

CONSTRUCTS UNIQUE TO TWO VOLUSIA COUNTY  
ELEMENTARY WRITING PROGRAMS

By

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## ABSTRACT

This case study sought to examine constructs of two fourth-grade elementary writing programs in Volusia County, Florida. With only the Sunshine State Standards as a guide, each district, school, or teacher must design a writing curriculum that addresses those standards, develops writers, and provides accountability.

Fourth-grade classrooms were selected because students at that grade level are required to participate in the FCAT Writing +, a two-day state assessment that requires students to compose an essay on a designated topic within a 45-minute period. A second part of the assessment consists of multiple-choice items covering editing and revising, graphic organizers, and letter writing. Both sections of this assessment measure student progress relative to the Sunshine State Standards benchmarks for writing.

Data were collected through multiple sources. An observation instrument, based in part on Karen Bromley's *Key Components of Sound Writing Instruction*, was constructed. Survey, focus group, and interview questions were derived in part from a survey Dr. Roger Brindley and Dr. Jenifer Jasinski Schneider created to study fourth-grade teachers' perspectives on teaching writing. Writing artifacts were also collected.

Karen Bromley suggested five elements to address both process and product that are necessary for a balanced approach to writing. They are Standards and Assessment, Large Blocks of Time, Direct Instruction, Choice and Authenticity, and Writing Across the Curriculum. Findings revealed that although both schools subscribed to different methods and materials for writing instruction, similarities were revealed with consideration to these components. Current

test scores validated these practices. Implications for further study and investigation based on these findings ensures the advancement of the body of knowledge about writing instruction.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Background and Significance

From stone, to clay, to papyrus, to scroll, to parchment then codex, writing evolved as a response to society's level of development and its need to communicate concepts (Martin, 1988). Originally reserved for the few privileged priests, soothsayers, and scribes, writing is now a requirement for functional literacy (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). Using a prescribed set of symbols that carry meaning, composing is unique to humankind (Martin, 1988). It is a graphic representation of language; furthermore, it communicates relationships and ideas.

Composing is a complicated and symbolic process that develops in conjunction with speaking, drawing, and playing (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Daiute, 1990; Dyson, 1997). Acquisition of skills is a long-term process requiring much personal practice and refinement (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1999). Lucy Calkins (1994) stated that writing is the process of growing meaning. It allows us to frame moments and make sense out of chaos. She speculated that this is why early people drew pictographs on cave walls.

For many children, writing strikes fear (Campbell, 1995). The empty page stares up at them and they are at a loss for actualization (Calkins, 1994). Once when someone asked Ernest Hemmingway what frightened him most, he replied, "A blank sheet of paper" (Schmidt, 2004).

Writers are notorious for establishing daily rituals as a precursor to writing; rarely do they just sit down and write. Inspiration springs from observing and attending to circumstances in our

daily lives (Graves, 1994). Calkins (1994) suggested the use of a Writer's Notebook as a tool or rehearsal for writing. It is a vehicle for recording life's experiences, which become seeds for rough drafts. Merle Hom uses Writer's Notebook in her classroom on a daily basis (Hom, 2004). Her students write daily for 15 minutes in their notebooks. As starters or sources of revelation, Hom uses items such as current news articles, classroom issues, and brief read-alouds to provoke a response. Like Calkins' use of Writer's Notebooks, these accompany the authors on their daily life's journeys and aid in establishing a regular routine for writing. Beyond words, Isoke Nia, a staff member of the Teacher College Writing Project, informs students that her notebooks contains secrets, memories, and poems (Calkins, 1994). She invites students to live the "writerly life."

Self-confidence and willingness to try influence the composing process more so than with reading (Hansen, 1996). In some communities print opens doors; in others it restricts deliberation. Young children quickly understand that illustrations and text convey meaning and that a response can be elicited. Unafraid of ridicule, young writers are free to record their innocence. Peers and teachers influence children's texts in explicit and implicit ways (Brindley & Schneider, 2002). When we attend to children's efforts, we demonstrate that their words carry worth, and inspiration is renewed (Calkins, 1994).

Although writing-skill acquisition is similar in fashion from one person to the next, disparity exists within developmental levels in young writers (Hansen, 1996). Gregory and Kuzmich (2005) provided an over-all synthesis of developmental writing stages (Appendix D), listing characteristics, capabilities, and needs of young writers. This range in abilities challenges instruction. Emergent writers respond differently to initial instruction because of their position within the various developmental writing stages (Gregory and Kuzmich). Recognizing their

individual status and measuring growth from that aspect assists in understanding writing progress.

Research over the last decade supports the concept that writing will develop in supportive classrooms that provide for oral language development, as well as providing writing activities for authentic purposes to real audiences. Writing is a social activity, and if the opportunities are provided children will express themselves in a variety of ways orally and on paper (Hansen, 1996).

This study examines the constructs of two fourth-grade writing programs at two elementary schools in Volusia County. In this era of educational reform, uniform standards guide instruction, and assessment provides accountability. Standards are written in general terms, but criteria for assessment need to be identified and developed so that objectives are clearly imparted to the student (Glass, 2005). In the reading and mathematics curriculum, state-adopted materials aid teachers in interpreting and implementing the standards. Every county in Florida adopts a current reading and math series every five years in which publishers incorporate Florida's standards in their texts.

In writing, however, there is no state adoption process of current research-based materials. Every county, school, and teacher must interpret and adhere to a standards-based curriculum with consideration to the state's writing assessment as a measure of progress in writing (Hughey & Slack, 2001). In Florida, these writing standards are part of the Sunshine State Standards (Appendix E). The challenge of curriculum design, implementation, and rendering accountability rests in the hands of teachers, many times on a trial-and-error basis. This study documents some of the challenges and decision-making processes schools and

teachers experience in order to implement a writing curriculum that will satisfy the needs of today's students and adhere to the demands for accountability.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this case study was to describe writing programs at two elementary schools in Volusia County (Florida). In this instance, a multi-site approach using holistic analysis was used. Multiple sources of information, such as interviews, focus group discussion, a written survey, observations, and collection of writing artifacts, were employed in order to paint a comprehensive picture of the writing programs at each school.

Before the 1970s, research into writing was limited to examining text structure and grammar (Whiteman, 1980). No prior research had been conducted on how people learn to write, what composing processes they use, whether there are developmental writing stages to be considered, or whether adults differ from children in the acquisition of skills.

Current research views the child as an active learner and the teacher, set in the natural environment of the classroom, as contributing to action research (Gambrell, Morrow, Neuman, & Pressley, 1999). The teacher is ultimately left with the role of interpreting the research by selecting best practices and translating the standards to produce appropriate instruction in very diverse classrooms. It is hoped that this microscopic view of two schools struggling to teach the standards, interpret and apply the research, and prepare students for state assessments will shed a ray of light in the area of writing research.

### Research Questions

What are some unique characteristics of a writing program at the elementary school in Volusia County that had 93% of its students Meeting High Expectations on Florida's writing assessment for 2004–05?

What are some characteristics of a writing program at an elementary school in Volusia County that had 75% of its students Meeting High Expectations on Florida's writing assessment for 2004–05?

### Definitions

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – As part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a rating system developed to evaluate the performance of each subgroup in all public school populations to determine whether schools, school districts, and the state have made adequate yearly progress. This pass/fail system of rating schools considers schools to be failing if they miss one or all of the 40-plus measured criteria set by the federal government. Failure in two consecutive years results in set consequences.

Case Study – A qualitative exploration of a “bounded system” or a case (or multiple cases) over time through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources (Cresswell, 1998).

Florida A+ Accountability Plan – A comprehensive grading system initiated in 1999 based on Sunshine State Standards in which a point system is used to rate schools using FCAT test scores. This system is unique to the state of Florida.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) – A criterion-based state assessment, based on the Sunshine State Standards, formulated for the state of Florida and administered

annually to measure how well students have mastered the Sunshine State Standards in reading and math.

FCAT Writing + – Developed in 1995 for the state of Florida, a demand-type writing assessment that measures student achievement in writing in grades 4, 8, and 10, considering four areas: focus, organization, support, and conventions.

Guided Writing – An approach in which the teacher brings students together in a small group for direct instruction on a specific aspect of writing.

Holistic Scoring – A method by which trained readers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality while considering four elements: focus, organization, support, and conventions.

Interactive Writing – An approach that incorporates language experiences and shared writing. In addition, it addresses the mechanical production of some of the writing skills.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – A 2001 extension of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its primary goal is to make every public school student proficient in reading and math by the year 2014.

Prompts – A directive to students to write for certain purposes. In Florida, three types of prompts are used: (1) expository: gives information, explains why or how, clarifies a process, or defines a concept; (2) narrative: recounts a personal or fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event; and (3) persuasive: convinces the reader that a point of view is valid or that the reader should take a specific action.

Process Writing A procedure or method for developing a piece of writing involving rehearsal, composing, revision, editing, and publishing.

Shared Writing, Language Experience – Group writing in which students produce a common text.

Stanford 9 – A standardized assessment administered in conjunction with the FCAT in grades 3–10. It is also administered to second-grade students.

### Limitations

As with any survey or interview, results of the study were limited by the degree of participation of the various respondents. Responding teachers may have been self-selecting from their interest in the writing process or some other aspect of pedagogy. Some principals may have chosen not to have their fourth-grade teachers participate in the study, as well as some teachers may have chosen not to participate. Honesty and complete disclosure is always a concern for the researcher.

Another limitation affecting research outcomes is the proximity of the researcher to the participants. When participants are aware that their actions are being observed and recorded, their level of competence may be affected.

### Assumptions

As previously stated, the basic assumption with all surveys, discussions, and interviews is that the respondents will answer all questions truthfully. Since the selected schools were identified because of their test score results and proximity to the researcher, anonymity may have been compromised.

It was assumed that the selected teachers understood the survey, interview, and focus group questions and responded to the queries in a way that accurately and adequately depicted their classroom and its subscribed curriculum.



It was assumed that teachers modeled lessons that actually represented the structure and composition of their writing program during the observations.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Historical Perspective

During the last three decades, writing research consisted of investigating the composing process and skill acquisition and verifying that natural stages of development occur in writing (Strickland et al., 2001). It was discovered that writing is a recursive process rather than a linear one, with writers traversing back and forth through stages. Subsequently, researchers began to document developmental writing stages children experience (Whiteman, 1980). Gregory and Kuzmich (2005) furnished a synthesized guide of these stages (Appendix D). As soon as young children could begin to hold a pencil and communicate thoughts and ideas, writing could develop, if the learning environment was engaging and motivated the learner (Campbell, 1995).

Perceptions about writing acquisition have experienced a series of transformations since researchers started considering children as viable learners. The Dartmouth Seminar in 1966 suggested that writing and reading be integrated. It stated that learners should be engaged in language acquisition whether speaking, listening, reading, or writing (Strickland et al., 2001). Furthermore, language had to be meaningful to the writer and build on prior experiences.

Among the modifications of the writing curriculum suggested for implementation was that concerning the role of the teacher. Effective teachers nurture and encourage writing development in a risk-free environment. Classrooms that reinforce oral language development are classrooms that foster writing development (Morrow & Strickland, 1988). Knowledge of a

developmentally appropriate writing curriculum was to be accomplished through teacher training, a major element in creating a supportive classroom setting (Strickland et al., 2001).

In the 1970s the traditional grammatically correct pieces of writing gave way to free personal expressions of writing (Elbow, 1973). Elbow stated in his text, *Writing Without Teachers*, that the process of writing was self-generating, should allow for free expression, and should not be inhibited by grammar rules, which were intrusive.

Despite the attempt to integrate reading and writing, in 1986 the Center of Reading and Writing reported that reading and writing instruction was still commonly taught and assessed as separate subjects. Ways of evaluating writing, however, were evolving from the traditional look at the grammatical structure of a composition to a more “authentic type assessment,” where context became an integral part of assessment (Strickland et al., 2001).

Today, the “new basics” require the literate person to write and read proficiently, think critically, and personalize the meaning of experiences in order to apply them to the real world (Gambrell et al. 1999). Writing in the modern world requires writing for a variety of purposes: letters and memoranda, e-mail and other electronic devices for communicating, documentation in various forms, how-to-manuals, and a plethora of forms to fill out, just to name a few.

Increasingly, writing is viewed as one of the best ways to foster critical thinking and learning across the curriculum (Baldwin, 2004). Students’ higher-order thinking skills are stimulated, such as the ability to make logical connections, to compare and contrast solutions to problems, and to adequately support arguments and conclusions. Writing prepares students for the real-world experiences of the demand type of writing required in the workplace, as well as in college classrooms (Baldwin, 2004).

## Call for Accountability

In the 1990s the call for higher expectations and standards again changed the way writing was taught. The National Commission on Excellence in Education's 1983 publication, *A Nation at Risk*, prompted a new wave of reform (Strickland et al., 2001). In 1991 in response to this report, President George H. W. Bush and a group of state governors convened an educational summit, the National Education Goals Panel, which formulated a set of six broad goals to be reached by 2000. National content standards and a national system of assessment based on those standards ensued (Strickland et al., 2001). Congress passed an extension of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2001. Initiated by President George W. Bush, this 1,100 page bill, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), heralded major changes in America's schools and became law on January 8, 2002 (Paige, 2002). This law contains four basic components: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on research-based teaching methods that have been proven to work through highly qualified teachers.

Each state and school district was left with the challenge of implementing annual state assessments and establishing academically high standards for every child. In addition, the act gave the federal government greater control over America's educational system through funding.

This new law espoused closing the achievement gap between low socio-economic groups and their middle-class counterparts in order to improve student achievement at all levels (K-12), while holding educators accountable for individual academic progress (Paige, 2002).

Specifically, it stated that every public school student was to be proficient in reading and math by the year 2014. The bill requires states to develop and administer annual proficiency tests in reading/Language Arts and math for all students in grades 3 through 10. These tests must align

with each academic content standard. Establishing a definition of student proficiency is left up to each state, taking into consideration the lowest-achieving demographic groups. States are required to raise the bar gradually, in equal increments, so that 100% proficiency is reached by the target date. Bars must be raised once every three years (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2005). In addition to state testing, a sample of students in every state would be required to take the 4<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in math and reading every year. The NAEP is administered in every state to a representative sample of children in grades 4 and 8 (Hoxby, 2005). This assessment allows for an objective comparison among states and is an effective benchmark for standards. States are also required to provide parents with annual report cards detailing a school's performance and their child's progress in key subject areas (ASCD).

Schools that fail to achieve adequate progress would be subjected to corrective measures. Technical assistance was to be provided to develop a two-year plan to increase performance of school needing improvement. Parents with a child in a school that had been identified as needing improvement would be allowed to transfer their child to a better-performing public or charter school after the school was designated as failing. If a school identified as needing improvement did not made adequate yearly progress after three consecutive years, the district was required to continue to offer school choice and provide low-achieving students within the school additional educational services and summer programs. Parents would be able to select the organization of their choice to provide additional academic services. Schools identified as needing improvement over four consecutive years would be subject to reconstitution, hiring of a private contractor, conversion to a charter schools, or staff restructuring (ASCD, 2005).

Another component of the bill required states to submit a plan to ensure that every teacher in the district was highly qualified to teach in his or her subject area. Funds were allotted for teacher training and to develop alternative routes to certification.

### Understanding Adequate Yearly Progress

Establishing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with consideration towards proficiency on the part of every student was at the crux of NCLB, which included all ethnic groups, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and mobile (changing schools in mid-year). AYP is a rating system that requires states to evaluate the performance of each of the subgroups (Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American) in all public schools to determine whether each school, each school district, and each state has made Adequate Yearly Progress (Volusia County Schools, 2005). Ninety-five percent of the student body at a school in each subgroup is required to take the state test. Schools that fall short on any of the criteria are considered failing, regardless of whether they have missed one or all 40-plus measured criteria.

One option districts have when calculating AYP is “safe harbor,” which is designed to address the fairness issue in calculating AYP. Schools will be considered to have reached AYP under this provision if the percentage of students in a particular subgroup who failed to reach proficiency decreased by 10% from the previous year and also the group made progress on another academic indicator (Lee, 2004). Failure to make AYP for Title I schools in two consecutive years designates that school as a “school in need of improvement.” Students attending these schools are eligible for “choice options” for the next year.

## A+ Plan for Florida

Adequate Yearly Progress is one of two measures that are used in Florida to determine how well schools are performing (Volusia County Schools, 2005). Initiated in 1998 by Governor Bush, Florida's A+ Plan focuses on accountability, choices for parents, more resources, rewards for improvement, and change when students are not progressing (Winn, 2005).

School grades assigned under the A+ Plan are based on student achievement, learning gains of individual students, and growth of struggling readers in the bottom quartile (Winn, 2005). The following reflects the points needed toward a school's grade:

A = 410 and up

B = 380–409

C = 320–379

D = 280–319

F = Less than 280

For 2006-07 the grading scale will include math and science scores. In addition, learning gains for the students in the lowest quartile will also be calculated into the school grade.

Schools earn one point for each percent of students who score in achievement levels 3, 4, or 5 in reading and one point for each percent of students who score 3, 4, or 5 in math on FCAT (Guide to Calculating School Grades, 2005). One point for each percent of students scoring 3.5 or above in writing on the FCAT Writing + is awarded to schools. Schools also earn one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in reading and one point for each percent of students who make learning gains in math. Special attention is given to the reading gains of students in the lowest 25% in levels 1, 2, or 3 in each school. Schools earn one point for each

percent of the lowest performing readers who make learning gains from the previous year. Math will be configured in for 2006-07. It takes at least 50% to make adequate progress for this group.

The consequence of not meeting all the standards in two consecutive years is that the school must allow transfer of students to higher performing schools. Those schools not meeting AYP in three consecutive years must provide tutoring to their low-income students through Supplemental Educational Services.

Included in Florida's A+ initiative and NCLB is the requirement that all teachers be deemed "highly qualified." Highly qualified teachers' implementing a research-based curriculum with consideration to assessment results in order to plan for instruction is an important component of both plans. Teaching quality is an essential component to raising student achievement (Emerick, Hirsch, & Berry, 2004). The federal government, under the NCLB law, mandated that by the 2005–2006 school year "highly qualified" teachers must possess at least a bachelor's degree, have full state teacher certification or have passed the state licensure exam and hold a license to teach, and demonstrate competence in each academic subject that they teach. Almost three-billion dollars was set aside for teacher training with state and local governments at the forefront of this initiative (Paige, 2002).

Almost every district conducts training in the Sunshine State Standards, the Florida A+ Program, the theory and implementation of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, and holistic scoring procedures (George, 2001). In addition, most districts offer training on writing state test questions and on selecting and using effective preparation materials. Teachers from every subject area study how to improve students' scores by using state assessment terms and jargon in assignments and by fostering such skills in daily assignments. Focusing on developing



higher-order thinking skills is considered a necessary requirement for professional development due to the format of the state test.

### Florida's Response

In 1996 the state of Florida responded to this new reform by identifying a core of knowledge and skills that all Florida students should possess. The Sunshine State Standards were developed and divided into four grade-level clusters and then subdivided into benchmarks addressing seven content areas (Florida Department of Education [FDOE], 2002). The Sunshine State Standards for writing are provided in Appendix E.

In addition, the Florida Educational Reform and Accountability Commission recommended the development of a statewide assessment system, now known as the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). FCAT was designed to assess students in grades 4, 8, and 10 in writing, grades 3 through 10 in reading and math, and grades 5, 8, and 11 in science, based on the Sunshine State Standards. FCAT assessments include both state-developed criterion-referenced assessments, as well as a commercially available national norm-referenced test, the Stanford 9, published by Harcourt Assessments (Winn, 2005). In February 1998 the FCAT writing assessment was first administered, and the reading and math testing followed in March.

The Florida A+ Accountability Plan used a comprehensive grading system initiated in 1999 (Volusia County Schools, 2005). The plan is based on the Sunshine State Standards and a point system. Schools are awarded one point for each percent of students who score at or above proficiency on FCAT in reading and math. Points are also awarded in writing for those students scoring 3.5 or higher. Additionally, points are also earned for students who make learning gains

in reading and math. All curricular groups, including ESE and ESOL, that attended the same school in both October and February are included. Schools can make a grade of A on the Florida A+ Plan and not make AYP on the federal measure. Title I schools that do not make AYP in two consecutive years are designated as “schools in need of improvement.” Students attending these schools are eligible for public school “choice options” for the following year. Title I schools that are in need of improvement for more than two consecutive years are required to provide additional services to students and to implement defined strategies for improving school performance (Volusia County Schools).

### Florida’s Writing Assessment

In 1990, the Writing Advisory Committee (composed of 15–20 reading or language arts professional from schools, school districts, and universities) initiated research into a variety of writing assessments to determine which course Florida’s state writing assessment should take. The committee polled the Council of Language Arts Supervisors in an effort to obtain their opinions as to test purpose, scoring and testing procedures, and prompts. In addition, the committee assembled information on all existing state writing assessments in 22 states, including modes of testing, time, and allowable use of dictionaries (L. Cone, personal communication, January 20, 2005). Literature regarding writing assessment and scoring approaches was collected. According to Cone, who is the FCAT Writing Coordinator at the Florida Department of Education Test Development Center, the decision to adopt a holistic scoring approach was based on their findings, as well as on an article written by Carol Greenhalgh and Donna Townsend (1981), *Evaluating Students’ Writing Holistically—An Alternative Approach.*”

The writing assessment was designed to assess Standard 2 of Goal 3 from *Florida's System of School Improvement and Accountability*, Blueprint 2000 (FDOE, 2002). Goal 3 stated, "Students successfully compete at the highest levels nationally and internationally and are prepared to make well-reasoned, thoughtful, and healthy lifelong decisions." (FDOE, 2005d). In general terms, the standard requires students to compose and create communications accurately using language, graphic representations, styles, organizations, appropriate format, and correct conventions. In 2000–2001, the title "FCAT Writing" was used; however, the Writing Advisory's Committee's discussions broadened to include an expanded assessment of writing topics and has since been renamed "FCAT Writing +" (FDOE, 2004b).

The supplement to the essay portion of FCAT Writing + consists of multiple-choice items, creating a more comprehensive assessment of writing. It will also be used to determine writing performance in meeting graduation requirements (FDOE, 2004a). The multiple-choice items were field tested in February 2005, and the first administration of FCAT Writing +, including the multiple-choice section, was February 7 and 8, 2006. The multiple-choice items measure the Sunshine State Standards benchmarks for writing that are not directly measured with the draft-essay portion of the test. Items measuring conventions have 3-answer options; other items have 4-answer options. Other types of items included in this assessment are typical writing samples with 4-option items, cloze passages with 3-option items, stimulus-based 4-option items, and stand-alone 3-option items. Beginning in February 2006, students were administered the entire FCAT Writing + resulting in a whole-test scale score between 100 and 500, as well as a subscore for the essay (a rubric score of 1 to 6) and subscores for focus, organization, support, and conventions based on the multiple-choice items. Achievement levels and graduation standards for the expanded test are to be set in the fall of 2006.

FCAT Writing + results do not represent a comprehensive evaluation of writing instruction programs in that this test does not measure all the important aspects of writing (FDOE, 2005f). A comprehensive evaluation of student writing would take into consideration writing for a variety of purposes, under varying conditions, and it would use information from a number of sources. Instead, FCAT Writing + is limited to the writing task completed during the 45-minute time period. The supplemental section does offer additional information about grammar and conventions.

Initial creation of the essay portion took into account the Sunshine State benchmarks and provided the foundation for the conception of a scoring rubric that considered the four basic writing elements of focus, organization, support, and conventions (Appendix G, scoring rubric including instructional implications). The writing assessment uses demand writing, in which a topic is assigned and writing occurs for a specific period of time (FDOE, 2005b). Each student receives a writing folder containing one writing prompt or topic. In the fourth grade, students are assessed using two different prompts randomly assigned: narrative, tells a story; or expository, gives information (Appendix F, examples of fourth grade prompts). In eighth and tenth grades, students are assessed on expository and persuasive writing (convinces the reader of a certain point of view). Prompts have two basic components: directions for writing (the prompt) and the writing. In addition, in persuasive writing administered in the eighth and tenth grades, the prompt also identifies the audience to whom the writing is directed (Appendix O; FDOE, 2005e). Students are given 45 minutes in which to plan and then respond to the assigned prompt.

Trained readers score the writing using holistic methods to evaluate each piece of writing for its overall quality. Holistic scoring using a 6-point rubric considers the overall quality of the piece of writing, keeping in mind the four areas of focus, organization, support, and conventions

(Appendix N; FDOE, 2005c). Scorers make judgments about the entire piece, rather than focusing on any one element. Readers gain experience scoring in a thorough, multi-day training program during which they score numerous student responses under the supervision and instruction of an experienced scoring director and a Department of Education staff member (Orr, 2001). In addition, readers are not permitted to score assessments until they have scored a “test set” perfectly. A least two qualified readers read each student’s paper. If the scores of the first two readers are not exact or adjacent, a third reader assigns a score without knowing the two previous scores. If the score of the third reader matches either score, that becomes the final score. Under no circumstances do the readers know the names of students, schools they represent, or scores from previously assigned readers.

A prompt review committee convenes annually to review the prompts and student responses to ensure that the selected prompts employ clear wording, are of appropriate difficulty and interest level, and are unbiased. Participants in this committee include language arts teachers from the targeted grade level and school and district curriculum specialists (FDOE, 2004b).

Occasionally, a student’s writing reveals problems such as abuse, neglect, threats, or cheating (FDOE, 2004c). In such cases, readers alert scoring directors, and demographic information is retrieved. The Department of Education Team Leader reviews the papers and demographic information and notification is sent to the school district where an investigation ensues.

The first year the FCAT Writing was administered was in 1993. The mean score for fourth grades in expository writing was 1.7 (6-point rubric), and in 2000 the mean score was 3.3 (FDOE, 2002). For narrative writing the mean score was 2.3 in 1993 and 3.4 in 2000. In 1993, 12% of the fourth graders taking the Florida Writes scored a 3 or above. Based on a 6-point

rubric, 3 was considered an average score. In 2000, 58% of the fourth graders taking the Florida Writes scored a 3 or above. Clearly, these scores reflect an improvement in the area of writing for Florida's students.

When faced with the requirement of high-stakes testing and writing curriculum based on the Sunshine State Standards, fourth-grade teachers are under pressure to insure progress so that all students become proficient in writing as measured by FCAT Writing +.

### Best Writing Practices

Relying on researched-based best practices to teach writing in a balanced literacy program is of paramount importance along with ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified to teach writing. Cunningham (1999) suggested that rather than making teachers accountable for students' learning outcomes, teachers should be held accountable for conforming to best practices in their teaching of literacy.

The term "best practices" encompasses a pedagogy that is researched, evaluated, and agreed upon, with the ability to be changed as current research dictates (Cunningham, 1999). Best practices originate with the study of children in actual classrooms (Stewart, 2002). In the 1980s and 1990s qualitative researchers such as, Calkins (1983) and Graves (1983), investigated writing in existing classrooms to understand the process of writing within the classroom and to document growth in the processes and products of students' writing. In addition, teachers as researchers began examining and documenting their own practices, which aided in bridging the gap between theory and practice (Stewart).

Brindley and Schneider (2002) believed, along with most literacy researchers, that there is not a singular approach to writing instruction (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996).

Rather, writing instruction should consist of a repertoire of techniques and strategies that include modeling, shared writing, guided writing, and interactive writing (Brindley & Schneider). In addition, research indicates that isolated grammar instruction is ineffective in furthering student writing development.

In reviewing the relevant research in writing, Kern, Andre, Schilke, Barton, and Conn McGuire (2003) constructed a list of guiding principles for organizing a writing curriculum and working with young writers on a daily basis.

Principle One: Teachers need to recognize that all students have individual voices with something important to communicate. By linking writing activities to real-life issues that students care about, the teacher can support and foster quality writing.

Principle Two: Students need to be actively engaged in activities such as choosing writing topics, selecting audiences, brainstorming ideas for development, revising work, reflecting on finished pieces, and taking advantage of opportunities for creative decision making.

Principle Three: Varying style, purpose for writing, and topics, coupled with direct instruction, addresses the diversity of today's student population and equips students for the "on-demand" writing required in the 21st century (Baldwin, 2004).

Principle Four: The use of literature offers authentic purposes for writing, affords a clear model for instruction, stimulates critical thinking, exposes students to a variety of genres, and advances student and text connections.

Principle Five: Teachers who write along with their students send a powerful message that denotes value and importance to the writing process.

Bromley's *Key Components of Sound Writing Instruction* (1999) addressed both written product and writing process in consideration of the current demands of accountability.

Furthermore, they provided a balance for teaching practices instead of overemphasizing one over another. Well-trained writing teachers are versed in a variety of practices, engage students, learn as writers, and instruct students in a range of forms for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Bromley suggested the following:

Component One: Design a writing curriculum with standards and assessment in mind. Standards are guidelines and supply a common language. Assessment should incorporate the teacher's personal beliefs as well as prepare students for state exams.

Component Two: Devote large blocks of time for reading, writing, talking, and sharing. Writing Workshop typifies the type of activities that incorporates all of these areas.

Component Three: A writing curriculum should include direct instruction in the composing process, as well as teaching conventions through the use of guided practice without the use of isolated skill instruction.

Component Four: Writing for a variety of purposes with consideration to a variety of audiences contributes to a student's fluency, competence, and independence. Included in this practice is the use of technology.

Component Five: A necessary requirement to construct meaning is writing in a variety of forms, especially in content areas. The use of graphic organizers enhances and supports student research and writing.

Cunningham (1999) maintained that these best practices should be implemented and refined by well-trained teachers who are able to modify their instruction to suite a diverse population. The belief that writing is a process that can be learned rather than the outcome of a mandated curriculum or prescribed program that teaches children to write is foreign to many teachers and districts (Stewart, 2002). Stewart stated that these "teacher-proof" scripted



programs prohibit teachers from practicing as professionals and inhibit the decision-making process. In many instances, principals or counties dictate which programs or materials teachers must use for classroom instruction, and training is limited to this approach. Teachers must go beyond the manuals and observe children, carefully selecting strategies and activities based on need rather than prescription. According to Stewart, many studies have revealed that the teacher is key to an effective classroom and student achievement (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Development of a comprehensive professional-development program is essential to creating changes in the classroom (Fleischer, 2004). A one-size-fits-all approach to professional development hinders learning. Plans that honor teachers in their own context foster ownership, encourage collaboration with colleagues, and recognize that change requires sufficient time and support. These are the plans that lead to success. One important element to be included in staff development is inviting teachers to respond in writing. By exploring their own history as writers they rekindle memories of how they were taught and explore their own beliefs and rationales for teaching writing. In doing so, they can examine which practices are most effective and investigate viable strategies they already use. By building on what they already know, a willingness to implement new strategies may occur. Encouraging teachers to become observers of their own students, specifically when new strategies have been implemented, assists them in becoming objective learners. Finally, reflection and articulation of their new knowledge with other colleagues facilitates learning. Due to the pressures of writing assessments conducted in many states, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) suggested that test preparation should be embedded in daily writing instruction. They provided a list of writing standards that the curriculum should embrace. Under these standards, students would be able to

- Develop ideas and topics with logically related ideas and adequate supporting details.
- Organize their writing with a clear structure that is related to meaning, topic, audience, and purpose.
- Select types of writing (genre) and styles of oral or written discourse for different purposes and audiences.
- Use tools such as note-taking summarizing, outlining, ordering, and questioning to develop their topics and ideas.
- Use research methods to gather information from different sources.
- Use knowledge of conventions for sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling to edit their writing.
- Develop and use criteria for assessing their compositions and research projects before presenting them to varied audiences.

The chart in Appendix I outlines the similarities and differences between requirements on writing assessments and those in a classroom.

Other strategies that Fountas and Pinnell (2001) advocated are using Writing Workshop; construction of language and word study activities; using graphic representations similar to line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, time line, and maps; and using a variety of minilessons.

### Writing Workshop

The Writing Workshop has emerged as an effective way to teach the process of writing (Atwell 1987; Bissett, 1980; Calkins, 1994; Despain, 1992; Graves 1983; Lensmire, 1994). Its conception stemmed from two seminal works, one by Janet Emig (1971) and the other by Donald Graves (1975), which contributed immensely to what had been termed “writing process” (Piazza,

2003). The writing process was a vehicle to assist writers to think and behave as authentic authors in terms of strategies, habits, behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes.

In 1978 a group of 25 educators participated in a cooperative school-university program known as the Bay Area Writing Project (Gray & Myers, 1978). The focus of this study session was to exchange ideas, debate issues, and extend their knowledge about process writing by engaging in their own writing. As a result of this five-week seminar, these teachers returned to their districts and recreated their experiences, generating a decade of similar projects in almost every state (Piazza, 2003) for contributing to writing acquisition in students.

In the mid-1980s researchers and teachers began referring to this entire instructional approach to writing as *writing workshop* [also, *writer's workshop*] (Piazza, 2003). This term was used to highlight the interrelationships between writing research and the study of teaching, learning, assessment, and all of the language arts areas of reading, oral language, and drama (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1975, 1983).

The term “writing workshop” refers to a risk-free environment, which involves daily writing, minilessons, and choice of topics (Pollington, Wilcox, & Morrison, 2001). It focuses on writing as a process as well as a product and integrates language arts to content areas (Piazza, 2003). It consists of five components: reading, minilessons, composing, sharing, and assessment. Different from the traditional methods of writing instruction, it allows students to work at their own developmental levels, on topics of their choice. The teacher orchestrates activities but does not control or dictate. Assessment includes a focus on the writing process as well as finished pieces, self-assessment, conferencing, and recording student behavior (Pollington et al.).

Adequate amounts of time are allotted each day to various activities, including group discussions, composing, and conferencing. According to Atwell (1987), research supports the

statement that when children anticipate writing daily they develop the writing habit. Students begin to think about writing and as a result view themselves as writers. Devoting large blocks of time to writing has a positive effect (Bromley, 1999).

Authentic writing instruction allows students a choice of topics and the pursuit of personal interests. When students write on self-selected topics, the quality of their writing improves (Clippard & Nicaise, 1998). Self-selected topics afford credibility and denote worth to a child's life experiences. Writing becomes a necessary and relevant outlet (Clippard & Nicaise).

Social interaction set in predictable routines fosters a positive, authentic, risk-free environment (Piazza, 2003). Social discourse before, during, and after writing through group sharing or individual conferencing allows for a shared experience, helping the writer overcome hurdles and develop ideas, and adds credibility to the fact that writing is not an isolated activity (Clippard & Nicaise, 1998).

Calkins (1994) advocated the use of a writer's notebook as a rehearsal for writing workshop. Instead of brainstorming, listing, graphic mapping, and lead-in sentences as a precursor to writing, students jot down notes, observations, memories, and ideas in a notebook that is their constant companion. These become seeds for future drafts, according to Calkins. This notebook details life's experiences and becomes a window into a child's life. The writing ritual is established and a literate way of life begins.

Pollington et al. (2001) conducted a study on the effects of writing workshop and traditional instruction on intermediate-grade students. Specifically, the question of self-perception and its effect on achievement was studied. According to Pollington et al., literature supported the relationship between positive self-perception and academic success. In their study they characterized the tradition of writing instruction as one that used preprinted material such as

textbooks and worksheets. Writing workshop was used because proponents of this method had expressed a belief that a writing-workshop approach can improve motivation and self-perception. Atwell (1987), Calkins (1994), and Graves (1983) agreed that three basic components are necessary for students to become good writers: time, ownership, and response. Writing workshop offers these necessary components.

One-hundred-thirty fourth- and fifth-grade students enrolled in four classes were studied. Two teachers used a more traditional approach to writing and two used writing workshop. Their findings revealed no significant difference between students' attitudes towards writing and a guaranteed effective method to instruction. The study did reveal, however, that no single method of instruction suits every child and that teacher effectiveness influences achievement increasingly more so than does method (Pollington et al., 2001).

In their study of writing workshop and a non-writing workshop methodology, Clippard and Nicaise (1998) attempted to research academic self-efficacy and writing efficacy in special-needs students. Their findings also supported the fact that writing workshop in and of itself did not increase achievement but that writing increased due to instruction. The complex nature of motivation, self-efficacy, skill development, developmental levels, and instructional approach intermingle and affect writing achievement in various ways. There is not one method that suits all learners, and teachers are the single most influential factor contributing to achievement.

### Journal Writing

Journal writing encompasses diverse purposes and serves a variety of functions. Usually unedited, the journal presents the free expression of the writer, written with an informal flair. Often the content of journals is shared orally or not at all. Most journals take the physical form of

spiral notebooks or three-ring binders, but they can even be “blog” entries on the computer (Piazza, 2003). The purpose of most journal writing is to record observations, descriptions, and memories in an attempt to gain meaning from life (Calkins, 1994). According to Piazza (2003), the goal of most journals is invention, discovery, and exploration. Suggested types of journals are as follows:

- Dialogue journals
- Double-entry journals
- Dream diaries
- Learning logs
- Literary response journals
- Personal journals
- Reading logs
- Simulated journals
- Travel journals
- Writer’s scrapbooks

Hughey and Slack (2001) stated that journal writing is expressive writing that fosters cognition and benefits people of all ages. Understanding that the writers themselves are the primary audiences for the journal contents and that learning will be fostered through this process is a necessary component to implementation of this type of activity. Writing in journals is a supplement to writing instruction and not a replacement for direct instruction (Hughey & Slack). Journal writing encourages risk taking, helps students find their voice, aids in refining ideas, and establishes rapport with the teacher and other students.

By writing along with the students, the teacher adds value to this activity, sharing what has been written. This modeling process demonstrates to the students how and what topics are recorded and personalizes the bond between teacher and students (Hughey & Slack, 2001). In addition, teachers can conduct minilessons on observing, discovering, and reflecting, which adds merit to journal writing (Piazza, 2003).

### Reading Response

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) discussed Rosenblatt's theory of reading responses and how it has directly impacted the way we view the reading process. According to this theory, our purpose for reading influences how we focus our attention and the way we connect to the text. Reading response journals assists students in learning to organize their ideas and react to what they are reading by solidifying, clarifying, and refining thoughts (Piazza, 2003). This type of activity integrates reading and writing and takes journals a step further (Hughey & Slack, 2001). Reflective thinking, perceptions, vocabulary development, and alternative interpretations of the text are recorded. The teacher poses questions or provides thoughts to be processed, and students are encouraged to record their responses. The teacher, in turn, will reply or react to the students' entries. The goal is not to summarize or retell the story but to uncover the meaning of the text (Fountas & Pinnell). The responses are usually kept private between the teacher and the student.

Rubrics can be developed that highlight quality responses with the use of reading response journals. Fountas & Pinnell (2001) offered a four-point rubric with consideration to these elements: voice (unique way the writers express themselves); clarity of expression (use of effective language); evidence of understanding the main idea (through examples and comments); characteristics of genre (fiction, non-fiction, biographies, etc.); use of conventions (spelling,

grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and organization); and awareness of self as a reader/writer (revelation of genuine, honest feelings about the text). Through the use of reading response journals, students become responsible learners.

### Personal Narrative

Teaching the structure of a personal narrative form of writing springs from the unstructured format of journal writing (Hughey & Slack, 2001). This type of writing enables the student to capitalize on the present knowledge and experiences they currently possess and accesses a different audience. Three essential elements of a personal narrative are audience awareness, intent, and form and structure. The audience may include peers, friends, family, and community. Personal narratives are written with the intent to make a point, express a feeling, or describe an important event or situation. Clear communication is the result of exploration. Rich descriptions using similes, metaphors, adverbs, and adjectives present a logical sequence of events embedded with comparisons and contrasts. Some examples of personal narratives are life graphs, autobiographies, memoirs, biographies, and identity boxes.

### Narrative Writing

Personal narrative writing is a component of narrative writing, characterized by the passage of time (Freeman, 1999). In narrative writing, a series of events, which can be fictitious or not, is described in chronological order. Fictional narrative contains story elements such as setting, characters, and a plot consisting of conflict and resolution. Non-fiction narratives do not contain a conflict; rather they depict a series of sequenced events. These types of writings can be primarily informational.



## Expository Writing

Expository writing is characterized by information, ideas, opinions, directions, explanations, and argument (Freeman, 1999). According to Freeman, writing reveals where the students are academically. Gregory and Kuzmich (2005) listed four elements contained in expository writing:

- Give details by using who, what, when, where, and why
- Tell procedure step by step
- Give directions or tell the how-to
- Recall, reflect, and recount

A variety of graphic organizers assist students with the construction of this genre of writing. Gregory and Kuzmich (2005) delineated five diverse graphic organizers: descriptive, sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, and problem/solution. Before, during, and after the expository writing process, questions are formulated. This process promotes critical thinking, clarity of message and meaning, depth of purpose, and development of voice (Gregory & Kuzmich).

## Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing convinces readers to change their mind based on evidence, logic, or emotion and is a form of expository writing (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). According to Freeman (1999), a persuasive piece is divided into three sections:

- A statement of proposition or opinion, including an acknowledgment of the opposition's stand and showing why that position is false or weak
- Arguments

- Best arguments (clincher)

A statement and acknowledgment usually encompasses about 20% of the essay, arguments about 70%, and 10% for the clincher. Studying advertising and sales messages assists students in becoming critical consumers and offers opportunities for ethical discussions. Gregory and Kuzmich (2005) provided eight attributes of this type of writing:

- Detection of bias
- Determining point of view
- Determining what is ethical
- Evaluating the completeness of a problem statement
- Determining beliefs and ethics of self and speakers
- Determining the source for the conclusions drawn by self and others
- Evaluating the pros and cons of solutions and claims
- Determining what information may be missing or incomplete

According to Hughey and Slack (2001), persuasive writing is a culmination of all of the modes of writing. Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham, and Gentile (1994) reported in the NAEP 1992 *Writing Report Card* that “persuasive writing tasks in general posed more difficulty for student at all three grades (4, 8, 12) than did the informative writing tasks.” In the state of Florida, persuasive writing prompts are not administered to fourth-grade students.

### Prompt Writing

Prompt writing, writing about dictated topics, is another type of writing activity occurring in classrooms. Prompts can be used during journal writing and in reading responses. During this type of activity, prompts are analyzed to determine the genre and intended audience. Once the

topic and purpose have been established, a graphic organizer is completed. The writer then composes, edits, and revises before the final draft is written (Mathena, 2000). This formula-type writing requires modeling and guided practice by the teacher, so students can move easily through the process. It is a beginning for many students, one that allows the writer to achieve success at effective communication and allows students to become thinkers. It is an initial process, permitting all students to become effective writers and providing a base to venture away from, once confidence has been instilled in the learner.

### Direct Instruction

Many teachers believe that when students choose their own topics and enter into the entire process of writing (planning, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing), good writing will result. However, this is not always the case. There are those who believe writing instruction needs to be direct and systematic (Bromley, 1999). According to Bromley, teachers must learn to balance writing process and writing product. Direct instruction in composing and in the conventions of grammar, spelling, form, and handwriting is necessary to achievement. Bromley believed that this instruction can be accomplished directly and indirectly as situations arise. Knowing grammar terms gives students a common vocabulary for improving their writing. Routman (1996) also suggested direct instruction with word usage and sentence construction in addressing a specific audience. Kane (1997) suggested using sentences from real literature as a model for authentic writing rather than performing isolated drill instruction. She referred to these lessons as *focus lessons* rather than *minilessons*.

To ensure the active involvement of students during direct instruction, Piazza (2003) listed these steps:

- *An anticipatory set* at the beginning of each lesson introduces the skill to be taught.
- *Teacher input* explains or demonstrates the skill.
- *Guided student practice* occurs when the teacher circulates and provides guidance and feedback.
- *Debriefing* occurs when children state what has been learned in their own words.
- *Independent practice* takes place with the application of the skill in future assignments.

### Modeling Writing

Teachers' modeling of writing is an effective strategy, especially when teachers incorporate a think-aloud process (Piazza, 2003). By verbalizing what she is thinking about as she writes, the teacher demonstrates how problems in writing can be solved logically. Piazza termed this running commentary "metalanguage," which is the ability to talk about language. After lessons are modeled, the teacher conducts debriefing sessions to assess what knowledge students have gained. Modeling implies direct instruction; however, writing circles, conferences, composing with children, and sharing something interesting from a book or newspaper are techniques that, while they do not constitute direct instruction, are still types of modeling.

### Shared Writing

Shared writing occurs when teacher and student write a message together. Using this strategy, the students dictate and the teacher records (Piazza, 2003). Dialogue between scribe and participants clarify what is being recorded through teacher questioning. Another form of shared writing is the language experience approach, designed for students in kindergarten through

second grade. Topics are generated from shared experiences in the classroom like a field trip, daily classroom events, or familiar stories. The teacher records the students' words verbatim on large chart paper, guiding and clarifying. This activity then becomes a reading lesson and a future source for innovation.

### Interactive Writing

Interactive writing, or “sharing the pen,” is an instructional technique unique to kindergarten through second grade (Piazza, 2003). Students and teacher alike construct text, completing sentences and paragraphs. Instruction in phonics, conventions, and other linguistic patterns are discussed along the way, recording the message on an easel or chart paper. Examples of this technique are altering a plot for a familiar story, changing an ending to a story, or creating innovations on stories. Interactive writing places a great deal of emphasis on spelling, handwriting, formatting, and punctuating sentences in authentic situations, editing the pieces along the way.

### Guided Writing

Piazza (2003) cited Cazden's 1983 and 1988 works and Vygotsky's 1978 work in her discussion of guided writing or “scaffolding,” which involves supporting learners as they write independently. Scaffolding provides for varying degrees of support for the students, then reducing that support as confidence builds. Guided writing occurs as the teacher circulates around the room, capitalizing on those “teachable moments.” It is highly individualized and demanding, since the teacher must be very familiar with the writing process and respond appropriately. According to Piazza, guided writing is one of the most effective methods of

instruction, because students lead the way in determining the course of instruction, depending on their individual needs.

### Writing Circles

Writing circles consist of a small group of three-to-five students gathered together to share their individual pieces of writing and elicit comments and suggestions from the remaining group (Piazza, 2003). Typically, the pieces of writing are in a draft or revision stage and the author is in need of direction. Positive comments are provided, along with questions the audience may have. This process offers concrete suggestions for revision.

### Genre Blocks

Good fiction originates from the experiences of daily living (Piazza, 2003). Contained in all pieces of fiction, story elements (character, setting, theme, plot, conflict, and point of view) create the adventure. All stories use basic narrative techniques and can be classified under the term *genre*. Some types of genres are realistic fiction, mysteries, fantasy, fables, fairy tales, folktales, legends and tall tales, and myths. Knowledge of story genres influences strategies writers use for producing and creating texts. According to Piazza, proficient writers are aware that, for the most part, stories contain mixed forms and genres, sharing language features, structural patterns, and overall purposes.

In writing, genre blocks allows the writer to practice writing in a certain genre for a length of time (Freeman, 1999). Freeman recommended two weeks per genre writing at an elementary level as being sufficient. By matching the blocks with themes or the literature to be studied and targeting a list of required skills, teachers can help the students gain competence in a

variety of writing genres. Varying the purpose for writing for diverse audiences increases fluency, competence, and independence (Bromley, 1999). It brings authenticity to the task and addresses the needs and interests of diverse learners.

### Technology

Literacy instruction integration in today's classrooms is of paramount importance in the preparation of students to become literate in a modern world (Labbo, Reinking, & McKenna, 1999). The acknowledgment that today literacy includes more than traditional print materials assists in the formulation of a literacy program that prepares students at all socioeconomic levels for multidimensional thinking (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). According to the American Library Association (Ryan & Capra, 2001), the six stages of technological literacy are defining, locating, selecting and analyzing, organizing and synthesizing, creating and presenting, and evaluating. These stages are not linear; rather they involve spatial multitasking and must be synchronized.

Bromley (1999) stated that electronic literacy offers choice and authentic opportunities in writing by exposing students to a variety of audiences. Digital and multimedia materials are included in the term electronic literacy. Students use technology for diverse purposes such as researching information on the Internet and in CD-ROM encyclopedias, email, creating videos, and searching the World Wide Web, just to name a few. Teachers not only use classroom computers for creating files, cumulating and computing grades, and posting lesson plans for parents to view but design interactive demonstrations that can be stimulating to the students. Labbo et al. (1999) stated that adult modeling of literacy activities is a major factor in the acquisition of conventional literacy for students.

Bromley (1999) also provided suggestions for using the computer to develop student writers: establish electronic “key pals” with students outside the classroom; embark on electronic field trips to places around the world; participate in collaborative projects with other schools; and send students’ writings to electronic magazines for publication. Involving students in electronic literacy insures that all students have equal opportunities (Labbo et al., 1999).

### Writing Across the Curriculum

Integrating writing across the curriculum creates new meaning and demonstrates content knowledge (Bromley, 1999). Vocabulary acquisition is the start of concept attainment and understanding (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). It impacts our understanding and influences what we say and write in expressing our thoughts. Vocabulary that is explicitly taught increases retention and comprehension. According to Gregory and Kuzmich, vocabulary acquisition is the gateway to inferential thinking and comprehension.

Expository writing uses factual information to recount, inform, or direct the reader (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). It becomes a vehicle for content-specific vocabulary development and integration of knowledge. It takes a variety of forms, depending on the subject and grade level. Content journals are one way for students to record their research and make connections to their daily lives.

Graphic organizers bridge research and writing (Bromley, 1999). They also offer support for students’ writing and aid in actively processing information acquisition in a visual form (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). Sequencing is a thinking skill that helps with the writing process. Graphic organizers assist with organizing and sequencing information found in content subjects



like science, math, and the recording of historical events. They enable students to create connections.

### Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are necessary requirements for satisfying the current demands for accountability (Hughey & Slack, 2001). Developing a writing curriculum that addresses writing standards and provides for a variety of assessment tools should be the goal of each school and each district (Bromley, 1999). In designing assessment tools, two issues need to be considered: assessment for accountability and assessment for effective instructional design (Winograd & Arrington, 1999). Recognizing the type of audience that assessments serve assists in the constructions of these instruments.

Assessment is a continuous process of collecting evidence to verify that students are learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). It incorporates reader responses and is often focused on practical, functional concerns (Tchudi, 1997). Assessment is formative, rather than summative, and aids with instructional planning, which promotes focused learning. Some of the most effective practices in literacy assessment are those that occur in the classroom between competent teachers and their students (Winograd & Arrington, 1999). A few examples of informal assessments are informal reading inventories, running records, conference guides, and checklists.

Evaluation is the culmination of instructional performance. It determines whether the student achieved a level of mastery through established criteria (Tchudi, 1997). Rubrics, criterion-referenced tests, minimum-competency testing, graduation exams, and college entrance exams represent different types of evaluative instruments (Winograd & Arrington, 1999). Both

assessment and evaluation should be seamlessly integrated into a writing curriculum (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Using authentic or alternative assessment denotes that students are involved in real-life tasks in the context of a meaningful learning environment. Authentic assessment may consist of self-evaluations, journals, logs, portfolios, projects, performances, and exhibits, just to name a few. The objective of authentic assessment is self-reflection, personal growth and understanding, and application of knowledge in real-world situations (Winograd & Arrington, 1999).

Performance assessment is demonstrating proficiency by performing a task that is compared to a standard and is authentic assessment (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). In using performance assessments, the focus is on the product and the growth of the learner. Most writing assessments, informal and formal, are performance assessments measured with a criterion-referenced scales or rubrics (Hughey & Slack, 2001). These types of assessments require an extended amount of time to complete and require students to construct new knowledge, taking standards into consideration. Different forms of performance assessments are writing essays, short responses, oral presentations, and portfolios.

Since grading writing does not contribute to learning to write and is in conflict with the new paradigms for writing instruction (Tchudi, 1997), the development of rubrics offers precision as an alternative to a one-dimensional grading system of letters. Consideration of the 6 dimensions of writing—content, organization, voice, word development, sentence fluency, and conventions—supplies a framework for many state-adopted rubrics (Young, 1997). These dimensions of writing are often referred to as six traits to writing (Appendix M).

Rubrics are scoring guides frequently used in performance assessment. Rubrics increase learning motivation and act as guides for self-improvement (Young, 1997). They contain

characteristics or a set of descriptions that identify quality writing (Winograd & Arrington, 1999). They are organized along a developmental continuum (emergent, developing, fluent, proficient, and independent) or along numerical level of competence (Piazza, 2003). A rubric may be constructed for holistic, primary trait, or analytical purposes (Hughey & Slack, 2001).

Considering the holistic rubric, the rater judges the writing based on a cluster of characteristic and exemplar pieces used as a guide, resulting typically in one score. Formal proficiency testing, such as large-scale testing, often uses holistic scoring. According to Hughey and Slack (2001), a negative feature of using a holistic assessment is that teachers and students do not receive specific information as to the students' strengths or weaknesses or suggestions for improving the writing process.

In analytic scoring, the writing is judged based on various qualities in a piece of writing (Hughey & Slack, 2001). Some of these qualities are richness, sound, clarity, and development of ideas and their relevance to the topic, conventions, organization, phrasing, and style. Occasionally, analytical scoring is used for large-scale assessments, but it is more frequently used to obtain an overall summary of the student's writing. This type of scoring can consist of a checklist, which detects the presence or absence of attributes, resulting in a numerical score.

Primary-trait assessment uses a focused holistic scale (Hughey & Slack, 2001) and can be used for large-scale testing. It is similar to holistic scoring, with one exception. A separate scoring guide must be constructed for each of the different forms of writing such as descriptive, informative, or persuasive. A single scores results, providing information for one specific trait.

In addition to using rubrics with writing assessments, rubrics can be constructed for a variety of other purposes, including reading, language arts, science, and even social studies. Other types of rubrics consider the elements to be judged, and a point system is assigned to each

element, resulting in one composite score. There are significant advantages to using rubrics. They clearly define the elements of a well-written paper, language that distinguished one level from another is precisely described, and rubrics afford grade justification to parents and students (Young, 1997). Fountas and Pinnell (2001) cautioned that it is important for the teacher to be familiar with the rubric. In addition, familiarizing students with the rubrics can lead to self-improvement and increased performance.

Two key factors to be considered when designing a rubric are content and conventions (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Content relates to the organization of the text and aspects of the writer's craft, whereas convention relates to spelling, sentence structure, capitalization, and punctuation. Usually constructed using a three-, four-, five-, or a six-point scale, rubrics can be used at the classroom level, as well as in standard assessments.

Proficiency tests that require students to respond to a prompt frequently use rubrics as scoring guides (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Fountas and Pinnell suggested that embedding writing test-taking skills into Writing Workshop provides for authentic assessment practice and does not result in isolated practice (Appendix J).

### Summary

Acknowledgment that the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires students to possess strong “on demand” writing skills for diverse applications in the real world is vital for every educator. Writing stimulates students' higher-order thinking skills, such as the ability to make logical connections and to compare and contrast solutions to problems (Baldwin, 2004).

The call for accountability requiring students to be evaluated in dictated formats narrows the approach to implementation of research-based instruction in writing. Teachers are required to teach writing with the state standards and assessment foremost in mind.

Research suggests that a sound writing curriculum should contain large blocks of time; should vary style, purpose, and form; should include direct instruction embedded in practice; should use literature as a model for instruction; should have the teacher writing along with students; and, finally, should feature a highly qualified teacher providing instruction using “best practices.”

Additionally, a state-adopted writing curriculum is not available to Florida’s teachers. Each district must adopt its own philosophy and methodology to writing instruction. Investigating “best practices” in research is left to each school, each teacher. In the absence of a sound writing program of study, teachers frequently subscribe to scripted material rather than relying on researched approaches. These “teacher proof” programs deliver a one-size-fits-all approach and diminish the teacher’s ability to individualize instruction.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to

1. Examine unique characteristics of two fourth grade elementary writing programs in Volusia County.
2. Compare those characteristics unique to the aforementioned schools to an observational instrument created with research-based writing components.
3. Compare characteristics of writing programs at both schools.
4. Analyze and draw conclusions as to which characteristics or practices may contribute to those students achieving High Standards, as measured by FCAT Writing +.
5. Add to the current body of knowledge about what constitutes effective practices in fourth grade with consideration to the state writing assessment.

#### Research Design

Using a collective, multi-sited, case-study approach, the research design explored a bounded system over time (five months) through in-depth data collection. A holistic analysis drawing on multiple sources of information was performed. A holistic approach was necessary to identify the characteristics of each writing program. The context of the case study was situated at

two different elementary schools, specifically fourth grade. Fourth grade was selected because students at that level encounter the state writing assessment for the first time.

The advantage of using qualitative research is that the researcher enters into the study without preconceived notions of what the findings will yield. Another advantage is duration of the study, which allowed for triangulation of information to reveal patterns resulting in naturalistic generalizations. Interviews, focus groups, observations, written responses to a survey, and collections of artifacts rendered a holistic understanding and provided evidence of reliability and validity (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

A comparison between a research-based observational tool and actual school practices assisted in determining which characteristics and practices contribute to increasing the number of students who are meeting high standards, as denoted by 2005-06 FCAT Writing + scores.

### Subjects

Selection of school sites was initially based upon 2004-05 FCAT Writing + scores as determined from the 2004-05 Accountability Report obtained from the Office of K-12 Curriculum and Program Accountability, Volusia County schools. The first school selected possessed the highest percentage of students in fourth grade Meeting High Standards at 95% as dictated by the report. The second school possessed the lowest percentage of students Meeting High Standards at 43%. For 2004-05, Meeting High Standards required students to score 3.5 or higher on the FCAT Writing +. Permission to conduct research at either of these initially selected schools was not granted by the principal or the teachers, respectively. The third school selected possessed the second highest percentage of students Meeting High Standards at 93% (School A),

and the fourth schools had 75% of its students Meeting High Standards (School B). School A employs five fourth-grade teachers and School B, three.

School A is located in the east central portion of Volusia County within the Port Orange City limits. Its population is around 849 students, with 37% receiving free or reduced lunch. The demographics for School A were as follows for 2004-05: 84.5% Caucasian; 5.9% African American; 4.7% Hispanic; .8% Asian; .1% American Indian; 4.0% Multiracial; 46.6% female; and 53.4% male (NCLB School Public Accountability Reports, 2005). Economically disadvantage students were 39.2%, disabled 17.8%, LEP (Limited English Proficient) 1.1%.

The demographic information for School A's fourth grade students enrolled as of February 2006 is as follows: 120 students, 64 female and 56 male; 8 African American; 5 Hispanic; 2 Multiracial; 104 Caucasian; and 1 unreported. Forty-five students qualified for free or reduced lunch; 23 ESE students (Primary Exceptionality); 2 LEP (Limited English Proficiency); and 3 who qualified for 504 accommodations (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2006).

Located in a beachside community, School B's population is around 439 with 51% receiving free or reduced lunch. Demographics for School B for 2003-04 were as follows: 79.7% Caucasian; 7.1% African American; 4.3% Hispanic; 1.8% Asian; .2% American Indian; 6.8% Multiracial; 45.8% female; and 54.2% male. Economically disadvantage students were 54.9%, disabled 12.5%, and LEP 2.7% (NCLB School Public Accountability Reports, 2005).

The demographic information for fourth-grade students enrolled at School B during February, 2006, is as follows: 65 students were enrolled; 30 female; 35 male; Caucasian 46; Asian 2; African American 4; Hispanic 3; Multiracial 4; and 6 were unreported. Twenty-nine students were eligible for free or reduced lunch; 14 ESE students (Primary Exceptionality); 3



LEP (Limited English Proficiency); and 1 who qualified for 504 accommodations (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2006).

Both schools received Title I funding, which is based on the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2006).

### Instruments

Original inception of the idea of surveying fourth-grade teachers originated from a study Dr. Brindley and Dr. Schneider published in the *Journal of Teacher Education* (2002). A letter requesting permission to use their survey was sent and permission was granted (Appendix C; Appendix P). The purpose of their study was to examine fourth-grade teachers' self-assessments of their perceptions about writing development and writing instruction. The authors surveyed fourth-grade teachers within a large school district in the United States. The survey focused on the tension between teachers' beliefs and perspectives and their teaching practices regarding elementary writing instruction.

Initially Brindley and Schneider (2002) piloted the survey instrument with teachers involved in master's-level professional development. The teachers provided feedback, and Dr. Brindley and Dr. Schneider revised accordingly (Appendix K). The survey employed a mixed method, combining seven Likert-type questions with eight survey questions requiring narrative responses. Using a mixed-method design and cross-case analysis they identified emergent themes in two major categories: those that dealt with writing instruction and those that pertained to the teachers' perspectives on writing development. Additionally, they discovered evidence that the state writing assessment dictated the teachers' instructional practices. The survey,

teacher interview, and focus group questions utilized in this present study incorporated questions from this original research (Appendix K, Appendix T).

The interview questions asked of the Volusia County Writing Teacher on Assignment were derived from topics encountered during research and at the school sites. Writing workshop (Questions 6 and 7) and six traits to writing (Questions 9 and 10) originated from research topics. Question 5 (regarding Kathy Robinson's materials) was encountered in a discussion at both school sites. Establishing job parameters were obtained from Questions 1, 2, and 3. Goal setting dealt with Questions 4 and 8.

Constructions of the observations instrument was based on Karen Bromley's, *Key Components of Sound Writing Instruction* (1999), obtained from Gambrell et al. (Eds.) *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*. Karen Bromley's article was also found in *Just Read Florida! K-3 Reading Academy* (n.d.), a resource guide which offers information about reading and writing research to Florida teachers, specifically those who are considered Reading First schools. Other sources that were consulted in the construction of the observational tool are Piazza (2003), *Journeys, the Teaching of Writing in Elementary Classrooms*; Lyons and Pinnell (2001), *Systems for Change in Literacy Education: A Guide to Professional Development*; and Tchudi (1997), *Alternatives to Grading Student Writing*. (Appendix U details the sources for creation of the observation instrument.) The rationale for creating and using a research-based observational tool was so that cross analysis could occur. The question is, do these eight fourth-grade classrooms employ practices and strategies that are reflective of research-based best practices? A comparison of both schools' FCAT Writing + scores, 2005–06, would enable the researcher to draw conclusions about which characteristics or approaches are effective for attainment of Meeting High Standards, as measured by the state assessment.

## Timeline

April 14, 2005: Letter sent requesting permission to use Dr. Brindley and Dr. Schneider's survey.

April 21, 2005: Permission received via email message to use Dr. Brindley and Dr. Schneider's survey

August 19, 2005: Received approval from Volusia County to conduct research.

August 29, 2005: Initial proposal sent into IRB, University of Central Florida.

August 25 & 26, 2005: Attempted contact with first school by phone and subsequent email message.

September 6, 2005: Met with second school's principal and fourth-grade teachers

September 7, 2005: Email message from second school's teachers, who chose not to participate.

September 20, 2005: Initial meeting with School A fourth-grade teachers

September, 2005: Permission granted to conduct research at School B.

October 10, 2005: Welcome letter sent to participants at both schools (Appendix S).

October 19, 2005: Received approval from IRB to conduct research.

October 27, 2005–November 15, 2005: First observations at School A.

November 9, 2005: Focus group discussion at School A.

November 15, 2005–December 14, 2005: First observations at School B.

November 16, 2005–January 25, 2006: Interviews with School A and School B.

January 11, 2006: Focus group discussion at School B.

January 18, 2006: Interview with County Writing Teacher on Assignment.

October 27, 2005–March 13, 2006: Written surveys collected.

February 7 & 8, 2006: FCAT Writing + administered

February 8, 2006: Feedback on writing test from School B

February 13, 2006: Email requesting feedback on writing test from School A

February 13, 14, & 15, 2006: School A sent responses via Email.

### Data Collection

This research study employed the following methods of data collection: two one-hour observations, a written survey, a focus-group discussion at each school, and interviews. Observations were scheduled during writing instruction at the teacher's discretion. These systematic methods of data collections with other naturalistic methodologies (i.e., collecting field notes, the collection of writing artifacts, informal conversations, and verifying interpretations of data with participants) assisted with triangulation of data sources in order to characterize and identify components of each school's writing program. Triangulation of information is the searching for the convergence of information that relates directly to "data situations" in developing case studies (Creswell, 1998).

### Observations

Permission to conduct research at selected schools was obtained prior to the initial meeting with both fourth-grade teams. Upon meeting with the teachers, the researcher provided an in-depth explanation of the research topic, the methodology to be used in data collection, and the reason for the research. The consent to participate forms were distributed and explained, along with copies of the survey and the focus group and interview questions. Timelines for data collection were also discussed. All eight teachers at both schools agreed to participate, with

assurance that names of schools and participants would not be divulged in the study. Two, one hour observations were scheduled during the teacher's writing instruction time. The observation instrument was not shared with teachers.

Situated in the back of each classroom, the researcher attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible while recording a running narrative of each lesson on the observation form. As pauses in the lessons occurred, the room contents were recorded on the observation forms along with illustrations of charts and students' displayed work. Whenever possible, graphic organizers were also drawn. In some cases, the teachers provided copies of handouts to the researcher as part of the artifact collection. As specific strategies and techniques were observed, the researcher checked them off on the observation form. Quotes and use of special activities or materials were also noted on the forms. For example, one teacher used a timer for each part of the activity. Some teachers incorporated body movements to assist students in remembering what is contained in each paragraph. In some cases props were used and described. As observations were completed, each form was placed in a file labeled appropriately.

## Interviews

Each interview was scheduled separately at the convenience of the teachers. Since an initial observation had been completed prior to the interview and the focus group or the informal introductory discussion had already occurred, the teachers appeared comfortable. Copies of the interview questions were distributed prior to the meeting and were available on that day, with the exception of Volusia County's Writing Teacher on Assignment interview. Field notes were recorded in spiral notebooks, each section labeled with the school's name and the participant's name. Intent to use audio equipment was stated in the IRB consent form; however, upon mention

of this at the initial meeting with each group of teachers, there appeared to be a tension so audiotape was not employed. Instead, notes were handwritten verbatim, with the question numbers written among the responses. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher immediately transcribed the interview using the computer. Two copies were produced; one was attached to the handwritten notes in the notebook, and the other was kept in a file to be used later for data analysis.

The interview with the Volusia County Teacher on Assignment was conducted in her office with her supervisor and co-workers present for a majority of the interview. Future goals for Volusia County's writing curriculum were discussed and copies of booklets and handouts used during teacher professional development were given to the researcher. Copies of curriculum maps that will be distributed next year were included, with the understanding that they were "works in progress." Upon completion of the interview, notes were transcribed from the spiral notebook and a copy was sent for verification. The teacher took it upon herself to restate questions and answers for accuracy and these were sent back to the researcher. There was a slight omission between both sets of questions and answers. Appendix L contains the original interview questions and Appendix R contains the restated interview in its entirety, as provided by the teacher.

### Focus Groups

The focus-group discussions were also scheduled at the convenience of each group of teachers. The questions had been previously distributed so teachers had the benefit of knowing what would be discussed prior to the group discussion. In both circumstances, the atmosphere was informal and relaxed. In both cases, discussion was lively and participation appeared to be

evenly distributed among the teachers, except in the case of School A. Both of the youngest teachers deferred comments to the more experienced teachers. Immediately upon completion of the focus group discussions, notes were transcribed from the labeled spiral notebook and two copies were reproduced, one stapled on top of the hand-written notes and the other filed for future analysis.

### Surveys

The surveys were distributed at the initial meeting in both settings. As teachers completed them, the surveys were placed in the file appropriately labeled. A roster containing the names of the participants and each component of data collection was kept. As items were completed, dates or checks were inserted under the correct heading and this chart was used as an organizational tool.

### Artifact Collection

Expected collection of writing artifacts included copies of lesson plans, handouts students may have kept in their writing folders, graphic organizers, notices to parents, rubrics, and any item which may have been deemed part of the writing program at each school.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis incorporating triangulation using multiple sources (observations, surveys, interviews, and focus-group discussions) allowed for a holistic view of characteristics unique to each school's writing program. Multiple sources of data collection ensured confirmation (Creswell, 1998) and rendered a holistic understanding of the situation and generally converging

conclusions (Anfara et al., 2002). Multiple sources of evidence assist in identifying pattern matching, replication of case studies, and internal validity.

Using a research-based observation instrument afforded the researcher an all-encompassing, objective view of each classroom. Entrance into each setting contained no predetermined course for observation. No specifications on types of lessons were shared with the teachers, other than that the researcher was to observe a writing lesson for an hour. Since timelines for introduction of writing genres had been previously shared, the researcher was aware that an Expository writing lesson would involve the first observation and a Narrative lesson would involve the second; however instructional approaches were not shared prior to the observation. The researcher informed the participants that any part of the writing process could be considered for observation, which meant that students could have been engaged in rehearsing, drafting, revising, editing, or sharing. Upon completion of both observations, the researcher reviewed the written narrative format and placed checks in the appropriate boxes on each observation instrument. Since multiple collection procedures were employed (interview, survey, and observation) a summation is provide in Appendix Q as to the exact sources where information was obtained from each teacher.

Further cross analysis occurred with the interview, focus group, survey questions, and observation instrument as follows: Question 1 on the survey dealt with types of writing that students did in classrooms, which is reflected on the observational instrument under Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum in a Variety of Forms. Questions 4, 5, and 8 from the focus group and Questions 6 and 8 from the interview also pertain to writing in a variety of forms.



Question 4 on the survey delved into types of assessments, which is reflected in Component 1: Standards and Assessment. Consideration to the Sunshine State Standards when planning for instruction is Question 6 of the focus group, and Question 1 on the interview also addressed assessment.

Questions 2 and 3 on the survey, positive and negative ramifications of the state writing test on instruction, supply insight into teacher perceptions, per Brindley and Schneider (2002), and allows for emerging perceptions. As with Dr. Brindley and Schneider's survey, narrative questions revealed the complex interaction between teacher perceptions and practices. Questions 1, 2, and 3 of the focus group series also contributed to understanding teacher perceptions about writing and the state writing assessment.

Cross checking for variety of instructional techniques occurred using focus group Questions 7 and 9 and interview Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5. All of these support Component 2: Large Blocks of Time: Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing on the observational instrument.

By using cross analysis in data collection, recurring categories were derived from the data. Even though there were eight separate voices, commonalties emerged, especially when comparing schools.

Classroom practices were compared against the researched-based observational tool with the aid of the survey, the focus group, and interview questions. In addition, each school's characteristics were compared with the other's, enabling generalizations about other writing programs to be drawn. Finally, consideration concerning FCAT Writing + scores assisted in drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of particular techniques and certain characteristics that writing programs should contain in order that students meet high standards.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine characteristics unique to two different writing programs at two Volusia County (Florida) elementary schools. In Volusia County, as well as throughout the state of Florida, there is no state textbook-adoption process and no state writing curriculum, other than the Sunshine State Standards, to guide teachers in selecting programs, materials, and strategies to prepare students for the “on demand” writing skills required for the twenty-first century. Individual schools, as well as individual teachers, are left with the challenge of “architectural designs” (Stewart, 2002) that must accommodate cultural variety, prepare students for the demands of writing in a technological society, and satisfy required accountability. In Volusia County, recommendations for curriculum design are forthcoming; however in the meantime, this study details actual current practices in two schools.

Documentation has been designed around an observation tool based on research by Karen Bromley (1999). Instead of subscribing to a particular program or technique, Bromley suggested building a writing curriculum around five major components: Standards and Assessment; Large Blocks of Time for Reading, Writing, Talking, and Sharing; Direct Instruction; Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences; and Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum in a Variety of Forms. Data collection occurred in the form of triangulation, which ensures accuracy due to corroboration of multiple sources of information. Triangulation also enables the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible (Anfara et al., 2002).

Interviews, focus-group discussions, observations, and written responses to a survey assisted in pinpointing the characteristics, as identified by Bromley (1999), Piazza (2003), Lyons and Pinnell (2001), and Tchudi (1997) that each school or teacher employs to meet the needs of its students in developing a writing curriculum (see Appendix U). Artifact collection and informal conversations and observations verified what has been shared with the researcher. According to the observation instrument, a cumulative summary (interview, survey, observations, and artifacts) contained in Appendix Q reveals current practice in eight individual fourth-grade classrooms. Focus-group discussions permitted the researcher access to perceptions and emotions teachers are experiencing. Several focus group questions also cross checked information presented on the other forms of data-collection instruments. The results of these findings are as follows, described in reference to the observation instrument. Key topics under each component are identified as denoted below.

### Key Components of a Balanced Writing Program

#### Component 1: Standards and Assessment

Nine elements are considered in this category, all dealing with various assessments and standards. Standards provide a common language and act as a guide for instruction (Bromley, 1999). They are the bridge to accountability and are guides for instructional practices. Assessment reflects standards and supplies feedback so that instructional strategies can be adjusted. Assessment should reflect the teacher's personal philosophy and belief about writing. In the case of these eight teachers from Schools A and B, every teacher subscribed to some type of rubric as a guide to writing assessment.

In School A, four of the five teachers used the FCAT Writing + six-point rubric as well as the rubric provided in the Harcourt reading series to score short and long responses (Appendix V provides cumulative aggregate totals for all eight teachers regarding each of Bromley's five components.) Four of the five teachers extended rubric-type scoring to content areas such as social studies and science. Three teachers mentioned identifying and assessing specific language mechanics when designing a rubric. Teacher #5 stated that she uses standard rubrics from a Web site called Rubistar. During the focus group discussion, School A's teachers asserted that it is important to teach students the rubric and show what each level looks like for self-awareness and progress monitoring. By providing examples of each level of the rubric, students can grade each other's papers. A frequent practice at this school is for the teacher to read a paper and for students to grade it orally.

In School B, Teacher #8 stated that she uses the six-point state rubric, and all three teachers said they use their own version of Kathy Robinson's rubric. (An in-depth discussion regarding these materials will be presented later in this chapter. However, Kathy Robinson's materials are presented in a scripted, daily lesson approach to FCAT Writing + preparation targeted for fourth grade students.) Teachers at School B have taken Kathy Robinson's suggestions as to paragraph content and created a rubric in bookmark format (artifact), which makes it simple for student usage. They refer to this as a checklist rather than a scoring rubric, because there are no points attached to each writing element. Checks indicate inclusion of specific elements in each paragraph of the writing. In the focus group discussion, School A teachers stated that they also use this bookmark checklist (Robinson, 1995a, pp. 8–33) for assessment but do not allow students to use it during prompt writing. Two of School B's teachers

use the Harcourt rubric for short and long responses on holistic reading tests, and two teachers extend rubrics into subject areas.

All eight teachers at both schools employ some type of conferencing as a means of assessment. Teachers at School A stated that the principal arranges for substitutes as the writing assessment draws near so that conferencing with individual students can take place. Teachers #3 and #4 in School A also use peer-to-peer conferencing and self-assessment techniques. In addition, all five teachers believe oral sharing in small groups or with the whole class greatly influences the quality of writing in their rooms. Teachers at School A stated in the focus group session that editing was a minor teaching point due to test format. Spelling and conventions play a minor role when considering scoring on FCAT Writing +.

Further, teachers reiterated that with holistic scoring, “flow and focus” is more important than any one element. When these teachers do edit, they select one or two major points for correction and highlight strengths. Also, with their use of the Kathy Robinson’s materials (1995a; 1995b), sentence practice, sentence elaboration, and dialogue usage are embedded in their daily routine.

Teachers at School A also stated that they talk a lot about the prompts and encourage students to attempt the use of a more sophisticated vocabulary even though the spelling may not be correct. Looking at previously scored anchor papers included in the Florida Writes booklets sent to fourth-grade teachers yearly aids in scoring, according to School A’s teachers. The newly revised Kathy Robinson manuals (1995a; 1995b) also include scored anchor papers.

Teacher-to-student conferencing, peer conferencing, self-assessment, adult intervention, and parent assistance represent a large portion of School B’s assessment technique. Since many of School B’s early writing practices take more of a Writing Workshop approach, there is greater

need for editing and revision which leads to publication (sharing of corrected final pieces). In addition, all three teachers use oral sharing throughout the process as a means of assessment.

The Sunshine State Standards for the State of Florida drives instructions and assessment. When asked Question 6 during the focus group discussion, “Do you use the writing Sunshine State Standards as your guide to planning?” School B’s teachers’ response was that these standards were “a natural part of our teaching. We are driven by the standards; we are driven by the rubric and our state test” (Teacher #7). School A’s teachers pointed out that these standards are incorporated in the Harcourt reading manuals and that writing is included in the language arts standards. These teachers are required to write the standards in their lesson plans so they are aware of all the standards.

No teacher mentioned the use of interest inventories or portfolio assessment as alternatives to traditional assessment.

## Component 2: Large Blocks of Time: Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing

### Writing Workshop

This segment of the observational tool can be broken down into two distinct sections that are in use during this block of time, one dealing with Writing Workshop and the other with instructional methods.

Bromley (1999) stated that students will perform other types of writing for different purposes throughout the day but that because of its components, the implementation of a Writing Workshop approach to teaching writing is what researchers recommend to develop the writing process. Calkins (1994) suggested minilessons, conferring (peer and group), shared sessions, and

publication celebrations as important inclusive elements of a Writing Workshop approach. Bromley referred to Atwell's (1987) suggestion that teachers spend an hour a day in Writing Workshop with one-third of that time engaged in brief lessons focused on demonstrated needs revealed by the group of students. Other time would be spent in sharing and discussing a well-written piece of literature, ending the workshop with suggestions to the students for improving their own pieces, as well as discussing ways of responding to each other's work. Students choose their own topics during Writing Workshop, and prompt and test practice is not incorporated. Also, not every piece of writing proceeds through the entire writing process, and the use of literature as a "model" is frequently invoked.

Four of the five teachers at School A employ parts of Writing Workshop, and all of the teachers at this school set aside an hour for writing. They stated in the focus-group discussion that previously they had a full hour for writing daily; however this year writing instruction takes place three or four days a week for an hour. The sentiment was that this might not produce the scores they achieved last year, and they worried about students' preparedness.

The mandatory implementation of Literacy Centers during a 90-minute block of uninterrupted time for reading and language arts at their school conflicts with their instructional writing time. This requirement of an uninterrupted 90-minute block of time for reading/language arts was issued at the county level. The researcher has observed that teachers are struggling with implementation of this requirement at many schools due to ESE and Speech/Language pull-outs; access to bathrooms; special classes like art, music and P.E.; and the need to teach every subject every day at the elementary level. These concerns have been voiced in meetings at the county level.

All the teachers at School A fully implement Kathy Robinson's writing program (1995a; 1995b) and have been satisfied with the results. The philosophy of a Writing Workshop approach appears to be in conflict with this program. Allowing students the choice of topics and having them proceed at their own pace is in direct contrast with the daily formatted lessons Kathy Robinson presented. Minilessons, sharing, editing, and daily writing are elements both approaches share, and these were the components teachers at School A endorsed, even though Teacher #5 maintained that she was "unfamiliar" with Writing Workshop. Teacher #4 acknowledged that she is interested in implementing Writer's Notebook next year and asked the researcher for information regarding this strategy. In addition, Teacher #3 asserted that she was interested in applying Writing Workshop in her room next year.

Four of the five teachers used literature as a model but did not view this practice as part of Writing Workshop. Teacher #2 stated in the focus group that her belief is that all other grade levels should endorse a Writing Workshop approach to teaching writing, except at fourth grade. The teachers stressed that the benefit of Kathy Robinson's approach (1995a; 1995b) is that it specifically targets fourth graders, especially with choice of topics for prompt practice. Several other types of materials are consulted at School A in addition to Kathy Robinson materials. A list follows under the Material subheading in this chapter.

Two of the three teachers at School B endorse Writing Workshop, with Teacher #6 stating in the interview that during her first attempts at implementation an administrator told her that "her room looked like chaos" and to discontinue this approach. Teacher #8 applies a Writing Workshop approach to one of her Literacy Centers. In that way, students self-select topics and embrace the strategy one hour each week during center time. "When the class is ready to choose their own topics, then I use Writing Workshop," asserted Teacher #7. This approach was used to



create the Ponce Inlet Preserve essays in this teacher's classroom. Even though all students wrote on a pre-selected topic, the elements of writing at your own pace, peer editing, teacher conferencing, and initial use of literature were endorsed for completion of this project. Teacher #8 also used this method to complete this project.

School B's instructional approach to teaching writing is a more eclectic one. A mixture of Kathy Robinson (1995a; 1995b), Melissa Forney (2001), Writing Workshop, and previously created teacher-made graphic organizers represents this school's approach to writing instruction. During the focus-group discussion, teachers stated that initially they use Kathy Robinson's materials and then branch off into other methods. "In the beginning, fourth graders need structure; they need to see a pattern and understand the language of the prompt" (interview, Teacher #7). "Every year is different; I need to gauge it by the kids I have that year. Writing is too subjective and is a 'creative thing'" (Teacher #6). "We had training to do the same thing [observing Kathy Robinson at Snively], but now over time we have developed our own 'personalities' in writing instruction. Kathy Robinson gave us format; now we give it our personalities" (focus group, Teacher #6). When asked about the use of Kathy Robinson materials, Teacher #8 replied that she uses some of her ideas, but feels that "her materials are not well rounded enough to use solely."

All three teachers at School B have their students write for an hour, four or five days a week. Inclusive in this is the employment of peer editing and some type of sharing. Two teachers used the term "Author's Chair," a Writing Workshop term. Author's Chair refers to the practice of one child, usually sitting in a designated special chair, reading her own work while the rest of the class listens and provides feedback. Teacher #8 specified that her students share their writing twice, once at the beginning of the writing process and then again at the end.

They review it with a peer and use a checklist posted in the room at the writing center. Then they edit with the teacher. When they peer review, their partner supplies three things they liked and three suggestions for improvement.

In addition to peer editing this teacher provides whisper phones [PVC pipes curved to provide a channel of sound from mouth to ear] to her students so that they can reread and edit their own writing. “They keep the noise under control and it helps with fluency.” Teacher #7 requires her students to share their completed piece with at least three other students. In Teacher #6’s classroom, a student shares his writing while the rest of the class consults a rubric created to find five specific items. As the student reads their piece, the rest of the class listens for those items and checks them off their rubric.

Sharing in School A’s classrooms occurs in small groups, with the whole class, and with peers. Teachers #1 and #2 frequently use the “turn and share” approach, where all class members share their writing with a close neighbor, simultaneously. Two teachers mentioned the term, “Author’s Chair.” Teacher #4 asks her students to bring in stories written in previous grade levels to share, and then they are critiqued.

All eight teachers subscribe to the use of minilessons, which will be addressed under Component 3.

### Instructional Methodology

Instructional techniques are delivery systems that range from whole group to individual instruction. Seven of such systems are listed on the observation instrument. Piazza (2003) and Lyons and Pinnell (2001) supplied the terms and the framework for each of these.

All eight teachers provide writing instruction to their students through modeling writing. Here the teacher models or demonstrates one aspect of the lesson or strategy while the class

observes or records the results in their journals. According to Kathy Robinson (1995a; 1995b) and Piazza (2003), modeling is critical, especially when it incorporates “talking aloud” techniques. Modeling presents students with quality products, and the “talking aloud” strategy supplies students with problem-solving techniques.

Guided writing, as defined by Lyons and Pinnell (2001), is performed in a small group for direct instruction on a specific aspect of writing. It addresses all ranges of issues that are specific to that particular group of students. Small group instruction was not observed in School A during the formal observations. Further inquiry during the focus-group discussion revealed that the teachers at School A equated it with modeling, whereas teachers at School B equated it to guided reading where students are heterogeneously grouped and the teacher is modeling.

Guided writing was not formally observed at School B; however incidental observations did reveal the use of this strategy, especially in the classrooms of Teacher #6 and #8. Teacher #6 stated during her interview that she requested another adult, a Reading Intervention teacher at the school, work with a small group of students on a daily basis after Christmas. The group’s dynamics were flexible, depending upon the skill or strategy of those students who needed additional intervention. In the case of Teacher #8, the frequency of writing intervention groups occurred once a week and involved the researcher. Teacher #7 was observed instructing students in a small group during writing instruction; however the researcher did not have access to the conversations.

Shared writing, as defined by Lyons and Pinnell (2001), is similar to a language experience where students produce a common text. Shared writing can be conducted in a small group setting or with the whole class. The importance of this technique is the demonstration of how print concepts work, how words are spelled, where conventions occur, and the verbal

problem-solving conversation. Several formal observations in both schools followed the format wherein the teacher was the scribe and the students supplied the information. Focus-group conversations at School B did correctly define this strategy, whereas at School A they equated it to Quick Writes (a Kathy Robinson strategy), turn and share, partner writing, sharing their work, and peer editing.

Independent writing was observed in all eight classrooms, as well as Direct Instruction, which will be discussed later in this chapter. All eight teachers mentioned that their students participated in investigative research, and those parameters will also be discussed later in this chapter.

### Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions

#### Process Writing

According to Bromley (1999), the writing process is structured around four components: planning, drafting, revising, and publishing. At the heart of this issue is that national and state writing assessments support only one part of this process: drafting (Kilgore, 2004). The first phase, planning or prewriting, is required on the FCAT Writing +; however this separate sheet is not even sent in for scoring. This first stage usually takes approximately 10 minutes, and that time is deducted from the total writing time of 45 minutes allowed on the state test. A common concern among teachers is completion of drafts or time for revision. Kilgore concluded in her study that children need to be given time, even on assessments, to follow the natural processes of planning, composing, revising, peer conferencing, and sharing. All national and state writing

assessments virtually ignore the final pieces of conferencing and sharing. A fair assessment would allow for flexibility so students could demonstrate their skills as writers, Kilgore stated.

Another dilemma fourth-grade teachers must address is that demand writing is very different from process writing, especially when using Writing Workshop, where students self-select topics. In the state of Florida, prompts are written in two formats: Expository (Explain, Clarify, Inform, Define, Instruct) and Narrative (Tell a Story). According to Anita Watson, Volusia County's Writing Teacher on Assignment (see her interview, Appendix R), state prompts so far have included Personal Narrative and Fictional Narrative but not Informational Narrative. Students must address the prompt; free choice of topics is unscorable. Teachers are faced with the quandary of teaching writing as a whole process or teaching in preparation for the state assessment. All three teachers at School B follow the entire writing process at some point during their writing instruction, while teachers at School A practice planning and drafting the majority of the time before FCAT Writing + is administered.

### Types of Writing

As elicited by Question 1 on the survey and Question 4 from the focus group, some of the types of writing listed by teachers at School A were journal writing (topics from Kathy Robinson), expository, narrative, Daily Writing Sentences (Kathy Robinson), answering short and long responses on the reading holistic assessments, Quick Writes (Kathy Robinson), friendly letters, science and social studies journals and essays, and math. A few teachers responded that they teach poetry and publish books for Young Authors after the state assessment is over. Planning and drafting are their main focus before state testing. During the focus-group discussion, School A teachers said that the students mainly practice parts.

While observing lessons, several teachers timed each section of the process and provided warnings to the students that they should be completing that section. As the state test drew nearer, writing instruction in the classrooms occurred at the exact time they would be administering the state assessment. Several teachers went so far as to change the clocks in their rooms to 8:30 a.m. so that students would be able to pace themselves looking at the same time spans on the clock the day of the state test.

Responses to questions concerning the types of writing children do in classrooms at School B were as follows: narrative, expository, process writing, personal narrative, fictional narrative, journal writing, poetry, prompt writing, Quick Writes, sticker writing, summaries, writing in the content areas, research writing, letter writing, short and long responses on holistic reading assessments, note taking, and book reviews. Teachers also stated that poetry and book publishing takes place after FCAT Writing +. All three of the teachers at School B took pieces of writing through the entire process including revision and rewriting to create a finished piece of writing throughout the year. The process occurred over days. As the state assessment drew near, these teachers also practiced in test format, timing the planning and then the drafting stages, advising students that if they finished early to start rereading and revising. Concerns that certain students were not finishing the prompt practice sessions in 45 minutes was the topic of discussion at both schools as the researcher completed data collection.

### Direct Instruction in the Form of Minilessons

Direct and systematic instruction as a means of intervention assists with the challenges of accommodating individual needs. Overreliance on teaching the writing process doesn't always yield students who can write for a variety of purposes and audiences (Bromley, 1999).

Furthermore, teachers need to strike a balance between process and product. Approaching instruction in a minilesson format, directly and indirectly, can accomplish this goal. The difference between minilessons and isolated practice is that in minilessons skills are taught to address specific students' writing needs rather than aimed at the entire class. Bromley cited the suggestions of Routman (1996), who endorsed teaching and discussing word usage and sentence construction in the context of the student's writing. She also cited Kane (1997) who used sentences from real literature to teach specific grammar skills, such as punctuation and quotations. Calkins' (1994) idea of genre studies was also mentioned in Bromley's chapter. A genre study immerses students in a particular type of literature, resulting in students' writing in this format.

All eight teachers endorsed minilessons. The School A teachers taught skills systematically through the daily use of Kathy Robinson materials. Each teacher possessed a binder containing transparencies of Kathy Robinson's first- and second-edition materials (i.e., spiral-bound and 1995 versions). They stated that the previous principal reproduced it for them, including her graphic organizers for Expository and Narrative writing.

During the interview portion of data collection, teachers revealed some of the most prominent minilessons they subscribe to, such as: Quick Writes, addressing a prompt, WOW words, teaching dialogue and similes, Daily Sentence practice, author's craft, spelling, alphabetical order, and sentence structure. The list on the observation form is not inclusive, just representative of typical lessons. Teacher #1 reiterated that she determines what to teach in her minilessons by looking at the students' writing. Her lessons are based on whatever they are not getting. "I do that all the time. I stop everything and address it. I do a lot on detail and description." was the response from Teacher #3. Teacher #2 replied that sometimes her Literacy

Centers become minilesson stations. Also, she stated that she used some of the “Bag Lady” ideas for reteaching. The Bag Lady materials are listed in the Harcourt reading series planners and are an additional resource for teachers. Grade levels were supplied with a copy of their idea books, according to Teacher #2.

Teachers at School B presented a more eclectic approach to minilessons, even with the use of graphic organizers. Teacher #7 subscribed to Kathy Robinson’s Narrative and Expository graphic organizers (1995a; 1995b); however she also included Melissa Forney’s materials (2001) as part of her resources. For Teachers #6 and #8, Kathy Robinson’s Expository graphic organizer (1995a) was endorsed; however a teacher-made Narrative organizer was employed for narrative planning. The structure of this narrative organizer was similar in form to the expository one except that one used squares and the other used circles. When asked about the history of this, teachers remarked that a previous principal created a school-based writing task force with grade-level representatives. Narrative and Expository organizers were designed and agreed upon so that each grade level used the same ones. Terminology was also agreed upon. As other principals came into the school, the use of these single graphic organizers fell away and each teacher had the choice of adopting her own.

Some of the minilessons listed by teachers at School B were webs, note taking, capitalization, dialogue, Quick Writes, initial sentences, sentence expansion, elaboration, grammar, and transition words. Teacher #8 replied that “minilessons are more [used for an] individual or 2 or 3 students’ needing a particular skill.” Teacher #6’s response was that she conducts minilessons daily on every aspect of writing. In addition, she stated, “I teach what they need to make connections.” Teacher #7 shared a unique method for teaching dialogue and punctuation. She models hand motions for quotation marks, exclamation marks, question marks,



etc. After students write dialogue, they pair with a partner and as they read their pieces, they have to use the correct hand motions. During free time in the room, students can choose to pair up, write something, and create dialogue with hand signals for practice. The teacher then starts seeing an attention to dialogue in students' writing.

### Procedures and Routines

All eight teachers at both schools enlisted the use of journals for process writing. Some were housed in the student's desk and some were located in certain areas of the room. In addition, Teacher #2 at School A listed science journals as a type of writing on the survey. During the focus-group discussion, teachers at School A emphasized that all of their students kept a writing notebook with handouts and a writing journal. This practice is also promoted in the Kathy Robinson manual (1995a; 1995b). She recommended the use of independent journals to be used on a daily basis, 20 to 30 minutes for independent writing, and she encouraged illustrations. Other types of journals she subscribed to were Dialogue and Group Journals, and Group Newspaper Journals.

Teacher #8 at School B endorsed the use of several types of journals. A set of journals for "free choice topics" is kept in the Writing Center. Each week three to five topics are posted at the center. Students keep a list of all these topics in their journals and select one on which to elaborate. On some occasions the teacher will pass out stickers and the students write about that particular sticker. Another set of journals is for prompt writing. Here is where Teacher #8 uses some of Kathy Robinson's ideas and minilessons. Over Christmas, students in her room compiled and designed journals to record events during the Christmas vacation. Old calendars were cut apart and their pictures became the cover design. These journals were used more as a

Writer's Notebook, according to this teacher. During an informal conversation, this teacher stated that she was also interested in initiating Writer's Notebook next year. Math and science logs are also used in this classroom.

All eight teachers established procedures for collection of papers, journals, and writing supplies. Depending on the activity, time on task and completion deadlines varied from room to room.

#### Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences

##### Writing for Different Audiences

Writing for peers, self, and teacher were predominant audience choices at School A. Writing instructions was conducted in the classrooms, and there was no evidence that it was shared outside the room. During a January observation in Teacher #5's classroom, the principal offered to assist in scoring writing papers for the fourth-grade teachers. Papers may have been sent home for parents to read, but this practice was not verified. Parents were supplied with FCAT writing practice packets on the Saturday (2/4/06) FCAT Writing Prep Party Day. These packets contained prompts, graphic organizers, reviews of what is contained in each of the narrative or expository body parts, vocabulary, strong verb practice, onomatopoeia, similes, synonyms, and a host of various skill practices (artifacts). Every child in attendance received these packets along with pencils and refreshments, and they were encouraged to perform their best. The teachers stated that the event is well attended.

One of the artifacts collected at School B was an issue of the *Cardinal*, School B's monthly newsletter. Contained in the November issue was an article written by the fourth-grade

team regarding how parents can assist with preparation for FCAT writing. The article attempted to enlist parents' help with this endeavor by encouraging letter writing, story writing, and poetry and story reading, and by encouraging parents to have their child describe items in their house using as many words as possible. In addition to this, the article detailed what a six-point essay would possess, whether it was expository or narrative. Clearly, parents were expected to become part of the "audience" for student writing at this school. Other audiences that students at School B write for are other adults outside and inside the school setting, peers, parents, teacher, and self.

### Writing for Different Purposes

Teachers at School B endeavored to furnish students with a variety of authentic writing experiences. As part of their study of one group of Florida's Native Americans, the Timucuan Indians, all three fourth-grade teachers involved their students in an essay contest in conjunction with the City of Ponce Inlet. The essays were supposed to describe the types of equipment and furnishings the city should place at the Timucuan preserve area located in Ponce Inlet. The essays were persuasive and descriptive in nature, and expectations were that city leaders would take their suggestions under advisement and incorporate some of their ideas in the design of this preserve. The students had to keep in mind the history of that civilization and attempt to meld their ideas with the natural beauty that is already located in the area.

Another project fourth-grade teachers at School B involved their students in was a Fourth Grade Water Conservation Writing and Poster contest sponsored by the Water Authority of Volusia (artifact). Here, students had the choice of addressing one of the following prompts: "Everyone can help conserve our precious water resources" or "My most creative ideas to conserve water" or "Florida's Water: It's Worth Saving." An alternative entry involved posters

guided by the following themes: “Use Water Wisely” or “Florida’s Water: It’s Worth Saving” As a matter of record, one of the fourth-grade student posters at School B was selected for judging on the Internet. Results of the winners were published in the March edition of the school’s newsletter. One student won the poster contest and five students were each awarded a \$50 savings bond.

After FCAT, fourth-grade teachers initiated a poetry unit at School B. Some of the best poems will be submitted to the Ponce Inlet Garden Club Poetry contest for judging. Also in the month of March the Reading/Language Arts Department collected poetry to be submitted for another local poetry contest. Two of the three teachers submitted poetry. In addition to this, all fourth-grade students were required to submit a social studies project for judging. Teacher #7 detailed in her interview that Volusia County requires an essay to be submitted with every exhibit and craft. She requires everyone in her class to submit an essay with his or her project in the form of a personal narrative. With this type of essay, students need to describe step-by-step procedures of why they chose their project and how they collected their material. Students in this class are required to consult four different sources and create a bibliography. Students had access to books, the Internet, encyclopedias, and magazines as sources. Bibliographies are handwritten in school but later taken home to be typed and submitted with the projects.

The Media Specialist also became a participant in this project. In one session she provided training for students on procedures for recording different sources for a bibliography, and in the second session, students returned to find and record their sources after topics had been chosen. Teacher #8 also has students participate in this type of research and also required a bibliography.

Teacher #8 uses the *News Journal* [local newspaper] kids edition weekly in a Literacy Center. Social studies, investigative research, reading, and writing are integrated into this activity. Teacher #6 fuses authenticity with the prompts she creates and the topics of study in her classroom. “They always write about field trips and I create prompts about topics we are studying, like Martin Luther King.... We always brainstorm words after reading the prompt to create a word bank.” Also, this teacher’s classroom is brimming with actual models of covered wagons, Native American artifacts, and pioneer items. “I have a lot of visuals in my classroom so that when we talk about covered wagons they can see a miniature of a covered wagon. That is authentic.” Teachers at School B reported during the focus group that they make writing meaningful through providing real reasons to write. On the observations form all areas of writing for different purposes were reported to be in use for School B’s teachers.

Writing for different purposes at School A takes several different forms. All the teachers reiterated that Kathy Robinson’s prompts (1995a; 1995b) relate to authentic situations fourth-grade students encounter. Teacher #2 cited a prompt about spending your allowance one afternoon at Walmart. Another prompt stated that the family is taking an adventure trip through Everglades National Park. Students are to explain why they should hire a Park Guide to take the family through the park. The sentiment voiced at this school was that students can immerse themselves in this type of writing because many share those common experiences. Teacher #3 only chooses those prompts her students can identify with. “I set them up. Close your eyes and imagine. I help them make connections. Kathy Robinson’s prompts are real-world situations.”

Quick Writes is another way students compose for a variety of purposes. In Teacher #4’s classroom, a large shiny black bat kite floated throughout the room, its purple hanging tinsel touching students as it floated by. Students had one minute to write a quick description of this

phenomenon. In another room the teacher arrived wearing a large tie unlike any the students had seen before. An ugly tan rubberized face stared out at them. As Teacher #2 circulated, students had one minute to record what they observed. In a third room, Teacher #3 held a Frankenstein-monster puppet and had students touch its green hideous face, purple body, and orange shirt. “No questions, just write” were the directions. “Think about your favorite lunch” was the prompt in Teacher #2’s room. For one to three minutes students described items or ideas as fast as they could with reminders to use descriptive vocabulary, WOW words, punctuation, and dialogue. Sharing ensues in every case. All five teachers at School A endorsed this practice and related it to authentic experiences. Teacher #1 and Teacher #3 stated that they also use the newspaper to bring real-world experiences to their students. Teachers at School A provide authentic writing activities so that students write to inform, entertain, and narrate.

### Technology

Even though there were at least two computers in every classroom and both schools possessed computer labs, none of the eight teachers used word processing in preparation for FCAT Writing +. The students are encouraged to print their responses to the prompts on the day of the test because of their lack of expertise with cursive handwriting. When questioned about this, many teachers responded that there was no time for typing stories on the computer until after FCAT. Teacher #8 at School B explained that fourth-grade students do not possess keyboarding skills and with only two computers in the classroom it would not be feasible to have all students type their pieces of writing weekly, even if they were to attempt it in the lab.

The teachers that do have students participate in the Young Authors program in fourth grade have students type their own stories; however, this is after FCAT Writing + is

administered. At least five of the eight teachers mentioned that their students participate in Young Authors by writing, typing, and illustrating their own stories. Young Authors is an annual event sponsored by the Reading/Language Arts Department in Volusia County. Two students' books are selected per school, and the students are invited to a county celebration, usually in April. Teachers at all grade levels are encouraged to submit two entries per class at the school level, and judging determines the two school winners who advance to the county celebration. Many schools conduct their own Young Authors celebrations, honoring all the entries from their own schools. In addition, some teachers conduct their own classroom celebrations, inviting parents to attend.

All eight teachers reported that their students are involved in investigative research and use the Internet for searches, especially in the areas of science and social studies. In this way technology is integrated with writing. Yahoooligans ("the Web Guide for Kids") is a Web site where students can research topics, reports Teacher #8, School B. The teachers at School A attend the computer lab once a week for an hour. The school obtained a license for Brain Pop, which gives students choices of topics, such as science, social studies, and English. Teacher #2 explained that students click on a topic, view a short 10-minute video, and then take a brief quiz. This activity is done during weekly lab time. Teacher #4 mentioned that FCAT Explorer and Fun Brain are other programs her students participate in when they are on the computer. No teacher mentioned other types of technology usage.

At School B, teachers shared the same thoughts. After FCAT, students in Teacher #8's classroom are engaged on the computer. She enrolls them in a typing program she has installed on the classroom computers, and by the end of the year her students are able to type around 30 words per minute. Teacher #6 has the students in her room type their conservation essays and

send them in to the contest; however, they were not required to type the personal narrative social studies essays.

#### Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum in a Variety of Forms

##### Teachers as Writers

More than just modeling and composing in front of a class, teachers should become writers themselves, according to Bromley (1999). By doing so, teachers can support their students' efforts. When asked during the interview portion of the data collection about their own writing, several of the teachers paused and the researcher provided suggestions. All eight teachers received and sent Email; however Teacher #6 at School B stated, "I would rather not use Email. I prefer writing out things. I write formal letters to parents, congressmen, the governor, and reminder notes to myself. I write everything."

This was the case during most of the interviews. All of the teachers modeled writing in front of the class; all of them wrote lesson plans, notes, letters to parents, and cards; but not all of them considered themselves writers until the question was asked. Teacher #7 at School B shared her personal narrative essay with her class and Teacher #8 has written grants. Teacher #3 at School A writes along with her class and keeps a prayer journal. "The students love it!" Teacher #1 at School A keeps an Oprah diary and a trip journal but does not share them with her class. Teacher #4 at School A stated that she shares her "A" papers from her youth with her class. The students enjoy them. "They (students) are more interested in a story someone writes outside the class because the stories are different. With prompt writing everyone writes on the same topic." This teacher encourages her students to write outside the classroom and bring the writings in to



share. This teacher is also one of the teachers who are interested in initiating Writer's Notebook next year. Teacher #5 is completing her master's degree in reading and writes papers for her coursework but does not share them with her class. Lastly, Teacher #2 writes poetry about someone's life and presents it to him or her as a gift, framed. She has never shared these with her class though.

### Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing in different forms in content areas constructs new meaning and demonstrates knowledge (Bromley, 1999). This writing can take a variety of forms from summaries to graphic organizers, to poetry, to content-area logs or journals, class books, reports, writing math problems, creating plays, or even publishing a newspaper. During the observations at both schools, evidence of other types of writing was displayed throughout classrooms. All eight teachers stated that writing was integrated with science and social studies. Three of the five teachers at School A presented evidence that students wrote in math, as well. Teacher #1 listed it on her survey. Teacher #8 at School B reported that her students write throughout the curriculum. In addition to this, the teacher had students write math poems and use Math Dog for multiplication, and her students participate in Sunshine Math, which is a school-based voluntary math program involving rewards. During the focus-group discussions, the fourth-grade teachers stated that the math "Big Idea" tests ask students to explain in writing how they arrived at their answers. So all fourth-grade students are required to integrate math and writing.

Jean West, a weekly volunteer at School B, speaks to students about various social studies and science topics such as slavery, pioneers, Native Americans, and plant growth, just to

name a few. Many times the artifacts that accompany her are rare and authentic. At least one fourth-grade teacher requires her students to take notes when Ms. West speaks.

### Writing in Different Forms

The observation instrument lists eleven different forms that content writing can take; however, this is just a representative list. Some evidence that teachers wrote in these formats was gathered through observation of the classroom contents. Teachers may subscribe to a wider variety of methods that was not directly observed or shared with the researcher. The scope of this issue is vaster than this study reports.

The break down of teachers that subscribe to these content forms is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Writing Across Content Areas

| Content area     | <u>Number of teachers</u> |          |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------|
|                  | School A                  | School B |
| Letter writing   | 4                         | 3        |
| Poetry           | 2                         | 3        |
| Journals         | 5                         | 3        |
| Creative writing | 2                         | 3        |
| Reports          | 5                         | 3        |
| Descriptive      | 5                         | 3        |
| Fiction          | 5                         | 3        |
| Non-fiction      | 5                         | 3        |
| Thematic         | 0                         | 0        |
| Seasonal         | 0                         | 0        |
| Literature       | 2                         | 2        |

Again, caution must be used in reporting and interpreting these results. It was not the intent of this study to report all forms and varieties of writing in all aspects of the curriculum in these eight classrooms.

All eight teachers reported that all their students become involved in investigative research throughout the year. In addition to science and social studies projects, teachers at both schools mentioned library research, poetry searches, Earth Day reports, animal studies

(especially those featured in the Harcourt basal), Native Americans, pioneer travel, Black History, Spanish explorers, ecosystems, and scientists. Using the almanac, encyclopedias, reference books, and the atlas is required instruction for fourth-grade students.

In May, an Invention Convention takes place in Teacher #7's classroom. The teacher sends home a packet explaining the assignment to students and their parents. Parents are supposed to send in a "show box" filled with items they think their child could use in designing and building an invention. The parents do not let their children know what they are sending in until construction day arrives in the classroom. The students complete a logbook where brainstorming, descriptions, and problem-solving techniques are recorded. Initially students sketch their inventions in conjunction with the art teacher. In preparation, the art teacher discusses Leonardo DaVinci and his diagrams and then assists the students in sketching their inventions. A rubric is used for grading the projects, and parents are invited into the classroom for the unveiling of the inventions. This is another way writing, research, and application bring authentic experiences to students.

### Room Arrangement

In all eight classroom there was evidence of instructional posters, word banks, and word walls related to writing. Writing folders or journals were in use in all eight rooms. Classroom libraries were viewed in five of the eight rooms. To be listed as present in the observation, reference materials had to be located in plain sight, since this questions was not verbally asked; therefore absence of these items in classroom inventory does not necessarily mean that they were not present. Dictionaries were in view in all eight rooms, three had thesauruses, and two had encyclopedias in plain view.

Another writing reference tool for students mentioned by teachers in School B was *Writers Express*, a handbook these teachers used to introduce different forms of poetry. It might be assumed that all eight teachers have access to this resource, since it was funded by the county and supplied to all teachers. Three teachers from School A purchased pocket charts, which hung on the backs of students' chairs and housed personal dictionaries, thesauruses, white boards, scissors, crayons, etc. When asked about this, the teachers from School A stated that these items are part of the supply list given to parents at the beginning of each year. They require all students to have these items. All classrooms were arranged so that there were student work areas, which may have been where literacy centers were located during the Reading/Language Arts block. Every classroom possessed at least two computers in addition to the school's computer labs.

#### Remaining Survey Questions

The written survey contained four questions. Responses to Question 1, types of writing students engage in, and Question 4, how writing is assessed in classrooms, were previously addressed in the comments from the observation instrument. However, Questions 2 and 3 were not. Both of these questions dealt with positive and negative effects of the state writing exam on instruction and were at the heart of Brindley and Schneider's research (2002) on teacher perceptions about writing development and the state exam.

Three themes emerged from the teachers' responses concerning positive effects on instruction: accountability, clear guidelines for instruction, and daily practice. Through assessment, students "can see their progress" (Teacher #1) and it "holds the teacher accountable for implementing writing across the curriculum" (Teacher #4). The teachers felt that through the use of the state exam assessment "increases written vocabulary and creative writing" (Teacher

#7), serves “as a clear guide for instruction” (Teacher #3), and “demands consistent instruction and much practice” (Teacher #2).

The negative effects of the state exam on writing instruction, according to these eight fourth-grade teachers, was that it puts “lots of pressure on students and teachers.... [It is] cut and dried ... [and students are] made to fit the mold.” (Teacher #5). Other comments were that the timed nature of the test “removes the elements of the natural flow of writing” (Teacher #7) and “squashes creativity” (Teacher #8). The students’ “maturational development is not in the same range, and a pass or fail test at this age is way too stressful for them” (Teacher #6).

#### Supplemental Information from Interviews

All the questions from the interview portion of data collection were addressed in the context of the observation instrument; however during the course of each interview additional information was shared with the researcher.

The timeline for writing instruction was consistent for all eight teachers. Expository instruction took place from August until the beginning of December, depending on the class response to instruction. Teachers held strong views on the scheduling of writing instruction. Some of their comments: “Twelve weeks of Expository and nine weeks of Narrative. That leaves one week for review.” “Each class is different so the number of times varies,” regarding demonstrated readiness to move on with Narrative instruction. “On Expository writing, children need more direction.” One teacher stated,

Expository can’t be done any shorter. It is much more difficult for student to learn the teaching format. They have seen narrative type stories and have written them more often than expository. I want them so comfortable. They need to be secure to take the test.

When introducing narrative writing, most of the teachers relied on pieces of literature as springboards. Teachers expressed their views on narrative instructions: Many of the teachers “use literature with narrative writing to teach story elements.” This process was observed or explained to the researcher. In the beginning, “students find it hard to transition from expository writing to narrative. In narrative writing you focus on events rather than reasons, ways, or things.” When introducing Narrative, Teacher #7 has students choose four or five books on their Lexile level and copy down the opening sentence they liked the best. They share it with the whole class and have to relate why they chose that one. For Narrative modeling, this teacher relies solely on Chris Van Allsburg’s stories because, “they are short enough to read the entire book in one session . . . his books have great twists to the ending of the story. His stories infer [sic] things.” The Kathy Robinson manuals (1995a; 1995b) also provide a list of books to use with Narrative, Expository, description, grammar, information, journals, and poetry instruction. Teachers at School A were observed reading various types of literature during Narrative instruction. Teacher #2 models the first week of Narrative writing. “The students copy events one, two, and three; then they created their own endings. [The teacher provides] scaffolding [activities] the first week.”

Kathy Robinson (1995b) supplied students with an acronym while they are engaged in narrative instruction to assist in remembering what is contained in each paragraph. It is called DAD: dialogue, action, description. “Every event has to contain DAD.” “For low children, it is sometimes difficult to get them to put a personal experience in every paragraph because they have limited experiences. Good writers can do this.”

To assist with remembering what is contained in Expository paragraphs, Kathy Robinson (1995b) also provided a body-movement exercise. During two observations at School A, students

were participating in this exercise. Hands were on their heads for INDENT; shoulders were TRANSITION WORDS; waist was MAIN IDEA; hips were DETAIL, DETAIL; thighs were FACT AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE; feet were CONCLUSION. . . MOVE ON TO THE NEXT PARAGRAPH.

### Focus-Group Questions

The first three of the focus-group questions were also obtained from the Brindley and Schneider (2002) research. The first question asked teachers what they believed their role in writing instruction was. Responses ranged from “modeling and providing structure” to “scaffolding” and “building steps and procedures necessary to create a fun environment to teach kids how to express themselves in different formats.” One teacher’s answer regarding writing was “helps me to see intellectually where the child is in their process of learning.” Another stated that her role was to “connect different writing genres to reading.”

The second question queried teachers regarding changes in instruction over the last three years. Answers were as follows from School B: “More modeling”; “We used Kathy Robinson in the beginning”; “Every year is different. I need to gauge it by the kids I have that year”; “A lot more immersion; we use a lot more visuals to make connections with their environment.” School A’s comments were, “It hasn’t changed in the last three years. The only change we made was purchase Kathy Robinson’s new manuals.”

Students’ attitudes towards writing involved the third question. “Some students are overwhelmed,” was a response from teachers at School A. A teacher at School B responded, “The students are insecure at the beginning of the year, but through continuous practice you see the progressive growth.” “I have them (students) look at their first writing now and edit it. When



they wrote that first piece of writing they thought it was wonderful; now they can't believe how bad it is." All other responses for the focus-group discussions were integrated in with the observation instrument results.

Discussion about the implementation of the new section of FCAT Writing + took place at School A. The supplemental part consists of multiple-choice questions based on graphic organizers, conventions, and letter writing. All the teachers stated that the county sent out practice booklets and felt that they covered most of these items during the year with the exception of the circle web, which was included on the test. "These types of webs are used during reading so our students are exposed to them during reading times."

As a special side note, during the month of December, students at School A took a field-test version of FCAT Writing + for possible inclusion of new prompts for future state assessments. Reactions by the students, as reported by two of the teachers, were that several students were upset, some crying, and some didn't finish their pieces. The teachers tried to reassure students but were glad this was not the actual assessment.

#### Demographic Information

Demographic information about the teachers in both schools is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

## Demographic Information

| Category                       | Response                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School A                       |                                                                                             |
| <u>Teacher 1</u>               |                                                                                             |
| Total number of years teaching | 37                                                                                          |
| Number of years at this school | 22                                                                                          |
| Grades taught                  | Kindergarten, K-1, 2, 3, 4                                                                  |
| Highest degree held            | BS in Elementary Ed.; Early Childhood                                                       |
| <u>Teacher 2</u>               |                                                                                             |
| Total number of years teaching | 25                                                                                          |
| Number of years at this school | 22                                                                                          |
| Grades taught                  | 3 & 4                                                                                       |
| Highest degree held            | BS in Education                                                                             |
| <u>Teacher 3</u>               |                                                                                             |
| Total number of years teaching | 1                                                                                           |
| Number of years at this school | 1                                                                                           |
| Grades taught                  | 4                                                                                           |
| Highest degree held            | Master's in Interdisciplinary Education K-6<br>Multicultural Math, Science & Social Studies |
| <u>Teacher 4</u>               |                                                                                             |
| Total number of years teaching | 7                                                                                           |
| Number of years at this school | 5                                                                                           |
| Grades taught                  | 3 & 4                                                                                       |
| Highest degree held            | BA Elementary Ed.                                                                           |
| <u>Teacher 5</u>               |                                                                                             |
| Total number of years teaching | 2                                                                                           |
| Number of years at this school | 2                                                                                           |
| Grades taught                  | 4                                                                                           |
| Highest degree held            | BA, Working on Master's in Reading                                                          |

| Category                       | Response                             |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>School B</b>                |                                      |
| <u>Teacher 6</u>               |                                      |
| Total number of years teaching | 26                                   |
| Number of years at this school | 13                                   |
| Grades taught                  | 3, 4, 5, Middle School               |
| Highest degree held            | BA                                   |
| <u>Teacher 7</u>               |                                      |
| Total number of years teaching | 15                                   |
| Number of years at this school | 10                                   |
| Grades taught                  | K, 1, 3, 4, and Reading Intervention |
| Highest degree held            | BA, National Board Certified         |
| <u>Teacher 8</u>               |                                      |
| Total number of years teaching | 4                                    |
| Number of years at this school | 1                                    |
| Grades taught                  | 1, 3, 4                              |
| Highest degree held            | BA                                   |

### Training

The newest teacher at School A said she attended the Writing Teacher on Assignment's workshop on How to Score Writing for Beginning Teachers. As with most professional-development programs in counties, participation is voluntary unless the principal specifically recommends training to a particular teacher. Assistance is available if teachers want it. As for other types of writing-instruction training, two of the teachers at School A attended a Kathy Robinson's conference several years ago. That's where they first obtained her material. Some teachers at School B actually went to Snively Elementary and observed these techniques in use.

The only other training that was incidentally mentioned was that two teachers from School A presented writing tips along with a packet of ideas to their third-grade team last year. They said that the second-grade teachers do more writing than third-grade teachers, because of the retention requirement in the third grade. If students receive a level-one score on the reading portion of the FCAT, they may be retained at that grade level. The third-grade teachers concentrate more on reading than writing, according to one of the fourth-grade teachers.

### Artifact Collection

Artifact collection relating to writing occurred throughout this study. The purpose for this process was verification of actual practices as compared to spoken words. The anticipated requirement to obtain copies of lesson plans was not necessary, because at School A most of the scope and sequence of lessons was contained in each teacher's transparency notebook viewed by the researcher. Each notebook contained a compilation of colored and regular transparencies derived from Kathy Robinson's materials along with other material that a previous principal had introduced to the fourth-grade teachers. (This same principal was responsible for initially forming the writing task force at School B, which adopted the school-wide usage of Expository and Narrative graphic organizers. After serving as principal at School B, he was relocated to School A.)

Each week's lesson followed Kathy Robinson's format of an oral activity involving a colored picture for which the students were required to describe the picture; morning oral prompts; sentence work; homework; poetry; and prompts for turn and share. During week 3, the Expository graphic organizer was introduced along with instructions for dissecting the prompt by highlighting the topic, drawing a triangle around the key word that indicates a Narrative or

Expository prompt, underlining the focus, changing the question word, and changing you, your, and you to I, my, and mine. Minilessons were also included in other weeks, and the Narrative organizer was introduced during Narrative instruction. Lesson plans were observed in use in classrooms at School B. Teachers at both schools also possessed copies of Kathy Robinson's manuals.

As handouts were distributed to students during observations or topics were discussed during interviews, copies were obtained as artifacts. These included graphic organizers, editing checklists, a copy of the invitation to the Saturday FCAT Writing + review party at School A, the booklets that were distributed to parents during that party, announcement of the Water Conservation contest at School B, and two of School B's newsletters, which included information about FCAT Writing + and suggestions to parents. Other graphic organizers in use at School B could be viewed by the researcher on a daily basis.

Copies of curriculum maps to be introduced to Volusia County teachers next year and booklets distributed during workshops were supplied to the researcher by the Writing Teacher on Assignment during her interview.

#### Kathy Robinson and Snively

In the early 1990s Volusia County's Title I program invited Kathryn Robinson to speak to teachers in Volusia County. (This information was shared with the researcher by Mary Diez, Reading/Language Arts Supervisor.) Kathy Robinson was the writing teacher at Cypress Creek Elementary School in Hillsborough County (Florida) at that time. She possessed a master's degree in Special Education and was widely traveled. She presented workshops on center-based

curriculum, language arts activities, and integrating writing throughout the curriculum in Bangladesh, Oklahoma, and Florida.

The first set of materials was sets of Narrative and Expository manuals that were developed in conjunction with Lynn Roberts, who was the P.E.P. teacher at Cleveland Elementary School and had been developing curriculum for P.E.P. for five years. Other contributors to that publication were Dana Roeling, Dale Nelson, and Carol Finch, who was the P.E.P. Supervisor. Some of Kathy Robinson's other accomplishments are Just Turn & Share Math Centers Series author; Florida Writes Workshop Presenter; FIN Multiple Intelligences Workshop Presenter; ESOL Instructor-Hillsborough County; UCF Project Central Participant; and P.E.P. Writes co-author (1995 revised manual)

After Kathy Robinson spoke several times in Volusia County, teams of teachers and administrators visited Snively Elementary in Winter Haven, Polk County, where this type of program was fully implemented and students were meeting with success in writing the FCAT Writing +. Snively was a Title I school serving a low-income migrant population. In 1991, based on its successful academic track record, it received the RJR Nabisco "Next Century Schools" grant and was honored as a National Exemplary School (Snively Elementary School of Choice, 2006). As these ideas were discussed and shared, Volusia County's teachers began implementation of these practices, which included these features:

- Writing Criteria and writing posters were displayed in every room
- The same Narrative and Expository graphic organizers were in use in every school
- Parts of stories were color coded: "beginning" (red), "middle" (blue), and "ending" (green)
- All student had portfolios and writing folders

- Writing was conducted at least an hour a day
- Every teacher received Early Literacy In-service Course (ELIC) training.
- Weekend journals were used by some teachers
- Every grade level used themes
- Science and social studies were taught through literature and writing
- Story maps, word banks, and charts displayed what good paragraph and sentence contained

### Components of Kathy Robinson's Materials

The Expository and Narrative manuals in the Kathy Robinson set (1995a; 1995b) are set up for daily practice. The manuals render a weekly plan for writing instruction spanning 12 weeks for Expository lessons and 9 weeks for Narrative lessons. For Expository, the weekly format consists of vocabulary terms to be introduced that week, daily morning prompts, daily sentence work, homework, journal reflection ideas, daily writing lessons along with reproducible charts, games pieces, and activities. The progression of skill acquisition eventually leads the students to the introduction of a graphic organizer (one for Narrative and one for Expository) and addressing prompts. In Week 8, an Expository checklist in bookmark format is to be duplicated and students begin self-assessment. A bibliography containing suggestions for literature is included in the appendixes along with additional prompts and anchor papers of students' work with justification of scoring. The Narrative manual is similarly formatted.

### Alternative Materials

At School A, all five teachers subscribe to the use of Kathy Robinson's materials and all possess a transparency notebook. Several of these teachers were observed using literature as springboards for Narrative writing. Teacher #1 shared the following additional resources: *Razzle Dazzle* by Melissa Forney (2001); *Solving Writing Problems With Easy MiniLessons* by Delores Hudson (1999); and *Steps to Writing Success: 28 Step by Step Writing Project Lesson Plans* by June Hetzel and Dr. Deborah McIntire (2002).

A materials list for School B is as follows: *Writers Express* written and compiled by Dave Kemper, Ruth Nathan, Patrick Sebranek, illustrated by Chris Krenzke (1995); *Razzle Dazzle* by Melissa Forney (2001); both editions of Kathy Robinson's Narrative and Expository manuals; *Writing Whizardry* by Marty Schrecengost (2001); and *Blowing Away the State Writing Assessment Test* by Jane Bell Kiester (2000). As previously stated, Teacher #7 used literature written by Chris Van Allsburg, and other types of literature were also in use in other classrooms.

### Volusia County's Writing Teacher on Assignment Interview

In addition to interviewing all eight teachers, an interview with Volusia County's Writing Teacher on Assignment took place on January 18, 2006 (Appendix L). The focus of the interview was to determine the direction Volusia County would take in developing a writing curriculum for implementation next year (Appendix R contains the interview in its entirety). This teacher stated that this was her second year in this job role, servicing 47 public schools, two charter schools, and two private schools. Selection of priority schools to service is achieved through a committee, which evaluates the FCAT Writing + results and targets schools based on need. According to the teacher, "This year we have seven targeted schools in writing with which



I work most closely. There are also eight additional schools on my watch list. I am available to every school as my schedule permits.” Endorsing the use of Writing Workshop even in kindergarten is the goal for Volusia’s writing program. “We feel effective, balance writing instruction should begin the very first day of kindergarten. Interactive writing, shared writing, guided writing and independent writing within the parameters of Writing Workshop will offer our students the opportunity to become lifelong writers.” Daily writing, independent writing, minilessons, and sharing are the components of Writing Workshop mentioned by this teacher.

In addition to endorsing Writing Workshop, curriculum maps are being designed with consideration to genre blocks for second through fifth grades based on Marcia Freeman’s work (1999). The teacher recalled that Lucy Calkins called them units of study. According to her,

A genre block is created by looking at the SSS (Sunshine State Standards) and what teachers are required to teach in a specific grade, choosing a mode of writing that best teaches these strategies and skills, and then designing lessons which include genre characteristics, composing skills, literary skills and writing conventions.

Genre blocks serve as a guide for teachers over a seven-month period. Curriculum maps will be distributed to Volusia County teachers as soon as the Sunshine State Standards are revised. The teacher said that “all staff development delivered by me is connected to the Sunshine State Standards.” She relies on the work of the following researchers: Lucy Calkins, Donald Graves, Ralph Fletcher, and Marcia Freeman.

When asked about the use of Kathy Robinson materials this teacher stated that in 1998 when she was the Writing Fusion teacher at Starke Elementary in Volusia County her goal was to help students pass FCAT Writing. She used Kathy Robinson’s materials, along with other supplemental ones, and these students did earn 3.0 on FCAT Writing but few earned higher scores. Now her goal for Volusia County teachers is implementation of genre blocks using Writing Workshop format.

Writing instruction in fourth grade differs from other grade levels because of the state assessment. If students had sound writing instruction in previous grade levels, fine-tuning would be all that's needed in fourth grade. She suggested that fourth-grade teachers, "begin the year with a three- to four-week descriptive writing genre block while introducing writing workshop techniques." The descriptive-writing genre block would be followed by four weeks of personal narrative, four weeks in an expository genre block, and four weeks in a fictional narrative block. After the state exam, "teachers should work on other modes of writing such as research and poetry." Additionally, she believes that "I don't think you should teach writing without using literature." The curriculum maps will contain suggested readings.

Three places to get writing for minilessons are teacher writing, student writing, and published text. The Teacher on Assignment asserted that "using picture books is an especially effective way to give student the key to the craft. Author techniques are studied through craft lessons, and students are encouraged to copy the professionals."

When asked about the six-traits-of-writing model, the Writing Teacher stated that it is a way of assessing writing with consideration to ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions through analytical scoring as opposed to holistic scoring. You focus on one trait at a time and spend about two to three weeks concentrating on that particular trait. "Six-trait writing fits within the writing workshop structure."

When queried about the new supplemental section of FCAT Writing + this year, she stated that this is the baseline year for that section. The first assessment remains the essay, a demand writing portion where students write for 45 minutes. The supplemental section is in multiple-choice format and contains four parts: writing plans, writing samples, cloze samples, and stand-alone items. This second sections will assess prewriting, revision, and editing. Practice

booklets have already been sent to schools. Demographic information for Volusia County's Writing Teacher on Assignment is as follows: she has taught for 15 years, two at her current position. She stated that most of her years in teaching have been as a resource teacher. She has taught the third, fourth, seventh grades, and she was a Reading Recovery teacher. This teacher earned a master's degree in reading at the University of Central Florida.

### Post-Assessment Perceptions

After the essay portions of the FCAT Writing + was administered, teachers were asked about their students' performance. Teachers at School A were sent an Email, and teachers at School B were asked face to face. Responses at School A varied. Teacher #4 stated that everyone wrote and no one froze. She attempted to maintain a relaxed atmosphere and her students echoed confidence that their performance went well. Teacher #2 wrote that she was very disappointed that her best writer "choked" and never arrived at the climax in his story. She also asserted that her students reported problems with the expository prompt. They thought they had not addressed it correctly. Teacher #1 and Teacher #3 reported the same problem with the expository prompt. Apparently it was written in a way that the response to the prompt could have been Narrative or Expository in nature. Since teachers are forbidden to read the prompts, there was no way to verify this information. Teacher #5 indicated mixed reviews by her students; only one student didn't finish and that student was a proficient writer. The student started crying when time was called, reported his teacher.

At School B, Teachers #7 and #8 reported that all the students wrote the entire time and they were comfortable with their products. As a proctor in Teacher #6's classroom, the researcher did observe one of the best writers (as described by the teacher) erasing all that she

had written and beginning again. The student voiced the same concern as students from School A that she was unsure if a Narrative or Expository response was needed. She was also in tears as time was called. No teacher mentioned difficulty with the supplemental portion of the exam.

### History of Achievement

At the beginning of this study, the two schools identified as having the greatest percentage of students Meeting High Standards (95%) in Volusia County and the lowest percentage of students Meeting High Standards (43%) were selected for participation. (Meeting High Standards last year meant that students achieved 3.5 or higher on the essay portion of FCAT Writing +.) Since those two schools chose not to participate in this study, the school with the second highest percentage of students Meeting High Standards at 93% (School A) was approached and did agree to participate, and a school with 75% (School B) of its students Meeting High Standards also granted the researcher access to the school's writing program.

A historical view of assessment results may provide insight and assist with drawing conclusions about writing practices endorsed at both schools. Writing scores are reported in two different forms: one deals with the percentage of students achieving certain levels and another reports the average combined score based on the FCAT Writing + six-point rubric. Table 3 shows a historical reporting of scores based on a combined mean score, by year, for School A and School B based on the six-point rubric (FDOE, 2005a).

Table 3

Combined Mean Scores Based on FCAT Rubric

| Schools  | Year |      |      |      |      |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
|          | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
| School B | 3.4  | 3.3  | 3.4  | 3.5  | 3.5  |
| School A | 3.5  | 3.6  | 3.8  | 3.8  | 4.0  |

As shown in the table, School B’s students were scoring above 3.0 and had made progress or remained the same in every year except 2002. School A’s students had made progress or remained the same every year and also scored above 3.0, which was the requirement for meeting High Expectations. School B’s gains (on the average) were 0.1 and School A’s gains (on the average) were 0.2 (FDOE, 2005a).

Last year, 2005, Meeting High Expectations meant that students were required to score at least 3.5 . Further inspection revealed that for School B in 2005 the mean Expository score was 3.5 and the mean Narrative score was 3.6. At School A, the mean Expository scores was 3.9 while the Narrative score was 4.1. Both schools’ students met High Expectations; however School B did not meet the state’s average score of 3.7 for both Expository and Narrative, respectively (FDOE, 2005a). (Beginning in 2000, averages are for all curriculum groups combined.)

The following historical information in Table 4 furnishes the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher on the FCAT Writing + for 2001 through 2005 (FDOE, 2005a).

Table 4

Percentage of Students Scoring 3 or Higher on the FCAT Writing + for 2001–05

| Schools  | Year      |           |           |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|          | 2001<br>% | 2002<br>% | 2003<br>% | 2004<br>% | 2005<br>% |
| School B | 78        | 85        | 87        | 91        | 88        |
| School A | 87        | 88        | 92        | 91        | 95        |

School B’s percentage of students scoring 3.0 or higher increased yearly, except for 2005. School A’s percentage of student scoring 3.0 or higher increased yearly, except for 2004 (FDOE, 2005a).

Table 5 presents information regarding the percentage of students scoring 4 or higher on the FCAT Writing + for 2001 through 2005 (FDOE, 2005a).

Table 5

Percentage of Students Scoring 4 or Higher on the FCAT Writing + for 2001–05

| Schools  | Year      |           |           |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|          | 2001<br>% | 2002<br>% | 2003<br>% | 2004<br>% | 2005<br>% |
| School B | 41        | 27        | 31        | 32        | 47        |
| School A | 53        | 48        | 61        | 55        | 69        |

School A’s teachers mentioned that there had been no change in their instruction during the last three years, except for purchasing the new version of the Kathy Robinson manuals to replace the previous, spiral-bound version, which probably explains their students’ stable and fairly consistent scores. School A’s teachers find the use of the Kathy Robinson materials effective, in that most of their students can achieve a 3 or higher through this format.

School B’s results show that many students are consistently scoring a 3 on the FCAT Writing + but the higher scores have not been as easily achieved for School B’s students.

Table 6 presents information regarding the percentage of students scoring 4 or higher on the FCAT Writing + for the years 2001 through 2005 (FDOE, 2005a).

Table 6

Percentage of Students Scoring 4 or Higher on the FCAT Writing + 2001–05

| Schools  | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| School B | 41   | 27   | 31   | 32   | 47   |
| School A | 53   | 48   | 61   | 55   | 69   |

In School B, over half of the students scoring 3 or higher also achieved scores of 4 or higher (88% and 47%, respectively) for last year, 2005. In School A, almost all students scored 3 or higher, and almost three-fourths of them received scores of 4 or higher (95% and 69%, respectively) for 2005.

A closer inspection of subgroups for School B for the 2004-2005 year, reported in percentage of students scoring 3 and above, is shown in Table 7 (FDOE, 2005a).

Table 7

Percent of Students Scoring 3 and Above by Subgroups for School B for 2004–05

|                            | School % | District % | State % |
|----------------------------|----------|------------|---------|
| All Students               | 89       | 88         | 90      |
| White                      | 86       | 90         | 93      |
| Black                      | 100      | 81         | 86      |
| Hispanic                   | 100      | 83         | 89      |
| Asian                      | 100      | 94         | 95      |
| Am. Indian                 | N        | 87         | 92      |
| Multiracial                | 100      | 90         | 93      |
| Disabled                   | 62       | 60         | 68      |
| Economically disadvantaged | 87       | 82         | 86      |
| LEP                        | 100      | 75         | 78      |
| Migrant                    | N        | 79         | 80      |
| Female                     | 100      | 93         | 94      |
| Male                       | 81       | 83         | 87      |



In consideration to the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher, School B's subgroups performed better than the district average in every category except White (86% versus 90%) and male ( 81% versus 83%).

For School A, the percentage of students scoring 3 or higher surpasses the district's scores for every subgroup (see Table 8; FDOE, 2005a).

Table 8

Percentage of Students Scoring 3 and Above by Subgroups for School A for 2004–05

|                            | School % | District % | State % |
|----------------------------|----------|------------|---------|
| All Students               | 95       | 88         | 90      |
| White                      | 95       | 90         | 93      |
| Black                      | 100      | 81         | 86      |
| Hispanic                   | 86       | 83         | 89      |
| Asian                      | 100      | 94         | 95      |
| Am. Indian                 | N        | 87         | 92      |
| Multiracial                | 100      | 90         | 93      |
| Disabled                   | 67       | 60         | 68      |
| Economically disadvantaged | 96       | 82         | 86      |
| LEP                        | 100      | 75         | 78      |
| Migrant                    | N        | 79         | 80      |
| Female                     | 94       | 93         | 94      |
| Male                       | 97       | 83         | 87      |

Meeting High Expectations for this year (2005–06) remains at 3.5; however next year's requirements of Meeting High Expectations increases to 4.0. If past history is an indicator of how well students will perform next year, School A has demonstrated that its students can

achieve this goal (Expository 3.9, Narrative 4.1, 2005); however, School B must increase efforts to reach this goal (Expository 3.5, Narrative 3.6, 2005).

2005–06 Test Scores

Closer inspection of this year’s test scores reveal the following information for School B, as shown in Table 9:

Table 9

School B Test Scores 2005–06

|            | Score | % of 3.5 or higher | % of 4.0 or higher | #of students tested |
|------------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Combined   | 3.8   | 73                 | 66                 | 64                  |
| Expository | 3.8   | 77                 | 63                 | 30                  |
| Narrative  | 3.8   | 71                 | 68                 | 34                  |

Source: FDOE (2006).

School B’s scores affirm that the writing constructs employed this year were successful for the students. Even with the higher standard of 3.5, the school has surpassed its past scores as well as the district’s combined average of 3.7 and the Narrative average score of 3.4. The district’s average score of 3.9 on Expository still challenges School B’s scores; however, with increased efforts next year School B may rival the district in all areas.

State average scores are 3.9 for the combined average score; 4.0 for the average Expository score; and 3.7 for Narrative. These scores challenge even Volusia County’s scores on all three levels.

A summary of this year’s scores for School A are as follows, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

School A Test Scores 2005–06

|            | Score | % of 3.5 or higher | % of 4.0 or higher | #of students tested |
|------------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Combined   | 4.0   | 78                 | 72                 | 120                 |
| Expository | 4.3   | 89                 | 86                 | 56                  |
| Narrative  | 3.8   | 69                 | 56                 | 64                  |

Source: FDOE (2006).

For School A, the combined score remained the same as last year, but this score is based on the higher standard of 3.5. School A’s students have surpassed the district’s scores of 3.7 (combined), 3.9 (Expository), and 3.4 (Narrative), as well as the state’s scores of 3.9 (combined), 4.0 (Expository), and 3.7 (Narrative). Clearly, this school’s constructs meet its students’ needs and surpass the district and the state averages.

CHAPTER V  
CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Constructs of Two Writing Programs

Two schools, eight teachers. . . . This study attempted to identify characteristics contained in each school's writing programs that would enable their fourth-grade students to achieve a level of competence as indicated on the FCAT Writing + state assessment. Measured against Karen Bromley's research-based components, data sources were triangulated to yield some interesting findings (Appendix V offers a summary of the following results reported as aggregate totals).

School A uses prescriptive, step-by-step curricula. These curricula have a history of proven results, as evidenced by success achieved at various schools in Florida that implemented this program and by an invitation for Kathy Robinson to speak and conduct workshops in Volusia County in the early 1990s using Title I funding. Adhering to focused, systematic writing instruction specifically aimed at the fourth-grade FCAT Writing + assessment, all five teachers follow a rigorous daily routine prescribed by Kathy Robinson's materials. The use of rubrics, checklists, conferencing, and sharing addresses the Sunshine State Standards and FCAT Writing +.

Test scores at this school are another indicator that this program has merit. Each teacher sets aside a 90-minute block of time for language arts in addition to an hour for writing instruction, typically three days a week. Minimal use of Writing Workshop is employed; however, the use of literature, direct instruction through minilessons, and sharing are endorsed. Modeling and independent writing highlight the instructional methodology. Planning and drafting characterizes the focus for writing instruction along with weekly test-preparation strategies, such as dissecting and discussing prompts and timed practice.

In this school, writing is limited to the Expository and Narrative genres until the writing assessment has been administered. Afterwards, other forms of writing can be addressed. Journals are an important element of these writing lessons. Authenticity is evoked through the selection of topics for prompts, and varied audiences include students, teacher, and self. Technology is not used for process writing; however it is used in other contexts.

All five teachers write notes, lesson plans, and Email. All five also model the writing process to their classes. Personal writing is occasionally shared with the class. Writing across the curriculum in different formats was evident; however, the depth of this topic was beyond the scope of this study.

A more eclectic approach characterizes School B's writing program. Rubrics, checklists, self-assessments, conferencing, and sharing are all components of this school's writing curricula. Practicing the entire process of writing through planning, drafting, revising, and final edited copy is in contrast with School A's focus of planning and drafting and frequent prompt practice.

A Writing Workshop approach is central in two of the three classrooms. The third teacher uses prompts more frequently than do the other teachers. This third teacher's approach to writing instructions is unique in that after prompts are introduced and brainstormed, the students write

the body of the essay at home. Sharing and evaluating is conducted the next day with the whole class in attendance, using their checklists as guides.

All three teachers model writing, instruct students in small group settings, provide for independent writing, and have students participate in investigative research. Writing instruction takes place for an hour on a daily basis and is in addition to a 90-minute language arts block, similar to School A. Direct instruction through minilessons is less formatted. The teachers state that the students' writing is their guide to direct instruction.

A wider variety of writing genres is attempted throughout the year in School B, both before and after FCAT Writing +. School B's teachers involve their students in authentic writing situations in-house, as well as outside the school setting. Computers are not used for process writing except in the case of Young Author participants; however they are employed for other projects and writing assignments. As with School A, all three teachers write notes, lesson plans, and Email. And just as in School A, all three model the writing process to their classes. Writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, across content areas, and in various forms are important features of the writing instruction at School B.

### Characteristics Both Schools Share

Even though the schools involved in this study approached writing instruction from two different perspectives, commonalities are present. With Bromley's components (1999) as a guide, here are characteristics both share:

#### Component 1: Standards and Assessment

- Use of rubrics and checklists
- Self assessment

- Teacher conferencing
- Oral sharing as assessment
- Consideration of the Sunshine State Standards

#### Component 2: Large Blocks of Time

- 90-minute reading/language arts block
- Writing block in addition to the language arts block
- Literature as a model
- Teacher models
- Independent writing
- Investigative research
- Shared writing

#### Component 3: Direct Instruction

- Process writing: the planning and drafting steps
- Graphic organizers
- Minilessons used for direct instruction
- Established routines

#### Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and

##### Audiences

- Different audiences: peers, teacher, self
- Different purposes: inform, entertain, narrate (tell a story)
- Conduct research



## Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum in a Variety of Forms

- Teacher writes Email, lesson plans, notes
- Writes across the curriculum: math, science, and social studies
- Students write reports, journals, and non-fiction

### Volusia County's Vision

Interviewing Volusia County's Writing Teacher on Assignment provided for insight and a glimpse into goal setting at the county level. One goal the Reading/Language Arts Department wishes to achieve is eliminating the reliance on prescriptive-type programs such as Kathy Robinson's, which are currently being used for writing instruction.

Instead of focusing on test preparation, the county would like teachers to focus on the development of writers through a Writing Workshop approach, beginning in kindergarten. Curriculum maps containing genre blocks, time lines, and literature suggestions are to be distributed to all elementary teachers, once the Sunshine State Standards have been revised at the state level. Another goal is the creation of a new analytical rubric for primary grades, which is more reflective of developmental levels for emergent writers.

In these ways, students can become proficient writers and scores can go beyond 3.0, according to the Writing Teacher on Assignment. In addition, this type of writing instruction offers a more balanced approach and is considered best practice for instruction, according to this teacher.

## Effects of the State Writing Exam on Instruction

Teachers at both schools agreed that state testing furnishes clear guidelines and establishes accountability for instruction. Daily practice is a necessity. Nonetheless, all eight teachers echoed similar negative sentiments towards state testing, feeling that the pressure to achieve is felt by students as well as teachers to be overly high. The timed format of the FCAT Writing + removes “the natural flow of writing” and “squashes creativity.” The role of the teachers is modeling, scaffolding, and providing structure and guidelines. For School A, very little change in instructional techniques has taken place in the last three years. For School B, increased modeling and immersion was considered essential.

## Demographic and Training

Of the eight teachers who participated in this study, four were very experienced, two were very new, and the others were somewhere in between. All possessed a four-year degree, one completed her master’s, and one was in the process of completing it. In addition, one teacher was Board Certified. Six out of the eight teachers previously taught third grade as well as fourth, so they had a sound understanding of prerequisite skills for fourth grade.

Only one teacher attended any type of writing training in preparation to teach fourth grade. That one teacher attended a training session on how to score writing based on the six-point rubric.

## Test Scores as Harbingers

Current results for School A revealed some interesting findings. Even though all three scores were above the district and state scores (combined 4.0; Expository 4.3; Narrative 3.8), and

even though the Expository score represented an increase over last year's result (3.9), the teachers were disappointed. For both years the combined score of 4.0 remained the same, and the percentage of students scoring 3.5 decreased from 87% to 78%. Additionally, the Narrative score decreased from 4.1 last year to 3.8 this year.

Teachers did voice a concern during the interview portion of the data collection that for most weeks they could conduct writing instruction only three days a week instead of five, as in the previous year. They felt that the requirement of a 90-minute Literacy Block detracted from their instructional writing time. Another consideration that may have contributed to the decrease in the percentage of students scoring 3.5 or higher is that these were different students from last year's. Before the test, several teachers voiced concerns about certain students' finishing in the allotted amount of time.

Teachers were also concerned about the narrative instruction; some students were not as proficient as teachers would have liked. Some students stated that the prompt topic was confusing (Appendix X). The Narrative prompt for this year told students to write a story about a time an animal did something smart. Students may have felt this required a more Expository response and may have been confused by "tell a story." Once again, the language of the prompt is so important to the type of response required. It will be interesting as follow-up to note whether writing instruction will return to five days a week next year and if more time is devoted to Narrative writing.

The elation over School B's scores was well deserved. The students' writing scores improved in every area. The combined score for this year was 3.8; last year it was 3.5. The Expository score this year was 3.8 as compared to 3.5; Narrative was 3.8 this year; last year was 3.6. Seventy-three percent of the students achieved 3.5 or higher as compared to 65% last year.

School B's scores were greater than the district's mean in the combined score and the Narrative score, 3.7 and 3.4, respectively). The district's mean Expository score was 3.9 as compared with School B's 3.8 score. School B also rivaled the state's Narrative score of 3.7; however, teachers must focus on their students' Expository writing and Combined scores as goals for next year (state's combined score 3.9 and Expository 4.0). Discussion is already underway as to an expansion of a "Writing Fusion" model, where the two Reading Intervention teachers play greater roles in fourth-grade writing instruction next year.

As a side note, the researcher's unintentional involvement with School B's teachers and students may have affected test-score outcomes. Since interaction with teachers at School B was on a daily basis, rather than a scheduled visit as in the case of School A, some influence may have inadvertently occurred. For example, beginning in January Teacher 8 sent a group of students to receive weekly intensive instruction on their drafts. In the case of Teacher 6, individual students were sent for writing remediation on occasion. Conversations between the researcher and teachers took place on a daily basis about writing instruction and students' progress. Also, incidental observations were routine, because of the nature of the researcher's position at this school. It is human nature to provide more comprehensive systematic instruction while being involved in a study. This influence was difficult to factor into the study, yet it is noteworthy.

### Conclusions

In this period of mandatory accountability there appears to be a discrepancy between pedagogy and pragmatics (Stewart, 2002). In the absence of a uniform curriculum design recommended at the county level, teachers are left with the task of locating and adopting an

inclusive writing program that develops student writers, adheres to the Sunshine State Standards, and addresses state assessments, specifically in fourth grade.

Research offers guidelines necessary in the development of writing instruction through a framework that Atwell (1987), Calkins (1994), and Graves (1994) endorsed, called Writing Workshop. Standing the test of time and research, Writing Workshop embraces natural authentic activities and promotes writing efficacy (Clippard & Nicaise, 1998). It does not, however, focus specifically on skills and strategies required for the timed demand writing subscribed to by Florida's state writing assessment.

In their research comparing a Writing Workshop approach to a non-Writing Workshop approach, Clippard and Nicaise (1998) concluded that Writing Workshop promoted self-efficacy in student writers; however, further research was needed to prove that it is the single most effective instructional approach. Even Bromley (1999) stated that an overreliance on the writing process doesn't always yield students who can write in different forms for a variety of purposes and audiences. Thus, at least according to Kern et al. (2003), the demands of state writing assessments run contrary to implementation of best practices.

The fact is that some teachers in fourth-grade classroom are reluctant to fully implement Writing Workshop because of its unstructured nature. Students typically choose their own topics and genre during Writing Workshop. Exposure to a variety of genres or, in the case of fourth grade, Narrative and Expository elements may not occur if students are left exclusively to their own choices. In addition, students involved in Writing Workshop are at different stages in the writing process, and student work groups vary according to the stage their piece of writing has entered. A teacher must possess strong management skills to ensure productivity and

completeness in a class of 22 students. Some teachers are uncomfortable with the management of such diversity.

Assessment in Writing Workshop is accomplished through the sharing of finished pieces and the creation of a portfolio. Oral sharing as a form of assessment occurred at both schools involved in this study with the understanding that the student would be able to revise. Sharing nor creation of a portfolio are practices for preparation of high-stake testing. Topics for minilessons are derived from student pieces and are addressed with individual students or in small groups, rather than whole-group instruction and modeling. Graphic organizers are not endorsed; organization is taught through editing and revising.

Prompt practice does not occur in a Writing Workshop approach or with genre writing. Teacher #7 from School B stated it so well in her interview: “They (students) need to understand the language of the prompt. They need to see a pattern.” Ignoring test format may not yield the desired results principals and county officials' desire. Teachers, especially in fourth grade, are not willing to change the direction of their instructional practices without proof that Writing Workshop, even in the form of genre writing, results in higher writing scores. Too much is at stake.

One clear example of this weakness that I encountered firsthand was in the case of one teacher who did exclusively use Writing Workshop, used no graphic organizers, and practiced no prompts. The results were that least five students in that teacher's class scored 0, 1, or 2 on the FCAT Writing + last year, something that the school had not experienced since the inception of the writing test. This particular school missed meeting its AYP goal due to these writing test scores.

As Kilgore (2004) found in her research, state writing assessments do not allow for naturalistic writing to take place. Prompts are assigned randomly with only two genres in mind. Prewriting is required but not scored. Only drafts are submitted, because of time limits, and student's essays must stay within the two pages of the test booklet, so length is also an issue. Writing must be completed in a 45-minute window of time. With such restrictive test requirements, the free pace and style of Writing Workshop do not fully lend themselves to the needs of fourth-grade writers. Yet the dilemma remains: how can we teach writing development and prepare students for state assessments, specifically in fourth grade?

There is a need to teach editing and revising, so that rather than just teaching test practice, we are developing writers of the future. Students should be exposed to graphic organizers as alternatives to brainstorming to assist with organization of essays. Graphic organizers also provided reminders for inclusion of story elements, supporting details and literary elements.

The fourth-grade curriculum maps designed by Volusia County incorporate no graphic organizer, timed practice, or use of prompts. Descriptive writing occurs in August, Personal Narrative would be taught for four weeks in September followed by Fictional Narrative for five weeks. According to teachers at both elementary schools, more time needs to be spent on Expository writing because, "children need more direction" to understand all of its elements (Teacher #8). School B's requirement of submitting Personal Narratives as part of the Social Studies Project requirements adds authenticity to the practice. Teacher # 2 expressed my sentiments exactly when she said, "Writing Workshop should be done at every grade level except fourth grade due to the testing."

Another fact to ponder when considering implementation of Writing Workshop and genre blocks as a county objective is that not all fourth-grade teachers would receive direct

professional development relating to these newly introduced Curriculum Maps. The Writing Teacher on Assignment offers training on a priority basis, as stated in her interview. The forty-seven public schools, two charter schools, and two private schools do not have direct access to her workshops, as space and time is limited. Her goal is to disseminate the Curriculum Maps through Language Arts contact people next year. These Language Arts contacts are usually busy classroom teachers, who may not always be comfortable providing professional development to the entire faculty, especially because of the necessity for attending to different grade levels. Individual teachers may sign up for county-level workshops, but this practice is voluntary and, as observed in this study, only one out of eight teachers attended any writing training this year. Clearly, attempting to change the way writing instruction is presented in the entire county will require more time and effort than is currently dedicated to the process.

Research identifies best practices in writing instruction (Brindley & Schneider, 2002). Originating within the classroom itself, best practices refer to the ways in which teachers work with their environment to design appropriate learning contexts for their students (Stewart, 2002). Wading through and selecting the best practices suited for their situation, teachers become the architects of writing programs. State assessment results confirm or deny those practices in the context of a varied, multicultural population in which schools are required to take on greater responsibilities, in many cases in the absence of parent involvement, adequate nutrition, and stable home situations.

Test requirements do not reflect or consider developmental writing stages. The one-size-fits-all curriculum that No Child Left Behind has created does not take into account individual circumstances. The school becomes responsible for progress in every sub-population in the school setting.



An example of the problems this policy can cause occurred at School B this year. A student's parent was required to vacate the hotel room where she and the student were living to make room for "race fans." The parent found temporary lodging a distance from the school. During the two days of FCAT Writing + testing the student was absent. On the last testing make-up day, the student arrived at school in the mid-morning. He rode a city bus to school, changing buses several times. NCLB requires that 95% of students enrolled at each school must be tested; therefore the school was required to administer the essay portion of the writing assessment to this student. The student did not complete his essay, saying afterwards that he had had a severe headache all week. This example shows that restrictive rules that do not take personal circumstances into account raise the pressure faced by students in today's classroom and adversely affect student and school evaluations.

Often teacher opinions about sound writing instruction give way to prescriptive test format practices. Pressure to achieve adequate progress overshadows personal beliefs (Brindley & Schneider, 2002). Brindley and Schneider concluded in their study that there needs to be involvement between state and local policymakers and literacy researchers regarding curricular decisions about content and delivery of writing instruction. We must provide teachers with support in their attempts to provide sound writing instruction, not just coaching for test taking.

### Application

For many years, researchers, such as Calkins and Graves, studied student and teacher interactions in real classroom settings to gain insight and knowledge. Teachers are keys to classroom instruction, often relying on their personal beliefs about teaching and learning (Stewart, 2002). These beliefs are reflected in what they teach and how they teach it. With the

call for accountability, teachers are forced to make changes in their instructional practices due to high-stakes testing. Therein lie the contradictions between stated beliefs and classroom practices for teachers, especially in fourth-grade classrooms (Brindley & Schneider, 2002).

The following is a list of suggestions for revamping and creating a writing curriculum that addresses writing development at the elementary level in Volusia County and guides fourth-grade teachers regarding test preparation:

- Convene a committee consisting of county-level personnel from the Reading/Language Arts office, the Writing Teacher on Assignment, and fourth-grade teachers whose individual that' scores have been consistently high. Solicit and compile a guide explaining these "best practices" in preparation for FCAT Writing +. Encourage all fourth-grade teachers to attend informal discussions at the beginning of the year, during which these model teachers share this information and at the same time gather other ideas and practices from the audience. Continue these meeting throughout the year and revise these guides as works in progress. When teachers are offered alternatives that work, prescriptive programs will be abandoned.
- Continue and expand on the goal to provide professional development training in the Writing Workshop approach for teachers at grades other than fourth, emphasizing genre studies. In addition, offer teacher training on other "best practices" that may be suitable to their own situations. Focus efforts on the Language Arts contact people and target priority schools for initial efforts, expanding as time permits. In this way, a base of support and expertise is established.
- Emphasize Karen Bromley's "Key Components of Sound Writing Instruction" (1999). Disseminate her article, which provides a framework for construction of a

- writing program, and highlight the immediacy of daily writing, using rubrics, minilessons, writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, and writing across the curriculum. For emergent writers, journal writing is important, but it should not be the only type of writing to which they are exposed. Direct, explicit instruction must be part of every writing program along with the use of rubrics for assessment purposes.
- Inform teachers that writing should be included in the 90 minutes of the uninterrupted Literacy Block in all grades.
  - Encourage all teachers to live the literary life and become writers themselves. Highlight the importance of modeling and sharing their own works with students and even colleagues.
  - Share Fountas and Pinnell’s suggestions (Appendix J) for embedding test-writing skills into the third- and fourth-grade curricula.
  - Start in-servicing and monitoring writing in third grade, so that students will be better prepared for the state assessment in fourth grade.
  - Create and disseminate an analytical scoring rubric for emergent writers that takes into account the disparity in writing development at that level.
  - Teach the Six Traits approach for older students when analyzing a piece of writing along with the Six-Point rubric used to score fourth-grade writing at the state level.
  - Emphasize the importance of teaching the story elements during reading, even at the kindergarten level. Identifying and using graphic organizers even at such an early age assists in understanding story components and author’s craft. There will be carryover when students begin to write their own stories.
  - Encourage teachers to model using interactive and shared writing.

- Encourage teachers to use literature to introduce minilessons.
- Invite all teachers to share their “best practices.”
- Continue the practice of requiring all grade levels to address prompts throughout the year, score these, and require writing folders to be in place at all grade levels.
- Encourage writing integration in subject areas.
- Encourage teachers to use the Harcourt weekly story as a basis for weekly genre writing. This practice can be accomplished once a week during the 90 minutes of uninterrupted time. The advantage of this practice is that after reading the Harcourt story, knowledge of the topic has already been established. Ideas and vocabulary are applied to writing and skills, and concepts are solidified.

When teachers understand that their instructional practices impact research, they become reflective practitioners. When they are given a voice, their practices assist in creating new practices and techniques; thus they become action researchers. And when their “best practices” are implemented and highlighted, change occurs. Teachers are the key to creating best practices that effectively meet the needs of their students and address accountability.

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

# Writing Survey

Kathy Holt

Please read each item and answer each question as completely as possible. All results will be kept confidential and no one needs to write their name on the survey. A code will be used. Do not answer any question you do not wish to answer and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.

## **Start Here:**

- 1. What types of writing do children do in your classroom?**
- 2. How does the state writing exam positively affect writing instruction?**
- 3. How does the state writing exam negatively affect writing instruction?**
- 4. Other than the state writing exam, how do you assess your student's writing?**

## Questions for Focus Group and/or Interviews

### Focus Group Questions

1. What do you believe is your role in teaching writing?
2. How has your writing instruction changed in the last three years?
3. How has your students' attitudes towards writing changed in the last three years?
4. What type of writing do children do in your classroom?
5. What program/materials do you use to teach writing?
6. Do you use the writing Sunshine State Standards as your guide to planning?
7. Describe the timeline you use for introducing skills and concepts.
8. Describe how writing is integrated into other subject areas in your classrooms.
9. Describe each of these:
  - Guided Writing
  - Interactive Writing
  - Shared Writing

### Interview Questions

1. In addition to the rubric used for the Florida Writes, what other kinds of rubrics do you use?
2. Describe your use of Writer's Workshop.
3. What type of minilessons do you conduct? How often?
4. How do your students share their writing?

5. How do you bring authenticity and a real-world connection to the writing activities your students complete?
6. How is technology integrated into your writing program?
7. What types of writing do you do yourself? Do you share any of them with your students?
8. What type of research do your students engage in during the year?

### Demographic Information

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. How many years have you been teaching at this school?
3. What grades have you taught?
4. What is your highest degree held?



## **Interview Questions for County Writing Person**

1. What is your job role in this county?
2. What school do you provide in-service to?
3. Is there one program/strategy/best practice the county endorses?
4. What is your opinion about the latest Kathy Robinson material?
5. What does research say about Writer's Workshop?
6. Is it researched based?
7. Does your in-service with fourth grade teachers differ from the other grades?
8. Describe the six traits to writing.
9. How are these traits measured in the classroom?
10. Is awareness of these traits helpful in preparation for the Florida Writes?

APPENDIX B  
OBSERVATION TOOL

## Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program

(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher # \_\_\_\_\_

### Component 1: Standards and Assessment

The following items were in use:

- Rubrics
- Checklists
- Self-assessment
- Anecdotal notes (teacher's observations)
- Student to student conferencing
- Teacher to student conferencing
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- Other:

### Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop:
  - Author's Chair, Circle Time (sharing time)
  - Literature
  - Minilesson
  - Conferencing:
    - Teacher to student
    - Peer to peer
  - Daily writing (time \_\_\_\_\_ #of days a week \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Assessing
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- Modeled Writing
- Guided Writing
- Interactive Writing
- Independent Writing
- Shared Writing

- Direct Instruction
- Investigative Research
- Other:

### **Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions**

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- Planning
- Drafting
- Revising
- Publishing

Graphic Organizers used:

- Types of graphic organizers in use:

Skills being taught

Systematic instruction through the use of: \_\_\_\_\_

Other:

Minilessons

Content and Structure:

- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Conventions (capitalization, punctuation, etc.)
- Paragraph structure
- Dialogue
- Story Grammar
- Narrative
- Expository
- Transitions
- Supporting Details
- Descriptive
- Persuasive
- Poetic devices
- Letter devices
- Other:

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process
- Making a book

- Illustrating and designing
- Self-evaluation

Procedures and Routines:

- Journals/folders/portfolios
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- Organizing deadlines and using time effectively
- Organizing papers and writing supplies

### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

Writes for different audiences:

- Adults
- Peers
- Parents
- Teacher
- Self
- Other:

Writes for different purposes:

- Persuade
- Inform
- Entertain
- Narrate
- Other:

Uses technology:

Research

Process writing

Other:

### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

Teacher writes:

Email

Journal

Lesson Plans

Grant proposal

Writes curriculum

Stories/poems/personal pieces

Other:

Writes across the content areas:

Math

Science

Social Studies

Other:

Writing in different forms:

- Letter writing
- Poetry
- Journals
- Creative writing
- Reports
- Descriptive
- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Thematic
- Seasonal
- Literature
- Other:

**Room Arrangement**

|                             | <b>Available in Room</b> | <b>In Use During the Observation</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>              |                          |                                      |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>      |                          |                                      |
| <b>Writing Center</b>       |                          |                                      |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b> |                          |                                      |
| <b>Student group area</b>   |                          |                                      |

|                                |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           |  |  |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       |  |  |
| <b>Computer</b>                |  |  |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |  |  |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            |  |  |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             |  |  |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> |  |  |
| <b>Other:</b>                  |  |  |
|                                |  |  |



APPENDIX C

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY

April 9, 2005

Dear Dr. Schneider,

I am currently a doctoral student at UCF working on my dissertation. Dr. Kaplan is the Chairperson of my committee and suggested that I contact you and Dr. Brindley. I am interested in conducting a survey with fourth grade teachers as to the writing strategies and techniques they use in their classrooms and the frequency of their use. My dissertation committee reviewed the survey that I designed and suggested that I try to obtain one already in use so that I would have a more valid instrument. In your article, *Writing Instruction or Destruction: Lessons to be Learned from Fourth-Grade Teachers' Perspectives on Teaching Writing*, published in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, Sept.-Oct. 2002, your survey queried teachers as to how much time they wrote on a daily basis and what type of writing they did with children. These are two of the research questions I am interested in using in my dissertation. I especially liked your use of mixed method design which, as you stated in your article, "allows for identification of emergent themes and a comparison of responses." I plan to interview fourth grade teachers in addition to distributing the survey to find out what materials are currently being used and if teachers have a definite time-line in preparation for Florida Writes. Volusia County, the county I am from, has not adopted a set of materials to teach writing, as in reading and math, so I am curious as to what teachers are using. These are also two of my research questions to be answered.

I understand that you wrote the article in conjunction with Dr. Brindley and I plan to seek his permission, as well. My committee suggested that I distribute my survey to schools that have been designated as "A" schools and possible some that have been designated as "D" or "F" schools as denoted by the No Child Left Behind law. A comparison of time spent on writing and strategies used would make an interesting dissertation topic.

Dr. Kaplan gave me your Email address, however, my letter came back as undeliverable so I am writing to ask if you would send me your survey, along with the completed statistics (factor analysis, reliability and validity) to be used in my dissertation? I would be glad to provide monetary compensation and, of course, give you and Dr. Brindley credit for the survey. I am trying to rewrite my dissertation proposal by the end of April so that I might distributed the survey during May and August. Your attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. In addition, any other articles or information you may have on this topic would be welcomed.

Thank You!  
Kathy Holt  
265 Country Circle Dr. West  
Port Orange, Fl. 32128  
386 322-7325  
tholt4@cfl.rr.com

APPENDIX D  
DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING STAGES

| <b>The Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Writing</b>                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Five-year olds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One thing at a time</li> <li>• Helpful</li> <li>• Empathetic</li> <li>• Literal</li> <li>• Learn through play</li> </ul>                                      | <p>Draw and label<br/>Initial consonants spelling<br/>Difficulty with pencil (fine motor not well developed)<br/>Love to write about their world</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Six-year olds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active</li> <li>• Competitive</li> <li>• Industrious</li> <li>• Eager to learn</li> </ul>                                                                      | <p>Drawing and writing<br/>Letter spelling “I lke sup”<br/>Writing in a “hurry”<br/>Like fantasy, pets, and friends</p>                              |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Seven-year olds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused</li> <li>• Often insecure</li> <li>• Cautious</li> <li>• Language growth</li> <li>• Precision</li> </ul>                                             | <p>Longer stories, beginning, middle, and end<br/>Correct spelling begins<br/>Nonfiction writing<br/>Content areas</p>                               |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Eight-year olds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High energy</li> <li>• Gregarious</li> <li>• Resilient</li> <li>• Talkative</li> <li>• Industrious</li> </ul>                                                | <p>New genres (poetry, cartoons, etc.)<br/>Drafts and revisions emerge<br/>Spelling improves (sources)<br/>Chapter books<br/>Cursive writing</p>     |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Nine-year olds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive</li> <li>• Worrier</li> <li>• Concerned with fairness</li> <li>• Descriptive</li> <li>• Self-critical, need encouragement and laughter</li> </ul> | <p>Introduce writing process<br/>Use of dictionary<br/>Broader themes<br/>Increasing fluent handwriting</p>                                          |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ten-year olds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth spurt</li> <li>• Emotional extremes</li> <li>• Strong sense of right and wrong</li> <li>• Good listeners</li> <li>• Ability to abstract</li> </ul>      | <p>Longer poems<br/>Longer chapter books<br/>Note taking<br/>Fluent cursive writing</p>                                                              |

| <b>The Learner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Writing</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p data-bbox="354 235 583 268"><b>Eleven-year olds</b></p> <ul data-bbox="188 275 634 533" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="188 275 451 308">• Need more sleep</li> <li data-bbox="188 312 464 346">• Need to save face</li> <li data-bbox="188 350 467 384">• Fine motor ability</li> <li data-bbox="188 388 493 422">• Emotional extremes</li> <li data-bbox="188 426 553 459">• Like to work with others</li> <li data-bbox="188 464 634 497">• Emerging adult role awareness</li> <li data-bbox="188 501 375 535">• Test limits</li> </ul>                         | <p data-bbox="776 235 1317 304">Opportunity to rehearse writing in various forms: poetry, cartoons, reports, etc.</p> <p data-bbox="776 308 1073 342">Spelling more accurate</p> <p data-bbox="776 346 1076 380">Functional handwriting</p>                                    |
| <p data-bbox="354 546 586 579"><b>Twelve-year olds</b></p> <ul data-bbox="188 585 727 882" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="188 585 396 619">• High energy</li> <li data-bbox="188 623 396 657">• Enthusiastic</li> <li data-bbox="188 661 610 695">• Self-aware, somewhat secure</li> <li data-bbox="188 699 440 732">• Peers important</li> <li data-bbox="188 737 500 770">• Enjoys conversation</li> <li data-bbox="188 774 574 808">• Particular abilities emerge</li> <li data-bbox="188 812 727 882">• High interest in current events and the world</li> </ul> | <p data-bbox="776 546 1024 579">Functional spelling</p> <p data-bbox="776 583 1162 617">Teen issues begin to dominate</p> <p data-bbox="776 621 1252 690">Summarization and clarity appears in writing</p> <p data-bbox="776 695 1195 728">Word processing used in writing</p> |

APPENDIX E  
SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS

Writing:

**1. The student uses writing processes effectively.**

| <b>Level</b>      | <b>Benchmark</b>                                                                                                                                               | <b>Sample of Performance Descriptions</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>Goal 3 Standards</b> |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Grades 3-5</b> | <b>LA.B.1.2.1.</b><br>Prepares for writing by recording thoughts, focusing on a central idea, grouping related ideas, and identifying the purpose for writing. | <b>LA.B.1.2.1.a</b><br>Uses simple graphic organizing systems, such as clustering ideas or a comparison/contrast listing, to draft a narrative about visiting the public library | <b>1,2,7</b>            |

| Level | Benchmark                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Sample of Performance Descriptions                                                                                                                   | Goal 3 Standards           |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|       | <p><b>LA.B.1.2.2</b><br/>Drafts and revises writing in cursive that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on the topic;</li> <li>• Has a logical organizational pattern, including a beginning, middle, conclusion, and transitional devices;</li> <li>• Has ample development of supporting ideas;</li> <li>• Demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness;</li> <li>• Demonstrates a command of language including precision in word choice;</li> <li>• Generally has correct subject/verb agreement;</li> <li>• Generally has correct verb and noun forms;</li> <li>• With few exceptions, has sentences that are complete, except when fragments are used purposefully</li> <li>• Uses a variety of sentence structure; and</li> <li>• Generally follows the conventions of punctuation , capitalization , and spelling;</li> </ul> | <p><b>LA.B.1.2.2.a</b><br/>Uses peer reader response to improve the organization of a draft describing family experiences of different cultures.</p> | <p><b>1,2,4,8,9,10</b></p> |



| Level | Benchmark                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sample of Performance Descriptions                                                                                                                | Goal 3 Standards  |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|       | <p><b>LA.B.1.2.3</b><br/>           Produces final documents that have been edited for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct spelling;</li> <li>• Correct use of punctuation, including commas in series, dates, and addresses, and beginning and ending quotation marks;</li> <li>• Correct capitalization of proper nouns;</li> <li>• Correct paragraph indentation;</li> <li>• Correct usage of subject/verb agreement, verb and noun forms, and sentence structure; and</li> <li>• Correct formatting according to instructions.</li> </ul> | <p><b>LA.B.1.2.3.a</b><br/>           Using the conventions for publication, publishes the final copy of a document in a classroom anthology.</p> | <p><b>1,2</b></p> |

APPENDIX F  
WRITING PROMPTS

## Examples of Writing Prompts

Below is an example of an expository writing prompt. The first component orients the student to the topic, in this case jobs or chores. The second component suggests that the students think about the topic then explain why a particular job or chore is done. This prompt was used in 1999 (FDOE, 1999).

**Writing Situation:**

Everyone has jobs or chores.

**Directions for Writing:**

Before you begin writing, think about why you do one of your jobs or chores.

Now explain why you do one of your jobs or chores.

The prompt below is an example of a narrative prompt used in 1999 (Florida Writing Assessment Program, 1999). As with the expository prompt, there are two writing components. Papers that focused on the topic, displayed an organizational pattern, contained developed supporting details, and generally followed the conventions of writing were scored in the higher ranges of the scale of unscorable to six.

**Writing Situation:**

Everyone has done something that he or she will remember.

**Directions for Writing:**

Before you begin writing, think about a time you did something that you will always remember.

Now tell a story about the time you did something that you will always remember.

APPENDIX G  
RUBRIC AND INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

## Instructional Implications for Each Score Point, Grade 4 (FDOE, 1999)

### **6 Points:**

According to the rubric, the writing is tightly focused, logically organized, and amply developed. It demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. Sentences vary in structure, and conventions are generally correct.

A score of 6 does not mean that the paper is perfect. In most cases, the writing could be improved by instruction that emphasizes

- Organization of internal elements (a beginning, middle, and end for each idea and not just for the total paper)
- Elaboration of all supporting details
- Precision and maturity of word choice

### **5 Points:**

According to the rubric, the writing is focused, and supporting ideas are adequately developed. However, lapses in organization may occur. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary in structure, and conventions are generally correct. Writing can be improved in the following ways:

- Strengthening the organizational pattern to ensure that no lapses occur and that transitional devices move the reader from one sentence, event or explanation to the next
- Elaborating the supporting details
- Improving word choice
- Increasing sentence variety

### **4 Points:**

According to the rubric, the writing is focused but may contain extraneous information, may lack internal organization, and may include weak support or examples. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary in construction, and conventions are generally correct. The writing can be improved by:

- Removing extraneous information
- Strengthening the organizational pattern to ensure that no lapses occur and that transitional devices move the reader from one sentence, event or explanation to the next
- Developing the supporting ideas through extensions, elaboration, or both
- Improving word choice
- Increasing sentence variety

**3 Point:**

According to the rubric, the writing is generally focused but may contain extraneous information, a simplistic organizational pattern, and undeveloped details or examples. Word choice is adequate. Most sentences are simply constructed, and there may be errors in the conventions. Suggestions for improvement are as follows:

- Removing extraneous information
- Developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, end, and transitional devices
- Developing the supporting ideas through extensions, elaboration, or both
- Improving word choice
- Increasing sentence variety

**2 Point:**

According to the rubric, the writing may show little relationship to the topic, little evidence of an organizational pattern, and little relevant support. Word choice is limited. Most sentences are simply constructed and frequent convention errors have occurred.

The writing can be improved by these instructional suggestions:

- Focusing on the assigned topic
- Developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, end and transitional devices
- Extending supporting ideas
- Improving word choice
- Increasing sentence variety
- Correcting spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure errors

**1 Point:**

According to the rubric, the writing minimally addresses the topic. There is no organizational pattern and little or no support. Word choice is limited. Most sentences are simply constructed, and frequency errors in conventions have occurred. Suggestions for improvement are as follows:

- Focusing on the assigned topic
- Developing an organizational pattern that includes a beginning, middle, and end
- Extending supporting ideas
- Improving word choice
- Increasing sentence variety
- Correcting spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure errors

**Unscorable—Response Not Related to Assigned Topic:**

According to the rubric, the writing did not address the assigned topic. This score category is not a statement about the quality of the writing; instead it is a statement about the focus of the writing. Improvement for writing emphasizes focusing on the assigned topic.

**Unscorable—No Response or Unreadable Response:**

According to the rubric, there was no response or an unreadable response. Suggestions for improvement are as follows:

- Arranging words so that meaning is conveyed
- Writing a sufficient amount and addressing the prompt so that scoring is facilitated

APPENDIX H  
CONSENT FORM



## **Consent to Participate in the Focus Groups, Interviews, Survey, and Observations Portion of the Research Study**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this Case Study is to describe the type of writing programs offered at two different elementary schools in Volusia County. This will be accomplished through a series of interviews, observations, a survey requiring a written response, focus group discussions and a collection of writing artifacts at the two designated schools. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Central Florida, as well as, Dr. Christopher J. Colwell, Deputy Superintendent for Instructional Services for Volusia County has approved the research.

By signing this consent form:

- The participant understands that participation in the focus groups, interviews, survey, and observations are voluntary and may withdraw at any given moment. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss.
- The participant understands that certain writing artifacts such as writing grades, rubrics, test scores, and lesson plans may be collected as part of this study however, and students' names will be omitted to protect their anonymity.
- The participant understands that all of the participants' names will be kept confidential. A number will be assigned to the participant's responses and that same number will be referred to in the write-up of the research.
- The participant understands that, upon request, he/she may obtain a copy of the research results.
- The participant understands that he/she may obtain a copy of the focus group and interview questions prior to the scheduled meeting.
- The participant understands that all data and artifacts will be kept in a secured location and access will be restricted to the researcher and the Dissertation Committee members. Data and artifacts will be separated from one another and separated from the informed consent documents to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the dissertation, copies of the data and consent forms will be kept for three years following the study.
- The participant understands that they will receive compensation for their participation in this study.
- The participant will understand that there will be no direct benefits from this research, besides learning more about how research is conducted.
- The participant will understand that there are no anticipated risks from participating in this study. In addition, you as a participant are not expected to answer every question or complete every task if it makes you feel uncomfortable. You will not be penalized for refusing to answer a question or completing a task.
- The participant understands that if there are any questions or concerns they may contact the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, and Suite 302, Orlando, Florida 32826. The hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except on University of Central Florida official holidays. Phone (407) 823-2901.
- Dr. Jeffrey Kaplan is the Major Professor involved in this research.

Educational Studies, College of Education at the University of Central Florida, ED122B,  
Orlando, Florida 32816

I understand that by signing this form I agree to participate in the focus groups, observations, and interviews as follow-up to the writing survey previously distributed at my school by Kathleen R. Holt. The focus group, interview, survey, and observation are part of the research that Kathleen R. Holt is conducting in conjunction with her dissertation through the University of Central Florida.

Contact phone number: (386) 322-7325.

I understand that focus group discussions and interviews may be audio taped and that those tapes will be kept in a secure location with restricted access. Upon completion of the dissertation, the tapes will be destroyed.

Participant's signature constitutes consent.

---

APPENDIX I  
COMPARISON BETWEEN TEST-TAKING SKILL AND DAILY WRITING  
ACHIEVEMENT

**Writing Workshop****Writing Test**

| <b>Different</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Same</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Different</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a list of topics or short drafts that are the seed for writing.</li> <li>• Select topics according to interests.</li> <li>• Write regularly, accommodating time to the demands of the topic and organizational plan.</li> <li>• Interact with others around the topic.</li> <li>• Assist others in planning writing and receive assistance.</li> <li>• Ask for help when needed.</li> <li>• Use references and resources, including technology.</li> <li>• Write to a known or unknown audience that is clearly defined.</li> <li>• Sometimes write on a focused topic or in a particular genre.</li> <li>• Selects a purpose and genre for writing.</li> </ul> | <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define a topic and organize ideas around it.</li> <li>• Provide supporting details.</li> <li>• Organize the text with a logical structure that flows.</li> <li>• Create a text with a sense of wholeness.</li> <li>• Vary length and complexity of sentences.</li> <li>• Effectively use standard conventions—sentence structure, usage, paragraphing, punctuation, spelling and capital letters.</li> <li>• Select and use words effectively.</li> </ul> | <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write in response to an assigned topic.</li> <li>• Write in a defined period of time.</li> <li>• Write to an assigned audience.</li> <li>• Write for a predetermined purpose.</li> <li>• Respond to directions for the assigned piece as a genre.</li> </ul> |

Source: Fountas & Pinnell (2001)

APPENDIX J  
EMBEDDING TEST-TAKING SKILLS

## Suggestions for Embedding Test-Writing Skills in Writing Workshop

Source: Fountas & Pinnell (2001)

1. Make sure students write several times daily.
2. Give students regular opportunities to write to a prompt as well as to self-selected topics.
3. Provide numerous opportunities for timed writing.
4. Have students revise papers within time limits.
5. Teach a variety of planning techniques such as note taking, listing, and webbing.
6. Teach revision and proofreading and give students opportunities to apply these skills in timed sessions.
7. Teach students to edit in a short daily interactive session.
8. Present focused minilessons on writing for different purposes and audiences as well as writing in different genres.
9. Help students learn how to write about their reading.
10. Teach students how to read the prompt and the questions to understand the writing task and select the organizational pattern (graphic organizer) that will best suit an effective written response.
11. Teach students to use highlighters to mark key words in the prompt and the questions as well as pertinent information in the reading passage that will be important to the written response.
12. Teach students how to use the scoring checklist for writing and use it regularly.
13. Engage student in partner or small-group oral presentations on a topic followed by group feedback. Their ability to plan and present information on a topic orally is the same process required on a written test.
14. Engage students in partner or small-group writing, revision, and proofreading sessions. Include group sharing and feedback.

APPENDIX K

BRINDLEY AND SCHNEIDER SURVEY OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

Survey of Writing Instruction by Dr. Roger Brindley and Dr. Jennifer Jasinski Schneider

1. Do you believe teachers need to write in order to teach writing? Please explain your answer.
2. To what extent do you perceive drawing to be a part of children's writing? Please explain your answer.
3. To what extent do you perceive talking to be a part of children's writing? Please explain your answer.
4. To what extent do you perceive playing to be a part of children's writing? Please explain your answer.
5. What do you believe is your role in teaching writing? Please briefly explain.
6. Has your writing instruction changed in the last three years? Please explain your answer.
7. Have your students' attitudes towards writing changed in the last three years? Please explain the nature of the change. To what do you attribute these changes?
8. In your classroom how much time do children write everyday?
9. What type of writing do children do in your classroom?
10. What writing behaviors do your fourth grade students typically exhibit? Can these behaviors be generalized or are they specific to individuals?
11. What type of writing instruction do you provide students? Does this vary for individuals?
12. How does the state writing exam positively affect writing instruction?
13. How does the state writing exam positively affect students' writing?
14. How does the state writing exam negatively affect writing instruction?
15. How does the state writing exam negatively affect students' writing?



APPENDIX L  
ORIGINAL OVERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Interview Questions for Writing Teacher on Assignment,  
Reading/Language Arts Department K-5**

1. What is your job assignment?
2. What schools do you service?
3. How do you choose the schools with which you work?
4. What program/strategy does the county endorse?
5. What is your opinion regarding the Kathy Robinson material?
6. Describe Writing Workshop.
7. Does your in-service with fourth grade teachers differ? If so, elaborate on the differences.
8. Describe the six traits to writing.
9. How does this approach fit with Writing Workshop?
10. How is the FCAT Writing + assessment changing this year?

Demographic Information

1. How many years have you taught?
2. How many years have you held this position?
3. What grades have you taught?
4. What is your highest degree held?

APPENDIX M

SIX TRAITS: DESCRIPTORS FOR ASSESSMENT

**Ideas:**

- Entertains the reader
- Considers audience
- Makes sense (ideas fit together)
- Develops character, setting, story conflict, and resolution
- Emphasizes a central theme or idea
- Presents a title that captures the story ideas
- Shows compositional risks

**Organization:**

- Creates a strong plot structure (beginning, middle, end)
- Locates the reader within settings (in time and space)
- Includes smooth story transitions to link ideas
- Develops an interesting and arousing introduction

**Voice:**

- Projects a consistent point of view
- Gives voice to the character
- Engages the reader; keeps the reader in mind
- Expresses a mood
- Uses active voice
- Employs dialogue that sounds authentic

**Sentence Fluency:**

- Follows appropriate pacing—slows down or speeds up at the right moments
- Incorporates sentence variety
- Suggest a readable text
- Infers rhythm and flow

**Word Choice:**

- Shows what is happening
- Builds actions through strong, lively, verbs
- Provides sensory words for mental images

**Conventions:**

- Uses quotation marks correctly
- Illustrates with drawings and print
- Includes conventional spelling
- Demonstrates legible handwriting

Source: Piazza (2003)

APPENDIX N  
HOLISTIC SCORING METHOD

## Definition of Holistic Scoring

Holistic scoring is a method by which trained readers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality. The holistic scoring used in Florida requires readers to evaluate the work as a whole, while considering four elements: focus, organization, support, and conventions. This method is sometimes called focused holistic scoring. In this type of scoring, readers are trained not to become overly concerned with any one aspect of writing but to look at a response as a whole.

### Focus

Focus refers to how clearly the paper presents and maintains a main idea, theme, or unifying point. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale demonstrate a consistent awareness of the topic and do not contain extraneous information.

### Organization

Organization refers to the structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and whether the points logically relate to one another. Organization refers to (1) the use of transitional devices to signal the relationship of the supporting ideas to the main idea, theme, or unifying point and (2) the evidence of a connection between sentences. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale use transitions to signal the plan or text structure and end with summary or concluding statements.

### Support

Support refers to the quality of the details used to explain, clarify, or define. The quality of support depends on word choice, specificity, depth, credibility, and thoroughness. Papers representing the higher end of the point scale provide fully developed examples and illustrations in which the relationship between the supporting ideas and the topic is clear.

### Conventions

Conventions refer to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and variation in sentence used in the paper. These conventions are basic writing skills included in Florida's Minimum Student Performance Standards and the Uniform Student Performance Standards for Language Arts. Papers representing the higher end of the scale follow, with little exception, the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling and use a variety of sentence structures to present ideas.

APPENDIX O  
2005 FCAT WRITING PROMPTS

Grade 4

**Writing to Explain (Expository)**

Students were asked to choose an activity they enjoy and explain why they enjoy it.

**Writing to Tell a Story (Narrative)**

Students were asked to write a story about a teacher surprising a class.

Grade 8

**Writing to Explain (Expository)**

Students were asked to choose a time of year and explain why they like that time of year.

**Writing to Persuade (Persuasive)**

Students were asked to persuade a newspaper editor whether teens waste too much time watching television.

Grade 10

**Writing to Explain (Expository)**

Students were asked to choose a personal quality they think is important and explain why that quality is important.

**Writing to Persuade (Persuasive)**

Students were asked to persuade the school board whether students should have a study hour.



APPENDIX P

DR. BRINDLEY E-MAIL MESSAGE

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Brindley, Roger

**To:** tom holt

**Cc:** Schneider, Jenifer

**Sent:** Thursday, April 21, 2005 10:34 AM

**Subject:** RE: permission to use survey

Hello Kathy,

I have been spending a few days rummaging around at home for the original survey results but per our IRB permission we are now outside the times statutes that I am allowed to disseminate that information and per our IRB the original replies are now destroyed.

The original survey is featured as figures 1-3 at the end of the JTE article (see attachment or [Brindley, R., & Schneider J. \(2002\). Writing instruction or destruction: Comparing fourth grade Teachers' Beliefs and Practices. \*Journal of Teacher Education\*, 53\(4\), 328-341.](#)) I have included the revised and resubmitted manuscript as an attachment so that you don't have to start scanning documents.

You are welcome to adapt that survey or lift out particular questions as you explore your own research – we would expect a citation (sorry! I'm sure you knew that already) but other than that we simply wish you the very best of luck, not that you will need any ☺

Sincerely,

Roger Brindley

Dr. Roger Brindley

Associate Professor

Childhood Education

University of South Florida

4202 E. Fowler Avenue, EDU 162

Tampa, FL 33620

Ph: (813) 974-7143

E-mail: [brindley@tempest.coedu.usf.edu](mailto:brindley@tempest.coedu.usf.edu)

Office Location: EDU 202

APPENDIX Q

CUMULATIVE SOURCES FOR OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT  
(SURVEY, INTERVIEW, OBSERVATIONS, AND ARTIFACTS)

## Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program

(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #1, School A

Observation Dates: November 15, 2005 & January 31, 2006

Interview Date: December 8, 2005

### Component 1: Standards and Assessment

The following items were in use:

- X  Rubrics (interview)
- Checklists
- Self-assessment
- X  Anecdotal notes {teacher's observations} (interview)
- Student to student conferencing
- X  Teacher to student conferencing (informal conversation)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- X  Other: (survey, conventions, spelling, thoughtfulness)
- X  Other: (interview, peer assessment- oral sharing)

### Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop:
  - Author's Chair, Circle Time (sharing time)
  - Literature
  - Minilesson
  - Conferencing:
    - Teacher to student
    - Peer to peer
- X  Daily writing: (survey, informal conversations) Daily, one hour; some weeks 3 days a week
- Assessing
- Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X  Modeled Writing (interview; observations)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts)
- Interactive Writing
- X  Independent Writing (observations, prompts)
- X  Shared Writing (observations)
- X  Direct Instruction (interview; observations)

- X  Investigative Research (interview)  
 Other:

### **Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions**

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- X  Planning (observations; artifacts)  
X  Drafting (observations)  
 Revising  
X  Publishing (interview)
- X  Graphic Organizers used: (observation, Kathy Robinson; artifacts)  
X  Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository; artifacts)
- X  Skills being taught (interview; observations; artifacts)  
X  Systematic instruction through the use of: Kathy Robinson material (observations; artifacts)  
X  Other: (observations, test prep; artifacts)
- X  Minilessons (interview, as determined by student's writing; observations; artifacts)
- Content and Structure:
- X  Grammar (observations; artifacts)  
X  Sentence structure (observations; artifacts)  
X  Vocabulary (observations; artifacts)  
X  Spelling (survey)  
X  Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(artifacts; observations)  
X  Paragraph structure (observations, artifacts)  
X  Dialogue (observations, artifacts)  
X  Story Grammar (observations)  
X  Narrative (survey; observations; artifacts)  
X  Expository (survey; observations; artifacts)  
X  Transitions (artifacts)  
X  Supporting Details (observations; artifacts)  
X  Descriptive (observations; artifacts)  
 Persuasive  
 Poetic devices  
X  Letter devices (survey)  
X  Other: (observations, reading and interpreting a prompt; Elaboration; Quick Writes; Introductory Sentence; Literature as a model; artifacts, Onomatopoeia, similes)

Strategies and Skills:

- X  Writing process (observations; artifacts)  
X  Making a book (interview)

- X  Illustrating and designing (interview)
- Self-evaluation
- X  Peer evaluation (observations; interview)

Procedures and Routines:

- X  Journals/folders/portfolios (survey, observations)
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- X  Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (observations, timed practice)
- Organizing papers and writing supplies

### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults
  - X  Peers (interview)
  - Parents
  - X  Teacher (interview, prompts; observations)
  - X  Self (interview, journals; observations)
  - Other:
- X  Writes for different purposes:
  - Persuade
  - X  Inform (survey, Expository; observations, artifacts)
  - X  Entertain (observations)
  - X  Narrate (survey, Narrative; observations, artifacts)
  - X  Other: (survey, Journal, letters; interview, newspaper)
- X  Uses technology: (interview)
  - X  Research (interview)
  - Process writing
  - X  Other: (interview, lab, once a week)

### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Teacher writes:
  - X  Email (direct experience with researcher)
  - X  Journal (interview, trips)
  - X  Lesson Plans (direct experience with researcher)
  - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces
  - X  Other: (interview, Christmas Cards, recipes, Ophra Diary)

- X  Writes across the content areas:  
 X  Math (survey, observations)  
 X  Science (survey, observations)  
 X  Social Studies (interview; observations)  
 Other:

- X  Writing in different forms:  
 X  Letter writing (survey)  
 Poetry  
 X  Journals (survey; observations)  
 Creative writing  
 X  Reports (interview)  
 X  Descriptive (artifacts, transparency notebook; artifacts)  
 X  Fiction (survey, Narrative; artifacts; observations)  
 X  Non-fiction (survey, Expository; observations; artifacts)  
 Thematic  
 Seasonal  
 X  Literature (observations)  
 Other:

Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room             | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                             |                               |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                             | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          |                               |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                             |                               |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                             |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           | X                             |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       |                               |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                             |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |                               |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                             |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             | X                             |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> |                               |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  | <b>Student work displayed</b> |                               |

**Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program**  
(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #2, School A  
Observation Dates: November 15, 2005 & January 31, 2006  
Interview Date: December 8, 2005

**Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- X  Rubrics (interview)
- Checklists
- Self-assessment
- X  Anecdotal notes {teacher's observations}(interview)
- Student to student conferencing
- X  Teacher to student conferencing (informal conversations)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- X  Other: ( interview, peer assessment, sharing)
- X (survey, other tests, journals, research reports, newspaper activities, and  
Made in centers such as flip books and newspaper activities)

**Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop:
  - X  Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time}(interview)
  - Literature
  - X  Minilesson (interview)
  - Conferencing:
    - Teacher to student
    - Peer to peer
  - X  Daily writing: (informal discussions, three to 5 days a week for an hour)
  - Assessing
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X  Modeled Writing (interview; observations)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts)
- Interactive Writing
- X  Independent Writing (observations)
- Shared Writing
- X  Direct Instruction (interview; observations)
- X  Investigative Research (interview)
- Other:



### Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- Planning (observations; artifacts)
- Drafting (observations)
- Revising
- Publishing (interview, flip books)

Graphic Organizers used: (observations, Kathy Robinson; artifacts)

- Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository; artifacts)

Skills being taught (observations; interview)

Systematic instruction through the use of: Kathy Robinson materials (observations; artifacts)

Other:

Minilessons (interview; observations; artifacts)

Content and Structure:

- Grammar (observations; artifacts)
- Sentence structure (artifacts)
- Vocabulary (observations; artifacts)
- Spelling
- Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(artifacts)
- Paragraph structure (observations, DAD; artifacts)
- Dialogue (observations; artifacts)
- Story Grammar (observations)
- Narrative (observations; artifacts; survey)
- Expository (observations; artifacts; survey)
- Transitions (artifacts)
- Supporting Details (artifacts; observations, DAD)
- Descriptive (observations; artifacts)
- Persuasive
- Poetic devices (survey; interview; observations)
- Letter devices (observations)
- Other: (observations, Writer's Craft, Small moments, creating imagery, Illustrations; artifacts, Onomatopoeia, similes )

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process (observations; artifacts)
- Making a book (survey; interview)
- Illustrating and designing (survey; interview; observations)
- Self-evaluation

Procedures and Routines:

- Journals/folders/portfolios (observations; survey)
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- Organizing deadlines and using time effectively
- Organizing papers and writing supplies

**Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults
  - Peers (observations; interview)
  - Parents
  - Teacher (observations)
  - Self (interview; observations)
  - Other: (interview, Bag Lady activities)
- Writes for different purposes:
  - Persuade
  - Inform (observation, Expository; interview; survey)
  - Entertain (survey; observations)
  - Narrate (survey; observations; interview)
  - Other: (survey, Science journals, Social Studies, Holistic tests, poetry)
- Uses technology:
  - Research (interview)
  - Process writing
  - Other: (interview, Brain Pop in computer lab, science and English)

**Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Teacher writes:
  - Email (direct experience with researcher)
  - Journal
  - Lesson Plans (direct experience with researcher)
  - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces (interview)
  - Other:
- Writes across the content areas:
  - Math
  - Science (survey; observations)
  - Social Studies (survey; observations)

X  Other: (survey, center activities)

X  Writing in different forms:

X  Letter writing (observations)

X  Poetry (survey)

X  Journals (survey; observations)

Creative writing

X  Reports (interview; survey; observations)

X  Descriptive (observations, artifacts, transparency notebook)

X  Fiction (observations; survey, Narrative; observations; artifacts)

X  Non-fiction (observations, survey, Expository; artifacts)

Thematic

Seasonal

X  Literature (observations)

X  Other: (interview, Bag Lady and center activities)

### Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room                                       | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                                                       | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          |                                                         |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       |                                                         |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |                                                         |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             | X                                                       |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> |                                                         |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  | <b>Transparencies, mobiles, timelines (biographies)</b> |                               |
|                                |                                                         |                               |

## **Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program** (Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #3, School A  
Observation Dates: October 27, 2005 & January 31, 2006  
Interview Date: January 25, 2006

### **Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- X  Rubrics (interview; observations; informal discussion; survey)
- X  Checklists (observations, Narrative)
- X  Self-assessment (observations)
- Anecdotal notes (teacher's observations)
- X  Student to student conferencing (interview)
- X  Teacher to student conferencing (interview)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- Other:

### **Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- X  Writer's Workshop:
  - Author's Chair, Circle Time (sharing time)
  - Literature
- X  Minilesson (interview)
- X  Conferencing: (interview)
  - X  Teacher to student (interview)
  - X  Peer to peer (interview)
- X  Daily writing (informal conversation, daily, one hour a day)
  - Assessing
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X  Modeled Writing (observations)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts)
- Interactive Writing
- X  Independent Writing (observations)
- Shared Writing
- X  Direct Instruction (interview; observations)
- X  Investigative Research (interview)

Other:

### **Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions**

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

X  Planning (observations; artifacts)

X  Drafting (observations)

Revising

Publishing

X  Graphic Organizers used: (observation, Kathy Robinson; artifacts)

X  Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository; artifacts)

X  Skills being taught (observations; interview; artifacts)

X  Systematic instruction through the use of: Kathy Robinson material (observations; artifacts)

X  Other: (observations, test prep; artifacts)

X  Minilessons (interview; observations; artifacts)

Content and Structure:

X  Grammar (artifacts)

X  Sentence structure (observations; artifacts)

X  Vocabulary (observations; artifacts)

Spelling

X  Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(artifacts; observations)

X  Paragraph structure (interview; artifacts; observations)

X  Dialogue (observations; interview; artifacts)

X  Story Grammar (observations)

X  Narrative (observations; artifacts)

X  Expository (observations; artifacts)

X  Transitions (artifacts)

X  Supporting Details (interview; observations; artifacts)

X  Descriptive (interview; observations; artifacts)

Persuasive

Poetic devices

Letter devices

X  Other: observations, reading and interpreting a prompt; Elaboration; Quick Writes; artifacts, Onomatopoeia & similes)

Strategies and Skills:

X  Writing process (observations; artifacts)

Making a book

Illustrating and designing

- X  Self-evaluation (observations)
- X  Peer evaluation (observations)

Procedures and Routines:

- X  Journals/folders/portfolios (observations)
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- X  Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (observations)
- X  Organizing papers and writing supplies (observations)

### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults
  - X  Peers (interview; observations)
  - Parents
  - X  Teacher (interview; observations)
  - X  Self (observations)
  - X  Other: (survey, essays)
- X  Writes for different purposes:
  - Persuade
  - X  Inform (survey, Expository; observations; artifacts)
  - X  Entertain (observations)
  - X  Narrate (survey; observations; artifacts)
  - Other:
- X  Uses technology:
  - X  Research (interview)
  - Process writing
  - X  Other: (interview, lab, once a week)

### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Teacher writes:
  - X  Email (interview; direct experience with researcher)
  - X  Journal (interview, prayer)
  - X  Lesson Plans (interview)
  - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces
  - X  Other: (interview, notes, writes along with the class)
- Writes across the content areas:

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Other:

- X  Writing in different forms:
  - X  Letter writing (poster on wall)
  - X  Poetry (poetry book on ledge)
  - X  Journals (observations)
  - Creative writing
  - X  Reports (survey; interview)
  - X  Descriptive (artifacts; transparency notebook)
  - X  Fiction (survey; artifacts; observations)
  - X  Non-fiction (survey, interview; observations; artifacts)
  - Thematic
  - Seasonal
  - Literature
  - Other:

Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                 |                               |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                 | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          | X                 |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                 |                               |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                 |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           |                   |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       |                   |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                 |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |                   |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                 |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             |                   |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> |                   |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  |                   |                               |

**Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program**  
(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #4, School A  
Observation Dates: October 27, 2005 & January 31, 2006  
Interview Date: December 8, 2005

**Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- X  Rubrics (interview)
- X  Checklists (interview)
- X  Self-assessment (interview)
- Anecdotal notes (teacher's observations)
- X  Student to student conferencing (interview)
- X  Teacher to student conferencing (informal conversation)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- Other:

**Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- X  Writer's Workshop:
  - X  Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time} (interview, wants to use Writer's Notebook next year)
  - X  Literature (interview)
  - X  Minilesson (interview)
  - X  Conferencing:
    - X  Teacher to student (informal conversation)
    - X  Peer to peer (interview)
  - X  Daily writing (informal conversation, one hour most weeks, daily)
  - Assessing
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X  Modeled Writing (observations; interview)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts)
- Interactive Writing
- X  Independent Writing (observations)
- X  Shared Writing (observations)
- X  Direct Instruction (interview; observations)
- X  Investigative Research (interview)
- Other:



### Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- Planning (observations, artifacts)
- Drafting (observations)
- Revising
- Publishing

Graphic Organizers used: (Kathy Robinson; artifacts)

- Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository; artifacts)

Skills being taught (interview; observations; artifacts)

Systematic instruction through the use of: Kathy Robinson material (observations; artifacts)

Other: (observations, test preparation; artifacts)

Minilessons

Content and Structure:

- Grammar (artifacts; interview; observations)
- Sentence structure (interview; artifacts; observations)
- Vocabulary (interview; artifacts; observations)
- Spelling
- Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(artifacts; observations)
- Paragraph structure (observations; artifacts)
- Dialogue (artifacts; interview)
- Story Grammar (interview)
- Narrative (interview; survey; artifacts)
- Expository (interview; survey; observation, artifacts)
- Transitions (observations; artifacts)
- Supporting Details (observations; artifacts)
- Descriptive (artifacts)
- Persuasive
- Poetic devices
- Letter devices (survey)
- Other: (interview, Quick Writes, similes, interpreting a prompt, literature as a model; artifacts, Onomatopoeia, similes)

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process (observations; artifacts)
- Making a book
- Illustrating and designing
- Self-evaluation (interview, Kathy Robinson's checklist)

Procedures and Routines:

- Journals/folders/portfolios
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (observations)
- Organizing papers and writing supplies (observations)

### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults
  - Peers (interview)
  - Parents
  - Teacher (interview; observations)
  - Self (survey; interview; observations)
  - Other:
- Writes for different purposes:
  - Persuade
  - Inform (interview; survey; observations)
  - Entertain (interview; survey; observations)
  - Narrate (interview; survey; observations)
  - Other: (survey, responses to questions, subject specific assignments, friendly letters, journals; interview, reading responses, stories from previous grades)
- Uses technology:
  - Research (interview)
  - Process writing
  - Other: (interview, lab, once a week)

### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Teacher writes:
  - Email (direct experience with researcher)
  - Journal
  - Lesson Plans (direct experience with researcher)
  - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces (interview)
  - Other: (interview, Christmas cards, lists)
- Writes across the content areas:
  - Math (observations)
  - Science (interview, survey)

- Social Studies (interview, survey)  
 Other:

- Writing in different forms:  
 Letter writing (survey)  
 Poetry  
 Journals (survey; observations)  
 Creative writing  
 Reports (survey; interview)  
 Descriptive (artifacts; transparency notebook; observations)  
 Fiction (survey; interview; observations; artifacts)  
 Non-fiction (survey; interview; observations; artifacts)  
 Thematic  
 Seasonal  
 Literature  
 Other:

### Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                 | X                             |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                 | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          |                   |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | Math & Vocabulary |                               |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                 |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           |                   |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       | X (by genre)      |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                 |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |                   |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                 |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             |                   |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> |                   |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  |                   |                               |
|                                |                   |                               |

## **Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program** (Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #5, School A  
Observation Dates: October 27, 2005 & January 31, 2006  
Interview Date: January 26, 2006

### **Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- X  Rubrics (interview, create rubrics, Rubistar.com)
- Checklists
- Self-assessment
- Anecdotal notes (teacher's observations)
- Student to student conferencing
- X  Teacher to student conferencing (informal conversation)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- X  Other: (interview, oral sharing; observations)

### **Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- X  Writer's Workshop: (Teacher stated that she is unfamiliar with all the components of Writer's Workshop)
- X  Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time} (interview)
- X  Literature (observations)
- X  Minilesson (interview; observations)
- Conferencing:
  - X  Teacher to student (informal conversation)
  - Peer to peer
- X  Daily writing (informal conversation, one hour most weeks, daily)
- Assessing
- Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X  Modeled Writing (observations; interview)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts)
- Interactive Writing
- X  Independent Writing (observations)
- X  Shared Writing (observations)
- X  Direct Instruction (interview; observations)

- Investigative Research (interview)  
 Other:

### **Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions**

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- Planning (observations, artifacts)  
 Drafting (observations)  
 Revising  
 Publishing (interview, Young Author's)

Graphic Organizers used: (Kathy Robinson; artifacts)

- Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository; artifacts)

Skills being taught (interview; observations; artifacts)

Systematic instruction through the use of: Kathy Robinson material (observations; artifacts)

Other: (observations, test preparation; artifacts)

Minilessons

Content and Structure:

- Grammar (artifacts; interview; observations)  
 Sentence structure (interview; artifacts; observations)  
 Vocabulary (artifacts; observations)  
 Spelling (interview)  
 Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(artifacts)  
 Paragraph structure (observations; artifacts)  
 Dialogue (artifacts)  
 Story Grammar  
 Narrative (survey; artifacts; observations)  
 Expository (survey; observation, artifacts)  
 Transitions (artifacts)  
 Supporting Details (observations; artifacts)  
 Descriptive (artifacts)  
 Persuasive  
 Poetic devices  
 Letter devices  
 Other: (interview, similes, author's language; observations, Literature as a model; artifacts, Onomatopoeia, similes)

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process (observations; artifacts)  
 Making a book (interview, Young Author)  
 Illustrating and designing (interview, Young Author)

Self-evaluation

Procedures and Routines:

- X Journals/folders/portfolios (survey; observations)
- X Locating and using print resources in the room (observations)
- X Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (observations)
- X Organizing papers and writing supplies (observations)

#### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults
  - X Peers (interview; observations)
  - Parents
  - X Teacher (interview; observations)
  - X Self (survey, journal; observations)
  - Other:
- X Writes for different purposes:
  - Persuade
  - X Inform (interview; survey; observations)
  - X Entertain (interview; survey; observations)
  - X Narrate (interview; survey; observations)
  - X Other: (survey, journal)
- X Uses technology:
  - X Research (interview)
  - X Process writing (interview, Young Author's)
  - X Other: (interview, lab, once a week)

#### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X Teacher writes:
  - X Email
  - X Journal (survey)
  - X Lesson Plans (direct experience with researcher)
    - Grant proposal
    - Writes curriculum
    - Stories/poems/personal pieces
  - X Other: (interview, writes papers for her Master's level courses)
- X Writes across the content areas:
  - X Math (observations)

- X  Science (survey; observations)
- X  Social Studies (survey; observations)
- Other:

- X  Writing in different forms:
  - Letter writing
  - Poetry
- X  Journals (survey; observations)
- X  Creative writing (interview, Young Author's)
- X  Reports (interview; survey)
- X  Descriptive (artifacts; survey, Narrative)
- X  Fiction (interview, Young Author's; survey; observations; artifacts)
- X  Non-fiction (artifacts; observations; survey)
  - Thematic
  - Seasonal
  - Literature
  - Other:

Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                 |                               |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                 | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          | X                 |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                 |                               |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                 |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           | X                 |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       | X                 |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                 |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           | X                 |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                 |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             | X                 |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> |                   |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  |                   |                               |
|                                |                   |                               |

## Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program (Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #6, School B

Observation Dates: December 14, 2005 & January 11, 2006

Interview Date: January 20, 2006

### Component 1: Standards and Assessment

The following items were in use:

- X  Rubrics (interview; observations; artifact)
- X  Checklists (interview, artifacts; observations)
- X  Self-assessment (survey)
- X  Anecdotal notes {teacher's observations} (interview)
- X  Student to student conferencing (interview)
- X  Teacher to student conferencing (interview; direct observation)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- X  Other: (survey, parent assessment; artifact)

Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop:
  - X  Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time}(interview)
  - Literature
  - X  Minilesson (interview)
  - X  Conferencing:
    - X  Teacher to student (interview)
    - X  Peer to peer (interview)
  - X  Daily writing (direct observation, one hour most weeks, daily)
  - Assessing
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X  Modeled Writing (observations; interview)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts; interview)
- Interactive Writing
- X  Independent Writing (observations)
- Shared Writing
- X  Direct Instruction (interview; observations; survey)
- X  Investigative Research (interview)
- Other:

### Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions



The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- X  Planning (observations; informal observations)
- X  Drafting (observations; informal observations)
- X  Revising (informal observations)
- X  Publishing (informal observations; artifacts; interview)

X  Graphic Organizers used: (observations)

- X  Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository, mixture of Kathy Robinson and teacher designed; informal observations)

X  Skills being taught (interview; observations; survey; informal observation)

X  Systematic instruction through the use of: (observations; interview)

- X  Other: (observations, test preparation)

X  Minilessons

Content and Structure:

- X  Grammar (survey; interview; observations)
- X  Sentence structure (survey, one to one editing; interview)
- X  Vocabulary ( informal observations)
- X  Spelling (survey, one to one editing)
- X  Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(interview)
- X  Paragraph structure (observations; artifacts)
- X  Dialogue (observations; informal observations)
- X  Story Grammar (observations; informal observations)
- X  Narrative (survey; observations; informal observations and conversations)
- X  Expository (survey; observation, informal conversations and observations)
- X  Transitions (observations; artifacts)
- X  Supporting Details (observations; artifacts)
- X  Descriptive (artifact, newspaper article)
- X  Persuasive (informal observation, Ponce Inlet Preserve essays)
- X  Poetic devices (survey)
- X  Letter devices (artifact, newspaper article)
- X  Other: (observations, similes, interpreting a prompt)

Strategies and Skills:

- X  Writing process (observations; artifacts)
- X  Making a book (informal observation)
- X  Illustrating and designing (informal observation)
- X  Self-evaluation (survey, Kathy Robinson's checklist)

Procedures and Routines:

- X  Journals/folders/portfolios (survey)
- X  Locating and using print resources in the room (observations, transparencies, charts)

- Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (observations)
- Organizing papers and writing supplies (observations)

#### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults (artifacts & interview, essay contest)
  - Peers (interview; survey, observations)
  - Parents (observations; artifact, newspaper)
  - Teacher (observations; interview)
  - Self (survey)
  - Other: (artifacts, Water Conservation contest; informal observation, Ponce Inlet Preserve essays, Young Author's
- Writes for different purposes:
  - Persuade (informal observation, Ponce Inlet Preserve essays)
  - Inform (observations; interview, field trips; survey; artifact, Water Conservation contest)
  - Entertain (observations; survey, Young Author's, poetry)
  - Narrate (observations, survey)
  - Other: (interview & informal observations, room contain a variety of "real-objects" for students to see and experience
- Uses technology:
  - Research (interview)
  - Process writing
  - Other: (informal observation, Young Author's)

#### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Teacher writes:
  - Email (direct experience)
    - Journal
  - Lesson Plans (direct experience)
    - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum (interview, writes prompts)
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces (interview, formal letters to governor, congressmen and other dignitaries)
  - Other: (interview, letter to parents, notes)
- Writes across the content areas:
  - Math
  - Science (interview)
  - Social Studies (interview; artifact, newspaper article)

Other:

- X  Writing in different forms:  
 X  Letter writing (artifact, newspaper article)  
 X  Poetry (survey; artifact)  
 X  Journals (survey)  
 X  Creative writing (informal observations, Young Author's)  
 X  Reports (interview)  
 X  Descriptive artifact, newspaper article)  
 X  Fiction (survey; informal observation, Young Author's; observations)  
 X  Non-fiction (artifacts; survey; observations; interview)  
 Thematic  
 Seasonal  
 Literature  
 X  Other: (interview, topics of study)

### Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                 | X                             |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                 |                               |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          |                   |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                 | X                             |
| <b>Student group area</b>      |                   |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           |                   |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       | X                 |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                 |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           | X                 |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                 |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             |                   |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> | X                 |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  | X Transparencies  | X                             |
|                                |                   |                               |

**Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program**  
(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #7, School B  
Observation Dates: November 15, 2005 & January 11, 2006  
Interview Date: November 30, 2005

**Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- X Rubrics (interview; survey, artifact)
- X Checklists (interview; artifact)
- X Self-assessment (interview, artifact)
- X Anecdotal notes {teacher's observations} (interview)
- X Student to student conferencing (interview)
- X Teacher to student conferencing (informal conversation and observation)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- X Other: (artifact, parent involvement)

**Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- X Writer's Workshop:
  - X Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time}(interview; observations)
  - X Literature (interview; observations)
  - X Minilesson (interview; survey)
  - X Conferencing:
    - X Teacher to student (informal observations)
    - X Peer to peer (interview)
  - X Daily writing (observations, one hour, four days a week)
  - X Assessing (interview)
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- X Modeled Writing (observations; interview)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts; interview)
- Interactive Writing
- X Independent Writing (observations)
- X Shared Writing (interview; observations)
- X Direct Instruction (interview; observations; survey)
- X Investigative Research (interview; observations)
- Other:

**Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions**

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- Planning (observations; informal observations)
- Drafting (observations; informal observations)
- Revising (informal observations)
- Publishing (informal observation; artifacts; observations)

Graphic Organizers used: (Kathy Robinson)

- Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository)

Skills being taught (interview; observations; artifacts; survey)

Systematic instruction through the use of: some of Kathy Robinson's and Melissa Forney's material (observations; informal conversations and observations)

Other: (observations, test preparation; artifacts)

Minilessons

Content and Structure:

- Grammar (informal observations, one to one editing)
- Sentence structure (survey; one to one editing)
- Vocabulary (observations, interactive bulletin board; survey)
- Spelling (informal observations, one to one editing)
- Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(informal observations, one to one editing)
- Paragraph structure (observations; artifacts)
- Dialogue (observations)
- Story Grammar (observations, informal observations)
- Narrative (interview; survey; observations; informal conversations and observations)
- Expository (interview; survey; observation, informal conversations and observations)
- Transitions (observations; artifacts)
- Supporting Details (observations; artifacts; survey)
- Descriptive (artifact, newspaper article)
- Persuasive (observations, Ponce Inlet Preserve essay)
- Poetic devices (survey)
- Letter devices (survey; artifact, newspaper)
- Other: (observations, interpreting a prompt, literature as a model; survey, note taking; interview, Quick Writes)

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process (observations; artifacts)
- Making a book (informal observations)
- Illustrating and designing (informal observations)
- Self-evaluation (interview, Kathy Robinson's checklist)

Procedures and Routines:

- X  Journals/folders/portfolios (survey; observations, informal observations)
- X  Locating and using print resources in the room (observations)
- X  Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (survey; interview; observations)
- X  Organizing papers and writing supplies (observations)

#### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Writes for different audiences:
  - X  Adults (observations; artifacts; interview, Ponce Inlet Preserve, Social Studies Projects, Ponce Inlet Garden Club Poetry contest)
  - X  Peers (observations; interview)
  - X  Parents (artifact, newspaper; interview, Invention Convention)
  - X  Teacher (observations)
  - X  Self (survey)
  - X  Other:
- X  Writes for different purposes:
  - X  Persuade (observations, Ponce Inlet Preserve essays)
  - X  Inform (survey; interview; observations, artifacts)
  - X  Entertain (observations; survey; interview, poetry; informal observations, Young Author's)
  - X  Narrate (observations; survey; interview; informal observations, Young Author's)
  - X  Other: (artifact, Water Conservation contest)
- X  Uses technology:
  - X  Research (interview)
  - Process writing
  - X  Other: (informal observation, Young Author's)

#### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Teacher writes:
  - X  Email (interview; direct experience)
  - Journal
  - X  Lesson Plans (interview; direct experience)
  - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum
  - X  Stories/poems/personal pieces (interview)
  - Other:
- X  Writes across the content areas:

- Math
- Science
- X  Social Studies (interview; observations)
- Other:

- X  Writing in different forms:
  - X  Letter writing (artifact, newspaper; survey)
  - X  Poetry (survey; interview)
  - X  Journals (survey)
  - X  Creative writing (survey; informal observation, Young Author's; interview)
  - X  Reports (interview; survey)
  - X  Descriptive (artifact, newspaper)
  - X  Fiction (survey; observations; informal observation, Young Author's; interview)
  - X  Non-fiction (survey; observations; interview)
  - Thematic
  - Seasonal
  - X  Literature (interview; survey)
  - X  Other: (survey, note taking, short and long responses on Holistic assessments; interview, Invention Log)

#### Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room                        | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                                        |                               |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                                        | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          |                                          |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                                        | X                             |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                                        | X                             |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           |                                          |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       | X                                        |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                                        |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |                                          |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                                        |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             |                                          |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> | X                                        |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  | Interactive Vocabulary<br>Bulletin Board | X                             |

**Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program**  
(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

Teacher #8, School B  
Observation Dates: November 30, 2005 & January 11, 2006  
Interview Date: November 16, 2005

**Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- Rubrics (interview; artifact; survey)
- Checklists (interview; artifacts)
- Self-assessment (interview)
- Anecdotal notes {teacher's observations} (interview)
- Student to student conferencing (interview; observations)
- Teacher to student conferencing (informal conversation)
- Sunshine State Standards
- Interest Inventories
- Portfolio Assessment
- Other: (survey, assesses for improvement, as well as for specifics; observation, oral sharing)

**Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop:
  - Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time} (informal conversation, wants to use Writer's Notebook next year; Centers, free choice of topics)
  - Literature (observations)
  - Minilesson (interview)
  - Conferencing:
    - Teacher to student (informal conversation)
    - Peer to peer (interview; survey)
  - Daily writing (interview, whole group, one hour, five days a week; Writer's Workshop Center, one hour each week)
  - Assessing (survey, interview)
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- Modeled Writing (observations; interview)
- Guided Writing (observations, prompts)
- Interactive Writing
- Independent Writing (observations; survey)
- Shared Writing (observations)
- Direct Instruction (interview; observations; survey)
- Investigative Research (interview; survey)



Other:

### **Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions**

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- X Planning (observations, informal observations)
- X Drafting (observations, informal observations)
- X Revising (informal observations; observations; interview)
- X Publishing (interview; informal observations; artifacts; observations)
- X (observations, writing pieces are completed over a three day period)

X Graphic Organizers used: (teacher designed)

- X Types of graphic organizers in use: (observations, Narrative & Expository; informal observations)

X Skills being taught (interview; observations; artifacts; survey)

X Systematic instruction through the use of: Some Kathy Robinson and Melissa Forney's materials (interview; informal observations)

X Other: (observations, test preparation)

X Minilessons

Content and Structure:

- X Grammar (interview)
- X Sentence structure (interview)
- X Vocabulary (observations)
- Spelling
- X Conventions {capitalization, punctuation, etc.}(informal observations)
- X Paragraph structure (observations; artifacts)
- X Dialogue (informal observations)
- X Story Grammar (observations)
- X Narrative (interview; survey; observations)
- X Expository (interview; survey; observation, artifacts)
- X Transitions (interview)
- X Supporting Details (observations; artifacts)
- X Descriptive (artifact, newspaper)
- X Persuasive (informal conversation, Ponce Inlet Preserve essays)
- X Poetic devices (informal observations)
- X Letter devices (survey)
- X Other: (survey, Quick Writes, sticker writing)

Strategies and Skills:

- X Writing process (observations; artifacts)
- X Making a book (informal observations)
- X Illustrating and designing (informal observations)
- X Self-evaluation (interview and survey, various rubrics and whisper phones)

Procedures and Routines:

- X  Journals/folders/portfolios (observations; interview)
- X  Locating and using print resources in the room (observations)
- X  Organizing deadlines and using time effectively (observations)
- X  Organizing papers and writing supplies (interview; observations)

**Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Writes for different audiences:
  - X  Adults (artifacts & interview, essay contest)
  - X  Peers (interview; survey)
  - X  Parents (artifact, newspaper)
  - X  Teacher (survey; interview)
  - X  Self (interview)
  - X  Other: (interview, New Journal, kid's edition)
- X  Writes for different purposes:
  - X  Persuade (interview, Ponce Inlet Preserve essays)
  - X  Inform (survey; artifacts, Water Conservation; interview)
  - X  Entertain (survey; interview; observations)
  - X  Narrate (survey, interview; observations)
  - Other:
- X  Uses technology:
  - X  Research (interview, Social Studies, Yahoo!igans; informal observation, Media Center research)
  - Process writing
  - X  Other: (Informal observations, Young Author's)

**Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- X  Teacher writes:
  - X  Email (interview)
  - Journal
  - X  Lesson Plans (interview)
  - X  Grant proposal (interview)
  - Writes curriculum
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces
  - X  Other: (interview, essays in college, and letters, cards)
- X  Writes across the content areas:
  - X  Math (interview, Math logs, Math poems, uses Marilyn Burn, My Dog

multiplication

- X  Science (interview, science logs; survey)
- X  Social Studies (interview; artifacts, newspaper; survey)
- Other:

X  Writing in different forms:

- X  Letter writing (survey; artifacts, newspaper)
- X  Poetry (artifact; informal observations)
- X  Journals (interview)
- X  Creative writing (survey; interview; observations)
- X  Reports (interview; survey)
- X  Descriptive (artifact, newspaper article)
- X  Fiction (observations; interview; survey; informal observations)
- X  Non-fiction (interview; artifacts; survey)
- Thematic
- Seasonal
- Literature
- Other:

### Room Arrangement

|                                | Available in Room                 | In Use During the Observation |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Posters</b>                 | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Writing Folders</b>         | X                                 | X                             |
| <b>Writing Center</b>          | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Word banks/Word Wall</b>    | X                                 | X                             |
| <b>Student group area</b>      | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Pocket Charts</b>           |                                   |                               |
| <b>Classroom library</b>       | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Computer</b>                | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Encyclopedias</b>           |                                   |                               |
| <b>Dictionaries</b>            | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Thesauruses</b>             |                                   |                               |
| <b>Writing reference books</b> | X                                 |                               |
| <b>Other:</b>                  | Whisper phones;<br>transparencies |                               |
|                                |                                   |                               |

APPENDIX R  
RESTATED INTERVIEW IN ITS ENTIRETY

Interview with Writing Teacher on Assignment, Volusia County Schools  
1/18/06

- What is your job assignment?  
Writing Teacher on Assignment, Reading/Language Arts Department K-5
- What schools do you service?  
I am available to the 47 public schools, to charter schools, and to private schools in Volusia County
- How do you choose the schools with which you work?  
A committee evaluates the FCAT Writing+ results for each school and makes determinations based on test results. This year we have seven targeted schools in writing with which I work most closely. There are also eight additional schools on my watch list. I am available to every school as my schedule permits. I am usually contacted by the principal when help is needed.
- What program/strategy does the county endorse?  
A writing workshop approach is considered best practice in writing in Volusia County Schools. We feel effective, balance writing instruction should begin the very first day of kindergarten. Interactive writing, shared writing, guided writing and independent writing within the parameters of writing workshop will offer our students the opportunity to become lifelong writers.
- Writing in kindergarten and through the first part of first grade looks a little different than a traditional writing workshop. These early/emergent writers are working to understand our system of writing and gain control of early strategies.  
Phonemic awareness activities and phonics instruction are a large part of the writing curriculum. After winter holiday in first grade, a more structured writing workshop can begin to take shape. By second grade, the three main components of writing workshop, the mini-lesson, independent writing, and sharing, should be in place. As the children grow as writers, the components remain the same but the content and craft grow in complexity.
- The Sunshine State Standards are currently being revised. The Reading/Language Arts Department K-5 is awaiting revisions before we complete curriculum maps. All staff development delivered by me is connected to the Sunshine State Standards.

I am in the process of designing genre blocks for second through fifth grade. A genre block is a unit of study designed around a particular type of writing. A genre block is created by looking at the SSS and what teachers are required to teach in a specific grade, choosing a mode of writing that best teaches these strategies and skills, and then designing lessons which include genre characteristics, composing skills, literary skills and writing conventions.

- When I began as a Writing Fusion teacher at Starke Elementary in 1998, my main goal was help the students pass FCAT Writing. At the time, the passing score was 3.0. Students at Starke were considerably behind in writing and had not shown success on the assessment. Kathy Robinson, a fourth grade teacher from Tampa, was invited to Volusia for a workshop. She had designed a very comprehensive, scripted, daily writing curriculum. I began using her materials, along with supplementing other materials, and this helped teach the students about organization, focus and conventions. The students at Starke did learn to write a 3.0 on FCAT Writing, but very few of them got higher scores and it was very noticeable that the students, when tested the next year in fifth grade, we not very good writers. It is my opinion that most schools in Volusia County would be best served if best practices in writing were implemented though a writing workshop approach.
- Writing Workshop  
There are hundreds of books on the market about writing workshop. Two important people to read are Donald Graves and Lucy Calkins. In addition, Ralph Fletcher and Marcia Freeman have wonderful material on writing workshop.
- Fourth grade  
Writing instruction in fourth grade does look a bit different. It is our hope that excellent writing instruction takes place in kindergarten through third grade. If this is the case, then the fourth grade teacher will be able to fine tune fourth graders to pass FCAT Writing+ with flying colors. Fourth graders are tested on expository or fictional or personal narrative. My suggestion is that fourth grade teachers begin the year with a three to four week descriptive writing genre block while introducing writing workshop techniques. Then I suggest teachers spend four weeks in a personal narrative block, four weeks in an expository genre block and 4 weeks in a fictional narrative block. After February, teachers should work on other modes of writing such as research and poetry.
- There are three places to get writing for mini-lessons – teacher writing, student writing and published text. A huge component of writing instruction is published text. Using picture books is an especially effective way to give students the key to the craft. Author techniques are studied through craft lessons and students are encouraged to copy the professionals.
- The six traits of writing model is an approach to assessing and teaching writing. Assessing the traits of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions through analytical scoring provides a language for talking about writing, increases motivation and thinking skills, and empowers students and teachers to take control of their writing growth. Six-trait writing fits within the writing workshop structure.
- FCAT Writing+ will be a two-day test this year. The first assessment is the essay portion of the test. It is a 45-minute demand writing to either a narrative or an expository prompt. The second portion of the test is multiple choice. It will contain four parts – writing plans,

writing samples, cloze samples and stand-alone items. These will test prewriting, revision and editing. This is a base-line year for this part of FCAT Writing+.

APPENDIX S

WELCOMING LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS



Oct. 10, 2005

Dear Participants,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation titled Constructs Unique to Two Elementary Writing Programs. My study will attempt to provide an in-depth view of the type of writing programs fourth grade teachers at Sugar Mill Elementary and Longstreet Elementary subscribe to.

Sugar Mill was selected for the study because 93% of fourth grade students there are considered Highly Proficient in the area of writing by the state of Florida, 2004-05. Clearly, your methods, techniques and materials meet the needs of Sugar Mill's fourth grade population.

Longstreet was chosen as a convenience sample and the proximity to the researcher will allow for minute inspection into the decision-making processes of a writing curriculum.

Data collection will involve:

- Observations
- A written survey
- Interviews
- Focus Group discussions
- Collecting writing artifacts; such as copies of lesson plans, types of prompts used, writing grades, and any other pertinent items considered part of your writing program.

Data collection will begin in October with a classroom observation of a writing lesson and end in February, with a focus group discussion after the writing assessment has been administered.

By agreeing to participate, your success will be objectively documented, with rights to view relevant chapters before they are submitted for publication. Also, every effort will be made not to interfere or disrupt your class proceedings in any way.

A monetary compensation will be presented to you once your official permission has been obtained in writing. Written permission is required under UCF's research department, the IRB.

I would like to begin the initial observations during the week of October 17 through the 21<sup>st</sup> at Sugar Mill Elementary. I understand that your writing blocks are staggered, therefore I hope to observe all five teachers at Sugar Mill Elementary over two day's time. If you could let me know via Email a time convenient to you where I could observe a complete writing lesson during that week, I will arrange to take those days off. Upon request, a copy of the observation tool and focus group questions can be sent to you prior to these dates. Also, if one of the focus group discussions could be conducted after school during that week, I would appreciate it.

Observations at Longstreet Elementary will be arranged individually and in person.

I look forward to meeting all of you and recording your successful approach to teaching writing.

Again, congratulations on your success and thank you for your participation in this action research project!

Sincerely,

Kathy Holt

tholt4@clf.rr.com

APPENDIX T

MATRIX OF SOURCES FOR SURVEY, INTERVIEW, AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Matrix of Sources for the Creation of Written Survey, Interview, and Focus Group Questions  
(Brindley & Schneider's original survey, Appendix K)

**Writing Survey:**

1. What types of writing do children do in your classroom?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question #9
2. How does the state writing exam positively affect writing instruction?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 12
3. How does the state writing exam negatively affect writing instruction?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 14
4. Other than the state writing exam, how do you assess your student's writing?  
Derived from S. Tchudi (1997)

**Focus Group Questions:**

1. What do you believe is your role in teaching writing?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 5
2. How has your writing instruction changed in the last three years?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 6
3. How has your students' attitudes towards writing changed in the last three years?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 7
4. What type of writing do children do in your classroom?  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 9
5. What program/materials do you use to teach writing?  
Researcher's question
6. Do you use the writing Sunshine State Standards as your guide to planning?  
Derived from Bromley (1999), Component One, Standards and Assessment
7. Describe the timeline your use for introducing skills and concepts.  
Derived from Brindley & Schneider's survey, question # 8
8. Describe how writing is integrated into other subject areas in your classroom.  
Derived from Bromley (1999), Component Five, Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum in a Variety of Forms

9. Describe each of these:  
Guided Writing  
Interactive Writing  
Shared Writing  
Derived from Lyons & Pinnell (2001), p. 40

**Interview Questions:**

1. In addition to the rubric used for the Florida Writes, what other kinds of rubrics do you use?  
Derived from Piazza (2003)
2. Describe your use of Writer's Workshop.  
Derived from Piazza (2003), Atwell (1986), Calkins (1983 & 1986), Graves (1975 & 1983)
3. What type of minilessons do you conduct? How often?  
Derived from Piazza (2003); Bromley (1999), Component Three, Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions
4. How do your students share writing?  
Derived from Pizza (2003)
5. How do you bring authenticity and a real-world connection to the writing activities your students complete?  
Derived from Bromley (1999), Component Four, Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences
6. How is technology integrated into your writing program?  
Derived from Bromley (1999), Component Four, Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences
7. What types of writing do you do yourself? Do you share any of them with your students?  
Derived from Bromley (1999), Component Five, Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum in a Variety of Forms
8. What type of research do you students engage in during the year?  
Derived from Bromley (1999), Component Four, Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences

## APPENDIX U

### MATRIX OF SOURCES FOR CREATION OF KEY COMPONENTS

## **Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program**

(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

### **Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

The following items were in use:

- Rubrics (Bromley)
- Checklists (Tchudi)
- Self-assessment (Tchudi)
- Anecdotal notes (Tchudi)
- Student to student conferencing (Writing Workshop, Bromley & Piazza)
- Teacher to student conferencing (Writing Workshop, Bromley & Piazza)
- Sunshine State Standards (Bromley, State of Florida)
- Interest Inventories (Tchudi)
- Portfolio Assessment (Tchudi)
- Other:

### **Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop: (Bromley, Piazza: researchers; Calkins (1994) Graves (1994) Atwell (1987)
  - Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time }
  - Literature
  - Minilessons
  - Conferencing:
    - Teacher to student
    - Peer to peer
  - Daily writing
  - Assessing
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- Modeled Writing (Piazza)
- Guided Writing (Lyons & Pinnell)
- Interactive Writing (Lyons & Pinnell)
- Independent Writing (Lyons & Pinnell)
- Shared Writing (Lyons & Pinnell)
- Direct Instruction (Bromley)
- Investigative Research (Lyons & Pinnell)
- Other:

### Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of: (Bromley)

- Planning
- Drafting
- Revising
- Publishing

Graphic Organizers used: (Bromley)

Types of graphic organizers in use:

Skills being taught (Bromley)

Systematic instruction through the use of:

Other:

Minilessons (Bromley, Piazza: Writing Workshop; researchers, Calkins (1994), Graves (1994) & Atwell (1987))

Content and Structure:

- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Conventions { capitalization, punctuation, etc. }
- Paragraph structure
- Dialogue
- Story Grammar
- Narrative (Kathy Robinson, 1995)
- Expository (Kathy Robinson)
- Transitions (Kathy Robinson)
- Supporting Details (Kathy Robinson)
- Descriptive (Kathy Robinson)
- Persuasive (Piazza)
- Poetic devices
- Letter devices (Piazza)
- Other:

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process (Bromley & Piazza, Writing Workshop)
- Making a book (Piazza)
- Illustrating and designing (Piazza)
- Self-evaluation (Tchudi & Bromley)



Procedures and Routines:

- Journals/folders/portfolios (Piazza)
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- Organizing deadlines and using time effectively
- Organizing papers and writing supplies

#### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Writes for different audiences: (Bromley)
  - Adults
  - Peers
  - Parents
  - Teacher
  - Self
  - Other:
- Writes for different purposes: (Bromley)
  - Persuade
  - Inform
  - Entertain
  - Narrate
  - Other:

- Uses technology: (Bromley)
  - Research
  - Process writing
  - Other:

#### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Teacher writes: (Bromley)
  - Email
  - Journal
  - Lesson Plans
  - Grant proposal
  - Writes curriculum
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces
  - Other:

- Writes across the content areas: (Bromley, Piazza)
  - Math
  - Science
  - Social Studies
  - Other:

- Writing in different forms:
  - Letter writing (Piazza)
  - Poetry (Piazza)
  - Journals (Bromley & Piazza)
  - Creative writing (researcher)
  - Reports (Bromley)
  - Descriptive (Kathy Robinson, Piazza)
  - Fiction (researcher)
  - Non-fiction (researcher)
  - Thematic (Bromley)
  - Seasonal (researcher)
  - Literature (Bromley)
  - Other:

**Room Arrangement**  
(researcher)

|                         | Available in Room | In Use During the Observation |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Posters                 |                   |                               |
| Writing Folders         |                   |                               |
| Writing Center          |                   |                               |
| Word banks/Word Wall    |                   |                               |
| Student group area      |                   |                               |
| Pocket Charts           |                   |                               |
| Classroom library       |                   |                               |
| Computer                |                   |                               |
| Encyclopedias           |                   |                               |
| Dictionaries            |                   |                               |
| Thesauruses             |                   |                               |
| Writing reference books |                   |                               |
| Other:                  |                   |                               |
|                         |                   |                               |

APPENDIX V  
AGGREGATE TOTALS

## **Key Components of a Comprehensive Writing Program**

(Piazza, 2003; Bromley, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tchudi 1997)

### **Component 1: Standards and Assessment**

(The following table provides information on the total number of participants that utilize these strategies and techniques. Please note: Some teachers may employ these strategies but they were not observed in use during the period of data collection.)

The following items were in use:

- Rubrics (8 out of 8)
- Checklists (8 out of 8)
- Self-assessment (8 out of 8)
- Anecdotal notes (5 out of 8)
- Student to student conferencing (5 out of 8)
- Teacher to student conferencing (8 out of 8)
- Sunshine State Standards (8 out of 8)
- Interest Inventories (none)
- Portfolio Assessment (one)
- Other: Oral Sharing (8 out of 8)

### **Component 2: Large Blocks of Time; Reading, Writing, Talking, Sharing**

The following strategies and techniques were in use:

- Writer's Workshop: (2 out of 8, full implementation)
  - Author's Chair, Circle Time {sharing time}(5 out of 8)
  - Literature (7 out of 8)
  - Minilessons (8 out of 8)
  - Conferencing:
    - Teacher to student (8 out of 8)
    - Peer to peer (5 out of 8)
  - Daily writing (8 out of 8)
  - Assessing (8 out of 8)
  - Other:

Instructional Methods:

- Modeled Writing (8 out of 8)
- Guided Writing (3 out of 8)
- Interactive Writing (none)
- Independent Writing (8 out of 8)
- Shared Writing (8 out of 8)
- Direct Instruction (8 out of 8)
- Investigative Research (8 out of 8)
- Other:

### Component 3: Direct Instruction in Composing and Conventions

The following instructional techniques were in use:

Process Writing, evidence of:

- Planning (8 out of 8)
  - Drafting (8 out of 8)
  - Revising (3 out of 8)
  - Publishing (6 out of 8)
- 
- Graphic Organizers used: (8 out of 8)
    - Types of graphic organizers in use:(Narrative & Expository, 8 out of 8)
- 
- Skills being taught (8 out of 8)
  - Systematic instruction through the use of: (Kathy Robinson, 5 out of 8; other, 8 out of 8)
  - Other:

Minilessons (8 out of 8, unless otherwise stated)

Content and Structure:

- Grammar
- Sentence structure
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Conventions { capitalization, punctuation, etc. }
- Paragraph structure
- Dialogue
- Story Grammar
- Narrative
- Expository
- Transitions
- Supporting Details
- Descriptive
- Persuasive (3 out of 8)
- Poetic devices
- Letter devices (7 out of 8)
- Other:

Strategies and Skills:

- Writing process (8 out of 8)
- Making a book (6 out of 8)
- Illustrating and designing (6 out of 8)
- Self-evaluation (checklists, 8 out of 8)

Procedures and Routines: (8 out of 8)

- Journals/folders/portfolios
- Locating and using print resources in the room
- Organizing deadlines and using time effectively
- Organizing papers and writing supplies

### **Component 4: Choice and Authenticity in Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Writes for different audiences:
  - Adults (3 out of 8)
  - Peers (8 out of 8)
  - Parents (3 out of 8)
  - Teacher (8 out of 8)
  - Self (8 out of 8)
  - Other:
- Writes for different purposes: (8 out of 8)
  - Persuade
  - Inform
  - Entertain
  - Narrate
  - Other:
- Uses technology:
  - Research (8 out of 8)
  - Process writing (Young Authors, 5 out of 8) (none for writing instruction)
  - Other:

### **Component 5: Writing to Construct Meaning Across the Curriculum In a Variety of Forms**

The following instructional techniques were in use.

- Teacher writes:
  - Email (8 out of 8)
  - Journal (8 out of 8)
  - Lesson Plans (8 out of 8)
  - Grant proposal (one out of 8)
  - Writes curriculum (none)
  - Stories/poems/personal pieces ( 5 out of 8)
  - Other:
- Writes across the content areas:
  - Math (8 out of 8)
  - Science (8 out of 8)
  - Social Studies (8 out of 8)

Other:

Writing in different forms: (Please note: Data collection pertaining to this section was beyond the scope of this study and results are inconclusive.)

- Letter writing (7 out of 8)
- Poetry (5 out of 8)
- Journals (8 out of 8)
- Creative writing (no information)
- Reports (8 out of 8)
- Descriptive (no information)
- Fiction (no information)
- Non-fiction (8 out of 8)
- Thematic (3 out of 8)
- Seasonal (1 out of 8)
- Literature (no information)
- Other:

**Room Arrangement**  
(researcher)

|                            | Available in Room | In Use During the Observation |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Posters                    | 8 out of 8        | 8 out of 8                    |
| Writing Folders            | 8 out of 8        | 8 out of 8                    |
| Writing Centers            | 1 out of 8        |                               |
| Word banks/Word Wall       | 8 out of 8        | 8 out of 8                    |
| Student group area         | 7 out of 8        | 2 out of 8                    |
| Pocket Charts              | 3 out of 8        |                               |
| Classroom library          | 5 out of 8        |                               |
| Computer                   | 8 out of 8        |                               |
| Encyclopedias              | 2 out of 8        |                               |
| Dictionaries               | 8 out of 8        |                               |
| Thesauruses                | 3 out of 8        |                               |
| Writing reference books    | 3 out of 8        |                               |
| Other: Transparencies      | 7 out of 8        | 7 out of 8                    |
| Whisper Phones             | 1 out of 8        |                               |
| Interactive Bulletin Board | 1 out of 8        |                               |

APPENDIX W  
IRB DOCUMENTS





Office of Research & Commercialization

October 20, 2005

Kathleen Holt  
265 Country Circle Dr. West  
Port Orange, FL 32128

Dear Ms. Holt:

With reference to your protocol #05-2984 entitled, "**Constructs Unique to Two Volusia County Elementary School Writing Programs,**" I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved on 10/19/05 and the expiration date will be 10/18/06.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB office when you have completed this research study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

*Barbara Ward*

Barbara Ward, CIM  
UCF IRB Coordinator  
(FWA00000351, IRB00001138)

Copies: IRB File  
Jeffrey Kaplan, Ph.D.

BW:jm



THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

*IRB Committee Approval Form*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): Kathleen Holt IRB #: 05-2984  
(Supervisor: Jeffrey Kaplan, Ph.D)

PROJECT TITLE: Constructs Unique to Two Volusia County Elementary School Writing Programs

- New project submission
- Continuing review of lapsed project # \_\_\_\_\_
- Study expires: \_\_\_\_\_
- Initial submission was approved by full board review but continuing review can be expedited
- Suspension of enrollment email sent to PI, entered on spreadsheet, administration notified \_\_\_\_\_
- Resubmission of lapsed project # \_\_\_\_\_
- Continuing review of # \_\_\_\_\_
- Initial submission was approved by expedited review

Chair  
 Expedited Approval

IRB Reviewers:

Dated: 10/19/06  
Cite how qualifies for expedited review: minimal risk and \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Sophia Dziegielewski, Vice-Chair

Exempt  
Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cite how qualifies for exempt status: minimal risk and \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jacqueline Byers, Chair  
Signed: *Tracy Dietz*  
Dr. Tracy Dietz, Designated Reviewer

Expiration  
Date: 10/18/06

Complete reverse side of expedited or exempt form

- Waiver of documentation of consent approved
- Waiver of consent approved
- Waiver of HIPAA Authorization approved

NOTES FROM IRB CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX X

2006 FCAT WRITING + PROMPTS

2006 FCAT Writing + Prompts—Grade 4

**Writing to Explain (Expository)**

Students were asked to choose something fun to do outside and explain what makes that activity fun.

**Writing to Tell a Story (Narrative)**

Students were asked to write a story about a time an animal does something smart.

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