

RESULTS

with

GLENCOE WRITER'S CHOICE GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals for sharing their experiences with the *Glencoe Writer's Choice Grammar and Composition* program:

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July 2005

Results. More than at any other time in recent history, attention is being focused on the results our schools produce. Expectations have been raised. Student performance standards have been identified for virtually every school subject. But now, more than ever before, language arts teachers and administrators are being called upon to challenge their students in becoming inquisitive and active learners. To achieve the high goals set by the standards, educators and others involved in language arts education will need to use an array of state-of-the-art strategies and tools.

This report tells the stories of 12 schools in eight districts that have implemented *Writer's Choice*, and have been successful in teaching grammar and composition skills, as evidenced by student performance on assessments, feedback from students and parents, and responses from teachers. These results demonstrate the benefits of an effective grammar and composition program as well as successful teaching practices.

The schools described here also share several other critically important common characteristics. They all have

- improved student performance.
- created exciting climates within their schools to encourage learning.
- monitored student progress during the school year to ensure effective instruction.
- demonstrated the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students, not just the brightest or most privileged.

The leaders of the schools described herein are eager to share what they have learned and to see their practices and experiences spread to other schools. Please feel free to contact the people identified in each article. We've provided telephone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses whenever possible.

Let's learn from the examples set by these schools. In doing this, we can help our children become the successful learners they need to be to face the challenges and promises of the future.

Introduction

Facing a blank page—or blank computer screen—and knowing that you have to put words on it to communicate with an audience is a daunting prospect, even for accomplished writers. The act of writing to an audience who will inevitably judge your product, inside or outside school, is a complicated and even scary task. Writing is a disorderly, often frustrating, and difficult undertaking.

It is no wonder that teachers see writing as hard to teach, and students see it as hard to learn. It is both—difficult to teach and difficult to do. One important reason for this difficulty is that *writing is thinking made manifest on the page*. The teaching of writing, then, as well as the learning of it, directly involves the human process of thinking itself—thinking in the raw, or thinking from scratch. The skillful writer is an accomplished thinker, able to create and to interpret, to reason carefully and to imagine powerfully. If a piece of writing doesn't work, it reveals flaws in one's thinking. So writing in the school curriculum may be the most challenging subject—if we can call it a subject—that teachers, students, and parents face each year.

And now, in the year 2005, it has even been added to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the formidable SAT! The first 25 minutes of that test now require that students produce a piece of writing on demand. Writing has always been important in the school curriculum, and in society at large, but its importance keeps growing. There is a widespread recognition that a capable writer is a person of influence, control, and power.

If I am even close to right in saying what I've said here, then teachers, parents, and students can use plenty of help and support with the enormously complex process of writing in the school curriculum. That's where Glencoe's *Writer's Choice* comes in. This textbook program was years in the making, and it involved significant input from some of the best teachers, researchers, and practitioners of the writing process in America. As you will

see in this booklet review of twelve schools in eight of the nation's school districts, all the time and expertise that led to the publication of *Writer's Choice* for grades 6–12 are now paying satisfying dividends. Teachers who use this textbook series are feeling empowered, and students and parents who work with these teachers are feeling successful and excited. What you will see in the following pages are educators' testimonies—coupled with hard evidence—that endorse the comprehensiveness, the practicality, the ease of use, the flexibility, and the creativity of *Writer's Choice*, an instructional program that truly works.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denny Wolfe".

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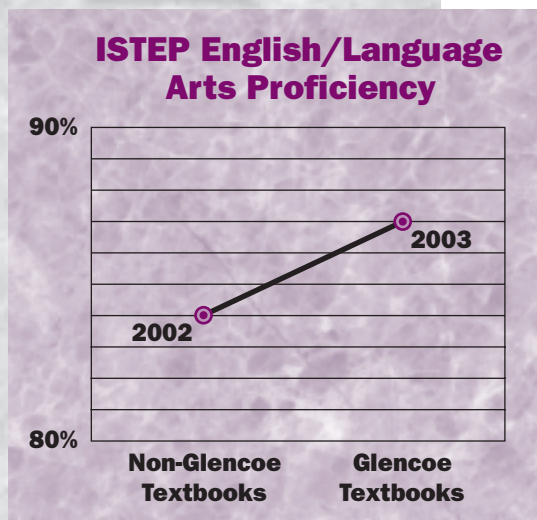
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Carroll High School

Northwest Allen County School District, Fort Wayne, IN

The Northwest Allen County School District serves a suburban community seven miles northwest of Fort Wayne, the state's second largest city (pop. 205,000). It is one of the leading Fort Wayne-area school districts and draws a large number of new students each year. Five Northwest Allen County schools, including Carroll High School, have been or are "Four Star Schools," ranking in the top 25% of Indiana schools for attendance and Indiana Statewide Testing and Educational Progress (ISTEP) scores. Northwest Allen County Schools' current enrollment of 5,500 students in grades K through 12 is predominantly Caucasian.

Carroll High School serves all 1,600 secondary students in Northwest Allen County. It currently maintains a 98% graduation rate and a 97% attendance rate, and 85% of its students pursue a postsecondary education. Carroll High School has been named an "Indiana Best Buy School" in four of the last six years and a "Head of the Class" school the past two years.



Preparing Students for State Testing

All 450 students at the Carroll Freshman Campus use *Glencoe Writer's Choice* in their English classes. Northwest Allen County School District adopted the *Writer's Choice* program because it closely aligned with Indiana's English and Language Arts Standards. The program was implemented at the start of the 2002–2003 school year. Ninth-grade English teacher J'Nelle Hamilton explains, "With *Writer's Choice*, our students have a book that covers everything they'll need to know regarding grammar and composition for their state assessment. *Writer's Choice* aligns perfectly with the state's standards: It covers all the

grammar and the different types of writing, with examples and practice throughout."

Jennifer Messer, another 9th grade English teacher at the Carroll Freshman Campus, adds, "*Writer's Choice* does a good job of preparing students for state tests and more advanced writing classes they'll take in the future. There are sections of the book that provide help with study skills and different forms of writing. For example, we focused recently on a section on narrative writing."

Supporting Student Learning

For grammar skills to develop, students need material that is presented clearly and offers multiple opportunities for practice. Ms. Hamilton finds these features in *Glencoe Writer's Choice*. "I really find that

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the grammar sections in *Writer's Choice* are effective. The order in which the material is presented makes sense. The concepts build upon previous concepts in a way that the students can understand. I also really like that there are exercises at the end of each unit to provide review and practice. They are not so detailed that students get bored. *Writer's Choice* also provides flexibility for different levels of learners because each of its grammar lessons has two parts to the directions. One day I can do the first part of the lesson, and if I see students are struggling with it I can have them do the second part the next day. With more advanced students, I just have them do both the parts at once to keep them focused. There's also a grammar workbook, which I use fairly often, which gives the students even more practice activities."

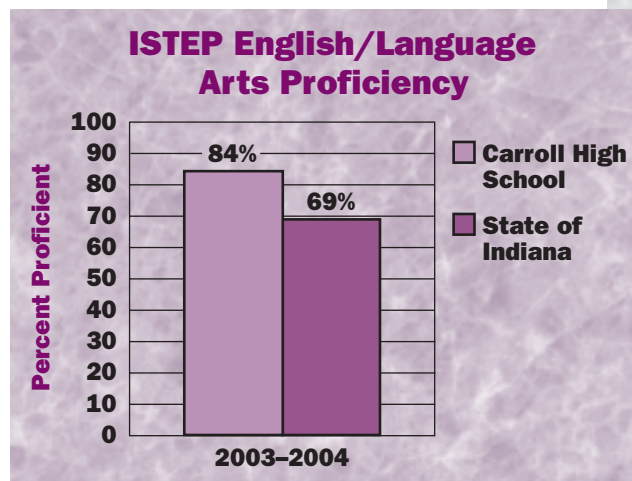
Resources for Teachers

Among the many aspects of *Writer's Choice* that English teachers at the Carroll Freshman Campus appreciate are the teacher resources. Ms. Messer says that "Glencoe has more for teachers in their materials than other textbooks. There are supplementary workbooks for teaching and reteaching that have a lot of exercises on a variety of grammar topics. There are a lot of supplements for writing practice as well that can be used for extra assessment, in addition to the ExamView® Pro test bank, which is one of the most utilized tools in our English Department. That alone sets *Writer's Choice* apart from other grammar and composition textbooks."

Seeing Success

Both Ms. Messer and Ms. Hamilton see signs of student success with *Glencoe Writer's Choice*. Ms. Hamilton comments, "I know that my students have less confusion using this program. They have learned its system, how it works, and they understand what they have to do." Although it is still early to draw conclusions about the success of *Glencoe Writer's Choice*

in bringing up standardized test scores at Carroll High School, there are some preliminary signs of improvement at this already high-achieving school. The first class of Carroll High School freshmen to use *Glencoe Writer's Choice* took their 10th grade ISTEP English and Language Arts assessment at the start of the 2003–2004 school year. More Carroll High School students who took that test were proficient in English and language arts than in previous years (87% in 2003–2004 compared with 84% in 2002–2003). This increase is a positive trend for a school that is already well above state proficiency averages (87% at Carroll High School versus 69% statewide in 2003–2004).



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East Baton Rouge Parish School System

Broadmoor Senior High School & Tara High School, Baton Rouge, LA

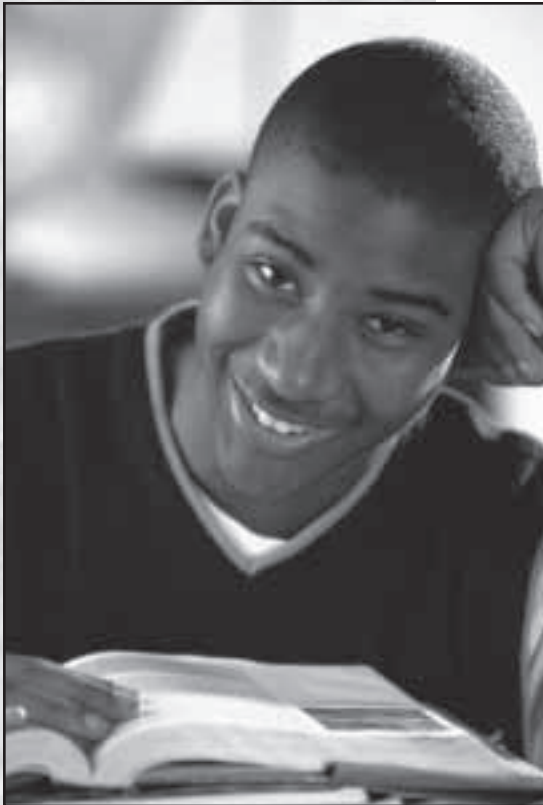
East Baton Rouge Parish (pop. 412,447) includes Louisiana's state capital, Baton Rouge, one of the largest cities situated on the Mississippi River. The East Baton Rouge Parish School System serves the Greater Baton Rouge Area. It is the third-largest district in the state and among the top 75 nationally in student enrollment. The system is composed of 88 schools with an enrollment of approximately 45,000 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

Broadmoor Senior High School and Tara High School are two of 17 high schools in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. Both schools serve students in 8th through 12th grade. Broadmoor Senior High has a student body of just over 1,000 students—54% African American, 41% Caucasian, 4% Asian, 1% Hispanic/Latino, and less than 1% American Indian. Tara High has the largest student body, of which 55% are African American, 42% are Caucasian, 2% are Asian, and 2% are Hispanic/Latino. At the last language arts textbook adoption, *Glencoe Writer's Choice* was chosen for high school students in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

An Abundance of Support for Teachers

"*Writer's Choice* offers an abundance of materials to supplement the text," according to Joyce Wilson, English Department Chair at Tara High School. She continues, "Our teachers were and are really impressed and enthusiastic about what *Writer's Choice* offers. It offers more technology than we have ever had, which is great because we are a technology school. Every teacher has a computer in their room, and students have access to computers in our school labs, so we can teach straight from the technology Glencoe provides. Our students don't even need to bring their textbooks home either, because they each have a StudentWorks™ CD-ROM, which is the electronic version of the Student Edition. You can't ask for anything better than that. I say, 'Hats off to Glencoe.' I love their program and their abundance of materials. Nothing is hard anymore now that we have *Writer's Choice*. You no longer have to search for

anything; it is all at your fingertips—activities, skills, answers. It cuts down on your research time, and that is important because it saves time for other important tasks."



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An Easy Program to Use

Many teachers in East Baton Rouge Parish are impressed not only with the abundance of materials but also the ease of use of those materials. Connie Denicola, 10th grade teacher at Broadmoor, states, "*Writer's Choice* is a wonderful book that provides a lot of writing opportunities for students. It is very logical and very easy to use, and does an excellent job of teaching important skills." Dianne Talbot, 11th grade teacher also at Broadmoor, shares, "I think *Writer's Choice* is a wonderful textbook and tool. It is well laid out, has wonderful examples and models of writing, and it is up-to-date. I find it easy to use because its instructions and models are easy to follow."

Sharmayne Rutledge, 11th grade teacher from Tara High School, likes that *Writer's Choice* provides guidance for reaching different learning styles and abilities. She states, "My experience with *Writer's Choice* has been a very successful one. One aspect of *Writer's Choice* that I really like is that it has ideas for reaching different learning styles. For example, at the end of a unit, students can write a paragraph, work in groups to change the ending of the story, put together a visual representation of the story, create a song or poem, etc. I enjoy using the text and supporting materials that go with it. I would encourage other schools and parishes to adopt *Writer's Choice*."

Measuring Success

Teachers measure success of the *Writer's Choice* program in a variety of ways in East Baton Rouge Parish. Many teachers report an improvement in language arts skills. Ms. Rutledge shares, "I believe that our student skills have greatly improved with *Writer's Choice*—writing skills, combining-sentence skills, and test-taking skills." Ms. Wilson adds, "I have seen improvement in student skills, especially

grammar, because with *Writer's Choice*, we can always refer them to the grammar and say, 'This is how it should be—now apply.'"

Ms. Wilson reports a change in student attitudes toward writing since the school implemented *Writer's Choice*. "Students are beginning to learn the process of writing, and some eventually enjoy it. If they don't like one type of writing, there is always another that they may like better." Ms. Wilson also thinks that "*Writer's Choice* helps us do a good job of preparing students for college by developing skills in writing research papers, abstracts, technical writing, and developing charts and graphs. These are all things our students will encounter in college." Ms. Davis supports Ms. Wilson's assumption: "I've received direct feedback from students who have come back to see me from college, and they tell me even though they weren't 'A' students in high school that they were well prepared for college and they are getting A's now. Some have even said that they had so much work in high school that college is easy."

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J. H. Williams Middle School

Vermilion Parish School Board, Abbeville, LA

Vermilion Parish, one of Louisiana's largest and most diverse parishes, is located in the southern coastal area of the state. J. H. Williams Middle School, located in Abbeville (pop. 11,887), Louisiana, is one of the 20 schools—11 elementary, 3 middle, and 6 high schools—in Vermilion Parish. It serves just over 700 students in grades 6 through 8. Its student population is 46% African American, 46% Caucasian, 8% Asian, and less than 1% Hispanic/Latino. Its school motto is *Joining Hands to Work Together for Academic Success*.

For the 2001–2002 school year, J. H. Williams Middle School selected *Glencoe Writer's Choice* for its 6th grade language arts classes. Ms. Florence Williams, 6th grade teacher and member of the parish textbook committee, explains, "*Writer's Choice* was one of the textbooks adopted for language arts by our parish. Being on the textbook committee, we looked at about five different textbooks, but it was *Writer's Choice* that was selected. I liked the textbook layout, the *Teacher Wraparound Edition* and supporting materials. *Writer's Choice* has a variety of materials to use. I was especially fascinated by all the technology. There are CDs I can use with all of the students who need more assistance and practice, and CDs that I can use with the gifted students to challenge them."

Teaching with *Writer's Choice*

Sixth-grade teachers at J. H. Williams Middle School unanimously find *Writer's Choice* easy to use.

Jackie Trahan, 6th grade teacher, says, "My *Teacher Wraparound Edition* and the Resource Manager are just wonderful. The Resource Manager lists all the materials available, where to find them, and what specific skill or type of writing the material focuses on. Another favorite resource of mine is the workbook. I like it and use it often because it focuses on one specific skill at a time, and each lesson provides the basic grammar rules used in the lesson that students can refer to when completing their work. A couple of years ago I started using the Bellringer Activities and found them very useful."

Ms. Williams adds, "*Writer's Choice* links grammar to literature and connects lessons to the real world. I use the supplemental materials that *Writer's Choice* provides. I especially like the teacher tips and supplemental materials for students who are English Language Learners." Like Ms. Trahan, Ms. Williams finds the Bellringer Activities useful.

Myra Allen, Special Education/Resource Teacher, also finds *Writer's Choice* very easy to use. She comments, "If you follow the *Teacher Wraparound Edition*, everything is pretty self-explanatory, and it guides you to the other resources you can incorporate into the lesson. An

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inexperienced teacher could be successful using this program with everything that is available to them."

Meeting the Needs of Special Education Students

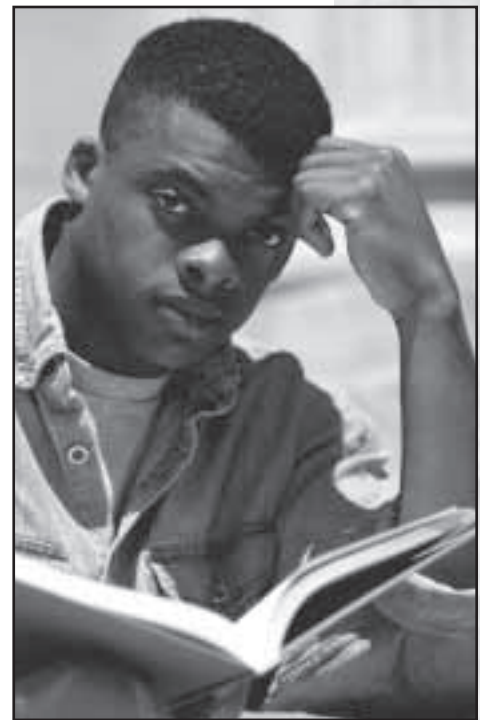
J. H. Williams Middle School does not provide separate classes for special education students. They are mainstreamed into regular classes. Ms. Allen accomodates eight special education students in their regular classes and comments on her experiences using *Writer's Choice* with those students. "I love *Writer's Choice* because it is very flexible, creative, and it accommodates the learning styles and abilities of our special education students. We use the *Presentation Plus!* CD-ROM that has the lessons in the text. The students really seem to like information presented visually. The program also provides other resources like the *Language Arts PASS* CD-ROM that is geared to the lower-level student. With *Language Arts PASS*, the students I work with seem to understand an idea or concept a lot quicker. Our special education students are definitely progressing along quite well with *Writer's Choice*."

Piquing Student Interest and Seeing Results

With *Writer's Choice*, J. H. Williams Middle School teachers have found that their students are more engaged in their language arts classes, and as a result, their writing skills are improving. Ms. Williams relates, "Most student are reluctant to write when they first come to class, but when you introduce writing the way it is presented in *Writer's Choice*, it seems to build their confidence and their skills improve. *Writer's Choice* connects lessons to the real world with TIME Magazine features, and it discusses movies that the students are familiar with. The artwork in the text and materials provides the students with food for thought. Often they go to the computers and research an artist after they've seen the artwork."

When asked what her students would say if asked about *Writer's Choice*, Ms. Williams responded, "My students enjoy the Dinah Zike's reading and study skills Foldables™, MindJogger Videoquizzes, and the workbook."

Mrs. Allen reports that she "can see the enthusiasm in the students when using the *Writer's Choice* program and its resources, especially the Bellringer Activities and MindJogger Videoquizzes. *Writer's Choice* gets them interested in writing with the prompts that they provide, and the lessons really get them thinking about the writing process. I think the students really enjoy writing more now and are more comfortable with it, and our test scores prove that. We have seen a big improvement, and I think that is partially due to all the things that are available to the students with *Writer's Choice*."



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Lloyd Wood Middle School

Tuscaloosa County School System, Northport, AL

Tuscaloosa County (pop. 164,875) is located in western Alabama on the Black Warrior River, about one hour southwest of Birmingham. It is home to the University of Alabama, a Mercedes-Benz M-class SUV assembly plant, and a Michelin Tire factory.

The Tuscaloosa County School System is responsible for educating almost 16,000 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in its 29 schools countywide. Lloyd Wood Middle School is one of the 29 schools and serves just under 600 of the county's students—74% Caucasian, 24% African American, and 1% Hispanic/Latino—in 6th through 8th grade. The school's mission is "to nurture the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of all students as they advance towards future educational opportunities."

Lloyd Wood Middle School found a language arts program that worked and adopted it for the second time in 2001; that program was *Glencoe Writer's Choice*.

A Teacher-Friendly Program

Both veteran teachers and new teachers at Lloyd Wood Middle School find *Writer's Choice* to be a teacher-friendly program. Parketta Pope, 6th grade teacher and one of the newer teachers reports, "*Writer's Choice* is teacher friendly; it has so many materials to go along with the textbook, and enables teachers to reach students of all diversities. *Writer's Choice* is an excellent resource, and I like the way the book is setup. The chapters build from one topic to the next, and the lessons connect to real life. I love that about the book. *Writer's Choice* is a very beneficial tool that makes learning English fun and exciting for all students."

Amber Williams, 7th grade teacher at Lloyd Wood, shares her experiences using *Writer's Choice* as a first-time teacher. "I think *Writer's Choice* is a valuable resource because it addresses all issues of grammar and writing that should be addressed in middle school. For the most part, I find using *Writer's Choice* easy to use. We now have inclusion classes at our school, and *Writer's Choice* works equally well for all students. It accommodates the different learning styles and levels of students, and the way it presents the material, it allows me to meet their differing needs. I particularly like the chapter review and exercises at the end of each chapter, because they provide a good review and preparation for the test. There are so many resources that come with *Writer's Choice* that are on CD-ROM. Those CD-ROMs are indispensable. If I lost them I would be lost myself."

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Jennifer Calhoun, 7th and 8th grade veteran teacher and longtime user of Glencoe materials, adds, "*Writer's Choice* is easy to use, and the materials are self-explanatory. You can make it meet your needs because it is very flexible and well written. A new teacher would be able to pick up the *Teacher Wraparound Edition* and the other materials and be successful because everything you need is supplied. I find it easy to use with all levels of students. It gives me tips for adapting lessons for lower students and ESL students, and for more advanced students it has enrichment activities. *Writer's Choice* also provides plenty of practice for students, so if you see that the objective wasn't met, there are still more practice opportunities left over for reteaching. Overall, I think the program meets not only the needs of the teacher, but the needs of all students."

Preparing Students for Future Success

According to Lloyd Wood Middle School teachers, students like *Writer's Choice*, and it shows with improvements in language arts skills and test scores. Ms. Calhoun comments, "Our scores have consistently improved in the English area of the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), and I've particularly seen an improvement in their grammar skills. I think you have to attribute that to the textbook they are using. My student like *Writer's Choice* because they learn more than just English, they learn fun and interesting things, like Greek mythology."

Ms. Pope agrees with Ms. Calhoun and has also seen an improvement in grammar skills. She and Ms. Williams also report that *Writer's Choice* does a very good job of preparing students for more advanced writing and language arts. Ms. Williams continues, "I think our students learn more with *Writer's Choice* than they would from another language arts program, and I think they find it engaging, especially the writing. In 7th grade, all Alabama students take a writing assessment test that includes

grammar and usage, sentence formation, writing mechanics, and holistic composition, and *Writer's Choice* prepares them well for this test, because we can show them concrete examples from it. Student skills in grammar and writing have improved, along with test scores, and that is a testament to this book."

Parental Approval

Not only do Lloyd Wood Middle School teachers and students like *Glencoe Writer's Choice*, but so do parents. Ms. Williams reports, "I have had positive comments from parents about *Writer's Choice*. Parents have said to me that they have seen improvements in their children's writing, and believe that it is a result of the textbook we use, *Writer's Choice*."



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Meadow Bridge High School

Fayette County Schools, Meadow Bridge, WV

The small town of Meadow Bridge (pop. 400) is located in Fayette County (pop. 48,000) in southern West Virginia. The town is situated about 60 miles southeast of the city of Charleston (pop. 50,000), West Virginia's capital. Fayette County, a rural community with spectacular natural beauty, includes part of the New River Gorge recreation area. The region is known for its scenic beauty and the abundance of outdoor recreational activities on its rivers, lakes and forested mountains.

Meadow Bridge High School, one of four high schools in the Fayette County School District, serves a predominantly Caucasian student population of 300 in grades 7–12. The school draws students from the town of Meadow Bridge and the surrounding rural areas. Nearly 65% of the students who attend Meadow Bridge High School receive free or reduced-price lunch, well above the West Virginia average of 41%.

The Fayette County School District adopted *Glencoe Writer's Choice* at the start of the 2001–2002 school year as the primary grammar and composition textbook for all students in grades 7–12.

Engaging All Students

Meadow Bridge High School believes it has found a program that engages all students in the learning process with *Glencoe Writer's Choice*. Elizabeth Hamlin, a veteran English teacher at Meadow Bridge High School, shares how *Glencoe Writer's Choice* has been making an impact at her school. "The *Writer's Choice* program is right for us. It's a very user-friendly program for the students, and I see them using it more enthusiastically than other programs we've had in the past, and that is very positive." Jessica O'Dell, another English teacher at Meadow Bridge High School, feels *Glencoe Writer's Choice* is a good match as well. "I believe student skills have improved over the course of the year, as well as from year to year, with this program."

Ms. O'Dell continues, "Visual learners are very well accommodated by *Writer's Choice* with the interactive CD-ROM, the transparencies, and the excellent graphics throughout the text." Ms. Hamlin adds, "Kids have different learning styles. I think the tactile and kinesthetic learners find the workbook very appealing. The auditory learners can link the stories we read to the grammar exercises we do. Glencoe has very methodically integrated the grammar exercises with the literature selections in *Writer's Choice*. Students find such overlap 'coincidental,' but it is actually meticulous planning on the part of Glencoe."

Ms. Hamlin also speaks to reaching various learning abilities: "I can reach all the students in my classroom with the supplemental materials provided with this program. I use the *Sentence Diagraming* CD-ROM for more advanced students who get through the workbook activities



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quickly, because it has more advanced work for them. I haven't had to use it in-depth, but there are great remediation opportunities available with the *Language Arts PASS* CD-ROM. This provides basic tutorials and includes all the elements and simple mechanics of the grammar units, and the content can be broken down into many grade levels below what we normally teach. It provides serious remediation, if that is needed."

Helping Teachers Meet State Standards

Having a program that meets all of the Content Standard Objectives (CSO) in English is essential for Fayette County Schools.

Ms. O'Dell shares, "I've been teaching for three years now, and I'm finding improvement in my teaching all the time. I think Glencoe has helped me improve, and they definitely helped make sure all the CSOs are met. Their material is very complete and provides the students with exactly what they need to know. Our grammar and writing standards are completely covered with *Writer's Choice*. All the content needed for our 8th and 10th grade writing assessment is presented." Ms. Hamlin adds, "New teachers can look at this book and see that it is aligned directly with our CSOs. There are hundreds of clearly referenced CSOs in *Writer's Choice*—you can open your *Teacher Wraparound Edition* and find them easily."

Reaching Today's Students with Technology

Despite being a small rural school, Meadow Bridge High School is well equipped for using an array of educational technology. Ms. Hamlin shares, "The technology resources that come with the *Writer's Choice* program set it apart from other grammar and composition textbooks on the market. Specifically, the composition work in *Writer's Choice* is more heavily computerized than any other program I've used or seen, and I love it. There is an amazing interactive workbook that comes with

the program that is flexible and perfectly paced for my students. I found my students were not responding as well to the printed version of the workbook, so I wanted to make the interactive workbook more accessible. We decided to add the Interactive Workbook onto our school's server, so it could be accessed everywhere there's a computer in the school. It's made a big difference. When we go down to the computer lab, my students go through the unit activities in the Interactive Workbook at their own pace. The students who can breeze through the activities can move on when they are done, while others who struggle can keep working at their own pace until they get it."

Writer's Choice technology pieces can also be utilized outside of the school and computer lab. Ms. Hamlin shares, "I have a class of juniors, 16- and 17-year-olds, who are adults in my mind. They work 30 hours a week in addition to coming to school, and have family commitments. These students appreciate *Writer's Choice* so much because they can borrow the interactive student edition on CD-ROM and do their work when they have free time. These young adults have a lot crashing down on them, and they really take advantage of the flexibility that Glencoe's technology resources offer."

According to Ms. Hamlin, "Meadow Bridge students just love the technology resources provided with *Writer's Choice*. Like most kids these days, they love doing their work on the computer, and I think it's so nice to see their interest in doing the work. My students often beg me to take them to the computer lab to do their work. I never thought my students would beg me to do grammar work! Now that's exciting!"

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Monroe County Schools

Coker Creek Elementary School & Tellico Plains Junior High, Tellico Plains, TN

Monroe County is a predominantly rural area nestled between the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains and the Cherokee National Forest in the southeast corner of Tennessee. The small towns of Madisonville (pop. 4,000), Sweetwater (pop. 5,600), Tellico Plains (pop. 900), and Vonore (pop. 1,200) are the larger communities in Monroe County, and much of the region is mountain wilderness known for its abundance of wildlife and gorgeous scenery. The Monroe County School System serves approximately 5,400 students in grades K through 12 on 11 school campuses. The district is predominantly Caucasian, and nearly 60% of the student body has been classified as “economically disadvantaged” by the state of Tennessee. The Monroe County School System adopted *Glencoe Writer’s Choice* at the start of the 2004–2005 school year for use in all of the district’s middle school grades. Tellico Plains Junior High School (serving 5th–8th graders) and Coker Creek Elementary School (serving K–8 students) are two of the schools that now use *Writer’s Choice*.



Meeting State Standards and Preparing for Assessment

After an extensive search for a new middle school grammar and composition program, *Writer’s Choice* was selected because of its emphasis on testing and its alignment with state language arts standards. Sandra Gandy, a 6th and 7th grade English teacher at Tellico Plains Junior High, was very active in the textbook-adoption process. As she describes, “I was on the committee at my school to review textbooks for adoption. After we had narrowed the field down, we began piloting different material in our classrooms to really get a feel for what the programs had to offer. We all came back from piloting convinced that *Glencoe Writer’s Choice* was the right book for us. It simply has the best material to prepare our students for testing because it is structured to meet all of our Tennessee Language Arts Standards. *Writer’s Choice* also provides a separate book to prepare students for the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), which focuses very specifically on our state standards. Our students are well prepared for their state writing assessment because of all the writing practice *Writer’s Choice* offers them throughout the year. I think changing to Glencoe was a good move for our county.”

A Program for All Students

Some of the schools in the Monroe County School System are small and remote and have multi-grade classes. Working with students who

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represent a wide range of ages and learning abilities is a challenge that *Writer's Choice* is well suited to meet. Sarah Brown is English Department Chair and currently the only 6th–8th grade language arts teacher at Coker Creek Elementary School. She feels that “the *Writer's Choice* system is perfect for me as a mixed-grade-level teacher. Even though students of different grade levels are in the same classroom, they have to use different textbooks based on their grade level. For example, if I teach a lesson in grammar, each student can follow along in his or her grade-level book.”

Positive Teaching Experiences

Glencoe Writer's Choice provides teachers and students with a methodically organized and thorough program that is enriched with an array of effective ancillary materials. Teachers in the Monroe County Schools express their satisfaction with the book's layout, which they say makes both teaching and learning easier. Ms. Brown shares, “*Glencoe Writer's Choice* has the best layout of any grammar and composition textbook I've used. There is a structure in which sections such as grammar, writing, and vocabulary are separated, as they logically should be.”

Teachers also appreciate that *Writer's Choice* makes it easy for them to assess their students' learning. According to Ms. Brown, “There are resources in *Writer's Choice* that help me determine exactly how much the students know. There is a supplementary book with pretests and posttests for each unit. I give the pretest and see exactly what each student knows, because I know there is no sense dwelling on something when it's already been mastered by the students. I can see their strengths, their weaknesses, and where I need to focus my teaching. Then I give them their posttest from that book and grade them on that.”

Early Signs of Success

Even though Monroe County's middle-grade students are still in their first year of using *Glencoe Writer's Choice*, teachers are already seeing student improvement in learning and attitudes, which they are optimistic will result in higher test scores. Ms. Brown points to how quickly and successfully she and her students are moving through the material: “I think the simple format of *Writer's Choice* has made my students' skills progress faster than usual. For example, it is now January and we have already covered the eight parts of speech, which in the past has taken me until April to complete! Now I can move into more complicated, higher-level thinking skills. I'm even seeing my special education students more engaged with this program than ever before, and I'm getting more out of them. I am really happy with their productivity.” She adds, “I've also had parents tell me that their children actually bring this book home to study from. That isn't something that I can say was true with texts we have used in the past. This tells me that students enjoy using this text, and I know they work better with *Glencoe Writer's Choice* than any other textbook I've used. I'd recommend it to anyone.”

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Morgan County Schools

Albert P. Brewer High School, Falkville High School, & West Morgan High School, Decatur, AL

Morgan County is located in North Alabama where the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains meet the Tennessee River. Morgan County Schools is one of three public school systems in Morgan County (pop. 111,064). It serves almost 7,500 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th in its 18 schools.

Brewer High School, Falkville High School, and West Morgan High School are three of the six high schools in the Morgan County School System. Brewer High School, located in Somerville (pop. 348), serves over 800 predominantly Caucasian 9th through 12th grade students. The number of students outnumbers the population of Somerville because the school also serves as Morgan County Schools' vocational/technical and ROTC training center. Falkville High School, located in Falkville (pop. 1,187), serves almost 450 predominantly Caucasian 7th through 12th grade students. In 2002 the school had the negative stigma of a priority school (low achieving), but in 2003 it relinquished the stigma by increasing the percentage of students who pass the graduation exam by almost 14%, from 79.7 to 93.6. West Morgan High School is located in Trinity (pop. 1,867). It serves over 450 students in grades 7 through 12 grade—85% Caucasian, 13% African American, 1% Hispanic/Latino, and less than 1% American Indian or Asian.



Positive Teacher and Student Reviews

Ms. Teresia Compton, English Department Chair at Brewer High, finds that *Writer's Choice* offers students an interesting and engaging introduction to writing. She explains, "*Writer's Choice* introduces writing to students using a lifeline or timeline approach where students write about themselves. It seems to pull them into writing because it is a topic they know everything about. It is a real winner every year. *Writer's Choice* also focuses in on prewriting, which other books don't. It's all very beneficial for my students. I cannot say for certain that my students are always excited about writing, but they are more confident about their writing abilities."

Other teachers in Morgan County Schools are giving *Writer's Choice* top reviews also for ease of use and design. Ms. Annie Lemons reports, "*Writer's Choice* is very easy to use. The material is organized in a manner that is effective regardless of student ability level—slow, vocational, or college prep students—and it gives you a lot of variety so you can select what is appropriate for each level. I particularly like the workbook; it has made my life easier. It provides the students with more

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examples and practice, and almost every page gives them the opportunity to practice writing, which I think is great. In addition, I find the computer programs that come with the program to be very effective. *Writer's Choice* has very nice cultural aspects to it as well. Ms. Marquart says, "I find *Writer's Choice* easy to use because of the way it is designed with big print, lots of white space, and attractive pictures, artwork, and graphics. The students can also read this text and find it appealing because of the pictures and artwork. It seems to just draw them in."

Lori Oden, 12th grade English teacher at Brewer High School, agrees with her district colleagues and adds, "This is my third year using *Writer's Choice*, and I think it does a great job. I love the way the *Teacher Wraparound Edition* (TWE) is laid out. It not only gives a lot of good examples, but it also points out other resources you can use. Overall, I think *Writer's Choice* offers a well-developed and comprehensive text that is both easy to use and suitable for all learners, and I would encourage other teachers to use it."

Teachers aren't the only ones with rave reviews about *Writer's Choice*. Teachers from Morgan County comment on what they have heard from their students. Ms. Lemons comments, "My students find *Writer's Choice* engaging because it challenges them and offers them a lot of variety." Ms. Oden adds, "I know my students really like the layout of the book because it gives very clear examples and visuals. I have often heard students say, 'Look at the chart,' when another student asks a question. I also know that they like the workbook because it gives them a few examples and then a lot of practice."

Signs of Success

Teachers are reporting that *Writer's Choice* is helping improve their students' language arts skills and helping more students pass the high school graduation exam on their first attempt.

Ms. Lemons states, "Here in Alabama, everyone has to pass the exam to graduate high school.

Writer's Choice covers all of the information on the exam wonderfully, especially its chapter on punctuation. At our school only 40%–50% used to pass the first round of the high school exam in language arts, but now we are up around 60%, which says that we are doing something right with the language arts program." Ms.

Oden adds, "I definitely think student skills have improved with *Writer's Choice*, specifically their grammar skills. I focus on the basics of grammar (*Writer's Choice* Unit 2) for the first six weeks of school each year, and it seems to really help those students who didn't pass the high school graduation exam in 11th grade pass it in 12th."

Ms. Compton believes another sign of success with *Writer's Choice* is students entering and winning writing competitions. She shares, "My second year using *Writer's Choice*, I had a student in my honors class who entered the Alabama Writers' Forum and won third place in the state. He and I and his mother went to Montgomery, met the governor, and received a plaque. That plaque is now in our school trophy cabinet, right next to all the sport trophies. I like to think that the writing process taught in *Writer's Choice* influenced him some."

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Mountain Home Junior High School

District 193, Mountain Home, ID

The small town of Mountain Home (pop. 11,143), located in Elmore County, is situated on the plain between the Danskin and Owyhee Mountains in western Idaho. It is located approximately 45 miles southeast of Idaho's state capital Boise (pop. 175,000).

Mountain Home School District 193 serves 4,100 students in nine schools: five elementary schools, one K–8 school, one middle school (grades 5–7), one junior high school (grades 8–9), and one high school (grades 10–12). The district's demographics are 83% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic/Latino, 3% African American, 2% Asian, and 1% American Indian.

Glencoe Writer's Choice has been the English textbook for 9th grade students at Mountain Home Junior High School for a long time. Dolores Williams, English Department Chair, explains, "When I started teaching at Mountain Home Junior High 16 years ago, *Glencoe Writer's Choice* was already the text for 9th grade students. In 2003 we were using a different textbook with our 8th graders but were very frustrated with that program. So *Glencoe Writer's Choice* was discussed for the upcoming 2004–2005 8th grade textbook adoption." Mary Hall, another 8th and 9th grade teacher at Mountain Home, adds, "When the 8th grade textbook-adoption process came around, I sat on the committee and was an advocate for *Glencoe Writer's Choice*. We knew it was working at the 9th grade level, and our goal was to expand on that success. Our district is moving toward a more consistent system of textbooks across grade levels. With this last adoption, the middle school has switched to *Glencoe Writer's Choice* as well, giving our students even more consistency."

A Focus on Grammar Skills

By expanding the use of *Glencoe Writer's Choice* into 8th grade, teachers at Mountain Home Junior High School hope to strengthen areas where students have been struggling in the past and provide students with the necessary grammar skills to be good writers. Ms. Hall shares, "We've found from our Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) results that some of our students are weak in language arts. *Glencoe Writer's Choice* has a very strong grammar section, and we hope it can give the students what they need to be more successful. I believe that grammar is a sequential learning process where concepts are built upon other concepts. The last textbook we had did not treat grammar sequentially; it was put together with little apparent rhyme or reason, and students were easily confused. *Writer's Choice* starts with easy grammar concepts and builds on these blocks. Glencoe has a very logical method of progressing students' skills."

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Meeting Student and Teacher Needs

Mountain Home teachers believe that *Glencoe Writer's Choice* presents grammar and composition to students in an engaging format. As Ms. Hall describes it, "Many of my students are visual learners, and *Writer's Choice* is very easy for them to use; starting from the way the chapters are set up, students can easily follow this book. Definitions of terms are set off in different colors, and there are clear examples that go with each one of them. Every time a new concept or definition is introduced in *Writer's Choice*, they give examples. The graphics that present the information are outstanding."

Writer's Choice provides Mountain Home teachers with everything they need to teach students about writing. Ms. Hall comments, "*Writer's Choice* gives you all the support exercises that you need for the students to succeed. For example, the 9th grade version of the text has a section for writing research papers that is very systematic and provides exactly what we are trying to do in our skill building on that topic. It's a very thorough and effective resource for teaching such assignments, and I find the students feel less confused and more organized using *Glencoe Writer's Choice*." Ms. Williams adds, "I'm still finding new resources within the *Writer's Choice* program that help me teach my students. I've just discovered a whole booklet of exercises on sentence combining in my supplemental materials. It's another great tool for us that outlines step-by-step techniques on sentence combining and provides great practice for the students."

Discovering the Writing Process

Teachers at Mountain Home Junior High have confidence in *Writer's Choice* and its writing process. Ms. Williams explains, "I am really sold on this textbook, and not just the strong

grammar sections, but on how it teaches the writing process itself. If students aren't aware of the process, then they are missing the whole joy of writing. The writing process is presented in *Writer's Choice* in a way that students can understand. It has very interesting visual representations and writing models where the writing process is outlined graphically, making it easy for the students to understand. I see a lot less frustration in my students with this book, and that is a function of the book's format presenting them information that they can grasp and apply in their writing. Students are more enthusiastic about writing now, and I believe that is because *Glencoe Writer's Choice* is written in a more encouraging and enthusiastic manner, where writing isn't made to feel like a task or challenge, but as something more exciting."

Ms. Williams believes she has proof that the writing process is getting through to her students. She shares, "I have one young man in my class who wrote an essay on his state writing test, the Idaho Direct Writing Assessment, specifically about the writing techniques he learned in *Writer's Choice*. Seeing a student enjoy writing really meant something to me."



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Other Comments

Ease of Use/Flexibility

Writer's Choice has more supplemental enrichment than other books to meet learners of all levels. It has been a great resource in my reading and writing class. I would recommend it to other teachers.

Nicole Bowers
Ben S. Carson Middle School

I think the layout of *Writer's Choice* is very clear and concise. It also cross-references well in the index and the glossary, making it very easy to use. I find it easy to teach from because all of the materials that are provided let you meet the different needs in a classroom.

I also use the ExamView® Pro test bank that comes along with the *Glencoe Writer's Choice* program. It's great for me as a teacher because it saves me time. I don't have to cut and paste and photocopy myself. It just makes my life easier.

Shelley Easterling
Fontainebleau High School

I think *Glencoe Writer's Choice* is easy to use for teachers and students. It has a clear layout, utilizes the latest technology, and it is cross-referenced well. You can look all kinds of things up within the book. For example, it references different pieces of literature that contain the same type of theme even with different types of media. It has more variety than your typical grammar book. Prior to this I had to pull from several different sources, but now, if needed, I am able to use this one book and its resources. It provides information for all learning styles and levels and gives alternative assignments and group assignments that help meet students' learning needs.

Misti Sibley
Fontainebleau High School

Glencoe Writer's Choice is an accessible textbook for students and teachers. The ancillary materials help the program reach a wide variety of students and meet their needs. It makes our lives easier as teachers to be able to take a reproducible page, copy it, and give it to your students rather than reinventing the wheel.

Christa Allan
Fontainebleau High School

High-Quality Examples/Visuals

It's easy to try to correlate real life with the stories and concepts in *Writer's Choice*. With kids today you have to relate just about everything to real life. If you can correlate it, then you make real progress, and Glencoe gives you this opportunity. I like the stories because they work really well and get the kids involved in class discussions. We can go from talking about the story to real life, and that gets their attention and that's when they learn best. That's what I like about using *Writer's Choice*.

Portia Jackson
Ben S. Carson Middle School

Glencoe Writer's Choice does a really good job of providing real-world models, writings, and prompts that give students a look at what other people write about and how and what will be expected of them when they get out of school. With *Writer's Choice*, our students are prepared for college. I've had students come back and say we were so tough on them with writing in high school that they found college classes easy.

Shelley Easterling
Fontainebleau High School

Content/Skills Building

Teachers at the grade level above me were more pleased with students' writing this year than last year. That means that after only one year with *Writer's Choice* they are noticing a difference in students' abilities, and that has to have something to do with the effectiveness of the *Writer's Choice* program. One of the main differences with the *Writer's Choice* program is the workbook. It's differentiated to meet different students' needs, more than I've ever seen in another program. We have so many reading and comprehension levels, so it works out really well for us.

Michelle Bowman
Ben S. Carson Middle School

For our standardized tests, the writing component is so important. Having strong writing sections incorporated in one book with *Writer's Choice* is very important to us. In general, our scores within our school have gone up each year, which could be attributed to the *Writer's Choice* program. I've seen writing improvement. Students can look at models given along with instruction, and they can model what they see in the text. When they can do that, it sticks with them, and they can continue to do it. Their writing skills overall, including grammar, have greatly improved.

Misti Sibley
Fontainebleau High School

There is a standardized test preparation book that comes with *Writer's Choice* that I find very helpful. We also get a lesson plan book geared to the state, and we can see how the book meets the state standards. It makes it a no-brainer; it's all right there for us. I think student skills have improved using *Writer's Choice*, and our test scores prove that. Though *Writer's Choice* is not the whole story behind our test score increases, it certainly plays a part.

Christa Allan
Fontainebleau High School

Student Response

I have one amazing student success story. I had a student who I felt could write and I used *Writer's Choice* to help him prepare for a writing contest. He won. We went to the Hilton in downtown Atlanta and he read his essay. It was an amazing experience as a teacher. We are talking about a disadvantaged student. I cried like he was my own child. These kids don't even know what they are capable of doing, but with *Writer's Choice* we can show them.

Portia Jackson
Ben S. Carson Middle School



My seniors appreciate the writing samples and the different types of essays presented in *Writer's Choice*. This helps the students in their own writing because it gives them a base to start from. I also think *Writer's Choice* really does prepare them for college, because it incorporates the grammar and literature models they will need. It shows them a variety of writing modes, and there are models with annotated side notes and that helps them in their own writing. Regular grammar books just don't have that.

Misti Sibley
Fontainebleau High School

Appendix

Research Supporting Content and Instruction

A Selected Annotated Bibliography

1. Writing is essential

A very broad study of how literacy functions in our society conducted by the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy states, "Results from ten years of research on writing, learning, and instruction have led us to conclude that written language, which is fundamentally active in nature (compared to the usually more reactive quality of reading), has the potential to have significant effects on performance in most areas of the curriculum, in many community-based endeavors, and in the high performance workplace."

—Freedman, Sarah Warshauer, Linda Flower, Glynda Hull, and J.R. Hayes. "Ten Years of Research: Achievements of the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy," May, 1995.

2. Writing improves reading skills

The NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card (covering 4th, 8th, and 12th graders) states that "Numerous studies have shown that reading development does not take place in isolation; children develop simultaneously as readers, listeners, speakers, and writers. The NAEP reading assessment recognized the importance of these interrelationships by asking students and teachers questions about the ways in which reading and writing are combined in their classrooms. [chart included] The students who said they wrote long answers on a weekly or monthly basis had higher scores than those who said they did so twice a year or less."

—"The NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card." National Center for Education Statistics. United States Department of Education.

A study of how the writing process and a daily comprehensive writing program improves the reading skills of first graders says, "The findings suggest that the writing process could be used in other grade levels to increase reading comprehension."

—Knight, Joyce. "Improve Reading Comprehension and Self-Esteem through the Use of the Writing Process." Dissertation, Nova University, FL, 1990.

A ten-year long study by the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy concludes by saying, "Writing-based literacy develops social and intellectual capacities in learners and promotes powerful literate practices and skills that can unlock the door to higher levels of performance and success."

—Freedman, Sarah Warshauer, Linda Flower, Glynda Hull, and J.R. Hayes. "Ten Years of Research: Achievements of the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy." May, 1995.

3. Good reading material leads to better writing

A study conducted by ETS in collaboration with the National Writing project and drawing on data from a 1998 NAEP study of 200 4th and 8th grade classrooms notes that "Successful writing assignments . . . are rooted in particular and substantive material. Students are required to interact with this material, transforming knowledge from different sources."

—Peterson, Art. "NAEP/NWP Study Shows Link Between Assignments, Better Student Writing." National Writing Project, *The Voice*, March-April 2001.

A study from the National Center for Education Statistics compiled from 1992 NAEP samples of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders writing concludes in part by saying, "In general, the data demonstrates that effective writing instruction includes an emphasis on the teaching of the writing process; integrating reading, writing, and language tasks and an emphasis on the quality and coherence of the written product."

—Gorman, Steve. "Majority of American Students Need to Improve Writing, Study Reveals." NAEP 1992 Report Card. September 29, 1994.

4. A writing workshop/writing process approach and daily writing improves students' writing

Are process writing techniques helpful for effective writing? Evidence from the 1992 NAEP assessment in writing supports research in the field that several process writing techniques are associated with higher writing proficiency skills."

—Goldstein, Arnold and Peggy G. Carr. "Can Students Benefit from Process Writing?" *NAEPfacts*, National Center for Education Statistics. Vol 1. No 3, April 1996.

A study of first graders, 5th–6th graders with behavior disorders, and 7–8th graders who are mentally handicapped. "Post-intervention data indicated that the writing workshop environment, which emphasized meaningful communication, promoted real purposes for writing. Findings suggest that students increased their written expression skills, learned to use higher order thinking skills, and maintained or improved their enthusiasm for writing."

—Cox, Patty, Sheryl Holden, and Teri Pickett. "Improving Students' Writing Skills through the Use of 'Writing to Learn'." Masters Thesis, Saint Xavier University, 1997.

A program targeting at-risk fifth graders "Demonstrates that student writing anxiety can be lowered through a writing program that emphasizes prewriting activities."

—Schweiker-Marra, Karyn and William T. Marra. "Investigating the Effects of Prewriting Activities on Writing Performance and Anxiety of At-Risk Students." *Reading Psychology*, v 21, Apr-June 2000.

A study of 8th graders that investigated the effects of basing writing instruction on the writing process. "The results supported the supposition that writing instruction should center on the process of writing and that students should be provided with the opportunity to write daily."

—Davlin, Nancy and Patricia Riggle. "Instruction of the Writing Process Affects Students' Writing Skills." 1988.

A survey conducted in conjunction with the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress test given to 4th, 8th, and 12th graders concludes that “students who . . . plan and outline their ideas for class-writing assignments tended to write better than their peers who are not in the habit of planning . . . Students who reported that they sometimes talk with their teachers about their writing scored higher than those who reported they never did so. And students who saved their class work in or compiled portfolios scored higher than those who didn’t. The survey also shows, perhaps above all else, that the more students practice writing, the clearer and more sophisticated their prose becomes, according to Richard Sterling, the president of the National Writing Project. ‘If writing occurred in every classroom every day,’ Mr. Sterling said, ‘Student achievement would, in my view, reach new heights for all.’”

—Manzo, Kathleen Kennedy. “US Students lack Writing Proficiency.” *Education Week on the Web*, 10/6/1999.

5. Scaffolding improves students’ writing

A study conducted by ETS in collaboration with the National Writing project and drawing on data from a 1998 NAEP study of 200 4th and 8th grade classrooms notes that “Researchers found that the best student writing occurs when assignments provide guidelines for how to structure ideas and writing with an appropriate level of scaffolding. Many common assignments do not provide this structure.”

—Peterson, Art. “NAEP/NWP Study Shows Link Between Assignments, Better Student Writing.” National Writing Project, *The Voice*, March-April 2001.

6. Writing can—and must—be taught!

“A study examined the effects of an integrated reading/writing curriculum on the narrative writing of students in general education 8th grade classrooms. . . . Results indicated that students in the experimental group [which focused on an integrated reading and writing curriculum that included instruction on the writing process and how to generate stories as well as on text comprehension] significantly outperformed students in the control group [which focused only on reading comprehension]—their stories contained more fully developed ideas, content, settings, character, and attempts to solve the central problem than students in control classrooms.”

—Simmons, Deborah C. and others. “Integrating Narrative Reading Comprehension and Writing Instruction for All Learners.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, 1993.

A study of K-8 students that concludes by saying “Student writing was improved by implementing the schoolwide focus on improving writing performance.”

—Miller, Christine and Lorraine Cross. “Moving from I to Us: The Power of Action Research to Improve Students’ Writing Performance.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, 2001.

A study of 8th graders that investigated the effects of basing writing instruction on the writing process. “The results supported the supposition that writing instruction should center on the process of writing and that students should be provided with the opportunity to write daily. Findings suggest that writing instruction does increase student’s writing skills.”

—Davlin, Nancy and Patricia Riggle. “Instruction of the Writing Process Affects Students’ Writing Skills.” 1988.

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