



**COMMUNITY
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FOR
LEARNING**

WriterCoach Connection™

Program Assessment

2007-08

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WriterCoach Connection™

Program Assessment 2007-08

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For the design of the program assessment and for the preparation of this report, we most gratefully acknowledge the expertise PJ Hallam, Ph.D., pjhallam@speakeasy.org. (See Appendix 4 for credentials.)

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WriterCoach Connection™ Program Assessment 2007-08

Section 1

Introduction

Overview

"There are instructional practices that research has indicated are proven strategies for teaching. WriterCoach Connection is one of those programs. WriterCoach Connection provides the personal interaction that students need for assessment, instruction, immediate feedback, and reinstruction to help all students. I am looking forward to expanding this program to more grade levels."

--Dr. William Wong, Superintendent, Albany Unified School District

Dr. Wong's comments go to the heart of WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC), a community volunteer-based program that provides one-on-one writing conferences for seventh through tenth grade students as they complete English class assignments. WCC recruits, trains, and coordinates volunteer coaches to support the learning and teaching of writing with these individual in-class writing conferences.

The annual WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment is a benchmark for measuring program progress in supporting English teachers and their students. Students and teachers respond to surveys designed to provide feedback on key aspects of the coaching process. Results guide program improvement and planning as well as program accountability to supporters, schools, and the public. This report delineates remarkable results and an exceptional level of engagement by students and teachers. A coach survey compliments this process in evaluating coach experiences, training, and concerns.

Students

In spring 2008, 1,184¹ students from six Albany and Berkeley secondary schools completed a survey that asked them to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale. The scale ranged from "Not Helpful" to "Very Helpful." Mean scores for each aspect on the survey were analyzed. Major results of the student survey are as follows:

1. **Overall, students rated writer coaching as "Helpful"** (Mean = 3.02).
2. Students felt the most helpful aspects of coaching were "showing me what's working in my writing" (3.02), "giving me suggestions for organizing my ideas" (2.99), "checking that I understand the assignment completely" (2.90), "showing me

¹ While 385 AHS students are being coached this year, at the time of the survey, 147 students in seven classes had not yet had a sufficient number of coaching sessions to provide valid survey results.

how to express my ideas more clearly” (2.89), “reading my work out loud” (2.84), and “making sure I understand the next steps I need to take to revise my work” (2.84). Students indicated that coaching was less helpful in “motivating me to complete and turn in my assignments” (2.46); however, this is further refined by recognizing that a substantial majority of students did not assign a “helpfulness” rating but rather indicated “I already am motivated.”

The aspects rated notably high, 2.80 and above, precisely reflect both the energetic interaction between student and coach and the program’s intent in developing writing and critical thinking skills and in addressing issues for which teachers most consistently request help for their students. Student comments further underscore the degree to which coaches help students clarify their ideas, organize their thoughts, and develop clear, fluid writing. Sample student comments are examined in Section 13 of this report.

Teachers

Twenty-five out of twenty-seven teachers completed the program assessment survey.¹ Teachers answered 17 questions regarding aspects of the coaching process and their observations regarding degrees of effectiveness in particular areas. The teacher survey also included evaluation of the helpfulness of coaching for students with differing skill levels. Major results of the teacher survey are as follows:

1. **All teachers said their writer coaches were helpful with improving the quality of student writing**, with a mean overall score of 3.42. No teacher rated coaching as being of no help.
2. When asked to compare a recent writing assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar recent assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, all responding teachers indicated a noticeable improvement in the rate of assignments turned in, the quality of student work, and the grades earned. The mean score on this question was 3.45.
3. Every aspect of the coaching program was rated “Helpful” with a mean score of 3.0 or above, with the exception of “challenging proficient writers,” which received the lowest overall mean score, 2.96.
4. Consistent with past years and amplified this year with even higher scores, the highest mean scores were attained on the two questions regarding working with site coordinators (mean score: 3.67) and communicating with site coordinators regarding the goals of the lesson and areas for coaching emphasis (mean score: 3.64). These responses indicate the high degree to which WriterCoach Connection is embedded within the curriculum of the schools, and is recognized by teachers as supporting their existing learning goals for their students.

¹ Two of the twenty nine teachers in total participating in the program had not had sufficient coaching sessions to provide reliable feedback before the survey date. One teacher returned narrative comments in lieu of the survey; one additional survey was returned too late for inclusion in data analysis

5. Teachers rated writer coaching as “Helpful” to “Very helpful” in the following areas: improving structure and organization (3.60); helping low-skilled or struggling writers (3.60); helping English language learner students (3.57); improving grades on written assignments (3.50); and increasing the number of students turning in written assignments (3.48). Overall improvement in the quality of student writing received a mean score of 3.42, and helping students make effective revisions received a mean score of 3.32.

6. The next most “Helpful” items in order were: comments on student worksheets matched lesson goals and student skill level (3.25), helping students overall become more motivated about writing, and improving critical thinking skills (mean score for each: 3.08); helping students become more confident about writing, and improving style and ‘voice’ (mean score for each: 3.04); and improving grammar and mechanics (mean score: 3.00).

7. One middle school teacher opted to return a narrative commentary rather than complete the survey. His comments included the following:

What I think is the most advantageous aspect of the Writer Coaching is that students not only get one-on-one help with assignments, but they get an adult’s perspective. Fourteen-year-olds often have tunnel vision. Having an adult that can sit with them and help them see the larger picture and larger paper is wonderful. These types of things can not be measured in a survey.

Descriptive Data

Table 1.1 WCC Program Statistics (as of April 15, 2008)

	King	Longfellow	Willard	BHS	BUSD	AHS	AMS	AUSD	Grand Total
					Subtotal			Subtotal	
Teachers	5	5	3	2	15	10	4	14	29
Classes	12	12	5	4	33	21	10	31	64
Students	304	289	143	108	844	385	292	677	1,521
Sessions	1,819	1,379	1,274	368	4840	1,642	1,445	3,087	7,927
Coaches	65	44	46	38	193	45	52	97	290

By the end of the school year, coaches had met with students for 10,404 individual writing conferences.

The balance of this report will describe assessment results collectively for the Albany Unified School District, the Berkeley Unified School District, and for individual school sites. Technical statistical information is incorporated in the appendices.

This report is modular, so that sections can be distributed individually to specific schools and school districts.

The entire report is available in .pdf format on request and at the website of Community Alliance for Learning, www.writercoachconnection.org.

WriterCoach Connection continues program development activities to address the data and narrative comments generated through the teacher, student, and coach surveys. Action steps include development of additional training materials (particularly to address the uninterested or disengaged student, and for English language learners), communication through site coordinators to address specific concerns or suggestions, development of a “Coach Pop Quiz” tool for ongoing coach training, revision of CAFL’s *60 Shortcuts* handouts, and incorporating observation in the training protocol. These issues are discussed in Section 15 of this report.

WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 2

**All School Sites
Student Survey Results**

Overview

WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection™ Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. This section delineates combined student survey findings at all WCC school sites. Section 3 of this report delineates teacher survey findings.

Descriptive Data

The return rate for all students was 87%, with 1,184 students out of a possible 1,356 completing the survey, administered in class¹. Breakdown by sites for all students are presented in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 Number of Student Responses by Site

	Site	
	Frequency	Percent
Albany HS	220	18.5
Albany MS	278	23.5
Berkeley HS	90	8
King MS	264	22
Longfellow MS	221	19
Willard MS	111	9
Total	1184	100

¹ Additional surveys from two classes were returned after the data analysis was complete. Those surveys were examined by CAFL staff and site coordinators and steps were taken as needed to address any specific concerns.

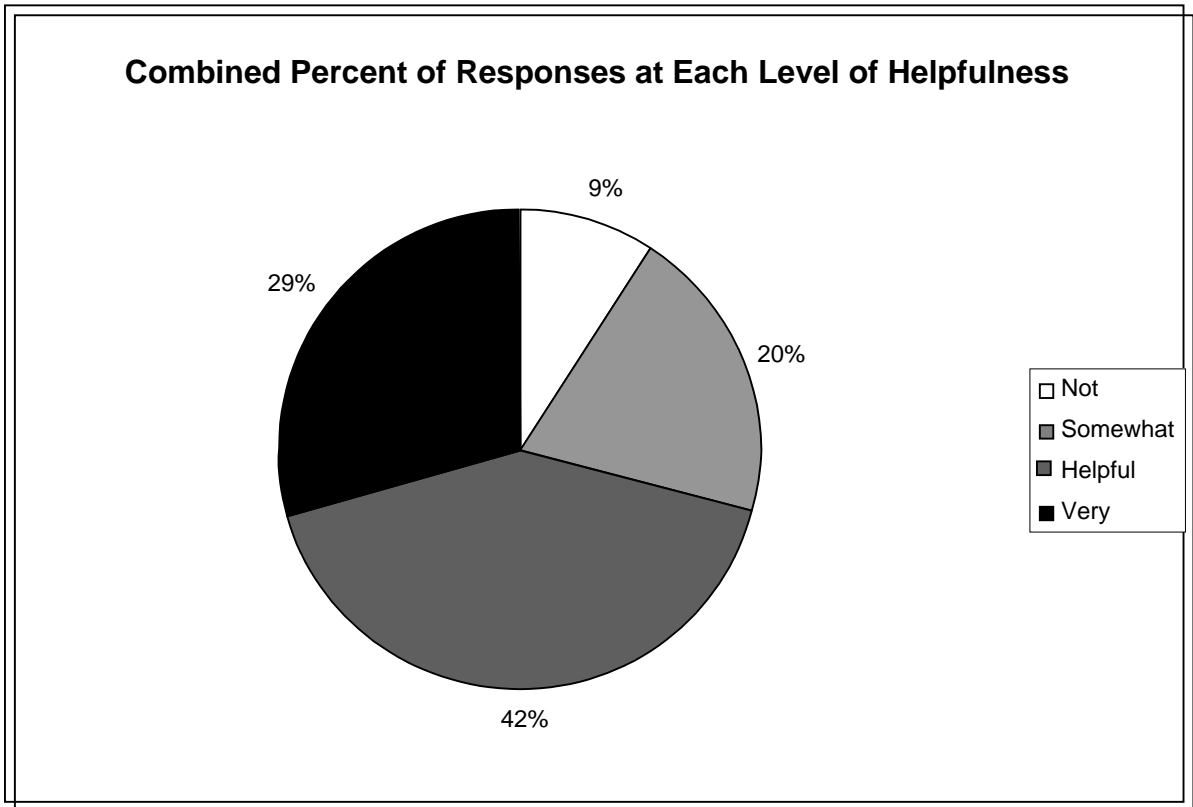
Table 2.1 indicates that the majority of students were from middle schools (n = 874, 74%). The number of students at each middle school ranges from the highest number at King MS (n = 278, 23.5%), and the lowest at Willard MS (n = 111, 9%).

Combined Student Survey Results

At the start of the second semester during the school year 2007-08, students from all WCC sites completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that overall their coaches were helpful (3.02).** (See Fig. 2.1 below)
2. The mean score for helpfulness on all eight aspects of the writing process was 2.88.
3. The elements rated as most helpful are: showing me “what’s working in my writing” (3.02) and “giving me suggestions for organizing my ideas” (2.99). “Checking for understanding of the assignment” (2.90); “showing me how to express my ideas more clearly” (2.89); “making sure I understand the next steps I need to take to revise my work” (2.84); and “reading my work aloud” (2.84) were areas of significant helpfulness to students. (See Fig. 2.2 below.)
4. Students indicated that coaching was less helpful in motivating them to complete and turn in their assignments (2.46); this is accounted for by the fact that students were given the option to also mark “does not apply, I am already motivated to complete and turn in my work,” so the helpfulness score measures only those students who did not indicate that they are already appropriately motivated..

Figure 2.1 Percent of Student Responses at Each Level of Helpfulness for Combined Sites

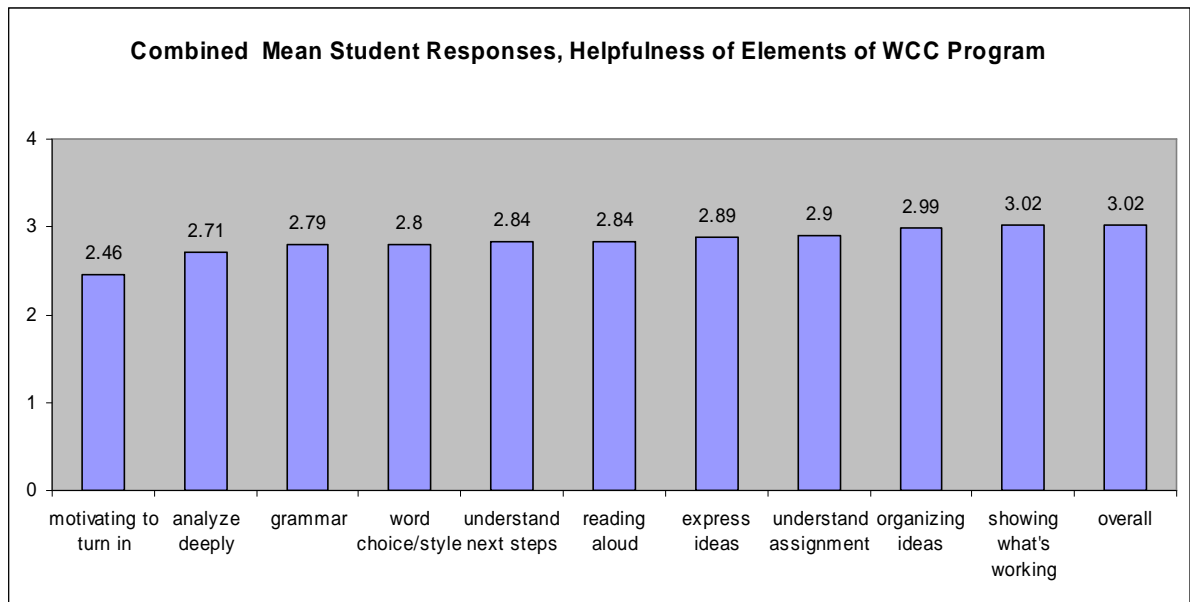


Overall, students selected “Helpful” or “very helpful” in their responses to the eleven aspects of writer coaching 71 percent of the time, and indicated at least some degree of helpfulness 91 percent of the time. While students did have the option to respond anonymously, site coordinators did follow up on all instances in which a student included his/her name and indicated dissatisfaction with some element of coaching. Sometimes this involved conferring with the teacher to determine if the student has any particular learning needs that coaches should be aware of. Other times this involved matching the student with a more suitable coach. In most instances, adjustments were put in place before the next coaching session. The survey is a powerful tool for identifying areas of needed adjustment and allowing site coordinators to take appropriate measures in a timely manner.

Figure 2.2 below displays the students’ mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the eleven important aspects of writing.

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



As demonstrated in Figure 2.2 above, the majority of students found coaching to be helpful, especially with regard to interaction with the coaches (organizing ideas, showing what's working well, checking for understanding of assignment, how to express ideas clearly, understanding next steps, and reading aloud). Students' comments reinforced this data, indicating coaches helped students by developing an understanding of writing structure, and fostering the ability to think critically about writing. These writing and critical thinking skills will serve the students throughout their academic careers and beyond. Discussion of student narrative comments is included Section 13.

While WCC was rated highly by most responders, there was some variation by subgroups. For example, between the responses of high school students (generally 9th and 10th graders) and the middle school responses.

Students' mean scores varied most significantly on two items. "Giving suggestions for organizing my ideas" received an overall mean score of 2.99. However, middle school students rated this higher (3.06). And "showing me what's working in my writing" received a mean total score of 3.02, but middle school students gave a higher mean helpfulness score on that item, and King Middle Students gave it the highest rating of 3.16. On the question of the overall helpfulness of coaching, middle school students overall gave a higher helpfulness mean score than did high school students.

Further investigation into student's responses and comments has shed light on some of the possible reasons for this difference. Two classes at AHS gave lower than average ratings, in comparison to other AHS students, on their surveys. Site coordinators at AHS immediately conferred with the teacher of these two classes; it was determined that in part the low scores may have stemmed from a coaching session for which the teachers improvised the lesson at the last moment due to schedule changes. This highlighted to the teacher and site coordinators the importance of careful planning and integration of coaching into lesson planning and learning goals. Great care was taken with arranging for the next coaching sessions with these two classes, and the results were much to the greater satisfaction of students, coaches, teachers, and the site coordinators. This data anomaly allowed WCC to identify and immediately respond to ensure that students are receiving appropriate helpful coaching.

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Section 3

***All School Sites
Teacher Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments.. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. Student survey findings are delineated in Section 2 of this assessment report.

Teacher Survey Descriptive Statistics

The return rate was very high, 93%, with 25 teachers out of a possible 27¹ completing the survey. This high return rate indicates that the responses represent the majority of teachers.

The number and percentages of teachers from each site are presented in Table 3.1. Fifteen of the teachers who responded (60%) teach in a middle school; ten of the teachers work in a high school(40%). Albany High School has the largest share of responses (n=8, 32%), while Albany Middle School, King Middle School and Longfellow Middle School each had 16 % of the responses. The lowest share of responses is from Berkeley High (n=2, 8% of responses), which also has the fewest students in the program.

Table 3.1 Number and Percent of Teacher Responders by Site

Site	N	% of total responses (all schools)
Albany HS	8	32
Albany MS	4	16
Berkeley HS	2	8
King MS	4	16
Longfellow MS	4	16
Willard MS	3	12
Total	25	100 ²

¹ Two of the twenty nine teachers in total participating in the program had not had sufficient coaching sessions to provide reliable feedback before the survey date. One teacher returned narrative comments in lieu of the survey; one additional survey was returned too late for inclusion in data analysis.

² Due to rounding, totals may not be 100%.

Middle school students make up the largest share of student responses, as illustrated in Table 3.2 below, accounting for 74 % of responses, with a proportionate share of middle school teachers comprising the teacher responses

Table 3.2 Number of Student Responders by Level and Site

School level	FrequencyPercent		Site		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
High School	310	26	Albany HS	220	18.5
Middle School	874	74	Albany MS	278	23.5
Total	1184		BHS	90	8
			King MS	264	22
			Longfellow MS	221	19
			Willard MS	111	9
			Total	1184	100

Teacher Survey Results

“I am a huge fan of WriterCoach Connection. There is often discussion about the need for ‘differentiated learning.’ I believe that WCC is one of the best things we have going that addresses the need for differentiated learning. It definitely helps students improve their writing for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it forces me to be very explicit about what I am asking students to do. The one-on-one attention that students get is priceless.”

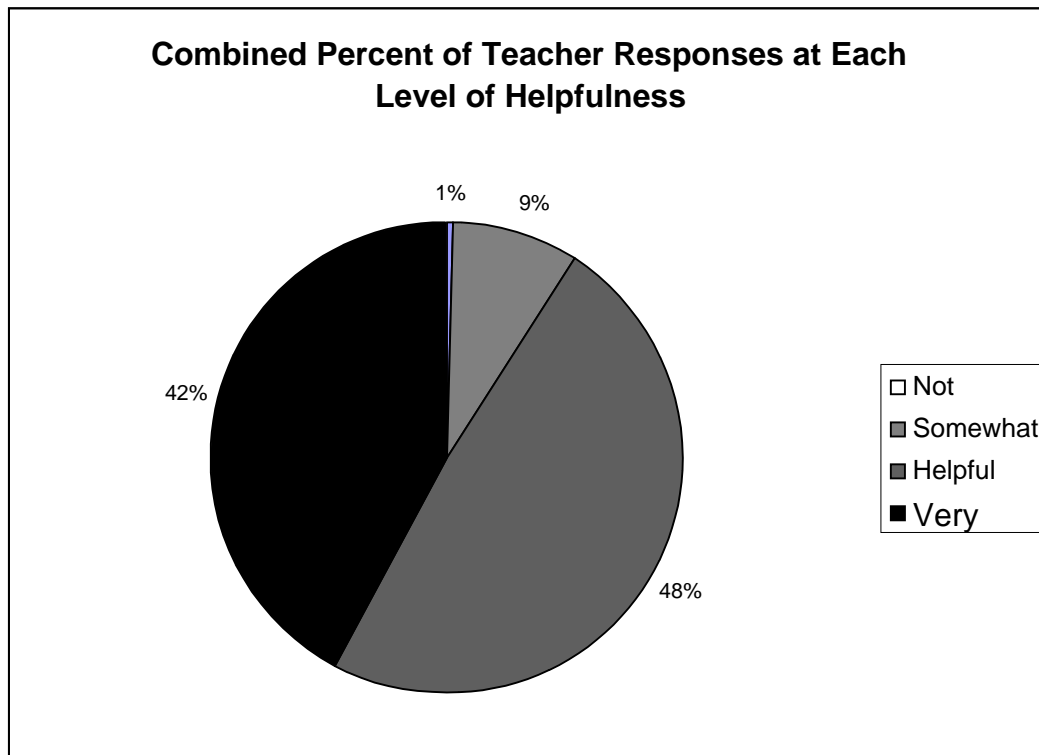
--Martha Cain, teacher at Longfellow Middle School, Berkeley

At the start of the second semester during the school year 2007-08, teachers from all six sites completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with seventeen aspects of the program on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the teacher survey are as follows:

1. **All teachers reported that their coaches were helpful.** None of the teachers indicated that their coaches were of no help. Mean ratings for the 17 aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range on all items except one. (See Figure 3.1, below.)
2. The mean score for help on all aspects of the writing process was 3.34, soundly in the “Helpful” to “Very helpful” range.
3. Significantly, when asked to compare a recent writing assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar recent assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, teachers indicated an improvement on the coached assignment in terms of rate of assignments turned in, quality of student work, and grades earned. The mean score on this question was 3.45, indicating strong degree of helpfulness. This result was consistent at all grade levels, with middle school teachers giving an even higher mean score on this question (3.56).

4. Consistent with past years and amplified this year with even higher scores, the highest mean scores were attained on the two questions regarding working with site coordinators (mean score: 3.67) and communicating with site coordinators regarding the goals of the lesson and areas for coaching emphasis (mean score: 3.64). These responses indicate the high degree to which WriterCoach Connection is embedded within the curriculum of the schools, and is recognized by teachers as supporting their existing learning goals for their students.
5. Teachers rated writer coaching as “Helpful” to “Very helpful” in the following areas: improving structure and organization (3.60); helping low-skilled or struggling writers (3.60); helping English language learner students (3.57); improving grades on written assignments (3.50); and increasing the number of students turning in written assignments (3.48). Overall improvement in the quality of student writing received a mean score of 3.42, and helping students make effective revisions received a mean score of 3.32.
6. The next most “helpful” items in order were: comments on student worksheets matched lesson goals and student skill level (3.25), helping students overall become more motivated about writing, and improving critical thinking skills (mean score for each: 3.08); helping students become more confident about writing, and improving style and ‘voice’ (mean score for each: 3.04); and improving grammar and mechanics (mean score: 3.00).
7. The only item to which received a mean score below 3.0 is “helping/challenging proficient writers” with a mean score of 2.96. Inasmuch as working with all students, regardless of skill level, is a hallmark of the program, these issues will be addressed in future professional development sessions with teachers and in coach training sessions. We continue to explore ways to encourage proficient students to take their writing to the ‘next level’ while knowing that they have ‘already earned an A’ without any further effort.

Figure 3.1 Percent of Teacher Responses at Each Level of Helpfulness

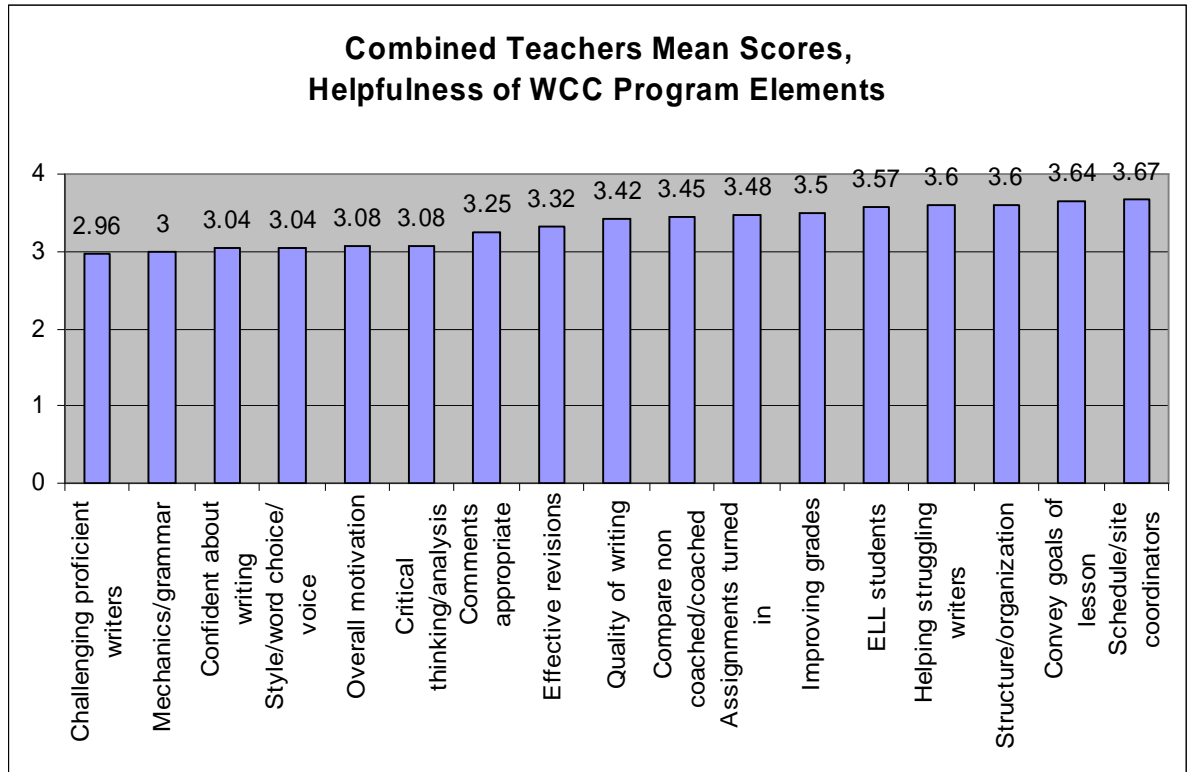


Teachers rated the various aspects of writer coaching as “Helpful” or “Very helpful” a full 90 percent of the time.

Figure 3.2: Combined mean scores from all teachers on helpfulness of seventeen aspects of the WriterCoach Connection program.

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



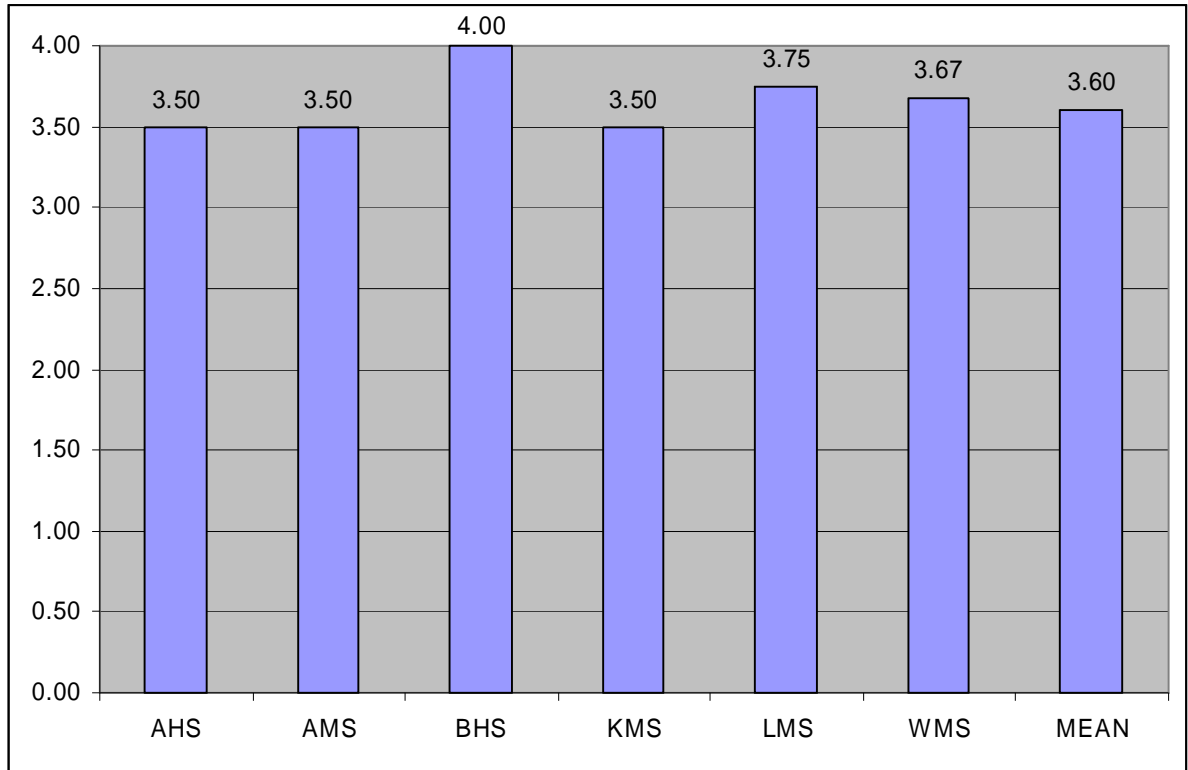
In Figure 3.2, above, the teachers' extraordinary rating (3.67) of the program's site coordinators reflects the program's intent to extend teachers' reach by providing the one-on-one attention for students made impossible for individual teachers by class size and curricular demands. The teachers' survey responses about the site coordinators spotlight a highly effective group of people in this pivotal position for the program.

Overall, teachers indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the helpfulness of the writer coaches in providing the level of individualized feedback for students at all levels of writing. Results across school sites were fairly consistent, although overall mean scores for middle school teachers tended to be slightly higher than those for high school teachers. One exception to this, and indeed one of the areas of greatest mean score improvement this year as compared with last year, is the element of supporting struggling writers.

Figure 3.3 Mean Teacher Scores by Site for Assisting “Struggling or Low-skilled” Writers

How helpful was this aspect of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



The overall score for helping struggling writers increased this year, particularly among high school teachers. This figure increased from 3.26 last year, to 3.60 this year, with Berkeley High School teachers rating this a 4.0, their highest ranking of all elements of writer coaching. This reflects significant efforts to work with teachers at all sites to identify struggling students early in the year and to provide coaches with refined goals and instructions for working with struggling students. In professional development sessions, teachers expressed appreciation for coaches’ role in the pre-writing process, and for helping students – particularly struggling students – overcome the fear of the blank page.

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Section 4
Albany Unified School District
Teacher and Student Survey Result Highlights

Overview

WriterCoach Connection (WCC) recruits, trains, and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 6 of this report details the teacher and student survey findings for Albany High School; Section 7 details teacher and student survey findings for Albany Middle School.

All of Albany Unified School District's 8th and 9th grade students participate in WCC, along with students in the English Language Development level 3 and 4 classes at Albany High School. The following report presents survey findings on AUSD participating teachers and students at the district level

AUSD Descriptive Data

The student survey return rate was 94%, with 498 students out of a possible 530 students completing the survey. The return rate for teachers was 100%, with all twelve teachers surveyed returning their surveys. Both of these return rates are high, indicating that the responses are representative of WCC teachers and students in AUSD.

Grade level and site breakdown are in Table 4.1, below.

Table 4.1 Number of Student and Teacher Responders by Site

Students	Site	
	n	% of Responders ¹
Albany MS	278	56
Albany HS	220	44
Total	498	100
Teachers		
Albany MS	4	33
Albany HS ²	8	66
Total	12	99

Table 4.1 indicates that WCC students surveyed in Albany are somewhat unevenly divided between the two schools, with Albany Middle School having the higher number (n = 278, 56%), and Albany High School the lower (n = 220, 44%). The number of WCC teachers in Albany is unevenly divided, with four from AMS and eight from AHS. The 9th grade English classes at Albany High School benefit from class size reduction support and are smaller than the 8th grade classes at Albany Middle School, resulting in a greater number of class sections (and teachers) for a similar cohort.

AUSD Student Survey Results

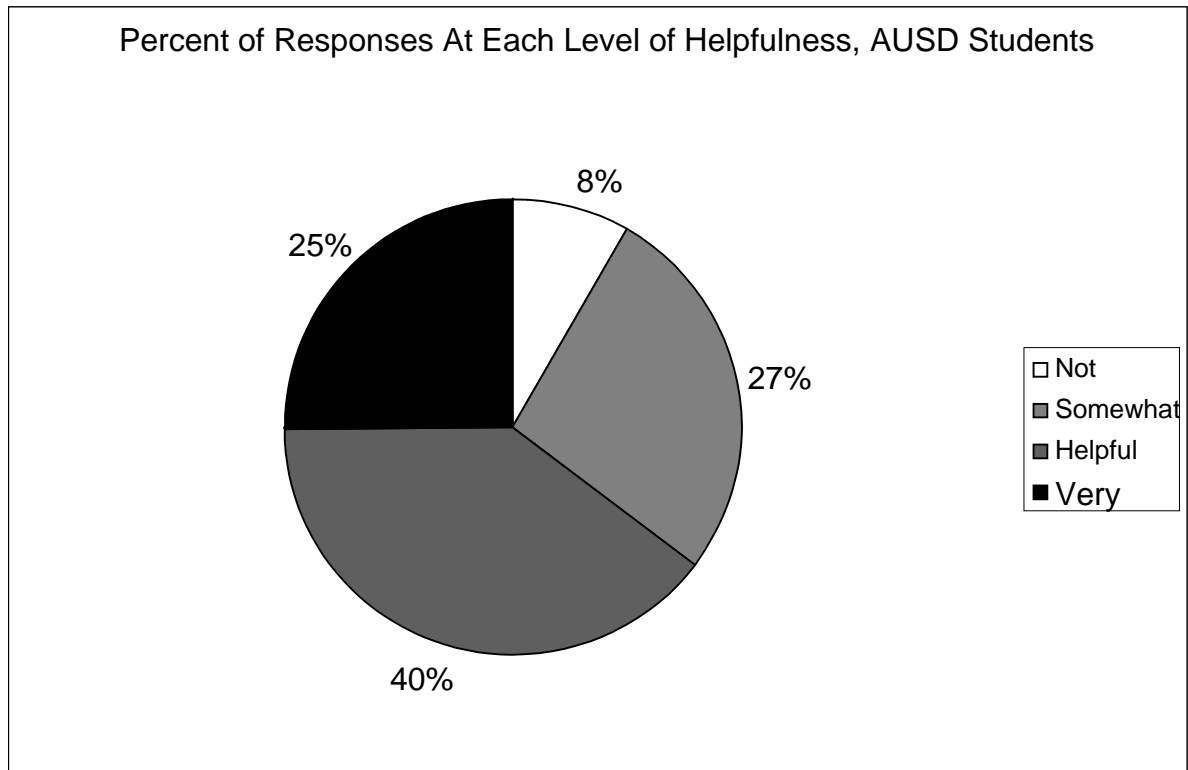
At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from the two Albany Unified School District schools that participate in WCC completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** Mean ratings for a majority of the eleven aspects rounded to the “Helpful” category (as detailed in Sections 6 and 7).
2. Albany students’ combined responses regarding the helpfulness of the eleven aspects of writer coaching indicated “Helpful” or “Very helpful” 65% of the time. And 92% of all combined responses by Albany students on the eleven aspects indicated at least some degree of helpfulness. (See Figure 4.2.) This high degree of appreciation for the benefit students perceive and experience through writer coaching is further underscored by the student comments, which are detailed in Section 14.

¹ Due to rounding, totals may not be 100%.

² Two of the twenty nine teachers in total participating in the program had not had sufficient coaching sessions to provide reliable feedback before the survey date. One teacher returned narrative comments in lieu of the survey; one additional survey was returned too late for inclusion in data analysis.

Figure 4.2: Combined Responses, All Albany Students, on All Eleven Elements: Percent at Each Level of Helpfulness



This data is consistent with last year's survey results. Mean rankings on the various elements were overall slightly higher at Albany Middle School than at Albany High School, although the rankings of the most helpful elements remained consistent between the sites. This may in part be a reflection of the high degree of collaboration between a smaller number of teachers at Albany Middle School, allowing for greater consistency in assignments and coaching goals between classes. For overall helpfulness of writer coaching, Albany Middle School students' mean score is 3.08, while Albany High School students' mean score is 2.82. As detailed in Section 6, further examination of the AHS student survey responses identified two class sections with unusually low mean scores. Site coordinators worked with that teacher to identify possible causes, and to address those issues to ensure the next coaching sessions were more productive and satisfying for students, teacher, and coaches. The survey is a powerful tool for identifying areas of needed adjustment and allowing site coordinators to take appropriate measures in a timely manner.

It is worth noting that last year, students from Albany Middle School gave an overall helpfulness mean score of 2.92. Increased coach recruitment and training efforts at Albany Middle School this year resulted in a larger pool of trained coaches. Last year AMS needed to rely on more 'substitute' coaches, and this year the coaching ranks at AMS have been more robust. This has allowed for greater consistency in coaching, which may be in part reflected in the increase in mean ranking for the overall helpfulness of coaching by AMS students this year.

AUSD Teacher Survey Results

Albany Unified School District teachers who participate in WCC also completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with seventeen aspects of the coaching process. Teachers' survey mean responses were positive. On the key question of asking teachers to compare an assignment on which students DID have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID NOT have writer coaching, teachers unanimously indicated a higher rate of assignments turned in, grades earned and overall quality of student writing on the assignment with writer coaching. This result was higher at AMS (3.75) than at AHS (3.16).

Consistent with past years, teachers gave exceptionally high rankings to the elements of working with the site coordinators to arrange coaching schedules (4.0, "Very helpful" at all Albany sites) and to convey the goals of the lesson and the areas for coaching emphasis (4.0 at AMS, and 3.75 at AHS). The exceptionally high ranking of site coordinators by AUSD teachers underscores an important aspect of WCC. The WCC site coordinators are the linchpin of the writer coach program, providing the crucial connection between the volunteer coaches and the teachers, who tailor assignments specifically for writer coaching based on the understanding of the program enabled by the site coordinators. The site coordinators help with coach recruitment and training, form the coach teams, schedule the coaching sessions, interpret the teachers' assignments for the coaches, directly oversee the coaching for every class, supervise coach workshops, maintain a database of coaching statistics for their sites, and provide guidance as needed for individual coaches. Site coordination is a complex job and demands a varied skill set that ranges from extreme attention to detail to the ability to see and analyze the big picture.

The teachers' extraordinary rating of the efforts of the program's site coordinators reflects the program's intent to extend teachers' reach by providing the one-on-one attention for students made impossible for individual teachers by class size and curricular demands. The teachers' survey responses about the site coordinators spotlight a highly effective group of people in this pivotal position for the program.

Aside from "Site coordinators," teachers ranked writer coaching as particularly effective in working with students who benefit significantly from individual attention: ELL students (3.75 at AMS; 3.67 at AHS); and struggling students (3.50 at both schools). Albany Middle School teachers gave mean scores of 3.0 or above on all seventeen elements. Albany High School teachers gave mean scores of 3.0 on fourteen of the elements, and the mean scores for the other three (increasing motivation, critical thinking, and number of students turning in assignments) ranked mean scores of 2.75 or above, which round to the "Helpful" category.

These results spotlight the effectiveness of the program's site coordination, the writing-revision base of the program, the help the program provides for students in the process of learning English, and the program's successful strategy to improve students' ability to organize their writing projects and to therefore address a fundamental need in English writing curricula.

AUSD teachers' responses indicate that coaches are particularly helpful with the struggling and language learner students, yet teachers also gave a mean score of 3.0 "Helpful" on the aspect of working with proficient students. A hallmark of the program is to offer writer coaching to all students, and training will continue to prepare coaches to help proficient writers while maintaining a focus on the program's overarching goal of closing the gap between young writers with a relatively high skill level and their classmates who are less well prepared.

WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 5

***Berkeley Unified School District
Teacher and Student Survey Result Highlights***

WriterCoach Connection (WCC) recruits, trains and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Students and their teachers who participated in WCC in Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) were surveyed. Section 8 of this report details teacher and student survey findings for Berkeley High School; Sections 9 through 11 detail student and teacher findings for each of the Berkeley middle schools: King, Longfellow, and Willard.

All of Berkeley Unified School District's 8th grade students participate in WCC, along with 7th grade students at Longfellow Middle School. At Berkeley High School, all 9th and 10th grade students in the Community Partnerships Academy participate in the program. The following report presents survey findings on BUSD participating teachers and students at the district level

BUSD Descriptive Data

The student survey return rate was 94%, with 498 students out of a possible 530 students completing the survey. The return rate for teachers was 100%, with all twelve teachers surveyed returning their surveys. Both of these return rates are high, indicating that the responses are representative of WCC teachers and students in BUSD.

The return rates by BUSD teachers and students was substantial: 81% of students responded (686 out of 844), and 87% of teachers (13 out of 15)¹. This data indicates that the responses are representative of WCC teachers and students in BUSD.

Breakdowns for students and teachers by site are in Table 5.1, below.

The data in Table 5.1 indicates that the majority of students who received WCC support were 8th graders, and, proportionately, the majority of teachers taught 8th graders.

¹ Surveys from two additional classes, and two additional teachers, were returned after the data analysis was complete. Site coordinators have evaluated those responses and taken steps as needed. In addition, one Berkeley teacher opted to submit narrative comments rather than complete the survey.

Table 5.1 Number of Student and Teacher Responders by Site

	Students		Teachers	
	n	Percent ¹	n	Percent
Berkeley HS	108	15	2	15
King MS	264	38	4	31
Longfellow MS	221	31	4	31
Willard MS	111	16	3	23
Total	704	100	13	100

Table 5.1 indicates that the number of students at each middle school is not evenly divided, with King Middle School and Longfellow having the higher numbers (n = 264, n = 221, respectively), and Willard Middle School the lowest (n = 111). Middle school students make up 85% of all Berkeley school student responses. The percentage proportions of students to teachers from each site are slightly uneven, with Willard teachers having more input than their number of students would indicate, and King slightly less. However, these discrepancies are small, and do not skew the data in a meaningful way.

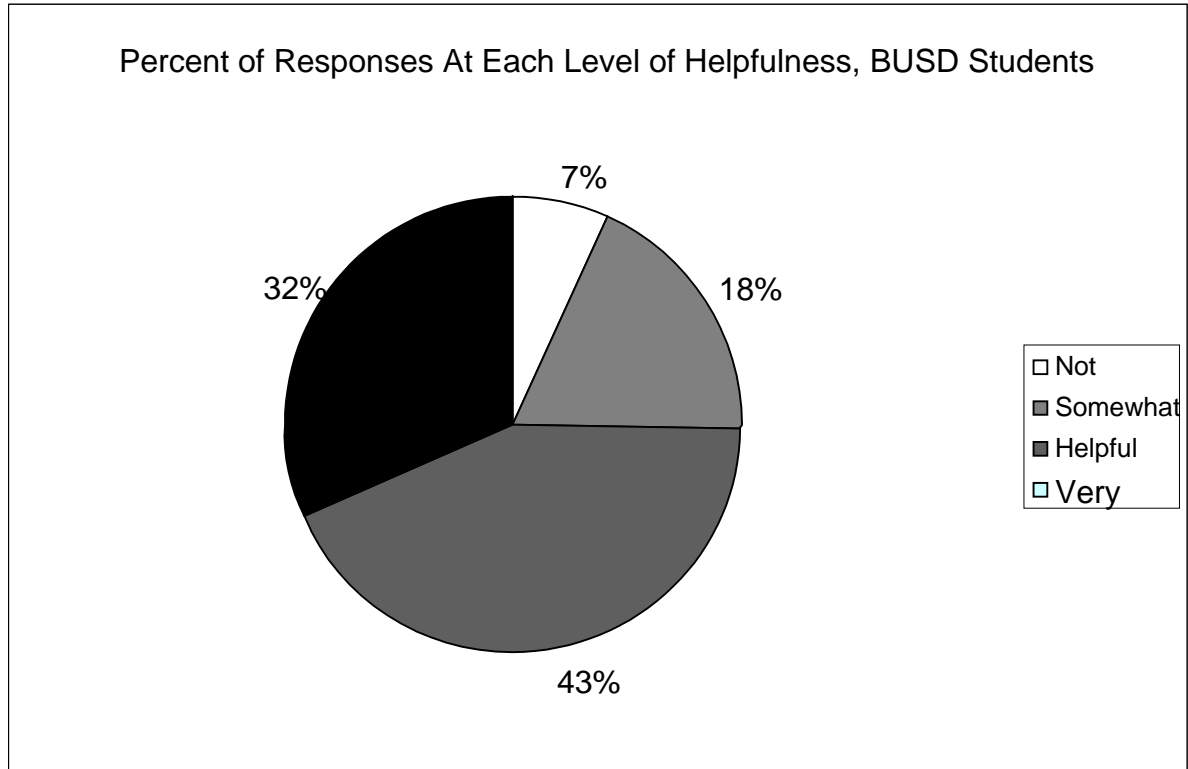
BUSD student survey results

At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from three Berkeley Unified School District WCC middle schools and the Community Partnerships Academy at Berkeley High School completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful. Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range 75% of the time. (See Figure 5.2, below.) Responses indicated at least some degree of helpfulness 93% of the time. The mean score for help on all aspects of the writing process was 3.0, “Helpful.” Mean rankings on the various elements were overall slightly higher at the middle school level than at the high school level within BUSD, although the order rankings of the most helpful elements remained largely consistent between the sites

¹ Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

Figure 5.2: Percent of Responses at Each Level of Helpfulness, BUSD Students



As demonstrated in Figure 5.2, the overwhelming majority of students found coaching to be helpful not only for the nuts and bolts of writing (essay structure; grammar, spelling; word choices) but for fostering the ability to think critically about writing (analyze, think, clarify ideas), skills that will serve students throughout their academic careers and beyond.

BUSD teacher survey results

Teachers who participate in the WCC program at the three Berkeley Unified School District middle schools and the Community Partnerships Academy at Berkeley High School also completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with seventeen aspects of the coaching process. Teachers' survey mean responses were very positive. Thirteen of the fifteen teachers participating in WCC returned their surveys.

On the key question of asking teachers to compare an assignment on which students DID have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID NOT have writer coaching, teachers unanimously indicated a higher rate of assignments turned in, grades earned and overall quality of student writing on the assignment with writer coaching, with slightly higher mean scores from the middle school teachers, but with a combined mean score solidly in the "Helpful" to "Very helpful" range.

Consistent with past years, teachers gave exceptionally high rankings to the elements of working with the site coordinators to arrange coaching schedules and to convey the goals of the lesson and the areas for coaching emphasis. The high ranking of site coordinators by BUSD teachers underscores an important aspect of WCC. Even at BHS, where survey scores on these elements were lower, WCC and the site coordinator were able to follow up immediately, address teacher concerns, and make adjustments so that subsequent coaching sessions were productive for all. The WCC site coordinators are the linchpin of the writer coach program, providing the crucial connection between the volunteer coaches and the teachers, who tailor assignments specifically for writer coaching based on the understanding of the program enabled by the site coordinators. The site coordinators help with coach recruitment and training, form the coach teams, schedule the coaching sessions, interpret the teachers' assignments for the coaches, directly oversee the coaching for every class, supervise coach workshops, maintain a database of coaching statistics for their sites, and provide guidance as needed for individual coaches. Site coordination is a complex job and demands a varied skill set that ranges from extreme attention to detail to the ability to see and analyze the big picture.

The teachers' rating of the efforts of the program's site coordinators reflects the program's intent to extend teachers' reach by providing the one-on-one attention for students made impossible for individual teachers by class size and curricular demands. The teachers' survey responses about the site coordinators spotlight a highly effective group of people in this pivotal position for the program.

These results spotlight the effectiveness of the program's site coordination, the writing-revision base of the program, the help the program provides for students in the process of learning English, and the program's successful strategy to improve students' ability to organize their writing projects and to therefore address a fundamental need in English writing curricula.

WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 6

***Albany High School
Teacher and Student Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection (WCC) recruits, trains, and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 4 of this report includes teacher and student survey findings for Albany High School and Albany Middle School combined.

AHS student survey results

At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from Albany High School completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows¹:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** Mean rating for the eleven aspects surveyed was 2.76, with all elements scoring 2.5 or above on the helpfulness index except “motivating me to turn in assignment.” (See Figure 6.1, below.)
2. Overall, students indicated that coaching was helpful, with a score of 2.82. The mean rating on six of the most crucial aspects writing of the writing process was 2.75 or above.
3. The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: showing me what’s working in their writing (2.93); discussing grammar and mechanics ((2.88); understanding of assignment (2.79); giving suggestions for organizing ideas (2.79); and reading work out loud (2.75). Showing how to express my ideas more clearly (2.72) was the most common area of helpfulness cited by students in their narrative comments.
4. Lower mean scores were attained on the question of motivating students to turn in assignments (2.4) However, more than half of the students did not select a helpfulness

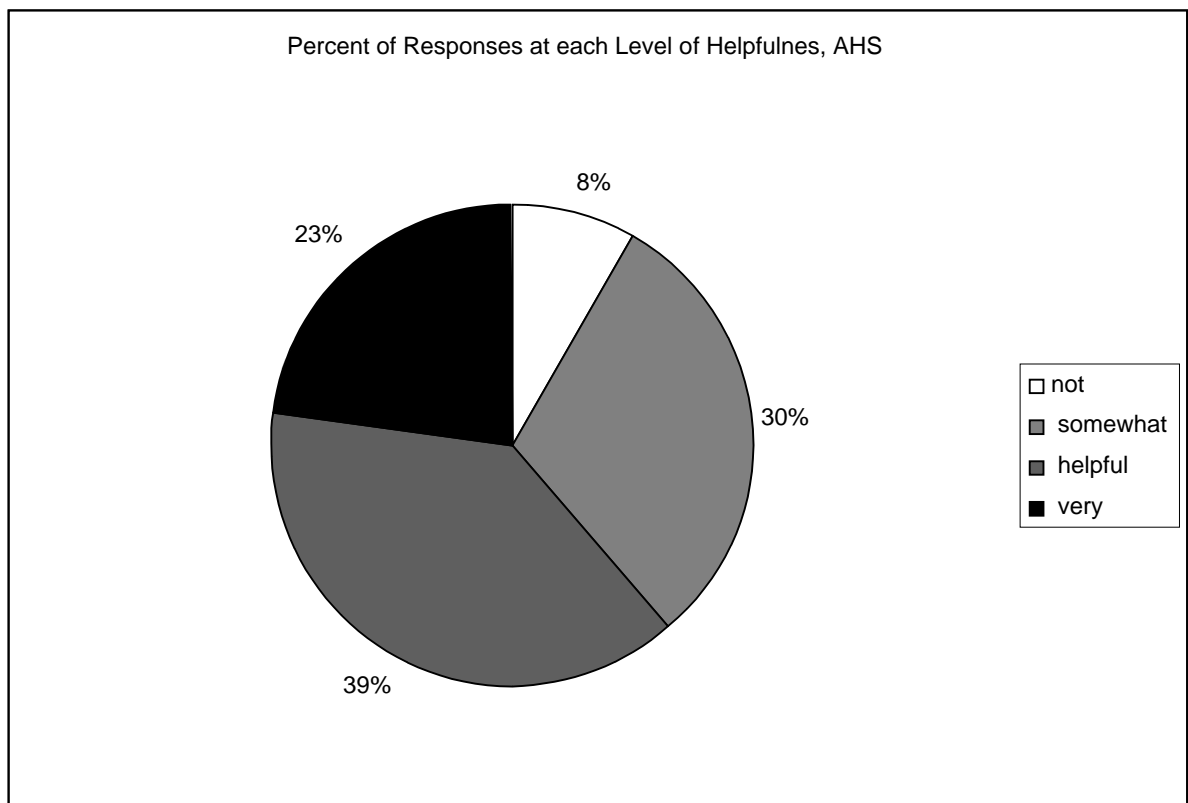
¹ While 385 AHS students are being coached this year, at the time of the survey, 147 students in seven classes had not yet had a sufficient number of coaching sessions to provide valid survey results.

ranking on these two questions but rather indicated they generally are already motivated and understand assignments. This reflects the high level of academic motivation by AHS students and the clear presentation of assignments and expectations by AHS teachers. Writer coaches are less helpful in this area primarily because less help is needed.

5. Students indicated coaches were “somewhat helpful” to “helpful” in the areas of giving suggestions about word choice and style (2.70), making sure students understand next steps for revising work (2.66), and encouraging students to analyze and think more deeply (2.57).

The return rate was 92% of the students surveyed, with 220 students out of a possible 238 completing the survey. Most of the students are in the 9th grade.

Figure 6.1 Percent of Albany High School Student Responses at Each Level



This data reveals a larger-than-usual number of students indicating coaching is “somewhat” helpful. Noting these results, we conducted further examination, which revealed that the lower-than-typical scores came predominately from two classes of one teacher. Site coordinators met with the teacher to evaluate the responses and student comments, and to identify the likely factors contributing to student responses. It was determined that schedule changes had altered expected assignments and student progress such that the two most recent coaching sessions prior to the survey had not been at optimal time and/or assignments had been modified for coaching at the last minute. Site coordinators worked with the teacher to carefully set the subsequent coaching sessions and disseminate clear assignment goals to students and coaches well in advance. The result: students, teachers and coaches all reported

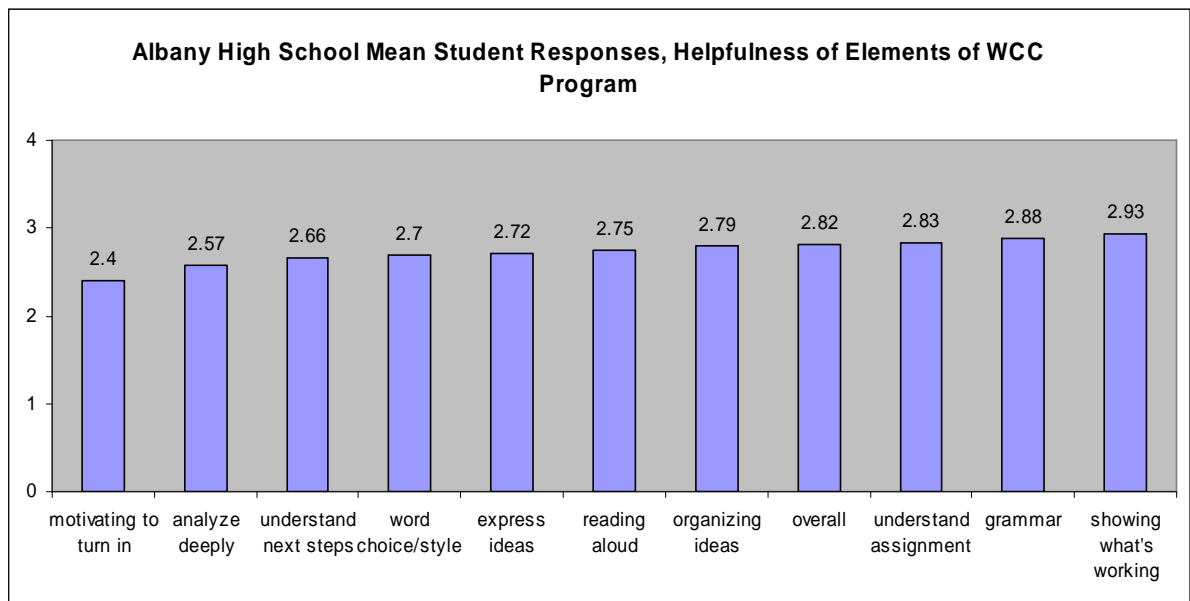
a much more successful experience. This real-time response to the mid-year survey provides essential program quality checks and allows for immediate response to concerns that may otherwise not reveal themselves.

Figure 6.2, below, delineates AHS student levels of satisfaction with coaching for the eleven important aspects of writing.

Figure 6.2 Albany High School Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



As demonstrated in these figures, the overwhelming majority of students found coaching to be helpful not only for the nuts and bolts of writing, but for fostering the ability to think critically about writing, skills that will serve students throughout their academic careers and beyond. Student comments are detailed in Section 13.

AHS Teacher Survey Results

All eight of the surveyed AHS teachers participating in the WriterCoach Connection program returned their surveys.¹ The major findings are:

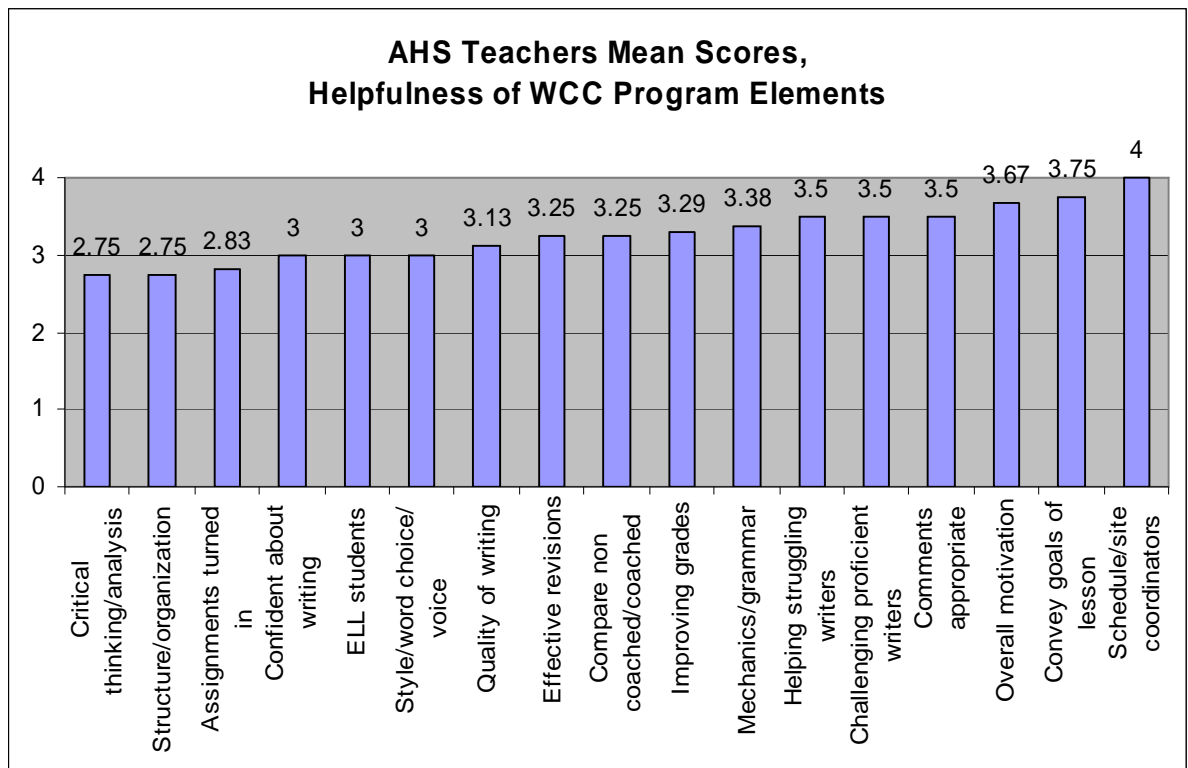
¹ Two of the ten teachers in total participating in the program had not had sufficient coaching sessions to provide reliable feedback before the survey date.

1. **Mean score for Albany High School teachers on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” (3) or above.** On the critical question of comparing an assignment on which students DID NOT have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, all AHS teachers who responded indicated an improvement in the rate of assignments turned in, quality of work, and grades earned on assignments.
2. Mean score for Albany High teachers on the separate question of helpfulness of writer coaching in increasing the number of students turning in assignments (2.83) is lower than the mean teacher response from all other sites (all others range from 3.5 to 4.0). This correlates with the high percentage of Albany High School students who indicated they are already motivated to turn in assignments.
3. Mean score for Albany High teachers on the element of “helping English Language Learner students with their writing” is 3.67, which rounds to the “Very helpful” category. Increasingly teachers at AHS are turning to WriterCoach Connection to provide individual attention for English learners. Based on this trend, we are working with the ELL teachers to develop additional training materials for our coaches so they may make most effective and productive use of their time with students who are writing in English as a second (or third) language.

Figure 6.3: AHS Teacher Mean Scores, Helpfulness of Elements of WCC Program

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 7

***Albany Middle School
Teacher and Student Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection (WCC) recruits, trains and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection™ Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 4 of this report highlights combined survey findings for the Albany Unified School District schools participating in the WCC program, Albany Middle School and Albany High School.

AMS student survey results

At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from Albany Middle School completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** Overall helpfulness of coaching scored above the “Helpful” category (3.08). Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range 68% of the time. (See Figure 7.1, below.)
2. The mean score by students rounds to “Helpful” for ten of the eleven elements surveyed; the one aspect scoring below 2.5 mean ranking was “motivating me to turn in my assignments.” This result is consistent with Albany High School, and reflects the high level of motivation among Albany Middle School students.
3. The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: showing what’s working in my writing (3.09); giving suggestions for organizing ideas (3.06); and showing how to express ideas clearly (2.95). (See Figure 7.2, below.)
4. Consistent with results throughout AUSD and BUSD schools, help with grammar and mechanics was ranked as a less helpful aspect of writer coaching (2.59). By design and reflecting teacher priorities, coaches are trained to focus first on student understanding of the

assignment, writing organization and content, and analytical and style issues before addressing writing mechanics, for which there often is insufficient time in a coaching session. In addition, teachers throughout the schools have discovered tremendous benefit from having students work with writer coaches on pre-write and outline stages of their assignments, when matters such as grammar and spelling are not apparent.

The return rate was 95%, with 278 students out of a possible 292 completing the survey. All of these students were in the 8th grade.

Figure 7.1 Percent of Albany Middle School Student Responses at Each Level of Helpfulness

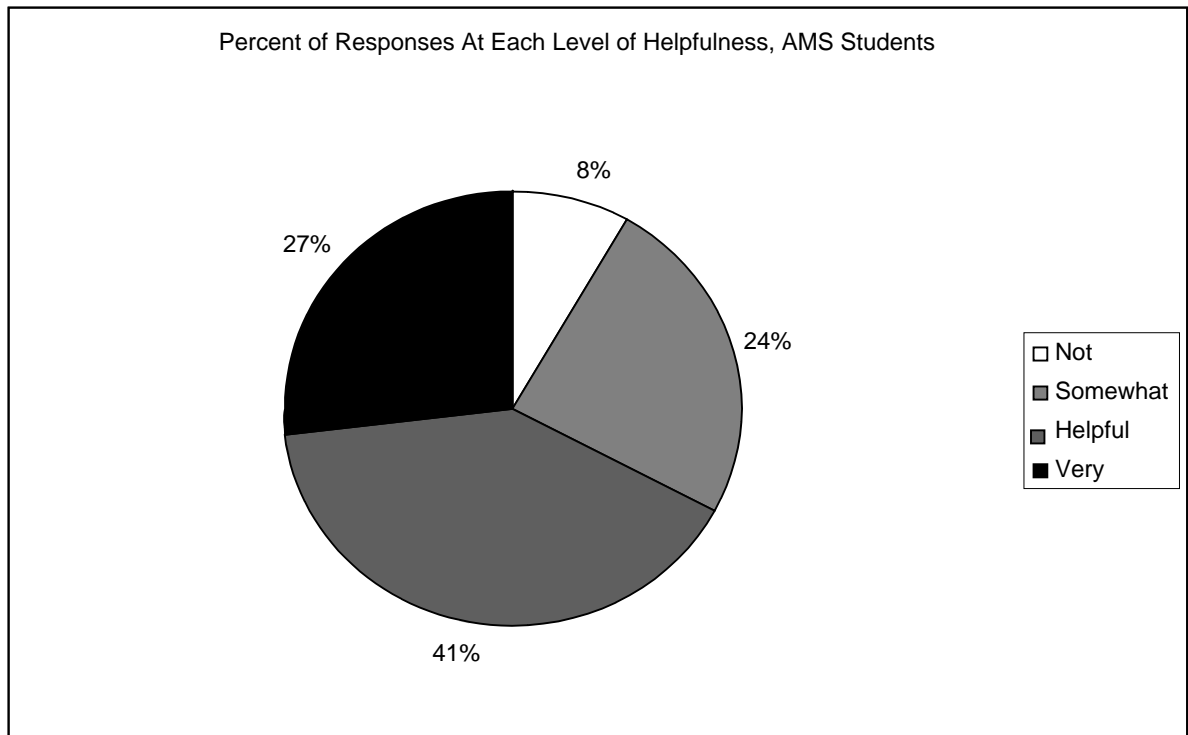
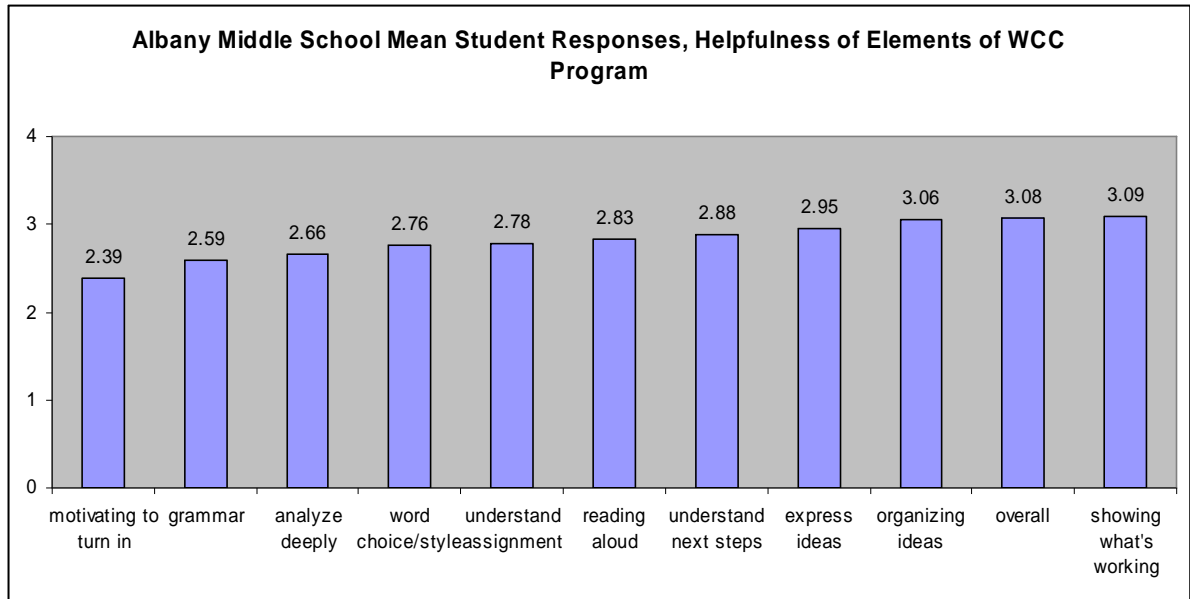


Figure 7.2 displays the students' mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the eleven important aspects of writer coaching. Overall, students selected "Very helpful" or "Helpful" in their responses to the eleven aspects of writer coaching 68 percent of the time. In addition, students rated these elements as at least somewhat helpful 92 percent of all responses. . While students did have the option to respond anonymously, site coordinators did follow up on all instances in which a student included his/her name and indicated dissatisfaction with some element of coaching. Sometimes this involved conferring with the teacher to determine if the student has any particular learning needs that coaches should be aware of. Other times this involved matching the student with a more suitable coach. In most instances, adjustments were put in place before the next coaching session. The survey is a powerful tool for identifying areas of needed adjustment and allowing site coordinators to take appropriate measures in a timely manner.

Figure 7.2 Albany Middle School Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



As demonstrated in these figures, the overwhelming majority of students found coaching to be helpful, especially with regard to interaction with the coaches (read aloud, understanding their next steps), the nuts and bolts of their writing (showing what's working in student writing, suggestions for organizing ideas, showing how to express ideas more clearly) and with regard to fostering an understanding of writing structure. These writing skills will serve the students throughout their academic careers and beyond.

AMS teacher survey results

All four participating Albany Middle School teachers participating in the WriterCoach Connection program returned their surveys.

Albany Middle School teachers mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” (3) or above. Thirteen of the elements round to the ‘Very helpful’ category with mean scores of 3.5 or above.

On the critical question regarding comparing an assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, all AMS teachers who responded indicated an improvement in the rate of assignments turned in, quality of work, and grades earned on assignments with writer coaching (mean score = 3.75).

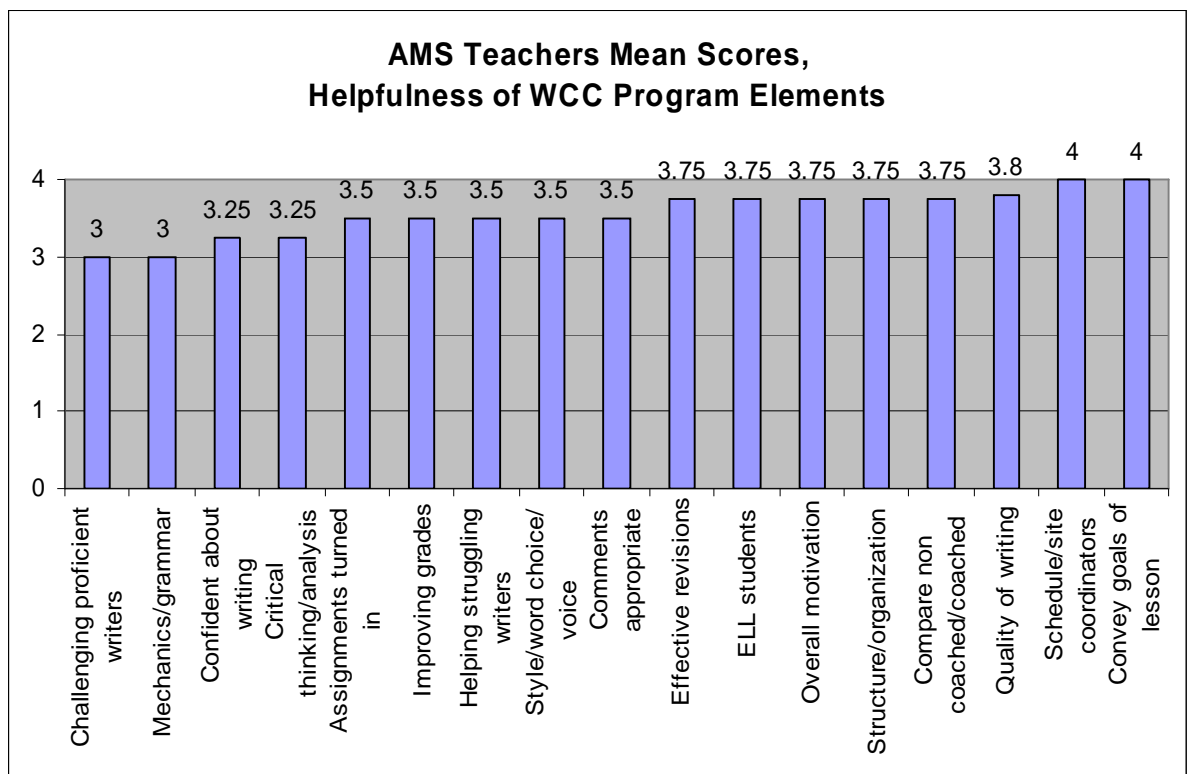
Consistent with the other schools in the program, Albany Middle School teachers rated the elements of working with site coordinators to schedule sessions and convey coaching goals as “very helpful” (mean score = 4.0). The next most helpful element is improving quality of student writing (3.8).

Four additional elements received mean scores of 3.75, rounding to “very helpful”. These elements are: making effective revisions, working with English Language learners, overall motivation, and improving structure and organization of written work.

Figure 7.3: Teacher Survey Responses: Albany Middle School

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 8

***Berkeley High School:
Community Partnerships Academy
Teacher and Student Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains, and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 5 of this report highlights student and teacher survey findings at all Berkeley Unified School District school sites.

BHS student survey results

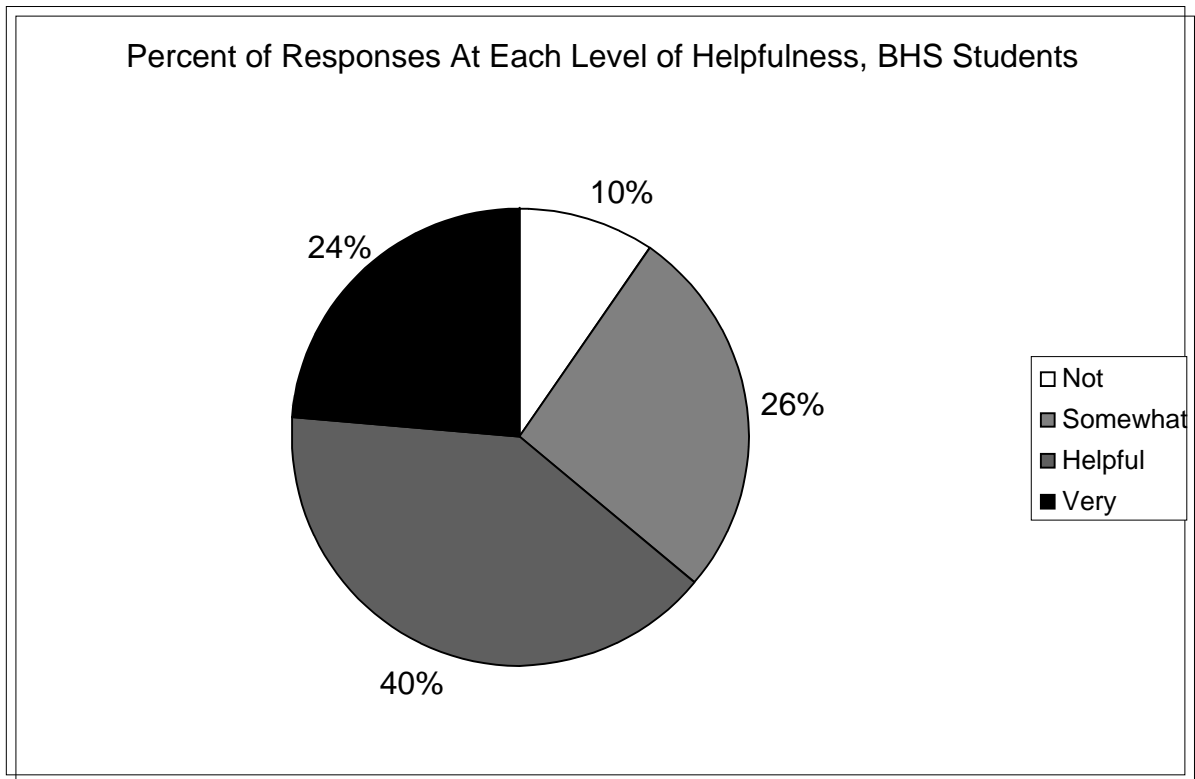
At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from Berkeley High School Community Partnerships Academy completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** (See Figure 8.1, below.) Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed rounded to the “Helpful.” The mean score for the overall helpfulness of coaching is 2.96, which rounds to “Helpful.”
2. The mean score for all questions on the four-point scale was 2.78, which rounds to the “Helpful” category. (See Figure 8.2 below.)
3. The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: helping to understand next steps (2.89); organizing ideas (2.88); showing how to express ideas more clearly (2.79) and showing what’s working in student writing (2.79). (See Figure 8.2, below.)
4. Students rated coaching as somewhat helpful in motivating them to turn in assignments (2.5). However, about one quarter of the students did not assign a helpfulness ranking to this question, but rather indicated that they are already motivated to complete and turn in assignments. Coupled with the teacher responses indicating coaching is particularly beneficial for struggling students, the spread of student responses on this question indicates that the factor of motivating students to complete and turn in assignments seems to be less

significant with the average and high-achieving students but does play a key role in supporting the struggling students.

The return rate was 92%, with 90 students out of a possible 108 students completing the survey. Students are divided about equally among 9th and 10th grade.

Figure 8.1: Berkeley High School Student Responses: Percent at Each Level of Helpfulness

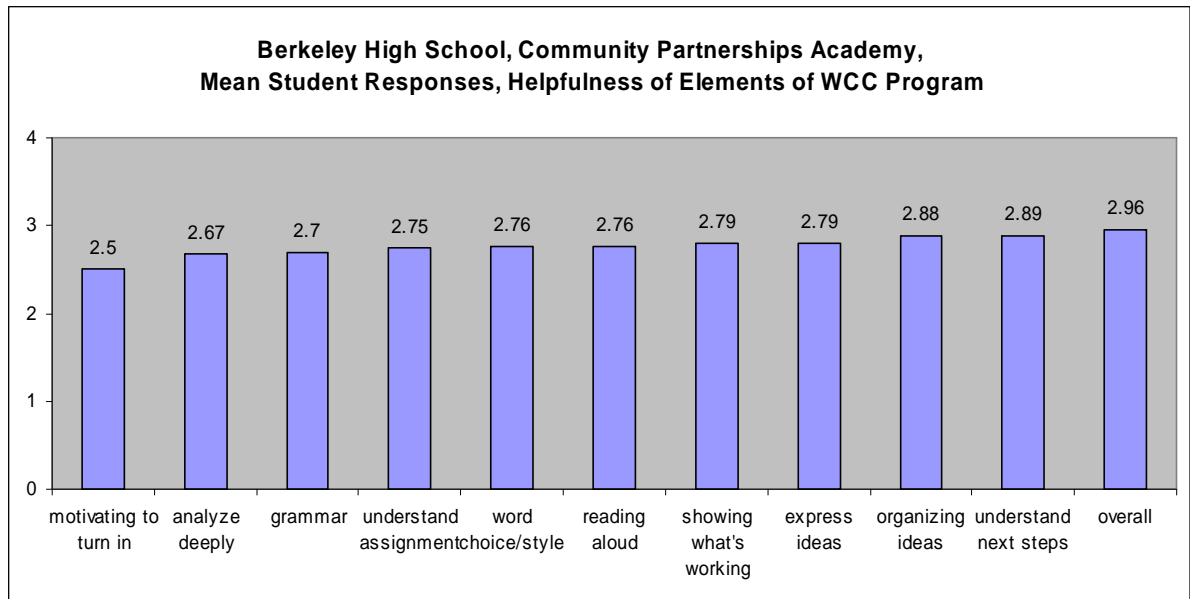


Students at Berkeley High School’s Community Partnerships Academy scored the eleven aspects of writing as “Helpful” or “Very helpful” 64% of the time. Ninety percent of all responses on the eleven aspects indicated at least some degree of helpfulness. While students did have the option to respond anonymously, site coordinators did follow up on all instances in which a student included his/her name and indicated dissatisfaction with some element of coaching. Sometimes this involved conferring with the teacher to determine if the student has any particular learning needs that coaches should be aware of. Other times this involved matching the student with a more suitable coach. In most instances, adjustments were put in place before the next coaching session. The survey is a powerful tool for identifying areas of needed adjustment and allowing site coordinators to take appropriate measures in a timely manner.

Figure 8.2 Berkeley High School, CPA Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



Student mean responses rounded to ‘Helpful’ on all elements.

BHS Teacher Survey Results

Both of the Berkeley High School CPA teachers participating in the WriterCoach Connection program returned their surveys.

Berkeley High School teachers mean scores on fourteen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” (3) or above. On the critical question regarding comparing an assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, all BHS teachers who responded indicated an improvement in the rate of assignments turned in, quality of work, and grades earned on assignments with writer coaching.

Helping struggling writers was identified by the BHS teachers as the most helpful aspect of WCC, with a mean score of 4.0, “Very helpful.” The next most helpful elements, with mean scores of 3.5 which rounds to the “Very helpful” category, are: increasing student motivation, increasing the rate of assignments turned in, and improving the structure and organization of student writing.

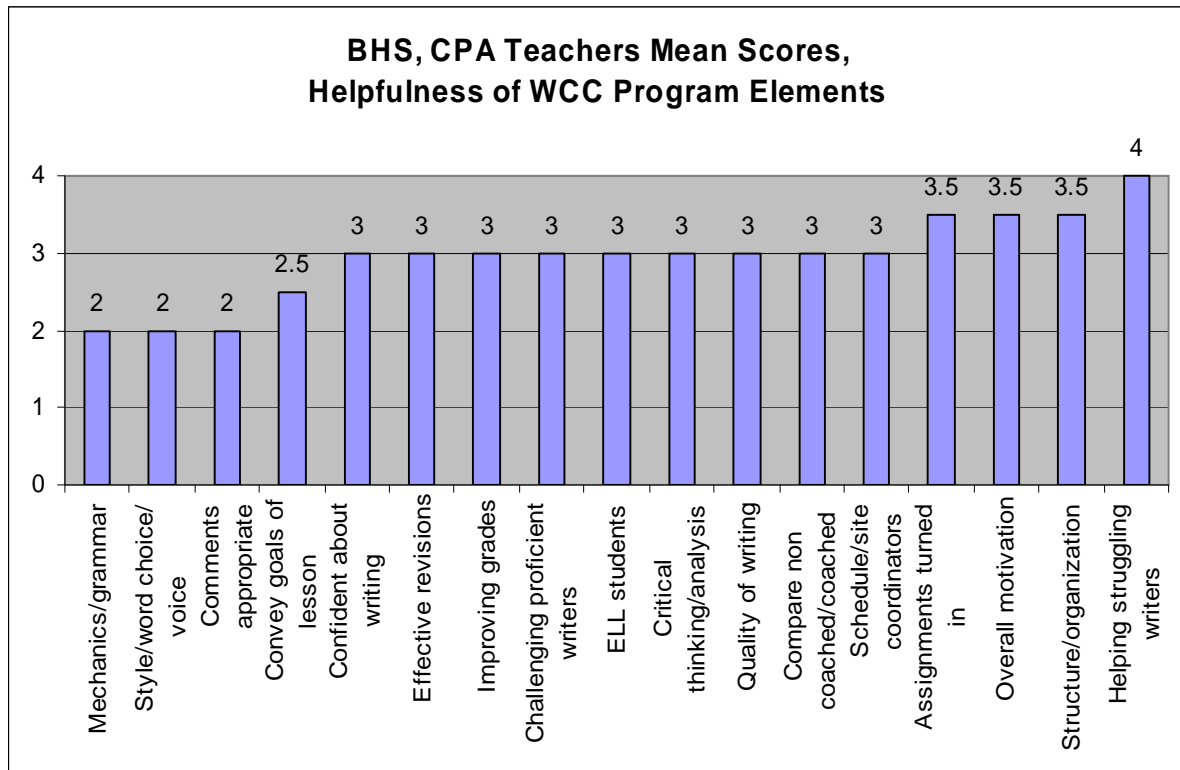
BHS teacher mean scores of 2.0 on three elements of the WCC program were unusually low. These elements are: improving grammar and mechanics, improving style and “voice,” and having coaching comments reflect lesson goals. These responses were noted and site coordinators and CAFL program staff met with teachers to explore the concerns that contributed to these responses. We were able to identify factors that contributed to a less-than-optimal coaching experience for one teacher immediately prior to the survey. (A

combination of an unexpected level of coach absences and a switch in assignment from what had been expected together contributed to challenges.) The site coordinator, supported by CAFL staff, was able to make adjustments and plan with the teacher for the next coaching session, which was productive and successful for students, teachers, and coaches.

Figure 8.3: BHS Teachers Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 9

***King Middle School
Teacher and Student Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains, and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 5 of this report includes combined teacher and student survey findings at all WCC Berkeley Unified School District sites.

King student survey results

At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from King completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

- 1. The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** (See Figure 9.1, below.) Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range 72% of the time. The combined mean for all questions is 2.98, which rounds to “Helpful.”
- 2 Overall, students indicated that coaching was helpful, with a mean score of 3.15 (in the “helpful” to “very helpful” range).
- 3 The mean rating on each of the eleven elements is 2.56 or above, rounding to “Helpful” or above in all categories. (See figure 9.2, below.)
- 4 The most helpful element for KMS students is showing what’s working in my writing (3.16), followed by help with organizing ideas (3.09), reading aloud (2.99) and checking for understanding of the assignment (2.99). The next highest mean score is for suggestions about word choice and style (2.96) and making sure student understands the next steps for revision (2.92).
- 5 Consistent with most other schools in the program, the lowest mean score was for the element of motivating students to complete and turn in assignments (mean score = 2.56). As previously noted, many students did not assign a helpfulness ranking to this

item, but rather indicated they are already motivated to complete and turn in assignments.

The return rate was 87%, with 264 students out of a possible 304 completing the survey.¹

Figure 9.1 Percent of King Student Responses at Each Level

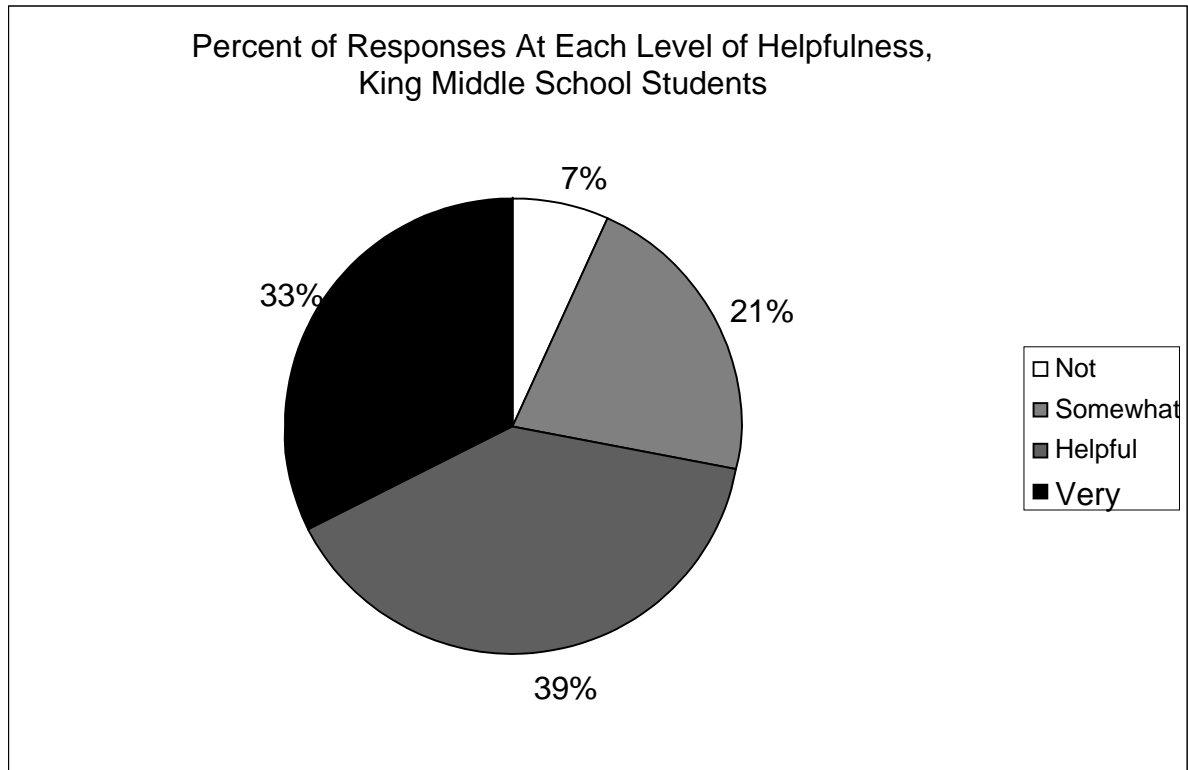


Figure 9.2, below, displays the students' mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the eleven important aspects of writing. For all responses on all aspects combined, students selected "Helpful" or "Very helpful" 72 percent of the time. Further, students indicated some degree of helpfulness on all aspects combined 93 percent of the time.

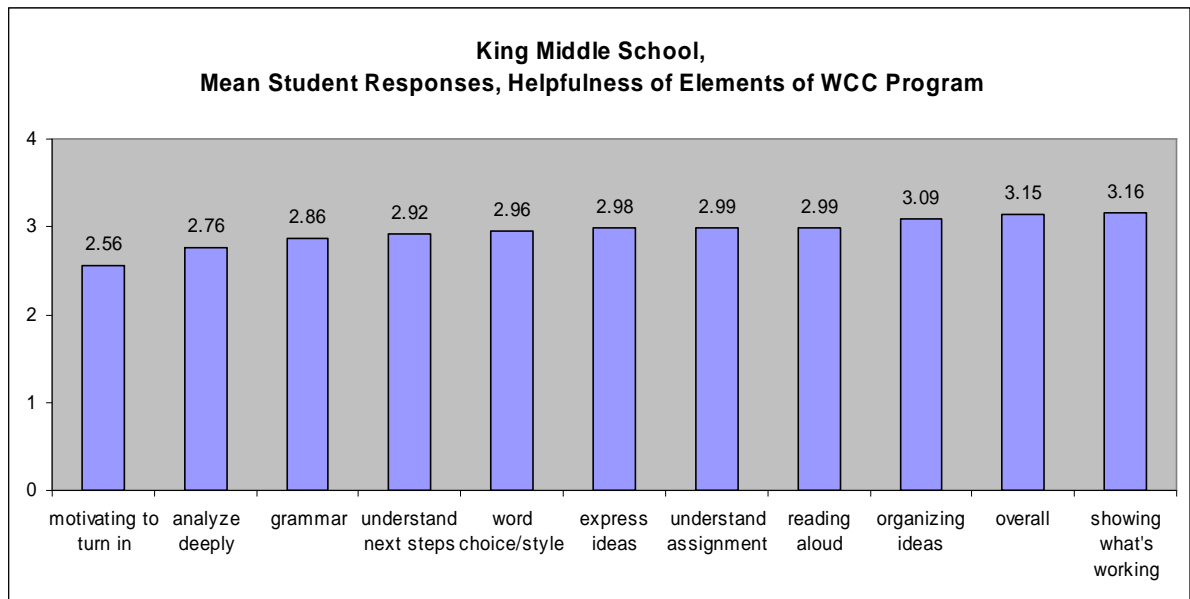
As demonstrated in these results, the overwhelming majority of students found coaching to be helpful not only for the nuts and bolts of writing (grammar, spelling; word choices) but for fostering the ability to think critically about writing (analyze, think), skills that will serve students throughout their academic careers and beyond. Student responses are detailed in Section 13.

¹ Twenty four additional student surveys were returned after the data assessment was completed. Those responses are not included in this report; however, site coordinators have reviewed the comments and survey responses and made any necessary adjustments.

Figure 9.2 King Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



As demonstrated in Figure 9.2 above, the majority of students found writer coaching to be helpful, especially with regard to interaction with the coaches, the nuts and bolts of their writing (grammar, spelling, word choices), and the ability to think critically about writing. These writing and critical thinking skills will serve the students throughout their academic careers and beyond.

King teacher survey results

Teacher mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” or above; all but two elements (increasing confidence, challenging proficient writers) have mean scores of 3.0 or above, in the “Helpful” to “Very helpful” range.

Four out of five teachers returned the survey, with the fifth teacher opting to submit narrative comments instead.

King Middle School teachers gave a mean ranking of 3.75 (rounding to “Very helpful”) on these elements: improving structure and organization of written work, improving grades earned, helping English language learners, and increasing the rate of assignments turned in. Teachers gave a mean ranking of 3.5 (also rounding to “Very helpful”) to these elements: making effective revisions, helping struggling writers, improving grammar and punctuation, overall quality of writing, and working with site coordinators to convey the coaching goals for the assignment.

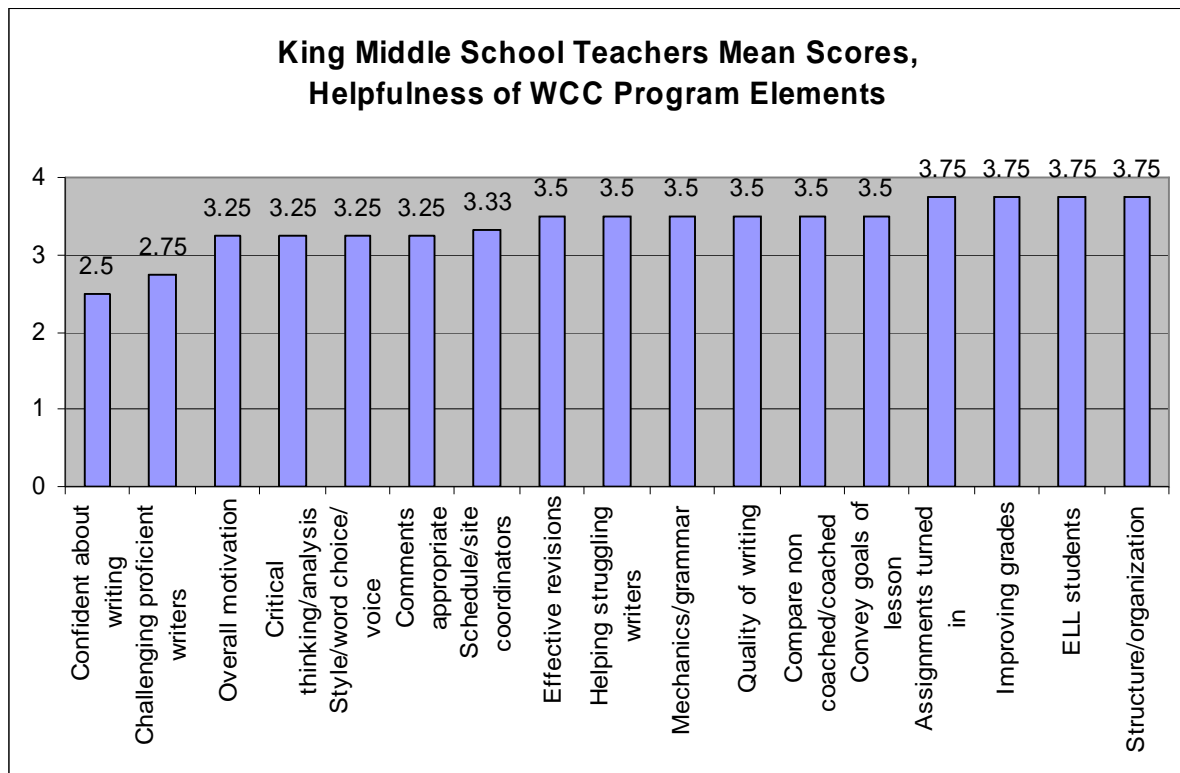
Consistent with teachers throughout the program, King Middle School teachers give a mean score of 3.5 (rounding to “Very helpful”) on the key question of comparing an assignment on which students DID have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID

NOT have writer coaching. Teachers unanimously indicated a higher rate of assignments turned in, grades earned and overall quality of student writing on the assignment.

Figure 9.3: King Middle School Teacher Responses, Mean Scores on Helpfulness of Elements of Coaching

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



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Section 10

***Longfellow Middle School
Teacher and Student Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 5 of this report includes combined teacher and student survey findings at all WCC Berkeley Unified School District sites.

Longfellow student survey results

The WriterCoach Connection program serves both 8th and 7th grade students at Longfellow Middle School. There are six classes of each grade, and student survey data includes approximately equal responses from both grades. At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from Longfellow completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with eleven aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not helpful” to “Very helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

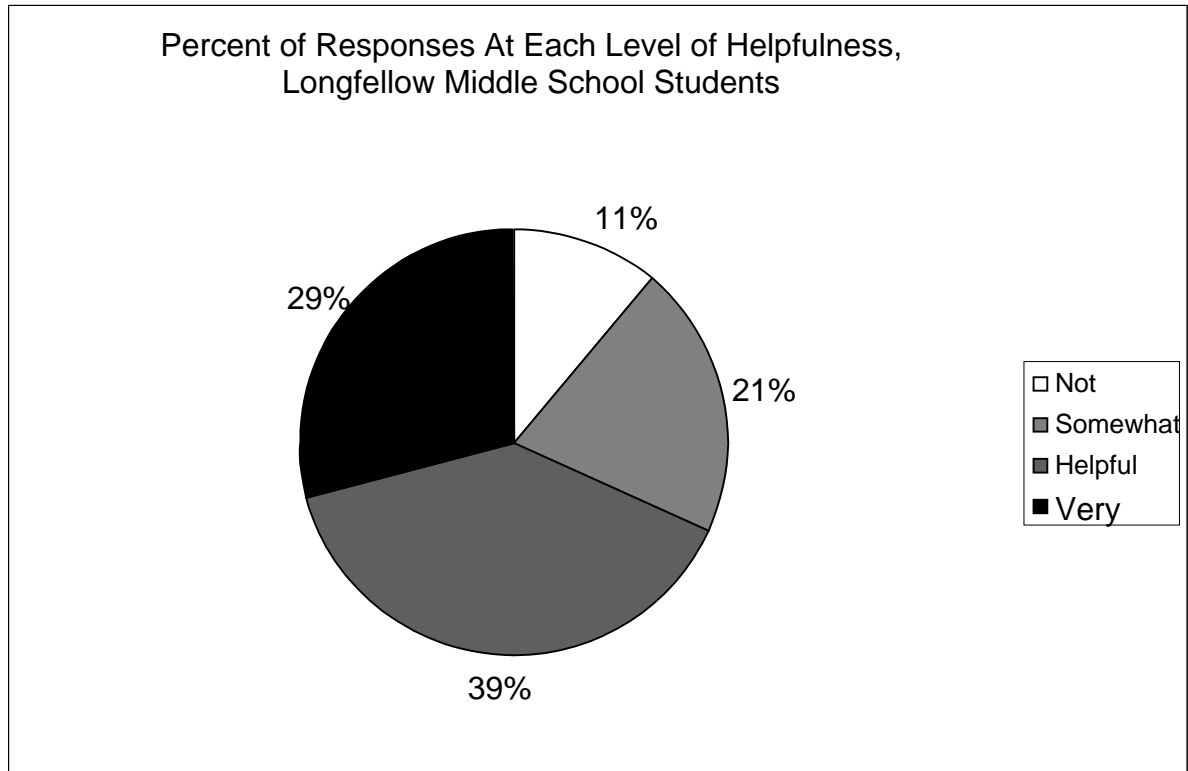
1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range 68% of the time. Students indicated at least some degree of helpfulness on all elements combined 89% of the time. (See Figure 10.1, below.)
2. Overall, students rated writer coaching as helpful (3.01).

The mean score for each of the eleven elements is 2.78 or above, rounding to “Helpful” in all categories except “motivating to turn in assignments” (Mean score = 2.46, see Figure 10.2, below.) Many students did not assign a helpfulness rating to this motivation element, but rather indicated they are already motivated to complete and turn in assignments.

3. The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: checking for understanding of assignment (3.07); suggestions for organization of ideas (3.03); showing what’s working in student writing (2.99); and showing how to express ideas clearly (2.94). (See Figure 10.2, below.)

The return rate was 76%, with 221 students out of a possible 289 completing the survey in time for inclusion in data assessment.¹

Figure 10.1 Percent of Longfellow Student Responses at Each Level²



This indicates the high degree to which students recognize the helpfulness of the individual attention that writer coaches provide. Uniquely at Longfellow Middle School, coaches are working with students in the 7th grade, who are at an earlier stage of development as writers and who in general benefit from support in the organization and “pre-writing” stages. Figure 10.2 below displays the students’ mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the eleven important aspects of writer coaching.

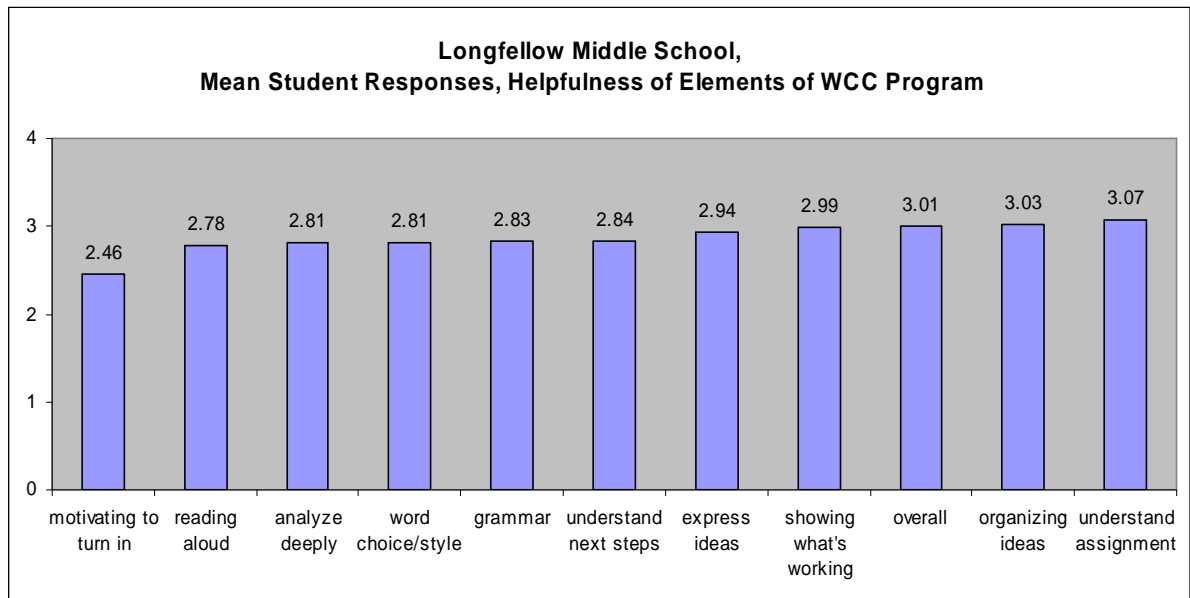
¹ Twenty two additional surveys from one class were returned late. They are not included in this data analysis; however, site coordinators have reviewed both the comments and the data from that class and have taken any necessary actions to address any concerns.

² Due to rounding, some percentage totals are not 100%./

Figure 10.2 Longfellow Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



As demonstrated in these figures, the majority of students found coaching to be helpful, especially with regard to interaction with the coaches and fostering an understanding of writing structure and the ability to think critically about writing. These writing and critical thinking skills will serve the students throughout their academic careers and beyond. Student comments are detailed in Section 13.

Longfellow teacher survey results

1. Teacher mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” or above. Mean responses for nine of the elements rounds to “Very helpful,” with scores of 3.5 or above. Four out of five teachers returned the survey.¹
2. Longfellow Middle School teachers gave a mean ranking of 3.75 (rounding to “Very helpful”) on these six elements: increasing the rate of assignments turned in, improving grades earned, helping struggling writers, improving the structure and organization of written work, scheduling with site coordinators and conveying the goals of the lesson.
3. Teachers gave a mean ranking rounding to “very helpful” to helping English language learners and improving the quality of student writing (both with a mean score of 3.5).

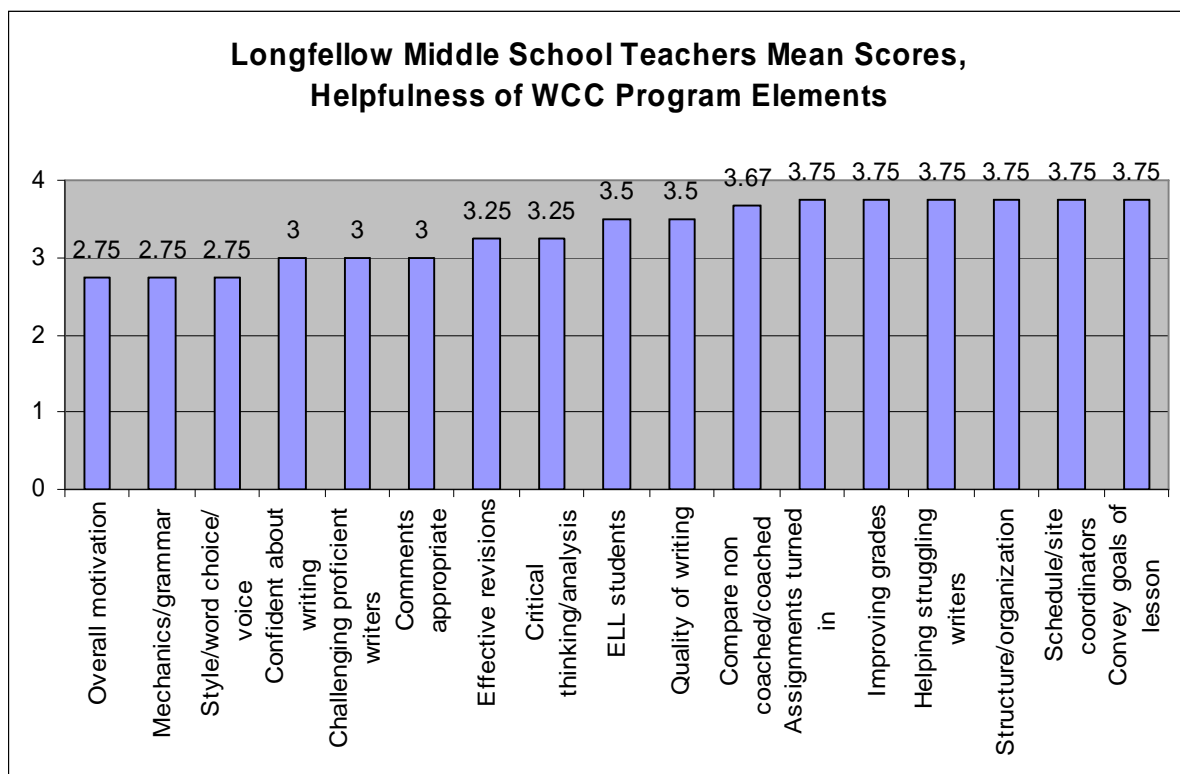
¹ The remaining teacher returned the survey too late for inclusion in this report; however, site coordinators have reviewed the survey response and taken any necessary actions in response to that feedback.

Consistent with teachers throughout the program, King Middle School teachers give a mean score of 3.5 (rounding to “Very helpful”) on the key question of comparing an assignment on which students DID have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID NOT have writer coaching. Teachers unanimously indicated a higher rate of assignments turned in, grades earned and overall quality of student writing on the assignment with writer coaching.

Figure 10.3: Longfellow Middle School Teacher Responses, Mean Scores on Helpfulness of Elements of Coaching

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



WriterCoach Connection™
Program Assessment 2007-08

Section 11

***Willard Middle School
Teacher and Student Survey Results***

Overview

WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains, and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing. Both students and their teachers are surveyed. Section 5 of this report includes teacher and student survey findings at all Berkeley Unified School District WCC sites.

Willard student survey results

At mid-year during the school year 2007-08, students from Willard completed an assessment survey in which they were asked to rate their experience with fifteen aspects of the coaching process on a four-point scale from “Not Helpful” to “Very Helpful.” Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very Helpful” range 70% of the time. (See Figure 11.1, below.) Students indicated some degree of helpfulness 92% of the time. The mean score for all responses on all elements is 2.92, rounding to the “helpful” category.
2. Students rated the helpfulness of working with coaches overall as 3.10 on a four-point scale, in the “helpful” category.
3. The mean score on all eleven elements rounds to the “helpful” or above range. The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: specific suggestions to improve essay structure and organization of ideas (3.08), showing how to express ideas clearly (2.98), checking for understanding of assignment (2.98), and showing what is working (2.97). (See Figure 11.2, below.)

The return rate was 78%, with 111 students out of a possible 143 completing the survey.

Figure 11.1 Percent of Willard Student Responses at Each Level

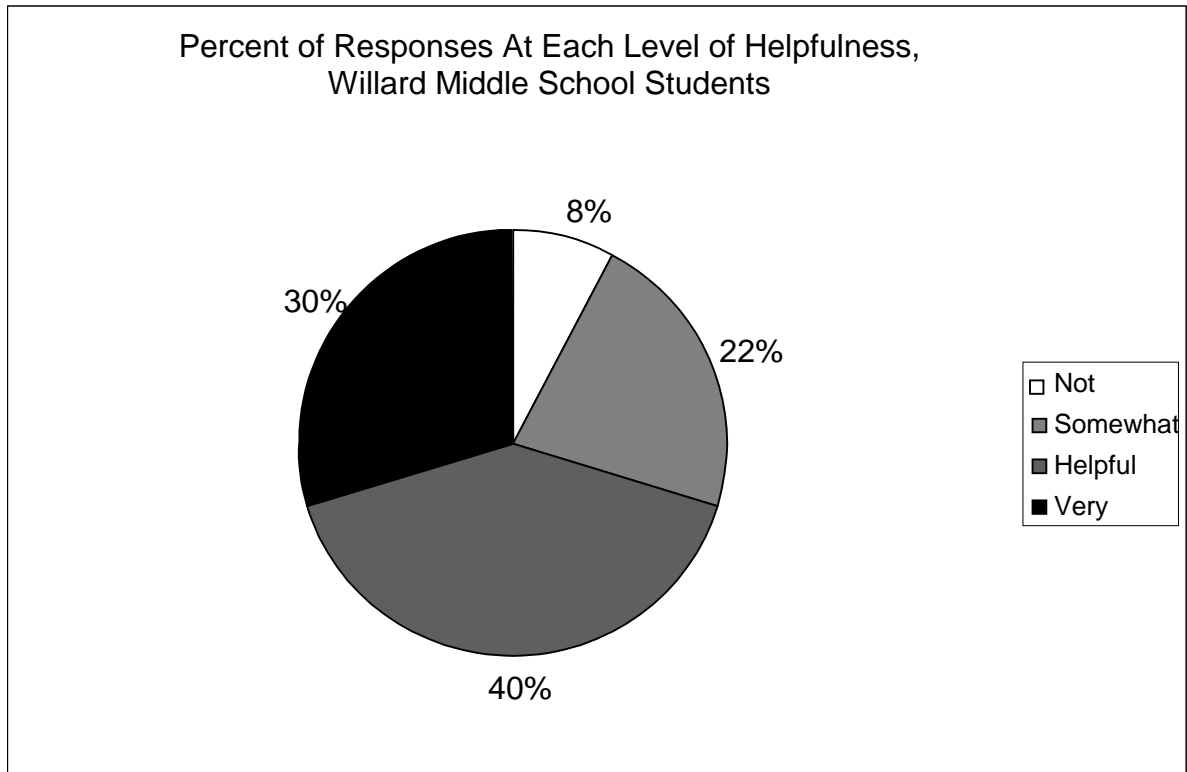
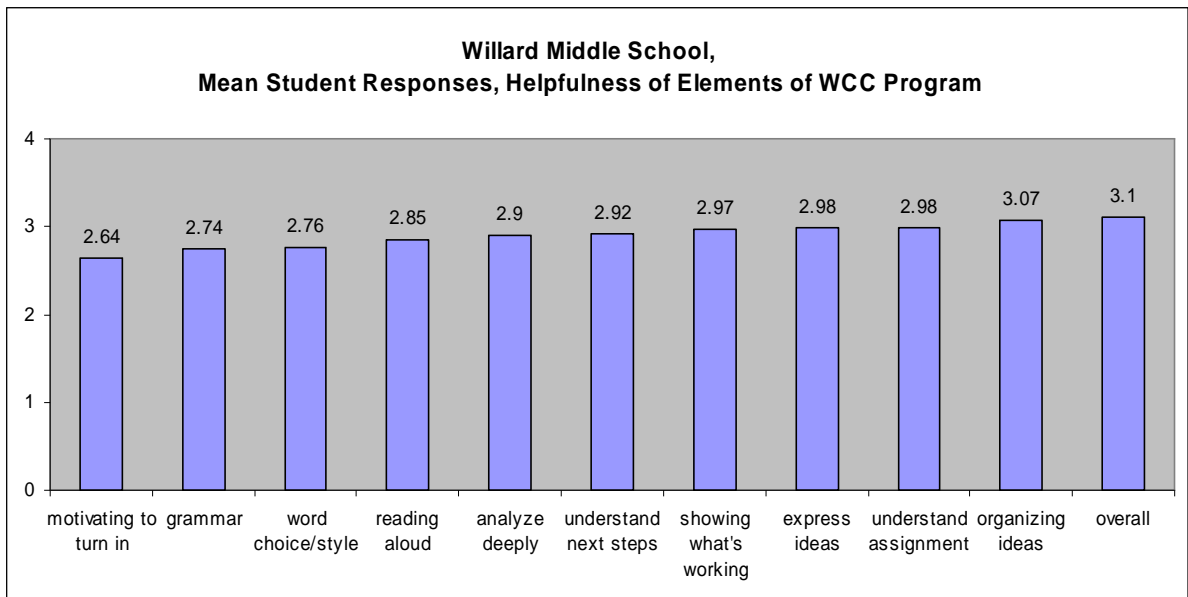


Figure 11.2, below, displays the students' mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the fifteen important aspects of writing.

Figure 11.2 Willard Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



As demonstrated in the figures above, the overwhelming majority of students found coaching to be helpful, especially with regard to fostering an understanding of writing structure, interaction with the coaches (check for understanding, read aloud, clarify what works, clarify ideas, revision notes made on the coach worksheet), and fostering the ability to think critically about writing (analyze, think). These writing and critical thinking skills will serve the students throughout their academic careers and beyond. Student comments are detailed in Section 13.

Willard teacher survey results

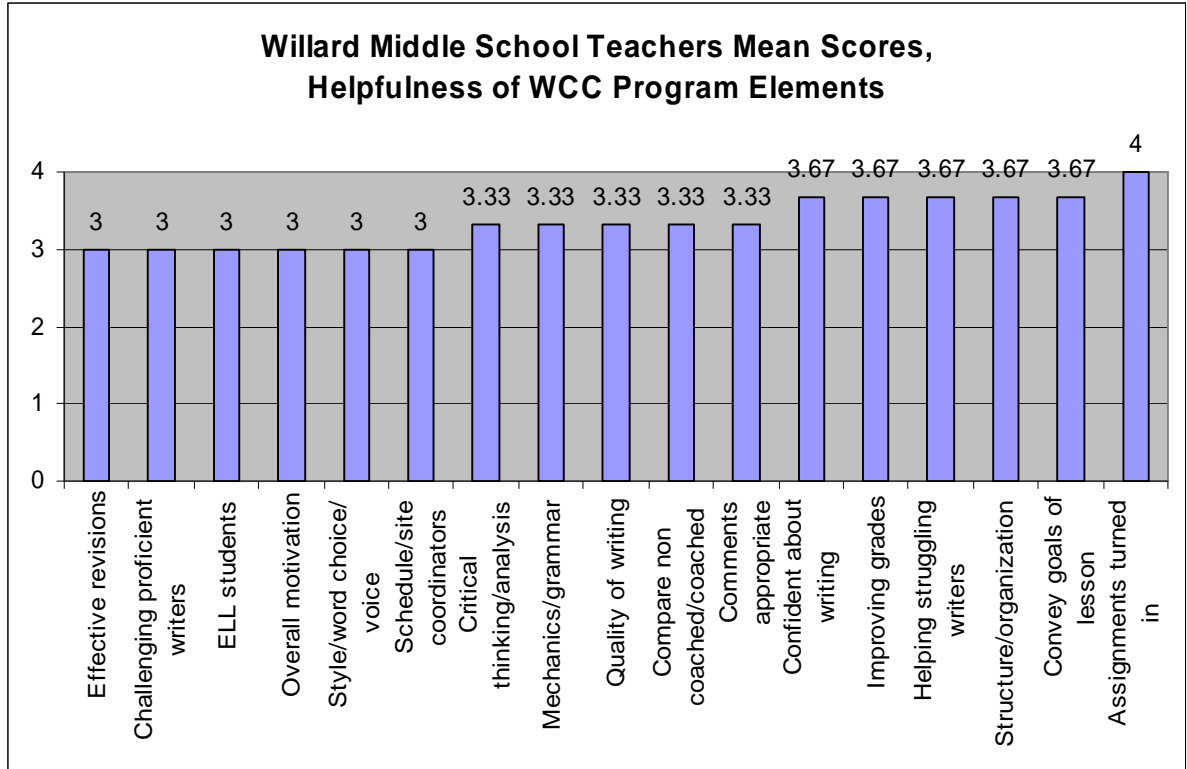
1. Teacher mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching fall in the “Helpful” to “Very helpful” range, with mean scores of 3.0 or above. All three teachers participating in WCC returned the survey.
2. Willard Middle School teachers gave a mean ranking of 4, “Very helpful” to the element of increase in assignments turned in. On these five elements, the mean score was 3.67, rounding to “Very helpful”: increasing student confidence as writers, improving grades earned, helping struggling writers, improving the structure and organization of written work, and working with site coordinators to convey the goals of the lesson.
3. Teachers gave a mean rankings of “Helpful” or above to all other elements of the writer coaching program.

Consistent with teachers throughout the program, Willard Middle School teachers give a mean score of 3.33 on the key question of comparing an assignment on which students DID have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID NOT have writer coaching. Teachers unanimously indicated a higher rate of assignments turned in, grades earned and overall quality of student writing on the assignment with writer coaching.

Figure 11.3: Willard Middle School Teacher Responses, Mean Scores on Helpfulness of Elements of Coaching

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

Scale: 1= Not 2=Somewhat 3= Helpful 4= Very helpful



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Section 12

Representative Teacher Survey Comments¹

The following comments are representative of those of the majority of teachers.

“The WriterCoach Connection is a phenomenal resource for our small school; it is an invaluable tool for what I believe is our most important goal—ensuring that our students are prepared for college writing. My ninth graders not only feel more confident about themselves as writers but also take the assignment more seriously because they are writing for an authentic audience—not just their teacher.”

Susannah Bell, Community Partnerships Academy, Berkeley High School

“The WriterCoach Connection helps me prepare thoughtful writing assignments on a regular basis. It is reassuring to know that when I assign a challenging piece, students who struggle will get personal help. I think many students feel appreciated after they have received one-on-one support. I notice that they have increased confidence. Many times they come up to me to show me positive comments coaches have written.”

Jessie Luxford, Longfellow Middle School

“Coaching has pushed my students to get their work done and has improved the quality of their work.”

Mya Thorniley, King Middle School

“There is a significant difference between work that is done with the coaches and work that is not. The overall structure and organization of the students’ writing is greatly improved.”

Megan Low, King Middle School

On what works well with WriterCoach Connection:

“Some of the wonderful things (about WriterCoach Connection) are 1) Positive contacts with a caring adult; 2) An opportunity to have writing edited one-on-one; 3) The final drafts are significantly better than without the editing provided by the coaches; 4) Students, regardless of their abilities, are pushed toward creating a better and more proficient piece of writing.

Victoria Edwards, King Middle School

¹ Participating teachers were guaranteed anonymity when completing their surveys. The teacher names in this report are provided with permission.

“WCC provides students with a real audience for their writing. As coaches help students deepen their thinking and organize their evidence, students come to see how they can use writing to communicate their ideas to other people. The one-on-one attention ensures that each essay has a careful reader at every stage of development.”

Alexandra Freidus, Community Partnerships Academy, Berkeley High School

“Giving students the opportunity to talk one-on-one with a coach about their writing before turning it in seems to help motivate them and help them develop a sense of their own strengths and their own voice.”

Rebecca Eisenberg, Albany Middle School

“I really think one-on-one support is very valuable for the students. It shifts some of the burden off of the teacher and prevents some students from falling through the cracks.”

Jeff Selk, King Middle School

“The most advantageous aspect of WriterCoach Connection is that students not only get one-on-one help with assignments, but they get an adult’s perspective. Fourteen-year-olds often have tunnel vision. Having an adult that can sit with them and help them see the larger picture is wonderful.”

Steve Conley, King Middle School

“I see coaching as a nurturing time. I often use coaching for the early stages of a writing assignment because I get more work, a higher quality work, because the coaches are able to help the students focus on their thinking. It is amazing how much gets accomplished in the early stages of the process.”

Patty Bonsall, Willard Middle School

“Everything—the kids look forward to coaching and it runs smoothly.”

Anne Frost, Longfellow Middle School

WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 13

Recurring Themes in Student Survey Comments

In addition to prompts with scaled responses, students had the opportunity to respond to three open-ended prompts (see Appendix 1 for complete survey):

- **My coach or coaches helped me to improve my thinking and writing skills by:**
- **Is there anything about working with your writer coach that you did not like, or that you would change?**
- **Here are my other thoughts about working with the writing coaches:**

Qualitative analysis of responses to these open-ended prompts revealed that, overall, students appreciated the individual help on a number of levels. The experience of coaching appeared to open them to a fact about learning to write effectively long recognized by teachers: that clear organization of a writer's ideas is crucial to compelling written communication. Based on their comments, students appear to value the bonds they develop with their coaches and the confidence in their abilities that those bonds foster. Students also appear to find writer coaching to be a fun experience, a perspective borne out by teachers who attest that students look forward to the days when they will be coached.

Comments from students were heartfelt and thoughtful, sprinkled heavily with phrases such as "it's cool," "it's fun," and "they help me a lot." This handwritten testimony praises coaches for helping students think deeper, expand ideas, giving good suggestions and ideas, AND helping with organization and clarification. Overall, students appreciate the good ideas, suggestions, showing what's working and what isn't working and WHY. They noted that there is not often time to work on grammar and mechanics, although many expressed the wish to work on these aspects of their writing.

The open-ended responses about what is not working also allowed site coordinators to identify and address any areas of concern promptly. Site coordinators conferred with teachers in response to some comments, to identify any particular learning challenges and strategies coaches may find effective with these specific students. In a few cases, coach/student pairings were adjusted to find more suitable matches, resulting in positive and effective subsequent coaching sessions.

The vast majority (over 75%) of the 1,723 student comments were positive; another 15 % were 'constructive criticism,' pointing out aspects which work better than others, and about 8% were negative. Although students had the option to respond anonymously, approximately half included their names. Site coordinators followed up with teachers and/or students on any "negative" comments (such as "I want to change coaches" or "My coach just tells me his ideas and doesn't listen to my ideas"), often adjusting the coach/student pairings for a more optimal experience.

About an equal number of students said coaching was too short as said coaching time was too long. While 15 percent specifically mentioned reading their work aloud as helpful, another 10 percent indicated they did not like to read their work aloud. On balance, this indicates the levels of these elements are probably ‘just right,’ but serves as an important reminder that coaches need to be sensitive to the individual preferences of the students with whom they work. It underscores the critical role of the first step in writer coaching: establish an effective relationship with the student. Ongoing coach training and refresher trainings emphasize awareness for cues such as body language and eye contact to gauge student engagement and comfort level.

Many of the students’ positive responses fell into five recurring themes: "Clarify organization," "Develop style," "Identifying strengths," "Overall help," and "Important intangibles." The following list of responses for each theme indicates that students felt most positive about how coaching supported them with organizing their thoughts, and how it increased their self esteem and general enjoyment of the writing activities.

Clarify organization

Breaking it down step by step so I could understand better.
Helping me get organized.
Helping me understand what kind of structure I need to use for my writing.
Going over the basic framework of my essay, and then helping me elaborate.
Develop and support ideas.
Helping me think more deeply and explain in more detail about my essay.
Clarifying my sentences and ideas.
Helping me answer my own questions.
Helping me find quotes.
Telling me to add detail.
Helping me add lots of support and details.
Making sure my arguments were sound by offering rebuttals.
Letting me self-edit.
Encouraging me to read my work so that I may hear if it doesn’t quite “fit together.”
Making me read my work.
Helping me by thinking out my ideas.
Brainstorm, ask questions, encourage thinking
Making me brainstorm.

Develop style

Helping me better my vocabulary.
Encouraging me to write more complicated sentences.
Challenging me to be more sophisticated in my writing.
It is very helpful to get other people’s opinions.
I would like to continue. They do help with my paper; it makes me think harder.
Asking me questions about my work and making me think about my work.

Stay positive--identify strengths

Telling me what I did right.
Knowing what my strong points are.
Giving examples and positive feedback.

Asking me questions.

Overall help

I thought I didn't really need to be coached but it helped. This is a good program!

It is a great opportunity.

I think she is a really good coach. She should be a writing teacher.

They helped me with my writing and I have improved.

They definitely have helped me overall.

I think it's a good idea and should be continued.

I think we should do this more often.

Important intangibles--writer's self esteem and enjoyment

Encouraging me.

Motivating me and giving me suggestions.

Giving me confidence and insuring that my writing is the best it can be.

It is really helpful to get other people's opinions.

She was nice and believed in me.

They're fun; really gets me into writing more stories.

I would like to continue. They do help with my paper; it makes me think harder.

He/she is so wonderful and bright and loves to hear what I have to say. It feels wonderful to have someone understand what I'm going through.

I think she is a really good coach. She should be a writing teacher.

They are fun to work with and they help you a lot.

They definitely have helped me overall.

This is a great opportunity.

I think it's a good idea and should be continued.

Cool experience! Very helpful.

It's awesome.

It's fun.

I loved it!

Most of the student comments about what they would change balanced out with about equal numbers saying it was "too long" and saying "we should have more time," and those saying "I don't like reading aloud," as compared to those saying "reading aloud really helps me."

Other frequent comments about ways to change or improve include:

Needs to ensure the student's voice is heard

Talks too much, pushes own ideas, changes my ideas.

Interrupts me.

Needs to speak more clearly, make sure vocabulary is understood

Talks too fast.

Repeats her/himself a lot.

Says words I don't understand.

Uses big words.

I can't read their handwriting!

In response to these comments, future training sessions will continue to address the challenge of simultaneously, in a session of twenty- to twenty-five minutes, listening to a student,

working with the student to develop strategies to improve a written assignment, and noting the highlights of the coaching session on the coach worksheet with sufficient clarity that the student (and the teacher) will be able to subsequently read it and recall what the student and the coach discussed. Training will also emphasize that the ownership of a student's written assignment rests with the student, and the student's input in the coach-student exchange is paramount. Finally, the comments regarding speech speed and choice of vocabulary by a coach suggest that training procedures must recognize the significant differences in learning capacities on the continuum of seventh to tenth grade levels.

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Section 14

Coach Survey Results

Coaches indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the WCC as a quality volunteer experience. Elements which coaches rate highly include the structure and support provided by site coordinators, the training, and regular advance preparation regarding coaching assignments and goals. Eighty two percent of coaches responding to the survey indicated coaching is a “very rewarding” experience, and fully 98% indicate it is at least fairly to very rewarding.

Figure 14.1 Coach satisfaction with the coaching experience

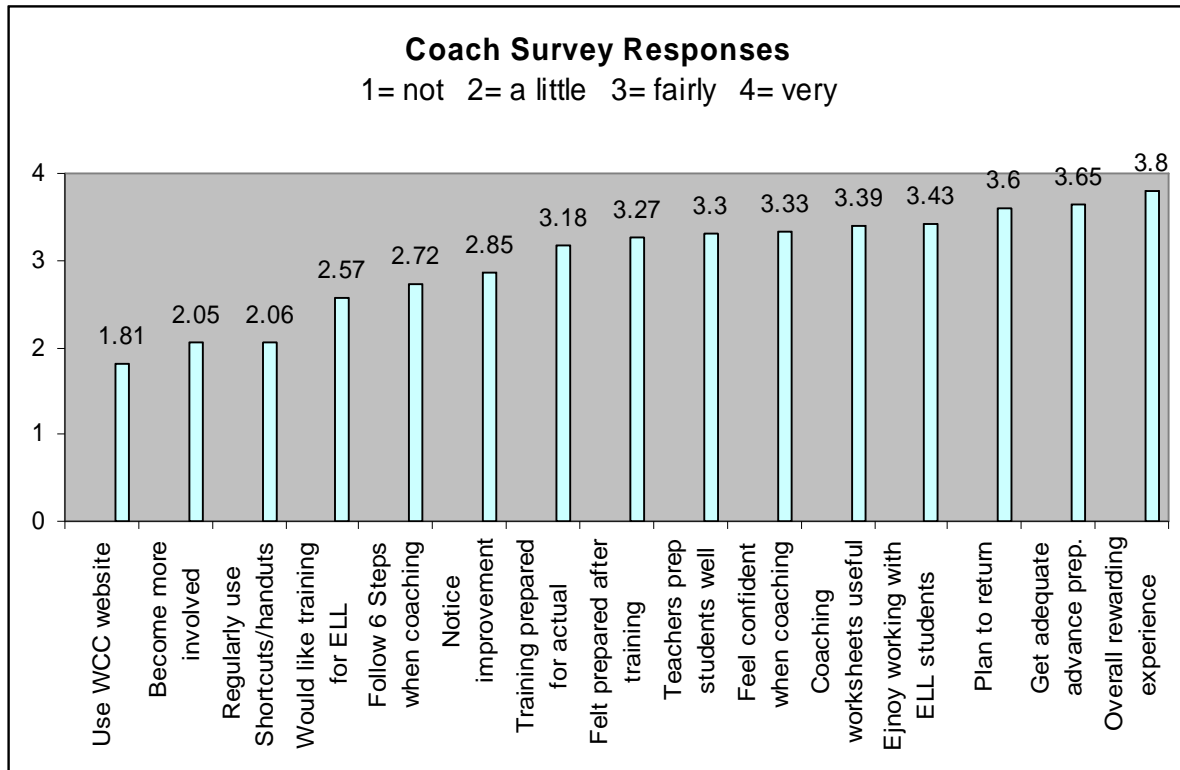


Coaches, as individuals who value writing, naturally submitted a wide range of informative, insightful, and appreciative comments. These are detailed below. In addition, coaches were asked to respond to 15 survey questions regarding aspects of the WriterCoach Connection program, ranking their responses on a scale from 1 (“Not”) to 4 (“Very”).

Coaching as an overall rewarding experience ranked the highest mean score, 3.8, indicating a high degree of coach satisfaction with the program. Coaches overwhelmingly indicated they get adequate advance preparation for coaching sessions (3.65) and that they plan to continue as coaches for the next school year (3.6).

Coaches indicated they enjoy working with ELL students (3.39), and many said they would like additional training to feel more confident in their work with English language learners. The ranking for the ELL training question was lower, with a mean score of 2.57, primarily because not all coaches work with ELL students so many perceived this extra training as not needed due to their coaching schedule. Of the coaches who regularly volunteer during ELL class periods, the majority indicated a desire for more ELL related training.

Figure 14.2: Coach Mean Scores on Coaching Experience



The structure and support CAFL and WCC provide to coaches is effective, as indicated by the high mean scores on several questions. Coaches feel the structured worksheets are useful in guiding their sessions (3.39), they feel confident when coaching (3.33), they feel students arrive well prepared (3.3), and they felt prepared for coaching after training (3.27).

Coaches indicated that training prepared them for what they actually encountered when coaching at a slightly lower mean score of 3.18. Narrative comments indicated this was mainly due to experiences with students who are unprepared, disengaged, and uninterested in the schoolwork. In response to these comments and this data, CAFL program development steps have been taken to generate additional training material regarding working with disengaged students, including discussion of this topic in spring coach refresher workshops, and redoubling efforts to obtain advance information from teachers regarding individual students who may be struggling and pairing them with coaches who are particularly adept at working with these students.

A robust one third of coaches responding to the survey indicated an interest in becoming even more involved in the WriterCoach Connection program. CAFL staff has followed up with these coaches, inviting participation in strategic planning, fundraising, outreach, grantwriting, publicity, and video documentation, depending on the interests, inclinations, and talents they offer to bring to the program. CAFL is extremely grateful for this outpouring of support, above and beyond the weekly commitment to sit at a table and work one on one with middle and high school students on their writing assignments.

Few coaches make use of the WCC website. Weekly assignments and other resources are posted and updated for easy coach access. However, the majority continue to rely on direct email updates from their site coordinators. CAFL will explore ways to make the website even more user friendly and easy for coaches to access and navigate, but notes that for now the vast majority of coaches are extremely reliable in monitoring email messages, printing out assignments and instructions, and arriving at coaching sessions on time and prepared.

The greatest challenges identified by coaches in their narrative comments: Doing more prewriting than revision; being thorough in the limited time; motivating students who are disengaged and not interested in the assignments. Says one self-evaluating coach: “My greatest challenge is remembering to shut up and listen. That’s why we’re there!”

Coaches describe their greatest successes

Showing students who lack confidence, who show up without assignments, that they can write. When a student thinks she can’t do it and then discovers she has something interesting to say!

Having a student tell me that I helped!

Making a highly uninterested student laugh, something I took to be a sign of trust.

Watching the light go on in a student’s eyes – “I’ve got it!”

Listening to discouraged students and picking up on the threads of their ideas and demonstrating how an essay was embedded in those threads.

Helping students motivate themselves and get excited about assignments they used to dread. A very indifferent student who chose a Sojourner Truth assignment because she had done one in 4th grade. But by the end of her work she had interviewed a *Chronicle* opinion columnist and had her piece printed in a local paper.

Coaches describe the quality of the WCC volunteer experience:

Thanks so much for this opportunity. I love coaching and I say with utmost sincerity that it has changed my life for the better.

Thanks for making it so easy to coach!

I feel the way the Connection is run is very good.

I enjoy this so much. The many students who are engaged make my day.

Site coordinators are doing a great job! Clear communication via email and a very positive environment on-site.

Great program – I've been telling my friends. Sharing experiences with other coaches is valuable to me.

I enjoy the one-on-one format, working with the kids, especially when there is a clear assignment.

It is a terrific experience and reminds me how fortunate we are to live in this wonderful community.

You guys are great – a real inspiration!

I have appreciated how extremely well thought out, organized, and coordinated this whole program is. Very favorably compares to any other volunteering I've done. Also impressed by the quality of other writer coaches.

This is a group enterprise – teachers, students, site coordinators, coaches partnering comfortably.

WriterCoach Connection™
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Section 15

***Action Steps Based on Survey Results:
Program Development***

The Program Assessment is a powerful tool for analyzing the overall effectiveness of WriterCoach Connection, as well as for spotlighting any issues needing attention and allowing for timely response. Survey responses are evaluated on multiple levels, as follows:

- 1 After receipt of surveys, site coordinator and CAFL staff review of every response, flagging those which require prompt attention. A teacher concern about a session that didn't go as expected, a student requesting a more compatible coach, a student indicating a high negative ranking and overall negative comments – anything out of the ordinary receives immediate attention and follow up. Most often this follow up involves the site coordinator and/or CAFL staff conferring with a teacher to understand possible causes. Some mitigation measures include redoubling efforts to communicate with teachers and coaches about goals of the lesson and to provide timely updates when things change. Discussing a specific student with negative responses will sometimes reveal learning issues and strategies that may be effective with that particular student.
- 2 Review and compilation of narrative comments, and development of action plan to address weaknesses, build on strengths, respond to requests, etc. Major elements of that plan in response to this year's survey results are discussed below.
- 3 Data analysis, as presented in sections 1-14 of this report. This analysis provides a benchmark for measuring whether the program is meeting its goals in supporting its primary constituents, the students and participating teachers, in the process of learning and teaching writing.

In response to the student, teacher and coach comments and responses, mid-year program adjustments and enhancements were made early in 2008. Sometimes these steps are a reminder to follow the protocols that are already in place, other times they involve the development of new training materials or procedures, such as the use of coaching logs. The major “issues” and “action steps” developed in response to this year's survey are as follows:

Major Findings and Action Steps

The most important areas of agreement among all survey groups:

The quality of coaching directly depends on the coach understanding the assignment, and understanding the individual student with whom he or she is working. Very clear goals from teachers, and very specific, action-oriented steps from coaches, yield the best

results. As demonstrated in the survey results, the WriterCoach Connection program “best practices” provide the optimal outcomes. Those best practices, which CAFL will continue to emphasize and refine are:

1. Teachers providing information before coaching commences regarding specific student learning needs, writing levels and English language learning needs; AND teachers providing advance information regarding the lesson and goals for the coaching session.
2. Site coordinators using that information to prepare coaches in advance, provide coaches with information regarding particular student needs, and encourage coaches to address the learning goals of the assignments.
3. Coaches providing specific action oriented steps which address the expressed goals of the coaching session. Students walk away from the coaching session with two or three concrete specific suggestions of how to proceed.

Pivotal to these key elements of program success is the site coordinator, and thus many of the action steps involve the role of the site coordinator. Support for site coordinators in their crucial role as the link between teachers, students, and coaches is the most essential area for ongoing WCC program development.

WriterCoach Connection continues program development activities to address the data and narrative comments generated through the teacher, student, and coach surveys. Action steps taken in response to this year’s survey data and comments include:

1. Development of additional training materials regarding areas of coach challenge, such as working with disengaged or uninterested students. This material will be incorporated in fall 2008 trainings of new coach volunteers, and in coach refresher sessions for returning volunteers.
2. Development of additional training materials regarding working with English language learners. Working with the ELD teachers and other sources, CAFL is developing new training material and will incorporate it into training of new coaches in fall 2008. In addition, this material will be included in coach refresher sessions for returning coaches. CAFL will also offer a special coach training workshop focused on ELD students and strategies for those coaches who work most frequently with ELD classes.
3. Development of a “Coach Pop Quiz” tool for ongoing coach training, and other resources for site coordinators to use both in refreshers and in ongoing weekly contacts with coaches to reinforce the established protocols of the WCC program. Site coordinators are encouraged to include a “tip of the week” in their regular weekly communications with coaches.
4. Revision of CAFL’s *60 Shortcuts* handouts and development of new handouts in response to teacher, student, and coach requests. Staff will also work with site coordinators on strategies to make more regular use of this

valuable resource, improving organization and access to the handouts during coaching sessions. Encouraging site coordinators to preselect and have available *Shortcuts* sheets which may be most appropriate for the assignment at hand.

5. Implementation of a coaching log in each student's folder as a means to record teacher information regarding the student's specific learning needs or level of writing ability, and to carry forward coach observations and notes. This procedure was piloted at AHS during the 2008-08 school year and has proven a productive and efficient resource. CAFL will work with site coordinators to modify the log as needed and incorporate into all student folders for the 2008-09 school year.
6. The classes for which teachers had provided clear and accurate information regarding specific student learning needs and writing levels generally had higher mean scores on their surveys and more overall positive comments regarding the helpfulness of coaching. In response, CAFL will redouble its efforts to have site coordinators meet with teachers in advance of the first coaching session of the year to identify any specific learning needs students may have. By working to understand in advance the particular needs or writing level of students, coaches will be able to more quickly adapt their approach to the appropriate level to best serve the needs of the student, whether that student is a highly proficient writer, and English language learner, or a student with a learning disability that requires a slightly slower speaking style, etc.
7. In response to the relatively lower mean scores for grammar and mechanics help, CAFL and site coordinators are exploring ways to encourage coaches to make a note in the mechanics section of the coaching sheet for each section. CAFL will work to identify some standard comments, and encourage site coordinators to have specific suggestions derived from the teachers' goals for a particular assignment/coaching session.
8. In response to coach comments, WCC protocol will encourage new volunteers to visit a site and observe coaching in progress before they complete training. This procedure is not always possible in the fall, because some training sessions take place before coaching has commenced. To that end, CAFL is developing a training video. This video will require additional time and resources to complete, but it will be a valuable addition to our training and recruitment efforts. The video will provide an excellent opportunity to model our "best practices of coaching" in action.

In addition, CAFL will explore modifications to the coaching worksheet that may help to encourage coaches to make effective use of coaching time. This step may include addition of a place to note a coaching goal, encourage coaches to establish a sound relationship with the student, and to provide a clear guide for the session. This procedure will be piloted at one or more sites in fall 2008.

APPENDIX 1: Student Survey

WRITER/COACH CONNECTION

Student Survey

January/February 2008

WriterCoach Connection would like to know about your experience with the writing coaches. **Your name and individual responses will remain anonymous.** *Thank you for your feedback!*

Name (optional) _____
First *Last*

Coach Name(s) _____

If you remember

I have met with a writer coach this many times so far this year: 0 1 2 3 4 5 or more

I have worked with this many different individual coaches this year: 0 1 2 3 4 or more

<i>Here are some things Writer Coaches do with students. How helpful are these aspects of coaching to you?</i>	not helpful 1	a little helpful 2	helpful 3	very helpful 4	
1. <i>Giving me suggestions for organizing my ideas</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2. <i>Showing me what's working in my writing</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. <i>Showing me how to express my ideas more clearly</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4. <i>Encouraging me to analyze/think more deeply about my ideas</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5. <i>Giving me suggestions about grammar or punctuation</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6. <i>Giving me suggestions about word choice and style</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
7. <i>Making sure I understand the next steps I need to take to revise my work</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8. <i>Overall, I find coaching to be:</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
9. <i>Checking that I understand the assignment completely</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	(I already understand assignments)
10. <i>Motivating me to complete and turn in my assignments</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	(I'm already motivated)
11. <i>Reading my work out loud</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	(Didn't read out loud)

12. Please finish these sentences (more space on the other side):

My coach or coaches help me to improve my thinking and writing skills by:

Is there anything about working with your writer coach that you did not like, or that you would change?

Here are my other thoughts about working with the writing coaches:

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APPENDIX 2: Teacher Survey

WRITER COACH CONNECTION

TEACHER SURVEY

January/February 2008

Teacher name _____

School site _____

<i>Please rate the degree to which the program this year has been helpful in the following areas, for your students and their written work after coaching:</i>	<i>Not 1</i>	<i>Little 2</i>	<i>Fairly 3</i>	<i>Very 4</i>	-OR- Check here if not applicable – please explain on back.
1. Increase in number of students turning in writing assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Students becoming more confident about writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Students making effective revisions from a first draft to a final draft of their written work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Improving grades on written assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Helping low-skilled or struggling writers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Helping/challenging proficient writers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Helping ELL students with their writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Helping students overall in becoming more motivated about writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Improving critical thinking skills such as identifying, evaluating, and analyzing evidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Improving the structure and organization of their written work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Improving their mechanics, grammar, spelling, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Improving their style, word choice, and “voice”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Overall improving the quality of writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If possible, compare a recent writing assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar recent assignment on which students DID have writer coaching. Do you notice any improvement for the coached assignment in the rate of assignments turned in, quality of work, grades earned, etc?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>In working with the program, how did <u>you</u> find:</i>	<i>Not 1</i>	<i>Little 2</i>	<i>Fairly 3</i>	<i>Very 4</i>	-OR- Check here if not applicable – please explain on back.
14. Arranging coaching schedule with site coordinator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Working with the site coordinator(s) to convey goals of the lesson, areas for coaching emphasis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Did comments on student papers and/or coaching worksheets reflect your lesson goals, seem generally appropriate given the student writing skill level?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us, briefly (use reverse if needed)::

What has worked well for you this semester?

Is there anything that you would like to change?

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APPENDIX 3: Coach Survey
WRITER COACH CONNECTION™ -- COACH SURVEY 2007-08

Your Name: _____ School _____

<i>Please rate the degree of satisfaction you have with (or interest you have in) the following:</i>	<i>Not 1</i>	<i>Little 2</i>	<i>Fairly 3</i>	<i>Very 4</i>
1. I felt prepared to begin coaching upon completing training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Training has prepared me for most of the coaching situations I have encountered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The “6 steps of coaching” guide is something I refer to (or have ‘internalized’) and it guides how I approach coaching sessions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I find coaching worksheets useful for providing students with a guide for revising (or beginning) their writing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I regularly use the 60 Shortcuts (tip sheets) and provide students with a tip sheet to take away from the coaching session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I usually get adequate preparation material in advance of coaching (assignments or writing prompt, novel, teacher lesson goals, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I enjoy working with ELL students on their writing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I would like additional training regarding working effectively with English language learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I usually feel confident about how to approach a coaching session once the student has read his/her writing aloud.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I regularly use the WCC website for any of the following: to check for assignments, look at links to other writing resources, view the tip sheets, and/or read up on CAFL news.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. When working with a student I have worked with earlier in the year, I usually do notice improvement in writing skills and/or level of thinking, organization of ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Generally teachers have prepared their students well so that our coaching time is productive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Overall, coaching students on their writing is a rewarding experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Schedule permitting, I plan to continue as a writing coach next school year. (Note: WCC is not asking for a commitment here -- it’s just a straw poll.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I’m so jazzed about writer coaching that I would be interested in becoming more involved with the WriterCoach Connection, and the Community Alliance for Learning, beyond coaching at my current site. (See examples on reverse) **	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Here's your chance, if you so desire, to share your ideas. Please use this space to tell us about any of the following. (Feel free to leave some or all blank – it's not a test!!)

Do you have suggestions regarding the training class?

Do you have any suggestions regarding the Shortcuts, particularly if there are ones needing revision or that we do not have and you would like to have available to give students?

Do you have any suggestions regarding how to improve the overall experience for the students or coaches?

What was your most challenging issue or your greatest success as a coach?

Do you have suggestions/ideas for recruiting more coaches?

Do you have any additional feedback for the site coordinator?

**Possible ways to expand your role with WriterCoach Connection include: volunteering to help with recruiting, promotion, or fundraising, applying to become a site coordinator or board member? What experience/skills (e.g. computer graphics, accounting, grant writing, etc.) would you be willing to bring to WCC or CAFL?

Thank you for your time and input,

WriterCoach Connection

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APPENDIX 4

Research and Evaluation Consultant P.J. Hallam designed program assessment for WriterCoach Connection and supervised the preparation of the 2007-08 Program Assessment Report.

Phyllis J. Hallam, Ph.D.

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Education and Degrees

December 2000	Ph.D. Education, Language, Literacy & Culture University of California, Berkeley
August 1979	Masters in Education, Special Education University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 1978	Reading Specialist Credential California State University, East Bay
June 1976	Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential University of California, Berkeley
June 1976	BA in Sociology University of California, Berkeley

Professional Employment (non-teaching)

2007-2008 Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD)

Director, Department of Assessment, Evaluation and Research

2006-2007 California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)

Title II, Improving Teacher Quality Grants: Research and Dissemination Consultant

2001-06 Berkeley Evaluation and Research Center, UC Berkeley

Institute of Education Sciences Research Grant Researcher:

Evaluating the Validity of Teacher Licensure Decisions (EVTLD)

1993-01 Center for Language and Learning <http://www.learningrecord.org/>

Program Evaluator – Collect, analyze and report findings, 1997-01

1992-94 California Reading and Literature Project

Literary Coach

University Teaching Experience

1999-00 California State University, Sonoma

Adjunct Professor; Sonoma, CA

Educational Leadership for Master's Degree Students – design and implementation of visionary leadership projects for literacy reform

Reading Content for Secondary Teacher Education – *literacy strategies for math, PE and all other secondary content courses*