

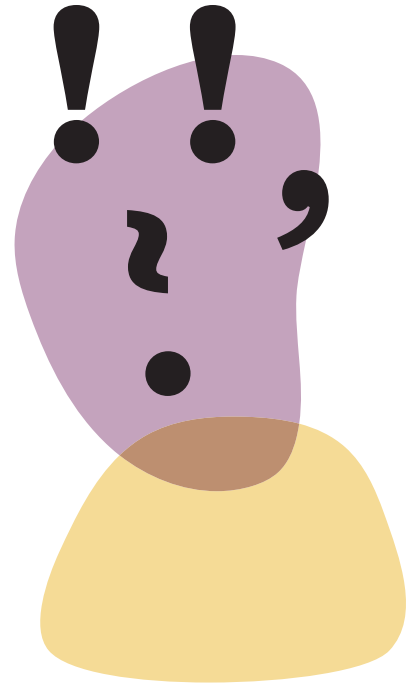
THE TRUTH ABOUT WRITING EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Part 2

Raising Teacher Voices



An 826 National Publication



ABOUT 826

826 is the largest youth writing network in the country. It was founded in 2002 in San Francisco by educator Nínive Calegari and author Dave Eggers. 826 National serves as the hub of the movement to amplify student voices and champions the belief that strong writing skills are essential for academic and lifelong success. The 826 Network now serves more than 450,000 students ages 6 to 18 in under-resourced communities each year online via 826 Digital and through chapters in nine cities: Boston, Chicago, Detroit/Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis/St. Paul. We work toward a country in which the power and the joy of writing is accessible to every student in every classroom. Together, we believe writing is the key to cultivating a new generation of creative and diverse thinkers who will define a better, brighter, and more compassionate future.

To learn more about how you can get involved with 826's movement for writing and creativity, please visit the 826 National website at 826national.org.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential skill for anyone at any stage of life and in any context. Strong writing skills don't just benefit students: they're also a critical component of a strong workforce. Yet, so many individuals are not taught to write well—not as students, not as professionals in the workplace—and this is especially true for those who come from underfunded and underserved communities. Less explicitly talked about are the cognitive and emotional benefits of writing; it is a tool for critical thinking, self-growth, and social & emotional processing. These are among the reasons why we need to talk about writing education.

The U.S. writing education system is uninspiring, lacking, and boring. These are just a few of the unfavorable words used by teachers across the country to describe the current state of writing education. If this sounds familiar, it may be because these are almost the exact words used by experts, authors, researchers, and educators from our 2020 report *The Truth About Writing Education in America: Let's Write, Make Things Right*. There, we presented the benefits of and challenges to writing education, as well as recommendations for how to move our field forward together.

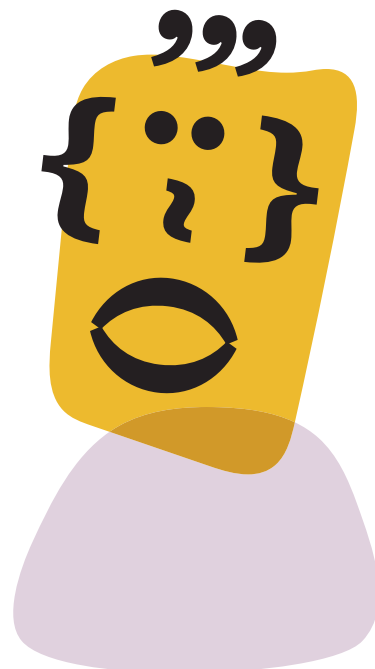
We now follow up with a survey of hundreds of teachers, adding an on-the-ground perspective to what we learned in our initial report. Our goal with this ongoing series is to bring writing education to the forefront of public, policy, and funding conversations and to carry those conversations forward by continuing to track our progress year after year. What has improved in the past two years, or even in the past ten years? Unfortunately, not much. The teachers who responded to our survey graded the writing education system a D-. Here's why.

¹ Casner-Lotto, Jill, and Linda Barrington. "Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce". Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and Society for Human Resource Management; National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. *Writing: A Ticket to Work . . . Or a Ticket Out*. College Board, Sept 2004.

“

We help students understand that writing is a life skill, not just a school skill.

”



WORDS TEACHER RESPONDENTS USED TO DESCRIBE
THE CURRENT STATE OF WRITING EDUCATION



TEN KEY FINDINGS

ON TIME

1. While the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) recommends that 1st graders should spend a minimum of 60 minutes writing per day, only 4% of teachers in 2022 and 3% in 2021 report that their students meet this threshold.
2. Teachers report a significant drop in time spent teaching writing from 2021 to 2022: In 2021, 39% of teachers reported spending more than 30 minutes a day teaching writing; in 2022, only 18% reported the same.

4%

of teachers report that their students write for the minimum recommended amount of time each day

ON CURRICULA

3. Although we know from research that writing creatively benefits students, the bulk of writing assignments are basic explanatory tasks. Students are routinely writing to convey (69%) or explain (67%) information but are less often producing poetry (20%) or creative writing (44%).
4. Comprehensive, standards-aligned, and well-adopted writing curriculum does not exist. Only 3% of teachers report solely using curricula provided by their school or district for writing instruction.
5. Only about half of teachers feel their schools prioritize writing instruction (55%) and that they have access to quality, standards-aligned curricula (65%).
6. The state of writing education in low-income areas is even more dire than in high-income areas. Teachers from schools in low-income areas feel less trained to teach writing and have less access to standards-aligned writing curricula than those from schools in high-income areas, and, in turn, spend more time planning their writing instruction.

“

Not enough time is so far ahead of the other challenges. Bold it.

”

ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

7. Teachers are participating in writing PD, but most do not have opportunities to meet regularly to share and discuss writing instruction with other educators.
8. Social media is becoming a core resource for teachers, with 38% of teachers using social media to find PD opportunities.

ON CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

9. Based on the identified challenges to writing education, teachers give the current state of writing education in the U.S. a D-.
10. There is a disconnect between what teachers believe is important to do in the classroom and what they are able to do. While 84% of teachers believe it is important to celebrate student writing, only 24% report doing so.

D-

Grade teachers give the current state of writing education

SURVEY SAMPLE

RECRUITMENT

In 2021, we sent the survey directly to 2,500 3rd-to-12th grade English Language Arts (ELA) teachers randomly selected through MDR, an education marketing company. It was also shared in the 826 Digital newsletter and on 826 Network's social media channels across the country. This resulted in 114 responses. In 2022, we conducted a larger recruitment effort. The survey was shared directly with 14,390 subscribers of 826 Digital as well as 5,000 randomly selected 3rd-to-12th grade ELA teacher contacts through MDR. It was also shared with teacher training/PD programs, in the 826 Digital newsletter, and on social media channels from the 826 Network. This resulted in 232 responses.

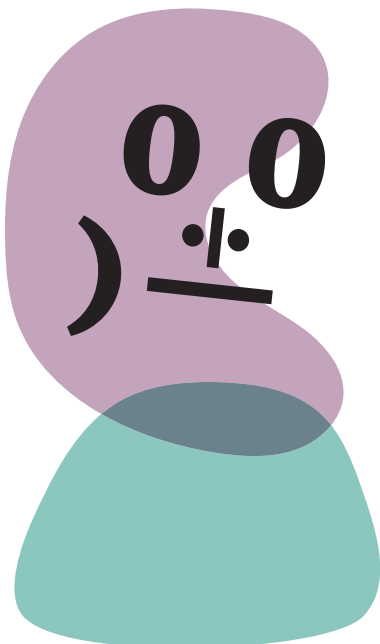
DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the typical teacher is a White woman in her 40s with over 5 years of teaching experience.² The majority of our survey respondents from both years are elementary-to-high school ELA classroom educators who identify as female, White, and from public schools, reflective of the general educator population. Our sample differs from the average educator in three ways: they are older (32% of the 2022 sample are older than 50 years), are more experienced (67% have been teaching for more than 10 years), and have completed more coursework (71% have a master's degree, and 70% have completed specific writing instruction coursework). They teach in varied types of location (urban, rural, suburban) as well as in varied areas of income status. They skew toward teaching older grades, which is reflective of writing education. Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed breakdown of demographics.

826 CONNECTION

While we did reach out to 5,000 randomly selected teacher contacts, we acknowledge that our sample of teachers includes many teachers already connected to 826 in some way—teachers who likely already value writing education. Surprisingly, only 36% of respondents indicated that they actively use 826 Digital, whereas 34% indicated that they had not heard of 826 Digital, and 30% indicated that they had heard of us but have not used our resources. The only significant differences between those who actively use 826 Digital and those who do not were that those who actively use 826 Digital believe in the benefits of writing more strongly. These teachers also believe more strongly in the benefits of publishing student writing, and therefore publish student writing more often (see Appendix B for details). Otherwise, respondents connected to 826 answered similarly to those who are not in terms of their beliefs and practices.

²Taie, S., and R. Goldring. *Characteristics of Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results From the 2017–18 National Teacher and Principal Survey First Look*. (NCES 2020-142rev). U.S. Department of Education, Apr. 2020, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020142>. Accessed July 2022.



TIME

At the very base level, we wanted to understand how much time students and teachers were spending on writing. In our initial report, writing education experts identified lack of time and the deprioritizing of writing as perhaps the biggest challenge to writing education. IES recommends that a kindergartener writes a minimum of 30 minutes a day and by 1st grade, a minimum of 60 minutes.³ While the recommendations by IES are just for elementary school, the assumption is that students in older grades should spend more time writing and building on skills learned in younger grades. We asked teachers the amount of time their students spend writing per day and how much time they spend teaching writing, planning their instruction, and grading and evaluating writing.

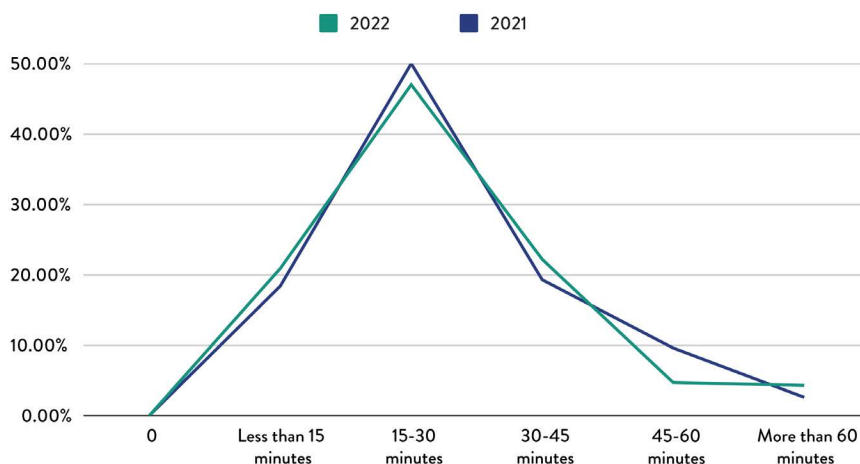
“
The process takes a lot of time, and we have FAR too much curriculum to teach.”

FINDING 1

While the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) recommends that 1st graders should spend a minimum of 60 minutes writing per day, only 4% of teachers in 2022 and 3% in 2021 report that their students meet this threshold.

“
Never enough time!”

MINUTES STUDENTS SPEND WRITING PER DAY



Given that we surveyed teachers of grade 3 and higher and that the majority of the respondents teach middle and high school, the expectation is that students should be writing more than 60 minutes a day. If that seems like a high bar, even if the bar is lowered to 30 minutes a day, which is what is recommended for a kindergartener, the stats still are not great. In both 2021 and 2022, only 31% of teachers reported that their students spend at least 30 minutes or more writing per day. This is identical to the 31% percent of high schoolers who reported writing 30 minutes or more per day in a 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) survey.⁴

This means that nothing has changed in over ten years: students are still not spending enough time writing in the classroom.

31%
of teachers report that their students write 30 minutes or more a day.

³ Graham, Steve, et al.. *Teaching Elementary School Students to be Effective Writers: A Practice Guide*. U.S. Department of Education, 2021.

⁴ Picou, Aigner. *Are Schools Making Writing a Priority? New Study Shows Students Are Not Spending Enough Time Writing*. Learning Agency Lab, 2021, https://www.the-learning-agency-lab.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Are_Schools_Making_Writing_a_Priority_TLAB.pdf.

FINDING 2

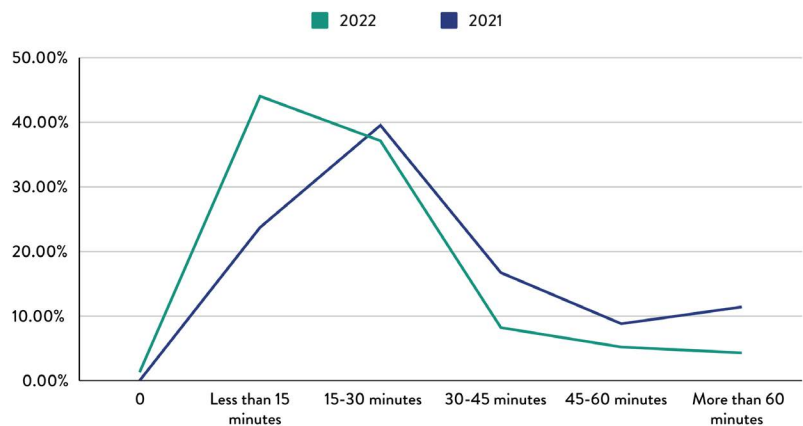
Teachers report a significant drop in time spent teaching writing from 2021 to 2022: In 2021, 39% of teachers reported spending more than 30 minutes a day teaching writing; in 2022, only 18% reported the same.

“

Districts are so desperate to mitigate ‘learning loss’ that they are using online platforms that are not engaging students in meaningful social interactions with stories or creative writing prompts.

”

MINUTES SPENT TEACHING WRITING PER DAY



*Statistically significant difference from 2021 to 2022; ANOVA ($F = 21.2, p < .000$)

In 2021, when the pandemic had affected students’ lives and learning for over a year, teachers recognized the importance of writing for their students. One teacher said, “I actually think our writing instruction this year has become a little more demanding,” and another, “I have felt the freedom to give my students a lot more choice in how they choose to express themselves through writing.” It was essential for teachers to understand how their students were feeling, and writing was an essential way to capture it.

“

Coming out of the pandemic, students have very little stamina to read or produce writing over a long period of time.

”

However, with classrooms returning to in-person in 2022, teachers were faced with new challenges. In addition to feeling the pressure of making up for the “learning loss” of 2021, many teachers also noted that their students lacked “stamina” and had “pandemic fatigue,” affecting their instruction as a whole. So while the time students spent writing in the classroom remained about the same, the time teachers spent teaching writing significantly decreased. This suggests that if students are not spending time learning how to write, the writing that they are doing may not be as meaningful and effective.

There was no difference found for the time teachers spent lesson planning and grading writing across the two years. Planning and grading time varied, from less than 30 minutes to a few hours. However, teachers’ planning and grading time was affected by the socioeconomic level of the schools teachers taught at and the resources they felt they had, which we will expand on further in the curricula section with Finding 6.

Time spent teaching writing was the only factor where there was a significant difference between the 2021 and 2022 responses. Responses between the two years for the rest of the survey were very similar, and thus we focus the rest of this report on just responses from 2022.

CURRICULA

WHAT DOES WRITING INSTRUCTION LOOK LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM?

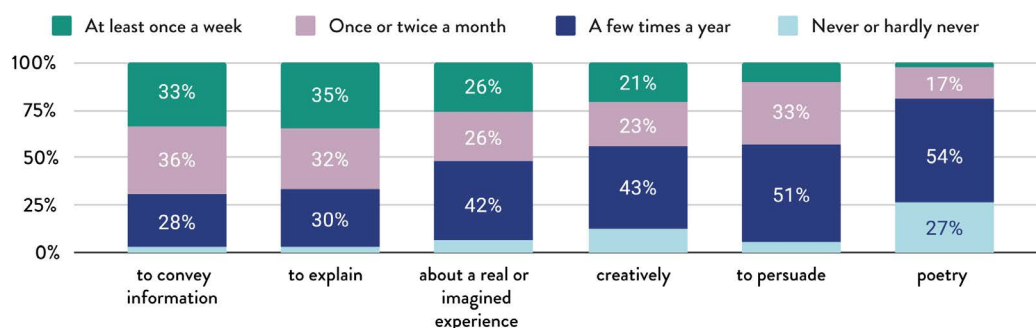
In this section, we asked teachers to paint a picture of what writing instruction looks like in their classrooms. We wanted to know what type of writing their students were doing, how often, and in what format. We also asked about the type of support and resources teachers receive and how prepared they feel to teach writing.

FINDING 3

Although we know from research that writing creatively benefits students, the bulk of writing assignments are basic explanatory tasks. Students are routinely writing to convey (69%) or explain (67%) information but are less often producing poetry (20%) or creative writing (44%).

I am in the minority in my department in regard to openness to stepping away from the five-paragraph essay. Teachers are hooked on its predictability and ease of instruction and evaluation. I feel pressured to not deviate.

HOW OFTEN TEACHERS ASK STUDENTS TO WRITE



Despite living in a time when writing creatively or journaling to express oneself and reflect is critical for mental health,⁵ the bulk of writing assignments center around explaining and conveying information. While being able to effectively explain information is important, students may only be doing so at a basic level, within the structure of the five-paragraph essay. Although this structure does provide a guide for students, researchers and educators have argued that it is also limiting and is geared toward passing standardized tests.⁶ Further, only 26% of students are writing on a weekly basis about an experience, 20% writing creatively, and only 3% writing poetry. These other forms of writing can be more engaging to students and are more conducive to self-expression and reflection. Even though teachers recognize that it is important for their students to express and reflect, the opportunities for students to do so are limited.

The idea that the five-paragraph essay is the gold standard for writing is detrimental to the whole writing curriculum, leaving out opportunities for other, more relevant ways of expression.

⁵ Stessman, Emma. "Journaling Could Help Boost Your Mental Health — Here's How to Get Started." *Today*, 31 May 2022, <https://www.today.com/shop/how-journal-mental-health-benefits-t255576>.

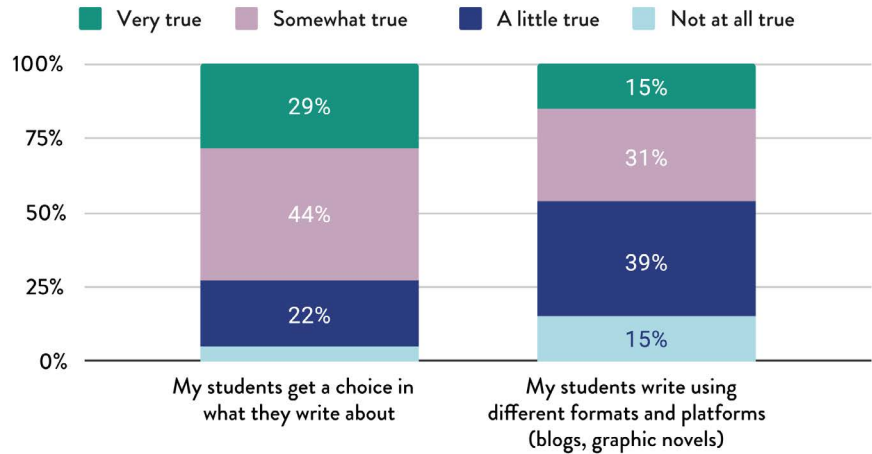
⁶ Campbell, Kimberly Hill. "Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 71, no. 7, Apr. 2014, pp. 60–65, <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/beyond-the-five-paragraph-essay>.



Students think writing is boring and do not like to write.

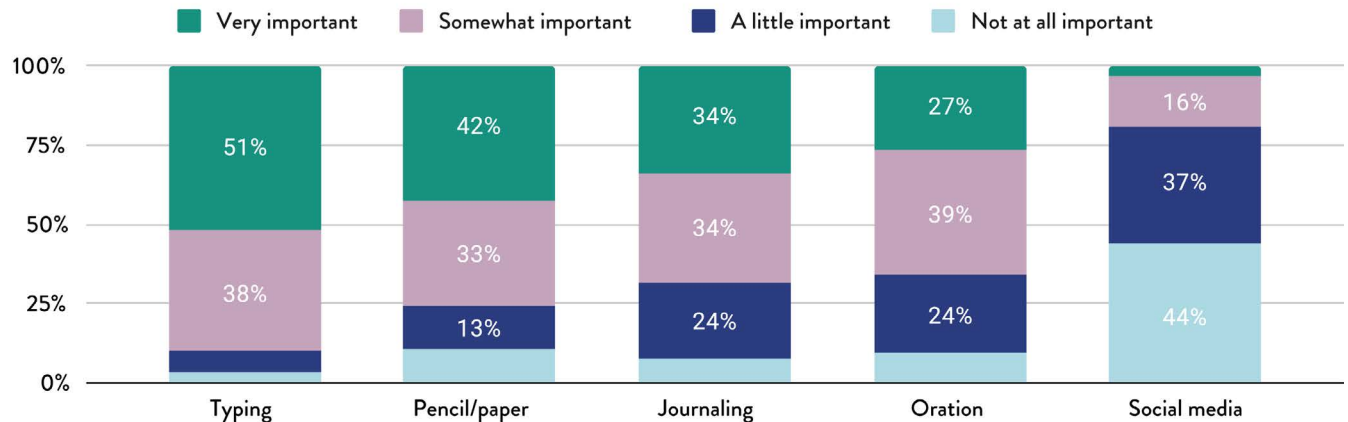


PERCENT OF TEACHERS WHO OFFER CHOICE ABOUT WRITING TOPIC OR VARIETY IN WRITING FORMATS



The majority of teachers do give students a choice in what they write and what platform/format they write with, but only 29% and 15%, respectively, do so to a strong degree. Again, while teachers recognize the importance of giving students choice about what and how they write, they may not be able to do so to the degree that they would like.

DEGREE TO WHICH TEACHERS BELIEVE THE LISTED WRITING FORMATS ARE IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS



Journals and the projects with written reflections are the only assignments I've seen consistently completed throughout this tough year. My kids get mad when I decide to skip journals that week...



Teachers feel that traditional methods of writing, such as typing and on paper, are still important. In regard to social media, 44% feel this method is not important at all, though the majority (56%) do feel it is important to some degree. There has been debate in recent years on how to and whether we should incorporate social media into writing.⁷ Students write using social media outside the classroom all the time but often in abbreviated ways. It will be interesting to see how these percentages change in the future and if social media is leveraged as a writing platform in the classroom. Finally, while 68% of teachers do believe that journaling is somewhat or very important, this seems low given the pressures students are facing in and outside of the classroom.

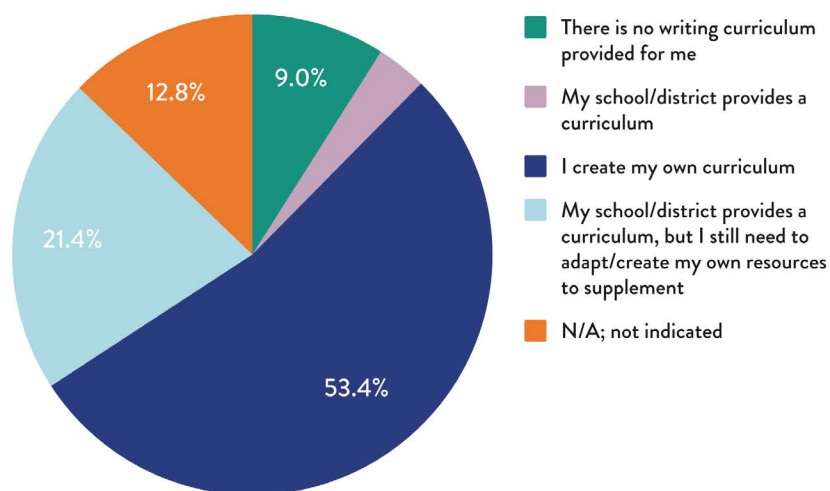
⁷ Hashim, Harwanti, et al. "Social Media and Its Impact on Students' Writing Skills." *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, vol. 7, no. 17, pp.102-06, <https://www.sciencepubco.com/index.php/ijet/article/view/21624>.

FINDING 4

Comprehensive, standards-aligned, and well-adopted writing curriculum does not exist. Only 3% of teachers report solely using curricula provided by their school or district for writing instruction.

Teachers were asked what, if any, curriculum their school provides, and also what other resources they use.

SOURCES OF WRITING CURRICULUM TEACHERS USE



3%

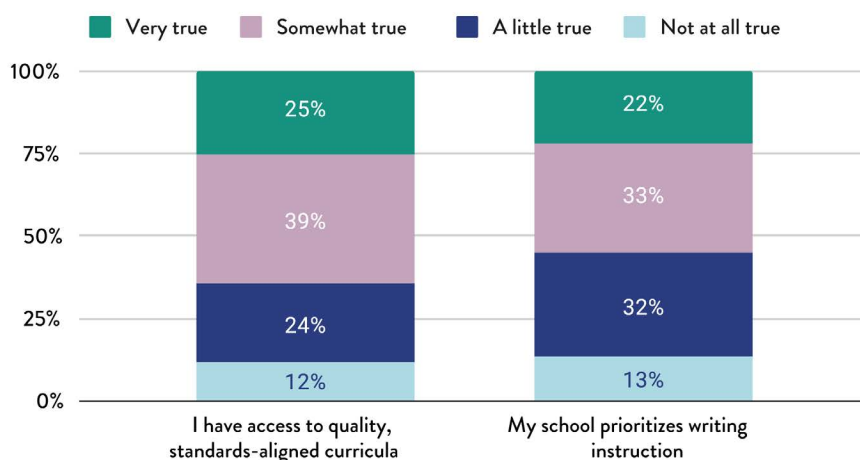
of teachers report solely using writing curriculum provided by their school or district.

Only 3% of teachers report solely using a writing curriculum provided by their school or district. 21% report having curriculum materials available from their school or district but that they need to supplement that material. More than half of teachers (53%) report having to create their own curriculum. It is no surprise then, that this leads to our next finding...

FINDING 5

Only about half of teachers feel their schools prioritize writing instruction (55%) and that they have access to quality, standards-aligned curricula (65%).

PERCENT OF TEACHERS WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY, STANDARDS-ALIGNED CURRICULA; PERCENT OF TEACHERS WHO WORK AT SCHOOLS THAT PRIORITIZE WRITING INSTRUCTION



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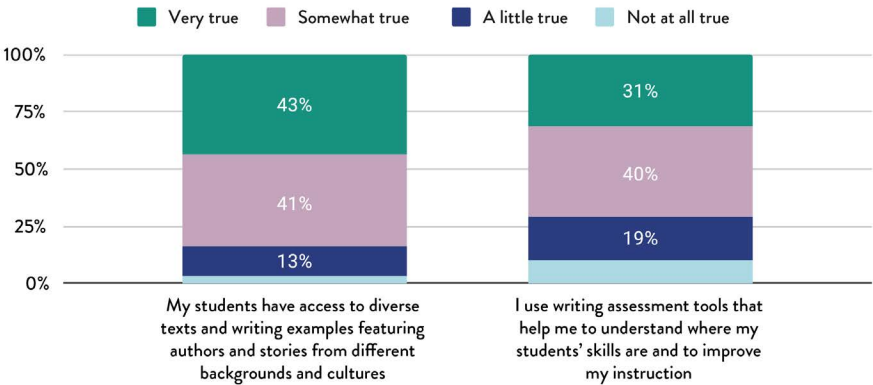
The time it takes to assess writing is the greatest hurdle!

”

“
Not feeling like a writer myself makes it that much harder to teach. I feel like a fraud and like the students can see right through me.
”

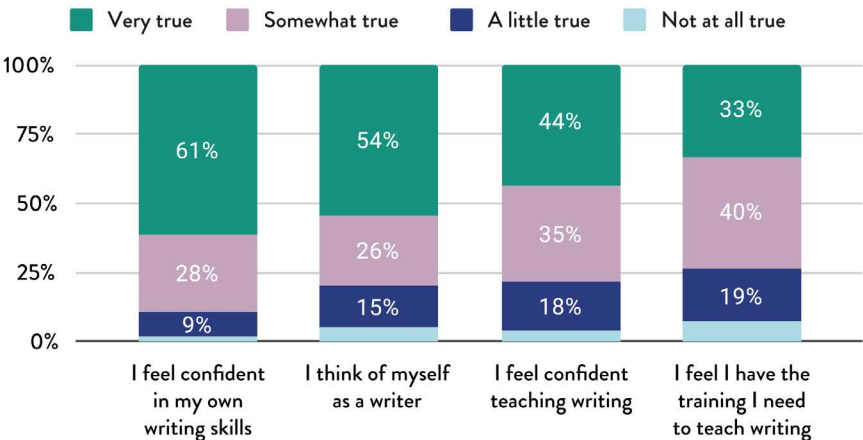
However, the findings are not all bad. There are some resources teachers do feel they have adequate access to. The majority do feel they have access to diverse texts (84%) and useful assessments (71%). These were both areas that the panel in our initial 2020 report identified as areas of need. The responses from teachers suggest that progress has been made and many are receiving sufficient access to diverse texts and assessments. When it comes to assessing writing, the challenge may not be access, but time. Many mentioned not having the time to adequately assess student writing and provide meaningful feedback.

PERCENT OF TEACHERS WHO REPORT ACCESS TO DIVERSE TEXTS AND USEFUL WRITING ASSESSMENTS



Lastly, while the majority of teachers feel very confident in their own writing skills, only 44% feel very confident to teach writing, with only 33% feeling very strongly that they have the training they need to teach writing. Continuing on these results is Finding 6 . . .

DEGREE TO WHICH TEACHERS FEEL CONFIDENT IN EACH OF THE LISTED WRITING EDUCATION CATEGORIES



33%
of teachers feel strongly that they have the training they need to teach writing.

FINDING 6

The state of writing education in lower-income areas is even more dire than in higher-income areas. Teachers from schools in lower-income areas feel less trained to teach writing and have less access to standards-aligned writing curricula than those from schools in higher-income areas, and, in turn, spend more time planning their writing instruction.

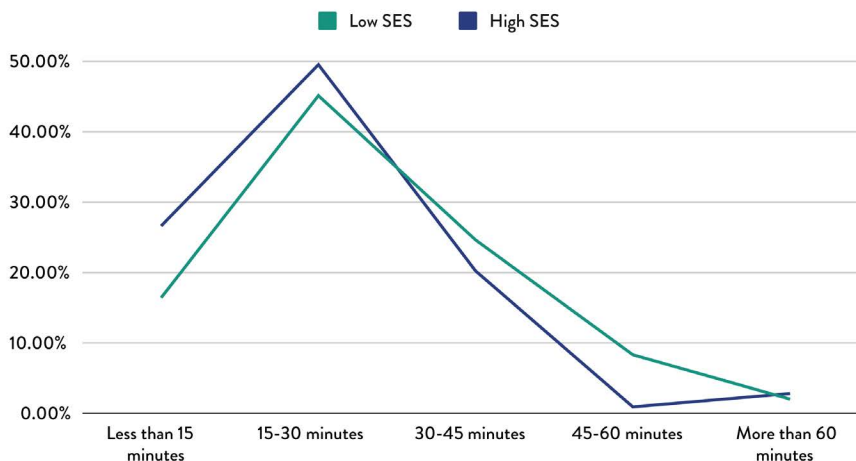
Equal access to quality writing education is a longstanding challenge in the United States. In 2011, NAEP reported that the majority of students are not writing at grade level proficiency, with broad disparities by race/ethnicity, gender, and school location (urban vs. rural). Most notably, while 75% of 12th grade students are not writing at grade level proficiency, almost all (90%) of Black and Hispanic students are not.

⁸

The disparity is due in part to teacher training and resources. When comparing teachers who work in low-socioeconomic status (SES) schools (where more than 50% of students are from low-income families as defined by the free/reduced lunch program) and those who work in high-SES schools (where less than 50% of students are from low-income families), we found the following statistically significant differences:

1. Teachers in low-SES schools report that their students spend more time writing than teachers in high-SES schools. This additional time though is likely spent on basic explanatory writing assignments, as seen in Finding 3.

MINUTES PER DAY STUDENTS SPEND WRITING



*Statistically significant difference between high and low SES; t-test ($F = 9.503$, $p < .002$)

⁸ National Center for Education Statistics. *The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2011*. (NCES 2012-470). U.S. Department of Education, 2012.

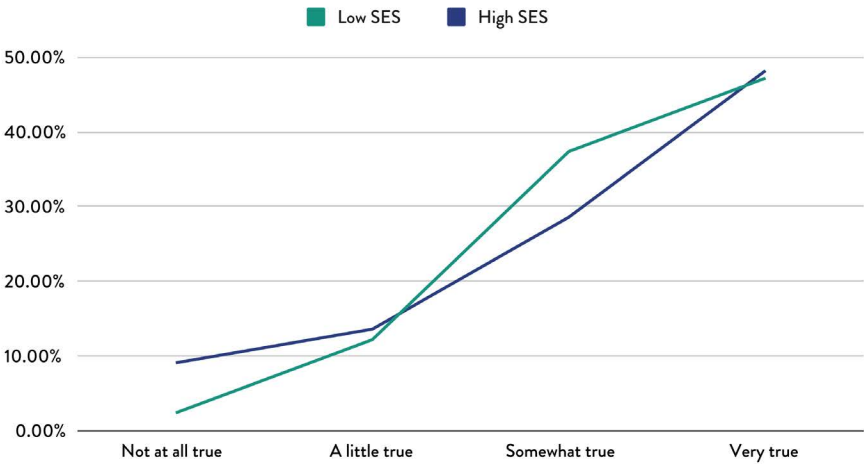
90%

of Black and Hispanic students are not writing at grade level proficiency.



2. However, teachers in low-SES schools feel that access to quality, standards-aligned curricula is a bigger challenge than teachers in high-SES schools. This suggests that the additional time students spend writing in low-SES schools may be with basic curriculum like the five-paragraph essay structure.

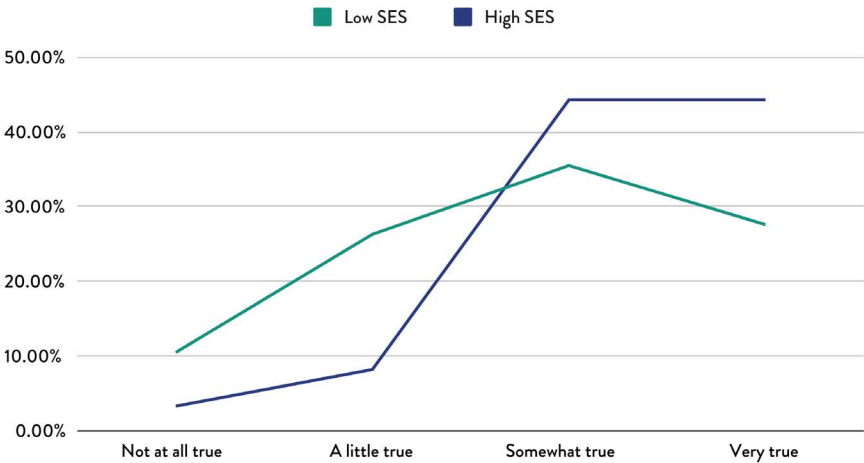
PERCENT OF TEACHERS WHO FEEL THAT ACCESS TO QUALITY, STANDARDS-ALIGNED CURRICULA IS A CHALLENGE



*Statistically significant difference between high and low SES; t-test ($F = 5.510, p < .020$)

3. Further, teachers in the lowest-SES schools (where more than 75% of students are from low-income families) do not feel they have the training they need to teach writing compared to teachers from the highest-SES schools (where less than 25% of students are from low-income families).

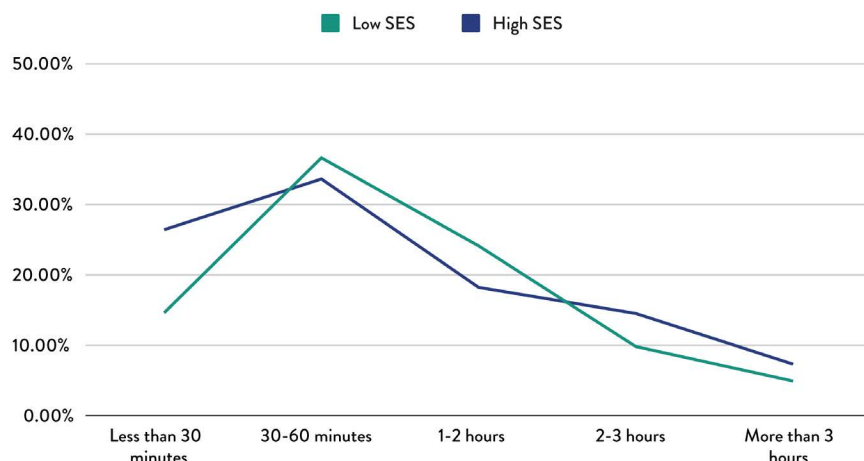
ACCESS TO ADEQUATE WRITING EDUCATION TRAINING FOR TEACHERS



*Statistically significant difference between highest and lowest SES; (post-hoc Tukey's $p < .008$)

4. Finally, teachers in low-SES schools also spend more time planning their writing instruction than teachers in high-SES schools. This makes sense if teachers in these schools do not feel they have the resources or training to teach writing and therefore need to spend more time planning.

AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT PLANNING WRITING INSTRUCTION PER WEEK BY TEACHERS



*Statistically significant difference between high and low SES; t-test ($F = 6.146, p < .014$)

“
I Google things randomly in
a panic in between classes.
”

BOTTOM LINE

We unquestionably need comprehensive writing curricula so that

1. teachers can spend time teaching rather than creating their own materials;
2. teachers feel supported in teaching writing in the way that they know they should be teaching: by providing students with more opportunities to express themselves, reflect, and to choose what they write and how, beyond the five-paragraph essay;
3. teachers feel trained and confident to teach writing; and
4. we can continue to bridge the socioeconomic gap reflected in the teaching of writing.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

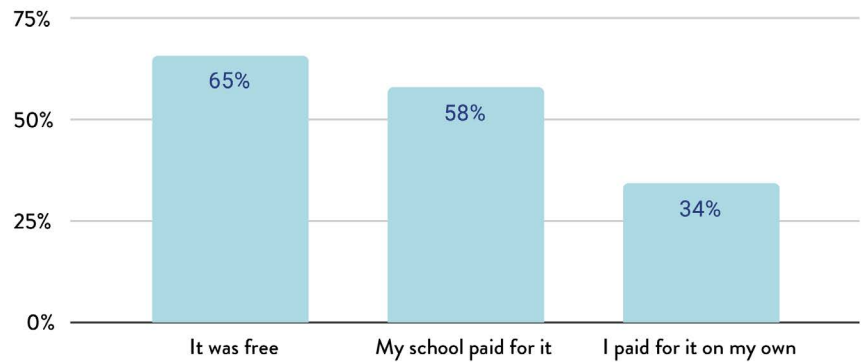
Knowing that teacher training in writing education has been and remains a challenge, we wanted to dig deeper into PD, especially during the past two years of the pandemic.⁹

FINDING 7

Teachers are participating in PD opportunities, but most do not have opportunities to meet regularly to share and discuss writing instruction.

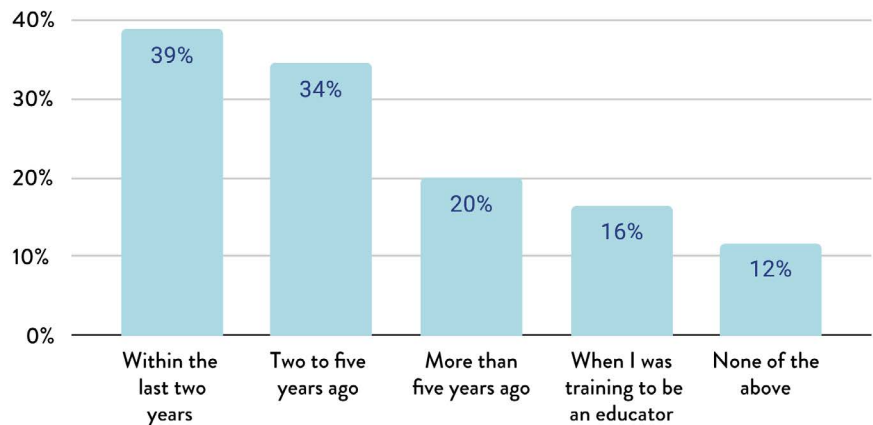
“We are at a loss on how to improve writing instruction: the vast majority of teachers do not understand the need for, nor the ability to implement, high-quality writing instruction, and educational leaders do not know what needs to be specifically done other than offer packaged curricula.”

WAYS TEACHERS HAVE COVERED THE COST OF WRITING EDUCATION PD IN THE PAST TWO YEARS



The majority of teachers (74%) are required by their administration to participate in PD opportunities. Most of these opportunities are either free or paid for by the school. Still, about a third of teachers pay for PD on their own.

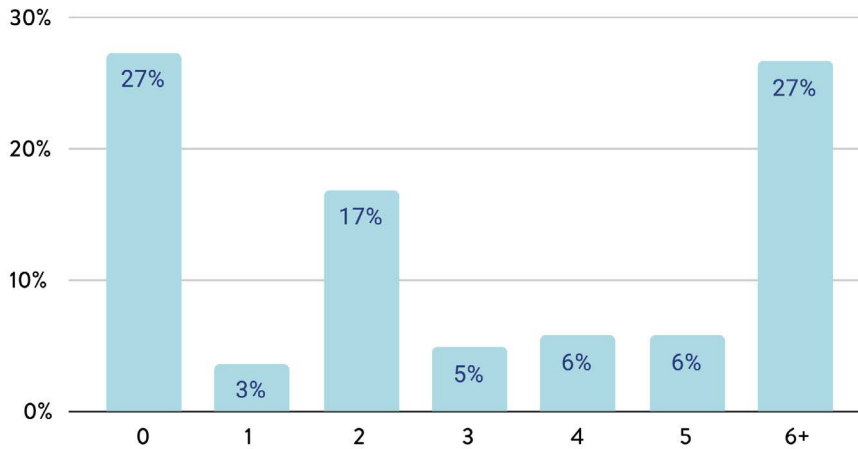
HOW RECENTLY TEACHERS HAVE RECEIVED WRITING-SPECIFIC PD



⁹ Troia, Gary A., and Steve Graham. “Common Core Writing and Language Standards and Aligned State Assessments: A National Survey of Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes.” *Reading and Writing*, vol. 29, no. 9, Nov. 2016, pp. 1719–43.

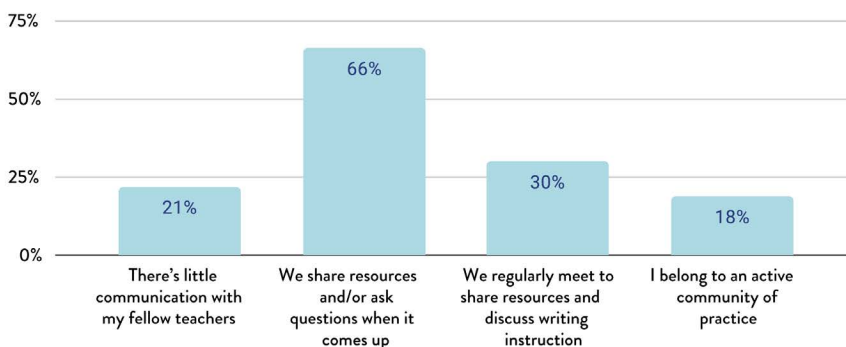
The majority of teachers (73%) have received PD specific to writing instruction within the last 5 years, but only 16% report having received writing instruction PD when they were training to be an educator. While the pandemic may have led to a dip in PD in recent years, with a quarter of teachers reporting that they have received 0 hours of PD, it does seem that, as a whole, PD opportunities are available and supported by schools.

HOURS OF WRITING-SPECIFIC PD TEACHERS HAVE RECEIVED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS



An important aspect of PD is having a community to support that learning. While just under half (48%) indicated that they regularly meet to share resources and discuss writing instruction and/or belong to an active community of practice, most teachers (66%) indicate that they only share or ask questions about writing education when it comes up. Of these, 12% also indicated that they have little communication with their fellow teachers, which suggests that while they can ask or share, it may happen rarely for some.

WAYS TEACHERS ENGAGE IN WRITING INSTRUCTION SUPPORT WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES

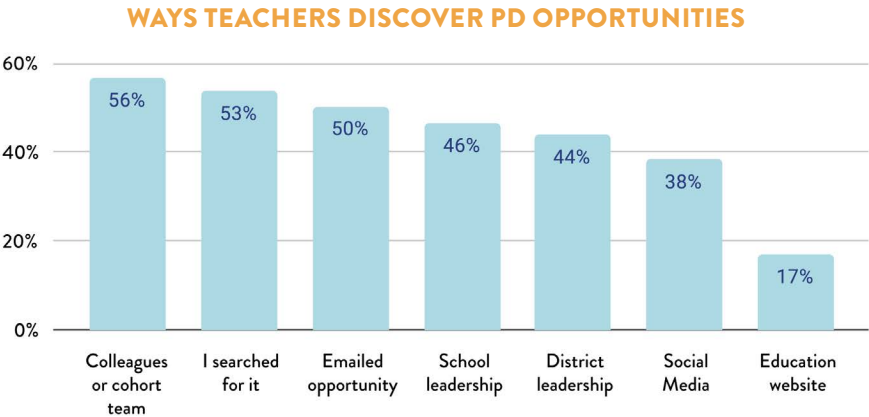


I think about teaching writing all the time, but my colleagues don't. I work at a school where the leadership has little vision . . . and almost everything is getting dumbed down. I'm a lone little hold-out, trying to teach meaningful, authentic, creative, rigorous writing.

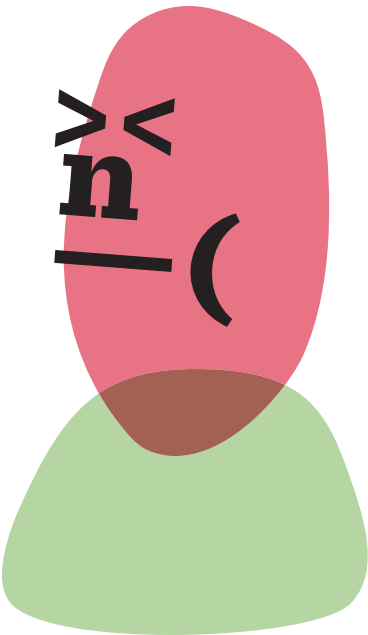
FINDING 8

Social media is becoming a core resource for teachers, with 38% of teachers using social media to find PD opportunities.

Teachers discover PD opportunities through many ways. Traditional methods, such as sharing between colleagues and school/district and just searching for it, are still prevalent. Social media is on the rise as a newer source of information, with 38% of teachers indicating that they use some form of it, whether on *Facebook* (23%), *Twitter* (17%), *Instagram* (17%), and now *TikTok* (3%).



In summary, while most teachers may not receive writing instruction PD during their training stage, most do receive it as active teachers. Schools and administrations support, if not require, PD and provide opportunities for it. However, teachers do still search for specific opportunities on their own, and many would benefit from deeper connections around writing instruction.



BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

As a follow-up to our initial report, we asked teachers about the benefits and challenges we identified from our interviews with researchers, authors, and educators. We wanted to see how reflective those findings are of what teachers see in their classrooms.

FINDING 9

Based on the identified challenges to writing education, teachers give the current state of writing education in the U.S. a D-.

Challenges: The majority of teachers agree that every one of the challenges brought forth by our 2020 panel is somewhat or very much a challenge. Not surprisingly, the top three challenges are lack of time and priority to teach writing (with reading instruction taking priority), lack of student-centered writing curricula, and lack of continued writing instruction PD. The one challenge that stood out as a less severe challenge from teachers' perspectives was lack of diversity in texts.

Giving a nod to our teachers, we converted their responses to the challenges into a letter grade. For each challenge, we combined the percentages of those who selected "not at all," "a little," and "somewhat" to end up with the percentage of teachers who did not think the challenge was serious. We then mapped those percentages to a grade typically assigned to those percentages in the classroom. Aside from the challenge of diversity in texts, all other challenges received D's and F's. A significant portion of teachers feel these are serious challenges. Overall, our current state of writing education receives a D- from our teachers.

D-

Grade teachers give the current state of writing education

CHALLENGES	TEACHERS WHO DO NOT FEEL IT IS A CHALLENGE	LETTER GRADE
Lack of diversity in texts	80.80%	B-
Lack of use of different writing formats and platforms	66.90%	D
Lack of meaningful writing assessment	64.60%	D
Lack of effective peer review and/or feedback strategies	63.30%	D-
Lack of preservice teacher training	59.80%	F
Priority of reading instruction over writing instruction	58.90%	F
Lack of continued writing instruction PD	52.60%	F
Lack of student-centered writing curricula	52.10%	F
Lack of time and priority to teach writing	50.50%	F

Benefits: In terms of benefits, almost every teacher agrees that writing benefits students in every way listed, with barely any teachers indicating “not at all.” The top benefits of writing were improving communication (89% agree “a lot”), self-expression (83%), and critical thinking (80%). Two of the bottom three skills—confidence (65%) and self-fulfillment/pride (64%)—are skills we see most improved during our publication process, which leads to Finding 10 . . .

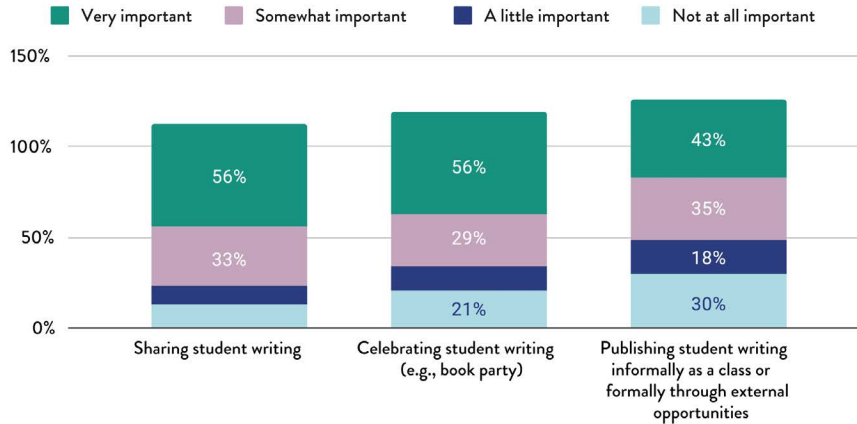
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL WRITING HELPS
STUDENTS TO IMPROVE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

AREA	SOMEWHAT	A LOT	TOTAL AGREE
Communication	10%	89%	99%
Self-expression	12%	83%	96%
Critical Thinking	16%	80%	96%
Creativity	17%	79%	96%
Reflection	17%	79%	96%
Comprehension	18%	77%	96%
Empowerment	24%	66%	90%
Persistence	27%	66%	93%
Organization/Goal-setting	26%	65%	91%
Confidence	28%	65%	93%
Self-fulfillment/Pride	29%	64%	93%
Empathy	29%	61%	90%

FINDING 10

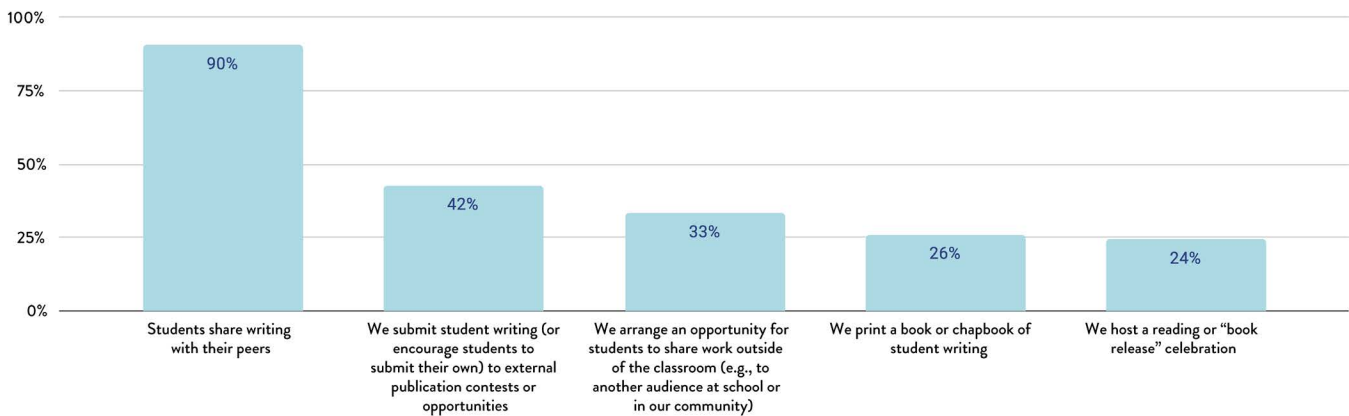
There is a disconnect between what teachers believe is important to do in the classroom and what they are able to do. While 84% of teachers believe it is important to celebrate student writing, only 24% report doing so.

DEGREE TO WHICH TEACHERS PERCEIVE THE LISTED AREAS AS IMPORTANT TO THEIR TEACHING

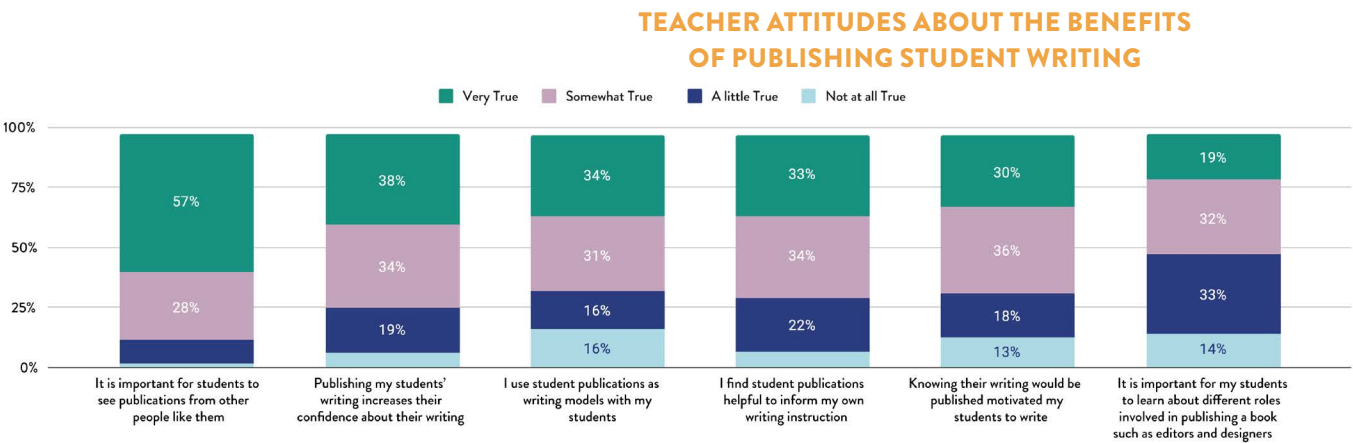


While teachers recognize the importance of sharing their students' work in some way, most do not, other than having students simply share with peers. The main reason cited was lack of time and resources.

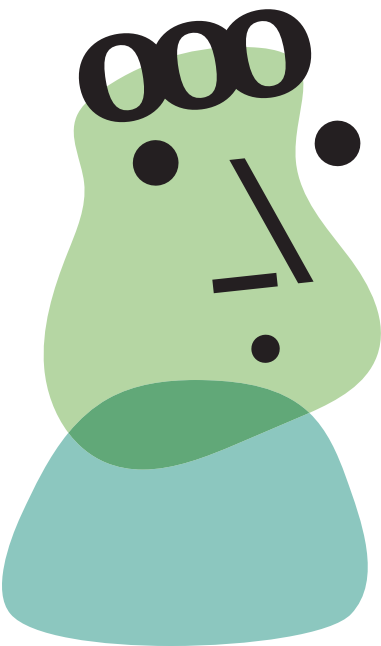
WAYS TEACHERS SHARE THEIR STUDENTS' WRITING



The majority of teachers also recognize that publishing student work can help increase their confidence (72%) and motivate students to write (66%). However, if teachers aren't publishing and celebrating student writing, then they may not see these student benefits as strongly.



In summary, we know the benefits of writing and that these benefits are deep and can impact students' lives well into their futures. Unfortunately, with the challenges they face, teachers are largely unable to provide writing instruction to the degree that students need in order to truly reap those benefits. Our students know very well that a D- is not passing. How can we expect better grades of our students when the education we are providing them doesn't meet expectations?



TAKE ACTION

Writing education prepares students not only for academic achievement but also for the lifelong need to articulate their thoughts and communicate with others. There are more benefits to writing than what at first meets the eye. While we are learning to write, we also learn how to process complex ideas from different sources, reflect and articulate on our emotions and thought processes, advocate for ourselves and our communities, become more compassionate to others, and much more. A writing education system that is “lacking,” “nonexistent,” and receives a D- from teachers is simply not good enough.

These results are not new to us or anyone in the writing education field. For over ten years, since the last NAEP-administered writing assessment and subsequent reports based on that data, we have known that students do not spend enough time writing in the classroom. We have known that there are no well-adopted, standards-aligned writing curricula. We have known that teachers do not feel trained in writing instruction. And yet, not much has changed.

To move the writing education field forward, we need to take action now. We need to

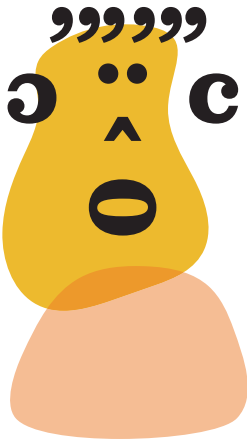
- 1. increase dedicated time for students to write, whether in the classroom or out, and especially to those in areas that need it most;**
- 2. develop standards-aligned curricula specifically for writing;**
- 3. support teachers to feel confident not just in their own writing but also in their writing instruction by providing PD resources, a learning community, and inspiration for writing lessons; and**
- 4. continue advocacy work to inform the field, the general public, policymakers, and funders about the challenges to and benefits of writing education.**

While not new, these results do confirm that our mission at 826 is needed and help inform our strategies as we carry our work forward. In this past year, 826 reached an estimated 15,000 teachers and 450,000 students through our chapters and 826 Digital. While we are proud of these numbers, we recognize that this is just a fraction of teachers and students in the U.S. We cannot do this work in a silo, and we can only move the field forward meaningfully together. Take action with us:

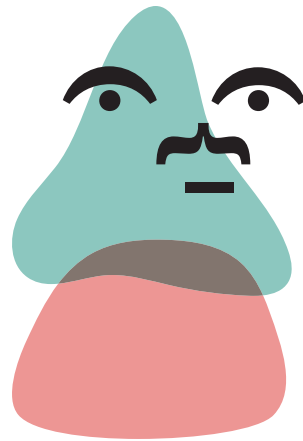
- Share this report with your teachers, administrators, and policy makers.
- If you are in the field of writing education, consider the four action steps above and how they fit into your role to support teachers and students.
- Come join 826 as a [volunteer](#), a [supporter](#), an [educator](#), and/or a [writer](#).

Consider this our call to rally. Picture the bullhorn, hear our students' voices, feel their pride as they share their powerful and brilliant writing. Honor their words by taking action. Reading this report is not enough. What will you do?

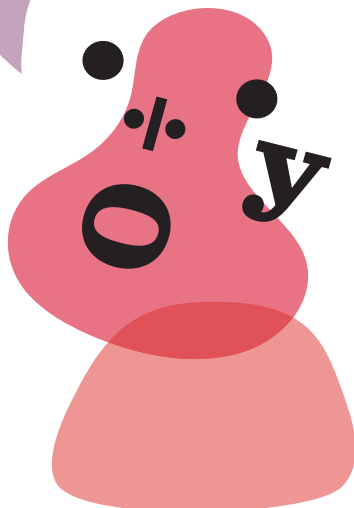
**CONSIDER
THIS OUR
CALL TO RALLY.**



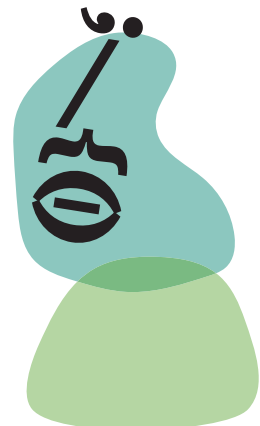
**SHARE THIS REPORT
WITH YOUR TEACHERS,
ADMINISTRATORS, AND
POLICY MAKERS.**



**HONOR THEIR
WORDS BY
TAKING ACTION.**



**JOIN 826 AS A
VOLUNTEER,
SUPPORTER,
EDUCATOR,
OR WRITER.**



APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

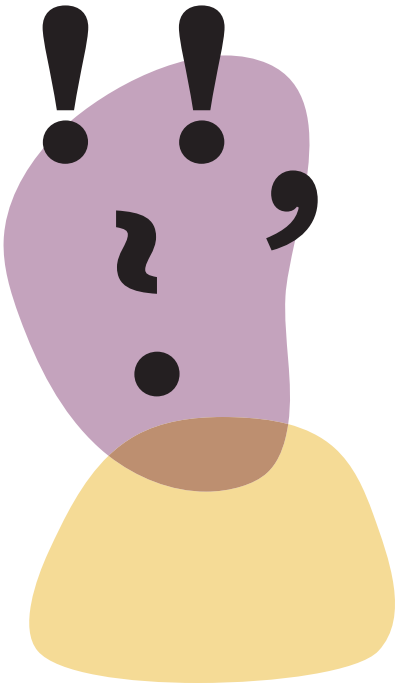
TEACHING FORMAT	2021	2022
Mostly in-person	4%	89%
Mostly virtual	91%	2%
Hybrid	NA	9%
GENDER		
Female	80%	86%
Male	17%	12%
Non-binary/Third Gender	3%	2%
RACE/ETHNICITY		
White	71%	78%
Black/African-American	4%	3%
Hispanic/Latina/o/x	5%	4%
Asian/Asian-American	4%	3%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%	9%
American Indian/ Native American or Alaska Native	3%	3%
Two or More Races	7%	2%
AGE		
<25	4%	2%
25-30	20%	7%
31-35	20%	11%
36-40	13%	15%
41-45	13%	16%
46-50	9%	16%
>50	21%	32%
ROLE		
Classroom Educator	92%	94%
SUBJECT		
Writing	60%	50%
ELA	80%	88%
Math	22%	15%
Science	21%	14%
Social Studies/History	26%	24%
Art/Music	11%	6%
Other	16%	15%

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

GRADE LEVEL	2021	2022
Elementary	24%	26%
Middle	40%	35%
High School	45%	53%
SCHOOL TYPE		
Public	81%	82%
Private	11%	8%
Magnet	2%	8%
Charter	5%	1%
Parochial	1%	1%
SCHOOL LOCATION		
Urban	46%	39%
Rural	21%	22%
Suburban	33%	38%
SES		
0-25%	25%	26%
25-50%	25%	21%
50-75%	16%	20%
75-100%	29%	33%
YEARS TEACHING		
Less than 1 year	4%	1%
1-3 years	12%	6%
3-6 years	22%	9%
7-10 years	20%	17%
more than 10 years	41%	67%

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND AND
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

EDUCATION LEVEL	2021	2022
HS or GED	3%	0%
Associate’s Degree	1%	0%
Bachelor’s Degree	30%	23%
Master’s Degree	63%	71%
Doctorate	4%	6%
COURSEWORK		
Writing Education	75%	71%
Reading Education	67%	33%
Other language arts-related subject	49%	51%
Elementary or secondary education	72%	74%



APPENDIX B: SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESPONDENTS WHO ARE 826 EDUCATORS VERSUS THOSE WHO ARE NOT

BENEFITS OF WRITING	NOT ACTIVE 826 EDUCATOR:			
	MEAN	SD	F	P-VALUE
Self-expression	3.73	0.611	15.36	<.000
Creativity	3.69	0.589	30.298	<.000
Communication	3.83	0.409	37.449	<.000
Reflection	3.72	0.521	5.773	0.017
Empathy	3.41	0.717	12.822	<.000
Confidence	3.52	0.654	18.761	<.000
Persistence	3.52	0.664	18.476	<.000
Critical thinking	3.74	0.51	15.435	<.000
Comprehension	3.68	0.571	12.565	<.000
Empowerment	3.47	0.758	15.998	<.000
CHALLENGE				
Lack diversity in texts	2.54	0.955	8.202	<.005
BENEFITS OF PUBLISHING STUDENT WRITING				
Share writing	3.3	0.793	21.754	<.000
Celebrate	3.27	0.862	12.9	<.000
Publish writing	3.09	0.903	6.769	0.01
Motivate	2.73	1.055	11.082	0.001
Representation	3.37	0.829	17.502	<.000
Mentor texts	2.74	1.122	7.052	0.008
HOW DO YOU SHARE STUDENT WRITING?				
	CHI-SQUARE	P-VALUE		
Print book	10.09	0.001		
Book release	13.794	<.000		
Share outside	8.19	0.004		

BENEFITS OF WRITING	ACTIVE 826 EDUCATOR: MEAN	SD	F	P-VALUE
Self-expression	3.88	0.393	15.36	<.000
Creativity	3.87	0.339	30.298	<.000
Communication	3.96	0.187	37.449	<.000
Reflection	3.82	0.519	5.773	0.017
Empathy	3.69	0.601	12.822	<.000
Confidence	3.72	0.502	18.761	<.000
Persistence	3.73	0.496	18.476	<.000
Critical thinking	3.87	0.375	15.435	<.000
Comprehension	3.82	0.47	12.565	<.000
Empowerment	3.69	0.578	15.998	<.000

CHALLENGE

Lack diversity in texts	2.91	0.84	8.202	<.005
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BENEFITS OF PUBLISHING STUDENT WRITING

Share writing	3.67	0.521	21.754	<.000
Celebrate	3.58	0.624	12.9	<.000
Publish writing	3.35	0.688	6.769	0.01
Motivate	3.06	0.878	11.082	0.001
Representation	3.6	0.561	17.502	<.000
Mentor texts	3.04	0.987	7.052	0.008

HOW DO YOU SHARE STUDENT WRITING?

	CHI-SQUARE	P-VALUE
Print book	10.09	0.001
Book release	13.794	<.000
Share outside	8.19	0.004

