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ALLIANCE  
FOR  
LEARNING**

**WriterCoach Connection™**

**Program Assessment**

**2008-09**

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# WriterCoach Connection™

## Program Assessment 2008-09

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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](mailto:pjhallam@speakeasy.org). (See Appendix 4 for credentials.)

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# WriterCoach Connection™ Program Assessment 2008-09

## Section 1

### *Introduction*

#### **Overview**

“One can never underestimate the power of one to one interaction. WriterCoach Connection volunteers provide students the structure, guidance and time to improve their writing skills. The program connects community members and our public schools in a way that benefits both.”

---*Marla Stephenson, Superintendent, Albany Unified School District*

Superintendent Stephenson’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 and teachers administer comparative cold-write assessment essays in fall and spring to measure changes in writing achievement during the school year. 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 2009, students<sup>1</sup> from seven Albany, Berkeley, and Oakland, California 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 = 3.1). Student survey results were consistent with, and overall generally slightly higher than,

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 88% of participating students were surveyed, with comments and qualitative responses reviewed. Actions were taken to address any specific concerns. For the purpose of the quantitative analysis, a random sample of 50% of student responses was tallied and is reflected in the charts and statistics cited in this report.

findings over the previous two years, with the highest scores coming from students at Media Academy in Oakland, where the mean response was 3.24.

2. Students felt the most helpful aspects of coaching were “Helping me understand the next steps I need to take to improve my writing” (3.2); “Showing me what’s working in my writing” (3.1); “Giving me suggestions for organizing my ideas” (3.1); and “Showing me how to express my ideas more clearly” (3.1). Students overall rated “Reading my work out loud” – a hallmark of WCC interaction – as helpful (mean score 3.0), although comments indicate many students also find this the most challenging aspect of writer coaching. Typical comments regarding the reading of their own work aloud range from, “It really helps me catch my mistakes and pay attention to what I’ve actually written,” to “I don’t like reading my work aloud but I admit it is helpful,” to “I don’t like reading my writing out loud.” We will continue to address this issue with coaches in training and coach workshops, suggesting approaches and alternatives. All elements of coaching received student mean scores of “Helpful” (3.0) or above, except the prompt “Motivating me to turn in my work.” This is consistent with prior-year findings, and reflects that a substantial number of students selected “not applicable” and indicated that they are already sufficiently motivated to turn in their work that coaching does not impact their motivation level. However, for struggling students, comments indicate that working with coaches to get an assignment started or developed does motivate students who otherwise might not complete an assignment but actually finish and turn in their work with the help of coaches..

3. The notably high ratings of 3.0 or above 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 12 of this report.

## Teachers

Twenty-five out of thirty-one teachers completed the program assessment survey.<sup>1</sup> 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 3.38. No teacher rated coaching, or any individual elements of 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

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<sup>1</sup> Three of the AHS teachers 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; two additional surveys were returned too late for inclusion in data analysis

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 3.5.

3. Every aspect of the coaching program was rated “Helpful” with a mean score of 3.0 or above. Six of the elements round off to “Very helpful,” including helping struggling writers, improving the overall quality of student writing, improving structure and organization of writing, and conveying the goals of the lesson.

4. Consistent with past years and amplified once again this year with even higher scores, the highest mean scores were attained on the two questions regarding working with site coordinators (mean score: 3.92) and communicating with site coordinators regarding the goals of the lesson and areas for coaching emphasis (mean score: 3.82). 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 learning goals for their students.

Teacher comments in the surveys indicate a high level of appreciation for the support of writer coaches, and of the importance of individual attention from a trusted adult. A sampling of teacher comments is included in Section 11. One representative of the typical overall teacher sentiment comes from Susannah Bell of Berkeley High: “I appreciate everything about the program...My students and I ‘walk on clouds’ the whole day after a coaching experience!”

## Descriptive Data

**Table 1.1** WCC Program Statistics, 2008-09

	King	Longfellow	Willard	BHS	AHS	AMS	Media	Grand Total
<i>Teachers</i>	6	5	3	2	8	6	1	31
<i>Classes</i>	12	10	5	4	24	12	5	72
<i>Students</i>	306	292	152	115	450	308	93	1,716
<i>Sessions</i>	2,792	2,313	1,857	676	1,466	2,678	649	12,431
<i>Coaches</i>	75	58	68	55	51	55	39	401

The balance of this report will describe assessment results for teachers and students overall, and then 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, <http://www.writercoachconnection.org/results.html>.

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 (including a training video and continued focus on addressing struggling students and English language learners), communication through site coordinators to address specific concerns or suggestions, development of a “Coach Pop Quiz” tool for ongoing coach training, planned further revision of CAFL’s *Shortcuts* to increase effective use of these handouts and provide enhanced attention to matters of grammar and language mechanics, and incorporating observation in the training protocol. These issues are discussed in Section 14 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. 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 approximately 88% of coached students completing the survey, administered in class. All returned surveys were reviewed for qualitative analysis, with site coordinators taking action to address any specific concerns voiced by individual students in the comments section. (Examples of actions taken include adjusting coach/student pairings, conferring with a teacher regarding individual student needs, and providing specific feedback to individual coaches.) For the quantitative analysis, a random sample of 50% of the surveys was analyzed.

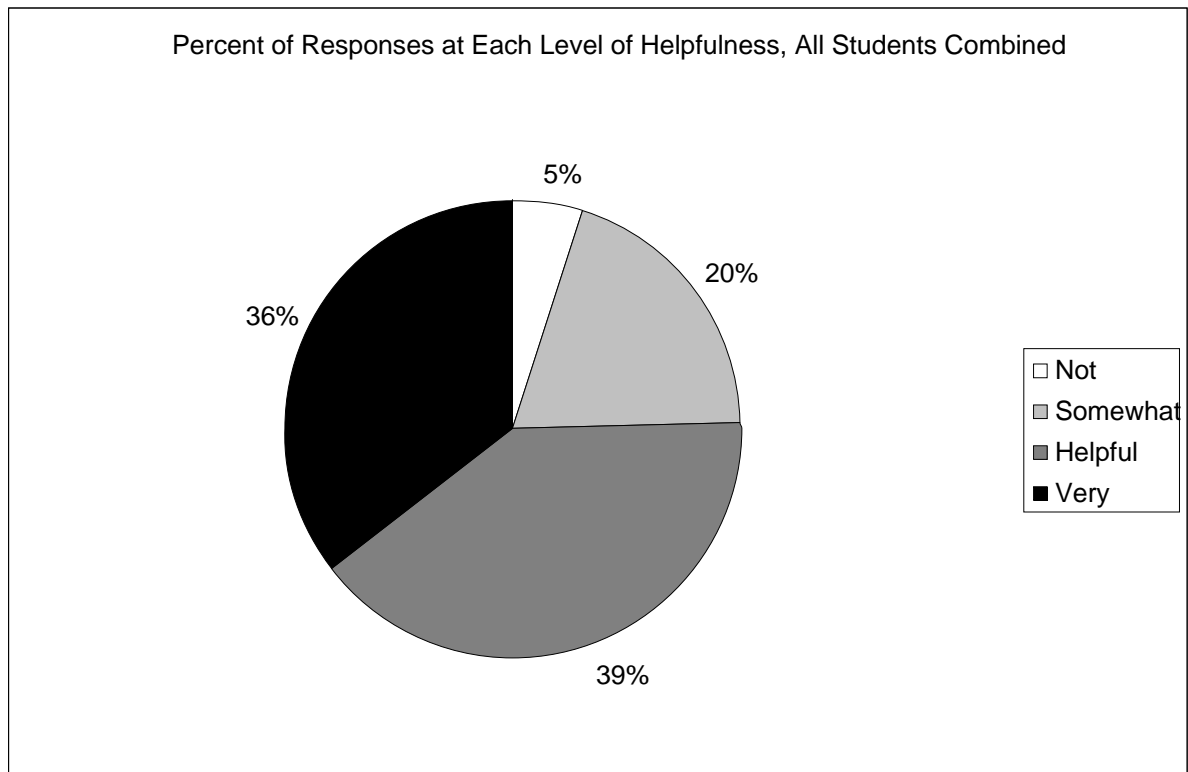
Students participating in WriterCoach connection range from seventh to tenth grade. The majority of students are in eighth and ninth grade, with specific numbers provided in each of the separate Site Result sections of this report.

**Combined Student Survey Results**

At the start of the second semester during the school year 2008-09, 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, with 95% of all responses on all items indicating some level of helpfulness, and 75% of all combined responses scoring 3.0 or above.**

**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 75 percent of the time, and indicated at least some degree of helpfulness 95 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 had any particular learning needs that coaches needed to 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.

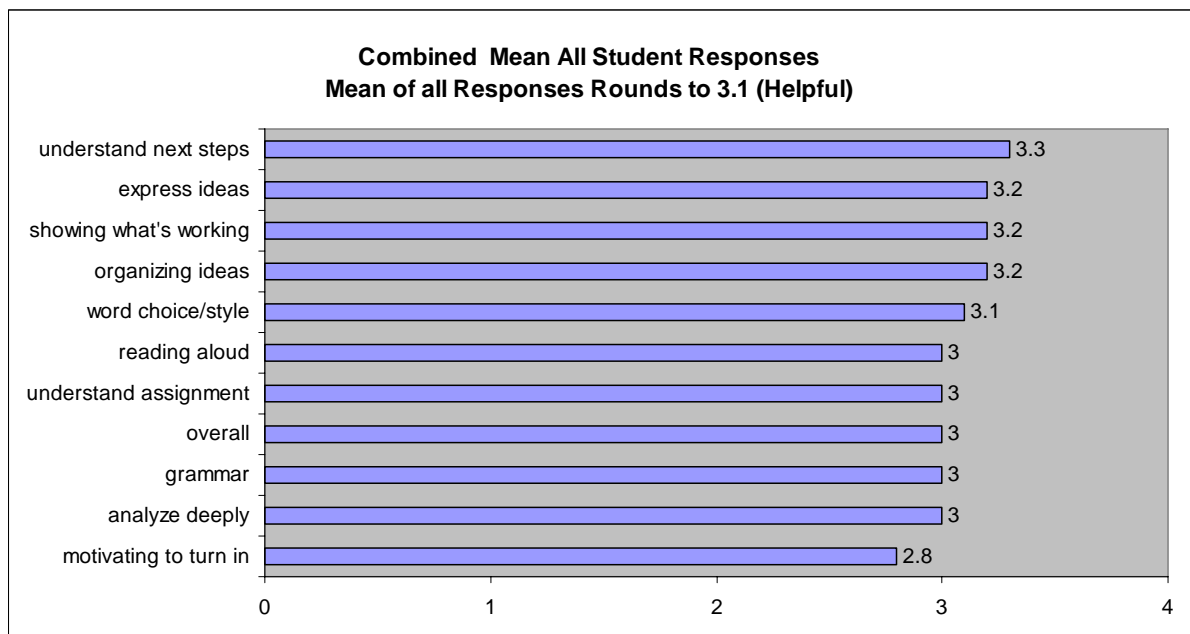
2. **The mean score for helpfulness on all eight aspects of the writing process was 3.10, up from 2.88 in the previous year.** This increase in overall degree of helpfulness is most likely a result of two things: first, the enthusiasm of students for the individual attention WCC coaches provide at our newest site, Media Academy, in Oakland; and second, greater attention paid by site coordinators to getting information from teachers prior to the first coaching session, which enabled greater effectiveness in addressing individual student learning needs and higher success in making strong student-coach matches.

3. Students rated as the most helpful aspects of coaching “Helping me understand the next steps I need to take to improve my writing” (3.2); “Showing me what’s working in my writing” (3.1); “Giving me suggestions for organizing my ideas” (3.1); and “Showing me how to express my ideas more clearly” (3.1). As noted in the introduction, students overall rated “Reading my work out loud” – a hallmark of WCC interaction – as “Helpful” (mean

score 3.0), although comments indicate many students also find this the most challenging aspect of writer coaching. Students acknowledge that reading their work aloud “really helps me catch my mistakes and pay attention to what I’ve actually written,” yet a small but vocal minority (fewer than 10 percent) express that they do not like reading their work aloud. This will continue to be an area to address with coaches in training and refresher workshop sessions, including considering alternatives and approaches when a student is reluctant to read aloud.

3. **All elements of coaching received student mean scores of “Helpful” (3.0 or above), except the prompt “Motivating me to turn in my work.”** This is consistent with (and slightly higher than) prior-year findings, and reflects that a substantial number of students selected “Not applicable” and indicated that they are sufficiently motivated to turn in their work that coaching does not impact their motivation level. However, for struggling students, comments indicate that working with coaches to get an assignment started or developed does motivate students who otherwise might not complete an assignment but actually finish and turn in their work with the help of coaches..

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 (understanding next steps, expressing ideas clearly, understanding what is working in student writing, organizing ideas effectively, and use of word choice and style). 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 12 of this report.

While WCC was rated highly by most responders, there was some variation by subgroups. For example, Albany High School and Albany Middle School student overall mean scores were slightly lower than those in Berkeley and Oakland. Closer inspection shows that this is largely due to lower scores mean scores on two items: “Motivating me to turn in my work,” and “Reading aloud.” A higher percentage of students in the Albany schools indicated they are sufficiently motivated to turn in their work that working with a coach does not impact their intention to complete and turn in assignments. In addition, working with a larger number of ELD/ English language learners at Albany High is reflected in a lower mean score on the question of reading their work aloud. Again, many of these same students who gave a lower helpfulness score to this aspect of writer coaching indicated in their written comments that although they don’t enjoy that part of the session, they recognize that coaching is useful. Controlling for those two elements, mean scores on the remaining nine elements showed less variation. Overall, Media students gave mean scores of slightly higher degrees of helpfulness on most elements.

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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. Students and their teachers are surveyed. Student survey findings are delineated in Section 2 of this assessment report.

**Teacher Survey Descriptive Statistics**

Twenty-five out of a possible 31 teachers completed the survey. Two surveys were received too late for inclusion in this analysis, and one teacher submitted narrative comments in place of a survey. The remaining teachers had not had enough coaching sessions by the survey date to provide meaningful feedback. This 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. Nineteen of the teachers who responded (76%) teach in a middle school; six of the teachers work in a high school (24%). Media Academy has only one teacher working with the WCC program, and so had only one teacher response.

**Table 3.1** Number and Percent of Teacher Responders by Site

Site	N	% of total responses (all schools)
<b>Albany HS</b>	3	12
<b>Albany MS</b>	5	20
<b>Berkeley HS</b>	2	8
<b>King MS</b>	6	24
<b>Longfellow MS</b>	5	20
<b>Willard</b>	3	12
<b>Media</b>	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding, totals may not be 100%.

## Teacher Survey Results

“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 students 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**

At the start of the second semester during the school year 2008-09, teachers from all seven 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. (See Figure 3.1, below.)
2. The mean score for help on all aspects of the writing process was 3.38, 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 3.5, indicating strong degree of helpfulness.
4. Consistent with past years and amplified again this year with even higher scores, the highest mean scores were attained on the two questions regarding working with site coordinators in conveying the goals of the lesson (mean score: 3.92) and communicating with site coordinators regarding scheduling and logistics (mean score: 3.82). 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. Teacher mean scores round to “Very helpful” in six of the seventeen areas, including improving the quality of student writing, improving the structure and organization of student writing, and assisting struggling students. Mean scores for all other program elements were 3.0 (“Helpful”) or above. These factors include making effective revisions, working with English language learners, improving overall grades earned and rates of assignments turned in, and helping students to develop critical thinking and analysis skills.

**Figure 3.1 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

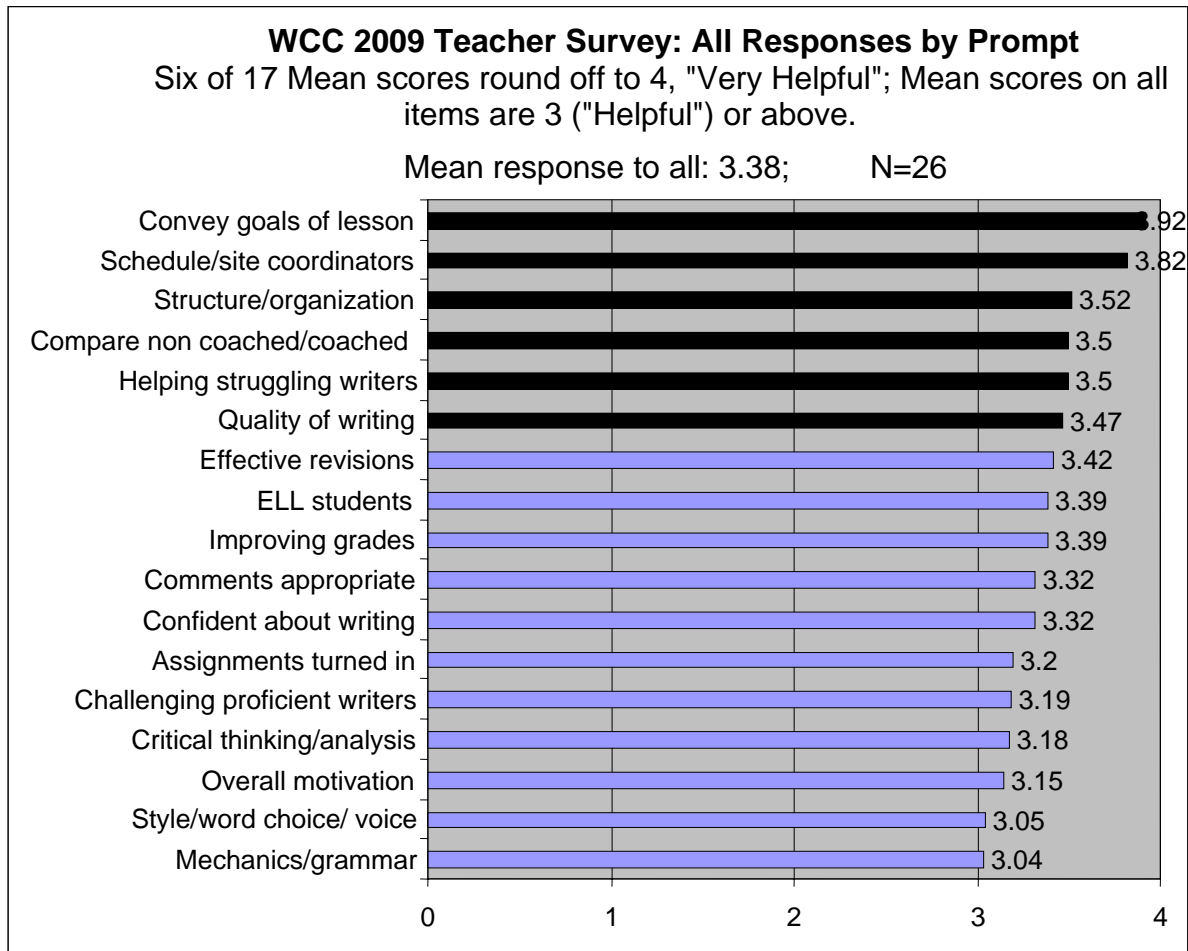


Figure 3.1, above, demonstrates the teachers' extraordinary rating (3.92 and 3.82) of the program's site coordinators and reflects the program's intent to extend teachers' reach by providing the one-on-one attention for students made impossible for individual teachers by class size and curricular demands. 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, with teacher comments often focusing on the program's effectiveness in supporting struggling students. In addition, teachers also gave improved ratings to the program's support for proficient writers, highlighting the strength of providing extended individual attention for every student at his or her level of writing.

The overall score for helping struggling writers is a robust 3.5. As all of our partner schools work to address the achievement gap, WCC's individualized writer coaching is recognized by classroom teachers as effective in addressing the needs of lower-skilled writers. This reflects significant continued WCC efforts on several fronts. We have enhanced coach training and coach refresher workshops to focus on effective strategies for engaging these students. We have participated at our school sites and districts in discussions of curriculum standards and assessment benchmarks and tools, so that our coordinators and coaches can understand the teaching goals and learning needs of the students we coach. In addition, WCC site coordinators 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.

Representative teacher comments are included in Section 11 of this report.

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**Section 4**

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

**Overview**

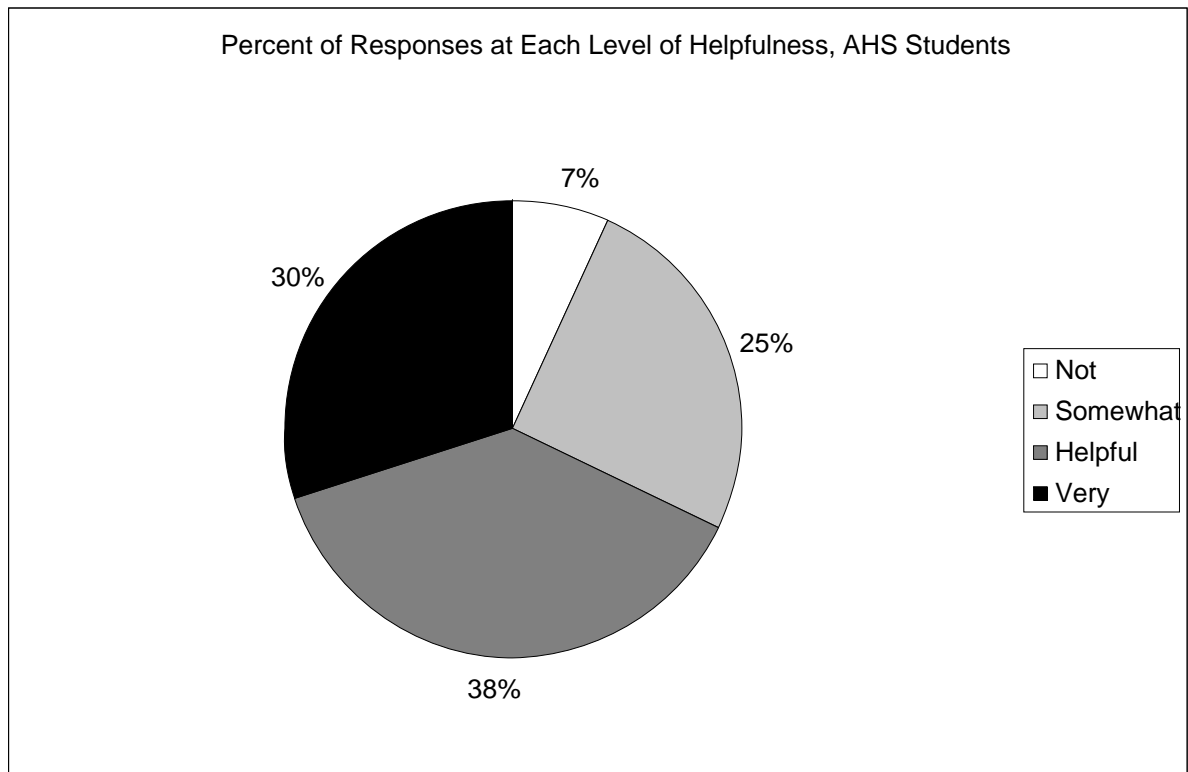
WriterCoach Connection (WCC) recruits, trains, and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the 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

**AHS student survey results**

In February and March 2009, 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 follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** Mean rating for the eleven aspects surveyed was 2.9, up slightly from the previous year. All elements scored 2.6 or above on the helpfulness index, rounding to “Helpful” or above in all categories. (See Figure 4.1, below.)
2. Overall, students indicated that coaching was helpful, with a score of 2.8. The mean rating on five of the most crucial aspects writing of the writing process was 3.0 or above.
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 student’s writing (3.1); explaining how to express ideas more clearly (3.1); and understanding the next steps needed for effective revision (3.1). Students also found work on grammar and organization helpful (3.0). (See Figure 4.2 for details.)
4. Lower mean scores were attained on the question of motivating students to turn in assignments and reading aloud (2.6) However, more than half of the students did not select a helpfulness ranking on these two questions but rather indicated they generally are already motivated to turn in 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.

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



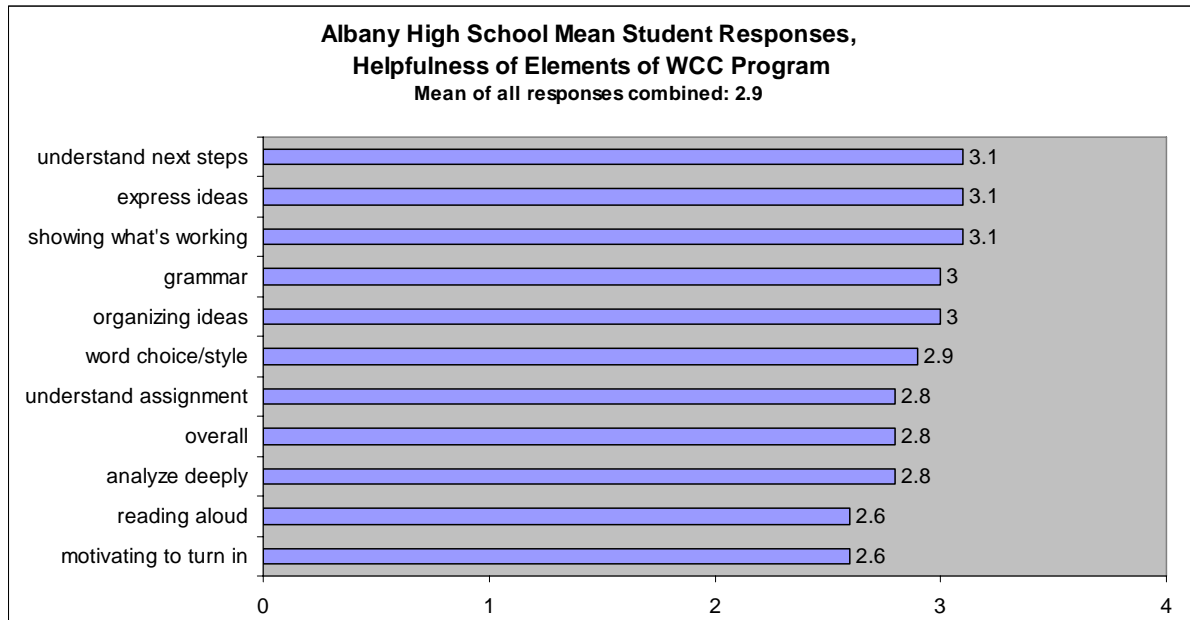
This data shows that on all combined responses, 68% indicated a level 3.0 or 4.0 of helpfulness, and only 7 percent of all responses to all questions indicated that element of coaching was not helpful. One third of all responses indicated a level of “Very helpful” on particular elements of coaching.

Figure 6.2, below, delineates AHS student levels of satisfaction with coaching for the eleven important aspects of writing. 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 12.

## 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



## AHS Teacher Survey Results

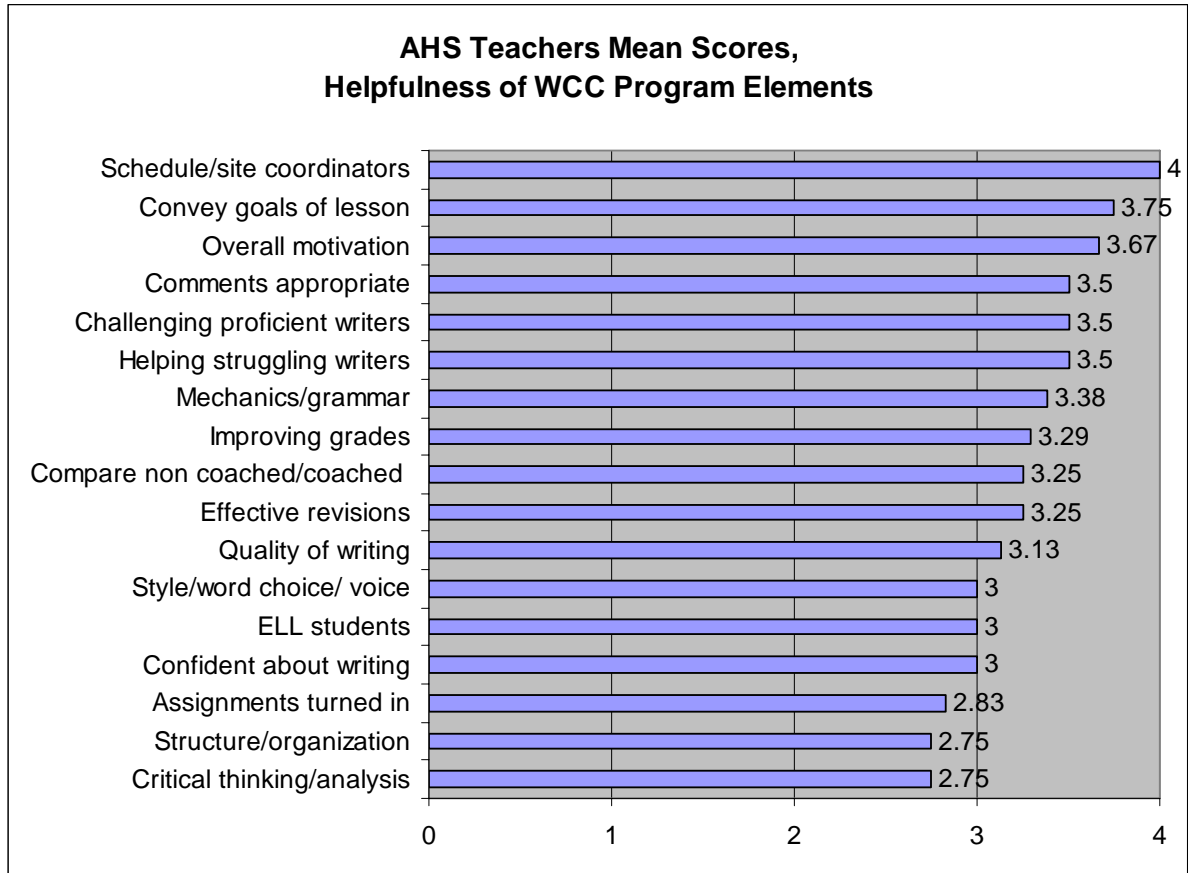
The major findings are:

1. **Mean score for Albany High School teachers on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” (3.0) 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 six of the elements rounds to 4.0, very helpful, including improving overall motivation of students (3.67) and challenging proficient writers AND effectively supporting struggling writers (3.5 for both elements). See figure 4.3 for details.

**Figure 4.3: 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



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**Section 5**

***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. Students and their teachers are surveyed.

**AMS student survey results**

In February and March 2009, 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 (3.0). Mean ratings for the eleven aspects surveyed fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range 71% of the time. (See Figure 5.1, below.)
2. The mean score by students rounds to “Helpful” for all eleven elements surveyed; the lowest ranking aspects (2.7 mean for each) were “Motivating me to turn in my assignments,” and, curiously, “Helping me to analyze more deeply.” This “motivation to turn assignments” result is consistent with Albany High School, and reflects the high level of motivation among Albany Middle School students. The “analyze deeply” mean score may reflect the nature of the assignments, which tend to be personal and reflective writing.
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 (3.2); reading my work aloud, understanding next steps, and organizing ideas (3.1 for all). (See Figure 5.2, below.)
4. Consistent with results throughout AUSD and BUSD schools, help with grammar and mechanics was ranked lower than many other elements (2.8). 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. However, in light of these consistent results over time, and of schools’ desires to raise student performance on standardized tests and writing assessments, WCC will evaluate possible revisions to our Shortcut resource guide and possible ways to increase the use of these grammar and mechanics handouts. See “Action steps,” Section 14 of this report.

**Figure 5.1** Percent of Albany Middle School Student Responses at Each Level of Helpfulness

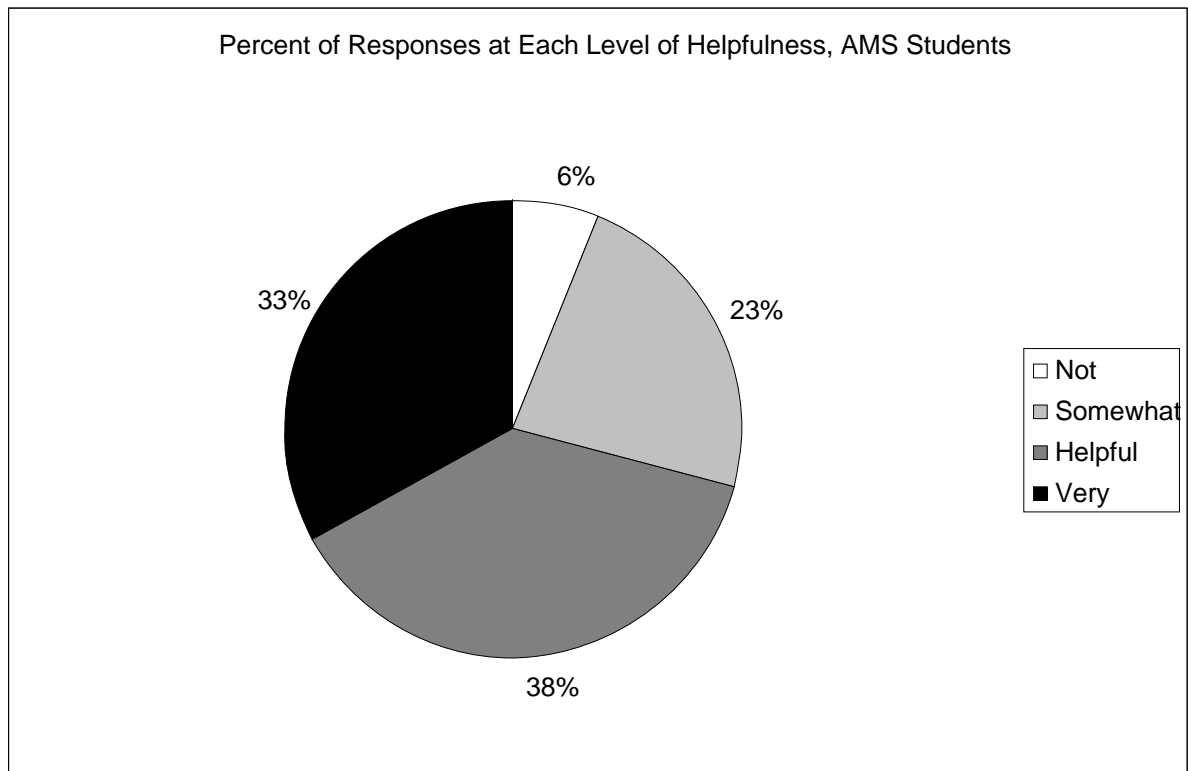
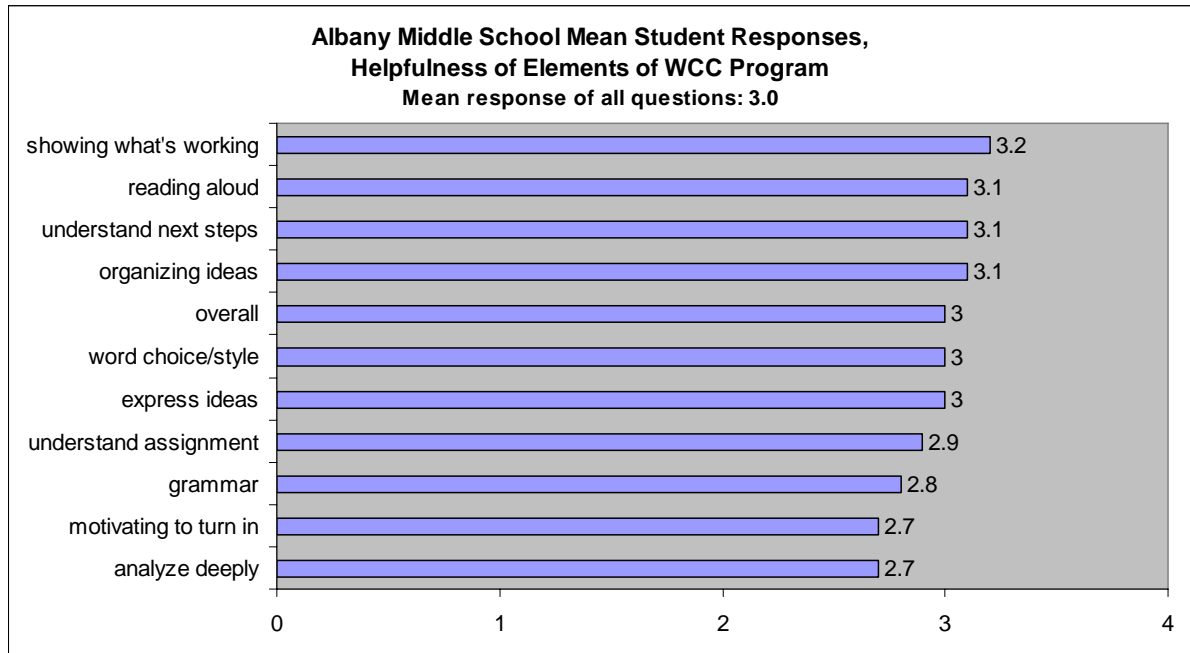


Figure 5.2 below displays the students’ mean scores on levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the eleven important aspects of writer coaching. Overall, students selected “Very helpful” or “Helpful” in their responses to the eleven aspects of writer coaching 71 percent of the time. In addition, students rated these elements as at least somewhat helpful 94 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 had any particular learning needs that coaches needed to 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 5.2** 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 (showing what’s working in student writing, reading aloud, understanding their next steps, and organizing ideas), the nuts and bolts of their writing (word choice and style, expressing ideas, and grammar). 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.

**1. Albany Middle School teachers mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” (3.0) or above, with the exception of increasing the rate of assignments turned in.**

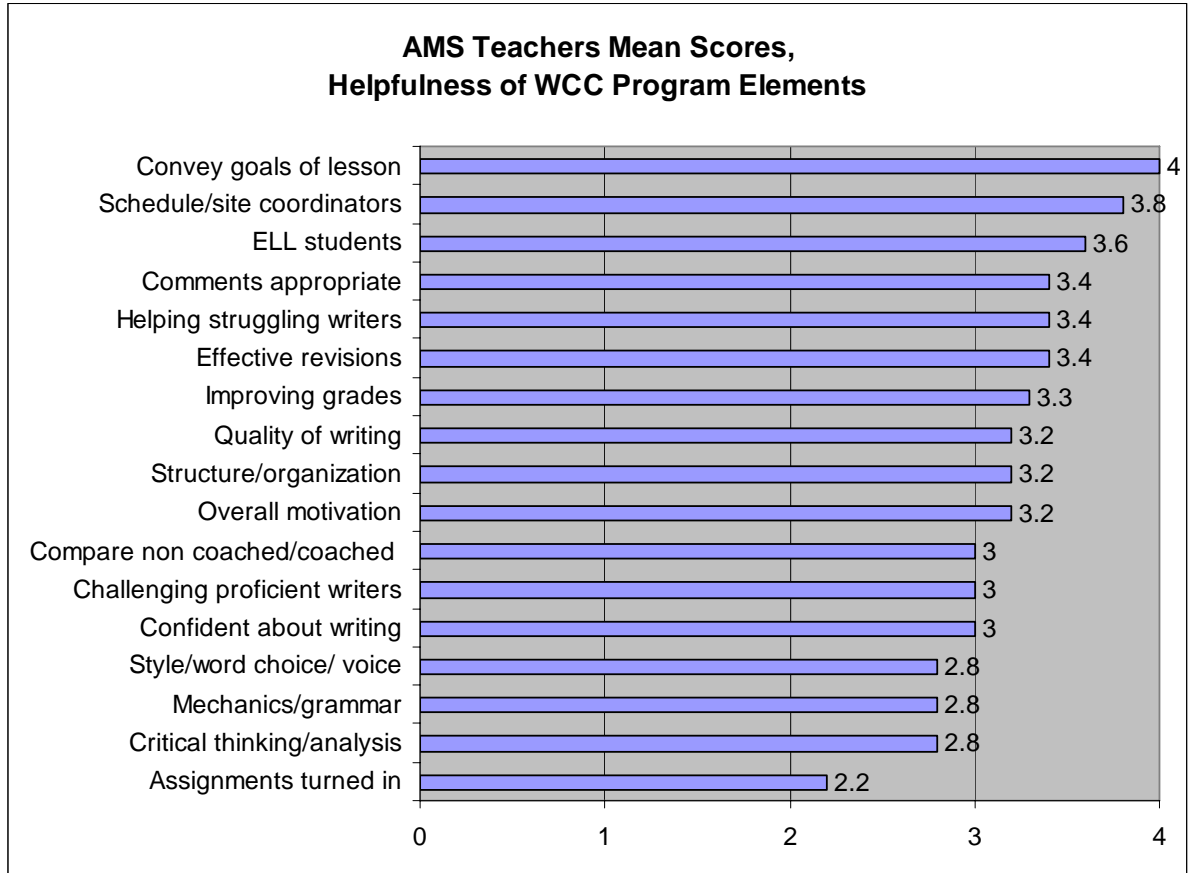
2. On the critical question of comparing an assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, all AMS teachers who responded indicated an improvement in the rate of assignments turned in, quality of work, and grades earned on assignments with writer coaching (mean score = 3.0).

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). Working with English language learners and struggling students were among the highest scores. (See Figure 5.3 for details.)

**Figure 5.3: 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™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**Section 6**

***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. Students and their teachers are surveyed.

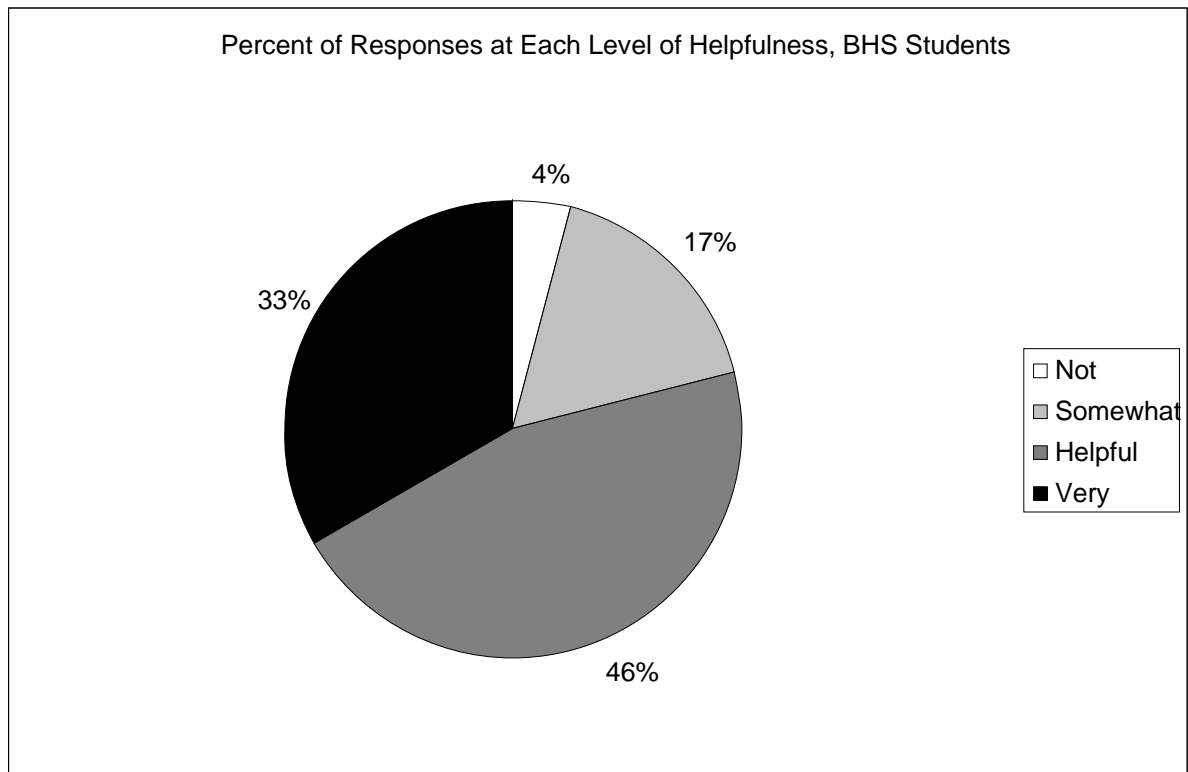
**BHS student survey results**

At about the midpoint of the 2008-09 school year, 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.” These students are 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Major findings for the student survey are as follows:

1. **The majority of students reported that their coaches were helpful.** (See Figure 6.1, below.) Students selected “Helpful” or “Very helpful” on 79% of all combined responses, and indicated some degree of helpfulness in 96% of all responses.
2. The mean score for all questions on the four-point scale was 3.1, up from previous years, reflecting a renewed effort to both coach training and coordination with teachers regarding learning goals and student needs. (See Figure 6.2 below.)
3. The elements rated as most helpful (3.2) are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: helping to understand next steps, showing what’s working in student writing, and helping students to organize their writing and express their ideas more clearly.

Mean scores on all individual elements round to 3.0 (“Helpful”) or higher.

**Figure 6.1:** Berkeley High School Student Responses: Percent at Each Level of Helpfulness

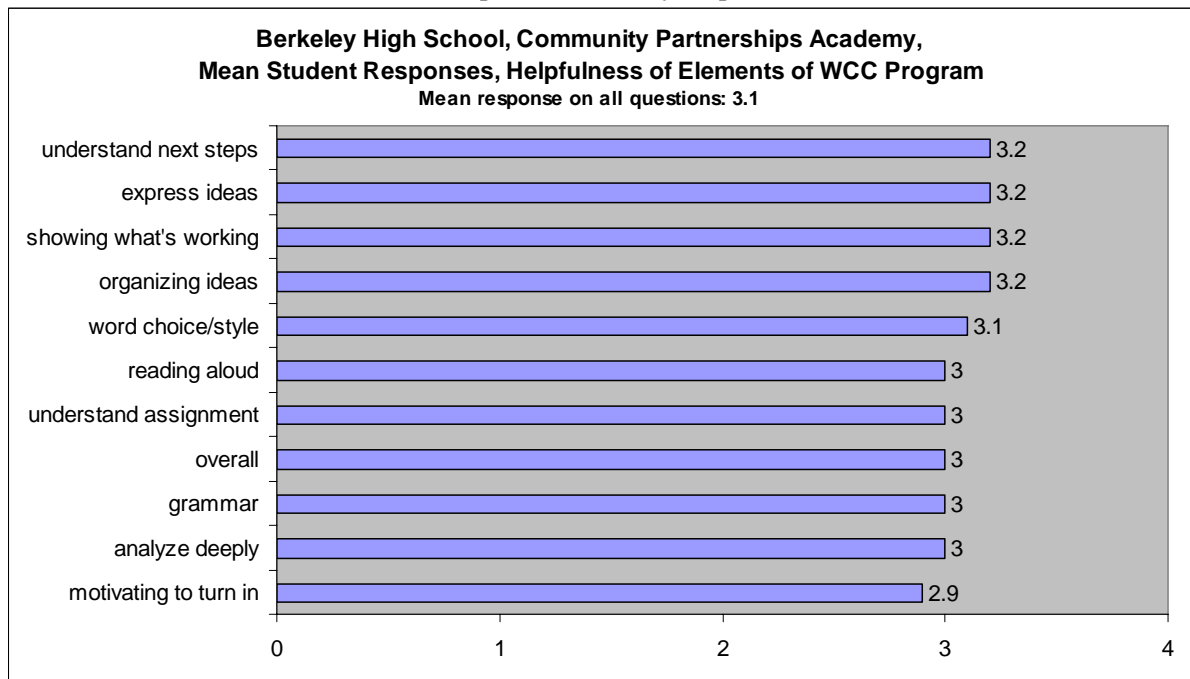


Students at Berkeley High School’s Community Partnerships Academy scored the eleven aspects of writing as “Helpful” or “Very helpful” 79% of the time, a significant increase from last year. Ninety-six percent of all responses on the eleven aspects indicated at least some degree of helpfulness. While students did have the option to respond anonymously, site coordinators followed 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 had any particular learning needs that coaches needed to 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 6.2** 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



Students across the board expressed appreciation for the coach attention in their written comments. Sample student comments are presented in Section 12 of this report.

### **BHS Teacher Survey Results**

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

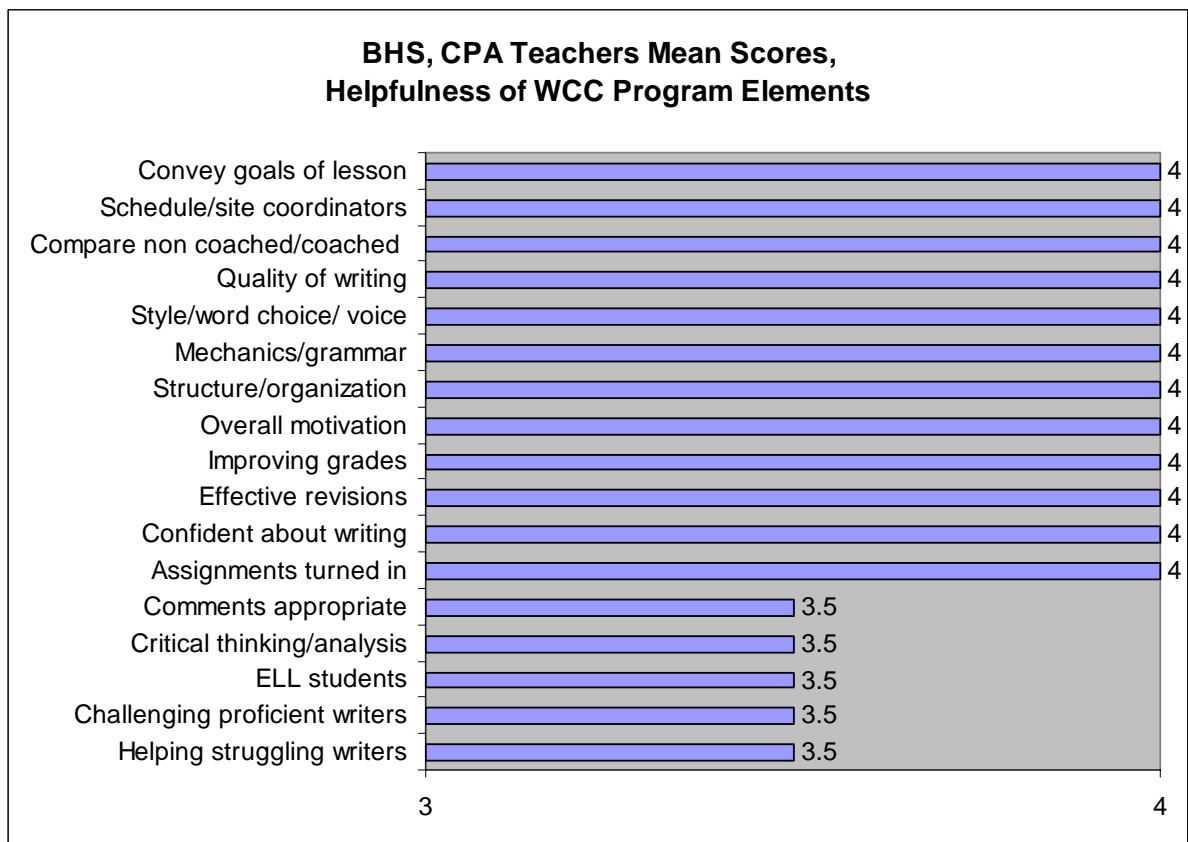
**Berkeley High School teachers' mean scores on fourteen aspects of writer coaching round to 3.85, with 12 of the 17 elements scoring 4.0, "Very helpful".** On the critical question of comparing an assignment on which students did NOT have writer coaching with a similar assignment on which students DID have writer coaching, all BHS teachers who responded indicated "Very helpful" in improvement in the rate of assignments turned in, quality of work, and grades earned on assignments with writer coaching.

BHS teachers indicated WCC was very helpful in the following elements: Conveying the goals of the lesson, scheduling with site coordinators, improving the quality of student writing, improving style and word choice, improving grammar and mechanics, and strengthening the organization of student writing. WCC also earned "Very helpful" scores for improving overall motivation and grades, helping to make effective revisions, and bolstering the confidence of student writers and increasing the rate of assignments turned in. See Figure 6.3 for details.

**Figure 6.3: BHS Teachers Mean Scores**

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

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



These results demonstrate a resounding show of support from the CP Academy teachers, and a reflection of substantial efforts on the part of WCC to enhance coach training and to work closely with the BHS teachers regarding curriculum goals and individual students' learning needs. A unique element of the BHS/CPA program is that students “loop” through with their teachers, so many coach/student pairs had the opportunity this year to continue working together and build upon the groundwork they established together last year. This has proven, for the most part, a very successful arrangement.

WriterCoach Connection™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**Section 7**

***Berkeley Unified School District  
Writing Proficiency Assessment Results  
All Middle Schools***

**Overview**

During the 2008-09 school year, Berkeley Unified School District administered writing assessment essays to all seventh- and eighth-grade students at King, Longfellow, and Willard Middle Schools, in October, January, and March. To determine writing proficiency levels, the district supervised trained readers who scored the essays holistically.

**Writing proficiency essay results**

The essay scores were evaluated independently for Community Alliance for Learning by Dr. P.J. Hallam, former Director of the Berkeley Unified School District Department of Assessment, Evaluation, and Research. The results indicated that writing proficiency among students in the WriterCoach Connection program increased by an average of 20% during the school year. (See Figure 7.1, below.)

As measured by this assessment, King Middle School writing proficiency among eighth-grade students jumped from 20 to 43 percent (23-point increase). At Longfellow Middle School, the writing proficiency of seventh-grade students rose from 26 to 43 percent (17-point increase) and of eighth-grade students from 23 to 35 percent (12-point increase). Willard Middle School eighth-grade students increased their writing proficiency from 11 percent in fall to 38 percent in spring (27-point increase).

Regarding the influence of WriterCoach Connection on writing proficiency among BUSD middle school students, Dr. Hallam notes, “The trend is strong, indeed. We cannot attribute this improvement solely to WCC, but with the strong results of the program’s survey assessments, and the results of the comparison study from 2008 [available at [www.writercoachconnection.org/results.html](http://www.writercoachconnection.org/results.html)], there is evidence that WCC is a contributing factor.”

**Figure 7.1** Writing Proficiency<sup>1</sup>, Berkeley Unified School District Middle Schools, 2008-09

School, proficiency level	Grade	Test 1		Test 2		Test 3	
		Students	Percent	Students	Percent	Students	Percent
King, not proficient	7	202	73	159	61	149	54
King, proficient	7	75	<b>27</b>	102	<b>39</b>	125	<b>46</b>
<b>Total students</b>		277		261		274	
King, not proficient	8	231	80	208	74	164	57
King, proficient	8	57	<b>20</b>	73	<b>26</b>	126	<b>43</b>
<b>Total students</b>		288		281		290	
Longfellow, not proficient	7	97	74	78	61	75	57
Longfellow, proficient	7	35	<b>26</b>	49	<b>39</b>	57	<b>43</b>
<b>Total students</b>		132		127		132	
Longfellow, not proficient	8	105	77	94	70	88	65
Longfellow, proficient	8	31	<b>23</b>	41	<b>30</b>	48	<b>35</b>
<b>Total students</b>		136		135		136	
Willard, not proficient	7	135	89	116	73	65	43
Willard, proficient	7	17	<b>11</b>	43	<b>27</b>	87	<b>57</b>
<b>Total students</b>		152		159		152	
Willard, not proficient	8	121	89	99	76	84	62
Willard, proficient	8	15	<b>11</b>	32	<b>24</b>	52	<b>38</b>
<b>Total students</b>		136		131		136	

Note about potential limitations of the data set: BUSD employed different genres of writing prompts for the three essay assessments. Moreover, each of the first two assessments was scored at one site on one date, with ample discussion among the group of readers about anchor papers and calibration of scoring standards, while the third assessment was scored at individual school sites, without the group discussion about the prompt and scoring process. These inherent inconsistencies in the assessment process could have impacted the data, particularly the third assessment.

<sup>1</sup> Data tabulated from assessment essays administered in October 2008, January 2009 and March 2009 and scored holistically by trained BUSD-supervised readers.

WriterCoach Connection™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**Section 8**

***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. Students and their teachers are surveyed.

**King student survey results**

At about the midpoint of the 2008-09 school year, 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.” These students are 8<sup>th</sup> graders. 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 fell into the “Helpful” or “Very helpful” range 81% of the time, a large increase over prior years. The combined mean for all questions is 3.2, above “Helpful.”
- 2 Overall, students indicated that coaching was helpful, with a mean score of 3.1, in the “Helpful” to “Very helpful” range.
- 3 The mean rating on each of the eleven elements is 3.0 (“Helpful” or above), again, a significant increase from prior years. (See figure 8.2, below.)
- 4 The most helpful element for KMS students is understanding the next steps to take (3.4), and helping to express ideas more clearly and showing what’s working in student’s writing (3.3). Students’ responses indicated a high degree of helpfulness from the ‘nuts and bolts’ elements such as working on grammar and reading aloud.
- 5 Consistent with other middle schools in the program, the lowest mean score was for the element of motivating students to complete and turn in assignments, and helping to analyze more deeply (mean score = 3.0). As previously noted, many students did not assign a helpfulness ranking to this the motivation element, rather indicating they are already motivated to complete and turn in assignments. The ‘analyze more deeply’ score may reflect the more personal nature of some of the writing assignments, and the fact that many of the

assignments early in the coaching year involve pre-write and brainstorming rather than full revisions.

**Figure 8.1** Percent of King Student Responses at Each Level

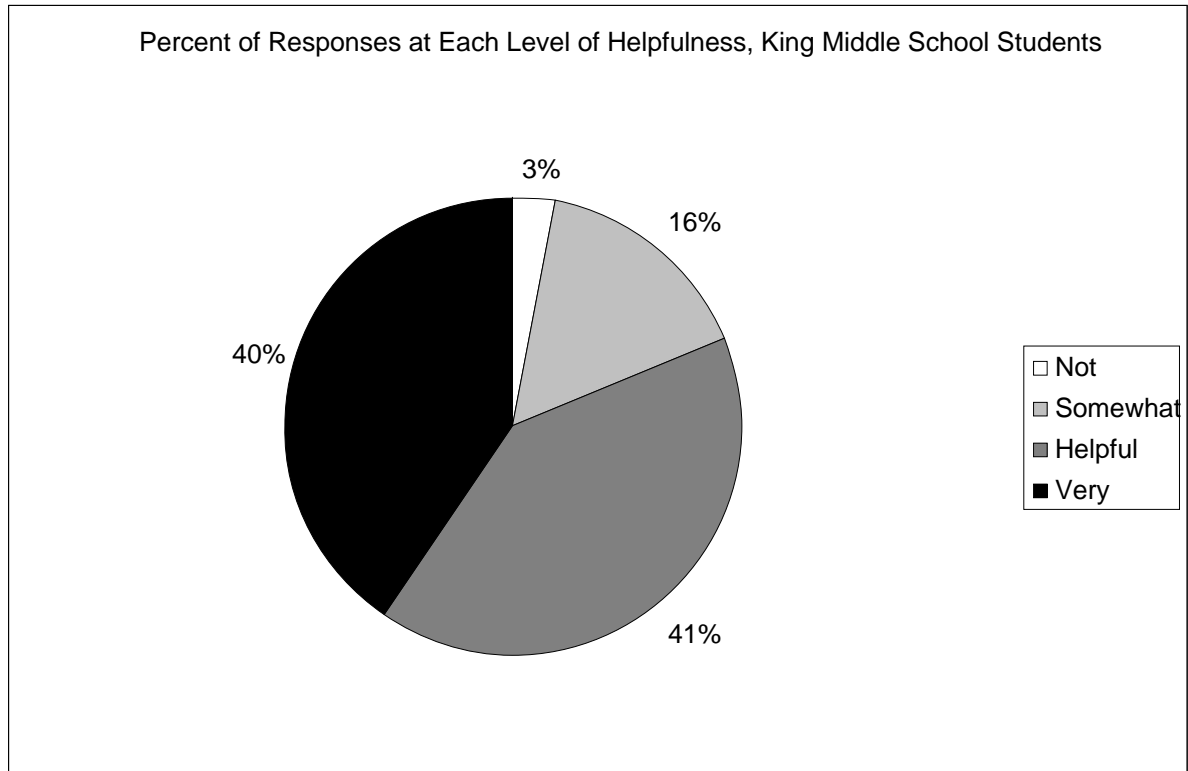
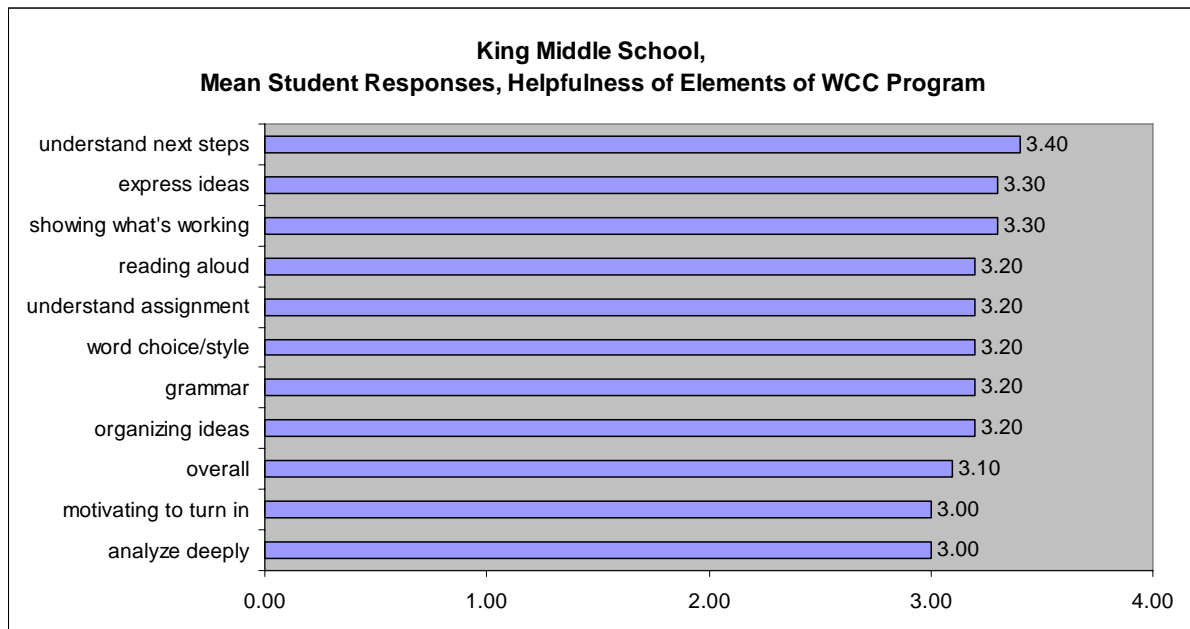


Figure 8.1 demonstrates that for all responses on all aspects combined, students selected “Helpful” or “Very helpful” 81 percent of the time. Further, students indicated some degree of helpfulness on all aspects combined 97 percent of the time.

## **Figure 8.2 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 8.2 above, the great majority of students found writer coaching to be helpful, with both the personal interaction and 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. Representative student comments are included in Section 12 of this report.

### **King teacher survey results**

**Teacher mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to “Helpful” or above. All elements have mean scores of 3.0 or above (“Helpful”), and eleven elements have mean scores of 3.5 or above, rounding to “Very helpful.”**

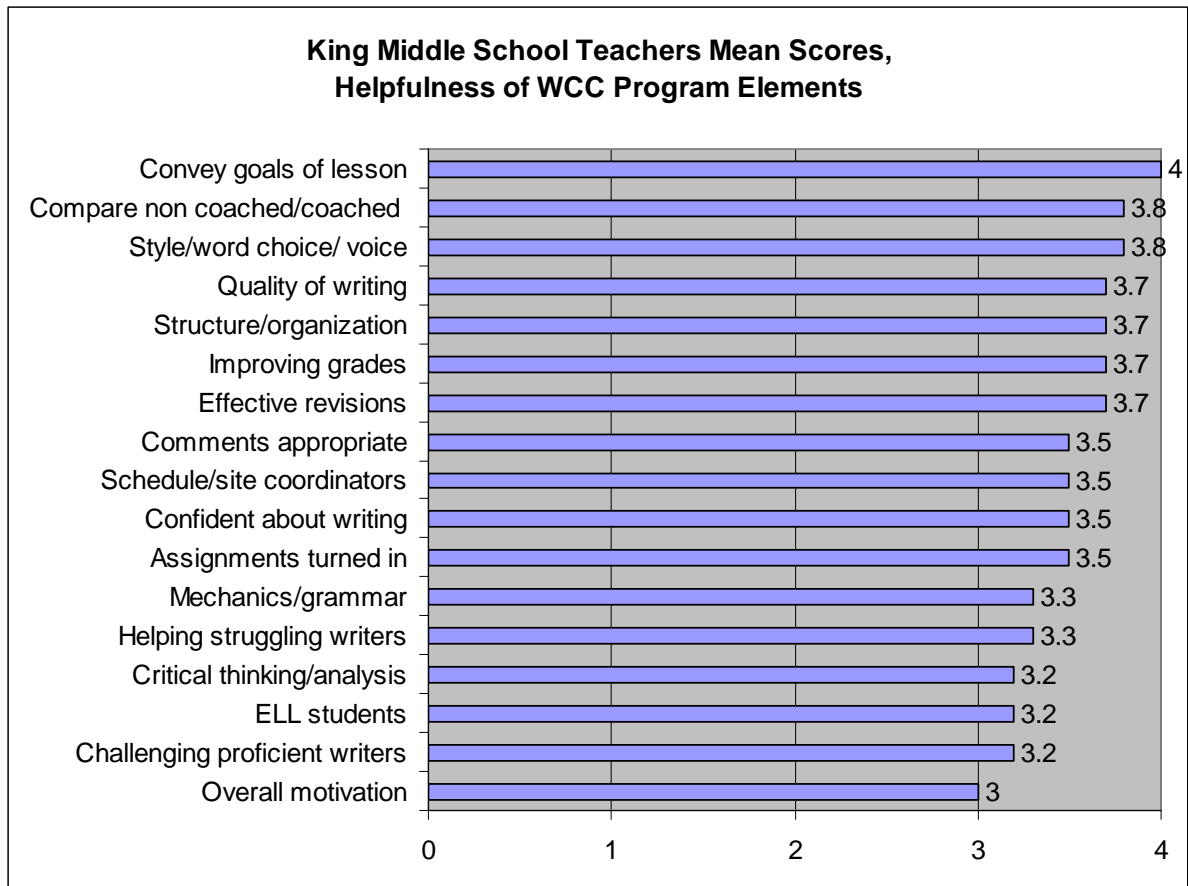
King Middle School teachers gave the highest mean scores to the following elements: conveying the goals of the lesson (4.0); style and word choice (3.8); quality of writing, structure and organization, improving grades, and helping make effective revisions (3.7); and bolstering student confidence and increasing the rate of assignments turned in (3.5).

Consistent with teachers throughout the program, King Middle School teachers give a mean score of 3.8 (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 8.3: 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



Representative teacher comments are included in Section 12 of this report.

WriterCoach Connection™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**Section 9**

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

**Overview**

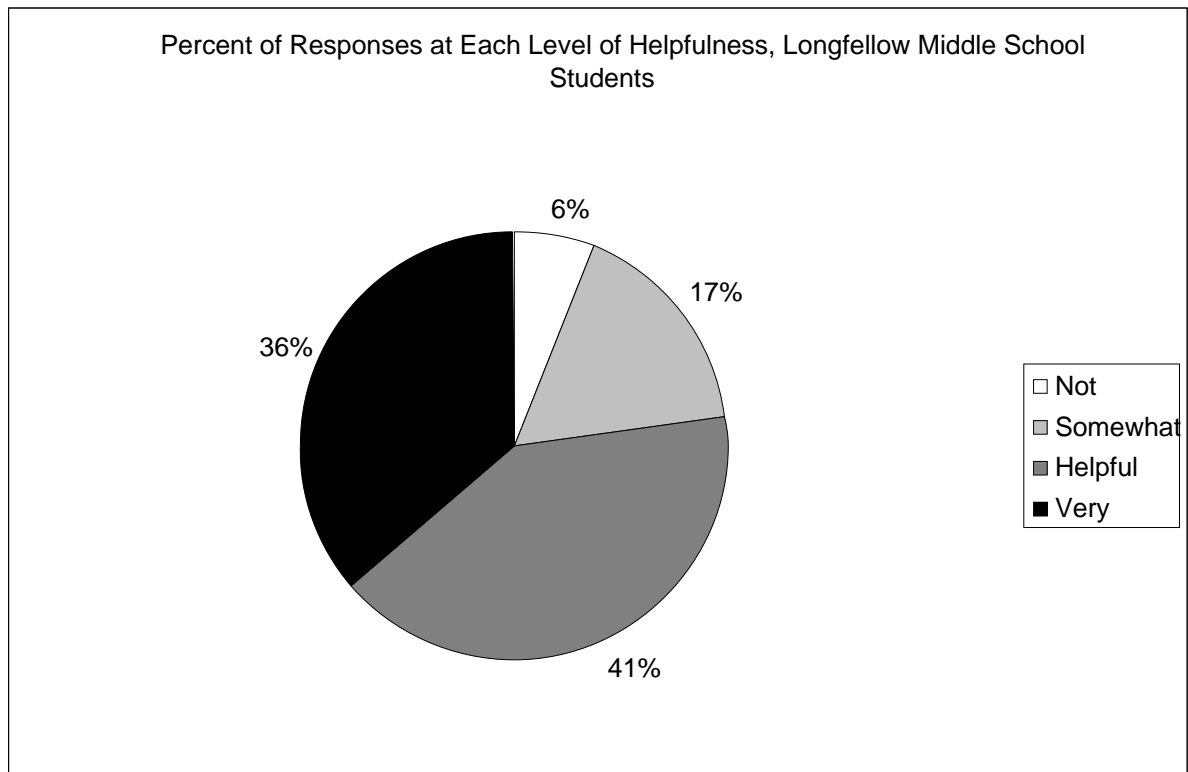
WriterCoach Connection™ (WCC) recruits, trains and coordinates community volunteers as classroom writing coaches. The coaches work one-on-one, helping students write and revise their class writing assignments. The WriterCoach Connection Program Assessment serves as a benchmark for measuring whether the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

**Longfellow student survey results**

The WriterCoach Connection program serves both 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at Longfellow Middle School. At about the midpoint of the 2008-09 school year, 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 77% of the time, an increase from the prior year. Students indicated at least some degree of helpfulness on all elements combined 96% of the time, also an increase from the prior year. (See Figure 9.1, below.)
2. Overall, students rated writer coaching as helpful (3.0). The mean score for each of the eleven elements is 3.0, “Helpful” or above, in all categories, except for “Motivating to turn in assignments” (Mean score = 2.8) and “Reading aloud” (2.9). (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. As noted in earlier sections, most students indicate reading aloud is quite helpful but for a small number of students it is not a helpful aspect.
3. The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: understanding next steps (3.3); suggestions for organization of ideas, expressing ideas more clearly, and exploring word choice and style (3.2). (See Figure 9.2, below.)

**Figure 9.1** Percent of Longfellow Student Responses at Each Level



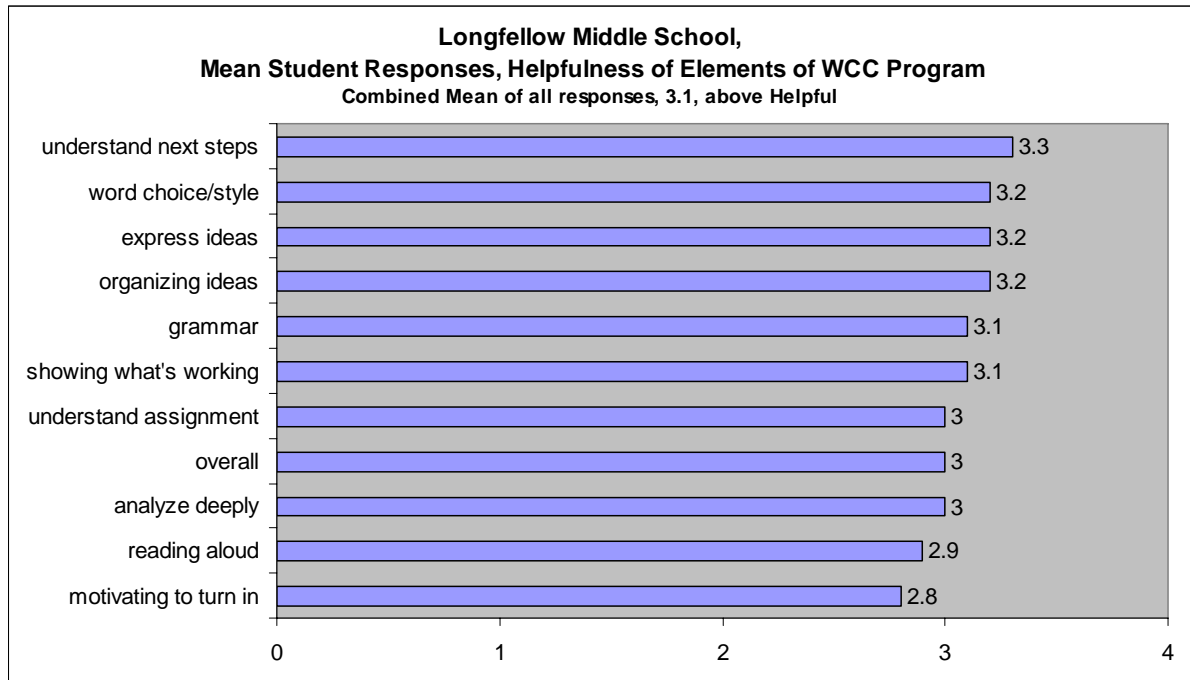
These results indicate the high degree to which students recognize the helpfulness of the individual attention that writer coaches provide. Uniquely at Longfellow Middle School, coaches are working with students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, who are at an earlier stage of development as writers and who in general benefit from support in the organization and “pre-writing” stages.

Figure 9.2 below displays the students’ mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the eleven important aspects of writer coaching.

**Figure 9.2 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 are 3.0, “Helpful” or above. Mean responses for seven of the elements rounds to “Very helpful,” with scores of 3.5 or above.

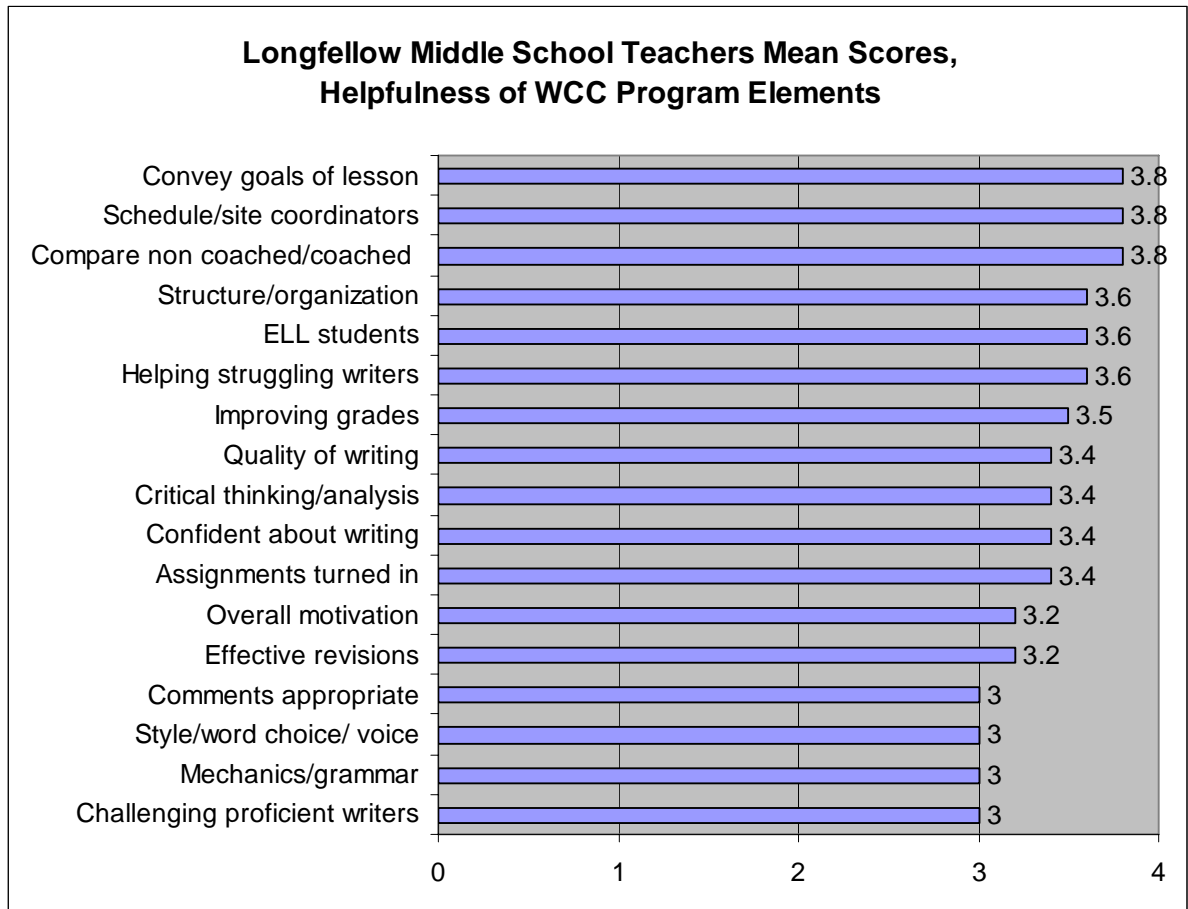
2. Longfellow Middle School teachers gave the highest mean ranking to the following elements: conveying the goals of the lesson and working with site coordinators (3.8); helping with structure and organization, working with ELD students, and working effectively with struggling writers (3.6); and improving overall student grades earned (3.5).

Consistent with teachers throughout the program, King Middle School teachers give a mean score of 3.8 (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 9.3: 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 2008-09

**Section 10**

***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. Students and their teachers are surveyed.

**Willard student survey results**

At about the midpoint of the 2008-09 school year, 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.” These students are 8<sup>th</sup> graders. 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 76% of the time, an increase from the prior year. (See Figure 10.1, below.) Students indicated some degree of helpfulness 95% of the time. The mean score for all responses on all elements is 3.1, “Helpful” and above.
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: understanding the next steps needed for revising writing (3.4), showing what’s working, and organizing ideas (3.2). (See Figure 10.2, below.)

**Figure 10.1** Percent of Willard Student Responses at Each Level

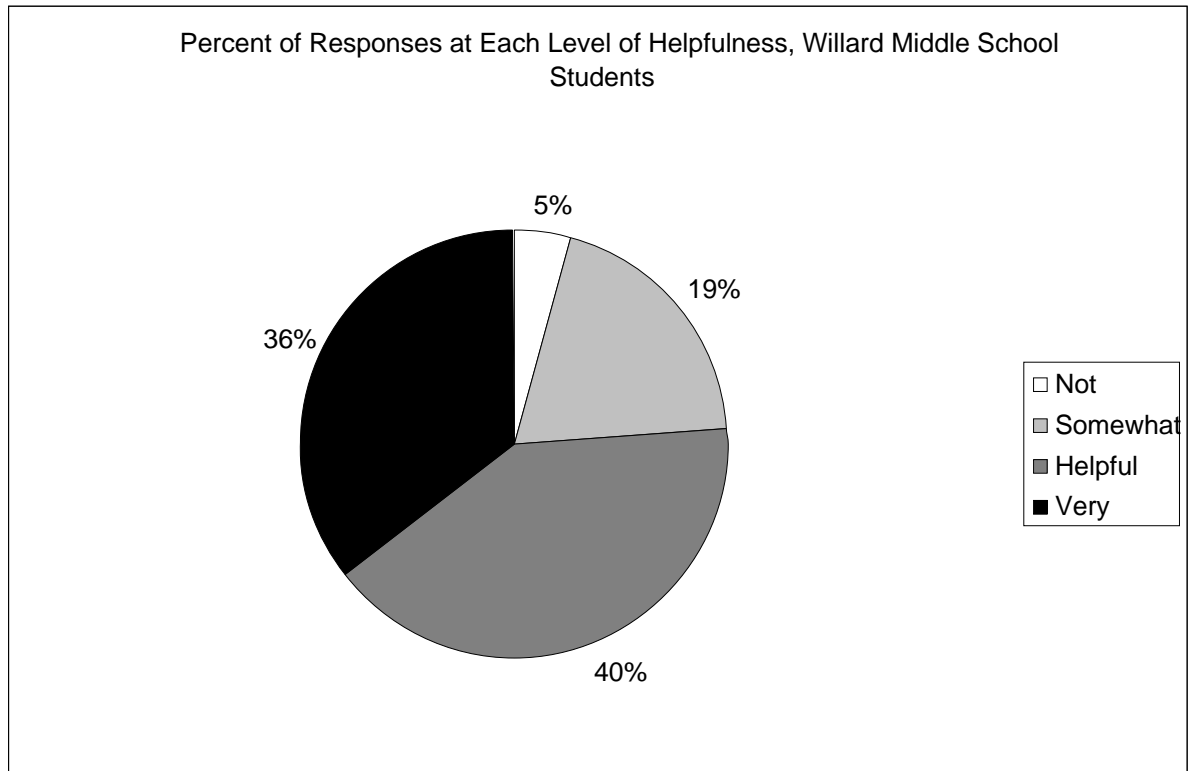
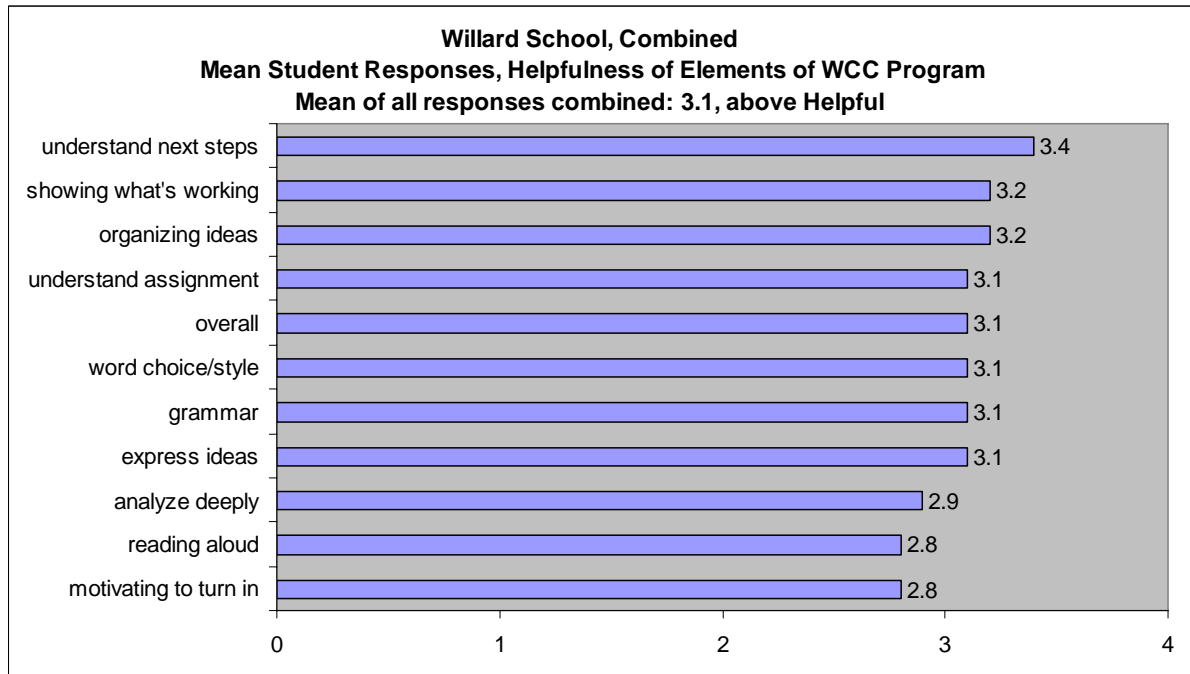


Figure 10.2, below, displays the students' mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the fifteen important aspects of writing.

**Figure 10.2 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, showing what’s working in student writing, organizing ideas, and making sure students understand the assignment). These writing and critical thinking skills will serve the students throughout their academic careers and beyond. Student comments are detailed in Section 13 of this report.

### **Willard teacher survey results**

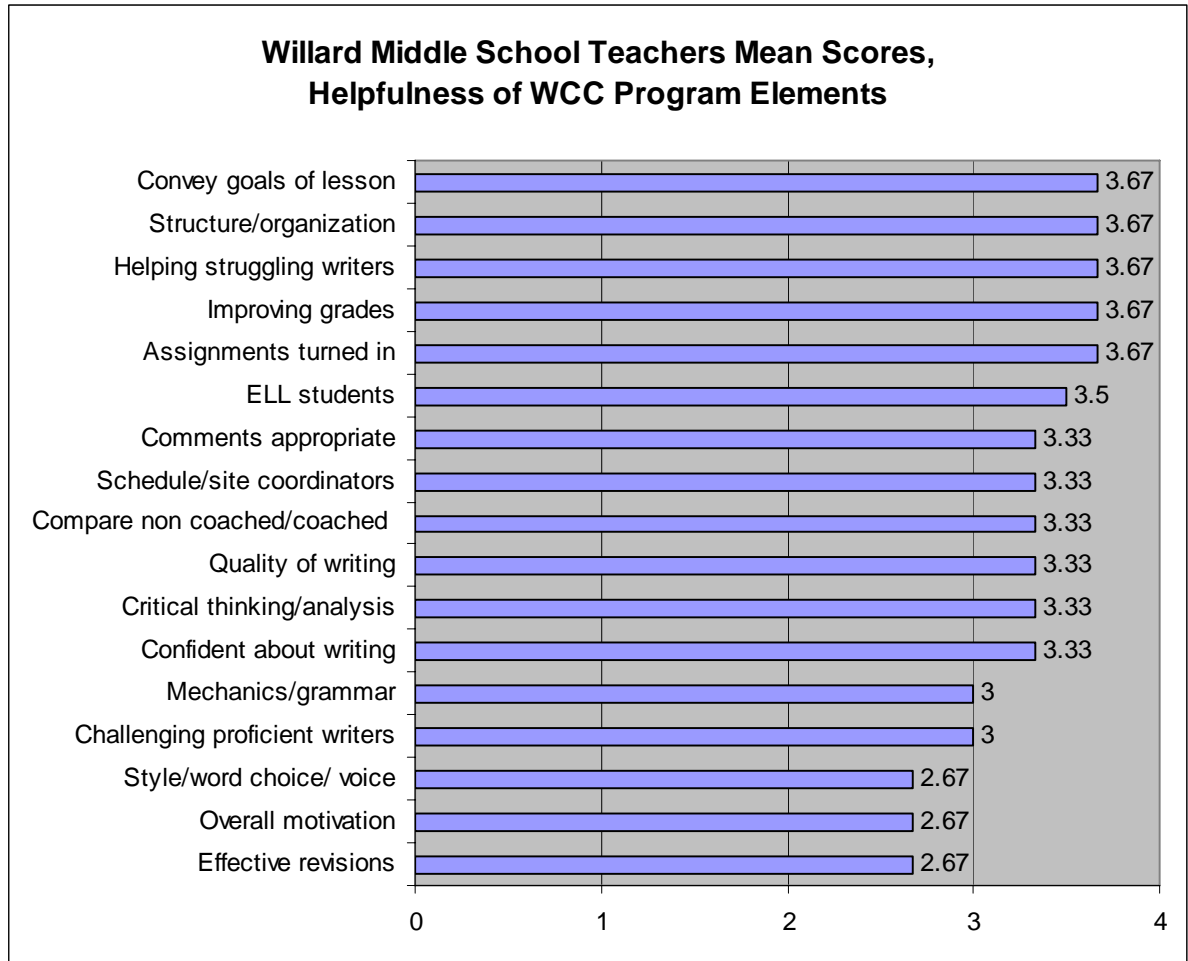
1. Teacher mean scores on all seventeen aspects of writer coaching round to the “Helpful” to “Very helpful” range, with mean scores of 3.0 or above on all elements except style, motivation, and word choice.
2. Willard Middle School teachers gave a mean ranking of 3.67 to the following elements: conveying the goals of the lesson, improving the structure of student writing, effectively helping struggling students, improving overall grades earned, and increasing the rate of assignments turned in. Working with ELD students earned a mean ranking of 3.5. See Figure 10.3 for details.

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 10.3:** 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



Representative teacher comments are in Section 12 of this report.

WriterCoach Connection™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**Section 11**

***Media College Preparatory High School, Oakland  
Teacher and Student Assessment 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.

**Media Academy student survey results**

At about the midpoint of the 2008-09 school year, students from Media Academy, as Media College Preparatory High School is commonly called, 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.” These students are 10<sup>th</sup> graders. 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 83% of the time. (See Figure 11.1, below.) Students indicated some degree of helpfulness fully 98% of the time. The mean score for all responses on all elements is 3.24, “Helpful” and above.
- 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 is 3.1 or above, all in the “Helpful” or above range.** The elements rated as most helpful are those that are most teacher intensive, where individual attention is most beneficial: organizing ideas (3.5), understanding the next steps needed for revising writing (3.4), showing what’s working (3.4), and understanding the assignment and helping students express ideas more clearly (3.3). (See Figure 11.2, below.)

**Figure 11.1** Percent of Media Academy Student Responses at Each Level

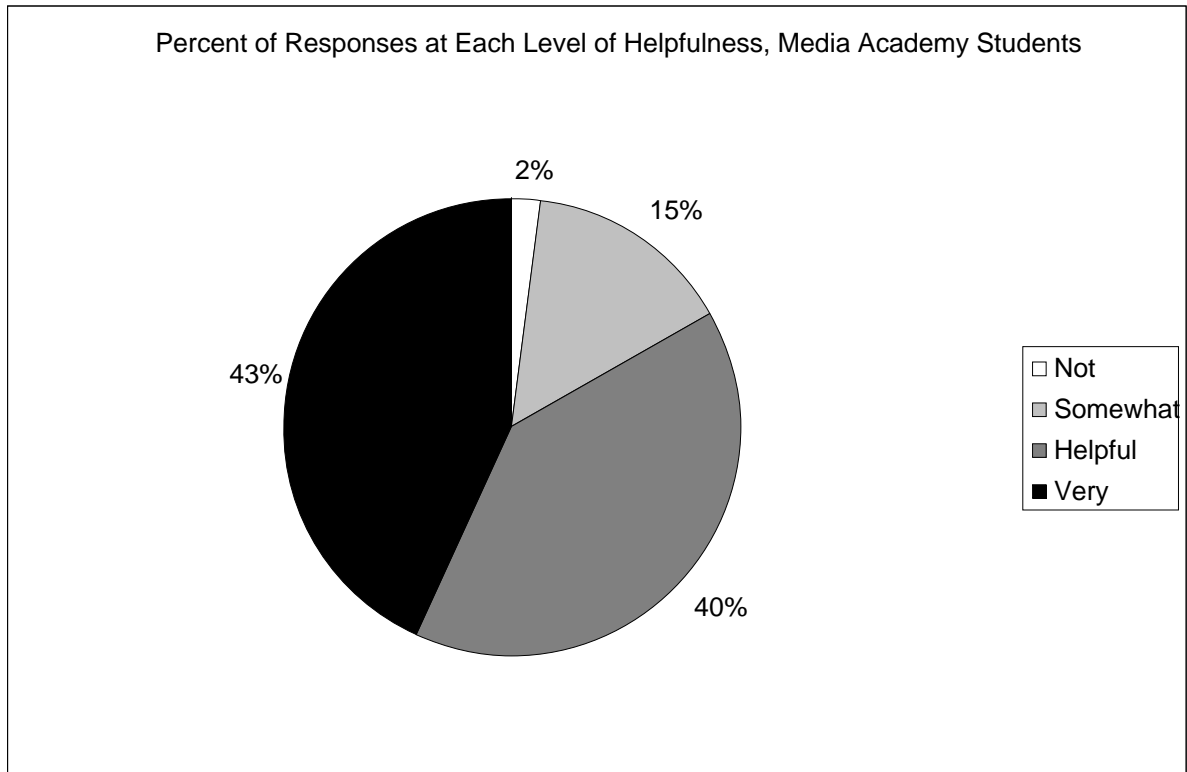
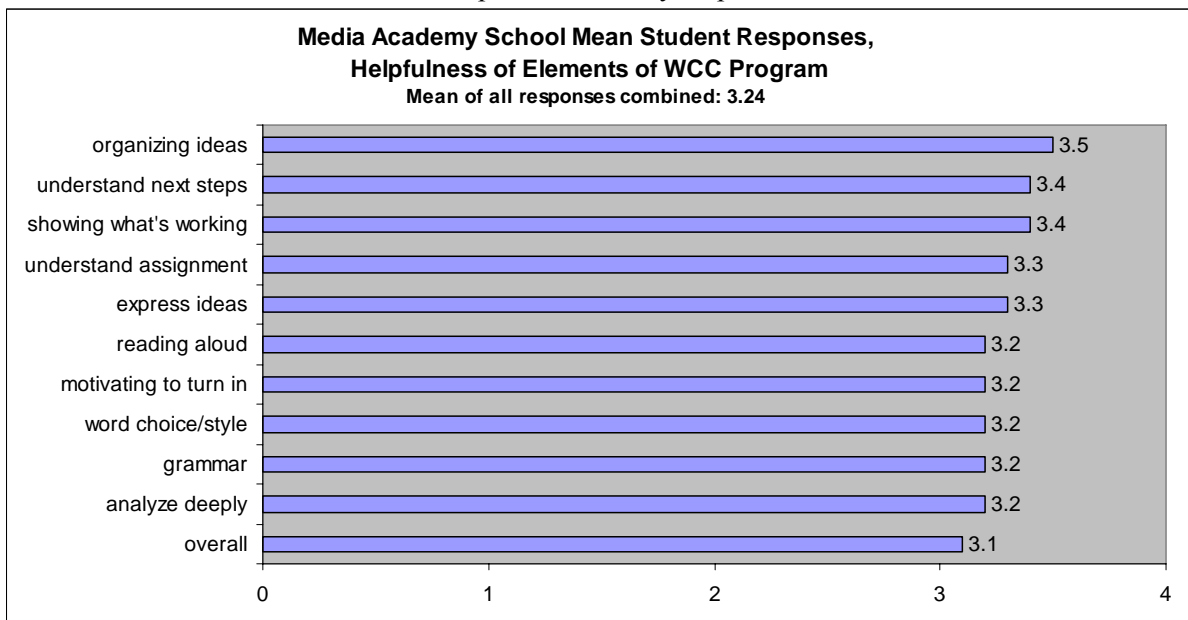


Figure 11.2, below, displays the students' mean scores on their levels of satisfaction with coach help for each of the fifteen important aspects of writing.

**Figure 11.2** Media Academy Student Survey Mean Scores

How helpful were these aspects of coaching?

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



## Media Academy teacher survey results

1. Teacher scores on all aspects of writer coaching averaged 3.18, within the “Helpful” to “Very helpful” range, with scores of 3.0 or above on all elements except effective essay revisions.

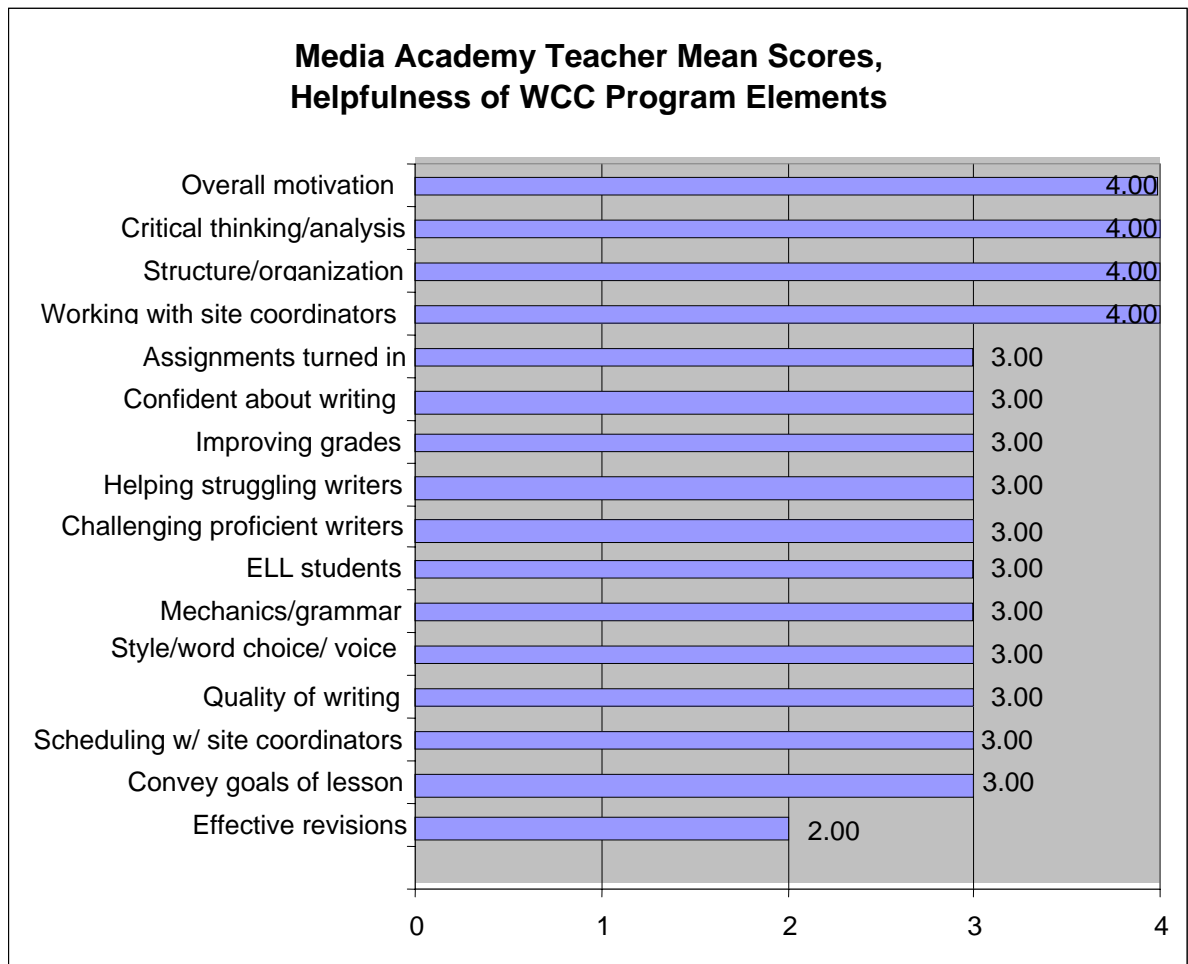
2. The Media Academy teacher gave a ranking of 4.00 (“Very helpful”) to the following elements: overall student motivation, development of critical thinking and analysis skills, improvements in structure and organization of essays, and working with WCC site coordinators. See Figure 11.3, below, for details.

The Media Academy teacher commented that the WCC site coordinators “...were great thinking partners about the assignments—what was working, what wasn’t. They provided a useful outside perspective.”

**Figure 11.3:** Media Academy 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



Representative teacher comments from all sites are in Section 12 of this report.

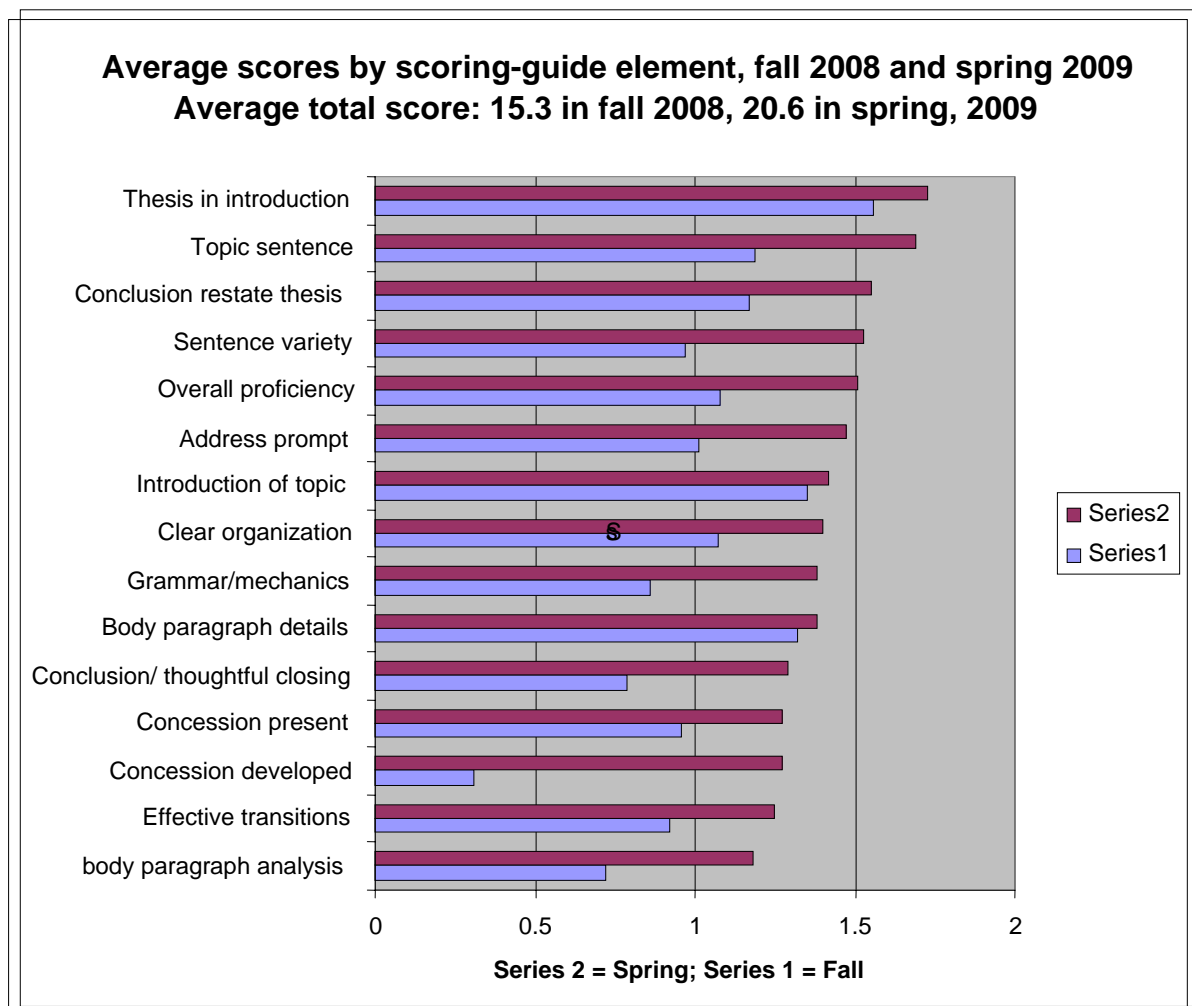
## Media Academy assessment-essay-based writing achievement data

The tenth-grade English teacher at Media Academy administered cold-write assessment essays in fall 2008 and spring 2009. A team of trained readers scored the essays holistically, using a scoring guide delineating fifteen elements of the writing process. This scoring guide enabled the teacher to give highly specific feedback to each student.

The maximum possible score for each essay was 30. The scoring team noted a significant jump in writing proficiency from fall 2008 to spring 2009, with the average essay score progressing from 15.3 to 20.6 during that period, a 35% increase.

In spring, three students achieved scores of 30, with an additional five students earning scores of 27 to 29, and five more in the 25-26 category. These figures represent a significant jump – in fall, only one student scored 25 or above. In spring, a total of 28 students scored in the proficient range on most individual elements and overall writing, a substantial improvement from the fall, when only five students scored 22 or above.

**Figure 11.3** Scoring-guide results for Media Academy assessment essays, 2008-09



In spring, Media Academy students scored highest on including a **clear thesis statement**. Many of the thesis statements were rudimentary and a few students were unable to take a position on the prompt, but scorers noted significant improvement in thesis statements.

The next highest average score was for **topic sentence**, followed closely by **restating the thesis**, and then **sentence variety**. While some of the topic sentences were out of place, and some were very basic, most students at least attempted a topic sentence to establish the main points of their body paragraphs.

Fifth highest score was for **overall clarity**. In spring, more students attempted to make a claim in response to the prompt and develop their thoughts, as compared to fall.

Sixth highest score was for **addressing the prompt**, followed by **presenting background information in the introduction**. Students tended to either include sufficient background/context information or forget this element almost entirely.

Students struggled at times with putting the puzzle pieces in the right places, sometimes placing the evidence in the conclusion or the thesis statement in a body paragraph, but scorers noted a higher rate of at least attempting to include the pieces in the spring, compared to fall. Many **concessions** were of the barest minimum, but several students developed thoughtful ideas on an opposing view. And, in a significant improvement from fall, only seven students did not attempt a concession, indicating that the great majority of students at least included some minimal reference to both sides of the issue at hand.

**Overall**, in spring scorers noted an effort by students to address the prompt and include all the critical elements, even when those elements were only partially present or not sufficiently developed. This effort represented a significant improvement from fall, when many elements were absent from the writing.

**Analysis** of examples remained a challenge, although many students at least attempted an additional sentence beyond the example, demonstrating an understanding of the need to go beyond just the example itself. Scorers also noted an increase in the effective use of **transition words**, although many students still sprinkled the transition words in but used them incorrectly. However, compared with the fall writing, there was a marked improvement in the appropriate and effective placement of these transition words.

The lowest score of the fifteen writing elements remained consistent -- **developed concession**. More students at least made an attempt in this category, doubling the average score for this element.

WriterCoach Connection™  
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**Section 12**

***Representative Teacher Survey Comments***

The following comments are representative of comments we received regarding WriterCoach Connection for the 2008-09 school year.

“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 students 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**

“Coaches meet students wherever they are as writers. Coaches are very supportive and willing to start at the beginning with struggling students.”

---**Mya Thorniley, King Middle School**

“I love having the coaches. It would be very difficult to give each student such personal attention without them. The students like having them, too!”

---**Alma Owens, 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**

“(I like) everything—the kids look forward to coaching and it runs smoothly.”

---**Anne Frost, Longfellow Middle School**

“Can they come more?!”

---**Kathy Mitani, Albany Middle School**

“Coaches have been positive, responsive to students needs and very encouraging! Kids feel supported and heard.”

---**Abby Skrivan, Albany Middle School**

“It’s a godsend having coaches read first drafts and give feedback-- otherwise I’d be swamped in papers or there would be no drafts.”

---**Jennifer Reid, Albany Middle School**

“Coordination and sessions have been extremely smooth and coaches are skilled at interacting with kids.”

---**Patrick Collins, Longfellow**

“More W.C.C. sessions!”

---**Martha Cain, Longfellow**

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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 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 85%) of the student comments were positive; another 10 % were 'constructive criticism,' pointing out aspects which work better than others, and about 5% 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, just under 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 it 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 coach refresher workshops 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.

**General:**

It helps to read my own writing out loud to a coach. I find simple mistakes and places where I can show not tell.

I find it really helpful and it makes me get my best ideas.

My coach rocks!

Helping me to add to my writing, describe better, and improve my ideas.

They’re fun!

First, he gives me confidence and tells me what I’m doing great at, and then helps me where I need improvement!

I have a very good coach who kindly suggests changes I should consider.

She’s nice, cool, and helpful!

My coach helps me think more about what I am writing about.

My coach helps me look at the bigger picture.

The coach helps me think outside the box and opens my mind.

He is fun and helpful and enjoys working with me, and that is what I like!

Working with my coach is perfect!

My coach helps me dig deep down in myself and spill my ideas onto paper.

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 of comments that it was “too long” and “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.

WriterCoach Connection™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**Section 14**

***Coach Survey Results***

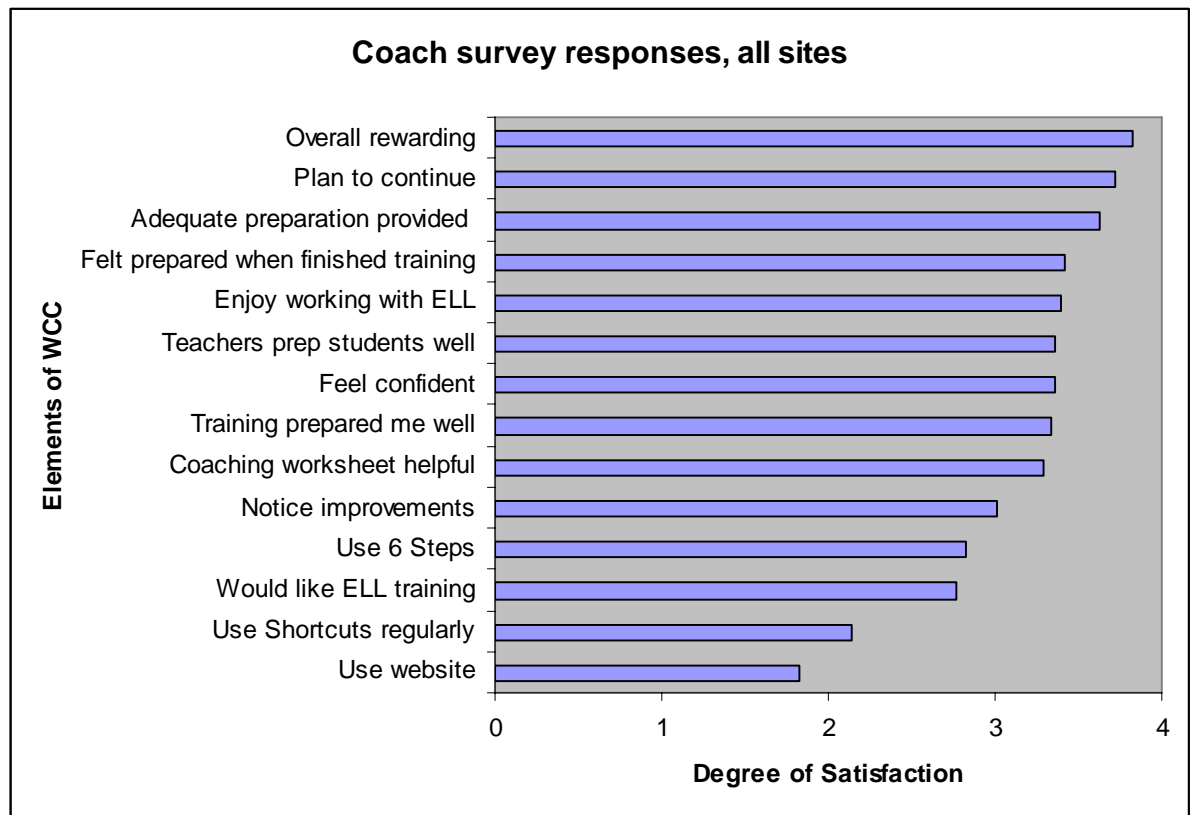
Coaches indicate a high degree of satisfaction with WCC as a quality volunteer experience. Elements which coaches rate highly include the structure and support provided by site coordinators, the training, and regular advance preparation regarding coaching assignments and goals. Eighty percent of coaches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

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 recorded the highest mean score, 3.72, indicating a high degree of coach satisfaction with the program. Coaches overwhelmingly indicated they get adequate advance preparation for coaching sessions (3.6) and that they plan to continue as coaches for the next school year (3.7).

Coaches indicated they feel training prepared them well, that they enjoy working with ELL students, that they feel confident as coaches and that the teachers generally prepare students well (3.4).

**Figure 14.1:** 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, they feel confident when coaching, they feel students arrive well prepared, and they felt prepared for coaching after training.

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 coaches 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.

## **Quotes from coaches**

### ***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.

### ***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!

This is such a well-run program, and such a rewarding use of my time. I want to get more friends involved.

I enjoy this so much. The students 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™  
Program Assessment 2008-09

**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 1-11 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 2009. Sometimes these steps were a reminder to follow the protocols that are already in place, other times they involved 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, consistent with prior years:**

**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 a coach session 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. WCC enhanced efforts in this area for the 2008-09 school year based on 2007-08 survey findings, and these efforts have resulted in higher overall levels of student, teacher and coach satisfaction this year.
2. Site coordinators using that information to prepare coaches in advance, to provide coaches with information regarding particular student needs, and to encourage coaches to address the learning goals of the assignments. Enhanced efforts in this area for the 2008-09 school year have resulted in higher degrees of student, teacher, and coach satisfaction. WCC will continue to build on these efforts, in training of coaches and in establishing ‘best practices’ protocols for site coordinators.
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. We will continue to emphasize this in coach training and coach refresher workshops.

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. Development of training videos which demonstrate a variety of coach and student interactions will assist new coaches in understanding their role. Work is underway to prepare training videos to supplement existing training, and should be in place for fall 2009 training sessions.
2. Continued development of additional training materials regarding working with English language learners and struggling students, as teachers and schools work to get these students proficient in language arts. We will work to incorporate new materials into refresher workshops for returning coaches as well.
3. Updating the “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. Piloting of some version of a coaching log has been generally well received at most sites. CAFL will work with site coordinators to evaluate and implement widespread use of a coaching log or similar tool 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 has proven a productive and efficient resource, although some coaches express concern about pre-judging of students. Training sessions and coach refresher workshops should include a brief discussion of the purpose and discrete use of the logs.

5. 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.

6. In response to coach comments, WCC protocol will continue to 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. The training video of actual coach/student sessions 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.

7. Helping students learn about grammar and mechanics generally had a lower mean helpfulness score than other elements of writer coaching. While WCC has a thorough and useful *Shortcuts to Effective Writing* handout resource, experience shows that coach use of this resource is inconsistent. WCC will explore possible revision of CAFL’s *Shortcuts* handouts and development of new handouts in response to teacher, student, and coach requests. CAFL should explore expanding the *Shortcuts* resource to include worksheets, and consider ways to incorporate a more regular system for using these worksheets and handouts with students. One suggestion to be explored is to establish a system of reviewing one or two key handouts before commencing each coaching session, and providing a folder for students to keep handouts and worksheets in for reference.

## APPENDIX 1: Student Survey

**WRITER/COACH CONNECTION**

**Student Survey**

**January/February 2009**

**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 <b>helpful</b> are these aspects of coaching to you?</i>	<b>not helpful 1</b>	<b>a little helpful 2</b>	<b>helpful 3</b>	<b>very helpful 4</b>	
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 2009

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>	<b>-OR-</b> Check here if <b>not applicable</b> – 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"/>
4. Students becoming more confident about writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 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"/>
6. Improving grades on written assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Helping low-skilled or struggling writers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Helping/challenging proficient writers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Helping ELL students with their writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Helping students overall in becoming more motivated about writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. 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"/>
12. Improving the structure and organization of their written work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Improving their mechanics, grammar, spelling, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Improving their style, word choice, and “voice”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Overall improving the quality of writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>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?</b>	<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>	<b>-OR-</b> Check here if <b>not applicable</b> – please explain on back.
16. Arranging coaching schedule with site coordinator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. 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"/>
18. 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 2008-09**

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?

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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?

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

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

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Do you have suggestions/ideas for recruiting more coaches?

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Do you have any additional feedback for the site coordinator?

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\*\*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 2008-09 Program Assessment Report.

### **Phyllis J. Hallam, Ph.D.**

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#### *Education and Degrees*

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