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INSTRUCTION AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT PROCESS WRITING IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This study conducted in eight Utah school districts documented the amount of time devoted to elementary writing instruction and described classroom physical environments related to that instruction. One-hundred-seventy-seven full-day observations were completed during a one-week period. Results indicated that process-writing time was dominated by explicit instruction from the teacher. Other elements of the writing workshop were implemented, but in a fragmented way. Classroom physical environments were generally not literacy rich. Process-oriented teachers had richer environments than those who focused on conventions.

Although writing is a basic and powerful aspect of education (Calkins, 2000; Graves & Kittle, 2005), the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003) has referred to writing as the neglected "R." Applebee and Langer (2006) have shown a decline in classroom writing instruction and have called for more studies focused at the elementary grades based on careful observations of teacher practices. Additionally, Marinak and Gambrell (2010) have called for research focused on classroom literacy environments that are highly motivating for all children.

Some school districts adhere to principles and practices of process writing described by Graves (1983) and Calkins (2000), including pre-writing, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, and publishing. This form of writing instruction has dominated teacher vocabulary for many years, yet it is still unclear what teachers mean by process writing and how they implement it in their classrooms (Applebee & Langer, 2006). Kara-Soteriou and Kaufman (2002) found that some teachers implemented this process in a rigid, formulaic fashion that does not reflect how writing naturally occurs. They also found teachers were not modeling writing practices for their students, providing time for student sharing, or allowing a choice of topics, although these are all requirements for a writers' workshop (Atwell, 1998).

Teachers need to plan writing instruction but they also need to create physical environments that promote writing. These classrooms should be "caring, thought-provoking, challenging, and exciting" (Wong & Wong, 1998, p. 3). Manning and Bucher (2003) suggested that one should first identify the desired classroom atmosphere and "then be sure that this atmosphere is reflected in the physical environment" (p. 278). Classroom environments should be created with relationships, structures, and resources that support learning (Atwell, 1998).

Roskos and Neuman (2003) point out that few studies have examined how classroom environments influence student learning, especially in early literacy settings. However, in a summary of their own research, they have shown that changing literacy environments has affected literacy outcomes. As they manipulated various elements of classroom environments they found that students performed better when classrooms were print rich, when students had close proximity to literacy tools, when print was placed at eye level, and when literacy props were portable. The impact of literacy-enriched classrooms was almost twice as great as in these same classrooms compared to before changes were made in the literacy environment. McGill-Franzen, Allington, Yokoi, and Brooks (1999) studied classroom libraries in kindergartens. They reported that the mere presence of quality literature and other supplies were not enough to increase children's literacy performance. However, when coupled with pedagogical changes linked to environmental elements, the positive results were substantial.

The purpose of this study was to observe elementary writing instruction and classroom physical environments in eight Utah school districts. Specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What selected aspects of writing instruction were observed in K–6 classrooms and for what amounts of time?
2. What evidences of writing products and writing instructional resources were observed in K–6 classroom physical environments?
3. How did observed K–6 teachers' classroom physical environments relate to their writing instructional practices?

Methods

In this study the researchers used a mixed method design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2010), because both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Given the quantitative dominance of this study, a Dominant-Less Dominant mixed methods research design was used (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Settings

Elementary schools located in eight suburban and rural school districts in Utah were selected to participate in the study. The districts have established partnerships with two local universities. Each of these districts expected and supported teachers in implementing process writing within a writing workshop at elementary levels. Despite these efforts, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2007) data ranked Utah in approximately the bottom 20 to 30% of states in writing ability. The only statewide elementary writing assessment occurs in fifth grade where students write a persuasive essay in response to a prompt and results are machine-scored.

A stratified random sample of the schools was chosen, representing the population of all elementary schools across these eight school districts. Schools were also designated as one of three socioeconomic levels (high, medium, and low), based on the number of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch.

Participants

A sample of 177 K–6 grade teachers were observed. Participants represented a proportional sample of teachers by grade level across the districts: 25 taught kindergarten; 28, first grade; 26, second grade; 22, third grade; 25, fourth grade; 26, fifth grade; and 25, sixth grade. All districts gave permission for the study to be conducted, and each teacher signed a consent form.

All participants were full-time public school teachers in regular K-6 elementary classrooms, with 90% female, 6% male, and 4% did not mark gender. A majority of the teachers (73%) held bachelor's degrees, while 24% held master's degrees. One teacher held a doctoral degree, one teacher had an education specialist degree, and one teacher did not report a degree. Licenses of 85% of the teachers included professional endorsements, with the majority in the areas of English as a second language, early childhood education, and mathematics. Seven reported endorsements related to literacy.

The teachers reported they had a range of teaching experience from 1-40 years with the average of 12 years, while six provided no response. Approximately half of the teachers were 45 years or older. Only six teachers were younger than 25 years old. Eight teachers did not report their age. Most of the teachers were white, with less than 1% from minority groups.

Instruments

To answer the research questions, two observation instruments were constructed. One focused on classroom writing instruction and the other on classroom physical environment related to writing instruction. Classroom observations were made by trained pre-service teacher-observers who used these researcher-designed observation forms.

Classroom instruction observation form. This form consisted of a series of boxes in which observers labeled and described instructional activities, as well as the duration of the activities and the number of students involved (see Appendix A). The observers provided a detailed running account of classroom events. The researchers prepared instructions for all observers, including guidelines for conducting observations. Based on professional literature, definitions and examples of typical classroom instructional practices and procedures observers would likely see in elementary classrooms were provided (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 2000; Graves & Kittle, 2005). This list of definitions was used in the training, as well as during the observations, and provided the activity labels they were expected to use for various aspects of writing, as well as other subject areas.

Classroom environment observation form. Based on the snapshot observation of classroom literacy and texts described by Hoffman, Sailors, Duffy, and Beretvas (2004), the researchers developed an observation form that focused specifically on writing environments (see Appendix B). The observation form guided the various preservice-teacher observers so they could stay focused on the recommended practices identified in the literature (e.g., Graves, 1983; Roskos & Neuman, 2003; Smith, 2005; Spandel, 2001).

Procedures

Observers were all elementary education majors in their senior year who were in their last semester prior to their student teaching. They were not required to sign consent forms but it was made clear to them that their participation as data collectors was voluntary. They were informed that they could opt out of this research project at any time without affecting their course assignments or grade for the course. While several chose not to participate in the full-day observation, the majority was willing to be included as data collectors.

The observers attended a 90-minute training session during a regular class period of a literacy course. All training sessions followed the identical format: explanation of the study objectives, description of the observation forms, practice with the forms using video clips, assessment using a video clip, and explanation

of instructions and procedures to follow on the observation day. The video clips were recorded in actual classrooms and represented a full range of instructional activities and environmental artifacts having to do with writing. As observers viewed an assessment video where various literacy events and environment items were shown, they used the activity labels and definitions to ensure consistency in use of terms. When researchers checked the completed observations forms, 85% of all items had been labeled the same.

Observers were then assigned specific classrooms, days, and times to complete their observations using both observation forms. They were instructed to refrain from participating in the class or helping individual students.

Prior to data collection, all teachers were sent a letter informing them of their selection to participate in the study. To ensure objectivity, the K-6 elementary classroom teachers were told that the observers would record a general distribution of time and practices in their classrooms and would note elements of the classroom environment. They were also given the day the observation would occur. If a selected teacher was absent, another teacher in the school was randomly selected to participate. Each of 194 observers completed a full-day observation during a one-week period in November: 36 were observed on Monday; 42, on Tuesday; 35, on Wednesday; 33, on Thursday; and 31, on Friday.

To assess the reliability of the observations, two observers were placed in 10% of classrooms (34 individuals in 17 classrooms). When data on their observation instruments were analyzed the agreement levels were high (Cohen's alpha inter-rater reliability of .95) This exceeded the level of agreement obtained in the training sessions. While all other classrooms had only one observer each, the high inter-rater reliability obtained in both the training and among the 34 paired observers led researchers to accept individual observations as reliable.

While each observer only spent one day in a single classroom, the large number of classrooms ($n=177$) observed allowed for a broad representation of classroom practice. Thus, this study may over- or under-estimate the amount of writing instruction and quality of classroom physical environments because only one observation was completed during a one-week period.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Based on frequency of occurrence for each aspect of writing and the amount of time devoted to each on both observation forms, teachers were classified into one of four groups—process writing ($n=70$), non-process writing ($n=26$), conventions ($n=61$), and zero writing ($n=12$). The aspects of writing from the observation forms that were used by the researchers to determine group placement were as follows:

- Process writing group: mini-lesson, response to lesson, sustained silent writing, teacher conferencing, peer conferencing, shared and interactive writing, student sharing, and teacher sharing
- Non-process writing group: prompted writing, formula writing, morning message, response to read aloud, response to literature, and response to content instruction
- Conventions group: spelling, daily oral language, word wall, and hand-writing
- Zero writing group: no activities associated with writing

Many of the aspects from the observation forms could be categorized into different groups. For example, mini-lessons could be listed in any of the first three groups depending on the topic and purpose of the lesson. Grouping decisions were based on definitions in the literature and descriptions of observed activities on the instructional instrument. These groupings were not meant to represent the teachers' philosophical stances or overall approaches.

Groups created with data from the instructional form were then compared with selected items on the environment observation form: (a) evidence of teacher writing, (b) student writing, (c) group writing, (d) six traits, (e) writing workshop, and (f) student sharing. These items were selected because they were deemed to be more process-oriented than other items.

Qualitative

The environment form had an *other* section that was analyzed using qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2007). Codes were assigned that accurately described the comments and were then examined and collapsed into broader themes. In an effort to establish face validity and to check for clarity of definition (Johnson & Christensen, 2004), an additional researcher also read the forms and assigned code words separately. The entire group then met and came to full agreement on the themes to be used. No predetermined codes were assigned prior to the study.

Results and Discussion

Classroom Writing Instruction

During the full-day classroom observations, writing instruction of some type was observed in all classrooms except for 12 (7%). All kindergarten and fifth grade teachers included some aspect of writing, while at all other grade levels, some teachers did not engage their students in any writing activities.

On average, teachers in this study spent just under one hour a day on all aspects of writing (53.9 minutes). Third grade teachers spent the most time on writing (63.2 minutes) and kindergarten and first grade teachers spent the least (31.8 minutes and 47.7 minutes, respectively); however, most of the kindergarten classes met for only half a day. Fifth grade teachers spent an average of 59.9

minutes per day on writing. The statewide writing assessment is only given to fifth grade students in these districts.

The observers recorded many writing activities that were evident in teachers' instruction. Observed aspects of writing fell into three sections: activities associated with the writing workshop/writing process; various types of non-process writing, and mechanics/conventions. The aspects of writing that were observed and the average amount of time spent on each are seen in Table 1 and described below.

Table 1: Average Minutes per Day Spent on Aspects of Writing Instruction

Aspects of Writing	K n=25	1 n=28	2 n=26	3 n=22	4 n=25	5 n=26	6 n=25	Total n=177
Writing Process Aspects								
Mini-lesson	1.8	4.0	7.3	10.6	4.1	9.8	6.9	6.3
Response to lesson	1.3	2.9	3.3	5.6	4.5	4.2	7.9	4.2
Sustained silent writing	2.4	2.3	1.3	2.7	.90	2.6	1.7	2.0
Student writing/teacher conferencing	2.4	1.8	4.1	3.6	10.4	5.0	1.6	4.1
Student writing/peer conferencing	0.0	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.2	.60	0.5
Shared/interactive	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.7	1.0	0.1	0.0	1.8
Student sharing	1.8	3.1	4.3	2.4	1.8	1.2	2.1	2.4
Teacher sharing	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	13.0	17.9	23.3	28.3	23.5	23.1	20.8	21.3
Non-process Aspects								
Prompted	6.4	7.0	13.9	4.4	2.0	6.4	4.8	6.9
Formula	0.0	1.3	1.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	2.4	0.8
Morning message	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.2
Response to read aloud	0.1	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2
Response to literature	1.4	2.7	1.7	3.2	3.9	1.9	5.2	2.8
Response to content instruction	0.3	1.0	2.1	0.9	1.1	8.1	2.2	2.3
Total	8.3	12.6	19.5	8.6	8.0	16.9	14.7	13.2
Conventions Aspects								
Spelling	2.4	6.3	10.3	9.4	13.1	9.6	9.8	8.7
Daily oral language	0.8	2.9	2.9	8.1	6.7	8.5	8.0	5.3
Word wall	1.0	3.4	0.9	2.1	0.0	1.4	0.4	1.3
Handwriting	6.3	4.6	3.9	6.7	7.0	0.4	0.3	4.1
Total	10.5	17.2	18.0	26.3	26.8	19.9	18.5	19.4
Grand Total	31.8	47.7	60.8	63.2	58.3	59.9	54.0	53.9

Note. Number of minutes is rounded to the nearest tenth.

Writing process

Teachers participated in a variety of activities associated with the writing process: (a) mini-lessons, (b) response to lessons, (c) sustained silent writing, (d) student conferencing, (e) peer conferencing, (f) interactive writing, and (g) student sharing. Mini-lessons labeled whole-class instruction on a variety of concepts and skills—everything from idea selection, voice, and organization to conventions. Response to lessons referred to writing that students completed immediately following the lesson and related directly to the content of the lesson. Teachers sometimes helped individuals, but this was not considered conferencing because the writing was to practice the skill and the writing was not revised. Sustained silent writing had to do with student writing that included no teacher help or prompting.

In this study, the majority of independent student writing was completed in journals/writers' notebooks. Student writing/teacher conferencing labeled the time spent by students on various drafts of writing they generated on their own with the teacher providing support to individuals and small groups. Student writing/peer conferencing was similar, but with time allotted for students to confer with each other rather than with the teacher. Shared/interactive writing referred to a teacher working with the whole class or a small group to create a single text with varying levels of student participation. At times, the focus was on generating the text, but at other times, the focus was on revising, editing, and copyediting a final draft of the text. Student sharing had to do with students reading their own writing to the whole class or in small groups. Teachers sometimes call this author's chair. Teacher sharing is the teacher producing and/or reading examples of his or her own writing as a model for students.

Non-process writing. Various forms of non-process writing were observed: (a) prompted writing, (b) formula writing, (c) response to literature, and (d) response to instruction. These writing activities were assigned with no expectation of revising or editing. Prompted writing meant that the teacher gave the topic and provided no systematic support (e.g., "What did you do over the weekend," a thank you letter, things you are thankful for). In formula writing, students generated speech bubbles in cartoons, created outlines, and completed Mad-libs. If teachers spent time reading or commenting on student work, that interaction was recorded. Responses came in three forms. Some teachers had students respond in writing to a book that was read aloud. Others asked students to respond to literature that was read as a class or in small groups. Teachers also asked students to respond to instruction in content areas such as science, math, and social studies.

Mechanics/conventions. Many teachers assigned a number of activities associated with the mechanics of writing: (a) spelling, (b) daily oral language, (c) word walls, and (d) handwriting. Spelling was the label used for tests, activities or games, and study assignments. Daily oral language referred to the process of correcting text that was presented with deliberate mistakes having to do with mechanical aspects of writing (e.g., grammar, capitalization, and punctuation). Students completed the activity individually by rewriting the text and correcting the errors. The teacher then discussed orally the corrections with input from

students explaining the reasoning behind the changes. Word wall had to do with time spent focusing on words displayed alphabetically on a classroom wall or bulletin board. Some were high frequency words, while others related to a unit of content study (for example, discussing words like *hieroglyphic* and *pyramid* when the class was studying Egypt). Handwriting labeled time spent learning and practicing manuscript or cursive writing.

Time Spent on Writing Activities

Teachers who taught writing spent the most time on spelling, prompted writing, and mini-lessons. The writing aspects observed least often were teacher sharing, morning message, and response to a read aloud book.

Time was nearly evenly divided between the writing workshop/writing process and mechanics/conventions. Approximately half of the average process writing time (10.5 minutes out of 21.3) was spent on mini-lessons and responding to those lessons. The average time spent on the conventions of spelling and daily oral language was 14.0 out of 19.4 minutes. While many teachers used parts of the writing workshop (Atwell, 1998), only five teachers in the study were observed implementing the three major components of it on the same day: (a) mini-lessons, (b) students writing/teacher conferencing, and (c) student sharing.

Across grade levels, average times were seen to increase or decrease for various aspects of writing. For example, upper grade level students spent more time on responses to mini-lessons (K=1.3 minutes; sixth grade= 7.9), and daily oral language (K=0.8 minutes; sixth=8.0). The lower grade level students spent more time on shared writing (K=3.3 minutes; sixth grade= 0.0) and word walls (first grade= 3.4 minutes; sixth grade= 0.4). Handwriting was a focus in all grade levels until fourth grade (7.0 minutes), and dropped dramatically in fifth (0.4 minutes) and sixth (0.3 minutes). Prompted writing was much higher in second grade (13.9 minutes) than in any other grade. Student writing/teacher conferencing was dramatically higher in fourth grade (10.4 minutes) than any other grade level and was extremely low in first grade (1.8 minutes) and sixth grade (1.6 minutes).

In this study, teachers were sporadic in implementing all aspects of the writing process. Kara-Soteriou and Kaufman (2002) found that teachers implemented the writing process in a rigid and segmented fashion. This study draws into question Kara-Soteriou and Kaufman's finding. There was little structure binding their eclectic elements of writing instruction.

While many teachers used parts of the writing workshop, only five teachers in the study were observed implementing the three major components of the writing workshop—mini-lesson, students writing/teacher conferencing, and student sharing—on the same day. This fragmentation could be due to lack of training or a belief that a full writing workshop is unnecessary. It could also indicate that they are simply more comfortable implementing some aspects of the writing workshop than others.

Students frequently wrote pieces that required only one draft. While this engages students in writing, they are not involved with the thinking required by

completing the writing process. This is consistent with Applebee and Langer's (2006) concern that most students are not required to write lengthy or complex pieces. NAEP (2002) results showed that 40% of twelfth graders have never written papers more than three pages long. Fourteen percent have never been required to write a paper longer than two pages. The one-draft writing that was prevalent in this study limits students' engagement in pre-writing activities that are linked to writing achievement.

While mechanics of writing were taught by teachers in this study, they were largely covered in isolation. There was no indication that spelling, daily oral language, word walls, or handwriting were connected to authentic writing tasks. Observations revealed little integration of mechanics.

Classroom Physical Environments

Likert scale items. Researchers determined that higher averages indicated richer environments. Results showed evidence of more individual student writing (2.38) than group writing (1.82). The highest recorded display aspect was teacher-written directions and labels (2.81). The lowest recorded aspect was teacher-written morning messages (1.52) with very few grade level differences. Second-grade classrooms displayed the most individual student writings (2.57), and fifth-grade classrooms had the fewest (2.09). First-grade classrooms had the most group writings (2.27), and sixth grade the fewest (1.30). The mean scores of the Likert scale items are represented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Evidences of Student and Teacher Writing

Evidences	K n=24	1 n=27	2 n=23	3 n=22	4 n=22	5 n=24	6 n=25	Total n=167
Displayed Student Writing								
Individual	2.54	2.48	2.57	2.41	2.36	2.09	2.20	2.38
Group	2.17	2.27	1.72	1.67	1.95	1.58	1.32	1.82
Displayed Teacher Writing								
Morning message	1.38	1.62	1.45	1.55	1.38	1.77	1.54	1.52
Directions/labels	2.83	2.85	3.00	2.84	2.64	2.91	2.64	2.81
Teacher's own writing	2.83	2.77	2.64	2.50	2.50	2.61	1.96	2.54
Daily schedule	1.44	1.96	1.73	2.10	2.25	2.22	2.28	1.99
Teacher modeling	2.29	2.69	2.25	2.34	2.09	2.21	2.04	2.27

Note. Likert scale 1-4 (1 indicates no evidence, 2 indicates 1-2 in evidence, 3 indicates 3-4 in evidence, 4 indicates evidence of five or more examples)

Yes/no items. On the yes/no items, the highest recorded evidence of displayed writing was charts and prompts created without student input (91%). This coincides with findings in Table 2 that show evidence of teachers' writings rather than displays of students' writings. The lowest recorded evidence was the traits of writing (40%), followed closely by evidence of the writing workshop/process (41%), and author's chair (41%). There was very little difference across grade levels; however, as grade level increased from primary grades to intermediate grades, so did the display of the six traits and elements of writing workshop. Primary grade teachers used more charts made with student input and word walls than their intermediate grade peers. Conversely, writing resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and spelling books were more prevalent in the intermediate grades than in the primary grades. The yes/no items are represented in Table 3.

Table 3: Percentages of Classrooms Showing Evidences of Writing Support and Resources

Evidences	K n=24	1 n=27	2 n=23	3 n=22	4 n=22	5 n=24	6 n=25	Total n=167
	Displayed Student Writing							
Individual	2.54	2.48	2.57	2.41	2.36	2.09	2.20	2.38
Group	2.17	2.27	1.72	1.67	1.95	1.58	1.32	1.82
	Displayed Teacher Writing							
Morning message	1.38	1.62	1.45	1.55	1.38	1.77	1.54	1.52
Directions/labels	2.83	2.85	3.00	2.84	2.64	2.91	2.64	2.81
Teacher's own writing	2.83	2.77	2.64	2.50	2.50	2.61	1.96	2.54
Daily schedule	1.44	1.96	1.73	2.10	2.25	2.22	2.28	1.99
Teacher modeling	2.29	2.69	2.25	2.34	2.09	2.21	2.04	2.27

Other Items

Relatively few observers wrote additional evidences beyond those specified on the form. However, the comments they made were analyzed qualitatively and six themes emerged: content prompts, (n= 44; e.g., spelling charts and comprehension strategies), support books (n= 19; e.g., picture books and encyclopedias), writing helps (n= 17; e.g., idea charts and word collections), writing projects (n= 14; e.g., class books and thank you notes), organization

($n=10$; e.g., classroom helper charts and menus), and student recognition ($n=6$; e.g., star student displays, and birthday charts).

The results indicate that the observed classroom environments were generally not providing for writing rich activities to occur. While it appears that teachers' writing was prominently displayed and modeled, it consisted of teacher-made materials, instructions, and charts rather than indications of process writing representing "classrooms for children" (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991, p. 11). On the yes/no items, the highest recorded evidence of displayed writing was charts and prompts created without student input (91%). Reutzel and Cooter (2000) discuss the importance of having a literacy-rich environment with an array of different books and props for children. This was not seen in the observed classrooms. The physical classrooms seemed to be similar to the instruction: fragmented and non-process oriented.

Most classrooms were found to be dominated by teacher-made resources and teacher-directed instruction. This finding is consistent with other research in the field (Applebee & Langer, 2006). Although most observed classrooms in this study showed evidence of more traditional resources (e.g., dictionaries and textbooks), teachers whose classrooms also included displays of student writing and teacher writing to students spent more time in writing instruction.

Relationships between Writing Instruction and Physical Environments

As stated above, teachers were placed into one of four groups: process-oriented, non-process, conventions, and zero writing. Regression analyses revealed an insignificant beta value ($\beta = 0.486$, $p = 0.056$). This means that teacher categories based on time spent in writing instruction did not significantly predict the richness of the writing environment. However, because the regression approached significance, further investigation was warranted.

When a regression was performed looking at only those aspects of the literacy environment most closely associated with process-oriented classrooms (evidence of teacher writing, student writing, group writing, six traits, writing workshop, and student sharing), a significant difference was found for all four groups ($p = .003$). This means that the presence or lack of presence of these six items in a physical environment predicted the kind of writing that was done in that classroom on the observed day.

Using the average scores on the environment observation form, one-sample t tests were conducted on each of the four groups. Of the six possible comparisons, only one showed a significant difference. The process group, with a mean of 7.39, was significantly higher than the conventions group, with a mean of 6.14 ($p = .002$). Process-oriented teachers in this study had more evidences of teacher and student writing and resources to support writing than teachers more focused on conventions. A regression was performed to test whether amount of time spent on writing would predict classroom environment scores. No significant relationships were found. Time spent on writing did not predict classroom environment scores in this study.

Those teachers who were found to have process-oriented instruction were also found to have writing-rich classroom physical environments. The connection between a teacher's environment and instruction can perhaps be attributed to that teacher's foundational core beliefs about teaching and learning. Teacher beliefs can be defined as "unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (Kagan, 1992, p. 65). These findings show that these teachers' "unconsciously held assumptions" (p. 65) were evident and consistent in their instruction and classroom environments.

In this study, those who engaged in process writing did have literacy-rich environments. It does not appear that simply spending more time on writing will necessarily lead to richer environments. Reutzel and Cooter (2000) maintain that lasting change must go beyond the superficial and be based on philosophical changes. Both pre-service and professional teachers need to be engaged in on-going professional development that affects their beliefs about process writing. Results of this study suggest that current practices may be leading to fragmented forms of writing instruction and an eclectic gathering of environmental resources. The instruction and environments observed may be filling time and space, but may not be inspiring children and improving elementary writing.

Further research is needed to examine implications for those preparing and supporting teachers of writing. Such research could go beyond the snapshot presented here to include other parts of the country and observations over time. We also need to consider teachers' perceptions. Interviews with teachers could also provide more depth of understanding of their motivations and decision-making processes.

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Appendix A: Classroom Instruction Observation Form

Teacher #: _____ Observer #: _____ Date: _____

Activity Label	Start time	Stop time	# of studen

Description

Activity Label	Start time	Stop time	# of studen

Description

Appendix B: Classroom Environment Observation Form

District _____ School _____ Grade _____

Date _____ Teacher Number _____ Observer Number _____

1. Evidence of Student Writing Displayed in the Classroom

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Individual Student Writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Group Writing (Shared, Interactive Writing) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Other: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

1 = none 2 = 1-2 in evidence 3 = 3-4 in evidence 4 = 5 or more in evidence

2. Evidence of Teacher Writing To Students

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| a. Morning Message | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Directions/Labels | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Teacher's Own Writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Daily Class Schedule | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Teacher Modeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Other: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

1 = none 2 = 1-2 in evidence 3 = 3-4 in evidence 4 = 5 or more in evidence

3. Evidence of Writing Instruction/Support in the Classroom

- | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| a. Traits of Writing (e.g., Six Traits) | yes _____ | no _____ |
| b. Phases of Writing Workshop | yes _____ | no _____ |
| c. Author's Chair | yes _____ | no _____ |
| d. Charts or prompts- without student input | yes _____ | no _____ |
| e. Charts or prompts- with student input | yes _____ | no _____ |
| f. Writing Center (including publishing supplies/materials) | yes _____ | no _____ |
| g. Content Area Writing (including L.A. block) | yes _____ | no _____ |
| h. Word Walls | yes _____ | no _____ |
| i. Other: _____ | | |

4. Evidence of Writing Resources

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| a. Dictionaries | yes _____ | no _____ |
| b. Thesaurus | yes _____ | no _____ |
| c. Writing/Spelling Textbooks | yes _____ | no _____ |
| d. Other: _____ | | |