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The Impact of No Child Left Behind on Teachers' Writing Instruction

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The study uses Foucault's framework of governmentality to understand the impact of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) on teachers' writing instruction and attitudes toward writing in high- and low-income schools. Using interviews and observations of 18 teachers, the study identified four themes: emphasis on testing, curricular effects, awareness of lower-achieving students, and concerns for English language learners. While teachers shared concerns in those areas, there were differences in how teachers from high- and low-income schools experienced the impact of NCLB on their writing instruction. The study suggests that NCLB has affected teacher morale as well as the nature and amount of writing instruction, but that school contexts figure into teachers' instruction. The example of one teacher from a low-income school demonstrates the potential for teachers to resist the coercive aspects of NCLB through their writing instruction.

Keywords: *assessment; elementary teachers; teachers' practices; language arts; Foucault; policy*

Although No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has focused attention on improving reading and math achievement, little attention has been given to other subjects including writing. If state or local policies do not support the teaching of writing, there is the possibility that teachers will neglect writing instruction. Since grant funds for the teaching of writing are not included in *Reading First,* the policy that allocates funds to states according to the proportion of families living in poverty and supports programs that use "scientifically-proven instructional and assessment

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tools" for early reading (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), teachers may not include writing in their language arts block (Shanahan, 2006). On the other hand, teachers may integrate writing into their reading instruction to save time, or teachers may continue to focus on writing because they see it as central to the literacy curriculum. The purpose of this study was to understand the nature of teachers' writing instruction and attitudes toward writing within the context of NCLB. Through interviews and observations of teachers' writing instruction in two states, Illinois and Utah, the study examined teachers' attitudes toward NCLB and documented their writing instruction. The study compared teachers' attitudes and writing instruction in high- and low-income schools through the lens of "governmentality" (Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1991).

Theoretical Framework

David Hursh (2007a) links the passage of NCLB to larger sociopolitical changes from social democratic policies prevalent during the Roosevelt era to neoliberal policies that promote standardized testing, greater accountability, competition, school choice, and privatization of schools. These policies share the assumption that such reforms are necessary in a globalized economy to increase achievement. Using data from New York and Texas, Hursh (2007b) argues that NCLB has increased the high school drop-out rate and has failed to close the achievement gap or increase the rigor of curriculum. His critique of neoliberalism that promotes individual choice, free market capitalism, deregulation, and privatization corresponds with arguments made by Lemke (2002) in his discussion of Foucault and governmentality, namely that neoliberalism creates a discursive field for forms of rationality such as NCLB.

In his 1978 and 1979 Lectures, Foucault articulated a notion of governmentality that connects technologies of domination with technologies of the self, a missing link between macro- and micropolitical levels. In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault (1977) theorizes that power was not exercised directly but rather through discourses that were part of modern practices of uniformity and examination whose purpose was to discipline the minds and bodies of the mass population. The result was domination or the solidification of power relations that become fixed with limited spaces for liberty (Best & Kellner, 1991). Foucault argues that technologies of domination such as the panopticon were used to monitor prisoners. Dressman (1997, 2008) has used the metaphor to describe modern day panopticons in education that monitor students such as testing and

recording the number of books read on charts. In contrast to his analysis of technologies of domination, Foucault, in the 1980s, focused on technologies of the self as practices by which individuals can "transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). Governmentality contains both the technologies of domination and technologies of the self, suggesting that the exercise of power does not necessarily deny freedom; individuals can resist and transform their own subjectivities within the discourses of power.

In his analysis of governmentality, Dean (1999) states, "government entails any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends" (p. 10). Human conduct can be shaped and controlled toward specific ends through rational means, those that are "clear, systematic, and explicit" (Dean, 1999, p. 11). A continuum of governmentality includes "strategic games" where some individuals try to control others by structuring the field of actions, to "government" that regulates conduct through technological means to "domination," a more stable and hierarchical set of asymmetrical relations. In this view, strategic games are not intrinsically bad because government is not removing liberty, while movement toward domination is considerably more repressive (Lemke, 2002).

One way of understanding NCLB and its effects on teachers is to consider it on this continuum within the concept of governmentality. The intention of the law is to control others by structuring the field—a set of rules such as requiring teachers to be competent in their fields that are enacted through technological means, in this case, standardized tests. The result of the law, however, is the production of asymmetrical relations in most cases; however, individual teachers can exercise technologies of the self to resist dominant practices in their classrooms. The overarching argument in this article is that teachers in low- and high-income schools share many of the same critiques of NCLB; however, teachers and students in low-income schools have less power to resist the law and are monitored to a greater degree than teachers in high-income schools. Teachers in high-income schools have more latitude to teach writing in less prescriptive ways because their students continue to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Yet as illustrated in an example of one teacher at a low-income school, there is a possibility of resisting the coercive effects of NCLB through the writing curriculum and transforming practices, exercising "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 1988).

Relevant Literature

To receive federal funding under NCLB, states are required to comply with the following: (a) have academic content standards, (b) administer standards-based assessments in reading-language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8, (c) employ a single statewide accountability system that measures and reports adequate yearly progress of all schools, (d) identify schools for improvement or corrective action, and (e) require teachers to be highly qualified in their subject area (www.ed.gov.nclb/methods.html). Since 2002, states have developed plans to receive the federal aid; however, in the last 4 years (2004-2008), national and local discontent with the law has been growing, and many educators question the emphasis on standardized testing, penalties for schools that do not make AYP, and a lack of funding to support students who are not passing. At least 20 states and many school districts have protested the act; the National Education Association has brought a lawsuit against the federal government; the Congressional Black Caucus has introduced a bill to place a moratorium on high-stakes testing; and the Harvard Civil Rights Project has warned that the law threatens to increase the drop-out rate for students of color (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Educators have pointed out the false assumptions and conflicts of interest between government and business in the implementation of NCLB, especially in relation to *Reading First* (Allen et al., 2007; Krashen, 2006; Office of the Inspector General, 2006). Surveys and polls by several professional organizations have found that teachers support the basic premises of the law; however, criticisms of the law include the following: (a) results from a statewide high-stakes test are poor measures of school performance, (b) teaching to the test is widespread and detrimental, (c) growth models that track students over the course of a year are better indicators than percentages of students who passed mandated tests, (d) emphasis on reading and math to judge school performance has led to less emphasis on other subject matters, (e) reporting disaggregated test scores does not help improve schools, and (f) NCLB has resulted in lowering teacher retention and motivation ("Mixed Reactions to NCLB," 2005).

Research on NCLB

Sunderman's (2006) study of NCLB documented changes in state accountability plans that were negotiated on a state-by-state basis, resulting in policy shifts and eroding consistency. For example, accountability now depends on which subgroups are included in the system, the statistical techniques used,

and how AYP is calculated. Sunderman found that “there were clear winners and losers from the changes” including “making it harder for some districts, primarily those serving minorities, to make AYP” (p. 10). In addition, Fuller, Wright, Gesiski, and Kang (2007) found that in a study of 12 states, progress made in the 1990s toward narrowing the achievement gap has disappeared in the wake of NCLB.

Darling-Hammond (2007) identified several unintended consequences of NCLB including the finding that schools serving large numbers of students of color and students with the greatest needs end up with the least qualified teachers and untrained aides. She argues that the goal of 100% of students achieving proficiency levels by 2014 is impossible because the steepness of the standard is not only unrealistic but also norm-referenced tests, which have been increasingly adopted by states, define 50% of students as below the cut-off score by definition. Schools that serve English language learners and special-needs students are further penalized if they cannot meet targets for the subgroups. Yet when English language learners, for example, gain proficiency in English, they are transferred out of that group; schools may still be labeled as failing even when they are succeeding with the students the law intended to help. Cawthon (2007) has identified similar patterns of unintended consequences for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, noting that state assessments were not designed to measure students without grade-level proficiency.

McCaslin (2006) suggested that the enactment of NCLB has exacerbated the differences in both learning and motivation among students who attend schools with differing economic resources. In her study of students in grades 3 to 5 in both affluent and poverty schools, she found that students who attend poverty schools take schooling seriously but “do so in a fog of anxiety….Challenges can be too high, too immediate, and too consequential; they can serve as barriers rather than ladders to attainment” (p. 486). Students in affluent schools whose achievement excelled reported more differentiated motivation patterns; some students found that learning meant more than doing school work, but many reported very little investment in that work. Marx and Harris (2006) argued that NCLB has left little room for science instruction because teachers are preoccupied with reading and math instruction. An additional concern was that science curriculum that emphasized scientific thinking and reasoning within real world contexts would become an upper-class science if tests constructed to measure narrow science standards became the norm. Concerns that NCLB has resulted in narrowing of the curriculum have been realized: 62% of schools surveyed indicated that they had increased their attention to reading and math

and 44% had cut social studies, art, science and recess to devote more time to those subjects that were tested (Center on Education Policy, July 2007).

While teachers surveyed have noted a loss of motivation in the wake of NCLB, Finnigan and Gross (2007), who investigated the assumption that sanctions will motivate teachers to perform at higher levels, found that teachers' motivation to increase their efforts on behalf of students decreased in schools that continued to struggle. The policy context of NCLB has increased the demands on teachers as well. Valli and Buese (2007) found that the tasks that teachers were asked to assume increased both in number and in scope as the result of the current policy context. The nature of their work was affected as their instructional roles were increasingly controlled and monitored through assessment and data analysis expectations; yet there were few indications that their instruction improved. Teachers experienced high levels of stress at the same time their pedagogical and personal relationships with students suffered. Harper, Platt, Naranjo, and Boynton (2007) reported in their interviews with 52 experienced ESL teachers that reading dominated their curriculum, leaving little time for other language arts; scripted reading programs limited their ability to address the needs of individual students; and they had often been reassigned to instructional roles for which they were not prepared.

Although NCLB does not mandate the use of standardized tests to measure AYP, it does mandate use of the same assessments for all students; the assessments must be aligned with academic standards, administered annually in reading and math (adding science in 2007-2008), valid and reliable (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). States tend to use norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests to measure AYP because they can be administered annually to large groups of students and are considered valid and reliable, thus resulting in what has been termed *high-stakes tests* (http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/testing.html). In their study of 25 states, Nichols and Berliner (2007) found that the pressure created by high-stakes testing did not improve academic performance but had negative effects on teachers' instruction and student motivation. Afflerbach (2005) has identified many of the problems associated with high-stakes testing and reading achievement including confining the reading curriculum, alienating teachers, disrupting high quality teaching, and labeling young children. Hillocks (2002) found that high-stakes writing tests negatively impact teachers' instruction and students' attitudes. Ketter and Pool (2001) found that an emphasis on test preparation tended to diminish teachers' abilities to reflect on individual students, and students became disengaged because the tests failed to consider their personal and cultural backgrounds. Murphy (2007) found that the types of writing assessments

that are used (e.g., multiple choice tests, impromptu written responses to prompts, or portfolios) have significant consequences. In her review of impromptu writing tests, she found that some research suggests that teachers are likely to spend more time on writing for a variety of purposes, while other studies found that the impact of the tests was to narrow the curriculum and promote formulaic teaching.

National surveys have reported teachers' concerns with NCLB, and research has begun to document the consequences of NCLB on teachers' motivation and roles and curriculum such as science, yet few studies have examined the impact of NCLB on teachers' writing instruction. Writing instruction is an important area to investigate because of its relationship to reading (Tierney & Shanahan, 1996), its power as a tool for learning and thinking (Armbruster, McCarthey, & Cummins, 2005), and its essential role in the school curriculum (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003). The following trends in writing instruction help to situate the categories that characterize the participating teachers' instruction.

Trends in Writing Instruction

Boscolo (2007) identified recent trends in primary school instruction as (a) the process approach, (b) writing as a cognitive process, and (c) the role of genre. From the process approach, Calkins (1994) and Graves (1994) developed the writer's workshop that included student choice of topics, writing for real audiences, developing revision strategies, and sharing work with peers. Conventions such as capitalization and punctuation are taught through minilessons and in the context of students' own writing; the teacher's role is to organize the workshop into a predictable structure and provide modeling and support for individual writers.

Studies of process approaches have found some positive effects on students. Sadoski, Wilson, and Norton (1997) found that writing was enhanced for younger writers when they had time to write, were encouraged to write more text, were exposed to well-written literature, and allowed to conference with teachers and peers. Goldstein and Carr (1996) also found that students in process-oriented classrooms tended to be better writers. However, challenges to process writing approaches have been launched by various critics: Delpit (1988), Reyes (1992), and Valdés (1999) suggested that the lack of attention to explicit features of writing can result in students from diverse backgrounds being denied access to power; Lensmire (2000) noted that the conception of voice is limited; Newkirk and Tobin (1994) found that implementation has resulted in a view of writing as a rigid

sequence of prewriting, writing, and revision. Cope and Kalantzis (1993) claimed that the expression of personal voice reproduces inequities in power relations and recommended a genre approach that involves "being explicit about the way language works to make meaning…an emphasis on content, on structure, and on sequence in the steps a learner goes through" (p. 1).

More cognitively oriented approaches have emphasized the features of the instructional setting and writing tasks that influence the writing processes (Boscolo, 2007). Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) comparison of knowledge telling (fulfilling an assignment through expressing one's knowledge) and knowledge transformation (using knowledge to meet a rhetorical goal) emphasized the need to help students learn self-regulating strategies. Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing (CSIW; Raphael & Englert, 1990) and self-regulated strategy development (Graham & Harris, 1993) were developed to help students improve their texts and become more aware of their composing processes. Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, and Stevens (1991) found that CSIW was effective for improving writing and developing metacognition. The Pathway Project was successful in teaching explicit cognitive strategies in both reading and writing to English language learners (Olson & Land, 2007). Explicit strategy instruction has been particularly effective for struggling writers, and a meta-analysis of cognitive studies determined that strategy instruction is effective in improving students' writing performance (Graham, 2006). Although explicit strategy instruction has been effective, one-size-fits-all tasks ignore the communicative functions of language. Chapman (2006) notes that classroom contexts have a major influence on students' writing and argues that "writing is enhanced when tasks are motivating, interesting, and appropriately challenging" (p. 34).

Boscolo (2007) states that "genres were basically ignored by the process approach" (p. 302) and draws from social constructivist theory to characterize genre as "a typified rhetorical action based in response to current situations" (p. 303). From this perspective, genre is seen as a set of rhetorical choices rather than formal definitions and lists of features. Chapman (1994, 1995) conducted an analysis of first graders' writing to show that the number of genres increased and became more complex over the course of a school year. However, children's genre knowledge does not develop in a linear way; rather children use and explore multiple genres simultaneously. Her work suggests that teachers need to provide a variety of contexts for writing and expand students' repertoires of genres. There has been increased attention on teaching specific genres such as narrative, expository, and argumentative to help students understand text structure and to prepare them to meet state standards. Many curricular materials such as Six Traits have been adopted to

teach aspects of good writing such as ideas, organization, voice, and conventions within specific genres (Spandel, 2005).

The approaches to writing described above—process approaches, cognitive approaches, and the focus on genre—have been introduced in some form in many elementary schools. Yet efforts to increase the amount of writing, engage students in more open-ended writing tasks, and reform assessment have not always been successful in impacting teachers' instruction. Implementations of writing programs vary depending on the teachers' understandings of writing and the classroom contexts (Gutierrez, 1992). Teachers who claim to share the same orientation toward writing such as process writing often have very different interpretations of the philosophy and practices (Lipson, Mosenthal, Daniels, & Woodside-Jiron, 2000). Strickland et al. (2001) found that teachers have expanded their writing programs to include more forms and genres, but they lack sufficient time to teach writing given competing curricular demands, and that they focus on test preparation rather than authentic writing experiences.

In the wake of NCLB, several organizations and publishers have developed packaged writing curriculums that offer instructional materials and professional development including literacy coaches to implement the writing curriculum. For example, the National Center for Education and the Economy, which has developed a school reform model to implement standards-based education, has an accompanying writing program, *Writer's Advantage,* which offers a sequenced writing curriculum. *Success for All* (Slavin & Madden, 2001) includes a separate writing component along with its reading program. Calkins (2006) along with her colleagues has developed a writing program, *Units of Study,* that is used in several states. Yet implementations of these programs and the effects of staff development have been uneven across schools and districts (Poglinco et al., 2003; Skindrud & Gersten, 2006).

While previous research on writing instruction has demonstrated the importance of teachers' practices and the effects of testing, little research has examined the impact of current federal policies on writing instruction. This study sought to examine the link between federal policies and teachers' writing practices in two states—Illinois and Utah.

The research questions for the study were the following: (a) What are teachers' attitudes towards the *No Child Left Behind* policy?; (b) are there differences in teachers' attitudes in high and low income schools?; (c) what characterizes teachers' writing instruction?, and (d) are there differences in teachers' writing instruction in high- and low-income schools?

Policy Contexts

Illinois

The Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts were developed from the 1985 state goals. The U.S. Department of Education approved Illinois's plan for compliance with NCLB in 2003, and all districts use the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) as the measure of AYP. Prior to the 2005 to 2006 school year, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) included a writing component in the ISAT, but during the year of data collection (2006), the state test contained reading, math, and science components with no writing test; the state reintroduced a test for writing in 2007 for grades 5, 8, and 11. The ISAT contained "extended response items" on both the math and reading portions; lengthier, coherent responses that addressed the specific questions were scored higher than brief responses. While the reading tests were used for measuring AYP, the writing assessments were not counted as part of AYP.

Utah

In 2005, Utah's legislature considered rejecting the $115 million allocated by NCLB, demanding more flexibility in student assessment. The state argued against disaggregating its data for subgroups such as minority, low income, special education, and English language learners from the entire school population as required by the federal law ("Defying No Child Law Could Cost Utah," 2005). After discussions with Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, the Utah State Board of Education applied to be part of a pilot program to use U-PASS, a growth-based assessment that existed before NCLB, as their accountability tool, but this request was denied. After the rejection of the accountability plan, several lawmakers suggested that NCLB should be abolished because of "usurpation of state power by the federal government" ("Should No Child Left Behind Be Left Behind?", 2006). The public discourse around the two accountability systems continues, however, because Utah schools are held accountable under both systems; differences between the two systems can result in schools being identified as needing improvement under one system but not the other. The U-PASS model designates schools as "Achieved State Level of Performance" or "Needs Assistance" based on criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) in math, language arts, and science as well as attendance and other tests given at particular grade levels. (The state writing test, Direct Writing Assessment, is

administered in grades 6 and 9, but the assessments are not used to measure AYP.) NCLB holds each school and district accountable for each subgroup in each area as well as attendance and graduation rates as the indicator of reaching AYP (Quinn, 2006). The Utah State Office of Education supports U-PASS because it brings together multiple assessments and indicators to determine the achievement of a school and compares an individual student's progress from year to year. However, critics of U-PASS suggest that it can mask the achievement gap between Whites and ethnic minorities ("Bad Marks for Utah's Schools," 2006).

Method

Data were collected between January and May of 2006 by two researchers—the primary researcher—a university professor—and a graduate student trained in qualitative research methods. The primary researcher made all contacts with school districts and arranged the schedules. Both members of the research team conducted classroom observations and interviews with teachers as well as analyzed the data.

Participants and Selection Process

Third-grade teachers were selected because NCLB requires state assessments of all students beginning in third grade; fourth-grade teachers were selected because previous studies have shown that more emphasis on writing begins in fourth grade, and combining third- and fourth-grade teachers in a school would provide a larger sample than one grade level.

The primary researcher selected districts and schools by first examining data provided by states on the internet to look for contrasts in income levels. Next, she contacted districts and explained the study to the superintendent or district official who made decisions about research. In the Illinois schools, she contacted the principals and in one case also made a presentation to all third- and fourth-grade teachers and asked for volunteers. It was challenging getting approval for the study at low-income schools because several principals or school personnel stated that researchers could not visit until after the ISATs. In Utah, once the assistant superintendent of research gave approval, the district language arts coordinator issued an open invitation to teachers. When the invitation failed to recruit volunteers, the primary researcher worked with a teacher contact to recruit volunteers in individual schools—all third- and fourth-grade teachers at those schools were encouraged to volunteer

for the study in hopes of getting a range of writing philosophies and practices. Although the sample is too small to make generalizations about teachers in their states, the teachers were representative of their schools (i.e., almost all third- and fourth-grade teachers in the school volunteered). While the schools in the sample were not totally comparable due to the various levels of gaining access, they provide opportunities for comparisons of teachers' attitudes and practices within specific school contexts.

High-Income Schools

Bailey. (Note: All names of schools and teachers are pseudonyms). At Bailey School in Illinois, 89.5% of the students are White, 4.3% Hispanic, 3.1% Asian, 1.2% Black, 1.8% multiracial, and .02% Native American; only 2% of students were on free or reduced lunch. The school made AYP with 95.2 % of students passing 3 years in a row. The school was located in a wealthy suburb of a major city. Homes in the area were enormous and located on extensive plots of land. Recently, some renovations were completed at the school and classrooms were large and well appointed. Student work was displayed in the hallways. The participating teachers were White (two females, one male), had master's degrees, and averaged 10 years of teaching experience. Teachers met in grade-level groups to develop a common language for writing and to reach consensus about genres and topics taught.

Belleview. The demographics of the students at the high-income school in Utah were 24 % on free lunch, 73% White, 12% Asian, 6% Hispanic, and 5% other; and 11% LEP. The school made AYP 3 years in a row with 92% of students passing at both third- and fourth-grade levels in language arts in the 2004 to 2005 school year. The school was located in a middle- to upper-middle class neighborhood and had been rebuilt on its original site in 2004 to take advantage of the mountain views. The hallways were light; furniture was new; and there were many open spaces with state-of-the art resources. Student work decorated the hallways. The five (four female, one male) participating teachers were White, averaged 20 years of experience, and held master's degrees.

Low-Income Schools

Park. The population at Park School, Illinois was 88% Black students, 4% White, and 4% Hispanic. Park School made AYP with 58.9%

students passing in 2004 to 2005; however, the school had not made AYP in the past years. As a result, it had been identified for improvement (i.e., restructuring by the federal government and placement on ISBE's academic watch list). The school was situated in a neighborhood in which a few larger, newer houses were interspersed with older, smaller houses. Although some houses were kept up, others seemed to be closed down or in need of major repairs. The school appeared run down with few books or other resources. There were computers in the classrooms, but they did not appear to be in use since piles of papers were stacked on them. Hallways featured many posters of African Americans and had student writing—reports of African Americans with a picture drawn by the student and text about the person. The three participating teachers were White and female; one teacher had 16 years of experience, the other two had 3 or fewer years.

King. Located in a poor, working-class neighborhood, King School in Illinois was for students in fourth and fifth grades. The demographics included 50% Black students, 42% Hispanic, and 7% White. King School did not make AYP with 48.7% passing and was considered under "reconstruction" because they had been "in school improvement" for 5 years. The hallways were dull with little student work displayed. Because the school was on the "watch list," teachers received extra support personnel who pulled students out of the classroom to work with them individually. There was a school-wide basal curriculum, and a set of novels that teachers were to use at the fourth-grade level. Two of the three participating teachers were African American, one White; two had bachelor's degrees and more than 10 years teaching experience; one had a master's degree but this was her first year as a certified teacher.

Richardson. Student demographics at Richardson School in Utah were 90% on free or reduced lunch, 43% Hispanic, 24% white, 12% Pacific Islanders, 17% other, and 48% LEP. In 2003 to 2004, the school did not make AYP with 49% of students passing; in 2004 to 2005, the school initially did not make AYP with 56% passing in language arts, but on appeal (due to differences in the calculations of subgroups), the school did make AYP; in 2005 to 2006, the school did not make AYP with 52% students passing in language arts. The school was located in a combined residential-industrial area with modest homes and apartment complexes. It had been recently rebuilt and had large classrooms, attractive facilities for physical education, lunch, and meeting rooms. Hallways with bright colors indicating

Table 1
Demographics of Participating Teachers

Teacher	Grade Level	Ethnicity, Gender	Years of Experience	Highest Degree
		Utah: High-income school		
Marcy	Fourth grade	White, female	29	MA
Lucy	Fourth grade	White, female	12	MA + 40 (credits)
Ruth	Fourth grade	White, female	19	MS
Daniel	Third grade	White, male	21	MA
Sarah	Third grade	White, female	22	MA equivalent
		Utah: Low-income school		
Amy	Fourth grade	White, female	23	MA
Kristen	Fourth grade	White, female	26	MA + 40 (credits)
Susan	Third grade	White, female	10	BA
James	Third grade	White, male	5	BS
		Illinois: High-income school		
Jackie	Fourth grade	White, female	8	MA
Sally	Third grade	White, female	14	MA
Tom	Third grade	White, male	9	MA
		Illinois: Low-income schools		
Sharon	Fourth grade	White, female	16	BSE
Rhonda	Fourth grade	White, female	2	BA
Dana	Fourth grade	White, female	3	BA
Olene	Fourth grade	African American, female	1 certified (5 altogether)	MA
Shauna	Fourth grade	African American, female	20	BA
Brenda	Fourth grade	White, female	14	BS

grade-level wings were filled with student work. The participants included four White teachers (three females and one male); three of the four teachers had 10 or more years of experience, and two held master's degrees.

In Illinois, nine teachers participated: three from a high-income school and six (three each) from two low-income districts that bordered one another. There were seven White teachers and two African American teachers. In Utah, nine White teachers participated, five from the high-income school and four from the low-income school. Table 1 displays the demographics of the participating teachers.

Data Sources

The design of the study included interviews with teachers, observations of language arts instruction, and interviews with administrators or instructional leaders. The 45-minute semistructured interview protocol consisted of questions focused on teachers' writing instruction, teachers' attitudes toward NCLB, and the effects of NCLB on their curricula (see the appendix). Several of the questions about writing instruction asked about changes before and after NCLB by using prompts such as "5 years ago" (since the study was conducted approximately 5 years after NCLB legislation was passed) and "currently." Additionally, teachers brought samples of student writing from high-achieving, middle-achieving, and low-achieving students to discuss the types of instruction and assessment conducted; however, responses to these questions were not included as part of this analysis.

Teachers were informed that the study focused on writing instruction and asked if we could observe a typical language arts lesson. Field notes typed on laptops focused on activities, nature of instruction, and classroom interactions. Within each school context, the primary researcher and the graduate assistant divided the data collection responsibilities by teacher; thus, when there were four teachers in a school, each researcher observed and interviewed two teachers. When there were three teachers in a school, the university professor observed and interviewed two teachers, and the graduate assistant observed and interviewed one teacher. When schedules permitted, the graduate assistant also observed and participated in the interviews the professor conducted.

Interviews with administrators and leaders from each state were conducted to understand the larger educational and political contexts including compliance with NCLB, curricular issues, and their understanding of teachers' instruction. The university professor conducted all interviews with administrators.

Data Analysis

The researchers used both the interviews, which were transcribed verbatim by a professional, and observations of teachers that were developed from extensive field notes. Beginning with methods suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) that were appropriate for qualitative inquiry, the researchers created extensive charts that were directly connected with the interview protocols. Each researcher read the interview transcripts and independently recorded the response of the teacher she had interviewed on the initial charts

in the following areas: NCLB, writing curriculum and instruction, student work, and district context. Next, they read each others' transcripts and examined the charts to verify the summaries. From these responses, the primary researcher categorized teachers' responses to NCLB into impact (little, some, major), advantages (e.g., sharing expectations, targeting achievement gaps between White students and students of color) and disadvantages (e.g., testing, assessment of particular writing genres, lack of focus on subjects not tested, disaggregating data by ethnic and linguistic groups). From these categories, she identified major themes that cut across the teachers' responses; they included (a) focus on testing, (b) curricular effects, (c) awareness of low-achieving students, and (d) effects on English language learners. Then, she analyzed patterns of responses between teachers at high-income versus teachers at low-income schools and asked the second researcher to independently examine the data using those same categories. Any differences in perspectives were discussed and resolved.

Interview analyses about curriculum and instruction began with examining each teacher's responses by (a) curriculum (e.g., writer's workshop techniques, teacher-made lesson plans, packaged curricula, textbooks). (b) orientation toward writing (e.g., focus on leads, voice, organization, mechanics), (c) opportunities for writing (e.g., frequency of writing, genres such as narrative, expository), and (d) activities and structures (e.g., minilesson, conferences, sharing, graphic organizers, small and large group instruction).

To analyze the observational data, each researcher wrote up her field notes and shared them with the other. Situations in which both researchers had observed the same classroom provided opportunities to expand the field notes and corroborate the interpretations of the classroom activities. Field notes for each teacher were then summarized to indicate classroom environment (e.g., displays of student writing, posters with steps of the writing process), types of writing activities (e.g., graphic organizers, responses to a prompt or student's topic choice), and types of interactions (e.g., teacher or peer-writing conferences, whole class discussions, small group discussion).

The interview and observational data were then used together to develop four categories: (a) writer's workshop (minilesson, topic choice, conferences, sharing time), (b) integrated curriculum and/or thematic units (e.g., using writing in units about Native Americans, deserts, dragons), (c) genre (e.g., focus on using features of particular genres such as narrative, expository, argumentative, poetry), and (d) packaged programs and skills based (e.g., America's Choice, basal programs and/or skills instruction). Each

researcher placed the teacher she had observed and interviewed into one of the categories based on the interview and observational data. In most cases, the observational data corroborated the interview data; however, in two cases in the low-income Illinois schools, the teachers said they had not taught writing in months but would do a “model writing lesson”—something they had taught before but had not taught recently because of testing constraints. In addition, teachers sometimes used the same language to describe their instruction, but there were distinct differences between teachers in the writer’s workshop group and teachers in the packaged program group who also used the term *writer’s workshop*.

Together, the interview and observational data provided snapshots of teachers’ instructional practices. Once each teacher was categorized independently, the researchers checked each other’s categorizations and examined patterns across teachers and then differences between teachers at high-income and low-income schools. Examples from the observation data and interview data were selected for each of the four categories to illustrate practices that were typical of that category. The examples start with the observational data from a teacher, draw on the interview data to contextualize his or her instruction and then draw on the interview and observational data from other teachers in that category to demonstrate shared assumptions and practices.

Findings

The findings from the interviews about NCLB are presented first by crosscutting themes, and then by differences between teachers in high-income schools and low-income schools. The findings specific to writing instruction are presented by category followed by comparisons between teachers from high- and low-income schools. Finally, responses about NCLB are linked to writing instruction. Foucault’s governmentality framework is used to consider the teachers’ responses and instruction in relation to larger sociopolitical issues in which NCLB is embedded.

Themes Across Contexts

To answer the research question What are teachers’ attitudes towards NCLB?, four themes were identified across the 18 teachers: (a) focus on testing, (b) curricular effects, (c) raised awareness of lower-achieving students, and (d) concerns for English language learners.

Focus on Testing

Teachers shared the belief that NCLB had forced educators to focus more on standardized testing. Almost all of the teachers (16 of 18) commented on state testing as a reality in their lives. Jackie's (high income, Illinois; HI, IL) response was typical: "What we feel so driven by are [*sic*] state testing. We have a responsibility to have our kids be very successful." Sarah (high income; Utah; HI, UT) echoed this comment, "But everything revolves around helping the kids for the test. You know, and that's—everyone is driven by that. And it's sad, you know." In addition, five teachers provided a critique of the tests themselves and how they were used. For example, James (HI, UT) said:

> I have students who make significant gains in reading within a year's time, but it doesn't necessarily mean they're at grade level, and because of that these students are still classified as nonreaders, nonwriters…those tests don't necessarily show the progress that students are making.

Sarah (HI, UT) resisted the types of assessment required by NCLB:

> We're drawing owls. We're writing about owls. We're researching. We're talking about families and divorce and what happens when your Dad loses his job. We're doing all those things. But that's not on the test. You know, the test said, "Sal goes to the bakery," you know? "Sal picks up five muffins. What does Sal have for breakfast."...And that's what we're supposed to be teaching. And it is a way of thinking. And in an old, traditional, authoritative teaching mode, that's what you would do. You would just—and, you know, they're an empty vessel, and you fill it up.

These teachers' responses to the reality of testing support survey data suggesting that teachers do not believe that statewide tests measure individual or school performance (NCTE, 2006). The emphasis on testing also caused stress and affected teachers' sense of themselves as professionals. Lucy (HI,UT) said, "[Testing] It stresses me out…I think as a teacher we need to be confident in ourselves. We need to believe that what we come with every day is what the kids need." Olene (LI, IL), a first year teacher who had just been certified, felt extreme pressure from ISAT:

> It was very hard. It was very tense. It was almost like it was just focusing on those two things during the ISAT. Then it was like mentally thinking, are they ready? You know, did they get it? Did they not get it? 'Cause you have so little time to make sure they got it, you just have to hit those subjects and move on.

While these teachers expressed the effects on themselves as professionals, Sharon (LI, IL) expressed the effects of testing on students, the curriculum, and her instruction:

> I think it puts more stress on the kids, too. I think the kids are tired of it. I don't think that as far as I'm concerned, I'm teaching the way that I feel a good teacher should teach, because I'm not teaching the fun way, where I feel the kids could learn more. It's more, "You've gotta listen to this," and just beating it into their heads over and over again. And that affects the child….Recess is not important; it's not an academic. So we don't have recess for the kids. It affects the kids a lot, I think.

Sharon's response gives voice to much of the survey data that show that teachers across the United States are stressed about the effects of NCLB and assessment (IRA, 2005). It also echoes the responses documented by Parsons and the Park School staff (2007) in which teachers expressed a sense of powerlessness that resulted from being labeled failures. The array of concerns over testing suggested that the teachers were not complaining about being accountable but that they were enmeshed in a complexity of forces that were beyond their control. Teachers' responses to the control that testing exerts in their lives provide an example of the way that NCLB regulates conduct through a technological means (Foucault in Lemke, 2002). While NCLB may have intended to be a "strategic game" (Lemke, 2002) to structure teachers' actions into promoting student achievement, testing as a form of rationality that is clear and explicit (Dean, 1999) appears to result in a sense of powerlessness. The feeling of powerlessness that resulted from teachers not being able to determine curriculum or even have recess also appeared to have negative effects on their students as well as the curriculum.

Curricular Effects

More than half (10/18) of the teachers remarked on the negative effects of testing on their curriculum: spending more time on test preparation, the elimination of some subjects such as social studies or features of the school day (i.e., recess), and loss of creativity in their instruction. Jackie (HI, IL) noted,

> I've been working [on] what we call a reader's response question. So we will read a story in a text or a novel and we'll have the kids respond. They'll have to use a specific format. The format is consistent with the ISAT items that require extended responses to a reader-response question.

Shauna (LI, IL) spent some extra time preparing her students for the ISAT: "I try to give extra homework assignments…to kind of help them just before ISAT. We allow extra time for that too, so that they can kind of be prepared for when they do take the test." Sharon (LI, IL) found that she had to abandon her writing program to prepare for the ISAT,

> I know writing is important, and we started out at the beginning of the year, and there is the extended response that they have to write. But I just feel that a lot of it is kind of left to the side, until that testing is over. I mean, there's just too much emphasis on that test.

Teachers' comments provide examples of the concerns raised by Afflerbach (2005) and Hillocks (2002) about the effects of widespread tests on curriculum, mainly time spent on test preparation and the narrowing of the curriculum.

Teachers also noted that they had less time to do other types of activities. Jackie (HI, IL) said, "I think the biggest change for me over time is that we have so much more we are required to do that it's hard to do those long-term fun diversion projects that are really valuable, but we just really don't have time." While it is unclear what she meant by "diversion projects" (diversion from what?), her comments seem to be exemplars of teachers' frustrations that they are unable to conduct more in-depth, long-term projects (Parsons et al., 2007). While teachers expressed concerns that they no longer had time to focus on particular types of projects, they were also concerned that students were reading less for enjoyment than they did in the past. Susan (LI, UT) commented,

> We've been a little concerned that they're not reading—we're not emphasizing reading for fun so much anymore, recreation. Fun. Get a book, you know, enjoy it, read it, have a good time with it, just for the sheer fun of reading. There is so much accountability now for their being able to comprehend, [because of the] CRT test.

Brenda (LI, IL) wanted students to enjoy reading and focused on improving her own instruction but felt pressure because of NCLB:

> So I always felt a lot of pressure with the ISAT testing. You know, you kind of get away from the fun of reading, I think when you're doing that. So I think that's one of the biggest gripes we have about the pressure of ISAT, is that we feel like it takes away from the fun of reading.

Noteworthy is that these comments about the effects of testing on enjoyment of reading were shared by teachers from high-income and low-income schools across states and support Allington's (2003) claim that high stakes tests do not increase enjoyment of reading. From the theoretical lens of governmentality, the teachers' responses demonstrate the role of "government" (Lemke, 2002) regulating their conduct of teaching through the curriculum. Rather than experiencing Foucault's (1988) practices that "transform themselves in order to attain a certain sense of happiness, purity, wisdom" (p. 18), most teachers experienced a sense of frustration and domination. However, the teachers found that NCLB raised their awareness of lower achieving students.

Awareness of Low Achievers

One of the goals of NCLB is to eliminate the achievement gap between minority and White students. Much of the discussion of NCLB has focused on whether this goal has been reached, with proponents suggesting that the legislation has helped schools progress toward narrowing the gap (Spellings, 2005) and others (Edelsky, 2007) pointing out that the effects of the legislation have been to punish schools with diverse populations without narrowing the achievement gap (Dillon, 2006; Hursh, 2007a). Only one teacher, Amy (LI, UT). specifically focused on whether NCLB would narrow the achievement gap saying, "I don't know if No Child Left Behind is going to close the achievement gap, or just dedicated people who care about affecting people's lives are going to close the achievement gap." Most teachers (12 of 18) commented about the increased focus on low-achieving students that resulted from NCLB. For example, Marcy (HI, UT) noted the focus on lower achieving students and her own attention to their needs, "Our district is very concerned about those target kids that are at the very bottom of the class….I watch them closely." Olene (LI, IL) experienced pressure from the principal who was providing an after-school program and curricular materials for struggling students to pass the ISAT:

> And I wanted to make the students successful. So I'm trying to do the best I can to make sure that—they want you to have at least 50% to 60% of your kids pass that test. And I think I want all of 'em to pass it, not so much just 50 or 60, but then again, you know certain students who are not reading in here. You know certain students who are not getting any support, that need the support. You know that you're going to have a problem with those students.

Most teachers expressed that they wanted their students to be successful; however, some of the teachers responded that it was not possible for all students to be successful. Like Olene, they expected problems with some students. Several teachers stated that they did not believe they could help struggling students. Daniel (HI, UT) said, "I mean, I have a student right now, there's no way that he's ever going to be on grade level—ever—no matter what you do for him, no matter what the resources or help that he has, he will never be on grade level." These kinds of low expectations and a sense of giving up on particular students indicate that the legislation has not necessarily changed attitudes about lower achieving students, but it has raised teachers' awareness of them. In addition, not all teachers shared the belief that the focus on lower achieving students was a positive thing. Jackie (HI, IL) felt strongly that there was too much focus on lower achieving students:

> I think there are those children who, regardless of what you do, they'll struggle….We help everyone we can. Again, I think it puts a lot of requirements or expectations on us to document and focus on the lower children and make sure they make it. And I think sometimes we focus so much on the few who are struggling that we no longer have the time and attention to give to them [higher achieving students]…I think the focus has shifted to this bottom so much. Kind of the underlying thought is that if you help them, then everybody's okay. But you're not looking at the average who maybe just makes it, and the kid who is really intelligent and a really fine student who really could do much more, because you're always focusing on that [lower achieving] kid.

While Jackie's comments may reflect the realties of classroom life and the struggle to meet the needs of all students, her response also reflects an underlying attitude that teachers cannot help all students be successful—exactly the view that proponents of NCLB hoped to challenge by legislating passing rates based on performance. This point of view might be particularly troubling if it is applied to minority students or English language learners who are overrepresented in lower income schools (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

English Language Learners

Teachers who had English language learners in their buildings had strong, negative feelings about the inclusion of their tests scores in determining AYP. Marcy (HI, UT) said, "It's not fair that kids who arrive from China are tested two days after they arrive and they are averaged in." Susan (LI, UT) noted:

> I have 17 ESL students out of 26…I have to give them third grade, and I know that they're going into this test, and they're not able to do it. Their sophistication of language, their understanding of our language and things, they're not there yet, and I know they're going in with a disadvantage.

James (LI, UT), who was a certified ESL instructor, explained:

> I understand the benchmarks that are set, but it's not always feasible for students who are new to the country or new to the language or who are acquiring a second language. I think the research—and my experience has kind of backed up what the research says—that it takes several years for students to acquire that academic language in reading and writing.

Thus, teachers felt quite strongly that ELL scores should not be included in determining AYP. The voices of the teachers in this study seem to represent a larger majority of educators who have recommended that growth models that track achievement of individual students and subgroups such as ELLs over time be used rather than the current AYP measure (NCTE, 2006). The finding also corroborates the interviews with Florida ESL teachers who believed that NCLB had compromised rather than contributed to quality instruction for ELLs (Harper et al., 2007).

Many of the concerns raised by teachers in the individual interviews reflect the national debate over assessment and curriculum. However, what have been less examined are the differences in attitudes in high- and low-income schools. When teachers in different school settings were asked, there were major differences in how teachers viewed the impact of NCLB on their instruction in high-income and low-income schools.

Differences between High- and Low-Income Schools

While teachers in the high-income schools criticized many aspects of NCLB, many of them shared the belief that it had not affected their instruction and that they were shielded from the effects of the law because they were teaching in a high-performing school. In the Utah high-income school, Ruth's (HI, UT) attitude was representative, "I don't [feel the impact] because it's a high-achieving school. For the most part they always do fine. There's always some that you wished had done better, but overall they're fine." Marcy (HI, UT) echoed this view, "The kids when they come here are very prepared…I don't have to worry like those other teachers, that's all they think about is passing the test. So I'm really lucky." Most teachers in high-income schools shared Sarah's (HI, UT) view that they

could escape the direct effects, "To be honest, I just hide away in my room and do what I want to do, as much as I can." Lucy (HI, UT) felt she could choose what she wanted to do with her students:

> But that's what I like about teaching. And what I love about [this school]. Nobody is saying, "Do A, B, C, and D." Nobody is standing over me saying, "You have to teach with a basal reader, with these." Nobody does that…like if I want to do a novel for the Civil Rights march, I can do that…my kids love it.

The Illinois teachers in the high-income school shared the belief that the law had not affected their instruction. For example, Tom (HI, IL) responded quite adamantly,

> Absolutely no effect at all…I think No Child Left Behind is more for an at-risk school [where] students are having difficulty. We're a Wonderbread school here. For the most part here, everybody is pretty "with it," the families are intact. We don't have that many problems."

Sally (HI, IL) concurred with this view saying:

> I'm not sure that I see any difference that our school has taken because of No Child Left Behind. I think we've always had a wonderful staff that has always made sure that the children are up to speed where they need to be. I don't think that the law has changed anybody here's perspective on that. I think we did a good job before, and I think we're continuing that.

These teachers felt safe in their school settings and confident that the students would succeed, almost without their intervention. One way to think about teachers' views that NCLB had not affected them is to see the teachers as feeling confident in their instruction and free to design appropriate curriculum without interference from administrators or others. However, it seems that such insulation from the effects of a federal law points to larger inequities among schools. Like the differences in schools that Kozol (2005) points out, the high-income schools seem to have not only more resources but also more complex, enriching curriculum than low-income schools because teachers have more flexibility to address students' needs (Anyon, 2005).

In contrast to the relative insulation that teachers at the high-income schools experienced, teachers at the low-income schools experienced the impact of the law on their everyday instruction and lives. Teachers in the low-income schools felt tremendous pressure to raise test scores, and

teachers in their first years of teaching felt particularly threatened. For example, Olene (LI, IL) was vulnerable having recently become certified, "But then again, they might not offer you a job back that next year because they have that right." Feelings of frustration were evident at King School, where the administrator had taken several measures to raise test scores: Students no longer went to recess or had art or social studies. Although writing was included in America's Choice, as the year went on, there was less emphasis on it, replaced with concerns for the ISAT. Rhonda (LI, IL) described the effects of the pressure on herself and her colleagues:

> There's so much pressure, everybody at this school is just stressed out of their mind to meet the AYP. And we haven't made it in 4 years. And, people are telling us different things everyday. "We're going to lose our jobs. No, we're not going to lose our jobs." There's so much stress, and we don't have any support from our parents, and our kids are just—it's just crazy. The teacher morale is very low right now.

She went on to say that she had wanted to do major projects with her students but was unable to:

> I want to do really great big projects, but it's so hard to get people to cooperate. I've tried it so many times, and it just—it's a disaster….We teach to the test. That's all it is. You know, all this stuff we learned in college, all these neat, creative, fun activities, we don't do it; we don't have time. We can't. We want to, and we know the kids would want to, but the pressure on us to save this school is unbelievable.

Rhonda's comments highlight many of the concerns raised by others with regard to the effects of testing on schools (Allington, 2003). She points to the enormous stress that teachers experienced, the low morale, and the curricular effects simultaneously. Dana (LI, IL) agreed that the pressure was overwhelming:

> It just causes more stress, more havoc and everything. Because even now, being on the watch list and being in reconstruction, you know, people think, "Oh, this is a terrible school. The teachers probably aren't doing [what they are supposed to]"…So it causes a lot of stress. It wears you out.

The pressure that teachers expressed in these contexts reflects findings from the literature on the negative effects of high-stakes testing and the policies that impose them (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). Teachers' comments

also point to the enormous burden that administrators have for developing plans for compliance for schools that are under reconstruction (Parsons et al., 2007). What have been less documented are the effects on students. The teachers in this study in the low-income schools in Illinois described their students as more agitated and less willing to learn. Dana (LI, IL) described the chain of events in this way:

> [NCLB] pushes our superintendent to push our principal, to push us, you know, and to push the kids. And we're all burned out. Wednesday they did a mock ISAT. And it was like 2 1/2 hours. But we've been doing this like since December. At first, we were practicing ISAT extended response three times a week, and math two times. And, you know, if you even say ISAT, the kids are like, "Ohhh!" They don't want to do it; they're burned out, and I don't blame them! But it's like if I don't do it, then my principal is going to have my head. So the problem is a lot of the kids, at least in my experience and talking with the other teachers, they're shutting down. They don't want to do it. They don't want to try it. They're just burned out.

The differences in attitudes about how NCLB affected the teachers was striking between the teachers at high- and low-income schools. While the teachers in the high-income schools had identified some of the problems with NCLB, the degree of pressure that teachers in low-income schools experienced was evident in the nature of their comments as well as the strong tones revealed on the tapes.

The teachers' differing attitudes about the impact of NCLB highlight some disturbing inequities. First, the teachers in the high-income schools believed that they had much more freedom to teach to meet the needs of their students, while teachers in the low-income schools felt they had to teach what the principal wanted, usually a scripted curriculum. Second, the teachers in the high-income schools could "hide" in their rooms, shielded from the effects of the law, whereas the teachers in low-income schools were driven by test scores. Third, the differences in morale were striking with the teachers in the high-income school being stable (most had taught for 10 years or more in the same school) and feeling confident. The teachers in the low-income schools, especially those who were new, such as Olene, lived in fear of their schools being reconstructed and losing their jobs. When teachers note that students are shutting down, but they feel they must continue to beat the curriculum into the students to prepare them for the tests, it suggests some major problems in conceptualization and/or implementation of the law (Darling-Hammond, 2007). While reducing these types of inequities may have been the intention of

NCLB, the interviews with teachers suggest that major inequities exist between high- and low-income schools. Rather than reducing inequities, NCLB may be reinforcing those if experienced teachers choose to teach in high-income schools where they can be shielded from the effects of the law. From the point of view of governmentality, there is an increasing sense of domination on the continuum (Lemke, 2002). Teachers in low-income schools are marginalized as power relationships become increasingly hierarchical and fixed with teachers at low-income schools becoming increasingly disenfranchised.

However, the picture is more complicated by the views of a Utah teacher at a low-income school who rejected the notion that her instruction was driven by state tests or that she was completely disempowered saying:

> I don't take stock in the No Child Left Behind because these children each learn in their own unique and beautiful way. And I'm not going to teach to a test. And I don't really care after 25 years of teaching. Let 'em fire me, you know? I don't think the tests tell—they're not a good form of assessment and [don't] tell accurately what children have learned or gained (Kristen, LI, UT).

When asked if she spent extra time preparing students for the state tests, Kristen went on to say,

> No. I hit every core standard I'm supposed to hit during the year, and when they leave, they know how to write; they know how to read. They know rocks and minerals. They know mountain men, Native Americans. They know wetlands and mountains and habitats. Everything I'm supposed to teach, I teach. I do it my way.

Kristen referred to herself as a "nonconformist" and resisted much of the discourse about students from low-income schools and their parents saying, "But I know these parents struggle just to put food on the table and they care just as much about their children as I care about my children." Unlike most teachers who said they did less interesting activities with their students now, Kristen said she had more "hands-on activities" than 5 years ago.

While there were differences in the effects of NCLB in high and low-income schools, a pocket of resistance such as Kristen's, suggests that not all teachers just gave in to the controlling environment of NCLB. As Foucault (1988) stated, "As soon as there is a power relationship, there is a possibility of resistance" (p. 188). To what extent did the differences between high- and low-income schools, and the possibility for resistance, make their way into writing instruction?

Table 2
Writing Instruction

Writer's Workshop	Integrated Curriculum	Genres and Prompts	Skills and Packaged Programs
• Workshop format	• Integrated approaches to curriculum	• Genre: narrative, research, expository, descriptive	• America's Choice/Basal Textbook
• Self-selected topics • Any genre • Focus on leads, voice	• Reading/writing connections • Focus on understanding and producing information in variety of genres	• Graphic organizer • Teacher-directed • Prompts	• Skills such as paragraphs, parts of speech • Following specific formats
• Marcy (UT, HI) • Lucy (UT, HI) • James (UT, LI) • Susan (UT, LI) • Amy (UT, LI)	• Sarah (UT, HI) • Ruth (UT, HI) • Kristen (UT, LI)	• Daniel (UT, HI) • Jackie (IL, HI) • Tom (IL, HI) • Sally (IL, HI) • Brenda (IL, LI)	• Dana (IL, LI) • Rhonda (IL,LI) • Olene (IL, LI) • Shauna (IL, LI) • Sharon (IL, LI)a

Note: UT = Utah; IL = Illinois; HI = high income; LI = low income.
a. Sharon said she followed the prescribed curriculum even though she criticized it; the lesson observed fit more into the genre and prompt category.

Writing Instruction

Data across the 18 teachers are presented in Table 2 to address the research question: What characterizes teachers' writing instruction? There was the following distribution of practices: Five teachers used a writer's workshop approach, three an integrated approach to curriculum, five a genre approach, and five used packaged programs or basal texts with a writing component.

Writing Workshop

The writing workshop classrooms included students' choices of writing topics, minilessons focused on a particular technique, writing time that included teacher input, and sharing with peers in small and large group settings (Calkins, 1994). For example, in Marcy's (HI, UT) fourth-grade classroom, she read a section from a Judy Blume book and then discussed what made good leads. Students worked on lengthy narratives about their own lives or on fictional stories, while the teacher held brief conferences with

individuals at their desks. Students sat on the floor in a circle to share their work and listen to peers' comments. Marcy's instruction was consistent with her views about writing, "I let the kids have free reign on what they do. For the most part, they get to choose [what they write]." Susan (LI, UT) described her workshop in this way:

> I do writers' workshop 4 days a week, four mornings a week with my third graders. First of all, they learned about a topics list, and they've learned about going back and reading the draft. They've learned about peer conferencing with peers….They do a rewrite. Then, they come back to me and conference with me on a rewrite.

James (LI, UT) also conducted a writer's workshop in his classroom, describing it in this way:

> I give them an opportunity to write about any kind of text that they would like to write. It depends on the projects we're working on. At times they're asked to write specifically about something, but during writer's workshop I like to give them that flexibility, that opportunity to choose.

These teachers shared the focus on student choice of topics, writing workshop format, and a focus on aspects of writing such as leads, voice, and organization.

Integrated Curriculum

In the three classrooms in Utah that focused on integrated curriculum, the teachers emphasized reading-writing connections. For example, students in Sarah's (HI, UT) third-grade classroom created their own books about a particular dragon based on the popular book, *Dragonology* (Drake & Steer, 2003). She conducted a whole class lesson in which students generated descriptive words for dragons; then, students wrote in different genres such as descriptive or creating a legend about the dragon. Her lesson was consistent with her goals for writing, "I like creating some kind of thematic unit that kids can get involved in…There's always that creative edge…I think voice comes from creativity…kids like [she names students] who just fall into their imagination and go with it." She went on to explain how important it was to use content that would be engaging to students, "It's the kind of stuff that engages kids. And after that, they can write their own." Kristen (LI, UT), incorporated writing into her thematic units on topics such as Native Americans or the desert:

> Most of the things I do in here, I try to involve all the senses: taste and sight and sound. And I do a lot of visual. And so, it helps second-language learners, if they don't know what a word means, if they see a picture of it, or if they taste it, they can make an association with it….We write every single day. We either do journal writing or we do a response to something that's happening in the environment. Last week, it was to support Coretta Scott King.

Kristen's observational data showed that she focused on using descriptive words about deserts with students adding on to each other's work; the student work reflected the integrated focus as students wrote about different topics in a variety of genres including poetry.

While the teachers who taught writing throughout the day in conjunction with their curriculum, the teachers in the genre group set aside a particular time of the day devoted to writing instruction.

Genre Based

The five teachers who implemented genre-based instruction focused on aspects of specific genres such as narrative, persuasive, and research reports that matched the state standards. Instruction included modeling, using graphic organizers, and conferring on teacher-generated topics. Tom's (HI, IL) instruction exemplified the focus on a particular genre. He began with the topic of penguins and asked students to give him information that they found using a graphic organizer with categories such where they lived, what they ate, and so forth. During writing time, students used their graphic organizers to create topic sentences. Then, he provided feedback on students' topic sentences. Tom's selection of genre and lesson appeared to be driven by discussions among colleagues about what genres they would teach, preparation for the ISAT, and his views on creative writing. He said,

> We start the year doing narratives and when it comes time toward doing expository, we're going to start doing more, getting ready for the ISATs….We started there [narrative] because when we find out what the actual ISAT is going to be about or what the writing portion is about, then we gear our writing curriculum to that. Almost teaching the test right before it.

The alignment to the state standards and tests are clear in these teachers' interviews as are the emphasis on using prompts. Jackie (HI, IL) said,

> Because we do so much of the prompt—writing to a prompt…so much of what we do—I don't want to say it's formulaic—but it really is teaching structure

> and working within the framework of the structure. Once we have that, then they have the freedom to become a more skilled writer.

Sally (HI, IL) used graphic organizers when she introduced descriptive writing to reach her goals: “That they will become proficient writers, and they will learn how to use grammar and punctuation, and capitals; that they will learn the differences between a narrative piece, expository, persuasive; and that they’ll enjoy writing.” She believed that these goals were best achieved through providing “a lot of structure….They would get a lot of outlines,” indicating the graphic organizers students used. The underlying assumptions here are that students need much guidance, that there should be an emphasis on mechanics as well as text structures, and that the structures should align with the standards and tests. Thus, the teachers in the genre group tended to implement a teacher-led lesson focused on specific aspects of writing that were aligned to the state standards.

The contrast between this group of teachers and those who used a writer’s workshop approach is evident in terms of the amount of choice of topics and genres offered to students, opportunities for teacher and peer feedback, and the degree of structure of the lesson. The teachers in the genre group followed a similar format: introducing the lesson through modeling or discussing the specific features of a genre, providing graphic organizers, and monitoring students’ during writing time. While teachers in the genre group had developed these lessons individually or with a group of teachers at the same grade level, teachers using a packaged program were handed a step-by-step curriculum with specific materials and formats, and they tended to follow it in a prescriptive manner.

Packaged Programs and Skills Instruction

Teachers who used a packaged program did so because the district mandated its use. For example, *America’s Choice: Writer’s Advantage*[1] consisted of “readers and writers workshops” featuring “phonics, oral language, shared books, guided reading, independent reading, daily writing instruction, and independent writing” (Poglinco et al., 2003) and followed the structure of a minilesson, independent work, and closure with routines and rituals.

Several teachers stated that they followed the prescribed curriculum closely including displaying the posters in their rooms. Dana (LI, IL) described the curriculum in this way, “So we have our writing section, and it has rubrics that they use with narrative writing we have, to make sure you follow these steps and just write down there.” Olene (LI, IL) followed the

prescribed curriculum, which included transparencies with graphic organizers and practice books, from the basal text very carefully:

> I'm following it pretty much word for word. It's actually based on the ISAT….It's a basic format. They have to give the introduction. They have to give the body. And they have to give a conclusion. A minimum of three paragraphs. Each [paragraph] must have at least five sentences to make a paragraph.

Not all of the teachers liked the prescribed program including Sharon (LI, IL), a veteran teacher, who said,

> I'm not crazy about the America's Choice writing program. If you can do foursquare, then why do I have to do all this other stuff that goes along with it? They have their own structure they want you to follow. In the case of writing a draft, they have to skip lines. They have to do this; they have to do that. To me, if the child is being creative, what difference does it make how they're writing?

Although writing was a component of the prescribed programs, several teachers felt they had to abandon the writing part of the program as they prepared for the ISAT. Sharon reported, "Before Christmas, we did a lot of writing. I would give them prompts or ideas, and they would sit and write. But now, since ISAT, it's a lot of looking at what we've read and answering a question." However, in her language arts lesson for the observation, Sharon used a book about friendship to prompt students' writing about their own views of friendship and allowed students to share their responses. Her lesson was more consistent with her views about promoting students' creativity than it was with following the prescribed curriculum. Rhonda's (LI, IL) language arts lesson came directly from the textbook and consisted of direct instruction about pronouns and did not include any writing. She explained, "with all the pressure of the ISAT, we're really working on our reading and math skills, and we really—we haven't done writing on a consistent basis for awhile." These data suggest that although writing is included as a component of the prescribed curriculum, teachers do not necessarily use the materials; instead, they are concentrating on preparing students for the state reading tests. Writing in these contexts may be neglected altogether, denying students opportunities to engage in meaningful, purposeful projects.

Interpreting the data from a point of view of the continuum of governmentality, issues of autonomy and coercion are evident. The writer's workshop teachers and the teachers who taught with an integrated approach selected the curriculum, exercising autonomy over their instruction. Their

practices are more reflective of the "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 1988) as they select topics, books, and activities to engage students in writing. Teachers who used the genre approach cited state standards as their rationale for teaching specific strategies and formats; thus, the state and school exerted more influence on their teaching than the workshop or teachers who taught with an integrated approach. Most reflective of the "technologies of domination" (Lemke, 2002) were the teachers who used packaged curriculum or skills who reported that they were required to use the curriculum by the principal or district. These patterns surface when comparing instruction in high-and low-income schools.

Differences Between High- and Low-Income Schools

Although teachers' practices represented a variety of different approaches, closer analysis reveals that teachers in particular school settings tended to cluster around certain types of instruction. Teachers at the high-income schools tended to group around a writer's workshop model, integrated model or a genre-based model, while teachers in low-income schools in Illinois tended to fall into the group of packaged programs. Teachers at high-income schools, who felt they were somewhat shielded from the law, also believed that they had flexibility to implement the type of writing instruction they valued.

In contrast, teachers at low-income schools in Illinois focused on preparing their students to pass the ISAT, and in some cases, went to extraordinary measures including participating in the after-school tutorials and eliminating writing to prepare their students for the test. Achieving AYP was an important goal for the teachers, and they adjusted their instruction to prepare students for the tests. Their writing instruction was affected, indirectly, by the law because they felt that they needed to focus on one type of writing task—the extended response—that was tested as opposed to other activities they felt were more interesting or fun. They found that preparing for the ISAT forced them to abandon the types of writing they believed were beneficial to students.

A notable exception to the patterns in high- and low-income schools as well as in school patterns was the example of Kristen in Utah. Not only did she resist the emphasis on testing, but also she did not share her peers' value on writer's workshop. She stated,

> I don't do writers' workshops like all the other teachers in here. That bores me…because I just don't think it's fun. It's got to be fun for kids….They've

> got to see something in it for them. And like this, right now everything we're writing has to do with Native Americans and their perspective on life. And they're writing a journal or building the birdhouses; we're going to give those to senior citizens. And so, they had to write about the whole experience of trying to put it together and hammer…And we had interactive Legos, where you build a house in here using specific Legos. And then, they made blueprints on graph paper and had to figure out the square footage. So they're seeing it in a lot of different areas, all inclusive, all day.

Kristen not only resisted the strictures of NCLB, but also developed her own curriculum. She described dressing up as Emily Dickinson when students were studying poetry and using portfolios to keep track of students' writing. Observations in her classroom revealed the focus on Native Americans including students learning to play flutes for a retelling of a legend the next week; walls were filled with displays of masks and poetry written by students about Native Americans. Students were learning to build birdhouses to bring to senior citizens and engaged in grant writing to raise money as part of this unit of study. Kristen explained,

> So I teach them the process of grant writing. And then, they—we work on a small component everyday. One day we may work on the cover letter, and then, the next day we may work on the budget. And another day, they work on problems that might occur in building birdhouses, and they come up with solutions.

Although her school was continually concerned about making AYP, Kristen had resisted taking up the discourse of teaching to the test but also had resisted following her colleagues' writing practices. Instead, she found a place on the margins where she could resist the dominant practices. What were some of the factors that might account for the clustering of teachers around particular types of writing instruction and the resistance of some?

Experience and Education

First, the teachers in high-income schools had many years of experience and were highly educated. For example, the high-income Utah teachers all held master's degrees and averaged 22 years of experience. The high-income Illinois teachers all held master's degrees and averaged 10 years experience. In contrast, there was more variation within the low-income schools: in the Utah school; three of the four teachers had 10 or more years experience, and in Illinois, three participants had 3 or less years experience;

fewer teachers held master's degrees in the low-income schools. Years of experience might help account for the teachers at Richardson, the low-income school in Utah, who implemented writer's workshop or integrated curriculum. For example, Kristen, who actively resisted the assumption that one had to teacher to the test, had 26 years of experience and a master's degree. She also experienced personal losses that she believed contributed to her attitude of persistence within the current environment:

> I think everybody is just so worried about test scores, and I'm not…I'm getting close to retirement, so I only have about 5 more years. And I figure, life goes on. If they don't like the way I'm teaching, then you know, I've lived through a daughter almost dying three times. And I've lived with children—my son is learning disabled.

Kristen's attitude appeared to reflect the circumstances of professional and life experiences. She viewed herself as having more agency than younger teachers, unwilling to give into the dominant discourses.

School and District Factors

School and district-related factors tended to explain some of the instructional patterns as well. For example, Utah teachers from the same district tended to cluster around writer's workshop. The curriculum coordinator indicated in an interview that many teachers had been implementing some version of writer's workshop for years prior to the study. They read professional books on their own and participated in workshops, discussions with colleagues, and/or online chats about curriculum. The staff development opportunities offered to teachers were extensive and focused on an emergent writing and reading-writing perspective that supported teachers in examining student work and their own practices. In addition, the administration of the state writing test did not occur until sixth grade; thus, third- and fourth-grade teachers in this study did not feel as pressured to prepare students for the writing component of the test.

Teachers from the high-income school in Illinois were all genre-based in their instruction. The school implemented a program called "Step Up," which used different colors to indicate topic sentences, supporting details, and conclusions. Teachers felt that it helped "develop a common language so that kids see the colors and they realize what you're expecting of them, so that every year they're not having to learn a new term necessarily for what you're expecting." Additionally, they met in grade-level teams weekly

for an hour. Tom (HI, IL) believed these meetings resulted in a shared curriculum with variations in teaching style, "and of course though we don't all teach everything the same way, we're basically all the same—we teach it all at the same time, we teach it the same manner." Jackie (HI, IL) noted that they had conversations across grade levels as well:

> The nice thing is that we have a building where there's just a lot of dialogue going on. We talked across grade level and said, "What would be this expectation in the first grade? How could we start from fifth and kind of work our way down?"

Sally (HI, IL) also mentioned that the use of school-wide prompts and rubrics resulted in shared norms, "We made up a rubric and everyone at school did it. We give them a prompt three times a year and the children would write on that. We'd grade them on the rubric." These examples of grade-level meetings and shared norms had a clear connection to their instruction.

In the low-income schools in Illinois, the teachers' practices focused on skills-instruction from the mandated curriculum, which, by design, tended to exert pressure on teachers to have similar types of practice. The district literacy coaches were provided to help teachers implement the packaged curriculum. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers from the same schools tended to have similar views about writing instruction that extended to their practices. However, it did not mean that they necessarily agreed with the tenets of the package as evidenced by Sharon (LI, IL), a veteran teacher.

Experience and education as well as school and district norms were part of the contexts in which these elementary teachers were enacting their writing curriculum. Thus, simply teaching in a low- or high-income school did not determine a teacher's writing instruction or the effects of NCLB. However, the data reveal patterns of inequity that correspond with many of the challenges leveled against NCLB (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2007) and the indirect ways in which the law has affected teachers and students.

Conclusion

The study identified four themes that were shared by the 18 teachers in relation to NCLB: (a) focus on testing, (b) curricular effects, (c) raised awareness of lower achieving students, and (d) concerns for English language learners. Teachers criticized the focus on testing both in the content of the tests as well as the ways in which the tests were used to determine whether a school made AYP. They believed that the focus on testing had

resulted in an increased pressure for teachers and narrowing of the curriculum and had negative effects on students. The teachers noted that NCLB had raised their awareness of lower achieving students, but while some teachers valued this focus, others believed that the focus undermined efforts to meet the needs of average or high-achieving students. Teachers who had English language learners in their classrooms believed that including their scores in AYP calculations was unfair. While these themes generally support the survey data (IRA, 2004; NCTE, 2006) that identifies teacher dissatisfaction with NCLB and supports the critiques of high stakes testing (Allington, 2003; Afflerbach, 2005; Hillocks, 2002; Nichols & Berliner, 2005), the study adds to the literature by comparing teachers in low-income and high-income schools in a particular area—writing.

There was evidence that teachers from low-income schools felt the impact of NCLB to a much greater extent than teachers in high-income schools, and that pressure influenced their instruction. Teachers from high-income schools felt more freedom to teach writing the way they wanted since their schools consistently made AYP, while teachers from two low-income schools believed they had to follow the packaged programs. This finding is compatible with other work that points out the differential effects of NCLB on high- and low-income schools (McCaslin, 2006; Sunderman, 2006) and raises concerns that students in low-income schools are delivered impoverished curriculum that does not promote meaningful engagement with texts (Anyon, 2005). However, the example of Kristen, a Utah teacher from a low-income school, provides an example of a participant who resisted the idea that NCLB had influenced her curriculum or that she was teaching to the test.

The differences between teachers in high-income and low-income schools were complicated by the role of teaching experience in their instruction and their attitudes toward NCLB. Teachers at the high-income schools and the low-income school in Utah were mostly experienced teachers who held master's degrees; therefore, they had more job security and could say, "Let 'em fire me." In contrast, the newest teachers at low-income schools believed they had to follow the prescribed curriculum and teach to the test to ensure their students' success. This highlights concerns that the least prepared and least experienced teachers are disproportionately assigned to schools with the greatest needs (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

The data on writing instruction and attitudes toward writing indicate that the amount and nature of writing instruction varied across teachers in the sample. Teachers implemented writer's workshop; integrated curriculum, genre-specific instruction; or used packaged programs. While these categories are not the same as Boscolo's (2007) identification of process writing, cognitive-oriented

programs, and a focus on genre as trends in instruction, the observations and interview show that writing instruction is occurring in a variety of contexts and has not been totally sidelined as the result of NCLB. Despite the variations in approaches, there were clusters of types of instruction and differences between high- and low-income schools. There tended to be coherence in instruction within a single school. For example, teachers at Belleview and Richardson used either a writer's workshop approach or an integrated approach to daily writing instruction, while teachers at Bailey focused on genres and prompts using graphic organizers. Teachers in the low-income schools, Park and King, were required to follow packaged programs, did not have daily writing instruction but practiced extended responses for the reading portion of the state test. These data reinforce concerns that high-income schools receive not only more material resources, but also students receive a more complex curriculum with greater opportunities for student input (Gay, 2007; Kozol, 2005). However, the findings that students at Richardson, a low-income school also had opportunities to engage in writer's workshop or an integrated writing complicates the picture and demonstrates that some teachers are resisting the pressure to raise test scores and implement packaged programs. Kristen, for example, created her own niche in her work with a class that had many English language learners, setting up her day around exploration of Native Americans. Like teachers who share a common theory and vision for students that is coherent and deeper than superficial consistencies of mandated curriculum (Elmore, 2003), these examples suggest that there are pockets of resistance and teacher decision making that indicate some teachers are basing instruction on students' needs rather than mandated curriculum and testing (Wollman, 2007). While the data tend to demonstrate that many teachers are experiencing NCLB as a repressive means of regulating curriculum through the technology of testing, Kristen's example shows that resistance can result in a teacher taking a more autonomous stance where an individual can transform her own subjectivity within the discourse of power (Foucault, 1977).

There were several limitations of the study that can inform future studies. The study was limited to a small number of teachers in only two states. The selection of schools and teachers resulted in having schools that were not necessarily comparable in terms of their populations and a disproportionate number of experienced teachers versus new teachers. Only one classroom observation limited the opportunities to see writing instruction over time and in some cases encouraged teachers to teach a lesson focused on writing even though they had not taught writing for several months. Researcher bias that favors writer's workshop or writing across the curriculum over packaged programs may have influenced the interpretations of the interview and observational data.

Despite the limitations, the study identified patterns that can inform researchers, policy makers, and teachers and raise awareness about how practicing teachers are responding to the federal law and its implementations by states and local districts. Large-scale studies comparing the effects of NCLB on new versus experienced teachers can help inform the recruitment and retention of teachers. More studies focusing on the effects of NCLB on curricular areas such as science and social studies will keep those disciplines in the public eye. In addition, in-depth qualitative studies can document the long-term effects of policies on practice to provide rich data that may support concerns raised by educators who oppose NCLB (Fukuda, 2007), but they may also reveal and provide information about how to reduce some of the wider inequities that NCLB sought to remedy.

The frame of governmentality has provided a link between Foucault's emphasis on technologies of the dominant (e.g., testing functioning as an oppressive force that induces conformity) and technologies of the self (e.g., individuals must transform themselves through resistance or finding a place on the margins) and helped to frame NCLB as a "strategic game" (Lemke, 2002) that is not in and of itself evil. The limitation of using governmentality, like much of Foucault's work, is that there is little sense of the ability of a collective to make change. We are left with the somewhat discouraging view that our only hope in the context of NCLB is the lone individual, such as Kristen, to resist, transform, and "create ourselves as a work of art" (Foucault, 1977, p. 237). The implication that follows is to encourage individual teachers to resist rather than pursuing collective efforts among teachers, administrators, researchers, and policy makers to make substantial changes to the law.

The study has implications that might not only support the efforts of individuals like Kristen who are finding places to resist the consequences of NCLB but also points to the need for collective efforts such as those by NCTE and IRA to reexamine the law before reauthorization. The study suggests that educators should not necessarily disavow intentions of the law even as they consider resisting the ways in which it has been implemented. The finding that teachers have become increasingly aware of the need to focus on lower achieving students seems important; yet an underlying assumption that there are some students who can never be helped should be a major concern. The finding that a number of teachers have not embraced the need to help all students achieve success may direct us toward challenging the attitude that some students are beyond help and encourage educators to recommend policies and support practices that address the needs of students in a less top-down, more teacher-initiated, and complex way.

Appendix
Teacher Interview

A. Demographic information (use form: degrees earned, years of experience and years of teaching in the particular school)

B. Curriculum

1. Tell me about the lesson I observed today. What are the goals?
2. How does it fit into your language arts curriculum for the year?
3. What are your goals for your language arts curriculum?
4. What opportunities do students have to write in this classroom? How often? What genres? Why did you select those activities/genres?
5. How often do you talk to students about their writing?
6. How often do students share their writing with other students? How does that work?
7. Where do your ideas for writing instruction come from?

C. Student work

Let's look at examples of writing from three students (one whom you consider an above average writer, one whom you consider an average writer, one whom you consider below average writer).

1. Please tell me about each student's writing.
2. In what genre are they writing? Why this genre?
3. What were your goals for the assignment?
4. What are the strengths of this student's writing? Weaknesses?
5. How will you work with this student on his/her writing?

D. Policy

1. How has your writing instruction changed over the last 5 years?
2. What have been the significant influences on your instruction?
3. What effects has No Child Left Behind had on your teaching of reading?
4. What effects has No Child Left Behind had on your teaching of writing?
5. What effects has it had on other subject areas such as art, social studies or science?
6. What effects (benefits? disadvantages?) do you see No Child Left Behind having on children?
7. How would you describe the state's perspective on NCLB? What effects has the state's perspective had on your attitudes toward No Child Left Behind?
8. Will your students be taking a state or district test this year? In what subjects? How much time will you spend preparing students for the test? What types of preparation do you do?
9. Is there a state assessment of writing? District assessment? How about your own assessment of writing?
10. Are there any other assessments related to No Child Left Behind that you give? If so, how do you prepare students for those tests?

Note

1. America's Choice School Design is described on its Web site as "one of the nation's leading comprehensive K-12 standards-based school reform programs." Coaching is a major part of the staff development aspect. Writers advantage is the writing component that involves daily writing instruction, classroom management, "Rituals and Routines," instructional materials, performance expectations in several genres, author studies, and rubrics.

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