

## Study Findings on the Integration of Writing Assessment & Instruction

**The Question:** Would it make a difference in analytic writing testing results to purposefully weave assessment strategies into the writing curriculum? In other words, can we document differences in writing performance between two groups of students—one group that was systematically taught how to use the six-trait analytic assessment scoring criteria as a tool for revision, while the other group participated in traditional writing process instruction without using an assessment component as a strategy for revision?

**The Sites and the Work:** During the 1992-93 school year, six fifth-grade classrooms in the Portland area were selected as study sites to determine the effect of teaching the six analytic traits to students. These classrooms represented diverse student populations from rural to urban communities, native and second-language English speakers/writers, and a diverse range of ethnicities.

Three fifth-grade classrooms were randomly selected as “study sites”; places where a pre- and post-writing assessment would take place, but teachers would continue to instruct and assess without any intervention on our part. Our role in these classrooms was to observe and document the current practice of teaching writing.

The remaining three sites became “teaching sites”—classrooms where we systematically visited the classrooms, taught students the traits and how to assess their own and others’ writing. Lessons specifically designed to show the link between the traits and revision skills were taught, with an emphasis on the traits of ideas, organization, and voice. These classrooms also participated in a pre- and post-assessment.

**The Results:** The results strongly indicate that direct instruction linking assessment and instruction makes a considerable difference in writing performance. The following table contains pre- and post-assessment averages:\*

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Gain</u>
Ideas	Teaching	2.54	3.38	+.84
	Observations	2.68	2.75	+.07
Organization	Teaching	2.60	3.15	+.55
	Observations	2.61	2.70	+.09
Voice	Teaching	2.73	3.60	+.87
	Observations	2.91	3.12	+.21
Word Choice	Teaching	2.73	3.26	+.53
	Observations	2.91	3.11	+.20
Sentence Fluency	Teaching	2.85	3.12	+.27
	Observations	2.87	2.89	+.02
Conventions	Teaching	2.79	2.98	+.19
	Observations	2.89	2.99	+.10

*Note: The last two traits are victims of the “not enough time” syndrome. The school year slipped away so fast that less time was spent on teaching the last few traits—and the scores reflect it, too!*

*\*A detailed summary of the study and reported results are available by calling our office at 503.275.9572. Ask for “School Centers for Classroom Assessment Final Report, 1992-93.”*