

# Overview of the National Study of Writing Instruction

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**Purpose:** The goal of this study is to provide educators across the nation with information about effective practices in writing across the curriculum, across a range of school settings across the nation. This information can in turn guide school improvement efforts. Your school has been selected for study because of its reputation for excellence in the teaching of writing.

**Procedures:** A team of two people will visit for three days to conduct interviews with the principal or vice-principal for instruction, to interview teachers and department chairs and observe classes in English, social studies, science, and mathematics. Interviews will be structured to fit within a regular class period. These interviews will be audiotaped so that the responses can be analyzed later. In addition, all teachers in the school will be asked to complete a questionnaire about curriculum and instruction as it relates to one of their classes. With the help of the teachers, the research team will identify at least 3 students at each grade level as key participants who will be asked to share all of their written work for one semester, and who will be interviewed about their experiences learning to write across subject areas.

**Confidentiality:** With the permission of the superintendent and principal, schools and districts will be identified by name. Confidentiality of all other interviewees will be carefully maintained and no data will be collected and shared without written permission. Permission forms will be used to obtain each participant's approval.

**Honoraria/:** To help coordinate interviews, organize interview space, and make other local arrangements, the study will ask one individual at each site to serve as a study liaison; the liaison will receive an honorarium of \$500 per grade level studied (of grades 6, 8, 10, and 12) for this help. Students chosen as "key participants" will receive a \$20 bookstore gift certificate.

**Project Sponsors:** The National Study of Writing Instruction is a collaboration between the Center on English Learning & Achievement (University of Albany, SUNY) and the National Writing Project (UC-Berkeley), with support from the Spencer Foundation, the College Board, and the National Writing Project.

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