Supporting the teaching of writing in New Zealand schools

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Student achievement in writing in New Zealand

New Zealand students are under-performing in writing. There is more than one source showing this. National data for writing are available from the normative sample for asTTle; there are also data from the completion of asTTle writing assessments entered into the e-asTTle database. In addition, there are data from the ongoing administration of NEMP writing tasks. The asTTle data represent a large number of students (around 75 000). The normative sampling for asTTle showed that by the end of schooling, students are two years below curriculum level expectations, and performance in writing lags significantly behind both reading and mathematics (Ministry of Education and University of Auckland, 2006). The National Education Monitoring Project notes that students are unable to achieve the vividness, personal feeling, and humour that characterises high-quality expressive writing (NEMP, 2006). This relatively low level of performance is in line with that reported in the 2007 US National Assessment of Educational Progress where over 50 percent of students at grades 8 and 12 scored at a basic level in writing (Salahu-Din, Persky, and Miller, 2008). The data from subsequent e-asTTle testing, while supporting the finding that writing performance is below curriculum expectations and that a modest proportion are likely to meet the National Standards, show that, in the last five years, the percentage of students meeting expectations (mapped to National Standards) has doubled (Hattie, 2010).

Although now quite old, the large cross-sectional normative sample for asTTle provides rich information about patterns of progress across year levels. Treating the cross-sectional sample as indicative of developmental patterns, the data show that growth was most marked between years 8 and 10. This takeoff comes, arguably, at a time when opportunities to write increase as writing in secondary school becomes a requirement in most curriculum areas. Writing has been shown to extend the learning of content in subject areas (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, and Wilkinson, 2004; Graham and Perin, 2007). Writing is often a catalyst for meaning making and further learning. There is some evidence that a close link to content is significant in enhancing writing performance (Pressley et al. 2007). In high school, students may not only have more topic-related knowledge with which to write but also a clearer purpose for writing. The growth curve in writing performance flattens between years 10 and 12. Arguably, the more specific skill in writing required to move beyond the level attained by year 10 needs to be both explicitly taught (so teachers need knowledge and skill) and practised.

Variability in performance among students is relatively low at primary school but is high by secondary school, suggesting the operation of Matthew effects (in which “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer”) (Stanovich, 1986), whereby those who have a reasonably high level of skill acquire additional skill more readily than those who start with a low level of skill. This means that the gap between high and low progress widens. When the distribution of total writing scores is plotted for the asTTle normative sample, there is a large overlap in

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the distribution of the scores of primary and secondary students; nearly half of secondary students had scores within the primary distribution range (Ministry of Education and The University of Auckland, 2006). Moreover, there is a considerable tail of low achievement at secondary level. A plausible, simple explanation may be that lower progress writers simply forgo opportunities to practise the craft. Using data from a study of high and low progress writers (N = 54) in years 1–8 (Glasswell, 1999), researchers calculated the number of words high progress writers wrote relative to low progress writers. In the first year of school, when the number of words produced was quite small, high progress writers wrote about twice as many words as struggling writers, and there was evidence of this gap widening across the years. For year 1, the effect size for the difference between high progress and struggling writers' word output was 1.01 (Cohen's d), and by year 8 before entry to secondary school, this difference had risen to 1.59 (Parr, 2009).

It is difficult to explain such patterns of performance without systematic data on classroom practice. In New Zealand, the above low performance was not mirrored in reading, so there are clear implications for how writing is taught and how teachers are supported to teach it. While Kiuhara and colleagues (2009) note that efforts to improve writing performance are virtually non-existent in school reform efforts in the United States, this is not the case in New Zealand where 90 percent of recent schooling improvement focuses on literacy, with attention to both reading and writing. Further, the National Literacy Professional Development Project covering years 1–8 has consistently shown that when teachers are supported to develop appropriate pedagogical content knowledge and to change practice, large gains (average effect size gain, using Cohen's d, was 1.2) can be made in writing performance (Parr and Timperley, 2010; Timperley and Parr, 2009).

Contextualising writing pedagogy

As a theoretical construct, writing is complex. Writing is a social and cultural act; it is problematic to specify what "develops" or progresses in writing or what it develops towards and under what conditions. Whether this is progression towards a defined goal or a broad horizon is a dilemma discussed by Marshall (2004). The goal model of progression assumes that what is necessary to be good at writing is "known, quantifiable and reducible to a systematic teaching programme" (Marshall, 2004, p. 102) while the horizon model suggests less closely specified outcomes and also multiple pathways. There is little research that addresses progression in writing that could help define the horizon and pathways. A model of writing that would predict both the course of the writing processes and the characteristics of the end product simply does not exist (Alamargot and Fayol, 2009). The complex and intangible act of writing presents a significant issue for both pedagogy and for evaluation, affecting the decision of what precisely is to be taught and what and how it is to be evaluated. This is the general nature of the context in which we operate; the implications of evolving theorising and research concerning writing are summarised below and discussed in full in Appendix 1.

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Evolving theories of writing

The field of research around writing is relatively new and limited, compared to that concerning reading. It was not until the 1970s that coherent research programmes in writing emerged, marrying empirical methods to theoretical conceptions. Writing is a diverse field of study with contributions from a number of disciplines including cognitive psychology, English rhetoric, and linguistics. Not only does it draw from diverse areas, but theoretical perspectives have changed markedly in its short history. It is important to have some appreciation of this context to understand why teachers may have limited knowledge, are confused, or lack confidence in teaching writing.

In 1986, Faigley identified three theoretical perspectives – the textual, the individual, and the social – that have influenced the way researchers have examined writing. The perspectives have paralleled that of the general intellectual climate and are discussed in turn below.

The textual perspective

The 1950–60s was a period of formalism. In literature, understanding a text meant seeing how each of its parts worked with all the others. Linguists built taxonomies of the discrete forms (for example, phonemes, morphemes). In teaching students to read and analyse texts critically, it was assumed that there was a stable, single, and universal text meaning inscribed in the text.

In composition, learning to write meant learning to avoid errors, and the essay was defined in terms of how many paragraphs it had – the five paragraph essay was commonly taught. Writing instruction focused on the features of good texts.

The individual perspective

From the late 1960s, cognitive theories examined reader responses to text, abstract underlying structures in linguistics, and composing processes in composition. Scholars began to think about writing not in terms of texts or products but rather in terms of the cognitive processes of reading and writing. Writing involves making choices about a given rhetorical problem, audience, and possible constraints that could influence the shape and direction of one's argument. Writers write about something to someone.

The identification of composing processes is credited to Flower and Hayes (1981) who developed a cognitive model of the writing process, claiming that writing is best thought of as a set of distinctive thinking processes that writers orchestrate or organise. Writing by the 1980s was seen as a dynamic, meaning making process. A writer translated an underlying, hierarchically organised cognitive representation into text. This viewing of research on writing processes as a study of mind challenged traditional concepts of text and text meaning.

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Readers and writers do not *find* meaning, they *construct* it. The reader's response determines text meaning.

In terms of pedagogy, the findings from cognitive model research became the basis of "process writing", attributed to Donald Graves and associates. Some teachers focused on the cycle of processes that a writer went through in a linear fashion – through generating ideas and translating them into written form to revising, editing, and publishing. Others were more flexible, recognising the recursive nature of the processes and the fact that not all writing needed to be "published". Layered onto the writing processes was a cycle of pedagogical "moves": modelling writing, independent writing, and sharing of writing, often termed the "writing workshop".

The social perspective

By the late 1980s, researchers began to view language as a social as well as a cognitive process. Writers compose as members of a community whose discursive practices constrain the way they structure meaning. Literacy problems were not difficulties in thinking but difficulties in joining unfamiliar discourse communities.

Post-structuralists like Bakhtin (1986) claimed meaning does not reside in an individual consciousness but is determined by the context of use and the interaction of different voices. Meaning is dialogic; the meaning of an utterance is always relative to other utterances. This incorporates the idea that inter-textual dialogue characterises language in use – the exchange of meanings is an interactive process and the text is the means of exchange. Explicitness is not a text phenomena but a social interactive one – it depends on what reader and writer share. Skilled writers anticipate responsive understanding in their text.

In terms of pedagogy, focusing on writing as constructed within a specific social context for a particular purpose prevents decontextualised teaching of text features using rubrics or similar tools. Writing is a social and cultural practice in which the term "genre' refers to the processes involved in "getting things done" through language, (Kress, 1993). It is a subtle but important shift to think about features, structure, or dimensions of writing and processes of writing as being *commonly* associated with a generic social purpose (rather than a text type). This is reflected in the notion of writing across the curriculum, which makes problems of text, social context, and genre more salient.

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What do teachers know about writing and what can they do?

These findings are based on data collected from two groups of writing experts. The first were a group of nineteen professional development providers who completed online surveys; the second was a group of ten experts who met for a one-day focus group meeting. The professional development providers were asked to comment on teachers they had worked with in 2010. They reported on a total of 834 teachers working with students from years 1–10. Those in the focus group were asked to consider the survey findings and whether the findings reflected their experiences. They were also asked to think beyond the survey in terms of identifying a way forward in relation to the identified issues.

What do teachers know?

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the overall levels of knowledge and understanding of the teachers they worked with on a six-point response scale (1 = very limited, 2 = limited, 3 = adequate, 4 = good, 5 = very good, and 6 = extensive). The most commonly reported levels were adequate and good with respondents reporting that, on average, close to 60 percent of the teachers they worked with were at these levels.

They were also asked about teacher knowledge and understanding across specific areas of expertise and different year groups using the same six-point scale. Overall the highest mean levels of knowledge and understanding were reported for language (x = 3.45) and the lowest for the New Zealand Curriculum (x = 2.62). Mean levels were consistent across the other areas: literacy acquisition (x = 3.07), teaching strategies (x = 3.23), assessment (x = 3.24), and strategies and processes (x = 3.25). These data suggest that teachers have an adequate level of knowledge across these six areas.

There were two areas where there were differences between year groups. While the mean level of knowledge and understanding of literacy acquisition was reported as good (x = 3.91) for junior primary teachers (years 0–3), it was lower for teachers of all other year groups (x = 2.88 or less), decreasing as the year level grouping increased. The three respondents working with junior secondary teachers (years 9 and 10) reported that these teachers had good levels of knowledge and understanding about language (x = 3.96).

In appendix A further details about these data are reported, including mean levels of knowledge for each item within the six areas discussed above. There were no instances where an individual item mean was above 5.00 (very good) and fifteen instances where it was below 2.50 (limited). For twenty-three items, the mean was below 4.00 (good). There were reportedly good levels of knowledge and understanding across all year-level groupings for the importance of a wide vocabulary and for teaching as inquiry. In addition, knowledge and understanding of both asTTle writing and the understanding of the structure and organisation of text was reportedly good across three categories of year group (middle

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primary, senior primary, and junior secondary). In all other instances, only one year group was reported to have good knowledge and understanding, reflecting the different needs of students and the resultant content knowledge needed by teachers.

In addition to the above areas, the survey also asked respondents about the knowledge and understanding of the teachers they had worked with in 2010 with regard to four different assessment tools: asTTle, English writing exemplars, NEMP writing, and Literacy Learning Progressions. Again the same six point scale ranging from very limited to extensive was used. With the exception of NEMP writing, the mean reported level of knowledge and understanding was directly related to the age group being taught. For asTTle, mean levels of knowledge and understanding ranged from 2.06 for junior primary through to 4.33 for junior secondary. For Literacy Learning Progressions and English writing exemplars, the reverse pattern was observed with junior primary having the higher mean levels of knowledge and understanding (4.35 and 4.06 respectively) and junior secondary the lower (2.00 and 3.00 respectively). Across all year groups, mean levels of knowledge and understanding were less than 2.00 for NEMP writing.

In considering the question of what teachers know, the **focus group participants** noted the low levels of knowledge and understanding of the New Zealand Curriculum reported in the interim report and concurred with this based on their own experiences. Further, they suggested that teachers also have low knowledge and understanding with regard to the writing demands of the curriculum and the discourses of the different learning areas.

Of particular concern was the extent to which teachers are able to differentiate between the levels of the curriculum. It was agreed that National Standards and the Learning Progressions had provided some direction and clarification of the message that writing is a tool rather than an end product. Another area of concern was the ability of teachers to understand and articulate the underlying cognitive processes in writing. The focus group suggested that, in their view, there was likely to be more variability in terms of teacher knowledge and understanding across years 4–8.

The focus group also concurred with the findings of the interim report with regard to teachers' knowledge of assessment tools. It was felt that while teachers are able to assess writing, they know less about how to use this information to accelerate learning. Further, it was suggested that teachers have difficulty seeing connections between all the different aspects of assessment.

What do teachers do?

In order to better understand what teachers actually do in their classrooms, as opposed to what they know, **survey respondents** were asked to indicate the extent to which knowledge and understanding were translated into practice. For this set of questions, a six-point scale was used (very slightly, slightly, somewhat, reasonably, considerably, and extensively).

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Across all year groups, the mean levels of translation for all six areas were between 3.00 (somewhat) and 4.00 (reasonably).

Respondents were also asked to use the same scale (very slightly to extensively) to report the extent to which the teachers used a range of seven strategies for teaching writing. Across all year groups, the mean levels of reported use of the different strategies ranged from 2.94 (making connections between and among texts by junior primary teachers) to 4.67 (modelling the deconstruction of text by junior secondary teachers). With the exception of junior secondary, where three strategies had a reported mean level of use greater than 4.00 (reasonably), all other year groups reported one or two strategies only with this level of use.

Modelling the deconstruction or the construction of text were the most commonly reported strategies being used by teachers across all year level categories. There were only two instances where mean levels of use above 4.00 were reported outside these two strategies. These were junior primary teachers' use of other deliberate acts of teaching (4.18) and junior secondary teachers use of giving effective feedback (4.33).

Concern about the origin and possible limitations of these seven strategies were discussed during the **focus group**. It was suggested that the way this question was designed had privileged a particular view or set of strategies with a strong focus on the deliberate acts of teaching. In particular, it was felt that there had been no mention of how the writing task is constructed or what might happen after the modelling. There was a concern that the *Effective Literacy Practice* books, around which the question was designed, were now five to seven years old and that the accepted view of effective practice had broadened.

Further, it was suggested by the focus group that while the interim report suggested reasonably high use of the modelling of construction and deconstruction of text, this was, in their view, rarely done well. It was reported that in junior secondary school (years 9 and 10), there was widespread use of writing templates with both groups and individuals.

The **survey respondents** were asked about the extent of use of different resource tools by the teachers they had worked with in 2010. Tools that were reportedly only rarely used were *Dancing with the Pen* (2.06) and LPDP online resources (2.00). Again professional learning sessions were reportedly frequently used (4.81) although it should be noted that this question was answered by professional development providers about the teachers they were working with. Other resources frequently used were the Literacy Learning Progressions (4.95) and student materials such as the *School Journal* (4.53).

The **focus group** discussed teacher use of assessment tools based on their experiences. They reported that primary school teachers not involved in professional development projects were less likely to use asTTle than those who were. Further, it was reported that asTTle was not used widely in secondary schools. Rather, it had been observed that NCEA tools were

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adapted for years 9 and 10 with annotated exemplars becoming teaching and assessment tools.

A number of comments were made by individuals with regard to general patterns they had observed in classrooms. These included:

- A focus on whole-class teaching rather than formative assessment
- A lack of teacher confidence and self-efficacy about what they are seeing
- Feedback on student draft writing focusing on surface features
- Teachers teaching didactically, not drawing on diverse resources
- Confusion around the setting of class and individual goals and how these relate to formative assessment
- A heavy reliance on formal tools for making teacher judgments and an over reliance on standardised assessment tools.

What do experts say about the resources teachers need to teach writing more effectively?

Survey participants were asked their opinion on the usefulness of a range of resources for the teaching of writing on the same six-point scale (not useful at all, slightly useful, somewhat useful, useful, very useful, and extremely useful). Questions were asked about building knowledge, informing practice and pedagogy, and assessment.

The mean levels of usefulness for building knowledge ranged from the 3.17 for the Guided Reading videos years 1–4 and associated texts through to 5.63 for the Literacy Learning Progressions. Along with the Literacy Learning Progressions, one other resource scored above 5.50 (extremely useful). This was professional learning sessions, again not surprising given the roles of the respondents.

Four resources scored less than 4.00 in terms of usefulness for practice and pedagogy. These were Guided Reading videos, *Dancing with the Pen*, The National Standards documentation, and the LPDP online resources for writing. The highest mean level of usefulness was reported for professional learning sessions. Other useful resources were *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* and in *Years 5 to 8*.

In terms of assessment, three resources were identified as being very useful. These were professional learning sessions, asTTle writing, and the Literacy Learning Progressions.

Finally, participants in the online survey were asked to comment on the resources used by teachers (see Appendix 3), how resources are used by teachers, and what was needed in terms of enhancing the quality or quantity of the resources to support writing. The consensus appeared to be that there were many good resources available and that there

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was coherence across them but that teachers needed help to use them in a structured and purposeful way – that high quality professional development is critical.

Further, survey participants suggested that the current resources did not address writing for the curriculum and that the exemplars perhaps needed to extend the writing illustrations in the National Standards. The perceived lack of alignment between the asTTle marking indicators and the Literacy Learning Progressions and between National Writing Exemplars and asTTle was seen as a potential source of confusion.

The wish list for survey participants included video clips of effective practice and writing as teachers need to work with or observe experts in the teaching of writing; a handbook that supports teachers to be explicit in teaching different writing strategies; a resource that supports teachers to see the connections between reading and writing; an effective assessment tool for years 1–3; and a bank of annotated writing samples. Again the comment was made that high-quality professional development programmes were also needed.

The **focus group** also discussed the usefulness of the current resources and the potential gaps. This group felt there was a lack of literature about what happens between the modelling of writing and the feedback students need on their own writing. It was agreed that there had been a huge emphasis on the deliberate acts of teaching and developing learning intentions and success criteria but often in the absence of sound content knowledge, so the learning can be "hollow". It was felt that the selection of strategies for engaging students with text and the instructional strategies may have narrowed teaching and that a broader range of strategies was required. One area of need was for resources to support teachers in the design of learning tasks.

The focus group expressed concern about the currency of key resources, such as the *Effective Literacy Practice* books, given the shifting knowledge base around effective practice. It was further noted that the National Standards had played a large part in the current shifts in expected practice, particularly in their emphasis on writing as a tool to communicate and think in different discourse communities and disciplines. It was felt that the reasons for this shift may not have been made clear to teachers and that they needed to be supported to blend theories about learning with knowledge of text. Members of the focus group reported that tools such as asTTle and the English exemplar rubrics had supported the development of teachers' content knowledge as had the Literacy Learning Progressions.

Although not mentioned in the survey, the resource *Accelerating Writing Progress in Years 7–8* was discussed at the focus group because it tries to address the writing demands of the curriculum. The group felt that this resource could be expanded to address the current needs of students in relation to the demands of the curriculum. In particular, it was felt that a framework for supporting effective practice needs to expand on the *Effective Literacy Practice* dimensions of practice, by including:

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- Involving students with a focus on agency and self-regulation
- The content and processes for writing in different learning areas
- Strategic teaching and learning of writing
- Curriculum progressions and writing demands, inlcuding designing tasks.

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Appendix 1: Evolving theories of writing

(Note: This is a full version of the discussion on page 5 of the report.)

The field of research around writing is relatively new and limited, compared to that concerning reading. Moreover, writing is a diverse field of study with contributions from a number of disciplines including cognitive psychology, English rhetoric, and linguistics. Not only does it draw from diverse areas, but theoretical perspectives have changed markedly in its short history. It is important to have some appreciation of this context to understand why teachers may have limited knowledge, are confused, or lack confidence in teaching writing.

It was not until the 1970s that coherent research programmes in writing emerged, marrying empirical methods to theoretical conceptions. Writing research partly came about as a result of more open policies of admission to universities in the United States in the 1970s. University teachers had a responsibility to teach something about which they had little understanding (other than intuition or personal experience) or training in. Important questions were raised about the nature of the writing process and the nature of written discourse. A writing research community emerged, marked by several developments – specialist journals, PhD programs, and an AERA special interest group. According to Nystrand et al (1986), the field evolved in its efforts to understand the central problem of meaning in discourse, so composition studies drew increasingly from rhetoric, linguistics, cognitive science, sociology, and thought about language in general.

In 1986, Faigley identified three theoretical perspectives – the textual, the individual, and the social – that have influenced the way researchers have examined writing. The perspectives have paralleled that of the general intellectual climate. For example, the 1950s was a period of formalism. In literature, understanding a text meant seeing how each of its parts worked with all the others. Linguists built taxonomies of the discrete forms (for example, phonemes, morphemes). In composition, learning to write meant learning to avoid errors, and the essay was defined in terms of how many paragraphs it had – the five paragraph essay was commonly taught. In the 1970s cognitive theories examined both reader responses to text and abstract underlying structures in linguistics and composing processes in composition. By the later 1980s these were supplanted by social analyses.

In the formalist period to the mid 1960s writing instruction focused on the features of good texts. In teaching students to read and analyse texts critically, it was assumed that there was a stable, single, and universal text meaning inscribed in the text. Strunk and Whites' *The Elements of Style* was published, and the readability formula invented.

From the late 1960s, scholars began to think about writing not in terms of texts or products but rather in terms of the cognitive processes of reading and writing. Educators pointed out that studying texts, independent of their rhetorical context, would not solve important writing problems. Writing involves making choices about a given rhetorical problem,

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audience, and possible constraints that could influence the shape and direction of one's argument. Writers write about something to someone. Developing as a writer involves writing about increasingly abstract topics for a wider audience. Britton's (1970) categories of writing types reflect this moving from the personal narrative out to the poetic. Britton too viewed language as a way of representing experience and the individual's way of operating on or revising the resulting representation. Janet Emig (1971) in her "Composing processes of 12th graders" argued that the central concern of writing teachers should be composing processes rather than identifying key features of exemplary texts or eradicating errors.

The identification of composing processes is credited to Flower and Hayes (1981) who developed a cognitive model of the writing process, claiming that writing is best thought of as a set of distinctive thinking processes that writers orchestrate or organise. Writing by the 1980s was seen as a dynamic, meaning making process. A writer translated an underlying, hierarchically organised cognitive representation into text. Flower and Hayes described differences between novices and experts. This viewing of research on writing processes as a study of mind challenged traditional concepts of text and text meaning. Readers and writers do not *find* meaning, they *construct* it. The reader's response determines text meaning. While these conceptions of reading and writing as cognitive processes drew from the work of linguists, they also drew on cognitive psychologists, such as Chomsky; this was important in shifting the focus of linguistics from formal language structures to the constructive, structure-building operations of the human mind.

By the late 1980s, researchers began to view language as a social as well as a cognitive process. The later model of the writing process reflects this, giving more emphasis to the context. There was also a shift in the more general orientation of linguistic analyses from syntax (form) to discourse (function). As other departments in schools and colleges began to incorporate writing into their instruction, the 'writing across the curriculum' movement was born and it made problems of text, social context, and genre more salient. Writers compose as members of a community whose discursive practices constrain the way they structure meaning. Learning to write for some became a case of socialisation into a community – like the academic community. Literacy problems were not difficulties in thinking but difficulties in joining unfamiliar discourse communities.

Post-structuralists like Bakhtin (1986) claimed meaning does not reside in an individual consciousness but is determined by the context of use and the interaction of different voices. Meaning is dialogic; the meaning of an utterance is always relative to other utterances. This incorporates the idea that inter-textual dialogue characterises language in use – the exchange of meanings is an interactive process and the text is the means of exchange. We use language and other semiotic systems both to organise our experience of the world and to communicate or otherwise share that experience with others. In terms of writing, the meaning is neither in the writer's intentions which, according to cognitive models, the writer translates into text, or embodied in the text itself. Texts have a potential

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for meaning, which is realised in use. The meaning evolves over reading and is not the same from reader to reader – rather it embodies the cultural and ideological assumptions readers bring to the text. The meaning is a unique configuration and interaction of what both reader and writer bring to the text. Explicitness is not a text phenomena but a social interactive one – it depends on what reader and writer share. Skilled writers anticipate responsive understanding in their text.

In writing, the expanding scope of theories has been accompanied by expanding conceptions of writing. How writers approach and understand writing can be a function of the context for writing. One context might be the culture of the classroom. Formal schooling represents a very specific social context, and it is well to remember that many of our notions of what writing is about, and the skills that it entails and generates, are tied up with school-based writing (Scribner and Cole, 1988). This has tended to promote the notion that writing outside the school is of little importance; that everyday uses are not "real" writing. But in everyday life, such writing activities as the making of lists, the writing of messages in print or electronic form (in real time or off-line), and Facebook postings are socially and personally significant. Only recently has research acknowledged that along with the changing perspective goes a changing, expanded definition of writing, one that acknowledges the socially embedded, communicative purpose.

In the view of current theorizing, text can be seen from two perspectives: "a thing in itself that can be recorded, analysed, and discussed, and also a process that is the outcome of a socially produced occasion" (Knapp and Watkins, 2005, p. 13). Forms of text (genres) produced ***in*** and ***by*** specific social institutions (like within schooling) will have some stability, to the extent that there is relative stability of the social structures (Kress, 1993).[1]

Teachers have been faced with a changing landscape and some quite nuanced conceptualising and theorising around writing. There is considerable scope for confusion. First, in terms of wider theorising, writing moved from meaning encapsulated in text to writing processes as researchers sought to understand the social dimensions of their domains. In terms of pedagogy, the findings from cognitive model research became the basis of "process writing", attributed to Donald Graves and associates. Teachers of writing, depending on the version of the "process writing" pedagogy to which they were exposed, engaged students in practising the craft in varying ways and to varying degrees. Some focused on the cycle of processes that a writer went through but in a linear fashion – through generating ideas and translating them into written form to revising, editing, and publishing. Others were more flexible, recognising the recursive nature of the processes and the fact that not all writing needed to be "published". Some focused on authentic contexts and allowing choice while others recognised that to empower writers, there was a need for them to experience writing for a range of audiences and purposes so some direction was

[1] This is the theoretical perspective represented by the asTTle writing tool, where writing is seen as serving seven major purposes – a core set of generic processes that encapsulate what the text is doing (Knapp and Watkins, 2005).

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required. Layered onto the writing processes was a cycle of pedagogical "moves": modelling writing, independent writing, and sharing of writing, often termed the "writing workshop". The extent to which any explicit teaching occurred within this cycle – for example, younger writers experiencing writing for a range of purposes, or the use of the conference as a form of teaching to move a student forward as a writer – was variable. These issues were at the heart of the critique of the process-writing movement.

But then the perspective shifted again. Inherent in the current view is that writing involves not only a set of cognitive processes but also complex cultural knowledge about use within a given context. So writing development cannot meaningfully be separated from the context of development; writing cannot be separated from its social purpose. Writing is a social and cultural practice in which the term "genre' refers to the processes involved in "getting things done" through language, (Kress, 1993). Here there is potential for confusion. "Genre" is used in a number of ways. It is often used to refer to a particular form of text, such as a novel or, more specifically, science fiction. But, as theorising has shifted, genres have come to be seen as produced ***in*** and ***by*** specific social institutions – the "getting things done through language" notion.

At the same time as theory moved to this socio-cultural perspective, linguistic theory, particularly in Australia, was utilised to specify forms of language commonly associated with particular text types (for example, Derewianka, 1990; Wing, 1991), not situated within specific social contexts. It is a subtle but important shift to think about features, structure, or dimensions of writing and processes of writing as being *commonly* associated with a generic social purpose (rather than a text type). This notion of generic social purpose was the approach taken to inform the criteria developed in the asTTle writing rubrics, where specific criteria were devised for each communicative purpose. Focusing on writing as constructed within a specific social context for a particular purpose prevents decontextualised teaching of text features using rubrics or similar tools. Investigation is needed of the best way to support teachers to gain the depth of knowledge needed to develop writers who can communicate powerfully in the contexts required, for example across discourse or discipline communities.

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Appendix 2: Scan of existing resources that support the teaching of writing

This appendix provides a list of resources that support the teaching of writing in years 1-10, that are readily available, and that could be expected to be found in many schools' resource rooms or libraries. It is arranged in two groups – those published by the Ministry of Education, and others.

Crown publications

Ministry of Education. (1992). *Dancing with the Pen: The Learner as Writer.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Exploring Language: A Handbook for Teachers*. Wellington: Learning Media and the Learning Centre Trust.

Ministry of Education. (c1996). *Describe, Explain, Argue: teaching and learning transactional writing*. Christchurch: User Friendly Resource Enterprises.

Ministry of Education. (2003). *The English Writing Exemplars*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1-4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2006). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5-8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2002). *Guided Reading videos years 1-4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2005). *Guided Reading videos years 5-8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Making Language and Learning Work: Handbook and DVD 3*. Wellington: Cognition Consulting Ltd, University of Canterbury Education Plus, and Visual Learning.

Ministry of Education. (2008). English Language Learning Progressions. Available on the Internet at: http://englishonline.tki.org.nz/English-Online/Teaching-as-inquiry2/English-Language-Learning-Progressions

Ministry of Education. (2010). *Accelerating Writing Progress in Years 7 and 8*. Available on the Internet at: http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/Writing/Accelerating-Writing-Progress-in-Years-7-and-8

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Non-Crown publications

Anderson, K. (2001). *Motivating the Reluctant Writer*. Wellington. Learning Media.

Annandale, K. et al. (2005). *First Steps Literacy: Writing Map of Development*. Sydney, Australia: Pearson Primary. (book and CD-ROM)

Barrs, M. and Cork, V. (2001). *The reader in the writer: the links between the study of literature and writing development at Key Stage 2*. London: Centre for Language in Primary Education.

Bradford, C. (1992). *Genre in Perspective: a whole language approach*. Gosford, Australia: Ashton Scholastic.

Carruthers, L., Braund, H., and Gibbon, D. (2009). *Recounts for ages 5-7* . Leamington Spa : Scholastic. (book and CD-ROM)

Collis, K. (2007). *Nonfiction text types*. South Yarra, Australia: Macmillan Education. (wallcharts)

Cowley, J. (2010). *Writing from the Heart: How to Write for Children*. Auckland: Storylines Children's Literature Charitable Trust of New Zealand.

Davis, A. (2007). *Teaching Reading Comprehension*. Wellington. Learning Media

Derewianka, B. (1990). *Exploring How Texts Work*. Sydney, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.

Drysdale, J. (2004). *Functional writing: writing tasks for middle school students*. Invercargill: Essential Resources.

Hood, H. (1995). *Left to Write*. Auckland: Berkley Curriculum Publishing.

Hood, H. (1997). *Left to Write Too*. Auckland. Berkley Curriculum Publishing.

Langley, M. (2005). *The Story with Writing: Using story-based activities to develop writing skills*. Invercargill: Essential Resources Educational Publishers Ltd.

Langley, M. (2009). *The Story with Language: Using story-based activities to develop knowledge of how language works.* Invercargill: Essential Resources Educational Publishers Ltd.

Langley, M. (2009). *The Story with Reading: Using story-based activities to develop reading skills.* Invercargill: Essential Resources Educational Publishers Ltd.

Learning Media. (2006). *Write Tools*. Wellington: Learning Media. (book, CD-ROM, charts, and reading cards)

Loane, G and Muir, S. (2010). *I've got something to say: leading young writers to authorship*. Whitianga: Aries Publihing Ltd.

Lowry, B. (2008). *Juicy Writing: Inspiration and Techniques for Young Writers*. Auckland: Allen and Unwin.

Mealy, V.T. (1986). *From reader to writer: creative writing in the middle grades using picture*

books. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

Olness, R. (2005). *Using literature to enhance writing instruction: a guide for K-5 teachers*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Parker, E. and Pardini, T. (2006). *The words came down!: English language learners read, write, and talk across the curriculum.* Portland: Stenhouse Publishers.

Soryl, Y. (2010). *Early Words*. Christchurch. Phonic Training. (book and DVD)

Tremewan, T. (2009). *The Story with Editing: Using story-based activities to extend skills in checking, correcting, and developing your own work*. Invercargill: Essential Resources Educational Publishers Ltd.

Wing, J.L. (1991). *Write ways: modelling writing forms.* Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.

Ideas factory

Forsyth, A.K. (2007). The Ideas Factory. Activities to inspire creative writing: Books 1–6. Invercargill: Essential Resources.

PM Writing

Smith, A. and Randell, B. (2007). *PM writing: Exemplars for teaching writing 1.* Melbourne, Australia: Thomson Nelson.

Smith, A. and Randell, B. (2007). *PM writing: Exemplars for teaching writing. 2.* Melbourne, Australia: Thomson Nelson.

Ciuffetelli, P. (2007). *PM writing: Exemplars for teaching writing 3*. Melbourne, Australia: Thomson Nelson.

Smith, A. and Ciuffetelli, P. (2009). *PM writing: Exemplars for teaching writing 4.* Melbourne, Australia: Nelson Cengage Learning.

Primary Writing Series

Primary Writing Books A-G. Perth: RIC Publications.

Editing Skills (Ages 6-7). Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

Editing Skills (Ages 8-9). Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

Editing Skills (Ages 10-11). Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

Editing Skills (Ages 11+). Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

Introducing Text Types Language Posters. Perth: RIC Publications.

Understanding Text Types Language Posters. Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

Introducing text types Interactive CD. Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

Understanding text types Interactive CD. Perth: R.I.C. Publications.

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The Story with Grammar Series
Lower and Middle Primary

Langley, M. (2006). *Using story-based activities to develop knowledge of how language works. Book 1: Parts of Speech*. *Book 2: Building Sentences*. *Book 3: Punctuation*. *Book 4: Vocabulary*. Invercargill: Essential Resources Educational Publishers Ltd.

Upper Primary to Secondary

Langley, M. (2004). *Using story-based activities to develop knowledge of how language works. Book 1: Parts of Speech*. *Book 2: Building Sentences*. *Book 3: Punctuation*. Invercargill: Essential Resources Educational Publishers Ltd.

Targeting Text series

Munn, K. et al. (c. 1999). *Targeting Text – Lower Primary, Books 1–3.* Glebe, Australia: Blake Education.

Barwick, J. et al. (c. 1998). *Targeting Text – Middle Primary, Books 1–3*. Glebe, Australia: Blake Education.

Barwick, J. et al. (c. 1999). *Targeting Text – Upper Primary, Books 1–3*. Glebe, Australia: Blake Education.

Text Types for Primary Schools

Durkin, P., Ferguson, V., and Sperring, H. (2006). *Starter Book* and *Books 1–6.* 2nd ed. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Websites

http://www.memfox.com/essential-english.html
http://schools.natlib.govt.nz

Magazines

The Literature Base (1990-). Leura, Australia: Magpies Magazines.

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Appendix 3: Annotated bibliography

Dix, S., & Amoore, L. (2010). Becoming curious about cats: A collaborative writing project. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 33*(3), 134-150.

This article explains that students' interests and achievement in *writing* are often debated and located in theoretical and pedagogical arguments. The writers believe that these issues can polarise understandings of effective teaching practice. This article describes one teacher's classroom practice in a New *Zealand* primary school. It outlines a collaborative project between a local teacher and a university lecturer. The two educators were concerned about political and educational changes and the influence this had on teachers' *writing* pedagogy. They were concerned about the differences between the children's reading and *writing* achievement evident in this year three classroom. As researchers they were keen to explore the 'power of literature' as a way of enriching children's oral and written language experiences. The writers argue that by using quality literature in the classroom, with a focus on authors' literary techniques, students develop an awareness of how authors craft and construct texts, which leads to the development of a metalanguage, and enhances their own *writing* skills.

Key Words: Composition, quality literature, written communication, writing techiniques, metalanguage.

Education Review Office. (2009). *Reading and Writing in Years 1 and 2.* Wellington: Education Review Office.

This Education Review Office (ERO) evaluation focuses on how effectively reading and writing was taught in the first two years of schooling, and on how well teachers use assessment information to plan and evaluate their teaching.

It was established that about 70 percent of teachers made good use of a range of effective reading and writing teaching practices in Years 1 and 2 classes. Effective teachers were more likely to inquire into ways of improving their teaching, and work collaboratively with other staff to share good practice and their teaching was evidentially based, deliberate and gave children opportunities to practise new skills and knowledge during the instructional classroom programme.

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The majority of teachers were good at using assessment to reflect on and improve their teaching of reading and writing. These teachers were adept at using a variety of assessment sources to make judgements about children's literacy progress and achievement. They also applied a 'teaching as inquiry' process to find out what children had already learnt and what changes to make to their teaching, based on what children needed to learn next.

Although many classroom teachers used assessment information well, school leaders were less clear about how they should use data to set and monitor appropriate reading and writing achievement expectations for children in Years 1 and 2. It is of concern that only about a quarter of school leaders set expectations that strongly promoted high levels of reading and writing achievement for children in their first two years. Furthermore, in nearly two-thirds of schools, leaders used limited or poor processes to monitor the progress and achievement of these young children.

This evidence was collected from 212 primary schools having an education review during Term 1 and Term 2, 2009. The schools included full primary schools, contributing primary schools and composite schools of varying sizes and deciles in urban and rural locations.

Key words: writing; teacher practices; use of assessment information; improving and monitoring achievement.

Education Review Office. (2007). *Quality teaching in years 4 and 8: Writing*. Wellington: Education Review Office.

ERO evaluated the quality of teaching of writing at Year 4 and Year 8 in 159 state schools during Term 4, 2006. This evaluation aligns with the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP). In this report the quality of the teaching of writing was evaluated across six evaluative areas[2]. Overall, ERO found that 41 percent of teachers were effective or highly effective across these six areas. A further 46 percent of teachers were effective in some but less effective in others. Thirteen percent of

[2] The six categories were:

- Effectiveness of the learning programmes to reflect the New Zealand Curriculum
- Effectiveness of the resources and technologies used to teach writing
- Extent of the teachers subject and pedagogical knowledge of writing
- Effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of diverse groups of students within the class
- Effectiveness in assesing student achievement in writing
- Effectiveness in motivating and engaging students to achieve highly

teachers need to improve significantly across all aspects of their teaching of writing. For the 46 percent of teachers that were effective in some areas but not in others, the areas that were less effective included assessing learning in writing, and identifying and meeting the needs of the diversity of students; and to a lesser extent teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge of writing. Based on the findings of the report, ERO made recommendations to focus on improving aspects of both teacher practice and school wide practice.

This evaluation report also has a companion good practice report, *The Teaching of Writing: Good Practice*. It is noted that the aim of producing this report of good practice is to help schools review their own writing programmes. It discusses examples from three schools that had a high quality writing programme. The presentation of these examples matches the framework used for the evaluation report (*The Quality of Teaching in Years 4 and 8: Writing),* to enable readers to use both reports together. To summate good practice, this report outlines a number of common characteristics in these exemplar schools that contributed to the high quality of the programmes offered.

Key words: learning programmes; resources; good practice; teacher knowledge; meeting student needs; assessing student achievement; student motivation and engagement.

Harland, D. (2003). *Using asTTle persuasive writing: A case study of teaching argument writing.* asTTle Technical Report, #29. University of Auckland/Ministry of Education.

This report outlines a case study in teaching argument writing using the asTTle persuasive writing progressive indicators. This intervention program, which focused on the deep features of argumentative writing, successfully demonstrated that low-achieving students in Year 9 could be taught to produce longer and more persuasive essays. Further, this intervention shows that students could make and keep a one-curriculum level gain based on only an eight week training program and that regardless of differences in actual delivery by the teacher the intervention positively impacted on all students' ability to write more sophisticated argumentation. This study has also shown that the asTTle progress indicators can be used successfully to develop a teaching program and to monitor improvement in argumentative writing. It explains that the ability to write persuasively is very teachable and learnable when both teachers and students are provided with materials and strategies that make explicit the qualities of good writing.

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Key Words: persuasive writing progressive indicators; teaching argument writing; asTTle

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Hawthorne, S. (2007). How best to teach writing skills: A review of the research into effective ways of teaching writing. *English in Aotearoa*, *62,* 27-35.

The purpose of this article is to give teachers of English a brief history of research into writing and an update on the current state of evidence about the best ways to teach writing at secondary school level. The article claims that recent reports into where students are 'at' in terms of writing skills have been published and they paint a picture that says teachers need to do better in teaching writing skills. The article goes on to examine constraints, theoretical standpoints and cultural persuasions that may have influence on the process and teaching of writing. Of note is that the research drawn on in this article incorporates both a New Zealand and international perspective.

Key words: best practice;

Hawthorne, S. (2008). *Engaging reluctant writers: the nature of reluctance to write and the effect of a self-regulation strategy training programme on the engagement and writing performance of reluctant writers in secondary school English*. Unpublished thesis (PhD). The University of Auckland.

The studies reported in this thesis examine the way engagement and motivational theories provide insight and understanding into how to engage, more effectively, reluctant writers at the secondary school level. Models of 'writing engagement' and 'reluctance to write' are proposed.

Study One investigated the beliefs of experienced teachers of English about the nature of reluctance to write. The teachers were interviewed separately and asked to describe the characteristics of reluctant writers that they had taught displayed. The teachers identified the behaviours and beliefs that they believed these students exhibited and described what they tried to do to improve student engagement with writing.

Study Two developed a tool to measure different levels of engagement with writing. A questionnaire was piloted with 99 Year 10 students from four different secondary schools and then further tested and refined with 265 Year 10 students from two secondary schools. The final version of the resulting

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instrument was later used in the final phase of this project as a means of measuring improvements in reported engagement levels as the result of an intervention.

Study Three explored student beliefs about what hindered or aided their engagement with writing in the English classroom. Four focus groups were conducted involving 28 students from the two schools that had participated in the questionnaire study. The focus groups were divided into two types: engaged and reluctant writers. Results from the focus group study clarified the differences and similarities between the two groups of writers and helped to refine understanding of what was important in engaging writers with school based writing. The results suggest that interest in a topic and the perceived relevance of the task to the student are the main factors influencing engagement. Other findings suggest that reluctant writers are more likely to be influenced by teacher, self-belief and knowledge and skill factors than engaged writers who are more likely to want choice and control over their writing. Some gender differences also appeared. In particular, girls appeared to be more aware of the influence of self-belief factors on engagement, and reluctant girls appeared to be particularly influenced by teacher factors[3].

Finally, Study Four was an intervention study exploring the impact a self-regulation strategy development treatment had on the engagement and writing performance of Year 10 students. Students' ability to self-regulate during the writing process had been identified in each of the previous studies, and in prior research, as an important factor affecting writing engagement and achievement scores. This study specifically sought to measure if the intervention had a differing impact on reluctant versus non-reluctant students. Four treatment groups completed the writing engagement questionnaire before and after the intervention period. Pre and post samples of writing performance were also taken. Findings from this study showed that the reported levels of motivation to engage with writing, of reluctant writers, improved significantly as a result of the treatment and that the treatment had a significantly positive impact on the writing performance of all groups of students.

The results from this research suggest that the proposed models of engagement with writing and reluctance to write include important aspects of the two constructs. The study also shows that a self-regulation strategy development intervention set in a regular classroom environment can have positive impacts for all students, and suggests that reluctant writers benefit the most from such interventions.

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[3] Also see below (published article): Hawthorne, S. (2008). Students' beliefs about barriers to engagement with writing in secondary school English: A focus group study. Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 31(1), 30-42.

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Key words: engagement and motivational theories; student engagement; student reluctance; self regulation strategy; motivation; self belief;

Hawthorne, S. (2008). Students' beliefs about barriers to engagement with writing in secondary school English: A focus group study. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, *31*(1), 30-42.

This paper presents findings about student beliefs regarding the barriers they face in engaging with writing tasks in English. The participants were 28 Year 10 English students from two Auckland secondary schools. The students represented engaged writers and reluctant writers from the two schools. Results suggest that interest in a topic and the perceived relevance of the task to the student is the main factor influencing engagement. Other findings suggest that reluctant writers are more likely to be influenced by their teacher, self-belief and knowledge and skill factors than engaged writers, who are more likely to want choice and control over their writing. Some gender differences also appeared; in particular girls appeared to be more aware of the influence of self-belief factors on engagement, and reluctant girls were particularly influenced by teacher factors. This study informs English teachers of factors that are important in improving the engagement of students in writing tasks.

Key words: engagement; reluctant writers; teacher practice

Hawthorne, S. (2010). How the NZC's 'Effective Pedagogies' Link to NZATE's 'Effective Practices in the Teaching of Writing' resource. *English in Aotearoa*.

This article outlines how key practices that have been identified as making a positive difference to students' writing outcomes link very closely to the effective pedagogies adopted in the new curriculum document. The article outlines that in a study undertaken by NZATE prior to the inception of the creation of "Effective Practices in the Teaching of Writing" book and DVD (to be made available early 2011), concluded that there are two overarching aspects that teachers need to be aware of to be effective teachers of writing. Firstly, there is the 'what' aspect that is essentially to do with the types of knowledge and skills students need if they are to be confident and able writers. Secondly, there is the 'how' aspect that is to do with the particular approach teachers use to develop any or all of the types of knowledge and skills that students need. From this NZATE identified seven key practices from their review of research into different approaches to teaching writing that are believed help to improve the quality of student writing.

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These are:

(1) Instruction that clearly describes the learning intentions and success criteria for each writing task students are asked to engage with.
(2) Instruction that encourages students to collaborate with peers to produce texts and to refine and develop the four key skills and knowledge.
(3) Instruction that allows for individual, goal-directed work.
(4) Instruction that makes connections across and between texts, text types, content and students' own lives.
(5) Instruction that emphasises that writing is a process – i.e. requires students to work through the planning, drafting and revising stages of writing.
(6) Instruction that involves students in using strategies that helps them with their writing and in managing the many processes involved in producing effective pieces of writing.
(7) Feedback that is specific and mainly focused on the particular writing task and strategies/ procedures that students are working on and gives clear guidance on next steps to improve.

The remainder of the article goes on to make links between these identified key practices and the new curriculum's 'Effective Pedagogies'.

Key words:

Limbrick, L. *et al* (2008). *Enhancing capacity to analyse students writing*. Wellington: Teaching and Learning Research Initiative / The University of Auckland.

This project collected evidence that can be used to modify writing instruction to raise student achievement in writing. It was a partnership between lead teachers and teachers in the Manurewa Enhancement Initiative and the University of Auckland, Faculty of Education. It focused on enhancing teachers' capacity to analyse students' writing, using the English Exemplars (2003), and strengthening teacher practice by using evidence to inform teaching. It investigates the role of professional discussion in quality learning circles (focused on students' writing), and in enhancing teachers' knowledge about, and confidence and competence in implementing, writing processes and pedagogy.

Key words: English Exemplars; professional discussion; writing processes; writing pedagogy

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Limbrick, L., Bachanan, P., Goodwin, M., & Schwarcz, H. (2008). Improving students' writing: the impact of teacher knowledge and student-focused practice. *Set: Research information for teachers, 2*, 34-38.

This research report found that targeted writing instruction based on evidence from students' writing brought substantial improvements in student achievement, while teachers deepened their understanding of both the writing process and teaching writing. Teacher confidence was greater where leadership supported professional discussion and peer support. The teachers in this project demonstrated that when evidence is at the heart of planning and decision making, student achievement in writing is improved.

The project reported on in this article arose from a smaller earlier study[4] which has identified low student achievement in writing in a group of Manurewa schools.

Key words: Writing teaching; Student achievement; Teacher education; English curriculum; New Zealand; Professional development; Assessment

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Limbrick, L. & Knight, N. (2005). Close reading of students' writing: What teachers learn about writing. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, *4* (2), 5-22.

This article examines a professional development initiative in writing which provided teachers with the ability to be researchers with regards to their own knowledge about writing, writing assessment and writing instruction. Through close attention to student writing samples and debate in ascertaining writing levels using the English Exemplars, teachers articulated growing confidence in their knowledge of language and the writing process. This was reflected in an increased confidence in, and ability to articulate beliefs about, writing instruction. This study also supports the idea that a professional learning community has the potential to be the context within which this confidence be investigated and teacher knowledge enhanced.

Key words: Teacher researchers, writing, professional learning communities, English writing exemplars.

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[4] Limbrick, L., Buchanan, P., Goodwin, M., & Schwarcz, H. (2005). Developing a self sustaining professional development programme in writing in a group of schools in the Manurewa Enhancement Initiative. Unpublished manuscript. University of Auckland.

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Locke T. (2006). The professional knowledge of English teachers in 'new times'. *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years, 14* (1), 13-22

This article considers teacher professional identity as it applies to English teachers, paying particular attention to the question of English teachers' professional knowledge. The author focuses on the matter of writing arguing that different models of English construct different professional knowledge in the teachers of writing. The author considers the challenges presented to teachers by the digitalisation of text and for professional knowledge and classroom practice.

Key words: English teachers; technology, online teaching; teacher competencies; teaching practice; writing teachers

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Ministry of Education. (1999). *Report of the literacy task force*. Wellington: Literacy Task Force.

The Literacy Taskforce endorsed the Government's goal that "By 2005, every child turning nine will be able to read, write, and do maths for success." This report explains that this goal requires teachers to be well prepared for their challenging jobs. This can be done through high-quality teacher education that includes a strong focus on developing the skills and knowledge necessary to implement best practice in the teaching of reading and writing. It means that teachers should be supported by strong professional leadership in their schools, through ongoing access to quality professional development opportunities, with appropriate classroom materials, and with the support of effective interventions when they identify children who need a period of intensive specialised teaching.

The Literacy Taskforce report goes on to discuss children's learning being enhanced by effective partnerships between school and home and that the role of the community is one of importance.

Key words: teacher education; best practice; professional leadership; quality professional development; specialized interventions; effective partnerships.

Parr, J. Glasswell, K. & Aikman, M. (2007). Supporting Teacher Learning and Informed Practice in Assessment Tools for Learning. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *35* (1), 69-87.

This paper concerns teacher learning. It describes the impact on teacher knowledge and reported practice of working with diagnostic assessment tools for writing. These tools were specifically designed with a dual purpose: to provide diagnostic information about students to guide teaching for

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enhanced learning outcomes and also to develop teacher understanding about features of, and developmental progressions in, writing. The paper describes the features of the tools which facilitate teacher learning and goes on to present three small-scale studies conducted during and after development of the tools to explore their impact. Discussion on this focuses on teachers' reports of their learning about writing and how working with the assessment tools impacted a range of teaching practices.

Results indicate that criterion-referenced writing assessment tools have the potential to enhance teacher knowledge and shape practices in positive ways. The design of the assessment tools articulates aspects of writing that research and theory suggest impact student achievement in writing. The design also makes concrete for teachers both performance indicators and a progression in these indicators. It was noted that undertaking such writing assessment allows teachers to enhance their pedagogical content knowledge about language. Rubrics that also provide descriptions of progressions allow teachers to view their students' learning about writing in a developmental framework. The criterion-referenced information that such rubrics provide allows teachers to look backward to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching.

Key Words: Developing teacher learning, writing assessment tools, enhancing student learning outcomes.

Parr, J. & Limbrick, L., (2010). Contextualising practice: Hallmarks of effective teachers of writing. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. *26*, 583-590.

This study identifies practices of effective teachers of writing. Three schools with significantly higher achievement in an area that underperforms nationally were identified and within them, those teachers whose students exhibited superior progress were selected. Multiple data collection methods were used which included lesson observation, analysis of the classroom environment, teacher and student interviews and teacher documentation. Common was a commitment to formative assessment practices and classroom environments supportive of student literacy learning. Characteristics of teachers whose students showed a greater awareness of their learning were:

- a sense of purpose and meaningfulness;
- of coherence or connectedness; and
- of being consistent and systematic.

This paper argues that student achievement in writing is likely to be higher when teachers exhibit these strengths.

Key words: Writing; Teacher effectiveness; Contextualising practice

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Parr, J. & Timperley, H. (2010). Feedback to writing, assessment for teaching and learning and student progress. *Assessing Writing*, *15,* 68-85.

This paper establishes the importance of written responses within the assessment of the learning framework in the writing classroom. Within this framework, the quality of responses was defined in terms of providing information about:

(i) where students were positioned relative to the performance desired;

(ii) about key features of the desired performance, and

(iii) what was needed to achieve the desired performance.

A study of teachers in six schools provided data regarding their ability to give quality, formative written feedback to a piece of writing. This quality score related significantly to gains in their students' achievement on a nationally standardised measure of writing. Teacher's ability to provide written response that serves assessment for learning functions appears to be a powerful component of teacher practice that develops student writing. The paper suggests that considerable teacher pedagogical content knowledge is required to provide such feedback.

Key words: Formative writing assessment; Feedback; Written response; Writing achievement; Teacher knowledge

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Vanstone, B. (2008). *Important messages from students' responsive writing: "...a big holloboleoo"*. Unpublished thesis, (MEd), University of Waikato.

This thesis explores responsive written feedback as a means of mediating the written language of six to eight year olds. This research aimed to develop understandings about the effect that responsive writing has on all of the students who participated. A review of the literature identified the importance of socio-cultural contexts for mediating students' learning, including a specific examination of responsive written feedback and its effects on students' written language in English and in Maori medium settings. Research included a retrospective look at two different responsive writing studies with results suggesting a very positive impact from mediating the learning of all students, within the context of responsive written feedback. This research also provides a perspective on students as second language learners.

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Key Words: Multicultural education; Written language; Teaching methods; Feedback; ESOL; Maori medium education

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Useful – but no full text

- Jesson, R., McNaughton, S., & Parr, J. M. Designing professional development in writing instruction which will transfer. *European Association for Research in Learning and Instruction.* Amsterdam, August 25-29, 2009.

Massey only has journal in hard copy

- Glasswell, K., & Parr, J. (2009). Teachable Moments: Linking Assessment and Teaching in Talk around Writing. *Language Arts, 86* (5), 352-361.

Abstract: Traditionally, assessing student writing ability has often been product-focused. Advocates of child-centered process-oriented classrooms, however, suggest that teachers should also focus on understanding children's writing behaviors in the context of meaningful communicative tasks. In such an approach, writing conferences are one way in which teachers can gather information to use for teaching purposes. While engaging with children around writing, skilled teachers can make the most of writing conference interactions by taking advantage of the "teachable moments" that children present to them. In this article, we will discuss teachable moments as powerful instructional episodes in which assessment and teaching mesh to produce a finely tuned instructional system that moves students forward. We identify and explore three key hallmarks of the teachable moment as assessment and instruction in action, and discuss how teachers can make the most of these seemingly simple, but instructionally complex events. (Contains 2 figures.)
Massey only has journal in hard copy

- Thompson, M. (2007). Inspiring young writers: research into the teaching of writing which has influenced the professional development for secondary literacy in Otago and Southland. *Reading Forum New Zealand*, 22 (1), 25-28.

Abstract : Reports on a project designed to gather data about the ways teachers engage students at all levels in the writing process. Discusses the findings of a questionnaire survey of teachers and students at primary and secondary level in the region.

Massey only has journal in hard copy

- Martin, E. (2008). Commentary: Writing with Resources in the NCEA - How Well Is It Working? *The New Zealand Language Teacher*, 34, 6-7.

Massey only has journal in hard copy

- Parr, J. (1991) Evaluation of the process of writing. *Set: Research information for teachers*, 2(6).

Key words: Student assessment, writing processes, writing teaching.

Massey SET accesses limited to 2005 onwards

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- Phillips, D. (1983). Encouraging writing: helping pupils to enjoy the writing process. *Set: Research information for teachers*, *2*(11)

Abstract: Researchers and keen teachers now see writing as a craft, needing workshop conditions as well as precepts and practice. These conditions, and the future of writing, are discussed in this review of research.

Key words: Writing processes; Writing teaching; Schools; Microcomputers; Computer uses in education; New Zealand

Massey SET accesses limited to 2005 onwards

- Beard, R. (2002). The effective teaching of writing. *SET: Research Information for Teachers*, 1, 44-48.

Abstract : Concentrates on the question of how fluent and confident writing, with an emphasis on improved syntactical structure and grammatical awareness within particular genres, can be most effectively taught. Touches on the progress in relation to range and processes in writing, and points out the interrelation among composing, transcription, and rereading. Comments on the value of shared writing and the worth of guided writing as compared to presentational, natural process, or individualised approaches. Explores the renewed interest in grammatical reference and the possibilities of linking grammar to authentic communicative purposes; points out underutilised studies on sentence combining, grammatical features of general style, and ways of dealing with grammatical errors.

Massey SET accesses limited to 2005 onwards

- Parr, J. (1987). Social and cognitive aspects of computers in the writing process. *English in Australia*, 82, 53-62

Key words: Cognitive processes; Computers; Word processing; Writing processes

My online access to “English in Australia” only goes back as far as 1991….

- Phillips, D. (1989) Responding Effectively to Pupils' Writing : a new study on the teaching of writing from NZCER. English in Aotearoa, 10, 11-18.

Abstract: Summarises a report on the teaching of writing in primary and secondary schools in 1988. Based on interviews with 65 successful teachers, of whom 25 were selected for observation. Outlines common approaches towards classroom management, the writing process, evaluation and feedback, intervention and assistance. Reports teachers’ views of writing.
Key words : College students’ writings, New Zealand Teaching School prose Curriculum-based assessment Education, Elementary Education, Secondary

Massey online access to “English in Aoteroa” only goes back as far as 2005

- New Zealand Association for the Teaching of English (1989). Teaching writing : a position statement. *English in Aotearoa*, 10, 9-10.

Abstract : States essential principles in the teaching of writing.

Key words: Writing Teaching

My online access to "English in Aoteroa" only goes back as far as 2005….

- Bright, C. (2008). Enhancing Student Writing: A Guide for Integrating Support into Subject Teaching. *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*, *14*(1), 82-83

Massey only has journal in hard copy

Limbrick, L., Buchanan, P., Goodwin, M., & Schwarcz, H. (2005). *Developing a self sustaining professional development programme in writing in a group of schools in the Manurewa Enhancement Initiative*. Unpublished manuscript. University of Auckland.

Theses of possible interest – but no full text

- Glasswell, K. (1991). *The patterning of difference: teachers and children constructing development in writing.* Unpublished thesis (PhD). University of Auckland.

Key words: Primary education ; Primary school students ; Teacher effectiveness ; Writing processes ; Writing (Composition)

- Glenn, J. (2009). *Using a feedback log to improve academic writing in secondary classrooms.* Unpublished theses, (PhD), University of Auckland.

Key words: Secondary school students ; Academic standards ; Writing improvement ; Feedback ; Secondary education ; Writing skills

- Woodside, P. (1997*). Does responsive feedback influence children's writing development?* Unpublished thesis, (BEd), Dunedin College of Education.

Key words: Children ; Feedback ; Handwriting ; Writing (Composition) ; Writing improvement

- McDonald, J. (1991). The effect of written versus verbal responsive feedback on the quantity of children's writing. Unpublished thesis (BEd), Dunedin College of Education.

Key words: Children ; Writing (Composition) ; Feedback

- Davison, J. (2004). *The impact of a scaffolded writing programme on the narrative writing of Year 5 and Year 6 students.* Unpublished thesis, (MA). Victoria University of Wellington.

Key words: Writing (Composition) ; Writing skills ; Writing teaching ; Writing improvement ; Scaffolding (Teaching technique) ; Children ; Narrative learning

- Naidu, S. (2003). *The impact of teacher modelling and responsive feedback on the writing in 9-11 year old students*, unpublished thesis (MEd), Victoria University of Wellington.

Key words: Writing (Composition) ; Writing improvement ; Writing skills ; Teacher response ; Student development ; Teaching process ; Feedback

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- Selbie, R. (2007). *Quality writing: a case study of literacy practice*, unpublished thesis (MedTechg). University of Otago.

Key words: Writing (Composition) ; Writing ability ; Writing skills ; Literacy ; Teacher effectiveness ; Educational quality

- Newson, J. (1993). *Fostering independence and a willingness to write,* unpublished thesis (BEd), Dunedin College of Education.

Key words: Writing (Composition) ; Teaching practice ; Education

- Hill, J. (1994). *How written responsive feedback from teachers and peers affects the amount children write*, unpublished thesis (BEd), Dunedin College of Education.

Key words: Children ; Writing (Composition) ; Feedback ; Teacher response ; Peer influence

"All of these theses available on Interloan through New Zealand Libraries but restrictions may apply"

Searched by key words and authors in ERIC, Proquest, Informit, education research complete, Index New Zealand, NZCER publication lists to find full text versions of all these – no luck.

Books of interest

Locke, T. (2005). Writing positions and rhetorical spaces. In Doecke, B., & Parr, G. (eds) *Writing = learning* (pp.75-95). Kent Town South Australia: Wakefield Press in association with the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.

Key words: English teachers; English teaching; Language; Literacy education; Student writing models; Writing teachers; Writing teaching

Abstract: The author's starting point for this chapter is a short article by Kevin Murray entitled 'Responding to students' writing: a do-it- yourself in-service kit' first published in 1984 and republished in 1996 and 1999, and again here. One might say that the author is engaging in a conversation across two decades with a man whom he has never met but whom he has come to admire. This act of writing of the author's is, of course, historically situated. He describes himself as occupying a rhetorical space, because he is deferring to the position Murray himself occupied, as an initiator of this conversation and as a special member of his imagined audience. The author is also keenly aware that this audience includes pre-service and beginning teachers, that group that the editors of this book have described as the author's intended audience. However, the rhetorical space the author is occupying as a writer also includes other participants, and they too have a part to play in response to his gesture of addressing them. As for the place of knowledge about language in the English/literacy classroom as an aid to the improvement of student writing - in many respects, the jury is still out on this one. The formal teaching of syntax does not appear to have enhanced the quality of student writing, though certain kinds of instruction in sentence-combining (similar in some respects to what Murray suggests in respect of 'conjunction') do appear to have had some positive spin-offs. The author's provisional position on this question is that an approach to knowledge about language that begins with a focus on the context/text relationship and which shows students what they can achieve with as well as in language is the place to start. [Author abstract, ed]

Title: The best of Set: Writing.

Personal Author: Philips D (ed)
Added Personal Author: Adler C ; Barham I ; Dixon J ; Elley W ; Farmer I ; Gentry R ; Giacobbe M E ; Lamb H ; Parr J ; Philips D ; Simmonds K ; Snyder I ; Withers G ; Woods C ; Wylie M
Added Corporate Author: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) ; New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER)

Abstract: This collection presents 15 articles on writing, three of them new, and 12 of them representing the best of the 500 articles published since 1974 in "SET: Research Information for Teachers", a twice yearly publication by the New Zealand and Australian Councils for Education Research aimed at teachers, students, board members, and interested parents. The articles in the collection discuss acquisition and development, teaching issues, assessment and standards.

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