The Writing Revolution (TWR) Summary Evaluation Report

April 2025

Presented by:
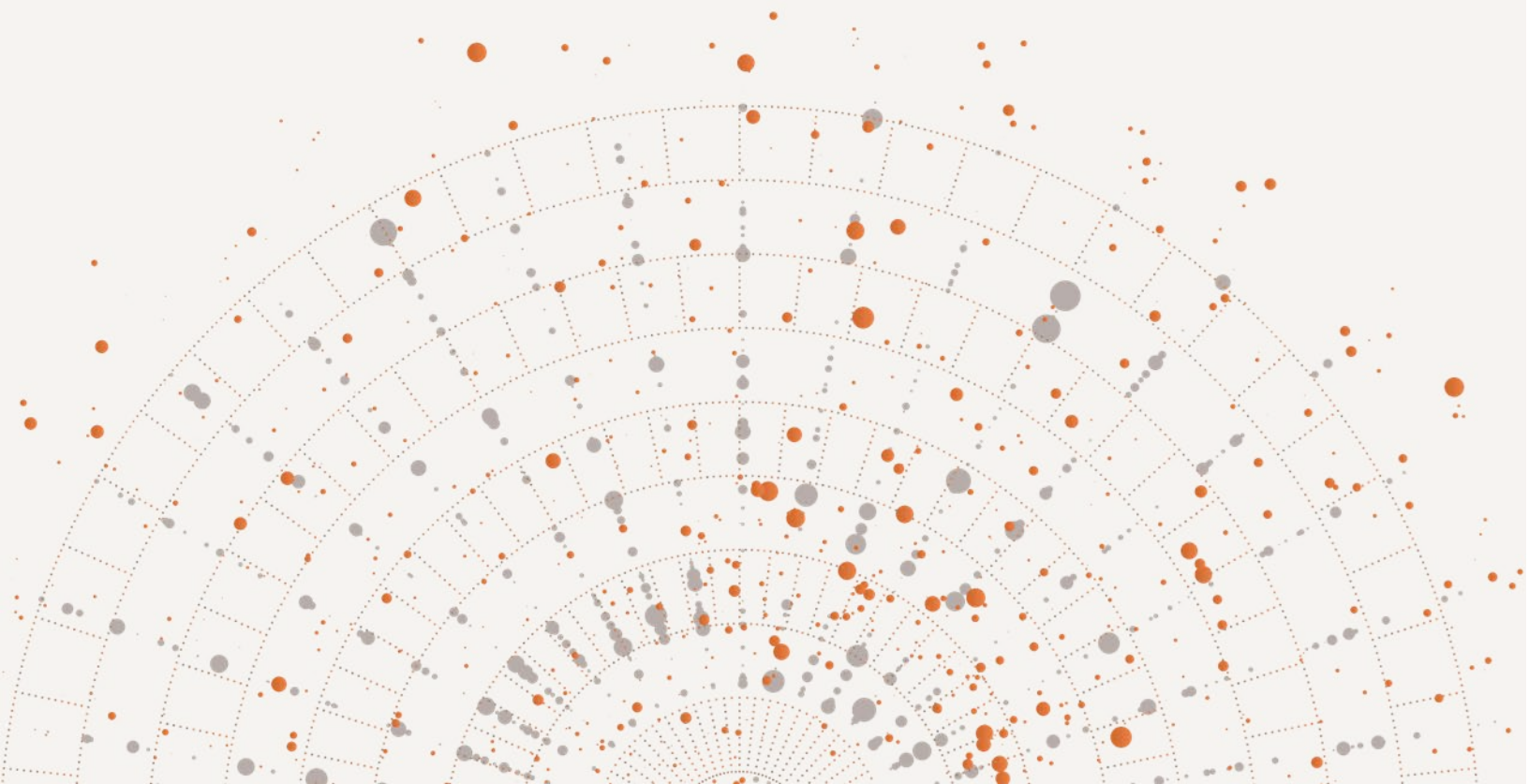Claudia Gentile, Senior Fellow
gentile-claudia@norc.org

Joy Zacharia, Senior Research Director II
zacharia-joy@norc.org
NORC at the University of Chicago

Presented to:
Kathleen Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
kmaloney@thewritingrevolution.org
The Writing Revolution

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Introduction

The Writing Revolution (TWR) is a non-profit organization committed to enabling all students, especially those from historically marginalized communities, to become proficient writers, readers, and critical thinkers. According to the most recent tests in writing, only 27% of 8th and 12th graders in the United States perform at or above the proficient level on NAEP literacy assessments (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)[1]. The results are even more staggering for low-income students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners, who often enter elementary school with fewer pre-literacy skills than their peers. The need for explicit writing instruction is critical, especially with educational gaps in literacy that existed before the pandemic widening. Moreover, most teachers receive little training in how to teach writing and often feel unprepared to teach writing. While educational standards set goals for students to write more in all subjects, they do not provide a map showing teachers how to reach those goals.

Through TWR, teachers and school leaders are trained and supported in implementing the Hochman Method© (the method), an explicit set of evidence-based strategies for teaching expository writing. TWR trains cohorts of teachers in how to implement the method schoolwide and supports implementation with online resources. To deepen trained teachers' understanding of planning and implementation, a series of research-based workshops are also offered. Workshops cover research-based practices for effectively incorporating the TWR strategies learned in the courses in K-12 classroom instruction, including best practices for planning and implementing the method into classroom instruction, how to use assessment to inform instructional decisions, and ways to create an engaging and motivating writing environment. Teachers are also invited to summer literacy summits hosted by districts across the country and take part in partner school visits.

Monroe City School District (MCSD) in Louisiana started working with TWR in 2018 to help shift the district's approach to writing instruction so that all students become proficient writers, readers, and critical thinkers. In MCSD, teachers who fully incorporate the approach in their classrooms and share their learnings with other teachers can become lead TWR teachers or *Revolutionary Teachers*. These Revolutionary Teachers collaborate with fellow teachers to support the understanding and use of the TWR strategies. In MCSD, a total of 395 teachers have been trained through TWR and, of these, 39 became Revolutionary Teachers.

To gain a deeper understanding of the role the Revolutionary Teachers play in schools implementing TWR and the effects of having a Revolutionary Teacher on students' writing performance, TWR contracted with NORC at the University of Chicago to conduct an evaluation study. In May 2024, the NORC team met several times with TWR to co-design a study that focused on staff who received TWR training while working at a partner school within the MCSD in Louisiana. The overarching goal of the study was to identify and promote the benefits of having Revolutionary Teachers across its partner schools.

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[1]National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2011* (NCES 2012–470). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Methodology

This section describes the evaluation questions that guide the study as well as the methods used, and data sources gathered to address the evaluation questions. We also describe how the data was analyzed.

Evaluation Questions

NORC and TWR co-designed the following evaluation questions that guided the study:

1. *To what extent does having a Revolutionary Teacher influence the adoption of TWR throughout the school and district?*
2. *To what extent does being a Revolutionary Teacher influence teachers' leadership roles and career paths?*
3. *To what extent does having a Revolutionary Teacher impact student writing performance and development?*
4. *How does students' performance on state assessments from schools that have a Revolutionary Teacher compared to the performance of students at other Louisiana schools that do not have a Revolutionary Teacher?*

Methods and Data Sources

NORC investigated these questions through individual interviews and the collection of administrative data. In close collaboration with TWR, the NORC team selected the variables for the administrative data, identified staff to participate in the interviews, and developed the interview protocols. A description of each methodological approach follows.

Individual Interviews

To address **Evaluation Questions 1, 2, and 3**, the NORC team developed and conducted individual interviews with teachers, district literacy coaches and school administrators at the Monroe District schools implementing TWR. Interviews were conducted virtually using a semi-structured protocol developed with input from TWR and designed to gather information about the ways TWR is implemented at interviewees' schools, the role teachers and coaches play, how they engage as a TWR Revolutionary Teacher, how TWR has influenced their career trajectory and plans, and how TWR has contributed to student development. As part of the interview process, the NORC team read a consent statement and asked the staff for consent to take part in and to record the interview. Protocols questions varied somewhat, depending on the role of the interviewee (teacher/literacy coach, administrator). Data collected from these interviews is intended to enable TWR to better understand the role Revolutionary Teachers have in the implementation and dissemination of TWR within schools. Each protocol was submitted for Institutional Review Board approval prior to use. See Appendix A for copies of the interview protocols.

At the start of the study, TWR shared with the NORC team a list of MCSD teachers, literacy coaches and administrators who took part in TWR since the initial training in 2018. The list included 35 staff who currently work at or recently left the MCSD and took part in TWR training while working at MCSD. While many staff continue to work at schools within the district, several have left and currently work in other school districts or have since retired from teaching. After TWR shared the list of staff with the NORC team, the team drafted an introductory email that TWR sent out with a request to take part in a 45–60-minute virtual interview. The NORC team sent follow-up emails and called staff at their respective schools to schedule the interviews. In total, 14 interviews were conducted: ten with teachers, two with literacy coaches, and another two with school administrators. Interviewees represented 12 MCSD schools and of the 14 educators interviewed, 11 still work in the school district. The interviews took place before, during or after school from October 17 through November 15, 2024. Additional outreach was conducted to try to increase the number of interviews conducted.

Administrative Data

To further address **Evaluation Question 3 and address Evaluation Question 4** about whether having a Revolutionary Teacher in the school impacts students' performance on the Louisiana State Writing test, the NORC team compared the outcomes of students in MCSD schools that had a Revolutionary Teacher to similar students in MCSD schools that did not have a Revolutionary Teacher.[2] Data compiled and reviewed included:

- Louisiana State Writing test spring 2023 and spring 2024 data for grades 3-8;
- ELA LEAP score and writing sub-scores for spring 2023 and spring 2024 for grades 3-8;
- School demographics (gender, race, ethnicity, economic disadvantage); and
- Student demographics (grade, gender, race, special education, economic disadvantage).

Note that, while TWR is implemented in K-12 classrooms in MCSD, we focused our analyses on grades 3-8 because these are the grades for which writing assessment data was available. NORC established a data sharing agreement with MCSD so MCSD could share de-identified student-level data with the NORC team. The NORC team received the data through the secure data system, cleaned and compiled the data.

Data Analysis

Interviews

The NORC team recorded the interviews and took field notes. Those notes along with the transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed deductively using a codebook that identified evaluation questions and major themes. Data from notes and transcripts were coded for the presence and absence of related themes and compared both within and across participant types.

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[2]Note that TWR materials are available to all schools in Louisiana, through the State Department of Education website.

Administrative Data

NORC used a technique called coarsened exact matching (CEM) to create analysis groups that were balanced on pre-intervention achievement and other important characteristics. By creating groups that are similar on observed characteristics at baseline (at the beginning of the school year), we are better able to attribute differences in outcomes (at the end of the school year) to the program. Like other matching methods, CEM is designed to create treatment and comparison groups that are similar on important, observed characteristics to reduce the confounding influence of those measures on the outcome.

We selected CEM for this study because it could ensure a close match on the pre-intervention measure while allowing exact matching on other characteristics. CEM is superior to propensity score and other matching methods in reducing imbalance and model dependence and retaining a large proportion of the initial sample. Using CEM, continuous variables are coarsened into categorical variables and then all possible combinations of the coarsened measures are used to stratify the sample. Students in strata that contain both treatment and comparison students are assigned weights according to the ratio of students in the stratum. In the analysis, the original variables are used along with the weight obtained through CEM.

To prepare for the analysis, TWR classified each of the MCSD schools by level of implementation (the extent that teachers in the school are incorporating TWR strategies into the classroom). Schools were categorized as *full*: multiple teachers implemented TWR, usually across grade levels and/or subject areas and engaged in preparing materials to add TWR activities to their curriculum; *partial*: multiple teachers implemented TWR but usually within the same grade level/subject area; and *minimal*: only one teacher received training in TWR. Of the 10 TWR schools, three were classified as full; six as partial; and one as minimal. Table 1 shows the level of implementation as well as some key characteristics for each of these MCSD schools. For this analysis we looked at those schools classified as *full implementation*: J.S. Clark Magnet, Minnie Ruffin, and Sallie Humble (**highlighted** in Table 1).

Table 1. Level of Implementation and Characteristics of MCSD Schools

School	Level of Implementation	Female	LEP	Econ	Black	Hispanic
Barkdull Faulk Elementary School	Partial	51.9%	0.5%	98.1%	95.3%	1.9%
Berg Jones Elementary School	Partial	49.7%	0.3%	99.7%	98.8%	0.3%
Carver Elementary School	Partial	49.5%	0.0%	98.5%	98.0%	1.3%
Cypress Point Elementary School	Partial	48.9%	3.2%	93.1%	89.9%	3.4%
J.S. Clark Magnet Elementary School	Full	53.0%	0.0%	72.1%	96.8%	0.0%
Madison James Foster Elementary School	Partial	44.4%	0.0%	98.2%	99.3%	0.0%

School	Level of Implementation	Female	LEP	Econ	Black	Hispanic
Minnie Ruffin Elementary School	Full	50.6%	0.0%	94.6%	97.5%	0.6%
Roy Neal Shelling, Sr. Elementary	Minimal	49.0%	0.3%	98.5%	95.7%	0.3%
Sallie Humble Elementary School	Full	51.5%	2.1%	60.4%	40.4%	4.1%
Thomas Jefferson Elementary	Partial	47.8%	0.4%	98.9%	97.8%	0.4%

For *Evaluation Question 3*, treatment students were identified as those students in the three full implementation elementary schools—J.S. Clark Magnet, Minnie Ruffin, and Sallie Humble. Comparison students came from the other seven elementary schools in the district that were implementing TWR at a lower level.

Matching was conducted on key characteristics which have been shown in past research to be predictive of student achievement: gender, race, special education status, economic disadvantage status, grade, and a pre-intervention academic measure. Table 2 shows the proportion of students at the three treatment and seven comparison schools by each of these key characteristics.

Table 2. Key Characteristics of Unmatched Sample, by Treatment and Comparison

Key Characteristics	Treatment	Comparison	Difference	Significance
Female	51.3%	51.5%	-0.2%	
Black	62.1%	97.2%	-35.1%	*
White	30.2%	0.9%	29.3%	*
Special education	9.8%	17.0%	-7.1%	*
Economically disadvantaged	70.0%	97.5%	-27.5%	*
Grade 4	48.0%	51.1%	-3.1%	
Grade 5	52.0%	48.9%	3.1%	
Number of students	427	530		

Note: * represents differences that are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

We used the matched sample to conduct a regression for each outcome as a function of the demographic characteristics and an indicator for treatment status. The analysis also accounted for the fact that students were grouped into separate treatment and comparison schools.

For *Evaluation Question 4*, treatment schools were identified as either the ten MCDS schools or the three full implementation MCSD schools, and comparison schools selected from the 694 other elementary schools in the state of Louisiana. Matching was conducted on gender, race, ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and a pre-intervention academic measure.

Key Findings

In this section, we summarize the key findings gathered through the interviews with TWR teachers, literacy coaches and school administrators and administrative data. Findings are organized by each of the four evaluation questions. We first present background information about interviewees' experiences with TWR.

Interviewees' experiences with TWR

In conducting interviews with TWR teachers, literacy coaches and administrators, we asked questions to capture information about their experiences with TWR, including questions focused on their TWR journey and collaboration with TWR.

Journey with TWR

To understand the interviewees' overall TWR journey, we asked questions about when they started working with TWR and what their journey has been like since beginning work with TWR. Respondents indicated that they started working with TWR sometime between 2017 through 2023. When we asked interviewees specifically which Revolutionary Team they were on, only a few teachers responded. Three reported being part of the initial team assembled by TWR in MCSD that helped develop core TWR materials for the district. All teachers and coaches interviewed reported continuing full engagement with TWR and noted how this continued engagement enhanced their abilities to teach writing and had a positive effect on their students' literacy skills and learning across subject areas.

We also asked interviewees about how participating in TWR has influenced the roles they play as a way of gauging the effect of TWR on teacher leadership. Some teachers reported that they have transitioned to different districts, while others have taken on new leadership roles within the MCSD, such as literacy coach, curriculum coordinator, or administrator. Several teachers noted other types of transitions, from lower grades to higher grades, from teaching ELA to teaching math and science. Similarly, some administrators and coaches also mentioned moving from classroom teaching to other educational roles. One coach specifically stated that they elected to add coaching responsibilities to their existing teaching role rather than fully switch jobs. While all interviewees commented that, through their experience with TWR, they felt better able to play leadership roles within their classroom, their school and the district, the varied ways this played out did not surface a specific leadership pattern.

Collaborating with TWR

We asked teachers several questions about their experiences with TWR as an organization. Our questions focused on: how TWR team members collaborated and made decisions; how teachers embedded TWR in the curriculum, and whether they felt supported by TWR leadership in this process; and how student-facing materials for TWR were created.

When asked about how they collaborate with other Revolutionary Team members, teachers felt positively about the inter-team collaboration. Teachers shared that the meetings took place once a week or once a month, that decision-making followed a natural progression, and they were able to compromise within teams. Within teams, they felt like equals-no one person was in charge. When asked about typical Revolutionary Team meetings, respondents (teachers and administrators) said that decisions were usually made by consensus and that team members checked in with one another between meetings via e-mail, Zoom, or phone calls.

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent does having a Revolutionary Teacher influence the adoption of TWR throughout the school and district?

To explore the extent to which having a Revolutionary Teacher influences the adoption of TWR throughout the school and district, we asked a range of questions. We first asked teachers, coaches and administrators about their overall knowledge of TWR adoption; then we asked about developing/adopting TWR materials; and we explored the ways TWR influenced their own development. We summarize their responses below. Please note that those we interviewed mostly knew about their own experiences implementing TWR in their classroom. Few teachers had any direct experience with TWR implementation beyond their classroom, and few literacy coaches had any direct experience with TWR implementation beyond their school.

TWR Adoption: Processes, supports and lessons learned

When asked about the processes used for adopting TWR, teachers, coaches and administrators reported that TWR integrated well with CKLA, enhancing both the quality of writing instruction but also instruction in other subject areas. They used TWR methods a few times a week or daily. They found that using TWR improved their literacy instruction. They noted that TWR was often applied across subject areas, improving elementary student learning. Decisions on TWR strategies were based on the curriculum, student understanding, and age-appropriateness. For younger learners (grades K-2), teachers used verbal questions and answers. Some teachers introduced the TWR concept before the curriculum content. Because of the influence of TWR throughout the curriculum, teachers asked more "how" or "why" questions during reading discussions, yielding more complex answers from students.

When asked about the types of student supports were needed when implementing TWR, teachers, coaches and administrators reported that a major support they used was scaffolding: teaching a little bit of material at a time and repeating lessons if needed. They also often gave oral instructions rather than written instructions, repeated instructions if needed and gave students extra time to complete assignments. Often, they needed to direct students to the page number to help them find the answer. Teachers wished for extra guidance from TWR around supporting students with special needs. Overall, students received TWR strategies across several subjects, including ELA, math, social studies, science, and music and, over time, students grasped the concepts and methods very well.

On the topic of schoolwide implementation, interviewees emphasized that training teachers across subjects and grades was key in cementing TWR in schoolwide practice, and that TWR training for teachers was most effective when repeated a few times. They also noted the importance of getting buy-in around TWR to ensure it becomes part of schoolwide practice.

Across the district, new teachers were offered TWR training every year. Teachers found TWR training to be enlightening and helpful. Before TWR, teachers often felt unprepared to teach writing. TWR provided a good structure for teaching writing and positively impacted their professional development. Recommendations for new TWR teachers included carefully reading provided materials, selecting materials based on student skillset and curriculum, explaining the purpose of TWR methods, and adjusting based on student responses.

Developing/Adopting TWR Materials

When asked about creating student-facing TWR materials, teachers reported participating in a range of materials development activities, including developing guidebooks for their grade levels. The process involved initial training, pairing with a designer, and using a shared Google Drive document. The guidebook curriculum was transitioned to a new hub called the curriculum hub, making TWR activities readily available. Revisions were usually made in a collaborative manner. Revisions were made when students were not meeting expected outcomes. New materials were shared online via a TWR "Curriculum Hub". One teacher described in detail the collaborative process:

> *So, we did like an initial training, and then they paired us with a designer, and then there was a revolutionary, and we were assigned a novel unit to start with, and the designer would start with creating, like just an overall activity, whether it was going to be comparing characters or comparing interactions. And then, once the lesson was built out, they wanted us to take specific activities and either convert them into TWR or add in TWR specific content. And so we had this giant working document in a Google drive, and that everyone had access to. And so we had timelines for getting specific activities completed based on these chapters or this section, and then we made adjustments. And so that went on until we'd get all the way through an entire unit. It'll go through the review, make revisions, and then we move on to the next unit. At the culmination of the 1st round of that project, they transitioned the guidebook curriculum onto a new hub called the curriculum hub, and those new lessons had the TWR activities included around the content, so that teachers no longer had to create them themselves, and they were just readily available, including the anticipated responses. -Teacher*

TWR's Influence on Teacher Development

When asked how engaging with TWR influenced their own development, all ten teachers reported that it positively influenced their ability to teach writing. They noted that TWR provided a structured method of teaching writing which made them feel confident in teaching, which in turn made students feel more confident. Teachers also reported that they feel more prepared, they have become more intentional, and they know how to communicate with the students better thanks to the strategy. Teachers asked for additional support from TWR in ways to support special education students and how to best orient a student who is new to TWR.

Evaluation Question 2: To what extent does being a Revolutionary influence teachers' leadership roles and career paths?

To examine how TWR has influenced career paths, we asked teachers, coaches and administrators a series of questions about its impact on their personal and professional lives in areas such as their attitudes, behavior, knowledge and career goals.

TWR Influence on Educators and their Career Path/Success

When asked how TWR influenced their confidence in teaching, how they teach writing, and their experience in the classroom, teachers were very positive sharing that because of TWR training and support, their knowledge increased, their confidence improved, and their approach to how they teach writing became more effective. Teachers and coaches noticed positive developments and improvements among their students. They thanked TWR for their support and guidance. A coach noted that there is a change that is evident because of the consistency and structure of the work. Teachers are being mindful and setting the criteria for success. Administrators also shared how it influenced teachers' practices in positive ways.

> *TWR gives you the structure to build a good quality, main idea and topic sentence and tell you how to get the supporting details, then some evidence supporting those details. There's some evidence, and then more details and evidence, and then you come in with your conclusion by restating and rewriting the topic sentence in a different format. It gives you structure. And I mean, I don't know how I would have told that to a teacher before.*

When asked how using TWR influenced the way they responded to students and their work, teachers reported that they feel more confident in giving direct feedback to students because TWR serves as a guide for teachers.

> *When they're not getting it, I'm able to say, okay, we're completing this sentence kernel, and we're talking about why". [Because of TWR] I'm able to guide my directions more and say, okay, that's not exactly what we're looking for. You're answering when it happened. But I want the why. Remember, we're going to use this because... and you know those trigger words and those question words that TWR provides are priceless. -Teacher*

When asked whether students experienced TWR strategies across the school day, the responses varied by school. In one school, the teacher and administrator indicated that students receive TWR strategies across several subjects, including ELA, Math, science, social studies and music. In another school, one teacher stated that they were integrating TWR into everyday teaching practices, including asking more "how" or "why" questions than "who" or "what" questions after a reading to get more complex answers from students. Another teacher in a different school said that they tried to use TWR methods a few times a week or every day in order to improve their teaching. One coach said that finding ways to apply TWR across subject areas did improve teaching practices, and that seeing the positive effects on students encouraged teachers to continue to use TWR methods.

Breaking down silos and developing a common language

When asked about whether TWR helped break down cross-grade and cross-subject areas silos, teachers as well as administrators and coaches spoke in general about the overall effectiveness of TWR in breaking down silos. Teachers at one school reported that using TWR has lessened the gap between first and second grade students' abilities. Teachers at another school noted that training teachers in TWR across all subjects (math, science, ELA, social studies, music, and PE) has helped effectively break down the silos. One administrator noted how TWR bridged gaps across classrooms within the same grade level.

When asked about whether TWR helped foster the use of a common language among their colleagues (cross-grade and cross-subject), most teachers reported that having a shared way of speaking about writing has been an asset in working with colleagues. Three teachers shared that they think it is going well as the kids are practicing the same thing across different subjects, and they make the connection across the subjects. Two respondents commented it could be better. They noted that the implementation of TWR is sometimes different for grade levels and teachers don't always use the common language. Thus, there is a need to improve training for teachers to better support their use of TWR language across grades and subject areas.

When asked about the successes they have had with TWR, all the staff interviewed talked about becoming a better writer and/or teacher. One teacher emphasized the confidence she built as a writing teacher and teaching students with learning disabilities. Students who struggled with writing had small successes every day (e.g., writing topic sentences) and they gained confidence as well. Some teachers also reported witnessing students' growth and higher test scores. For example, there was a student who failed ELA previously but went above and beyond by the end of the year.

> *And I can see that within their test scores for ELA, we moved to a state assessment called the innovative assessment and that was based off of our content, like exactly the lessons that we were teaching and because TWR is content based, it was not just giving them more information, but giving them a chance to work with the information over and over again to internalize it, so that when it came time to test or to write about it. It wasn't a big deal for our kids, because they were very familiar with that. And again, like I said. Our test scores have improved significantly over the past few years. I don't think it's official just yet, but I think we're classified as a C school now. -Teacher*

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent does having a Revolutionary Teacher impact student writing performance and development?

To address the impact having a Revolutionary Teacher has on student writing performance and development (**Research Question 3**), we collected information from the interviews and also used student-level data from MCSD on both student characteristics and writing outcomes.

Insights from interview data

When asked what changes they have seen in their students (in their attitudes, behaviors, and writing) since using TWR, all teachers, coaches, and administrators reported that students' writing was clearer and more coherent since starting TWR. One coach also noted that students were more likely to raise their hand or volunteer in class, as TWR had increased the students' confidence. One teacher noted that their kindergarteners were able to give fuller, more coherent responses, even when responding orally since they began using TWR. Several teachers reported witnessing students' growth and higher test scores.

When asked how changes in student growth vary based on students' instruction level, grade level, gender, ESL or IEP status, teachers and administrators shared that they haven't seen many changes based on students' gender, race, etc. TWR provides instruction for every child:

Now they have writing revolution strategies. And it's like Whoa, like you're a better writer than I am. That's amazing. I mean, you do see those differences. But I think they're really just regular classroom differences, if that makes sense. But I've not really seen a difference in gender, or, you know, different grade levels and stuff. But I think that the scaffolding activities just work wonders for the students who have learning disabilities, it just builds your confidence. -Teacher

Outcomes from assessment data

The district initially provided data for 3,358 students in grades 3 through 8. There were no treatment students in grades 7 and 8, so they were dropped from the analysis. Of the remaining students, 986 had test scores in both 2023 and 2024. After limiting the sample to those students with both tests, there were only 11 treatment students in grades 3 and 6, so they were dropped as well. The final analysis was conducted on 957 grade 4 and 5 students in MCSD.

We examined four outcomes: ELA Scale Score and Writing Performance, and tests of Written Expression and Written Knowledge & Use of Language Conventions. The outcomes were from spring 2024 and the pre-intervention measure was taken from spring 2023. Coarsened exact matching was used to identify a set of comparison students who had similar characteristics to students in treatment schools. The weights from the matching were then used in a regression analysis. All outcome measures except the ELA Scale Score were categorical variables with the values Weak, Moderate, and Strong. These were converted to numerical values of 1, 2, and 3 for the analysis.

All measures showed a positive effect for students who were in high implementation schools, and for one measure—ELA Writing Performance—the effect was statistically significant with an effect size of 0.25 (Table 3). Therefore, having a Revolutionary Teacher with a full implementation resulted in a statistically significant, positive effect on ELA Writing Performance for MCSD students in grades 4 and 5.

Table 3. Effects of a Revolutionary Teacher on Student Assessments

Outcome	Coefficient	Std. Error	p-value	Significance
ELA scale score	2.41	2.92	0.431	
ELA writing performance	0.21	0.09	0.039	*
Written expression	0.17	0.10	0.108	
Written knowledge & use of language conventions	0.20	0.10	0.079	

Note: * represents differences that are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Evaluation Question 4: How does students' performance on state assessments from schools that have a Revolutionary Teacher compare to the performance of students at other Louisiana schools that do not have a Revolutionary Teacher?

To address **Research Question 4**, we used school-level data from the state of Louisiana on school characteristics and LEAP performance. The LEAP data was used to create an outcome that reflected the percent of students who attained either Advanced or Mastery[3] (a score of 750 or above) on the LEAP ELA assessment in 2024. Because we needed a pre-intervention measure on which to match schools, we were limited to looking at grades 4 through 6 as we had no pre-intervention data for students in grade 3. Proficiency levels of MCSD schools are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Percentage of Students Attaining Advanced or Mastery on 2024 LEAP Assessment

School	Proficiency Grade 4	Proficiency Grade 5	Proficiency Grade 6
Barkdull Faulk Elementary School	12%	10%	3%
Berg Jones Elementary School	13%	10%	5%
Carver Elementary School	28%	18%	8%
Cypress Point Elementary School	22%	31%	11%
J.S. Clark Magnet Elementary School	60%	55%	49%
Madison James Foster Elementary School	44%	41%	13%
Minnie Ruffin Elementary School	11%	19%	12%
Roy Neal Shelling, Sr. Elementary	13%	6%	4%
Sallie Humble Elementary School	53%	51%	41%
Thomas Jefferson Elementary	17%	7%	5%

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[3]https://doe.louisiana.gov/docs/default-source/assessment/leap-2025-grades-3-8-interpretive-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=e35e9d1f_0

We attempted to use coarsened exact matching to identify a set of comparison schools that had similar characteristics to treatment schools. For these analyses, we considered two definitions of treatment schools: all ten schools in MCSD and only the three full implementation schools (see Table 1). In both cases, matching resulted in a group of comparison schools that was not very similar on the matching variables. Each of the treatment schools had a combination of demographics and student achievement levels that were somewhat unique. As a result, comparison schools (schools with similar combinations of demographics and achievement levels) could not be found among the non-TWR schools in Louisiana. In part, this was due to the use of the intervention for multiple years in treatment schools, resulting in levels of achievement that were difficult to match among schools with similar demographics. Therefore, comparisons could not be made between treatment (having a Revolutionary Teacher) and comparison schools (not having a Revolutionary Teacher).

Conclusions

Below we summarize key findings and challenges that surfaced from our exploration of TWR implementation through interviews with teachers, literacy coaches and school administrators, and the analysis of TWR participation and student outcomes data.

Key Findings

Overall Experiences

Engaging with TWR enhanced participating educators' abilities to teach writing and had a positive effect on students' literacy skills and learning across subject areas. All participating educators commented that, through their experience with TWR, they felt better able to play leadership roles within their classroom, their school and the district. All participating educators felt positive about their interaction with other Revolutionary Team members.

Adoption of TWR

All participating educators reported that TWR integrated well with the district's Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program. Those teachers who engaged in TWR curriculum development work noted that they felt prepared to do the curriculum work because of the TWR training they had received. All of the educators interviewed noted that the TWR team regularly provided constructive and timely feedback on classroom materials, responding to requests for help and provided in-person observations or virtual meetings to review materials.

On the topic of schoolwide implementation, those interviewed emphasized that training teachers across subjects and grades was key in cementing TWR in schoolwide practice. All educators expressed the importance of getting buy-in around TWR to ensure it becomes part of schoolwide practice. Interviewed educators shared that TWR provided a structured method of teaching writing which made them feel confident in teaching, which in turn made students feel more confident.

Leadership Roles and Career Paths

Teachers reported that because of TWR training and support, their knowledge increased, their confidence improved, and their approach to how they teach writing became more effective. Teachers reported that they feel more confident in giving direct feedback to students because TWR serves as a guide for teachers. There is still variation in whether students experience TWR across the school day and across subject areas. When they do, those interviewed reported that it improved teaching practice. The literacy coaches interviewed reported that seeing the positive effects on students encouraged teachers to continue to use TWR methods. Educators interviewed noted that TWR helped break down cross-grade and cross-subject silos and has helped students and staff develop a common language for speaking about literacy learning.

Student Development and Success

Insights from interviews. All of the teachers, coaches, and administrators who we interviewed reported that students' writing was clearer and more coherent since starting TWR. They also noted that students were more likely to raise their hands or volunteer in class, as TWR had increased the students' confidence. Students were able to give fuller, more coherent responses, even when responding orally since they began using TWR. Several teachers reported witnessing students' growth and higher test scores.

Insights from analyzing student outcomes data. We used a matched comparison group design to examine students within MCSD based on the level of implementation in their schools. The three schools with full implementation were considered treatment schools and the other schools that implemented less often were comparison schools. We matched students in the comparison schools to students in the treatment schools to create groups that were similar on observable characteristics, including a pre-intervention measure of the outcome. Using the matched sample of students in the analysis, along with accounting for the clustering of students within schools, we found that having a Revolutionary Teacher with full implementation resulted in a statistically significant, positive effect on ELA Writing Performance for MCSD students in grades 4 and 5.

We attempted to conduct a similar analysis of schools across the state. We explored defining treatment schools as all MCSD schools and only the three schools with full implementation. For this analysis, we attempted to match comparison schools to treatment schools to create groups that were similar on observable characteristics, including a pre-intervention measure of the outcome. Due to the small number of treatment schools, the matching procedure was unable to create comparison groups of schools that were similar to the treatment schools. Therefore, we were unable to estimate the effects of a Revolutionary Teacher by comparing schools in MCSD to others in Louisiana.

In summary. In reflecting on the findings from the interviews and outcomes analyses, the main take-away is that TWR is a highly effective approach to developing students' literacy skills, across all subject areas. Another key lesson relates to the ways teachers do and do not collaborate. In some schools, teachers became part of a revolutionary team that met across multiple years to develop materials to integrate TWR activities within the district's literacy curriculum. These teachers reported belonging to the team while they were doing the specific task of developing materials, but not beyond that. Afterwards, they were strong implementers of TWR and often served as a resource for their colleagues but did not view themselves as belonging to a revolutionary team. The way schools are structured and the limited amount of time available for teachers to collaborate may have influenced their sense of being part of a team.

Thus, participating in TWR empowers teachers, helps them develop leadership skills and makes them open to collaborating with their peers around improving instruction. To fully realize the potential of TWR to accelerate student development and teacher leadership, school districts need to establish opportunities to support the across-grade and across-subject collaboration that enables teachers to continue to advance in implementing TWR.

Challenges

Challenges identified through interviews. During the interviews, participants shared several key challenges they experienced in implementing TWR in their classroom and schools. One key challenge was buy-in, mentioned by both teachers and administrators. Teachers said it was difficult getting buy-in from students, parents and fellow educators. One reason for the lack of buy-in is that TWR is a step-by-step method, which can be time consuming.

Another challenge teachers noted was in adapting TWR to meet the needs of all students. They explained that TWR was challenging for their special needs students, and that they wish they had more support for implementing it with students who have special needs. Coaches and teachers also stated that there was difficulty starting TWR with students who have never been exposed to it. Part of this challenge came from the fact that some students were not accustomed to learning a systematic writing method.

Challenges from study limitations. Because the focus of this study was on students, schools and staff in MCSD, we necessarily had a limited number of treatment schools for the outcomes analyses. Thus, with a smaller number of treatment schools, we would need to observe a larger score difference in order to detect a significant impact of TWR on student writing performance. In addition, due to limitations in available assessment data we were not able to examine the impacts of TWR on all grade levels. When it came to comparing the performance of MCDS students with those across the state, the unique make-up of many schools within MCDS and across the state made it not possible to find comparable schools. Moreover, the TWR approach and materials are available state-wide, which also clouds this type of comparison of MCSD students with other students across the state, many of whom have had some contact with TWR.

Recommendations

As the feedback from the interviews demonstrates, the experiences of teachers, literacy coaches and school administrators with TWR are **overwhelmingly positive**. Moreover, as the analysis of student outcome data by degree of TWR implementation shows (and as all the educators interviewed reported), TWR has a **positive influence on students' literacy development**. Below we present several recommendations for improving implementation (that surfaced from the interviews) and for designing future studies.

Recommendations for improving implementation. Below are several suggestions from those interviewed for ways to improve TWR implementation going forward.

- Provide teachers with additional guidance and materials to support special education/special needs students.
- Provide teachers with more support for how to best orient students who are new to TWR and may not have experienced structured programs before.
- Acknowledge how overwhelming it can be for someone new to TWR to learn/master the full program.
- Provide extra support to teachers who do not think their grammar knowledge is strong enough for them to be able to understand and implement TWR.
- For teachers new to TWR, strongly recommend that they: (1) carefully read provided materials; (2) are selective with materials to ensure that they are based on student skillset and curriculum; and (3) explain the purpose of TWR methods to students and to adjust their approach based on student responses.
- Encourage schools and districts to provide regular TWR training and time for teachers to collaborate with each other around developing TWR activities to add to their curriculum.

Recommendations for further studies. Through the lessons learned in this study, we offer several recommendations for conducting further studies of this highly promising approach to teaching writing and supporting students' literacy development.

- Given the limitations experienced in the student outcomes portion of this study, future studies should be designed to take into account the nature of the available assessment data and the unique nature of schools in Louisiana, to develop an approach that fully captures the performance and growth of MCSD students in comparison to students across the state and in other states.
- Future outcomes studies should plan on obtaining the writing sub scores on the state literacy test for students within and outside of the district, to ensure that the outcomes data specifically focuses on the subject that TWR addresses (writing, not literacy in general or just reading).
- To obtain further insights about how to promote TWR across a wider range of types of teachers, future implementation studies should include recruiting teachers who received TWR training and may have started implementation, but did not continue as strong implementers.

Appendix: Interview Protocols

Teacher/Literacy Coach Interview Protocol

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a researcher at NORC at the University of Chicago. Thank you for participating in this interview. As you know, we are evaluating of The Writing Revolution Program. As a Revolutionary Teacher and member of the Revolutionary Team in your school, you are an important partner in our evaluation effort. Our conversation today will last about 45 minutes. As a reminder, your participation is completely voluntary and there are no repercussions for choosing not to participate. Also, you can choose not to answer any question, We will not use your name in any reports to The Writing Revolution or in any publications. Do you have any questions about participating in this study interview? Can you please verbally consent to participating in this study? (If no, then end the interview). Also, I would like to audio record our meeting so that we can remember everything that is shared today. The recordings will remain with NORC and will not be provided to anyone else. Is it ok with you if I record our conversation? (Pause for confirmation/do not record if they say no). Great, let's get started!

Intro & Role

1. When did you join the Revolutionary Team?

2. Which Revolutionary Team were you on? *(3-11 ELA; K-2 CKLA; State 3-5 Guidebooks; Newark Support Revolutionary Team)*

3. Are you in the same job/role as you were when you first joined? If not, how has your job/role changed? *(like to learn about their specifics of their new role)*

4. Are you still teaching the same grade(s)/subject(s) as when you first joined? If not, how has this changed?

Team Processes

1. As a member of a revolutionary team, in what ways do you collaborate with other Revolutionary team members? Please describe the collaboration, such as key activities, frequency, etc. *(Emphasize team dynamics, structure, and the process of collaboration.)*

2. Can you describe a typical Revolutionary team meeting and how decisions are made? *(Explore meeting structure, leadership roles, and the decision-making process.)*

3. Do you collaborate with other Revolutionary Teams, in other schools or other districts? If yes, in what ways? *(Newark)*

Integrating TWR

1. Describe the process you use(d) to embed TWR in your curriculum *(GBs, or CKLA).*

2. Did you feel prepared to do this type of curriculum work?

3. In what ways did TWR support this process?

4. How did embedding TWR in your curriculum influence the way you teach writing?

    a. How did it influence your ability to teach writing?

    b. How did it influence the way you respond to students and their work? *(to assess and meet students' needs via in-the-moment decisions)*

5. How did it influence your own professional development *(and confidence in teaching)?*

Student-facing Writing Materials

1. What student-facing TWR-based writing materials did you develop as a Revolutionary Team member? Can you walk us through how you created these materials? *(Focus on the process of tool/resource development and collaboration.)*

2. As you and other teachers used these writing materials, how did they support writing instruction? Did you make any revisions? *(Focus on the process of learning and using tools.)*

3. How do you decide which TWR strategies to use in specific instructional situations? *(Focus on decision-making processes and strategies.)*

4. What types of supports do you provide when working with special needs students?

Changes in Practices

Since you joined the Revolutionary Team,

1. How have your instructional practices changed? *(Probe to see if they use TWR strategies, such as annotating lessons/anticipating responses in advance of lessons; hear, see & say; I do/ we do/you do; asking probing questions; checking for understanding, on-demand feedback; differentiation/scaffolding)*

2. How have you integrated TWR practices into your teaching? Can you describe your process? *(Focus on how they embed TWR into their lessons.)*

3. Can you describe how working with colleagues has changed since being part of the Revolutionary Team? *(Focus on how collaboration is facilitated, and barriers are overcome.)*

4. One of the goals of TWR is to help break down silos *(cross-grade and subject area).* How is this going? What's working and what's not working?

5. Another goal of TWR is to foster the use of a common language among colleagues. How is this going? What's working and what's not working? *(at the school level and district level)*

Changes in Students

Since you joined the Revolutionary Team,

1. What changes have you seen in your students? *(in their attitudes, behaviors, and writing)*

2. How do these changes vary based on students' instruction level, grade level, gender, ESL or IEP status?

3. Do students experience TWR strategies across the school day? If so, in which subjects and to what extent? *(in other subjects)*

4. How have your students engaged with TWR over time? What processes helped them adapt to it? *(Explore student engagement from a process perspective, such as repetition, scaffolding, or exposure.)*

Sustaining TWR

1. What are the key steps your team is taking to ensure TWR becomes part of the schoolwide practice? *(Creating new Revolutionaries and/or Revolutionary Teams; Shift to the ongoing process of implementation and sustainability.)*

2. What would be the best way to ensure that TWR continues and becomes part of schoolwide instruction?

Reflections

1. Before you experienced TWR, how would you have described what teaching writing is to a new teacher?

2. Since TWR, how would your description change, if at all?

3. If you were talking to a teacher who is about to start TWR, what would you recommend they do to prepare/get ready/be ready for it?

4. As you were engaging with TWR Revolutionary work, what were your top 2-3 successes?

5. What were some of your challenges or the biggest challenge?

6. Is there any feedback you'd like us to share with the TWR team?

Last Thoughts

1. Is there anything else you'd like to share today that I didn't ask about?

Thank you so much for your time today. Again, your feedback is vital to our evaluation of The Writing Revolution program.

School/District Administrator Interview Protocol

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a researcher at NORC at the University of Chicago. Thank you for participating in this interview. As you know, we are conducting an evaluation of The Writing Revolution Program. As an Administrator of a school(s) with a Revolutionary Team, you are an important partner in our evaluation effort.

Our conversation today will last about 45 minutes. As a reminder, your participation is completely voluntary and there are no repercussions for choosing not to participate. Also, you can choose not to answer any question we ask. In addition, we will not use your name in any reports to The Writing Revolution or in any publications. Do you have any questions about participating in this study interview? Can you please verbally consent to participating in this study? (If not, then end the interview). Also, I would like to record the audio and video from our meeting so that we can remember everything you share today. The recordings will remain with NORC and will not be provided to anyone else. The information that you share will not be tied to you individually in any reports or other publications. Is it ok with you if I record our conversation? (Pause for confirmation/do not record if they say no). Great, let's get started!

Intro & Role

1. When did you receive training in TWR?

2. Were you a member of the TWR Revolutionary Team?

3. Since working with TWR, how has your job/role changed? (focus on the process of change)

4. How many schools in your district are implementing the TWR strategies?

5. Which schools do you work with?

Connecting with TWR Revolutionary Team

1. How do you leverage the Revolutionary Team members in your work?

2. In what ways do you engage with the Revolutionary teams and Revolutionary Teachers?

3. What are some activities you engage in to support the implementation of TWR in your district?

4. One of the goals of TWR is to help break down silos (cross-grade and subject area). How is this going? What's working and what's not working?

5. Another goal of TWR is to foster the use of a common language among colleagues. How is this going? What's working and what's not working? (at the school level and district level)

6. In what ways do you connect with other district leaders to support the implementation of TWR in your district's schools?

Integrating TWR

1. Were you involved in any schools/teachers' efforts to embed TWR into your district's ELA curriculum (*GBs, or CKLA*)? If yes, what was this process like and how were you involved?

2. To what extent did you feel prepared to do this type of curriculum work?

3. In what ways did TWR support this process?

4. How did embedding TWR in your district's curriculum influence the way writing is taught?

    a. How did it influence teachers' understanding and knowledge of how to teach writing?

    b. How did it influence teachers' knowledge about how to respond to students and their work? (*to assess and meet students' needs via in-the-moment decisions*)

    c. How did it influence teachers' overall professional development (*and confidence in teaching*)?

Student-facing Writing Materials

1. How have the student-facing writing materials teachers developed to embed TWR into the district's curriculum been used by teachers (*at each school and across the district*)?

2. How have these writing materials been shared within schools and across schools?

3. To what extent do teachers who work with special needs students need extra resources?

Changes

Since your district began using TWR strategies,

1. What changes have you seen in how teachers teach writing? (*their use of TWR strategies such as: annotating lessons/anticipating responses in advance of lesson; hear, see & say; I do/ we do/you do; asking probing questions; checking for understanding, on-demand feedback; differentiation/ scaffolding*)

2. What changes have you seen in students? (*in their attitudes, behaviors, and writing*)

3. How does this vary based on students' instruction level, grade level, gender, ESL or IEP status, if at all?

4. Do students experience TWR strategies across the school day? (*in other subjects*)

Sustaining TWR

1. What are the key steps you are taking to ensure TWR becomes part of the district-wide practice? (*Shift to the ongoing process of implementation and sustainability.*)

2. What would be the best way to ensure that TWR continues and becomes part of district-wide instruction?

Reflections

1. Before you experienced TWR, what did you think teaching writing was about?

2. After TWR, how would you explain what teaching writing is to a new teacher?

3. If you were talking to a principal/school leader who is about to start TWR, what would you recommend they do to prepare/get ready/be ready for it?

4. As you engaged in TWR Revolutionary work, what were your top 2-3 successes?

5. What were some of your challenges or the biggest challenge?

6. Is there any feedback you'd like us to share with the TWR team?

Thank you so much for your time today. Again, your feedback is vital to our evaluation of The Writing Revolution program.