

## **Informed Teachers Engaged Writers**

A Research Partnership with the sites of the California Writing Project:  
Recruitment Email to Teacher Consultants of the California Writing Project

Dear TCs,

The California Writing Project has partnered with researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara and George Mason University in Virginia on a research study that is focused on student writing engagement. The study has its origins in the work of James Moffett who said, "the most efficient education would never require of learners that they do anything especially for evaluation that they would not be doing anyway in order to learn" (Moffett, *Detecting Growth in Language*, 1992, pg. 2).

Our goal was to design a self-assessment tool that would help students reflect on a piece of writing at the time of submission that would provide their teachers with information they could use to provide formative feedback at the whole class and individual levels. Our hope was that the tool would help us to understand and increase students' engagement with writing and that would fit naturally in the course of smart writing instruction.

The opportunity to conduct this work with Teacher Consultants of the California Writing Project who know so much about writing, learning and instruction is tremendous, and we thank you so much for your willingness to consider participating in what we hope will be a valuable study for teachers and students.

The study itself has two parts. First, after completing a writing assignment of the instructor's choosing, students complete a short online survey called The Writing Engagement Scale - WES. The results of their responses to the WES are then compiled and sent back to each teacher by the researchers in an easy-to-read format (for both the whole class and for individual students). After reviewing the results, the participating teacher responds to a X question survey (see document attached called Teacher Survey). After administering the WES, sending student texts, and completing the teacher survey, all participating teachers will receive a \$100.00 gift card as a token of appreciation for sharing their students' work and insights with the research team.

The other activity associated with the research is obtaining permissions, and while there are a few steps involved here, we've tried to make that as easy as possible. First, teachers will need to contact their principal to let them know they would like to participate. (See document attached called Information for Principals). Each teacher will need to sign a consent form for taking the survey (which we will send to all participating

teachers). Then, the teachers will need to let parents know about the study and to give them a chance to opt out of the study if they would like (we've provided sample language for that). Next, teachers will ask students if they are willing to participate or if they'd like to opt out. The research team is prepared to support any teacher who may need district level approval and we are also happy to talk with their principal if they'd like more information.

**Checklist for Participating TCs:**

1	Send information on the study to your principal	•
2	Sign the Teacher Consent Form	•
3	Write to your students' parents about the study	•
4	Obtain student assent to participate	•
5	Digitally distribute the WES	•
6	Collect and share student writing with the research team	•
7	Take teacher survey (once you receive your results)	•
8	Enjoy your gift card with our sincere appreciation!	•

We would welcome the chance to share more details with you about our study design and what we've learned so far (to date over 500 students have completed the WES). Please let us know if you would be interested in reading our forthcoming paper in the journal *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* that is to be a part of a special issue on formative assessment edited by notable writing researchers Steve Graham, Gert Rijlaarsdam, and Gustaf Skar, as we would be happy to send you a preprint of the article. Thank you again for your consideration, we are so happy to be partnering with the Teacher Consultants of the California Writing Project. **If you are interested in participating in this study please let your site Director know.**