

*Symposium: Multiple Lenses for Understanding
Source-Based Analytical Writing Development*

Writing Opportunities in the History Classroom

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The need

1. Students are not writing well
2. Problem can't be solved in a single subject area (ELA)
3. Disciplinary literacy is important (Common Core, History Social Studies Framework)

The research base

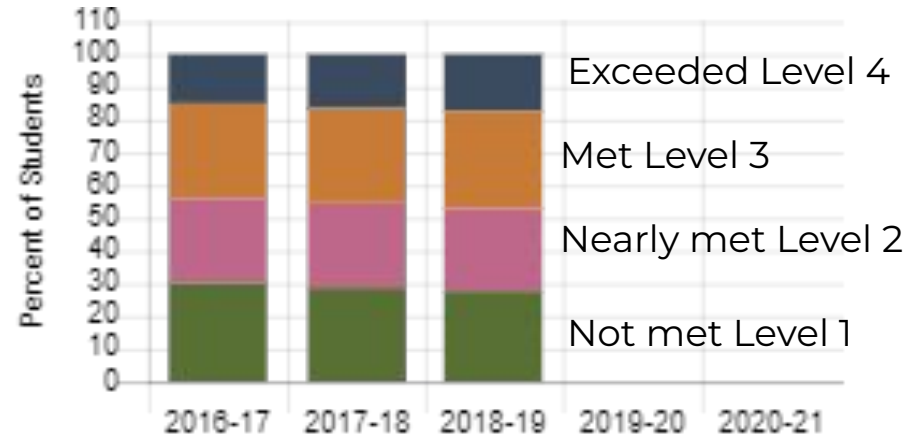
1. Students are not writing frequently
2. Students are not writing deeply
3. Teachers are not sufficiently trained in research-based pedagogy
4. Best data is a decade old
 - a. Applebee & Langer (2011)
 - b. Kiuvara, Graham & Hawken (2009)



The study

Survey in a single California school district

- 79% Latinx students
- 74% students eligible for the National School Lunch Program
- 16% English learners
- CAASPP ELA scores:



The study

1. Teachers in the district
 - a. History and Social Studies teachers
 - b. Grades 6-12
 - c. Fully credentialed, approximately half holding a bachelor's degree and the remaining holding a postgraduate degree
 - d. Teachers were 24% Latinx, 56% White, 11% Asian, 5% African American
2. Participation
 - a. 78 of 80 teachers
 - b. Survey given January-February 2020 (pre pandemic)
 - c. Respondents received a \$25 gift card



The study

Basis of survey

- Drew et al., 2017;
- Gilbert & Graham, 2010;
- Graham et al., 2001, 2014;
- Kiuahara et al., 2009; and
- NAEP, 2017

The survey

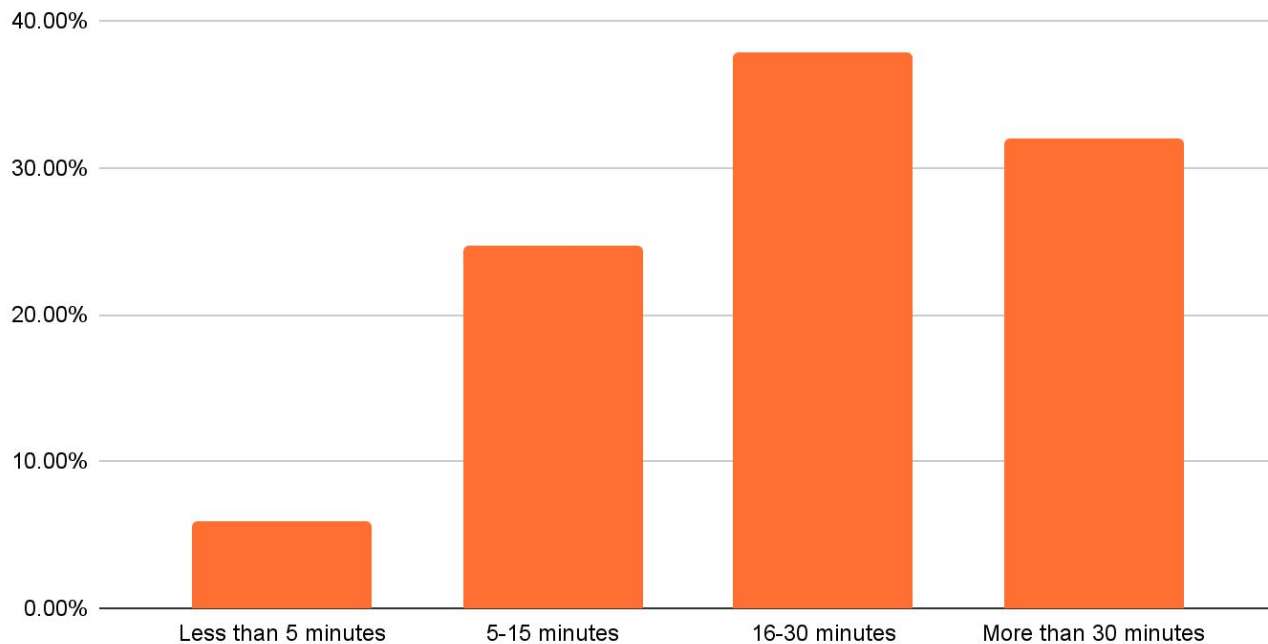
Major sections

1. Learning goals and challenges in teaching writing
2. Writing practices in their history classes
3. Instructional practices, including types of sources and use of technology
4. Preparedness to teach writing

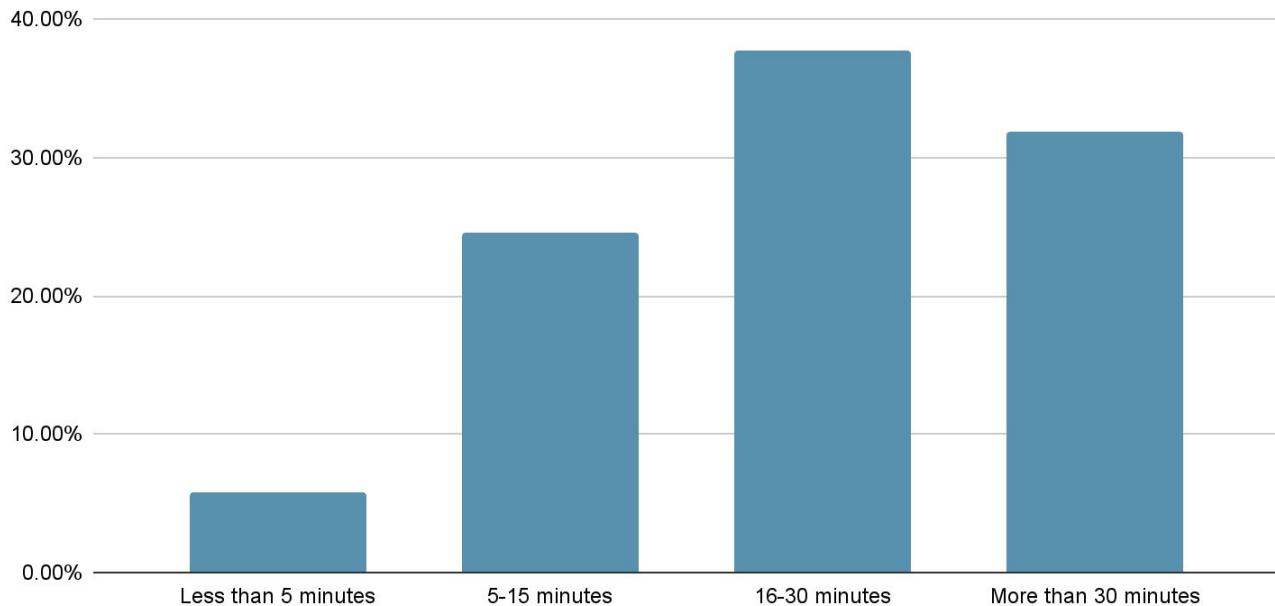


**Writing time looks
okay . . .**

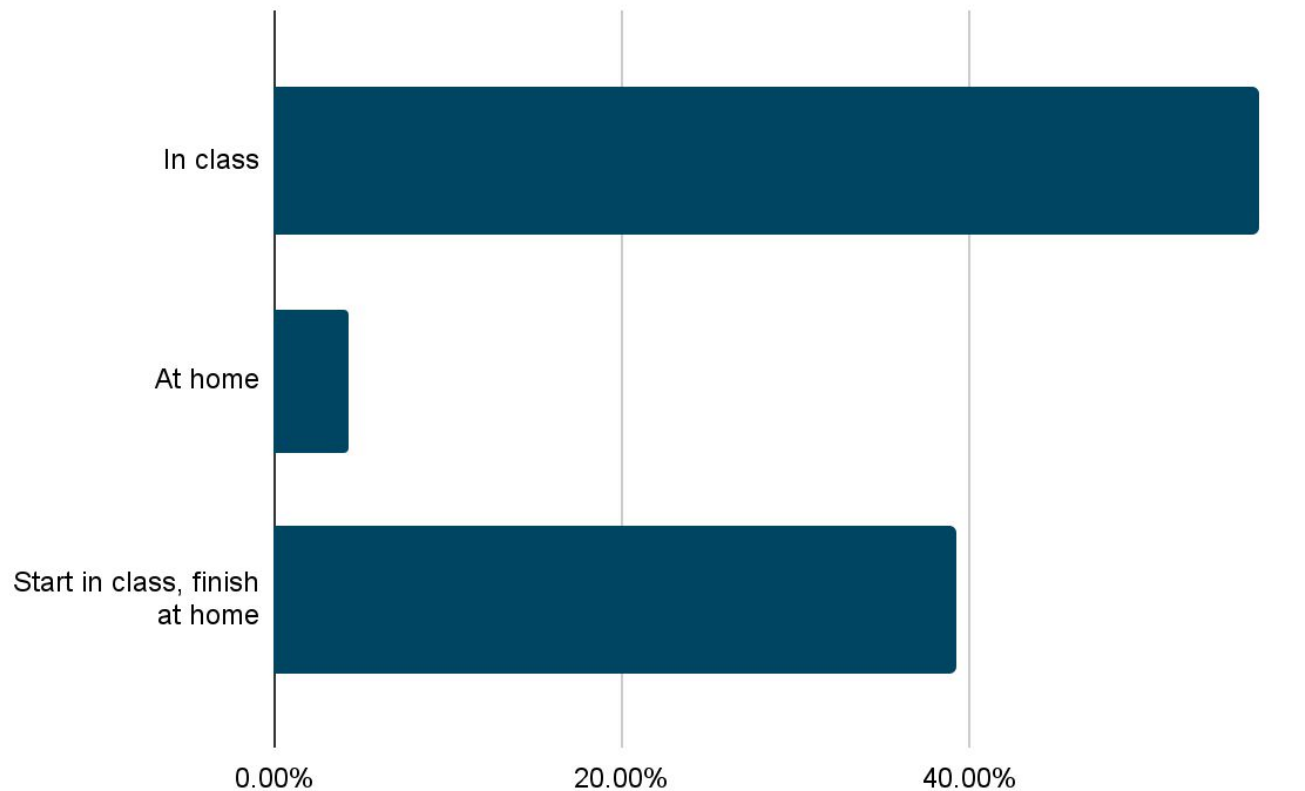
During an average week, how many minutes do your students spend writing in class?



During an average week, how many minutes do you spend *teaching* writing in class?

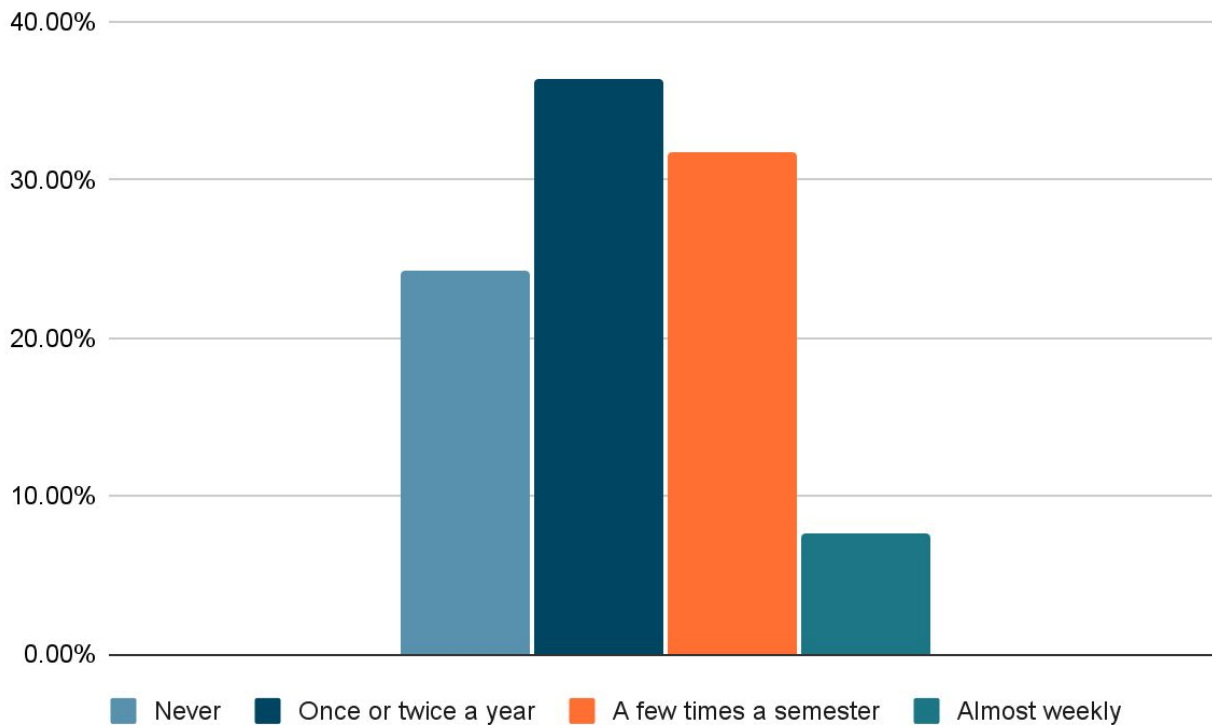


Where are students expected to do most of the writing you assign?



**But extended
writing is rare**

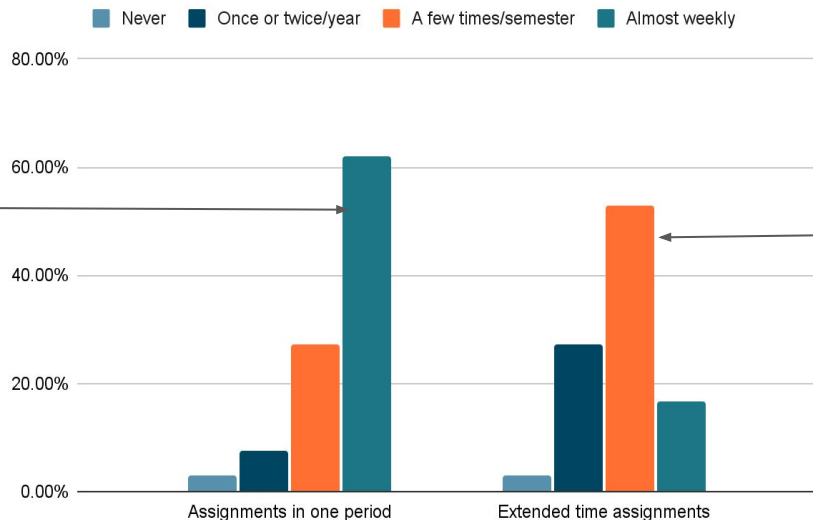
Assignment of 2 or more pages



Assignment that students have to complete within one class period

Assignments designed for students to work extended periods of time

Almost Weekly



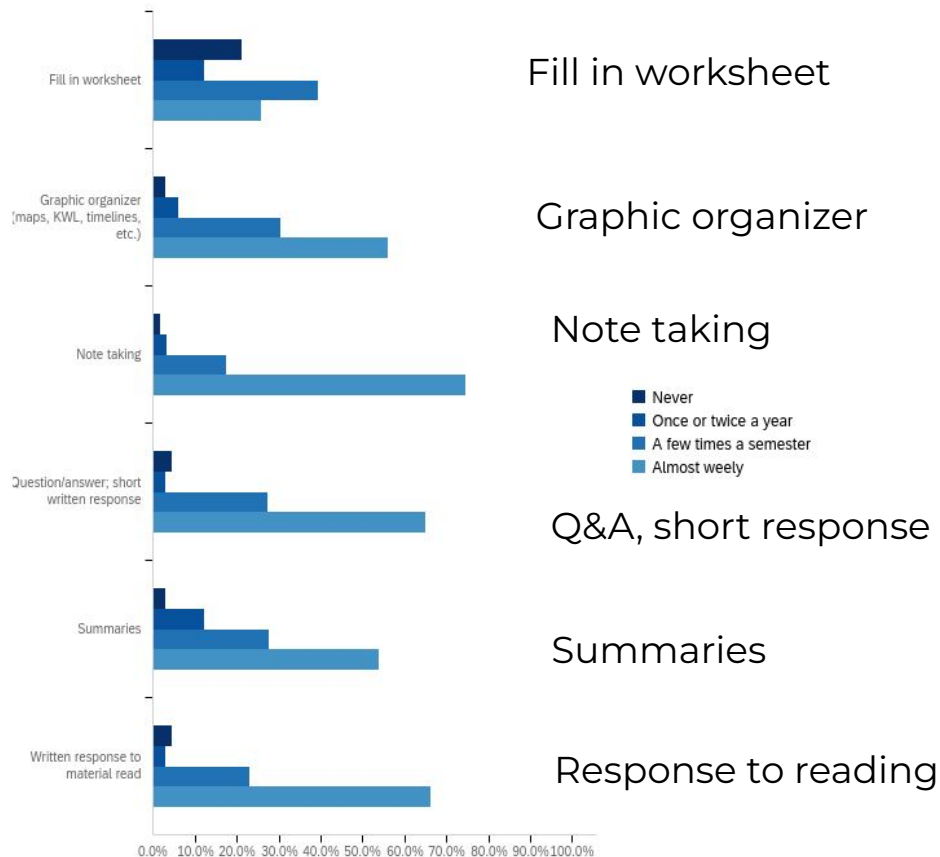
Few/semester

**But most writing is
low level, with
little instruction
and few sources**

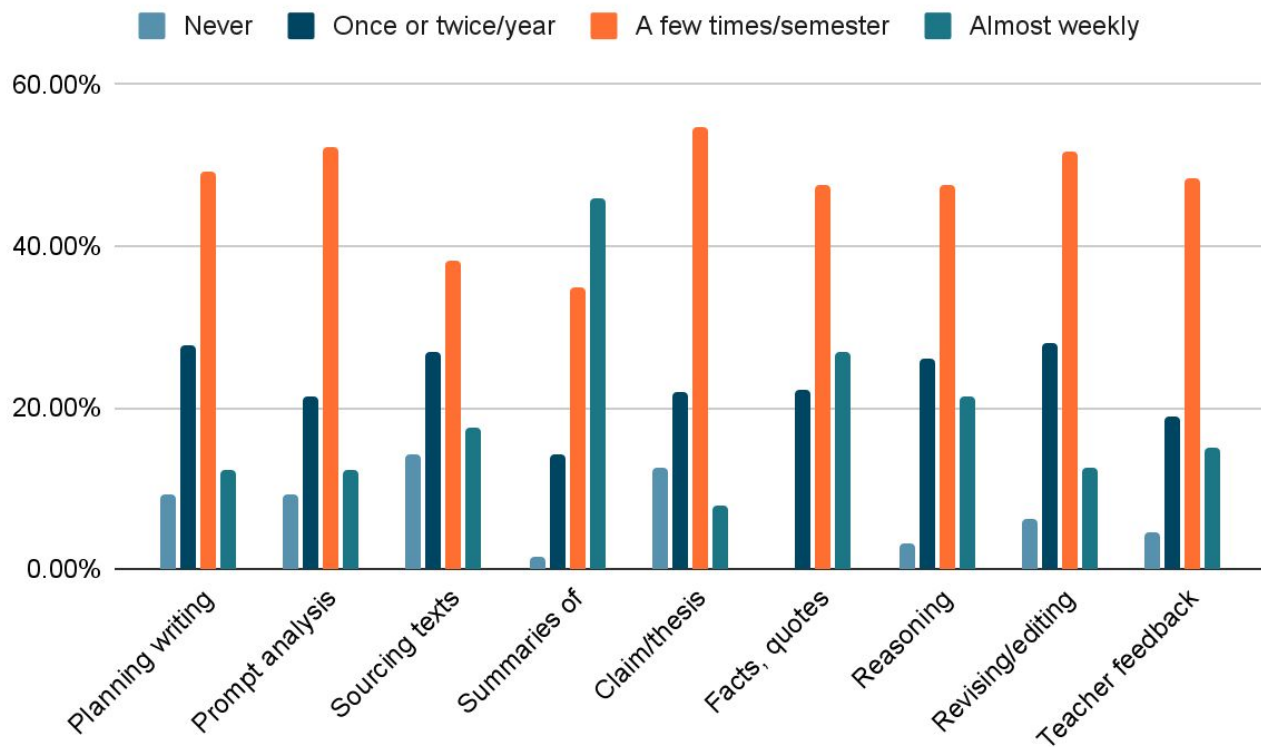
How frequently do your students do the following type of writing?

Weekly:

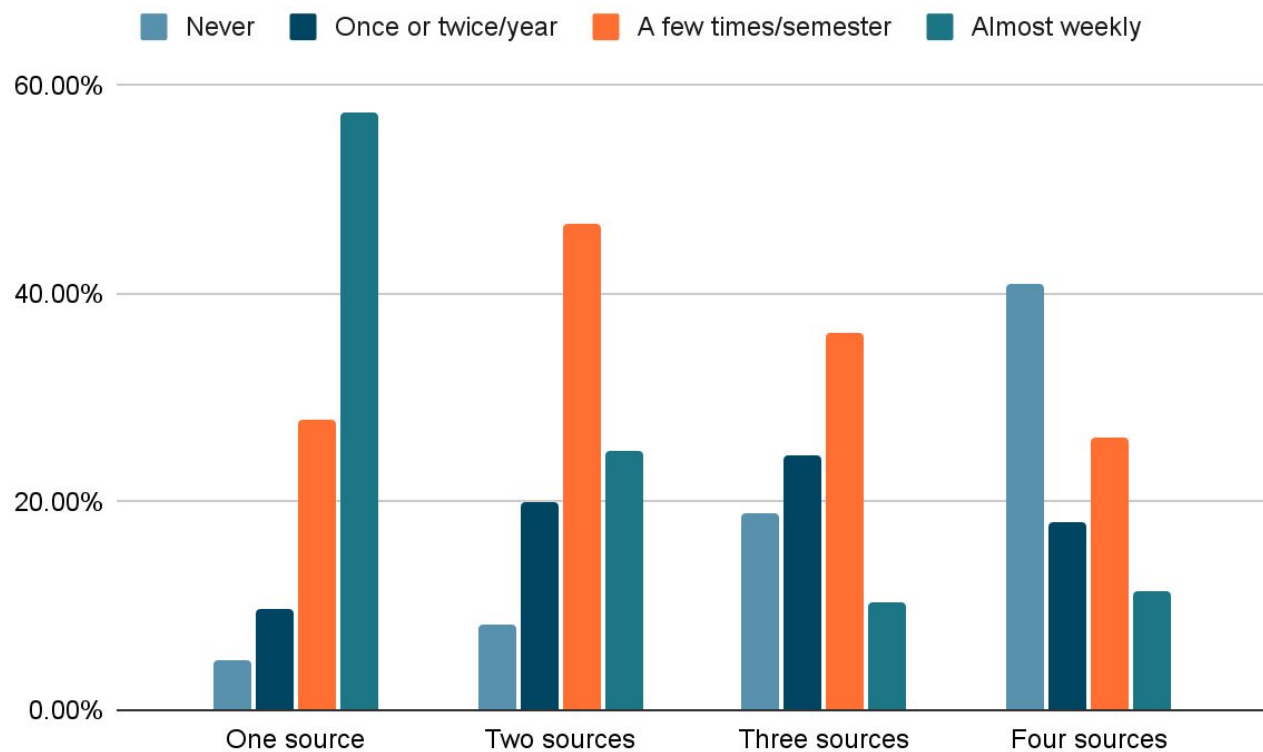
- Graphic organizers (56%)
- Note taking (76%)
- Summary writing (50%)
- Written responses to reading (66%)



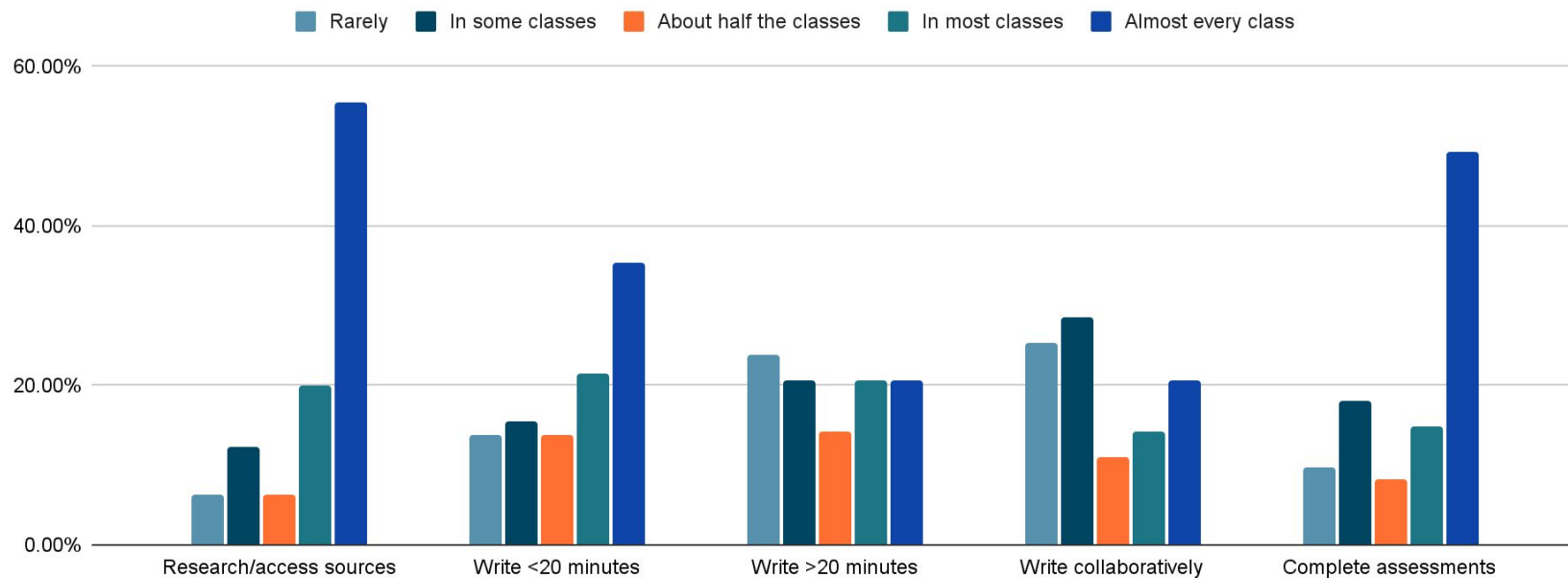
How frequently do you teach these writing strategies?



How many sources do students refer to/analyze/summarize when writing for class?



How is technology used in your class?



Tell us more about why you have students write in your class....

Widespread use of **writing for assessment**, such as, “*to better judge their understanding of the curriculum*” and to determine “*if modifications of lessons need to be made.*”

Related to this was writing to meet prescribed standards, prepare students for high stakes testing, or meet IEP goals

Tell us more about why you have students write in your class....

Writing to learn was the next common reason to have students write.

Teachers reported using writing to **organize and synthesize content** and **improve comprehension**, *“Responding to writing prompts helps my students analyze historical events in a way they may not have thought of before, as well as gives them some insight to be able to make connections between these events and their own lives, find parallels, and examine cause and effect.”*

Teachers also talked about using writing to help students **learn to support claims with evidence**, *“to develop evidence-based thinking to support their ideas”* or *“improve critical thinking skills.”*

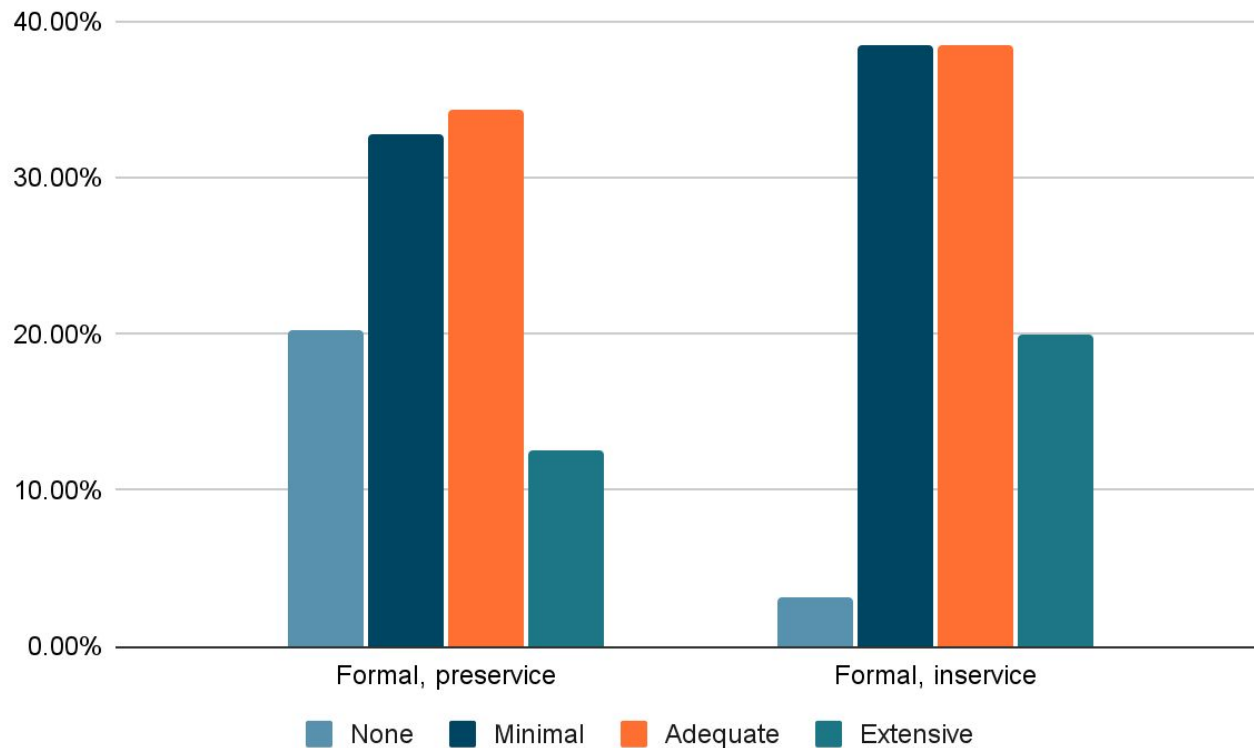


Tell us more about why you have students write in your class....

Writing to communicate was the final category of responses, with some specifically citing the need to learn how to write, mentioning helping students improve their academic discourse, and others focusing on using writing for expression, *“I have them write so they have an opportunity to share their knowledge in their own words”* or *“to give them an opportunity to express their opinions about transpired events.”*

**Teachers need
more preparation
to teach writing**

How much preparation did you have to teach writing?



What would you say are the 3-5 most important things a teacher needs to know about teaching students how to write in history?

- Know your students and meet them where they are
- Content area knowledge
- Writing genre and skills
- How to ask good questions
- Teaching reading, comprehension
- Using evidence to support a claim
- How to scaffold students' process



Takeaways:

- Writing time looks okay . . .
- But extended writing is rare,
- Most writing is low level, with little instruction and few sources; and
- Teachers need more preparation to teach writing

Thank you
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