

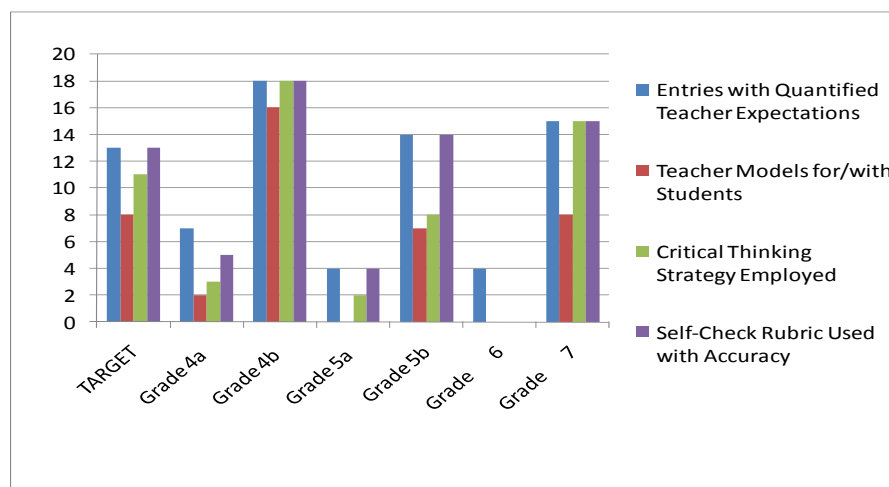
## What Works in Classrooms for Writing to Learn Content Standards

*Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)* has been an educational mantra for more than a decade, but few *WAC* initiatives produce the same measurable results reported in their original research. In the last three years, we've teased out specific routines and strategies that produce predictable, significant spikes in student scores on the Georgia state tests of knowledge across the curriculum from grades 2-11. We now see that when teachers and administrators make sure journal-writing routines include the following, student performance experiences "lift off." This is true in our original research and in the experiences of educators who follow our system. They use our *Journal for Writing Across the Curriculum* instructional and monitoring tools **within their curriculum** to ensure that journal-writing tasks include:

- Quantified expectations ("In 5-6 sentences, use 4-5 key terms that explain ratios.").
- A model entry written by teachers for or with students.
- A specific critical-thinking strategy (*quad cluster*, *acrostic*, *Venn diagram*, *K-W-L*).
- Student self-assessment using a crude rubric: [+] for exceeded expectation, [⊙] for met expectation and [=] for missed expectation.

Administrators stop by each class, examine teacher and student journals, and record the frequency of each of the four features on a *Frequency Data Collector*. As these frequency data show, half of the teachers in this sample (Teacher 4b, 5b and 7) chose to exceed the Target threshold of writing three critical-thinking entries/week; the other three did not. Other aspects of instruction remained constant.

Profile of *Writing to Win* Journal Routines in Math  
March 2009 – Pearson K-7 School



In April, students took the Math—*Criterion-Referenced Competency Test* with the following results. Writing explanations of content standards using the above routine a minimum of three times/week really works. Note: 2008 and 2009 scores include the same students in consecutive years.



Teacher	3 entries/ week	Student pass-rate		+ / -
		2008	2009	
4a	No	55	54	- 1
4b	Yes	50	80	+ 30
5a	No	73	63	- 10
5b	Yes	79	90	+ 11
6	No	65	56	- 9
7	Yes	46	76	+ 30

Results on Georgia state-administered tests in various other classes and grade levels suggest that this very intentional four-part journal routine works everywhere that teachers implement it with fidelity. We enjoy finding new grade levels and courses that respond well to the power of the *Writing to Win* journal routine.

School R-rural, U-urban, S-suburban	3-Year Trend	W2Win Journal	In- crease	Course	Grade
Dublin HS (U)	64	92	+ 28	Physical Science	9
Jenkins Co MS (R)	55	77	+ 22	Math	7
	51	66	+ 14	Earth Science	
	79	92	+ 13	English Lang Arts	
Spring Place ES (R)	78	99	+ 21	Science	5
EC West ES (S)	81	100	+ 19	Math	5
Atkinson Co HS (R)	23	64	+ 41	Econ/Business	9-11
Cloud Springs ES (S)	71	89	+18	Math	4