

# Technical Report

## Secondary Writing Instruction with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students who are on Grade Level or College Bound

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## I. Introduction

Writing instruction is provided to students in K-12 settings to build skills that bring greater connection to their communities and the world. Our previous research shows teachers of the deaf prioritizing individualized writing instruction to meet the diverse needs of deaf and hard of hearing students at the secondary levels. Teachers reported feeling confident about teaching deaf students to punctuate properly, spell correctly, and use accurate grammar, but struggled with teaching complex writing skills such as synthesizing information from multiple sources. Most teachers felt they were not fully prepared to teach secondary deaf students and desired more professional development. See a full report of our previous study here: [Secondary Writing Instruction with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students](#). The findings from this prior study broadly capture the current state of writing instruction with secondary deaf students; however, little was learned about how teachers support a specific subset of students--those who are on grade-level and/or college-bound. To learn more, we conducted a follow up study by hosting focus groups with teachers who have taught or are currently teaching grade-level or college-bound secondary deaf students, and by comparing their survey results with findings from the first study.

## II. Survey and Focus Group: Summary of Findings

This report provides a summary of survey results and focus group findings related to the practices, challenges, and research needs in writing instruction with deaf secondary students who are on grade-level or college-bound. The data are presented in comparison with findings from our previous study with teachers who teach diverse deaf learners. Hereafter, “General” will be used in referring to the previous study of teachers who teach diverse deaf learners, and “Grade-Level” will be used to refer to the current study involving teachers who teach grade-level or college-bound students. More information about data collection and analysis is included at the end of this report.

## A. Factors

Do these factors influence the time and focus of teachers' writing instruction? Scale: (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Sometimes, (4) Often, (5) Always				
Factors	General (N = 222)		Grade-Level (N = 18)	
	Mean	Indicator	Mean	Indicator
Students' individual writing needs	4.72	Always	4.75	Always
The grade level standards	3.88	Often	3.90	Often
The program curriculum	3.60	Often	3.62	Often
Workforce entry	3.47	Sometimes	3.49	Sometimes
Post-secondary education admission	2.94	Sometimes	2.95	Sometimes
High stakes writing assessment	2.82	Sometimes	2.82	Sometimes

### Survey Results

The survey asked teachers to report on whether certain factors influenced the time and focus of their writing instruction, ranging from *never* to *always*.

- Both groups reported almost identical data with students' individual writing needs *always* influencing the time and focus of their writing instruction and high stakes assessments having the *least* influence.

### Grade-Level Focus Group Discussion

#### **Students' Individual Needs**

Teachers broadly agreed that students' individual academic needs are the instructional priority and mandated by their IEPs. As deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) classes are typically small, several teachers felt it was possible to focus on all of the students' individual needs regardless of how different they are. A teacher remarked, "For students who can handle college, they have IEP goals that support their development for college. Students' individual needs are still relevant to their post-secondary admissions." Another teacher explained, "I need to document in the IEP if students are at grade level or below grade level, and whether it is attainable for them to go to college. If it is not, that definitely impacts my writing instruction because it is not a priority to prepare students for

college if they are significantly delayed in their writing.” One teacher strongly disagreed with his colleagues in the focus groups about his role in preparing students for college. He said, “Supporting students' individualized needs, following grade-level standards, and getting students ready for the workforce are all my responsibilities.” It appears that IEP plays an important role in whether and how teachers are involved in preparing students for college.

### ***Grade-Level Standards***

Most teachers felt that just by following grade-level standards and curricula, students would become ready for college, as the required skills are already embedded in the sequential learning objectives across grades. A teacher commented, “With the standards aligned with the curriculum, it's my belief that they will have the skills to enter college.” Yet, one teacher shared concerns about the standards being interpreted differently by teachers. She explained, “Depending on how you apply the standards. If you apply them rigorously, then yes, the student will be prepared. If you taught to the bare minimum of the standards, then the student would run the risk of not being prepared. The standards are so broad you are free to do what you make of it.” Another teacher said she often made explicit connections between what students were learning in the class and the skills required to succeed in college. She said, “I find that it motivates my students if I tell them that if you go to college, this is what you will expect. You will do a similar assignment. This really helps them with motivation.” The major difference identified between teaching grade-level students and non-grade level students is the use of grade-level standards which may not be applied to those who are not at grade-level. Similarly, there is a greater focus on the argumentation genre and high stakes tests with grade-level students when compared to teachers' reported focus with students not on grade level.

***Grouping for Standards-Based Instruction.*** A teacher from a large bilingual deaf school said that she determines her students' needs based on the results of formal writing assessments, which inform and shape her instruction. After her students take the assessments, they are placed either in: (a) a class that adheres to grade-level standards or (b) a class that uses a modified curriculum. She commented, “I follow grade-level standards for grade-level classes while I do not for other classes.” It became apparent during discussion that schools with a critical mass of deaf students are more able to form groups based on students' needs compared to schools with one or a few deaf students. This particular factor seemed to greatly impact instructional format and focus across schools.

### ***College Preparation***

Regarding preparing students for college, teachers shared different resources that their schools provided to support students' aspirations. One teacher said she helped her student fill out vocational rehabilitation applications. Advanced Placement classes were offered in some deaf schools where students could earn concurrent credits for college. A teacher added, “What they learn in my classroom aligns with the standards expected in ACT. We look at ACT essays as examples and discuss how we can produce similar text.” However, if college preparation was not documented in the IEP, teachers' focus in the classroom moved away from test preparation and essays. A teacher shared her feelings that the focus on college preparation could be narrow, and that a greater priority should be more broadly about being able to write academically. She explained, “I don't think specifically about supporting students with a college entry essay when they are seniors. It's more about what kind of academic writing do I expect? Will they be writing academically or will they be

writing more for functional purposes? What's the purpose of their writing?" Middle school teachers agreed that college preparation is likely to become more important in high school and that this was not something they were concerned about at their level. A teacher said, "In middle school, I am thinking about college a little bit but not really as much as high school teachers."

## B. Teacher Preparation and Skills

How prepared do teachers feel to teach writing to DHH students at the secondary level?		
<i>Preparedness</i>	<i>General (N = 222)</i>	<i>Grade-Level (N = 18)</i>
Not prepared at all	5%	0%
A little prepared	17%	0%
Somewhat prepared	33%	22%
Mostly prepared	32%	56%
Very prepared	14%	22%
Mean	3.3 (Somewhat)	4.0 (Mostly)

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How would teachers rate their current skills to teach students to do each of the following? Scale: (1) Poor, (2) Fair, (3) Average, (4) Very good, (5) Excellent				
Skills	General (N = 222)		Grade-Level (N = 18)	
	Mean	Indicator	Mean	Indicator
Punctuate appropriately	4.12	Very good	4.11	Very good
Spell correctly	4.01	Very good	4.00	Very good
Use accurate grammar	3.99	Very good	3.78	Very good
Type fluently	3.94	Very good	3.83	Very good
Organize & structure ideas	3.88	Very good	3.94	Very good
Generate ideas	3.75	Very good	4.00	Very good
Construct strong arguments	3.72	Very good	3.83	Very good
Revise writing	3.63	Very good	3.72	Very good
Cite reference sources	3.63	Very good	3.39	Very good
Translate ideas into written text	3.62	Very good	3.83	Very good
Understand & consider multiple viewpoints	3.59	Very good	3.94	Very good
Paraphrase source material	3.54	Very good	3.39	Average
Use tone and style appropriate for the intended audience	3.52	Very good	3.44	Average
Synthesize information from multiple sources	3.42	Average	3.44	Average

## Survey Results

Two survey questions posed to teachers asked about how prepared they feel to teach writing and for them to rate their skills in teaching specific writing features and skills.

- The majority of the general group reported in the survey feeling *somewhat* prepared while the grade-level group felt *mostly* prepared to teach writing to DHH students at the secondary level.
- Almost a quarter of the general group felt *a little prepared* or *not prepared at all* while none of the grade-level group felt this way.
- The mean scores between the general group and the grade-level group are very similar across skills with a few negligible differences.

- The grade-level group reported feeling less skilled than the general group in teaching how to cite reference sources and using accurate grammar.
- The grade-level group reported being more skilled when compared to the general group in teaching how to generate ideas, translate ideas into written text, and understand and consider multiple viewpoints.

## **Grade-Level Focus Group Discussion**

### ***Preparedness***

In focus groups, teachers described their preparedness in two ways: (1) whether they have had sufficient training to develop the necessary knowledge and skills, and (2) whether they have sufficient time on a daily basis to prepare for instruction. Some teachers said that they or their colleagues had majored in English or linguistics, or had taken additional literacy courses during college, and those educational experiences increased their confidence and knowledge with writing pedagogy. A teacher remarked, “In undergraduate, I specialized in linguistics and this prepared me well for teaching literacy, more than the teaching preparation program did. My master’s degree in deaf education focused more on theories, and they weren’t applied to teaching. So, I feel my undergraduate program prepared me more for teaching writing.” Other teachers also reported that their teacher preparation programs did not provide enough focus on writing instruction, with one teacher saying she had not received any training in college to teach writing. She explained, “Thinking back to my master’s program, there wasn’t a lot of focus on writing, unfortunately. When I first went into teaching I really had no experience in the area of teaching writing.” Some of these teachers paid out of pocket to receive training specific to writing instruction while some others said they benefited from professional development provided by their schools.

A teacher said although professional development along with ten years of teaching experience made her an experienced and effective teacher, she does not have enough time to prepare for the next day’s instruction. She said, “With many years teaching, I have experience and flow, but then students are changing all the time and you constantly need to collect more resources. I don’t have the time to be prepared and effective.”

### ***Teaching Grade-Level Students***

Most teachers found it easier to teach grade-level students because they followed grade-level standards that are already well-established and curricula that are available for use. They agreed that there are plenty of materials, resources, and lessons they could easily retrieve and use with their students. Because grade-level students were learning and developing writing skills at a quicker pace, teachers felt more competent. A teacher explained:

With grade-level students, it is easier to see their improvements. It feels like a cycle: They apply what you teach, and you see immediate progress. This cycle is encouraging for me as a teacher. With students who are below level, you teach and teach and teach, and you don’t see much progress. You think maybe you did something wrong and that maybe you are not ready. This impacts my feelings of preparedness.

However, one teacher disagreed and shared her frustrations feeling ill-prepared to teach grade-level students. She said, “This year I am teaching grade level students for the first time, and I do not feel

prepared at all. I am uncertain whether I should be giving them more work or if the load is too much. I did not receive any training on writing instruction.” With the exception of this teacher, there was broad consensus that teachers felt more prepared to teach grade-level students.

### ***Teaching Students Who are Not at Grade Level***

Due to the lack of curriculum, materials, and training that match the needs of deaf students who are not at grade-level, teachers reported not feeling as prepared to teach this population. A teacher said, “I remember especially my first year coming in and looking at these students’ writing and saying, you know, where do I even begin with this.” Another teacher added, “We do not have appropriate curriculum and materials that match our students’ needs. I make a lot of modifications from the hearing-based curriculum. There is no writing curriculum for deaf students who are not at grade-level at the secondary level.” Another teacher agreed, “If I google and need help with middle school age students at grade level, there are plenty of resources and ideas that pop up to help with brainstorming. But when you are teaching 14, 15, or 16 year old students who are writing many levels below their age, the resources are not there.” Some hearing teachers shared that they grew up receiving grade-level instruction so they were unable to draw upon their own experiences when working with deaf students who are not on grade level. One of them added, “With deaf students who are delayed, sometimes it takes a lot of thought and perspective to say ‘how do I adjust my hearing brain to be able to teach this in a way that works with the deaf brain?’, because the hearing brain is so reliant on how things sound and what sounds right.” The lack of training and preparation specialized to the deaf context makes it difficult for hearing teachers to support their deaf students’ learning needs.

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## C. Student Writing Skills

On average, how would teachers rate their students' skills with each of the following? Scale: (1) Poor, (2) Fair, (3) Average, (4) Very good, (5) Excellent				
Skills	General (N = 221)		Grade-Level (N = 18)	
	Mean	Indicator	Mean	Indicator
Generate ideas	2.77	Average	3.61	Very good
Type fluently	2.46	Fair	3.44	Average
Punctuate appropriately	2.28	Fair	3.28	Average
Spell correctly	2.27	Fair	3.11	Average
Understand & consider multiple viewpoints	2.01	Fair	2.94	Average
Translate ideas into written text	1.98	Fair	2.83	Average
Construct strong arguments	1.92	Fair	2.67	Average
Organize & structure ideas	1.92	Fair	2.67	Average
Use tone and style appropriate for the intended audience, cite reference sources, synthesizing information from multiple sources, use accurate grammar, paraphrase source material, revise writing	1.85- 1.67	Fair	2.61- 2.18	Average - Fair

### Survey Results

The survey broadly gauged DHH students' writing skills by asking teachers to report, on average, how well their students performed on specific writing tasks. For both the general group and the grade-level group, the numbers reported by teachers reflect the mean skill levels across students in their classes.

- The ranking of skills was identical between both groups, but with general students having mostly fair skills and grade-level students having mostly average skills.

### Grade-Level Focus Group Discussion

Teachers agreed with the ranking of generating ideas as students' greatest writing strength and revising as one of their weakest skills. A teacher said, "My students have a strong start to their writing, but they lack finesse to finish. They do not really have the stamina to receive feedback and continue to improve their paper until completion." All teachers agreed that their students usually stop after the first draft and avoid revising their papers based on received feedback. Revising is a

challenging part of the writing process for most students. A teacher explained, “They would become defensive and say they cannot change their writing. They want me to edit their paper for them, but that is not what I am doing. I am providing revisions that students can make to improve their papers. I don't care about grammar yet, and I am mostly interested in helping them improve their ideas.” A high school teacher said middle school students mostly engage in assignments that involve freewriting or the narrative genre; this makes them ill-prepared for high school writing of various genres for different purposes.

What teachers shared about teaching writing skills to grade-level students appeared to align with some evidence-based practices, such as establishing authentic readers to boost motivation. A teacher commented, “Having an audience really changes how I teach, especially how I teach the argumentative genre. It allows students to actively think about their audience and receive a response from them. They are not just writing for the sake of writing.”

Teachers broadly agreed that mentor texts also build interest and motivation. A teacher acknowledged that reading and writing cannot be separated. She explained, “When teaching argumentative writing, there is a need to read many mentor texts. I'm big on this. When reading, you can see the structure of the writing, and it will improve students' own writing structure. Mentor texts have to be used with deaf students.” Another teacher shared a multimodal method in using mentor texts. She said, “I've used shark tank as a mentor text for writers on grade level. This mentor text is used to study how people create proposals. We capture different techniques and the way that language is used. My students can use these moves in their own writing.”

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## D. Most Important Writing Skills

Select the top three skills that are important for DHH secondary writers. (Select only three.)	
<i>General</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Translate ideas into written text	21%
Organize and structure ideas	19%
Use accurate grammar	10%
<i>Grade-Level</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Construct a strong argument	19%
Organize and structure ideas	17%
Synthesize information from multiple sources	17%

### Survey Results

Teachers were asked in the survey to pick three skills out of a list of fourteen skills that they thought were the most important for DHH writers in secondary levels.

- The general group felt translating ideas into written text, organizing and structuring ideas, and using accurate grammar were the most important skills.
- The grade-level group felt constructing a strong argument, organizing and structuring ideas, and synthesizing information from multiple sources were the most important skills.

### Grade-Level Focus Group Discussion

Teachers were asked to share how they teach skills they feel are the most important for their students to learn. A teacher said she teaches argumentative skills by using respond-to-literature activities. After reading a text, she has her students make a claim and then support it with evidence from the text. She felt this approach helps her students to develop skills necessary for tests and college writing. Two teachers thought it was important to make real world applications when it comes to teaching argumentation. A teacher elaborated, "My students are writing a letter to send to the administrators to argue that they should be able to buy coffee. This real-life example motivates them to write. I help them build a foundation in understanding what makes a good argument -- using ethos, pathos, and logos as they are key components in getting other people to agree with you." Another teacher found stem sentences such as "I say" and "they say" helpful in getting students to consider other people's perspectives on a topic, especially on the topic of deafness, as this is highly relevant to

their lives. She said that by considering other people's viewpoints, students begin to think about counter-argumentations.

Two teachers from public schools said their deaf students lacked world knowledge. A teacher said, "What I discovered is critical thinking is something that my students do not have a lot of practice with. One of the ways I ended up approaching this is we just talk and talk, just even the basics of who, what, when, where, why, and how." The other teacher said, "A lot of our students do not have a lot of the background knowledge and experience that a typical hearing student would. It's difficult to come up with ideas if they don't have experiences, and if they don't know different viewpoints on certain widespread topics that are very apparent to many people." This teacher works one-on-one with her deaf students and provides explicit instruction of each step that is involved in building argumentations.

## E. Time and Perspective on Genres

What percentage of time do teachers spend on each genre in a school year and which genre is the most important for students?				
Genre	General (N = 190; N=186)		Grade-Level (N = 17; N = 17)	
	Time teaching in each genre	The most important genre	Time teaching in each genre	The most important genre
Narrative	31%	23%	22%	0%
Informative	28%	54%	25%	44%
Argumentative	22%	18%	33%	56%
Poetry	11%	2%	10%	0%
Other	8%	3%	9%	0%

### Survey Results

Teachers were surveyed about the percentage of time they spend teaching each genre in a school year and which genre they thought was the most important for their DHH students.

- The general group spent a larger percentage of their overall time teaching narrative writing while the grade-level group spent a larger percentage of their time teaching argumentative writing.
- The general group thought informative writing was the most important genre while the grade-level group thought argumentative writing was the most important genre.

## Grade-Level Focus Group Discussion

Most teachers agreed that narrative writing was not emphasized in their instruction, and that argumentative writing was the most important genre for secondary students who are at grade level. Crafting argumentation often includes narrative and informative components, so teachers felt this genre was comprehensive. A teacher said, “Argumentative writing is important because they will need to persuade people for the rest of their lives.” Another teacher agreed, “Argumentation is in everything, even in the emails we write.” Several teachers recalled their own experiences in college and noted that argumentative writing was the primary genre they engaged with.

A teacher said his students were comfortable with and could successfully write full pieces of narrative and informative writing independently while they found argumentative writing more difficult and needing further instruction and practice. He remarked, “This genre has more value in my instruction because I really do need to teach it.” A teacher from a bilingual deaf school expressed that students received instruction with information reports due to collaborations with content area teachers at the school. She said, “Social studies and science teachers need to meet the IEP goals of having their students read informational text and write information reports. Language arts teachers are responsible for teaching argumentative writing. The shared responsibility makes it easier to focus more on argumentative writing in my class.” Another teacher mentioned structuring components of her teaching based on high stakes tests. She explained, “There are new state tests that have less emphasis on persuasive writing and have greater emphasis on narrative writing and other genres.” As for poetry, teachers had varied views of the value of this genre. A few teachers loved it and felt the freedom of writing in this genre benefitted their students greatly while others felt it was difficult to teach.

## F. Minutes of Writing Instruction

During a typical week, how many minutes do teachers spend on certain components of writing instruction?		
<i>Writing Instruction</i>	<i>General (N = 190)</i>	<i>Grade-Level (N = 17)</i>
Teaching writing to a class <i>(This only includes time where teachers directly teach writing genres, processes, or text knowledge.)</i>	69 minutes	71
Teaching grammar to a class <i>(This only includes time where teachers directly teach vocabulary, grammar, word order, sentence structure.)</i>	60 minutes	90
Student writing <i>(This only includes time spent planning, drafting, revising, and editing that is paragraph length or longer. This does not include instruction.)</i>	68 minutes	97

## Survey Results

To gain a bigger picture of secondary writing instruction, teachers were asked in the survey to indicate the amount of time they spend teaching certain components of writing in a typical week.

- Both general and grade-level groups spent similar amounts of time teaching writing to their class each week (approximately seventy minutes).
- The grade-level group taught grammar and had students engage in writing for thirty additional minutes compared to the general group.

## Grade-Level Focus Group Discussion

All teachers agreed that their grade level students spent more time writing in class because of their greater capacity to write independently. A teacher said, “Time spent on writing reflects students' independence in writing”. Another teacher elaborated, “Stamina is one thing and having a larger vocabulary is another. They are able to write down all of their ideas with the vocabulary they have. Language delayed students max out with their vocabulary, making it challenging to write down everything they want to say. Grade level students are able to spend more time writing due to their stamina and large vocabulary.” Teachers said their grade-level students are able to spend thirty minutes writing or write a full-page paper in a single sitting. This provides context for why grade-level students write for approximately thirty more minutes per week compared to other students, according to teacher reports.

Most teachers were puzzled at the increased time in grammar instruction with grade-level students compared to other DHH students. They felt grammar was the least important component of their writing instruction. Some teachers believed students would naturally acquire grammatical knowledge through their ongoing interactions with reading and writing. A teacher said, “My experience is the opposite from the data. I do not teach grammar more to grade-level students or even to my college students. I believe that by writing more, they will develop grammar.” During the writing process, students are called to attend to grammar only during the editing component. Another teacher explained, “I think it is important to have that fluency in writing, and that students feel they can effortlessly express what they want to say. Editing is last. It's the same as real writers. They don't edit their story first; they clean up later.” This is the time when teachers guide students through applying more complex English features such as figurative language or varying sentence structures. Other teachers said they provide direct instruction on grammar, have students practice through a computer-based program, and/or teach them to use grammar checking softwares such as Grammarly. A teacher working in a public school said while deaf students work on general writing assignments in the mainstream class, she pulls them out to work on grammar one-on-one. She explained, “I do not have a whole class of students, it's typically pull-out, one-on-one time. Our time is mostly spent on those little pieces of fine tuning grammar.” Two teachers from deaf schools said their students usually express a desire for more grammar instruction. A teacher said, “My students are asking me for more grammar instruction. They are asking me questions about the rules. They really want to know.” Another teacher pointed out that direct instruction in grammar was not as effective without applied practice and mentor texts, which most teachers agreed with.

### III. Methods

#### Design

The purpose of this study was to learn about secondary writing instruction occurring with grade-level or college-bound deaf students and to compare these with broader findings about writing instruction occurring with diverse deaf students. Mixed methods research was employed using a sequential explanatory design (Ivankova et al., 2006) across two cycles. The cycles were identical in methods and differed by the focus of the student populations. In the first cycle, data were collected from teachers who taught diverse secondary deaf students, ranging from emergent writers to proficient writers. In the second cycle, data were collected from teachers who taught grade-level or college-bound secondary deaf students more specifically. See Figure 1. Findings from the first cycle were reported in another [technical report](#). Findings from the second cycle, in comparison to or contextualized within findings from the first cycle, are reported in this technical report.

<b>First Cycle (Teaching of All Deaf Students)</b>	
First Phase (Quantitative)	Nationwide Survey
Second Phase (Descriptive)	Three Focus Groups
For access to full reporting of data from the first cycle, see <a href="#">here</a> .	
<b>Second Cycle (Teaching of Grade-Level or College-Bound Deaf Students)</b>	
First Phase (Quantitative)	Nationwide Survey
Second Phase (Descriptive)	Three Focus Groups

Figure 1. Research Design

#### ***Second Cycle (Grade-Level or College-Bound Deaf Students)***

Following the procedures of the first cycle, the second cycle involved quantitative data collection via a survey completed by secondary teachers of the deaf who taught grade-level or college-bound students. This was followed by a second phase of descriptive data collected from three focus group sessions to further explore and better understand the survey data. In focus groups, teachers viewed and discussed the survey results, extending our understanding of the quantitative data. In this way, the study is a follow-up explanations model that is quantitative oriented (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

**First Phase (Quantitative).** We sent a nationwide survey to explore writing instruction used with deaf students in secondary levels. Out of 222 teachers who completed the survey, 97 reported their interest in participating in focus groups. We sent a follow-up email to these 97 teachers asking if they taught grade-level or college-bound students, and if so, whether they wanted to join focus

groups. Eighteen teachers responded favorably to the request. All were asked to complete the survey again while thinking specifically about their grade-level or college-bound students.

**Second Phase (Descriptive).** The eighteen teachers were assigned to three focus groups based on instructional context and level, but only eleven teachers were able to attend. The composition of the three groups were: (a) three middle school teachers who provided writing instruction in ASL and English, (b) six high school teachers who provided writing instruction in ASL and English, and (c) two middle and high school teachers who provided instruction in English only.

The focus groups were held virtually on Zoom on three different days, lasting one hour each, and were video recorded for transcription purposes. We took turns asking questions, facilitating discussions, and taking notes. Focus group questions were semi-structured and based on survey results, with the goal of drawing interpretations from the teachers. The questions asked were similar to the following: "After looking at the survey data on student skills, share more about your thoughts and experiences". Sometimes we had them compare their survey responses to the larger survey results in the prior study such as: "Why do you think those who are teaching students at grade level spend more time weekly on grammar instruction and more time engaging students in independent writing?" After collecting focus group data, teacher comments were transcribed and summarized to supplement the survey results in a technical report. This technical report was shared with the focus group participants prior to publication to seek input on the accuracy of the discussion summaries. Participant input and revisions were incorporated into the final report.

### **Grade-Level Focus Group Participants**

Eleven teachers (Black n=1, white n=10; women n=9, men n=2; Deaf n=3, hearing n=8) from nine different states participated in three focus groups, representing diverse settings (deaf school n=8, self-contained classroom n=1, itinerant n=1), levels (middle school n=5, high school n=6), and language of instruction (spoken English n=2, ASL and English n=9).