



Pensacola students ace FCAT writing test

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PENSACOLA - Students at O.A.S.I.S. High School Preparatory Academy have exceeded all writing skills expectations — and have the scores to prove it.

In just two years since the highly technical alternative education school opened in Pensacola, all 72 students have achieved 100 percent writing proficiency scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

The secret to their success: Vantage Learning's MY Access!, an award-winning Web-based writing environment that builds better writers by instantly scoring student essays, and providing immediate remedial instruction that engages and motivates students.

Based on Vantage Learning's IntelliMetric engine, MY Access! uses a rich blend of artificial intelligence and the virtualization of human expertise to accurately assess students' competency and progress in reading and writing.

MY Access! scores are consistently as accurate as human expert scorers, giving teachers the freedom to focus on one-on-one instruction rather than extensive paper-grading.

"Any time you can use hands-on instruction to engage and motivate a student, you are going to have tremendous results—as our students' stellar FCAT writing scores show," says Ruth Forrester, Principal of O.A.S.I.S. Academy. "Powerful and targeted instant feedback motivates the kids, and builds their confidence in their own writing ability."

Forrester, a 37-year veteran of middle school education, opened O.A.S.I.S. Academy in 2005 to help Escambia County's low-level learners gain the necessary skills to attend a mainstream high school.

The school had already implemented programs to improve math, science, and reading proficiency.

The missing piece: An online program to increase writing proficiency, since the majority of the students were writing at level 1 or 2.

Forrester ultimately chose MY Access! for its Web capabilities, which let students type essays from any computer with an Internet connection.

She also liked the program's interactive research and feedback components that engage the students with fun, lively exercises.

The results of her selection: Since implementing MY Access!, most students now write between level 4 and 5, with two eighth graders writing at level 6.

Students using My Access! scored 86 percent proficiency on the FCATs in the first year alone, and raised it to 100 percent proficiency this past year.

"Teaching students how to write in optimal circumstances is challenging, so imagine what teachers at O.A.S.I.S. Academy were facing with students often sidelined by academic problems, social issues, or illness," says Harry Barfoot, Vice President of Sales and Marketing of Vantage Learning.

ABOUT VANTAGE LEARNING

Delivering more than 193 million online test transactions last year, Vantage Learning (www.vantagelearning.com) is recognized as the leader in cost-effective, high volume, secure, scalable online assessment and instructional programs for K-12 and higher education.

Leveraging technology such as artificial intelligence, natural language understanding, and web-based learning objects, Vantage provides educators with high-quality tools and resources that motivate students to learn and that create meaningful interactions between students, parents and teachers.

Acknowledged by industry leaders as the gold standard for scoring quality, consistency, reliability, and scalability of automated essay scoring using the patented IntelliMetric engine, Vantage Learning has received accolades ranging from the prestigious CODiE Award for best instructional technology to recognition by Eduventures as one of the eight most innovative educational technology companies.