

The Challenge

Although Lake Weir Middle School, located in Marion County, Florida, had an A+ rating due to its outstanding performance on previous exams, the school's faculty wanted to ensure that their students were prepared to face an even tougher challenge since Florida raised the passing standard on the Florida Writes exam in 2005. Students are now required to achieve a 3.5 (up from a 3) on a 6-point holistic grading scale in order to pass the exam. Educators expect further increases to the passing standard in the future.

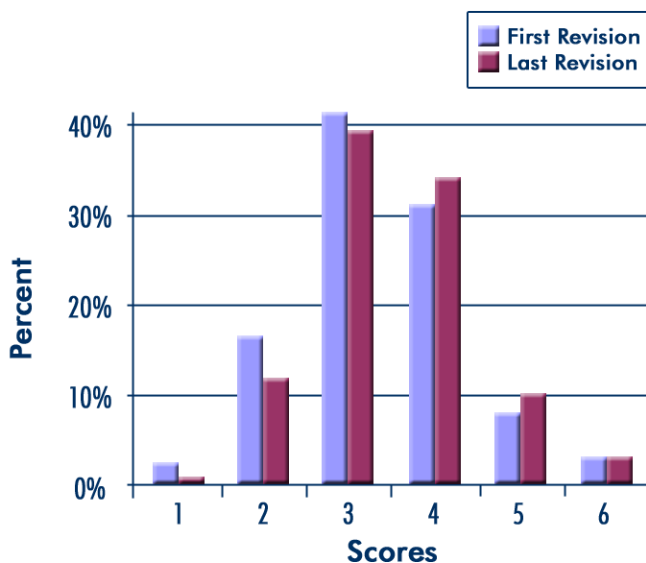
The Solution

Teachers at Lake Weir Middle School decided to pool their bonus money and invest it back into their students' education by purchasing Vantage Learning's MY Access!™, an award-winning, web-based writing assessment and instructional tool that improves students' writing proficiency. MY Access! scores student essays instantly and provides individualized instruction to engage and motivate students to continually improve their writing skills. The robust reporting feature within the program provides up-to-the-minute information about student performance, enabling teachers to make timely, data-driven decisions for successful, differentiated instruction.

The Results

Lake Weir Middle School implemented MY Access! in December 2004, and have found that students are motivated to write more, both in the classroom and at home. "I think this is the most wonderful tool I've come across in 24 years," says Fleeta Harris, a Language Arts instructor at the school. "With 100+ students per teacher per language arts class, we can have them do a lot more writing, which will increase their writing skills." Lonni Beechen, also a Language Arts teacher at Lake Weir Middle School, agrees. "Students who were having trouble writing short sentences are now producing multiple-paragraph, long-form essays. This is the best writing tool I've seen in over 22 years of teaching," she concludes.

**Comparison of Scores
First Revision v. Last Revision**



1) After only 6 months of using MY Access!, students improved their scores on the Florida Writes exam.

- The average score of Marion County middle school students on the Florida Writes was a 3.7 in 2005, up from 3.6 in 2004.

2) In addition to improvement on the Florida Writes, there was a noticeable improvement in the students' writing abilities after using MY Access! for six months.

- When Lake Weir's students wrote their first essay using MY Access!, the average holistic score was 3.34; by their last essay, the average score was 3.49.
- The percentage of students achieving a 4, 5 or 6 on their essays increased from 42% to 47% by the end of the six months; significantly fewer students received scores of 1 or 2 by the last revision.