

## Client Reference Email

### Alpine School District, Utah

**From:** Pam Hallam, Director of Information Systems

**Sent:** Monday, August 01, 2005 3:41 PM

#### **MY ACCESS! Helps Alpine School District Get Writing, Right!**

The topic of writing was recently addressed in the Research Roundup (Volume 21, Number 3, Spring 2005) produced by the Educational Research Service and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Amie Goldberg and colleagues (1992 & 2002) conducted a meta-analysis of studies, which compared the results of K-12 students who wrote with computers versus those who used paper and pencil. The meta-analysis targeted measures of quantity and quality of writing, as well as the number of revisions. Their conclusion was that, "Significant findings favoring computers were found for both quantity and quality of writing." In addition, the finds show that "students who used computers for writing were more engaged, interested, and independent."

It is intuitive that the best way to improve writing is to WRITE MORE! This equation is dramatically improved with the addition of timely and specific feedback. Educators are faced with a dilemma where writing is concerned. How can they fit more wiring into their curriculum with the demands of increasing class sizes and accountability measure, which focus on core subjects? Unfortunately the amount of writing currently being required in our classrooms is probably decreasing, not increasing. To combat this situation, Alpine School District has used Title II-D funds for the last two years to pilot Vantage Learning's software called MY Access!<sup>TM</sup> This software provides immediate feedback, specific to the student's writing style, using IntelliMetric<sup>TM</sup> essay scoring technology, and engages students in the writing process by encouraging them to revise their essays based on this individualized instruction. The most obvious benefit is that students are writing more, MUCH MORE. Students are revising their papers based on the specific feedback provided from the MY Access! program until their writing meets the "proficient" writing standards. The MY Access! program does not "replace" the teacher's responsibility to teach and correct student writing. In fact, the pilot teachers report grading the same number of papers as they have in the past, but now they can increase the number of writing assignments required because they can be scored by the MY Access! program. In addition, their instruction is more meaningful and targeted as a result of the reports, which can be generated by the MY Access! program.

Teachers in the Alpine School District say they love the MY Access! program, which affords students 24-7 access. They cite many reasons like MY Tutor, which automatically analyzes writers' responses and links them directly to developmentally appropriate MY Tutor instructional content. This feature allows students, whose reading and/or writing is at a lower level than their actual grade level, to receive feedback that is within their zone of proximal development. Perhaps the most notable benefits are produced qualitatively – they insist that they have observed the same conclusion as the researchers cited above. They proclaim that their students write more, are more engaged, interested, and independent, and produce better and more thoughtful writing as a result of using the MY Access! program.

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