

Corona-Norco Unified School District

WriteUp!

WHAT IMPACT DID THE WRITEUP! INTERVENTION HAVE ON ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE ARTS AND WRITING SKILLS?

Project Overview

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

The Corona-Norco Unified School District (CNUSD) in California identified a need for a research-based systematic approach to writing in the district. The goal of the WriteUp!¹ intervention was to bridge the achievement gap for high-needs students and improve overall student achievement, using writing across-curriculum.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

When CNUSD secured an i3 development grant from 2010-2015, the funding was used over the following three academic years to support prior work in the district by continuing to work with the research-based *Step Up to Writing* curriculum; implement a technology-based essay scoring and writing feedback platform; and provide professional development and support to district teachers. The WriteUp! program consists of three main components: writing curriculum and strategies, online writing software systems, and a professional development model. These components are blended into a cross-curriculum writing intervention that emphasizes the use of technology. The intervention was geared primarily toward elementary school students; it was also expanded into middle schools and high schools in the district. Teachers at all levels were given the professional development opportunities to support the WriteUp! program model. The program employed a quasi-experimental design with one-to-one matching of students to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

¹ The Corona-Norco Unified School District received an i3 development grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U396C100467. Development grants provide funding to support the development or testing of novel or substantially more effective practices that address widely shared education challenges. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

THE WRITEUP! MODEL

- **WRITING CURRICULUM.** The *Step Up to Writing Curriculum* was implemented for its research-based strategies and emphasis on narrative, personal essay, and expository writing as well as a skills focus on comprehension and study skills. English Language Arts (ELA) teachers were trained in the curriculum.
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD).** The PD was designed to improve the teaching of writing at the high school level, with additional support for instruction focused on college and career instruction, as well as to provide staff with strategies for planning and implementing effective writing instruction across curriculum. Teachers were trained and supported in the online writing software and technology. Teachers also received coaching support.
- **ONLINE WRITING SOFTWARE.** The district chose to use CTeWriter and later switched to MY Access! by Vantage Learning to fulfill the technology requirement of the proposed intervention. This technology was used throughout the grant to provide online writing instruction, assessment, and feedback. Students had access to lessons and courses online. Teachers could send links, assess work, and provide differentiated support to students.

Summary of Results

WHAT IMPACT DID THE WRITEUP! INTERVENTION HAVE ON ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE ARTS AND WRITING SKILLS?

None of the impacts studied for the i3 intervention were determined to be statistically significant for ELA or writing at either the elementary or middle/high school levels.

Please see Appendices A and B for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluators noted a few takeaways from the *WriteUp!* intervention.

- **THE POTENTIAL TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN ELA AND WRITING.** While the impact evaluation did not find a significant impact on writing and ELA achievement, CNUSD administration indicated a belief that the intervention still has the potential to improve achievement in these areas.
- **THE POTENTIAL USE WITH SUBGROUPS OF STUDENTS.** Prior to the i3-funded study, earlier *WriteUp!* intervention results indicated that there were positive impacts on students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Students with Disabilities (SWD).
- **TEACHER AND STUDENT BENEFITS.** The CNUSD administration noted that teachers and students enjoyed various benefits of the program. For example, the online lessons in writing and college and career readiness are still posted on the district's website and in use (as of the 2015-16 school year). Teachers worked toward full implementation of the program throughout the study and achieved many full implementations. They also received PD and the appropriate materials necessitated for the work.

For More Information

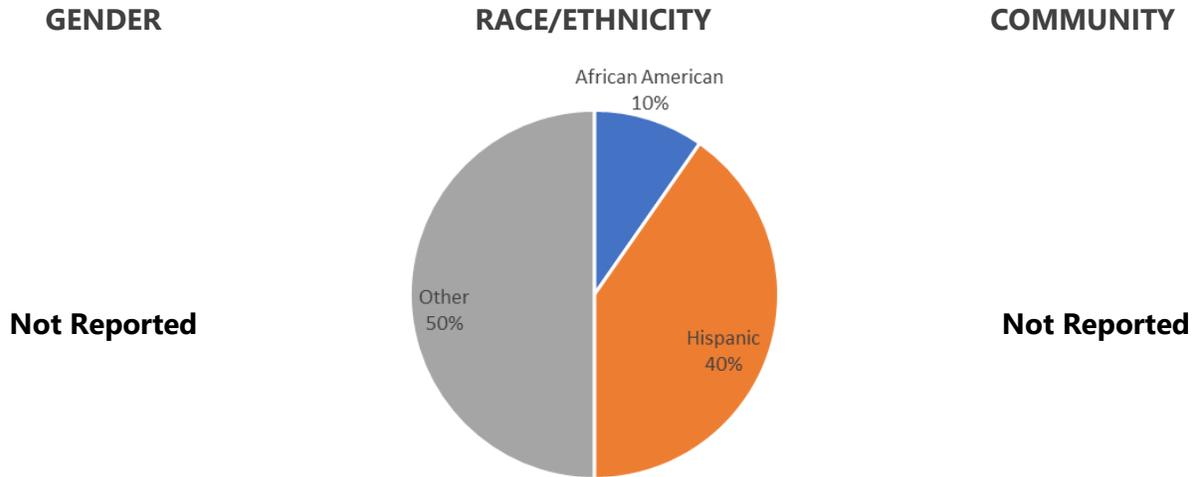
Evaluation Reports

Final Evaluation Report (2015) (PDF) (Key Data Systems, November 2015)²

² The information and data for this result summary was collected from an evaluation report that is no longer available online.

Appendix A: Students Served by the Project³

GRADE(S)													
PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12



HIGH-NEED STUDENTS ⁱ		
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	English Learner	Students with Disabilities
Not Reported/Not Applicable	10.4%	38%

³ These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology⁴

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Quasi-Experimental Design
Approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The study used a quasi-experimental non-equivalent comparison group design. Exact one-to-one matching was done for each outcome variable. Matching continued until baseline equivalence samples were achieved for each outcome variable. Hierarchical linear modeling was applied to the analyses with a two-level model where students were nested in schools.
Study Length:	Three years –2011-12 school year through 2013-14 school year

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Study Setting:	Eleven elementary, three middle, and two high schools in CNUSD
Final Sample Size:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Intervention:</i> 88 elementary students with scores on district writing assessment exposed to intervention for three years; 197 elementary students with scores on district writing assessment exposed to intervention for two years; 1,161 with scores on CST ELA exposed to intervention for two years; 1,606 middle/high school students with CST ELA scores exposed to intervention for two years; 1,026 elementary students with scores on district ELA benchmarks exposed to intervention for two years; 1,070 middle/high school students with scores on district ELA benchmarks exposed to intervention for two years.<i>Comparison:</i> 88 elementary students with scores on district writing assessment exposed to intervention for three years; 197 elementary students with scores on district writing assessment exposed to intervention for two years; 1,161 with scores on CST ELA exposed to intervention for two years; 1,606 middle/high school students with CST ELA scores exposed to intervention for two years; 1,026 elementary students with scores on district ELA benchmarks exposed to intervention for two years; 1,070 middle/high school students with scores on district ELA benchmarks exposed to intervention for two years.
Intervention Group Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elementary School: 14.9% English Learners, 33.6% Special Education, 45.3% Hispanic, 9.7% African AmericanMiddle/High School: 6.2% English Learners, 42% Special Education, 48.8% Hispanic, 12.8% African American
Comparison Group Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elementary School: 10.4% English Learners, 36.2% Special Education, 40.9% Hispanic, 4.3% African AmericanMiddle/High School: 4.1% English Learners, 35.2% Special Education 39.3% Hispanic, 2.6% African American.

⁴ These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Development, 2010-2015

Data Sources:

- Standardized reading test scores

Key Measures:

- Student Achievement in English Language Arts (California Standards Test, ELA; District ELA Benchmark) Writing Skill (District Writing Benchmark)

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

Although an evaluation may not have been reviewed by the time of publication for this summary, it is possible that the study will be reviewed at a later date. Please visit the websites found in the footnotes on this page to check for updates.

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW⁵

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW⁶

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW⁷

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

⁵ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

⁶ <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

⁷ <https://intensiveintervention.org/>

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Development, 2010-2015

The [*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

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ⁱ “High-need student” refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)](#).