MI Write

Powered by PEG

A Proven Path to Success

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MI Write can be a reliable tool to help educators make important intervention decisions.

MI Write, powered by the PEG Engine, can be a reliable tool to help educators make meaningful decisions. In a recent study published in the Journal of School Psychology, Joshua Wilson (2018) evaluated the use of PEG (Project Essay Grade) automated essay scoring as a screener to identify struggling writers as part of a universal screening system. Wilson sampled a diverse group of 100 Grade 3 students and 130 Grade 4 students, each of whom completed an informal writing prompt in the Fall and Spring and then took their state test, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's English Language Arts test. The scores from the informal writing prompts were correlated with performance on the state test.

Findings indicated that students scoring in the lower-range of PEG (scores lower than 12 on a first draft of a 30-minute essay) had a higher likelihood of subsequently failing the state test. Similarly, students scoring in the upper-range of PEG (scores above 18) had a high likelihood of subsequently passing the summative test.

Notably, observed outcomes of the study suggest an increased risk for students who had lower scores on the screeners:

- Scores below 12 on the Spring screener – Of these students, 58% in Grade 3 and 87% in Grade 4 did not pass the state summative test.
- Scores between 12-17 on the Fall and Spring screener – Rates increase from 14% (Fall) to 22% (Spring) in Grade 3, and 50% (Fall) to 61% (Spring) in Grade 4.

This correlation indicates an achievement gap that grows larger with a lack of improvement. The test results of the 2009 NAEP achievement tests suggest the same conclusion; while 18% of all fourth-grade students scored "below basic," the proportion was 27% for eighth-grade students.

The consequences are clear, but preventive measures may not be. A single screener cannot perfectly identify which students are actually at risk. For accurate classification, Dr. Wilson points out that a combination of screeners to test both reading and writing have been proven more effective than either type of screener alone. He proposes the use of MI Write as the initial screener in a two-stage system or in the design of a screener including stimulus material that students would read to respond to a prompt. The stimulus material could even include recorded segments for prompts designed to test listening skills. Also, because MI Write offers unlimited opportunities for practice, teachers can better monitor progress and collect more data.

These findings show that PEG can be used to guide decisions about which students are at risk and who may require supplemental instruction. Furthermore, these findings are promising because alternative writing screeners are time-consuming to administer and score, and subject to poor reliability (i.e., scores may be untrustworthy). In contrast, PEG scores students' essays with a high degree of reliability and does so immediately, allowing educators to reduce the gap between assessment, identification, and intervention.

Wilson, J. (2018). Universal screening with automated essay scoring: Evaluating classification accuracy in Grades 3 and 4. Journal of School Psychology, 68, 19-37.

+1.5 average writing score improvement over 6 drafts for typical students

+3.5 average writing score improvement over 6 drafts for students with disabilities

MI Write Powered by PEG • MI Tutor Powered by PEG

Research on MI Write® shows that:

- Students who use MI Write ***revise much more*** than traditional paper-and-pencil writing.
- Students demonstrate ***strong improvements*** in the quality of their writing from first draft to final draft, and reduce the number of spelling and grammar errors.
- Students who use MI Write demonstrate ***significant gains*** in writing motivation and writing confidence. Students with learning disabilities or other high-incidence disabilities appear to ***close the gap*** with their non-disabled peers.
- MI Write helps make a ***lasting, positive impression*** on students' writing ability. When teachers use MI Write for a number of writing assignments, students demonstrate improvements in their independent writing performance from pre-test to post-test.
- Teachers report that giving students feedback takes half the amount of time than when they are the sole source of feedback and they ***give significantly more feedback*** on higher-level writing skills.
- Scores from MI Write can accurately ***identify students at-risk*** of failing state writing tests.

Wilson, J. (in preparation). PEG Writing supports eighth-graders' growth in independent writing quality and writing confidence. Manuscript in preparation.

Wilson, J., & Andrada, G. N. (2016). Using automated feedback to improve writing quality: Opportunities and challenges. In Y. Rosen, S. Ferrara, & M. Mosharraf (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Technology Tools for Real-World Skill Development (pp.678-703). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Wilson, J., & Czik, A. (2016). Automated essay evaluation software in English language arts classrooms: Effects on teacher feedback, student motivation, and writing quality. Computers and Education, 100, 94-109.

Wilson, J., Olinghouse N. G., & Andrada, G. N. (2014). Does automated feedback improve writing quality? Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal, 12, 93-118.

Wilson, J., Olinghouse, N. G., McCoach, D. B., Andrada, G. N., & Santangelo, T. (2016). Comparing the accuracy of different scoring methods for identifying sixth graders at risk of failing a state writing

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