

Step Up  
to Writing®

**STEP UP TO WRITING  
EFFICACY REPORT:  
IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS**



# RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## GENERAL EDUCATION AND ELLS

### KEY DETAILS

#### Riverside County, California

**Instructional Period:**  
2005–2006

**Grade Levels:** 2–5

**Research Demographics:**

- 1,660 students participated
- General education
- ELLs: 51%
- 39 teachers participated (RCOE)\*
- Hispanic: 80.5%
- Socially and Economically Disadvantaged (SED): 85.2 %

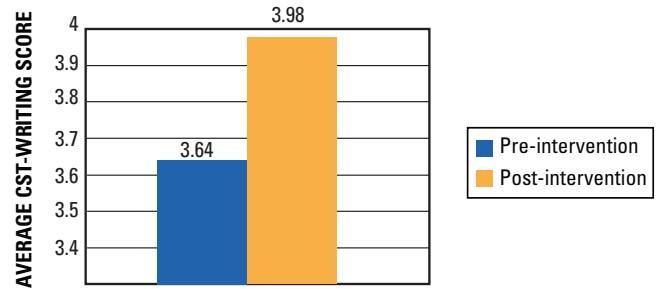


**Research Design:** Fourth grade—subgroups of 15 students

**Measure:** California Standards Test (CST) Writing

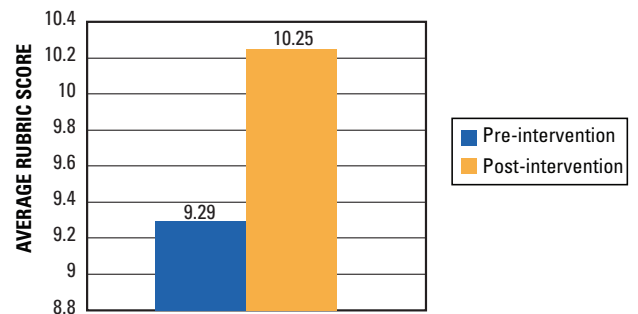
\*Riverside County Achievement Team

Average CST Writing Score by School Cross-Sectional Analysis of Fourth Grade Students Before and After Writing Intervention\*



\*Research based on implementation of the core program, *Step Up to Writing*, and a professional development program

Average Rubric Score Pre/Post by School/Intervention



### The Results Are in:

- Three to four years later, students' writing skills were assessed, and the mean scores on state standardized tests continued to improve
- Teachers indicate writing workshops are valuable and writing strategies are easy to incorporate

Programs rarely meet the needs of every child unless teachers use additional strategies to adjust instruction ... this is where *Step Up to Writing*® begins to be essential.

—Susan Smith  
Reading Specialist  
Riverside Unified School District, CA

We've been focusing on the writing process, and using strategies from *Step Up to Writing*, for around 10 years ... it started as an honest conversation about 'What can this do, if we implement it district-wide?'

—Jeanette Newman  
Professional Development Team Member  
Corona-Norco Unified School District, CA

Visit [www.voyagersopris.com/success-stories/corona-norco-usd](http://www.voyagersopris.com/success-stories/corona-norco-usd) to watch Corona Norco's story.

# KENROY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GENERAL EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND ELLS

## KEY DETAILS

### Wenatchee, Washington

**Instructional Period:**  
2003–2006

**Grade Level:** 4

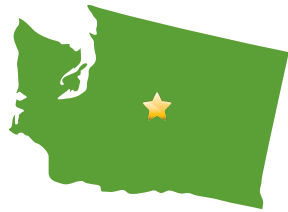
**Research Demographics:**

- Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL): 45%
- Minority students: 26%
- Special education: 19%
- Bilingual: 15%

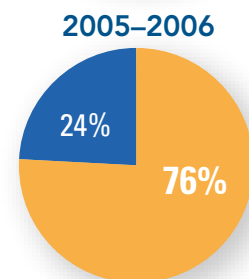
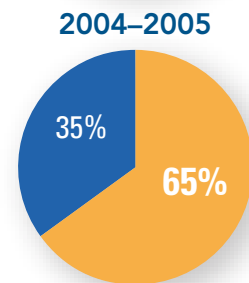
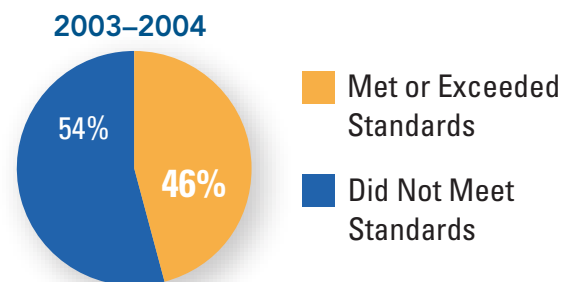
**Instructional Time:** 30 minutes per day/four days a week

**Research Goal:** Three years to increase the number of students who passed the WASL

**Measure:** Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)



## Percent of Fourth Grade Students Who Met or Exceeded Standards on the WASL Writing Assessment After Step Up to Writing Implementation



## The Results Are in:

- Thirty percent more students met or exceeded standards on the WASL Writing Assessment after three years of *Step Up to Writing* implementation
- As writing scores improved, reading scores improved: 90% of fourth grade students met or exceeded state standards in reading by spring 2006

We adopted *Step Up to Writing* due to lagging test scores. During the first year of implementation, our fourth grade writing scores improved 32.4 percent. We are now sharing *Step Up to Writing* strategies with the other elementary schools in our district.

—Lori Larson  
Literacy Specialist, Columbia Valley Gardens Elementary  
Longview, WA

# SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2

## GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

### KEY DETAILS

#### Sheridan, Wyoming

**Instructional Period:**  
2004–2005

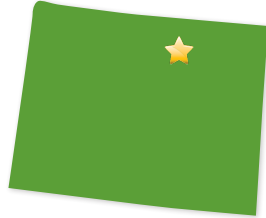
**Grade Levels:** 1–5

**Research Demographics:**

- Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL): 30%
- Special education: 13%
- Minority students: 9%

**Research Design:** 644 students in *Step Up to Writing* group; 273 students in comparison group

**Measure:** District writing assessment

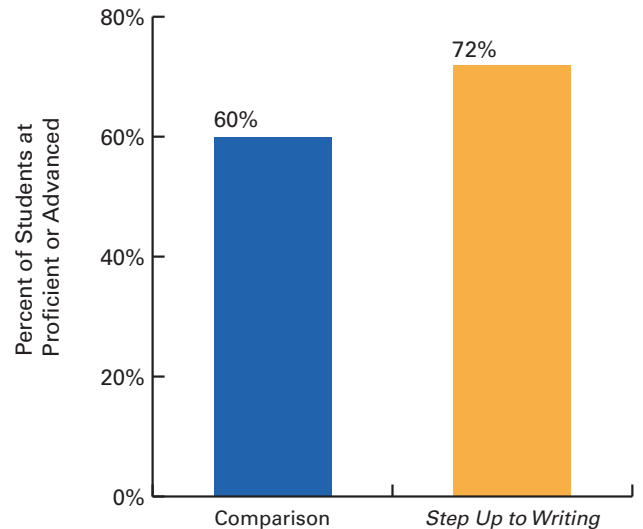


### Why Step Up to Writing?

*Step Up to Writing* was selected by staff in Sheridan School District No. 2 because:

- It can be implemented at all grade levels
- It includes professional development necessary for successful implementation

Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on the 2005 District Writing Assessment (Posttest)



Voyager Sopris Learning™ is committed to a long-term partnership with every district that implements our solutions. Each implementation support plan is individually crafted with school and/or district administrators to meet specific needs, including making explicit connections to state and national standards.

# KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' DEAF EDUCATION PROGRAM

## DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS

### KEY DETAILS

#### Bakersfield, California

**Instructional Period:**  
2008–2009

**Grade Levels:** 7–8

**Research Demographics\*:**

- 16 students participated
- Hispanic: 100%
- All students either bilingual or trilingual: American Sign Language (ASL), English, and Spanish
- Low socioeconomic status



**Research Design:** Single group, 2007–2008 pretest/2008–2009 posttest

**Instructional Time:** 55 minutes daily, with cross-content writing activities throughout the day

**Measure:** California State Test: English Conventions Battery Test and State Writing Assessment

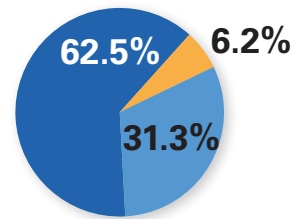
\*Russell, L. R. (2010). Language development for the deaf and hard of hearing using *Step Up to Writing*. University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA.

**2007–2008**  
Pretest Scores Before *Step Up to Writing* Implementation



Basic Proficiency

**2008–2009**  
Posttest Scores After *Step Up to Writing* Implementation



Below Proficient

Proficient

### Why *Step Up to Writing*?

*Step Up to Writing* was selected by staff in Kern County because it:

- Includes remedial lessons
- Provides a single writing organizer with cross-grade-level implementation options
- Includes consistent visual cues and format
- Provides research-based elements (i.e., a variety of instructional strategies, defined scope and sequence for instruction and remediation, color coding, language experience and strategies)
- Is interpreted easily to American Sign Language

“We really saw a great development of the writing process, which is so vague if you don’t have a writing system. To have one district-wide, from primary all the way up to high school, is so strong for our district.”

—Beth Feaster  
Principal, Temescal Valley Elementary School  
Corona-Norco Unified School District, CA

# SIMPLE STRATEGIES RESULT IN DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT'S WRITING

These samples were produced by the same student in response to the essay prompt in the Grade 7 Baseline Assessment. Before receiving *Step Up to Writing* instruction, the student wrote a basic paragraph with little elaboration. After three days of instruction, the student composed an essay response on the same topic with considerably more elaboration and explanation.

**Students learn to elaborate on the key idea using the Es:** Explanation, Examples, Experiences, Events, Evidence, Expert opinions, Exact information, Effective illustrations and quotations, and Expanding on everyday life.

## IMPLEMENTATION BACKGROUND

**Writing Strategy:** Stretch Paragraphs and Use the Es (Elaboration)

**Grade Level:** 8

**Instructional Minutes/Week:** 180

**Class Size:** 25

**School:** Soulsbyville Elementary, K-8

**District:** Soulsbyville, CA

**Prompt:** Write a short essay describing how the campers address their basic human needs on their winter camping trip. Make sure to refer to information from the sources in your response.

### BEFORE STEP UP TO WRITING: Initial Assessment Response

The campers in the story had several human needs. First they had tunnel shovels to dig their way into the snow. The campers had different type of clothing, waterproof jackets and pants, wool sweaters. They also had food supplies. A good thing that they had was warm sleeping bag. If you want to stay warm and dry, you need to build a proper shelter and it stabled correctly. Try not to where cotton because it will take in water and can cause hypothermia.

### AFTER 3 DAYS OF STEP UP TO WRITING INSTRUCTION:

In the Icemen Campeth, five boys went camping in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The campers addressed three of their human needs which are Physical, Safety, and Social needs. these human needs are listed from Maslouis Hierarchy of human needs. Maslouis Hierarchy is a chain from basic to advanced human needs.

First of all the five boys addressed their physical needs. The first need is bringing food to eat. The campers brought canned beans to eat, and hot cocoa to drink. They built Quinzee huts for shelter. The huts had air and warmth. They got their air from a vent hole in the roof. they kept warm by having good sleeping bags and heavy close.

After that, they addressed Safety needs. Shelter is a good safety need because it protects you from the outside. The hut they were using was called a Quinzee hut. it was a 10 by 8 foot mound of snow, hollowed out with a underground entrance. Other safety needs is having proper clothing, NO COTTON, warm sleeping bag, and having tools in a backpack.

Finally social needs. Social needs can be useful while camping with friends. The campers hung out by the fire in the snow. They drank hot cocoa because they were cold and tired to stay warm. The five boys worked together and built five Quinzee huts so they didn't have to build them in the dark and in the cold.

The Iceman Campeth taught me a lot about ice camping. How like Quinzee huts are hollowed out hounds of snow with a underground entrance. In safety needs it taught me that wearing cotton absorbers water and takes your body heat away. Also safety showed me that they blocked the entrance with their backpack from the outside. From my point of view, try going ice camping when it snows in your town.

Explanation

Examples

Explanation

Examples

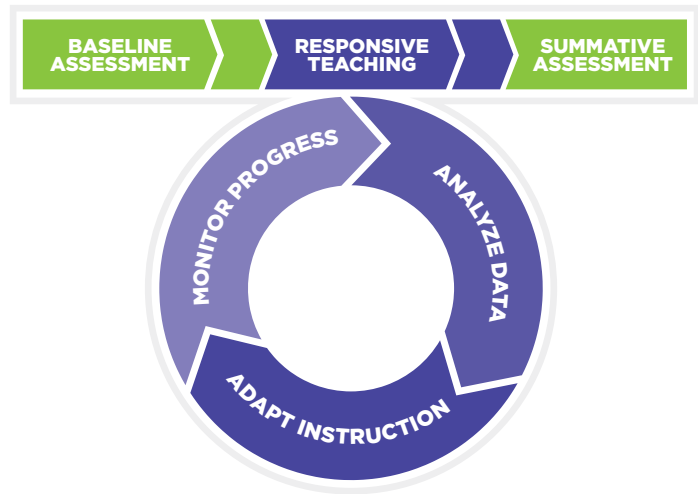
Experiences



# PROGRESS MONITORING AND BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

The *Step Up to Writing* assessment plan provides rigorous baseline and summative assessments for each grade level and each type of writing—informative/explanatory, opinion/argument, and narrative—that mirror performance task assessments in rigorous high-stakes tests. Through assessments, students:

- Read selections of authentic text on the same topic from different sources
- Answer multiple-choice comprehension questions
- Write a short essay based on a prompt



## BASELINE ASSESSMENT: ARGUMENT, GRADE 7

*Step Up to Writing—Grade 7* Argument Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions**

**Directions:** Refer back to the sources on page 2. Fill in the correct bubble to answer the questions.

- According to source #2, wind energy produces about how much of the world's electricity?
  - 25 percent
  - 2.5 percent
  - 20 percent
  - 13 percent
- According to critics mentioned in source #4, what allows wind energy to compete with coal and natural gas?
  - wind farms
  - large wind turbines
  - financial support from the government
  - the fact that wind does not cost anything
- As presented in source #5, what is one factor that contributes to bird deaths from wind turbines?
  - Birds are confused by the noise of wind turbines.
  - Wind farms operate at night when birds can't see turbine blades.
  - Bats cannot use their sonar to avoid the wind turbines.
  - Wind farms are built along routes birds use to migrate.
- What can be inferred about wind power from source #3?
  - Most climate scientists believe wind energy is the most powerful energy source.
  - Wind power produces more greenhouse gases than coal, petroleum, and natural gas.
  - Wind power is the only way to stop rising global temperatures and climate change.
  - The more electricity generated by wind, the less carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases will be produced.
- What can be inferred about energy sources from the sources?
  - Electricity production still relies on fossil fuels like coal, petroleum, and natural gas.
  - Renewable energy will soon replace other energy sources.
  - Wind power is the most promising form of renewable energy.
  - Wind power will soon overtake nuclear electric power.

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*Step Up to Writing—Grade 7* Argument Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wind Energy: Its Role in Our Energy Future**

**Source #1**  
**How does wind become electricity?** According to the U.S. Department of Energy: "Wind turbines harness the power of the wind and use it to generate electricity. Simply stated, a wind turbine works the opposite of a fan. Instead of using electricity to make wind, like a fan, wind turbines use wind to make electricity. The energy in the wind turns two or three propeller-like blades around a rotor. The rotor is connected to the main shaft, which spins a generator to create electricity."

**Source #2**  
**What are some of the pros and cons of wind energy?** According to London's Grantham Research Institute and *National Geographic*, these are some of the advantages and disadvantages of wind energy:

**Pros of Wind Energy**

- Wind energy does not pollute the air or water.
- Wind power uses a natural, renewable energy source.
- Wind farms can coexist with other land uses, like agriculture.
- The largest wind turbines can power 600 U.S. homes.
- The amount of electricity produced by wind energy is growing 25% a year.

**Cons of Wind Energy**

- Wind energy can be unreliable. Other sources of electricity must be ready for calm days.
- Wind turbines are very expensive to build, erect, and connect to the power grid.
- The blades of wind turbines kill thousands of birds and bats each year.
- The noise and looks of wind turbines bother some people.

**Source #4**  
**Wind farms are expensive.** Large wind turbines cost \$3–\$4 million each to buy and set up, according to *Windustry.org*. That means a wind farm of 25 turbines could cost as much as \$100 million before any electricity is generated. Critics of wind energy also point out that wind energy producers have received a lot of financial support from government. This takes the form of tax credits that save these companies millions of dollars. Without this support, wind energy would struggle to compete with coal or natural gas as an affordable energy source.

**Source #5**  
**Wind turbines kill birds and bats.** Environmentalists are concerned that wind turbine blades kill too many birds and bats. In some cases, wind farms are built along bird migration routes. *The American Bird Conservancy* reports: "A 2008 Department of Energy report calls for the U.S. to generate 20% of its electricity from wind by 2030. By then, wind turbines are expected to be killing at least one million birds each year. . . ." The organization is demanding wind energy producers do more to address the problem.

**Source #6**  
**Wind energy supplies a small amount of U.S. energy needs.**

**Energy Sources for U.S. Energy Use, 2011**

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

For a complete bibliography of sources, see the Teacher Edition.

*Step Up to Writing—Grade 7* Argument Writing Baseline Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Prompt:** Write a short essay arguing for or against the use of wind energy. Use evidence from at least two of the sources provided to support your position.

**Directions:** 1. Plan in the space provided below.  
 2. Draft on the page(s) titled: DRAFT.  
 3. Prepare final copy on the page(s) titled: FINAL DRAFT.

**Checklist:** Use this checklist to do your best writing. The items below directly relate to essay scoring:

<input type="checkbox"/> Write a clear introduction with topic sentence that states the claim.	<input type="checkbox"/> Write a conclusion that supports the claim and follows from the ideas presented.
<input type="checkbox"/> Present reasons and evidence in logical order, with transitions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use precise word choice and varied sentence structures.
<input type="checkbox"/> Support your claim with important ideas and details from the sources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use appropriate formal style and standard English.
<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge an opposing claim and address it convincingly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Revise for organization and content.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Edit for proper conventions, grammar/usage, punctuation, and spelling.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Proofread for a final copy.

**Planning Space:** Use the following space to plan your writing.

Our results were remarkable. Almost 80 percent of children in grades 2–5 grew at least one rubric score. The most notable factor is the *Step Up to Writing* training. It was specific; it provided a writing template for staff; it provided specific practice and a reference notebook.

—Russell Henderson  
Former Principal, Sable Elementary  
Aurora, CO

When our kids were taking the state exams or any type of essay, they would tense up and get nervous. Now, they know to organize their writing.

—Kelli Monique Briggs  
Teacher, John Williams School No. 5  
Rochester, NY

Visit [www.voyagersopris.com/success-stories/john-williams-school](http://www.voyagersopris.com/success-stories/john-williams-school) to watch John Williams School No. 5's story.



Visit [www.voyagersopris.com/success-stories](http://www.voyagersopris.com/success-stories) to watch videos from schools around the United States.

