

Ninth grade students at the New Hanover County high schools will soon be utilizing an online writing program called My Access! to advance their writing skills. This week, select English teachers from the area high schools attended training sessions to prepare to implement the program in their classrooms.

My Access! is a program that was created by Vantage Learning with the goal of allowing each student to become his or her own writing tutor. The program works by providing writing prompts, then giving feedback in five main categories: focus area, meaning, content and development, organization, language use and style, and mechanics and conventions. Over 350 semantic, syntactic, and discourse characteristics within the student's writing are analyzed. In addition to this topic writing and scoring system, My Access! has a variety of writing tools, including a thesaurus, a writer's journal, and a revision checklist.

One of the advantages of My Access! is that it has the ability to provide immediate constructive feedback. When teachers are faced with the time consuming and difficult task of reading and grading student essays, a period of only two to three days can cause the assignment to lose immediacy. By providing instant feedback, My Access! aims to eliminate that wait period. It allows students to stay constantly engaged, and provides more time for the teacher to focus on classroom instruction and monitor student progress.

According to the New Hanover County Schools website, My Access! has the ability to improve students' writing by:

- Delivering writing assignments more frequently.
- Conducting early diagnosis of students' writing proficiency.
- Providing remediation and individualized instruction.
- Monitoring formative writing performance by student and class.
- Conducting peer reviews of writing assignments.
- Encouraging a one-to-one learning environment.
- Motivating students to improve their writing skills through more frequent writing and editing.
- Supporting developing writers or ELL students with multilingual feedback linked to proficiency level.

For more information on My Access! please visit the [Vantage Learning website](#).