“Preparing today’s students to succeed in tomorrow’s world” is the mission of Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD). And, the way the District envisions doing this is through what they call their guiding principal—improvement of student learning through technology.

The focus at SVUSD is on teaching and learning strategies which are put into daily practice to translate into stronger student performance.

After STAR test results indicated that 56% of District students scored below proficient in writing, a decision was made to initiate the Write On! project to address and remedy the situation. A key component of the project is My Access!, an internet-based instructional writing program that scores student essays through artificial technologies.

Students participating in the Write On! program wrote frequently to the state academic content writing standards on mobile-lab classroom computers, editing their work multiple times. Catering to today’s youth’s expectations of instant information (essays are scored in less than 10 seconds), the program gives feedback on scoring for each of the five traits of effective writing, teaches students to use rubrics for self-guided instruction, and provides an electronic portfolio for students, teachers, and parents.

Funded by an ETTT Competitive Grant, the model also included a strong professional development program to ensure continuous...
The California Department of Education (CDE), Education Technology Office administers the EETT Competitive and Formula Grant Program under Title II, Part D, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Funds from this grant are used to assist districts to utilize technology to enhance teaching and promote learning. Funds are distributed equally to the EETT Competitive and Formula Programs. The CDE distributed $62 million dollars in 2005-06 to local educational agencies (LEAs) and will distribute $33 million dollars in 2006-2007.

EETT Competitive Grants (EETT-C) provide funding for grades four through eight to assist eligible local educational agencies in using technology to enhance teaching and learning. It is a competitive grant process for which LEAs must complete an application which is scored and ranked against other competitors. The top scoring applications are funded.

EETT Formula Grants (EETT-F) provide funding for grades kindergarten through twelve to assist eligible local educational agencies in using technology to enhance teaching and learning. Funding amounts are based on the LEA’s proportion of their eligible Title I, Part A amount applied against the Title II, Part D total available amount of money to be distributed.

During the first year of the project, seventh graders in the District’s four middle schools and their teachers participated. Participation was expanded in the second year of the grant to include eighth graders and their teachers as well.

The project has yielded substantial increases in students’ writing performance and scores as well enhanced technology proficiency. The achievement has met with a positive response from students and teachers alike who indicate that the program has increased the enthusiasm for writing across many student populations.

Not without its challenges--beginning with finding resources to handle a large-scale equipment set-up (12 computer labs with over 45 computers to configure)--the project also had to address and overcome laptop security, wireless and network speed issues, software upgrade concerns and working with dual platforms (two PC schools and two Mac schools) to ensure the project’s success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Number of 7th Grade Students Tested</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Scoring 4-6 on a 6 Point Scale</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Scoring 3-6 on a 6 Point Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td>2370</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td>2450</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For additional information, visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/et/ft/eett.asp