
CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE- SKILL PREPARATION

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The mission of Cuyahoga Community College is to provide high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services that promote individual development and improve the overall quality of life in a multicultural community. Consequently, Cuyahoga is committed to collaborative efforts with secondary school systems and baccalaureate institutions for the advancement of educational excellence and improvement of student access and success in higher education. One such institutional partnership, established in 1983 among the Cleveland, East Cleveland, and Lakewood Public Schools with the College is the Urban Initiatives Action Program for Language Education (UIP). The program fosters the concept that the broad intellectual skills essential to effective work in all fields of college study are language based—reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning, and studying.

The goal of the UIP is the achievement of a command of basic and higher-order language by all students. The program attempts to reduce language deficiencies and develop reasoning and communication skills through the *Foundations for Learning: Language* curriculum, which has been implemented in each of the Collaborative districts. As part of the *Foundations* program, students participated in a pre- and postprogram expository essay assessment. Teachers received training in holistic assessment and scored all essays holistically. The scores provided a basis for measuring improvement and progress in writing skills. Each paper was assessed independently on a six-point scale by two readers, with the total score determined by adding the two scores together. For papers having a span of two or more points between readers, a third reader read and scored the paper.

In all three school systems mean and median scores improved between 6% and 27% from pre- to posttest. Additionally, the percentage of passing and high scores increased between 4% and 57% and the percentage of low scores decreased from 29% to 3% on pre- to posttest among the districts. Students participating in the Foundations program in all districts showed progress in writing ability.