



CASE STUDY

How **Ooltewah Elementary** Improved Their Benchmark ELA Score by Up To **15.9%**



At-a-Glance

Assistant Principal Whitney Green shares the story of how Kiddom and EL Education were instrumental in helping Ooltewah improve their ELA benchmark score during a pandemic.

Challenges

Ooltewah was tapped to join a district pilot with EL Education to improve ELA proficiency scores and push students with more rigorous literacy instruction. Then came COVID-19 and the uncertainties of virtual learning.

Solutions

Starting in early summer, Ooltewah rolled out EL Education with digital access via Kiddom.

Results

OES made the most ELA growth within the entire district, out of elementary, middle, and high school.

Overview

Can you describe your learning community?

★ Ooltewah Elementary consists of roughly 1,000 students that are served each day. Our school demographics include 15.6% economically disadvantaged, 6.6% ELL students, and 7.9% special education. Our learning community has a majority of middle to upper class white families, making up 74.4% of our student body. Though our student body is predominantly white, we serve well over twenty languages, as our community is very diverse in cultures. We are an ELL site for our district, so students can attend our school without living in our zone. Ooltewah Elementary has recently changed administration within the past two years, with little consistency or emphasis on instruction, prior to the new administration. The school recently adopted a curriculum coach, providing support to K-5th grade teachers in all subject areas. Prior to the 2018-2019 school year, Ooltewah Elementary was a level 3

school within the state of Tennessee. During the 2018-2019 school year, we became a level 5 reward school.

What drove you to adopt EL Education?

★ With our ELA scores ranging from 35%-45% of students being proficient in grades 3rd-5th, there was a need to reevaluate our ELA instruction. Hamilton County was piloting two ELA programs within our district, as the 2020-2021 school year was our ELA adoption year. I researched both curriculums with EL being the curriculum I selected to pilot 3rd-5th. We were one of nine schools to pilot EL, while another ten schools piloted the other curriculum that was selected. Both curriculums were vetted by the state of Tennessee and offered as potential choices for adoption. EL offered a new perspective on how to view learning and teaching ELA. Our current system was based on small group instruction, that

exposed students only to texts that were at their reading level, with emphasis on fluency being the predictor of what we determined to be a proficient reader. Based on state testing data, our delivery of instruction and materials were not rigorous enough or applicable to what was expected of them on TNReady. EL curriculum offers all students the opportunity to build knowledge within a specific topic, using the Baseball Study as a foundational piece for student learning. EL develops modules with a specific topic for each in which students are exposed to on- or above-grade level texts that align with the topic of study. Students engage daily in deep conversations around the topic, while also building a rigorous vocabulary, and a focus on analyzing and understanding each component of the writing process.

What drove you to adopt Kiddom?

★ After all the success we had in adopting EL 3rd-5th during the 2019-20 school year, we were excited to continue this built up momentum. Then the pandemic hit in Feb 2020 and we were moved into quarantine. Unfortunately, we didn't have a way to continue the EL curriculum remotely, and though our teachers did the best they could, our students were not experiencing the same rigorous curriculum and instruction they had experienced face-to-face. For the 2020-21 school year, the district decided to adopt EL districtwide and they also purchased Kiddom to supplement the hardcopy version of the curriculum based on the recommendation of the

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literacy adoption committee. However, because of the quick and challenging transition to virtual/hybrid for teachers at the start of the school year, the district did not require schools to use Kiddom. Because our 3rd-5th grade ELA teachers were already familiar with the EL curriculum, we were chosen to start using Kiddom as we met over the summer to launch our school year. At this time I developed a "think tank" that consisted of one ELA teacher from 3rd-5th grades. This group met to review the platform and discuss how we could utilize Kiddom to enhance not only our ability to plan collaboratively, but also to ensure all students have access to the EL curriculum. After reviewing the platform, our teachers were more than excited to start using Kiddom within their classrooms, both remotely and face-to-face. Based on teacher feedback, Kiddom was easily accessible, made the entire curriculum virtual and editable, and gave them the ability to decrease variability among face-to-face and virtual students. All students will now have access to continue the EL curriculum, not allowing uncontrollable circumstances to stand in the way of delivering this curriculum to all students.

Challenges

What challenges did you face adopting the EL Education curriculum?

★ The EL Education curriculum was challenging to implement in the beginning as teachers had to redefine how we teach ELA. Another challenge we faced was the amount of materials needed for each module, the amount of time needed for planning in a face-to-face setting, and understanding the flow of the lessons, as EL requires 2 hours of ELA instruction.

One thing that helped with this challenge is our school is currently using the EL slides provided in Kiddom and it is a requirement that all grade

levels, K-5th utilize these slides. The slides provide consistency, organization, and a visual for both teacher and student. Our K-2nd has recently started utilizing the K-2 read aloud videos that are provided by the EL curriculum within Kiddom.

What challenges did you face moving to Kiddom?

★ With any implementation, the challenge is always change and comfortability with the program. Starting with a "think tank" group allowed our teachers to provide direct feedback to Kiddom. This allowed Kiddom to personalize the platform to meet the needs of our students.

Approach

When you set out, what were your success metrics?

★ Our district's approach to rolling out EL Education was providing ample professional development and access to materials before the 2020-21 school year started. Regarding Kiddom, they have given schools the option to start gradually implementing this platform, as some schools were overwhelmed with just implementing the new EL curriculum within their buildings.

★ Because our school piloted EL in 3rd-5th, we were ready to implement Kiddom. The timeline for 100% implementation of Kiddom was defined as "All 3rd-5th ELA teachers using Kiddom on a daily/weekly basis with their students." During the summer of 2020-21 we had a developing group of teachers with early access to the platform who I utilized to train and support their teammates. The expectation was set that all ELA 3rd-5th teachers would be

consistently using Kiddom by the end of August. This timeline was necessary as we had dedicated virtual classes in each grade level, along with face-to-face students potentially transitioning to remote learning, should COVID-19 cases spike within our district.

★ Fortunately, our district invested in providing standards based benchmarks for both ELA and math through Instructure. These benchmarks are aligned to TNReady that are taken at the end of the school year. Each benchmark provides information about students' level of mastery within each standard. We used this data to determine the success of EL and Kiddom. Based on our scores for two of the benchmarks that have been taken this year, along with taking into account the learning gap due to the pandemic, our virtual classes are scoring consistently with our face-to-face to classes. Informally, we spoke with other schools about their virtual classes' benchmark data and it was a starkly different story, as they scored much lower than we did.

Results

15.9%

Higher Benchmark Growth



On ELA benchmark 1 & 2 scores, we made the most growth within our entire district out of elementary, middle, and high school. Kindergarten grew 15.9% in ELA compared to last year. All of our K-5 virtual teachers either scored or outscored their teammates with face-to-face students. This can be attributed to EL Education giving students a higher cognitive demand, as well as Kiddom continuing this learning as students work remotely, or have to quarantine. Kiddom also positively affected this data by allowing teachers to collaborate within one curriculum to ensure all students were accessing the same lessons, so any notes or adjustments made were aligned within the entire grade level.

100%

Implementation to Target



We had 100% implementation within the designated time we had administered the use of Kiddom. All of 3rd-5th grade ELA teachers saw the need and value of using this platform on a daily/weekly basis, never losing instructional rigor as students transitioned in and out of the classroom due to quarantining. There was an easy transition as students were comfortable and familiar with Kiddom as they would enter virtual classes if they had to stay home due to COVID. Again, allowing us to decrease variability among the classes.

2

Months to Roll Out



Starting this process early in the summer was helpful with the roll out process of using Kiddom. I believe it was critical that educators spent time before the school year started to get comfortable with the platform. This allowed our educators to become familiar with Kiddom to start the implementation process at the beginning of the year. It also allowed them to support their teammates within this process as they became experts over time.

Solution

What have EL Education + Kiddom solved?

★ EL Education and Kiddom solved two problems at Ooltewah Elementary that have drastically transformed our students' mastery of the TN standards. EL Education has provided a rigorous curriculum that we desperately needed as our state assessment showed a majority of our students were not mastering the ELA TN standards. Another issue that was prevalent before these two platforms were the lack of collaboration and consistency within grade level planning. In order to improve ELA scores for our students, it was also obvious that we needed to decrease the variability of instruction among grade level teams. During a year when virtual learning was inevitable and not by any terms ideal, Kiddom provided an answer of how to continue EL without losing out on exposure to the curriculum or allowing the factor of being inexperienced with remote learning to aide in learning loss.

How do teachers feel about using EL Education + Kiddom?

★ With any change, people are apprehensive and sometimes resist or reluctant to move away from what they know. Fortunately, through the process of piloting they saw obvious benefits from using EL, such as rich student discourse, all students being able to engage within tasks/conversations, students building richer vocabulary and being able to write and analyze the different components of an essay. All of these aspects have aided and translated into our school data having a positive effect on students' mastery of the standards. The teachers trusted us as we led the EL pilot, reassuring them

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we needed to implement the curriculum with fidelity in order to get accurate information when basing our decision to continue the curriculum or not. During this process, we were able to see evidence of the features highlighted, even though we did take an implementation dip according to data on our first two Instructure benchmark assessments in 2019-20. Moving into this school year with many factors weighing on topics like learning loss, uncertainty of face-to-face instruction, remote learning, etc., our school was privileged to pilot Kiddom for our district 3rd-5th. Part of successfully implementing new programs is creating teacher buy-in and gaining their feedback on these programs. Informing and involving early on in this process allowed them to feel a part of the implementation versus being told or forced into something. The teachers have actively been a part of utilizing and implementing Kiddom and EL within our building. The continued success in our ever-improving data and daily recognition of seeing all students achieve and participate in rich discussions around topics has created advocates for both, EL Education and Kiddom.

Ready to learn how Kiddom and EL Education by Open Up Resources can help with ELA proficiency in your learning community?

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