

# Individualized Practice for Students. Time Savings for Teachers.



**Lisa Romanowski**

Teacher and Math & Science Department Head



**Location:**  
Timmins, Ontario, Canada



**Grades:**  
9-12



**Number of students:**  
370



**School characteristics:**  
Small Catholic high school serving  
urban and rural students



**Subjects:**  
IXL Math

## Accelerating Learning with Targeted Practice and Real-Time Data

When students in Lisa Romanowski's high school math classes needed extra practice to master grade-level skills, she knew providing more worksheets wasn't going to cut it. She turned to IXL Math to give her students unlimited, targeted practice without increasing her own workload. With the IXL Real-Time Diagnostic, she also gained data on student skill levels to make instructional decisions in the classroom.

### The Challenges

Located in Timmins, Ontario, about eight hours north of Toronto, O'Gorman High School is the only high school in the Northeastern Catholic District School Board. The school pulls in students from several surrounding communities as well as local feeder schools. High school students must take at least three years of math following the Ontario Curriculum; many take four to fulfill college and university entrance requirements. Students arrive at O'Gorman with varied backgrounds and skill levels in mathematics.

Many students in Lisa's classes require targeted practice to master grade-level standards. However, creating practice worksheets creates additional work for teachers and does not give students the immediate feedback or support they need. Answer sets for commercial worksheets typically only provide the final answer, without the steps required to get there. As a result, students are not able to self-correct misconceptions and increase their mastery.

## The Solution



IXL Math allows students to practice as long as needed to achieve full mastery of a skill, whether they're at school or at home. Problems are generated dynamically, so practice is truly unlimited and targeted to the needs and skill levels of each individual student. Automatic grading means teachers do not have any additional work, and students know right away whether their answer is right or wrong.

This immediate feedback is essential for productive practice and skill mastery. If students get a problem wrong, they get a mini lesson that provides not only the correct answer, but also the full solution set with all the steps to solve the problem correctly. This allows them to fill in gaps in their understanding before progressing to the next question, making learning more efficient.

Since IXL skills are aligned to the Ontario Curriculum, it is easy for Lisa to assign skills that correlate to her lesson plans. IXL's SmartScore, which measures skill mastery on a scale of 1-100, makes it simple to track how well learners understand concepts. Lisa can even monitor class activity as it happens using IXL's Live Classroom report, letting her see what learners are working on and who might need additional support.

Additionally, with the Real-Time Diagnostic and IXL Analytics, Lisa can get detailed information on students' overall grade-level proficiency and progress with just a few clicks of her mouse, saving time and enabling her to better meet the needs of her students.

Here's an overview of how Lisa uses IXL Math with her O'Gorman High School students:

Students in all of Lisa's math classes update their levels in the IXL Real-Time Diagnostic at least three times each semester to provide baseline, midterm, and end-of-semester data.

Each week, Lisa assigns one or more skills aligned with the lessons she is teaching in class. Students have the entire week to complete the assigned skills during class time or as homework. Students receive a grade for assigned work completed in IXL and are expected to attain a specific SmartScore (usually 80) to receive full credit.

Students are encouraged to complete additional practice on their own at home or during free time to brush up on other skills as identified in their IXL Real-Time Diagnostic Action Plans.

Lisa also uses IXL during temporary remote learning on inclement weather days, when an occasional teacher will be in to replace her, and to help students catch up after they have been absent.

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## The Results



Lisa has been using IXL Math since 2012, and her use of the program has grown over the last decade. It has become an indispensable tool in her classroom and is now used for math instruction at all schools in the Northeastern Catholic District School Board. Some schools have also adopted IXL English.

Since implementing IXL, Lisa has relied less on providing practice through textbook questions and worksheets. With skill practice largely taken care of by IXL Math, Lisa can focus more of her planning time on integrating interesting application problems into her lesson plans. When students work on IXL Math in class, Lisa focuses on providing support and targeted intervention for students who need it. She always has access to real-time data to support instructional decisions, and her students are motivated by seeing their skill growth. A somewhat unexpected benefit is the collaboration that arises amongst Lisa's students as they work on IXL Math skills. They frequently discuss concepts and share solution strategies amongst themselves.

During and following the COVID-19 pandemic, many students arrived at O'Gorman High School below grade level in math. The IXL Diagnostic allows Lisa to quickly pinpoint skill levels and learning gaps for each student. With the targeted practice in IXL, most students demonstrate significant progress in closing the gaps over the course of a semester. Lisa has also used the detailed student information in IXL Analytics to make recommendations for students requiring individualized education programs, as well as during discussions in parent meetings. IXL Math helps prevent students from falling through the cracks, and ensures they each have what they need to succeed.

A photograph of a classroom where several students are seated at wooden desks. In the foreground, a young man and woman are looking at a tablet together, smiling. Other students in the background are also working on laptops or tablets. A large whiteboard is visible in the background.

“Thanks to IXL, my students get all the practice they need, and I have instant access to progress data—all without adding to my workload. IXL has become part of my daily planning process and instruction.”

– Lisa Romanowski, Teacher and Math & Science Department Head

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