CASE STUDY

Real-Time Progress Monitoring: A Catalyst for Personalized Learning

Amy Williams

Elementary School Principal

BERRIEN SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TOGETHER, INSPIRING STUDENTS TO THINK, LEARN, ACHIEVE AND CARE IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Location:
Michigan

Grades:
3-5

Number of students:
375

School characteristics:
Rural public school with a high English language learner population.

Subjects:
Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies

Simplifying Progress Monitoring and Personalized Learning

Sylvester Elementary School is in early implementation stages of exploring how to accomplish personalized learning for all students within a competency based system. IXL is supporting these early efforts by giving teachers real-time data to make daily instructional decisions and assess student mastery.

The Challenges

Sylvester Elementary serves a diverse student body comprising a wide range of academic backgrounds, and almost 25 percent English Learners. Michigan's school of choice program attracts students to Sylvester Elementary from nearby urban districts and many children of international students or faculty at the nearby university.

The district is starting to implement a competency-based model for instruction. This model assesses and grades students based on their demonstrated mastery of grade-level skills. However, it also presents challenges when it comes to personalizing instruction and remediation based on individual student needs.

School leaders recognized that teachers would need more timely and specific information than they receive from quarterly benchmarking, without cutting into classroom time or requiring extensive one-on-one attention. They turned to IXL for support.

Teachers need a practical progress monitoring tool that gives them up-to-date diagnostic information without cutting into instructional time.

The Solution

Sylvester Elementary uses IXL's Real-Time Diagnostic to fill the gap between benchmark assessments with up-to-date and specific information at the student, class, school and district level—without taking up extensive classroom time. The Real-Time Diagnostic pinpoints student knowledge levels and generates specific personalized skill recommendations for each student. Teachers can use these recommendations to help students fill their knowledge gaps and make plans for growth.

Plus, built-in tools for differentiation and skill remediation within IXL's curriculum make it easy for teachers to personalize instruction.

Here's how teachers at Sylvester Elementary are using IXL:

Students at Sylvester Elementary are expected to keep their Real-Time Diagnostic up-to-date by answering at least 15 questions per week in both math and language arts. This gives teachers the ongoing progress monitoring, mastery assessment, and skill remediation information they need to adjust instruction for individual students and for the class.

Teachers assign IXL's skill plan for NWEA® MAP™ to each student, so students know exactly which skills they need to work on in IXL to hit their growth goal on the next benchmark. Additional skill plans aligned to textbooks help teachers adjust offline instruction, too.

IXL's detailed reports, like the Score Grid, allow teachers to quickly see which students are on target and which need extra support. The reports also provide evidence to support standards-based grading. For example, students who miss the target on a grade-level end-of-unit assessment, but later demonstrate mastery in IXL, can be graded as meeting grade-level expectations.

IXL's engagement tools help teachers find and address trouble spots in real-time. For example, many teachers love using the Group Jams feature to check for understanding during a lesson. Group Jams allow teachers to lead the entire class or small groups through the same question at the same time. Students who have not yet mastered grade-level skills will be assigned recommended skills in IXL for remediation and practice.

Sylvester Elementary celebrates students who meet grade-level targets for skill mastery in both math and English with "Proficiency Parties" and "Growth Getaways" every other month. Using IXL Leaderboards to set up friendly competitions, teachers are able to motivate students to reach for these mastery targets.

The Results

In their first full year of implementation, the school has consistently maintained updated diagnostic data for more than 75 percent of students. Amy says, "That's a remarkable percentage, especially for something still relatively new. It speaks to the value that teachers see in the program."

As a results of Sylvester Elementary's consistent usage of the diagnostic and the IXL platform as a whole, Principal Amy Williams is seeing that:

- IXL saves teachers time. By automating progress monitoring, data analysis, and reporting, teachers can remain focused on delivering targeted instruction and remediation to students with diverse learning needs.
- Diagnostic data is predictive. A comparison of the IXL Real-Time Diagnostic results with benchmark scores from NWEA® MAP showed strong correlations between the two, with student scores in IXL demonstrating high predictive value for the Fall/Winter/Spring benchmarks.
- Students are taking responsibility for their own learning. Students are highly motivated by seeing their own growth on IXL and working through the skills on their personalized Recommendations Wall. Amy says, "We always say relevance drives rigor. Students are more likely to apply themselves if they feel like the content they are working on is the logical next step."