

Case Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington Elementary School District

- www.wesdschools.org
- 25,300 students
- 32 schools
- 50 native languages spoken

Rosetta Stone Demonstrates Language-Learning Success for ESL Students in Phoenix, Arizona

About Washington Elementary School District

Washington Elementary School District (WESD) serves a diverse population of more than 25,300 students in north central Phoenix and East Glendale, Arizona. The largest elementary school district in the state, WESD comprises 32 schools (19 K-6 schools, two K-5, one 6-8, six K-8 schools and four middle/junior high schools) and is committed to “achieving excellence for every child, every day, every opportunity.” In 2005, the district turned to Rosetta Stone® Classroom language-learning to help drive achievement and integrate its large population of non-English speaking students into the district’s education system.

Challenge

Washington Elementary School District (WESD) faced the challenge of integrating a diverse population of students speaking more than 50 different languages into the schools curricula. The district needed to create an effective multi-age English as a Second Language (ESL) program to ensure the advancement and success of these students, as well as find a way to communicate with and engage their non-native speaking parents in their child’s education.

Solution

In 2005, WESD incorporated language-learning solutions into their overall ESL curriculum, providing an immersive and personalized English-learning experience for a wide range of students and their parents. Rosetta Stone Classroom features, such as speech analysis tools, grammar and spelling components and predefined course templates, complement the classroom teaching expertise, making it possible for WESD students to interact as a class as well as attain language skills at their own pace, suiting Rider University’s goals to impact the entire campus. Rosetta Stone Classroom is also used in afterschool programs, adult education programs and family literacy classes.

Results

One year after introducing Rosetta Stone Classroom into all of WESD’s language lab computers, the language-learning solution was expanded to be available on every computer throughout the school district. Each year since its inclusion in the schools curricula, students have experienced English language gains, leading to improved advancement and learning, while also driving the ESL programs to expand in funding, staff and participation.

CASE STUDY DETAILS

At A Glance:

- Phoenix and East Glendale, Arizona
- 25,000+ students
- ESL curriculum needs
- Full district implementation of Rosetta Stone Classroom

Rosetta Stone Personalizes Language-Learning Experience for Diverse Group of ESL Students

With a large number of children entering the school district without the necessary knowledge of the English language, the Washington Elementary School District (WESD) of Phoenix, Arizona faces the unique challenge of integrating a significant percentage of their students into the state curriculum. Boasting 32 ethnically diverse elementary and middle schools, approximately 38 percent of WESD students are Caucasian, 48 percent Hispanic, 7 percent black, 4 percent American Indian and 3 percent Asian. Home to more than 300 refugees, WESD schools currently support more than 50 different languages in their classrooms. In their promise to provide the best education for all of their students and their commitment to adequately teaching the district's population of non-native speakers, WESD committed itself to initiating a new English as a Second Language (ESL) program in 2005 that would engage a student's family into the learning experience through an immersive, interactive and personalized program.

With a limited budget and staff, WESD decided that Rosetta Stone® Classroom would best fit the needs of their organization and their wide-variety of ESL students. In 2005, WESD installed Rosetta Stone Classroom software onto all of its language lab computers. One year later, the language-learning solution was available on every computer throughout the school district.

"We needed a single solution that allowed a wide range of students from different grades, backgrounds and proficiency skills to attain language skills at their own individual pace," said Sue Brown, administrator for ESL Programs, Washington Elementary School District. "Rosetta Stone Classroom helped us create effective multi-age programs where ESL kids could naturally learn English in an immersive and personalized environment."

Students, Parents and Teachers All Notice Marked Improvement in Comprehension

Each year since Rosetta Stone's inclusion in the curricula, WESD students have experienced English language gains, leading to improved student advancement and learning, while also driving the ESL programs to expand in funding, staff and participation. Rosetta Stone Classroom has been so successful at WESD, educators have applied elements of the program into new learning environments. Many of the schools have painted their language labs green, imitating the "green signal" that appears on the Rosetta Stone program signifying that a person has learned the correct word or phrase in English. Other schools have created pins for high achieving students with the phrase, "Going Green!", as a means to encourage language learning.



“We’re pleased WESD selected Rosetta Stone Classroom to deliver consistent, demonstrable language-learning results district-wide,” said Tom Adams, CEO of Rosetta Stone. “In the same way that WESD has integrated the solution into the fabric of their schools, Rosetta Stone is meant to be just one of the tools – albeit a powerful one – a teacher can employ to educate their students.”

In the hopes of extending the success achieved in the classroom, WESD decided to integrate ESL learning into school-sponsored extracurricular activities. The program was expanded into the afterschool programs within the year and the afterschool sessions featuring Rosetta Stone have consistently been the highest attended throughout the district.

Encouraging Family Learning to Facilitate Student Success

Along with the large number of children who enter the WESD classrooms without English language proficiency, many of the parents of these students are similarly unable to communicate with the faculty and staff. Administrators in WESD believed it was necessary to encourage these non-native speaking parents to learn the English language and become more involved in their child’s education in order for their children to reach their full potential. In pursuit of this goal, WESD launched two parallel programs in 19 of their schools at the end of 2007: an adult education program and a family literacy class.

The adult language learning program uses Rosetta Stone Classroom to individually teach non-native speakers the English language. These adult classes utilize the Rosetta Stone Level 3 program, a more advanced language-learning program that builds on language fundamentals and conversational skills, to ensure parents attain the necessary communications skills they need in their everyday lives. With this program, WESD hopes to empower parents to succeed for themselves and become role models to their children who are also going through the same process.

This idea of communal learning is continued in WESD’s family literacy class. The family literacy classes bring both parent and child together to use Rosetta Stone, participate in group activities, watch educational movies and play word games. WESD believes that these classes assist in the advancement of both the parent and child by turning learning into a family activity, fostering continued growth in the language learning which immensely benefits the child.

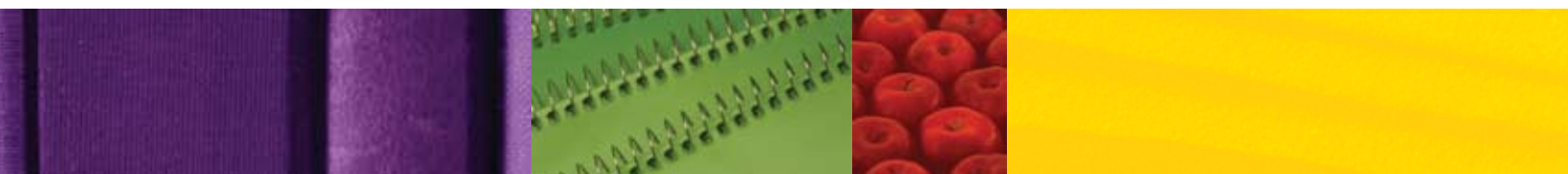
WESD immediately saw an increase in parental participation in school activities after the launch of these programs. The school district noticed that more of the non-native speakers were attending Parent-Teacher events, significantly higher numbers became involved in the school PTA and more parents were participating in meetings with faculty to discuss their child’s progress.

“Rosetta Stone Classroom helped us create effective multi-age programs where ESL kids could naturally learn English in an immersive and personalized environment.”

Sue Brown,
Administrator for ESL Programs
Washington Elementary School District

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Next Steps: Improving Teacher Skills and Communication

Prior to 2005, each school in WESD was equipped with only one language-learning expert despite the growing population of non-native speakers in the district. As a result, WESD believes that it is becoming increasingly important for faculty to be able to communicate in more than one language. Beginning this year, WESD has started encouraging all staff to use Rosetta Stone® to learn another language. WESD hopes to provide all of their staff with the tools necessary to improve their interpersonal skills with the students and their parents, as well as amongst other school employees. The school district believes this language learning will translate into an improvement in their staff's ability to teach and provide the best education for all of their students.

About Rosetta Stone Classroom

Rosetta Stone Classroom is a powerful learning tool that incorporates seamlessly into a teacher's overall language learning curriculum. Features such as speech analysis tools, grammar and spelling components and predefined course templates adeptly complement classroom teaching expertise. Rosetta Stone Classroom provides the support teachers need with Rosetta Stone Manager, a built in management tool that delivers real-time reporting capabilities, details on student progress and user-friendly administrative functionalities.

The software offers flexible license solutions that are tailored to meet a school's specific needs, technology environments and requirements. Available in more than 30 different languages, Rosetta Stone Classroom affords teachers the opportunity to entrust critical language skill development to the software so that invaluable classroom time can focus on topic-based activities that bring language learning to life.

Next Steps:

In 2009, WESD will utilize Rosetta Stone for faculty development so the entire staff can communicate in multiple languages.

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