



Case Study

Sweetwater Union
High School District

K-12 Adult Education

Workforce Skill Development

Building English Language for Adult Learners

Challenge

The Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) Division of Adult Education needed a solution that would build required English skills for participants to use in the workforce or to continue their education. With over 2,000 adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners participating in the distance learning program at SUHSD, the district needed an online solution allowing participants to build English skills on their own, outside the traditional classroom. The district also wanted a solution that could complement classroom instruction, building confidence to speak English and fine-tuning pronunciation skills. The solution needed to generate student results on assessments greater than or equal to that of students participating in traditional classroom instruction.

Implementation

SUHSD implemented the Rosetta Stone® Course™ online solution. Participants access the program online on their own at home or in designated computer labs at SUHSD school locations. Participants were required to sign a contract to participate in the program. Minimum progress was defined as one lesson with corresponding activities in Rosetta Stone per week, for completion of one level of study in the Rosetta Stone solution at the end of a 16-week period. Teachers were assigned to groups of distance learning students. Meeting with students on a weekly basis, teachers provided participants the support and motivation required for successful completion. The administrative tool, Rosetta Stone Manager™, was used to monitor and manage learner progress.

Benefits

Since 2008, SUHSD has experienced the following benefits since implementation of the Rosetta Stone solution:

- Increased scores on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) when the solution was used as a complement to classroom instruction
- Supported 60% increase in enrollment in distance learning program



At a Glance:

Founded in 1920, the Sweetwater District has grown to more than 41,000 students in grades 7 through 12 and more than 24,000 adult learners. The district's 32 campuses are located in the cities of Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, National City, and San Diego, including the communities of Bonita, Eastlake, Otay Mesa, San Ysidro, and South San Diego. Approximately half of Sweetwater's students speak a language other than English at home. With an adult ESL population of over 5,000 students, nearly half of these learners participate in ESL Distance Learning.

"With the addition of Rosetta Stone software to our Distance Learning curriculum, we are able to offer interaction and a quality pronunciation component to our ESL Distance Learning curriculum that we were never able to offer before."

—Crystal Robinson,
Teacher on Special Assignment
EL Civics/Distance Learning/WIA II
Sweetwater Union High School
District Division of Adult Education

Meeting Student Needs

SUHSD wanted a program to meet the diverse needs of their adult learner populations participating in the ESL coursework. Understanding that all learners are not equal, the district launched a comprehensive English language-learning program to meet the needs of their adult population. The ESL program at SUHSD is broken into two types of course offerings. First, SUHSD offers a distance learning program to participants. In this program, learners utilize the Rosetta Stone® solution studying English independently, either at home or in computer labs available at four adult school sites designated for Rosetta Stone usage, with hours conveniently set to meet the needs of learners. In addition to the Rosetta Stone solution, participants are required to meet with an assigned teacher to review progress in the course. SUHSD also offers a classroom instruction option where learners meet weekly with a teacher in a class of approximately 30 students. Students participating in classroom instruction could elect to use the Rosetta Stone solution to build language skills to complement the classroom.

Implementing for Success

The Division of Adult Education at the district requires that participants sign a student agreement upon entering the program. The agreement outlines the minimum requirements for participating in the program. First, students are expected to meet weekly with their assigned teacher. During this 20-minute session, participants can ask

questions regarding material in the program and teachers can assess learner performance. Students will be dropped from the program if they miss more than two appointments in a given month. Minimum progress in the Rosetta Stone solution is also defined in the contract requiring students to complete one lesson of the program along with corresponding activities per week. The goal is for participants to finish one level of study in the Rosetta Stone solution at the end of the 16-week course. Last, all learners are required to take the CASAS test with both pre-tests and post-tests required.

Building Confidence to Speak

The proprietary speech-recognition technologies have significantly increased speaking and pronunciation skills of participants. Using a USB headset and microphone, learners speak from the very first screen of the program, building their confidence to start conversations and keep them going. In addition, the speech analysis tool gives learners the opportunity to fine-tune pronunciation. Moving away from the use of VCR tapes and DVDs, the district needed a solution that integrated state-of-the-art technology to drive engagement and interactivity with learners to build oral communication skills. As Crystal Robinson, ESL Teacher on Special Assignment, states: "Traditionally in Distance Learning, students would check out VHS tapes or DVDs to watch at home and complete the corresponding packets. With the addition of Rosetta Stone software to our Distance Learning curriculum, we are able to offer interaction and a quality pronunciation component to our ESL Distance Learning curriculum that we were never able to offer before."

Realizing Benefits

SUHSD has experienced many benefits with the implementation of the Rosetta Stone solution. First, the district has found that performance on the CASAS test for distance learning students using the Rosetta Stone solution is equal to the scores of those receiving classroom instruction. However, CASAS scores are higher for learners that used the Rosetta Stone solution to build skills to

complement classroom instruction. Last, due to the district's ability to offer a distance learning program through the Rosetta Stone solution, SUHSD has seen a 60% increase in ESL Distance Learning enrollment since 2008.

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-based language learning. With over 20 years of experience behind us, we're continuing to develop award-winning innovations that improve the lives of people and the operations of organizations every day.

Our proprietary, proven method leverages interactive technologies to replicate the immersion environment in which people learn their first language, and it activates each learner's natural aptitude for acquiring a new language regardless of language background. We offer our clients scalable solutions for a variety of needs, from individual learners to single classrooms to entire organizations.

Our solutions have been implemented in over 20,000 schools and in more than 17,000 private and public sector organizations, and they are used by millions of learners in over 150 countries throughout the world.

