

Customer Success Story:

# Napa County Office of Education



K-12 | Professional Development



## Implementing Award-Winning Professional Development

### Challenge

The Napa County Office of Education (NCOE) needed a language-learning solution for professional development for school employees to learn Spanish in support of building stronger communication skills with Spanish-speaking students and their families. Having a 52% Hispanic population, of which 34% of those students are English learners, NCOE recognized that many educators lacked the Spanish language skills needed to effectively communicate in the school environment. In addition, districts like Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) struggled with large achievement gaps among Hispanic students. Although NVUSD is in its fifth year of program-improvement status, NCOE envisioned implementing a language-learning solution to help continue to close achievement gaps for districts, providing additional support to Spanish-speaking populations. In order to accomplish this goal, NCOE needed a language solution that was easily accessible at work or at home, allowing staff to learn anywhere, anytime with an online solution.

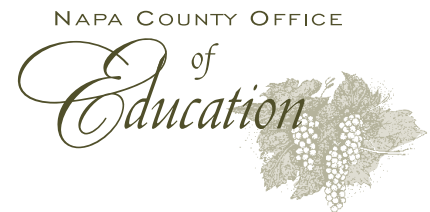
### Implementation

In October 2010, NCOE launched an innovative solution, the Napa County Hablamos Program, to address the professional-development needs of teachers and staff to improve communication with English Learners. Collaborating with the county's two largest districts that represented 90% of the county's students (St. Helena and Napa Valley Unified School Districts), NCOE provided free, annual licenses to the Rosetta Stone® Language Lessons Version 3 for K-12 program (formerly Rosetta Course®) for Spanish for teachers and staff. Each participant was required to sign an agreement outlining minimum expectations for program use. Learners were required to study a minimum of 72 minutes per week to increase Spanish language oral proficiency. The 24/7 availability and ease of use brought many educators in the district within reach of what might have seemed like an impossible goal: learning a new language. NCOE monitored the usage monthly to ensure minimum progress was being met using Administrator Tools (formerly Rosetta Stone Manager™).

### Benefits

The following results have been realized since implementation in October 2010:

- 2012 Golden Bell Award was awarded to Napa County Hablamos Program by the California School Boards Association.
- 94% of participants met professional goal to improve communication.
- 47% of participants improved one proficiency level, with those remaining improving greater than one proficiency level based on ACTFL standards.
- Over 235 employees learned Spanish during the program's first two years.



*"With Latinos making up nearly 52% of students in the Napa County schools, the Napa County Board of Education made a decision to offer the Rosetta Stone language program to all staff countywide."*

**Jan Sabo**  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Curriculum and Instruction,  
Napa County Office  
of Education

## Effectively Leveraging Technology

NCOE needed a language-learning solution that provided online access for anywhere, anytime study for teachers and school staff. With limited time and resources for personal and professional development, the Rosetta Stone® solution provided the flexibility for participants to build Spanish language skills at home or work at times convenient to their schedules. One participant shared, "I wanted to improve my speaking and understanding skills, but do not have the time for a regular class. I can do this on my own when time is available." In addition, free access to this technology increased interest. Another participant shared, "I was grateful to know that I could improve my Spanish on my own schedule, and then hearing that I might not have to pay for it made it accessible. It keeps me motivated to keep practicing knowing that this is a gift." Being immersed in the program from the start, learners were able to systematically build their language skills and they began speaking within a few days of study. Through proprietary Rosetta Stone speech-recognition technologies, participants were able to practice and fine-tune their pronunciation, increasing their confidence to speak with others. Building communication skills motivated participants to use the program. "I started at the beginning of the program and I am now approximately halfway through Level 3," remarked one learner.

## Delivering On The Vision

The NCOE board is committed to the success of Napa County students. The goals of the board included that it would "contribute to providing county students with an education of the highest quality in keeping with their capacity to learn." This commitment to student success includes addressing ways to close the achievement gap. Communication problems between teachers, administrators, students, and parents are often cited as barriers to success for English learners. Many students live in homes where Spanish is the primary language and their parents do not speak or read English proficiently, making it next to impossible for these parents to effectively help their children with homework, attend school events, or communicate casually with other parents or teachers about their student. By providing the staff of Napa County schools with this professional-development opportunity, the board showed its commitment to providing high-quality education to all of Napa County's students by supporting professional development that would improve communication with English learners and their families. As Jan Sabo, assistant superintendent, stated, "Educational staff often face a language barrier when dealing with parents and students who speak little or no English. Aligning closely with our county office's goal to close the achievement and opportunity gap, NCOE offers this program to anyone working in our schools." In addition, the board adopted agency goals that included developing meaningful, mutually beneficial partnerships with districts in areas of common purpose. Districts combined resources to provide professional development to all employees in Spanish language acquisition through the Rosetta Stone online solution, for the common purpose of closing the achievement gap throughout the county.

## Success Through Sustainability

The language-learning initiative implemented at NCOE has been in place for two academic years and over 235 county school employees have participated in the program. The cost of the program was pulled from the Curriculum & Instruction general fund, with the county office and districts matching costs. The sustainability of the program can be attributed to shared funding and many strong supporters of the program, including board members, teachers, and staff. As one supporter stated, "We need people to learn Spanish. A large part of our community speaks only Spanish and we have to be able to communicate with them. The easier you can make this for people to access, the better." NCOE not only wants to sustain the current program but plans to grow the implementation in the future. The current program has the potential to reach every school in the district, allowing teachers and students to study Spanish. In addition, the vision is to use the Rosetta Stone program with English learners to improve their English-speaking skills.

## Experiencing Results

The Napa County Hablamos program, offering professional development with the Rosetta Stone solution, received a 2012 Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association, which recognizes exemplary programs. In addition, 94% of participants were able to meet their professional goals of improving Spanish communication skills with English learners and their families. Of the 235 participants in the program, 47% advanced one level in proficiency as measured by ACTFL standards. Many participants advanced over two levels in proficiency.



### About NCOE

The Napa County Office of Education exists to provide educational leadership, resources, and services to the five school districts in Napa County; to provide a wide range of direct services to over 6,000 children each year; and to serve as a liaison between the California Department of Education and local school districts on a variety of state-mandated accountability measures. This mission is accomplished through partnership efforts involving school districts, community agencies, teachers, families, and communities; through direct instructional programs and administrative services; and through coordination with the California Department of Education and other agencies. NCOE provides fiscal oversight of our five school districts, as well as critical business services, including payroll, credentialing, and grant writing. NCOE assists districts and schools with resources, expertise, and coordination for a variety of programs and mandated activities such as textbook adoptions and technology training.

### About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and entire organizations.

Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 education institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.



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