



iPASS Makes California Textbook Adoption List



As California school districts face the important decision of which new textbooks and intervention tools to use, iPASS—an innovative software program by the makers of iLearn—is making the grade. The program, which made California’s adopted textbook list even though it’s not a printed textbook, may be the individualized program students need for success.

One of the biggest problems schools face in teaching math is the wide range of skill levels in each class. “To try and meet the needs of the students on an individual basis with one teacher for 25 students is virtually impossible,” says Richard Noblett, principal at Olive Middle School in Baldwin Park. “But iPASS is an individual learning system that works. It’s a good interface and it holds the students’ attention.”

Olive Middle School currently uses the program for 7th and 8th grade. The intervention class is a second scheduled math class that lasts a semester, and when students aren’t taking the course during school, they come in after school. Two hundred students are in the program.

The interactive program engages students that may have otherwise been too far behind to follow the classroom lesson (or so far ahead they were bored). iPASS users move at their own pace and can’t move on to the next lesson or chapter until they’ve mastered the current one, which means they have to achieve at least an 80% on the end-of-chapter test.

Noblett is most excited about how the students respond to the program. “Often, with any kind of computer-based program, kids get a little bored after a while. But [with iPASS], our

students aren’t experiencing that; the kids are still enjoying it. We’re experiencing good things, good motivation and good morale. It’s a combination of the program and the good interface—plus the teachers and me meeting with the students to make goals—that keeps them on task.”

To help with keeping track of progress, iPASS provides comprehensive, student-specific reports and data to its users. Parents get a detailed look at their child’s progress, which can be compared to the rest of the class. The reports can target what specific issues the student is having and the teacher can then work with that student one-on-one to fill in those gaps. Teachers can spend less time grading and more time teaching.

The iPASS lessons are right in line with the school curriculum. Teachers appreciate that it’s task-oriented, instead of being a game to practice with, like other software programs they have tested. But students get the same fun factor with friendly competition. They motivate each other to master the material and move on to the next chapter. “It’s a dynamic way of learning,” says Noblett. “Sometimes two or three students struggle in the same place. iPASS holds the attention of the rest of the class while the teacher gets them up to speed.”

Noblett is very confident his students will show great improvement on their state tests this year. “They’re learning things that are directly related to the standardized test. They’re improving in their regular math classes, so we’re seeing immediate results. It’s very structured. It gives a lot of great examples. It’s a great tool.”

