



Unity Christian High School's Adoption of SmartClass

Introduction

Unity Christian School is committed to fostering academic excellence and character formation in a nurturing environment. As a private K-12 institution, the focus is on the holistic development of each student. Recently, the school faced new challenges with the influx of Ukrainian refugees and ongoing Chinese exchange students, prompting their search for a flexible and effective digital curriculum to support their English Language Learners (ELLs).

Identifying the Need

The current demographic shifts have resulted in a diverse classroom of absolute beginners to students with a fifth-grade reading level. With a growing number of students arriving throughout the year, the school recognized the urgency of implementing a tailored solution. Previously, their programs catered mainly to foreign exchange students, but the new context required a more comprehensive approach to language acquisition.

Kailee Davelaar initiated the exploration into digital curricula. She noted the absence of formal testing to assess the varying levels of English proficiency among our students. Currently, they have two groups: ELL 1 and ELL 2, with the aspiration of integrating students into a cohesive English class throughout their high school journey.



Why SmartClass?

After evaluating several options, the school selected the SmartClass English curriculum, primarily for its comprehensive features designed to support our ELL population. Key reasons for their choice included:

1 Flexibility

SmartClass allows educators to create custom activities tailored to the specific needs of their students, ensuring that lessons are relevant and engaging.

3 Supportive Resources

SmartClass offers optional student resource books and excellent training for teachers, empowering them to use the curriculum confidently.

2 Placement Testing

The integrated placement test provides essential data to accurately assess students' proficiency levels, facilitating effective class placement.

4 Holistic Approaches

With SmartClass, they found a full solution that supports the refugees' varying proficiency levels while promoting an inclusive learning environment.



“We are thrilled to have discovered SmartClass as a solution that not only meets our immediate needs but also aligns with our educational philosophy. The flexibility and support it offers make it an invaluable tool for our teachers and a critical resource for our students. We wholeheartedly recommend SmartClass to any educational institution seeking a versatile and effective curriculum for English Language Learners. At Unity Christian High School, we believe that every student deserves the opportunity to thrive, and with SmartClass, we are one step closer to making that a reality.”



Implementation and Impact

The partnership with SmartClass began by enrolling 20 students and training the teachers on the platform. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with educators appreciating the ability to adapt lessons on the fly as new students join the community. The flexibility of SmartClass has been particularly beneficial in addressing the diverse needs of students, many of whom arrive with different backgrounds and language skills.

Although their current project is relatively small, the school remains optimistic about the potential for growth. As the student population changes, they are prepared to expand their use of SmartClass to accommodate additional ELLs and ensure that every refugee feels supported.