

Effectiveness Report

Roy Martin Middle School – Las Vegas, NV Striving for Educational Excellence

>> OVERVIEW

The Roy Martin Middle School is located just east of downtown Las Vegas. The neighborhood is a common first stop for new arrivals to the area. Many parents and family members work long and difficult hours in the local service industry to save money and relocate. As a result, students' academic support is often compromised. A high rate of transience and low English skills creates a complex web of challenges for the school's students and staff.

Mary Hafner, Principal at Roy Martin, knows that the constant change creates disparity in the student's classroom experiences. Of the 1,300 enrolled students, 700 require some type of English Language Learner (ELL) services. Others, as Ms. Hafner notes, "are struggling in reading. They have the desire to learn but are missing chunks of basic skills." 69.9% of the school's population is Hispanic, while 8.5% is black, 7% is Asian and 13.6% is Caucasian.

The Need for a Solution

The Roy Martin Middle School administrators began searching for a supplemental program that would engage students in multiple subjects, and integrate well with all of their existing academic programs and hardware resources. They chose *SkillsTutor*, an online program designed to be used as a teacher-aided instructional tool or as a one-on-one tutoring resource requiring minimal guidance.

SkillsTutor's individualized instruction, diagnostic testing, prescriptive assignments, and automatic reporting are incorporated to help teachers. The program's management system monitors progress and generates accountability reports. Roy Martin Middle School has been effectively using *SkillsTutor* since 2005.

Implementing SkillsTutor

The school's staff was impressed with the company's support of the program. Working closely with their *SkillsTutor* Implementation Specialist to develop a realistic and comprehensive implementation plan, the school's entire staff was trained on the product during the first half of one staff development day. Teachers "hit the ground running," delighted with the easy and intuitive interface.

SkillsTutor's breadth and flexibility serves the school's varied needs: enrichment for magnet students, remediation and pullout program classes, ELL class work, and special education. *SkillsTutor* quickly proved popular with students and teachers.



Roy Martin Middle School
Criterion Referenced
Test (CRT) results since
purchasing SkillsTutor

CRT Results: 8th Grade

Reading Proficiency:

2005	24%
2006	33%
2007	43%
2008	41%
2009	56%

Math Proficiency:

2005	26%
2006	38%
2007	40%
2008	42%
2009	53%

Writing Proficiency:

2005	38%
2006	43%
2007	45%
2008	46%
2009	54%

Within a month of beginning the online “access-anywhere” activities and lessons, over 800 students and 40 teachers were actively using the program.

The school, together with *SkillsTutor*, worked to create a parental brochure in English and Spanish explaining how to assist their children with homework and test scores at home.

Staff has seen success in using the program with English Language Learners. As the students progress through the year, *SkillsTutor*'s content complemented their increased English skills, helping them to reinforce and build their academic vocabulary and confidence.

Open computer labs allow teachers to use the program to introduce key concepts to classes, or focus more specifically on individual needs. One academic team (English, Math and Reading) collaborate on two days of lab time per month. Title I instructors have taken advantage of *SkillsTutor*'s individualized instruction to support pullout programs helping struggling students that are struggling in specific skill areas.

A third of the students participate in Roy Martin's magnet program and are assigned wireless laptop computers, completing *SkillsTutor* assignments as part of the homework or class work for their accelerated courses. The laptops allow students to access the program 24 hours a day. “Our time of day report has demonstrated an increase on before-school, after-school and home usage. We have a University of Nevada, Las Vegas GEAR UP program with open labs so we know students use *SkillsTutor* and we know they are using it at home,” comments Ms. Hafner.

Computers were brought into every special education and ELL classroom and math labs were expanded. Teachers received additional training in differentiated instruction and classroom technology. *SkillsTutor*'s common-sense licensing (writing one unlimited license for the school) supported their ability to do this without incurring additional costs.

Success!

The school has achieved increased scores on their Criterion Reference Test results (CRTs) year after year, for their 8th grade students – demonstrating the impressive results of all of their hard work. In reading, scores increased from 41% proficient to 56% proficient. In math, proficiency rose from 42% to 53%. Ms. Hafner notes that “a portion of our proficiency increases can be attributed to *SkillsTutor* and the teachers working closely with benchmarks.” In addition, Roy Martin is the only middle school in Las Vegas that is designated as a high-achieving school for their test scores.

Students like the technology and enjoy working with *SkillsTutor*. Many appreciate the privacy and neutral feedback the program offers. It also allows each student to move at their own speed, according to their specific needs.

Teachers have been very impressed with their *SkillsTutor* experience, remarking that “it's such a pleasure to work with,” and “this is finally a program with a common-sense interface.”

>>SITE

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>>QUOTE

“We believe that *SkillsTutor* is one factor that helped to increase scores year after year.”

Mary Hafner
Principal

>>RESULTS

In June 2006, Roy Martin Middle School was designated as having **High Achieving Growth** status for the 2005-2006 school year; the only middle school in Las Vegas with that designation. They attribute part of their success to *SkillsTutor* and continue to see increases in test results each year. As Mary Hafner comments: “With the help of *SkillsTutor* and their support team, we were able to pinpoint activities that would reflect specific work on certain benchmarks.”