

Orange Grove Elementary Charter School

Charleston, S.C.

Grades PreK-5

796 students

29% free/reduced lunch

7% students with disabilities

4% English language learners

<http://ogeecs.ccsdschools.com>

Fifth Graders Increase Science Test Scores with Net Texts

Challenges:

[Orange Grove Elementary Charter School](#) is part of the Charleston County School District. Like many schools, Orange Grove found that using only textbooks as a way of imparting knowledge to students was a strategy that failed to meet the learning styles and ability levels of its varied student population. Teachers also wanted to integrate more technology into their lessons, particularly at the fifth grade level.

“In the fifth grade, the curriculum is more intense and students have a lot of books. We thought if we could move some of our curriculum materials to iPads, it would reduce the stress of kids having to carry books back and forth,” said technology instructor Sharon Fisher.

“In science, in particular, many of our students were overwhelmed with the textbook structure,” said teacher Michelle Comen. “It’s my goal to level the playing field for all students. I thought the use of iPads and Net Texts would enable us to bridge the gap and ensure all students are receiving the content in a manner they can understand, instead of missing content simply because of reading difficulties.”

Solution:

Orange Grove Elementary Charter School began using [Net Texts](#) and iPads in fall 2012 at the fifth grade level, primarily in science. With Net Texts, teachers can access a vast library of high quality open educational resources (OER) and content, which they can combine with their own resources to create and publish lessons directly to students' iPads. Teachers and students across the school now use the free, web-based solution in science, social studies, math, English language arts and technology classes.

The Net Texts system consists of two parts: a content management website for teachers, and a free app for iPads and Android tablets for students. Using the website, teachers can select existing courses from the Net Texts library of free, open educational resources, or create new courses by mixing and matching items with their own educational materials.

To date, Orange Grove teachers have created more than 60 courses using Net Texts. “In science, for example, the fifth grade teachers divided up the standards. Each teacher took a different section of the curriculum and developed units, so now our whole science curriculum is on Net Texts,” said Fisher.

“Before Net Texts, we each had our own curriculum materials and open resources. Net Texts enabled us to take the materials we’d already developed, organize and share them in a very efficient manner,” said Comen. “It’s also easy to find resources online since new items are being added every day. Even if your computer crashes, you can still access your courses and resources because they’re stored on Net Texts.”

Students use the Net Texts app to download, display and interact with the courses, which are filled with videos, slideshows, e-books, PDFs, text, audio books, and web links.

“I use Net Texts almost daily with my students. It’s replaced most of my textbooks,” said Comen. “It enables me to address any and all learning styles with diverse resources. It also allows me to differentiate my instruction and assign content to students based on their learning levels. Since everyone is working on their iPads, students don’t feel like they’re being singled out. It levels the playing field.”

According to Comen, another benefit is that Net Texts it is always available. Once downloaded, course materials are stored on the student’s iPad, so they can be accessed anywhere without needing Wi-Fi.

“Before Net Texts, I might present a video or PowerPoint to students, but if they didn’t understand it or were not present in the room, they missed the content,” she said. “With Net Texts, students can stop and review as often as they need to. As a result, their retention levels have gone up and their achievement is higher. In just one year, I’ve seen a difference in our state test scores.”

Net Texts is also changing the way teachers teach. “I think my students are achieving at higher levels because the nature of instruction has changed in my classroom — and Net Texts has a lot to do with that,” said Comen. “Students no longer have to take 20 minutes of instructional time to copy things off the board because everything is right there on Net Texts. Instead of lecturing, I can now move around the room and work with students. Students feel more responsible for their learning. They can stop a video or PowerPoint to get the information they need, and they can ask me a question if they need more. Net Texts also helps with classroom management. My advanced learners no longer ask, ‘What can I do now?’ With Net Texts, they always have resources available to them. It provides a safe environment for learning with technology, which parents appreciate, too.”

Fisher agrees. “Net Texts makes it easy to organize my resources for each class and to integrate technology across the curriculum,” she said. “I teach a writing lab with students in grades two through five. I have six sections for each grade level, which means I have 24 different classes.

With Net Texts, no matter what subject we're covering, students are engaged all the time. It motivates them to learn."

Results:

- Improved state test scores
- Increased student engagement
- Decreased costs for curriculum materials

On the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS), the percentage of fifth grade students meeting or exceeding the state's expectation in science jumped by nearly 6 percentage points from 2012 to 2013.

**Orange Grove Elementary Charter School – Grade 5
PASS Performance – Science**

<u>Year</u>	<u>% Met or Exemplary</u>
2012	87%
2013	92.9%

"That parallels the results in my classroom. I saw a jump in the number of children who met the standards in science," said Comen. "When a child becomes successful in one subject, that success can't help but carry over to their other subjects. Net Texts allows us reach each and every child in our classroom. We're really pleased with our results and the success of our students."

With Net Texts, schools can also save up to \$100 per student per year by reducing or eliminating costs for textbooks and curriculum materials. "With Net Texts, I no longer have to make as many copies of handouts or worksheets, which saves time and money," said Comen.

"The support we get from Net Texts is amazing," said Fisher. "They are so dynamic and positive, and they've provided us with great advice and resources."

For more information about Net Texts visit www.net-texts.com.

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