

# Stunning Success in Seventh Grade Math:

The 12-year success story still going strong.

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## **Twelve years ago, we began working with Commander Edwards, a seventh-grade teacher in a suburban middle school outside Atlanta, Georgia.**

I refer to her as “Commander” Edwards because she uses a Star Trek theme for her class, and it’s how her students address her in the classroom.

She teaches in a Middle School of about 2000 students, with about 700 students in the seventh grade. The seventh-grade math class is made up of 40 students chosen for the class because they were determined to be the “lowest performing” general education students in the seventh grade.

That means they were performing below more than 90% or so of general education students in the seventh grade.

When I first met Cmdr. Edwards, she had already had extensive experience with other math support software programs for years and found them to be lacking, for many reasons. So, when I first met with her to tell her about iLearn Math, she had two primary concerns.

The two most important things she wanted to know were:

- 1. whether our software provided more than just “cartoons and games”, and***
- 2. whether students could “game the system.” In other words, could students just guess or “fake” their way through the program*** or were they required to actually learn what was presented.

She was adamant about the fact that she was looking for a program that didn’t suffer from these two “deficiencies” as she saw them.

I assured her at the time that iLearn Math was a legitimate educational program, not just cartoons and games, and second, that it was designed to prevent students from being able to “beat the system.”

I’m sure she was skeptical, of course, but she made the decision to adopt iLearn Math for her class, and worked with the School Principal to purchase the program for the year.

Her class was organized as a combination of primary, grade level, instruction and supplemental instruction in a single, expanded class period. All students had access to a desktop computer for the duration of the class.

For part of the class period, Cmdr. Edwards taught the normal seventh grade curriculum over the course of the school year. For the remainder of the class period, students used iLearn Math, working independently in the uniquely individualized curriculum administered for each student.

The program is designed to identify the gaps in knowledge for each student below grade level, and systematically provide the instruction, practice, review and mastery assessments needed to fill those gaps.

Cmdr. Edwards' class began using the program in late November. Over the rest of the school year, **she used the program in a very conscientious way. (In today's terminology, we would say that she implemented it with "high fidelity.")** Students logged in on a regular, daily basis, and used the program for about 40 minutes per day

Even though they began using the program well after the beginning of the school year, the results during the year and at the end of the year were truly amazing...by all accounts. During the year, she monitored student progress using the District-wide benchmark assessments given four times across the school year.

She was very pleased to see that their benchmark scores were increasing at a far greater rate than the rest of the students in seventh grade.

The real test, however, came at the end of the year when the state math tests results were published.

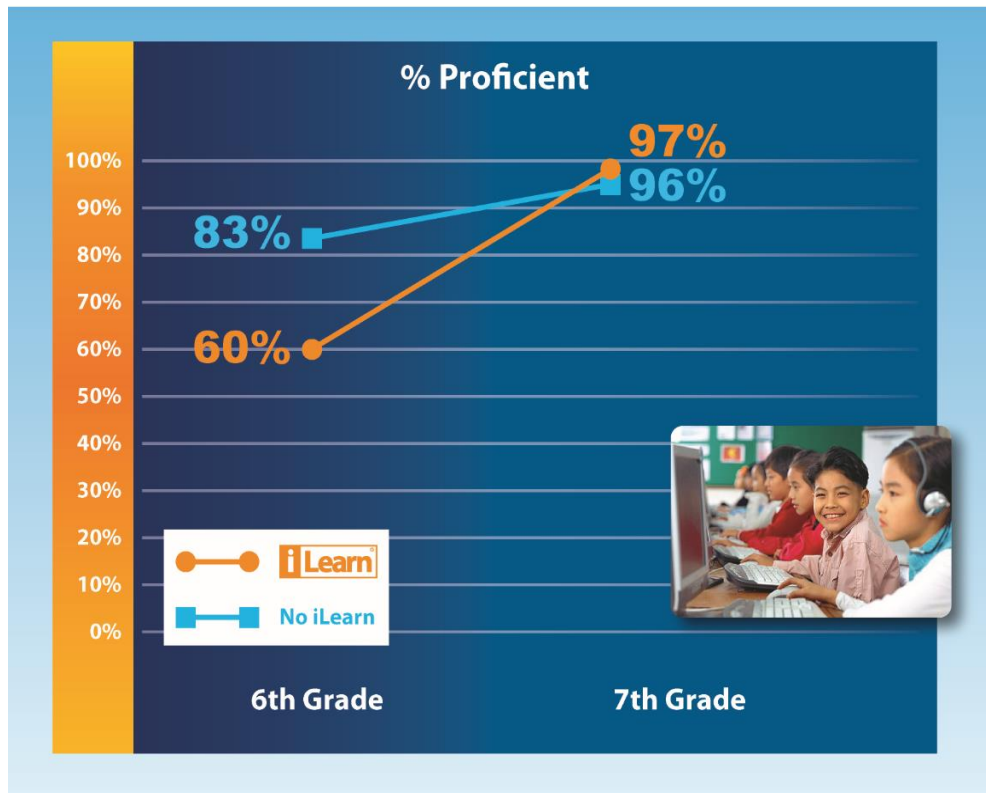
It is fair to say that Cmdr. Edwards was astounded at the results.

She was so pleased, she contacted us to share their success. She worked with us to compile the state test data for that year and the prior year, for the same students in the sixth grade.

This within-cohort comparison allowed an evaluation of how the students did in the prior year in the sixth grade compared to how they did in the seventh grade.

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The results are summarized in the graph below. It shows the percentage of students who scored at the “proficient” level on the state test for the two years across 6th and 7th grades.



In the sixth grade they had no supplemental instruction. They used iLearn Math for supplemental math support for the entire seventh-grade year.

***Before using iLearn Math only 60% of the students scored at the proficient level.***

This was well below the state average, of 75% and even further below the average of all sixth-grade students in the school, which was 83%. This is shown by the left endpoint on the orange and blue lines above.

In the seventh grade, after using iLearn Math for supplemental instruction, that percentage increased dramatically.

Of the 37 students who took the state test, all but one of them scored at the “proficient” level.

***After using iLearn Math, 97% of the students scored at the proficient level.***

This is shown by the right endpoint on the orange line above. The average for the entire state was 96% (right end of blue line).

This was an amazing accomplishment in a single year. Such an increase from 57% passing to 97% passing in a single year is remarkable by any standard!

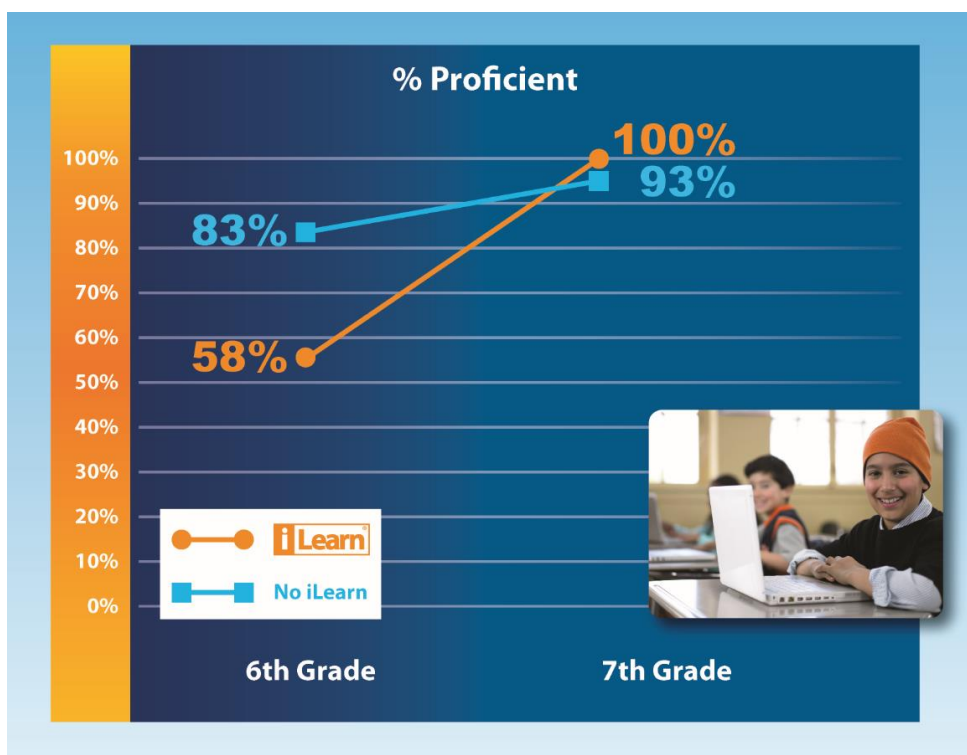
It represents a complete closure of the Achievement Gap in a single year for these students!

But wait, that's just the beginning.

That was only the first year of a 12-year odyssey that has yielded one success after another.

Because of the dramatic success in the first year of use, Cmdr. Edwards began using iLearn Math at the beginning of the next school year for the same class.

And again, the results stunned everyone. They're shown below.



For this cohort of students, 58% had scored at the proficient level in the sixth grade the year before.

At the end of the seventh grade, all 40 students remained in the class, and remarkably:

***100% of the students, all 40 of them, scored at the proficient level on the state test.***

This was even more stunning than the results from the previous year.

***The Achievement Gap was completely closed in one school year...again!***

Moving forward, Cmdr. Edwards has continued using iLearn for this class of the lowest-performing seventh grade students with the same results. However, because students began using the program in the sixth grade in the third year, the comparison shown above for the first two years was no longer appropriate.

***But for 11 of the 12 years since these results, 100% of these lowest-performing 7th grade students have scored at the “proficient” level!***

Cmdr. Edwards remains staunchly committed to the use of iLearn Math because of the exceptional results she has achieved using the program.

As she now describes the situation, she “co-teaches” with iLearn Math, which to us is the ideal situation.

She continues to get high levels of recognition for the performance of the class, both within the District and her class is frequently visited as a model for how to transform performance in math for students who need the most support.

And the even better news, this is not the only school that experienced such outstanding success.

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