



Stanford eCorner

Khan Academy Goes to the Classroom

Sal Khan, *Khan Academy*

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Khan Academy Founder and Executive Director Sal Khan describes how his nonprofit's online lessons have been used at local schools to facilitate peer-to-peer learning. Khan also talks about how students using those lessons in class seem to take more ownership of their learning process and see their teachers more as partners than antagonists.



Transcript

This right over here, right when we got out of the gate, it was kind of surprising to me, but it was always the dream to be used in schools and some schools reached out to us, especially locally in Los Altos and they said what - how could you imagine this being used in a real classroom? And we said well, we don't think the lecture should be the focal point of the classroom anymore. We don't think if lecture isn't the focal point of the classroom anymore, you don't have to move everyone together at the same pace, you don't have to separate the strong from the weak students anymore. Instead students can learn at their own pace, watching videos if they need to. Doing exercises, getting feedback, and the classroom should be a place for interaction. And we can arm teachers with dashboards like this and this is just one of 50 ways that teachers can look at the information. And you can use this to facilitate kind of peer to peer learning where a teacher can say, okay look it looks like James is having trouble with solid geometry. A teacher - if I'm the teacher I could either say okay I am going to sit next to James while everyone else works at their own pace or even better I could say okay, it looks like Marsha is proficient in that, maybe she could be - tutor James or maybe Ben has already mastered it, he could tutor James and then they both benefit. James gets the benefit of getting personalized attention, Ben or Marsha get the benefit of learning to kind of empathize and communicate and explain concepts and frankly and learn the concept that much deeper. This is some data from a charter school in Oakland, California. It's Oakland Unity, it's serving an under-served population, it's a ninth grade algebra class here and I want to be very careful with this slide because I don't want anyone to walk away with the impression that Khan Academy is this - it's this miracle thing that you can just drop into a classroom and the butterflies will fly and the flowers will bloom.

It's a tool. And like any tool it's going to be as effective as the folks who are using the tool and a lot of what the results I'll talk about in a second are in my mind primarily due to the teaching staff at Oakland Unity and just to get a sense, this was a school that in 2010 was in the 20th percentile in the State of California amongst ninth grade algebra classes and in that one year without any Khan Academy they did - they were able to get to 76 percentile. So a huge jump just by amazing teachers and when we even asked the teacher Peter McIntosh, who was the head teacher, what did you do? He said, well I just wanted them to kind of take ownership of what they were doing. So he was already even without Khan Academy trying to get into a self-directed personalized learning world. But then he said he felt it asymptoted because there is only so much that I could do with the students and we were kind of hungry for this and then I learned about Khan Academy and then that's what took them to the point where in 2013 there is only nine ninth grade algebra classes in the State of California who have outperformed this classroom. And what's been interesting about this is Peter McIntosh he says, yes the math is nice, it's great - it's nice that they have great math scores, but he sees it as something more than that. He sees it as a mindset changing tool where these students were typically and this is not just this classroom, this is a lot of classrooms. They were passive, they would say teacher tell me what to do next. Yeah, I'm not good at math, they will engage in a problem for four seconds and then they will give up. And then sometimes view the teacher as the antagonist.

Hey, that person is going to try to fail me, they are going to give me a hard test; I have to do a little gamesmanship with them. And it changes that to okay, this is my goal. Here are all the tools that I have to reach my goal at my own time, at my own pace, and my teacher is a collaborator, they're trying to get me to where I need to go and as soon as you have that self-direction, you have that ownership over your learning narrative, that pays dividends in every class you take and they saw that that these kids actually improved in other classes, because they learnt to take ownership of things.