



SUCCESS STORY

ALTERNATIVE STUDENTS BENEFIT USING A FLIPPED, BLENDED CLASSROOM



Elementary students use Odysseyware at home to reinforce classroom concepts

It's not uncommon for high school students to enroll in virtual courses for a variety of reasons, but imagine third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders working independently to complete schoolwork online and at home. With only 114 students serving grades 3–12, Val Verde Academy (VVA) in Moreno Valley, California, has the flexibility to customize learning using an online curriculum paired with hands-on classroom instruction. This redefines the meaning of “blended learning” and creates a fun and flipped environment for elementary school students.

On a typical school day at VVA, the school bell rings at 8:30 am. Each student is engaged in hands-on classroom activities and lessons until 11:30 am. The afternoon is spent at home doing online lessons on Odysseyware, independently or with the help of a parent. The part-time format allows VVA to create a flipped classroom where the online courses establish and reinforce classroom concepts.

at a glance

Val Verde Academy

Virtual School
Moreno Valley, CA
academy.valverde.edu

114 Students
Grade 3-12

60% Hispanic/Latino

17% Black

19% White

Adopted Odysseyware in 2012



Thanks to the unique model of Val Verde Academy, all students are reading at or above grade level.

Odysseyware®



The part-time format allows Val Verde Academy to create a flipped classroom using Odysseyware to establish and reinforce classroom concepts before and after they're introduced.

Targeted, customized Career & Technical Education courses excite students

With more than a decade of experience, Odysseyware has a proven record of success supporting blended-learning initiatives of partner schools and districts. Designed to meet the needs of 21st-century learners, the platform caters to diverse learning styles by incorporating embedded interactive, multimedia instructional videos, learning games, rich illustrations, and animations.

VVA uses the shortened, in-class time for hands-on activities that incorporate 21st-century aptitude: collaboration, communication, problem solving, and skills based in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). Note-taking, summarizing, close reading, close writing and organizational abilities prepare them for college and career readiness. Using a blended model, students engage in interactions they typically wouldn't get from being full-time, virtual students. This allows them to put their skills to the test and apply their knowledge using online technology and traditional learning models. As an example, VVA students were studying Native Americans, but researching and writing projects on the topic while at home. At school, the topics were reinforced in traditional and collaborative learning models.

With only 14 students in grades 3 through 6, elementary teacher Shaun Hoak is fortunate and can give individual, specialized attention to ensure each of his students is making progress. Additionally, Mr. Hoak is able to add, remove, and change any lesson, unit, or assignment to fit the needs of his students, customization made easy with Odysseyware.

Using Odysseyware's teacher dashboard, Mr. Hoak tracks each student's grades, assignments, and tests while also sending personalized messages and feedback in real time. Combining results of online and in-class work gives VVA a complete picture of how students meet set standards. The academy uses Odysseyware curriculum to align with Common Core, State Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards. Concepts and skills are reinforced daily through traditional and collaborative learning models while students are on campus.

"A big misconception of blended learning is that students are glued to devices while in the classroom, which is not the way VVA works. While students are engaged with technology in the classroom, they're applying their knowledge and practicing skills they've learned through hands-on projects, group activities, and rotating stations."

— Dr. Vanessa Karwan

"I directly align my classroom content and standards to the pacing and lessons assigned in Odysseyware," Mr. Hoak shared. "My goal as a classroom and virtual teacher is to deepen and extend students' learning, and I've found the best way to do that is to use Odysseyware as the foundation for this learning."



“At the Academy, my child has gone from a regular classroom, long hours, and ‘F’ grades to shorter class time and computer homework—and is now on the honor roll.”

—Alice Vaidyanathan, mother of 6th-grade VVA student

Parents and Odysseyware

With half of the schoolwork being done at home, parents play a vital role in assisting students with assignments and lessons. With any new technology, there's a learning curve, including for parents with various levels of computer experience. VVA teachers and administrators have 1:1 coaching and tutoring sessions with parents to ensure they're confident in using Odysseyware with their student. Teachers are also available for technical support, and VVA parents collaborate on assignments and at-home schoolwork through their parent-teacher organization (PTO). The academy has found that once parents learn how to use Odysseyware, they truly enjoy helping their children.

Erin Davis, mother to 3rd- and 4th-grade students, agrees that while the thought of a young child doing schoolwork on the computer may seem untraditional, “younger children have grown up with these electronic devices, so they learn quickly using them for school.”

“It's like baking a cake,” said Dr. Karwan, using a metaphor to describe young students and online work. “In third grade, students have basic computer, literacy, and math skills, which serve as the foundation of the cake. As a student progresses onto higher grade levels, they build on knowledge and skills they've already mastered. That's the frosting—adding onto the foundational skills they already have.”

Thanks to the unique model of Val Verde Academy, all students are reading at or above grade level. Students are able to gain confidence in their learning because they're in smaller groups and getting positive reinforcement from parents, teachers, and Odysseyware.

Val Verde Academy (VVA) is designed for students who thrive in smaller, alternative environments:

- High-performing and/or gifted students
- Those with health issues
- Involved in extracurricular activities

“Parents are able to help their children by reading the topic many times until they grasp the concept. At school time is limited,” said Juana Barajas, mother of a 5th-grade student. **“Using Odysseyware takes responsibility, but it's worth it to dedicate time to our children.”**