



Hear from our Sumdog schools: Katherine Sullivan in Palo Alto, California

Katherine Sullivan is a 3rd Grade classroom teacher based in Palo Alto, California in the United States.

About the school

Katherine has been an educator for 31 years and currently teaches in a small public elementary school in Palo Alto, California. Out of the school's student population, 17.2% speak English as an additional language and 6.8% qualify for free and reduced lunches. The school has been using Sumdog for 6 years.

Creating an even playing field for students

At first, we began looking to engage and challenge students that were meeting expectations and exceeding them. We quickly found that Sumdog was also a terrific tool for students that were struggling. Prior to using Sumdog, we were using games and pencil/paper independent work with our students that were highflyers. This soon became inequitable for the other students as they were watching their peers playing games while they received additional small group support. Ultimately, we were looking for something that would engage everyone and Sumdog was the solution! Now, no one knows who is working at what level but they are all playing the same games.

Building an online community with Sumdog

Initially, I knew nothing about Sumdog. A senior teacher that has since retired was an avid Sumdog user and insisted that getting Sumdog was the top priority with our grade level funds. So we purchased Sumdog and began using it during the pandemic. This turned out to be a godsend as students were able to compete with one another during the day which built a sense of community for us when we were apart. I still feel that today as we are all sitting in the same classroom. It helps students build an online community and learn digital citizenship that teachers can control.

How is Sumdog used at your school?

During our math block, we teach whole group lessons and then break up into smaller groups. The students work independently on tasks that I assign, their incentive at the end is Sumdog. I reset the diagnostic test three times a year to keep track of their progress. Multiplication tables is something I use often and recently we've taken part in competitions between classes so students can compete against each other. Sumdog has completely transformed my classroom as I can now pull individual or small groups of students to offer support while the other children are so engaged on the platform. As a result, no one is off task and I therefore have no behaviour challenges.

What impact has Sumdog had?

Sumdog meets my learners where they are which means everyone feels successful. When children feel like they can do something, it's energising and makes them want to continue doing it. Our math block is now the most exciting part of the day because the children feel like superstars! Students are welcome to play at home and my parent community have shared with me that they love that their children are so engaged and come home talking about practising math on Sumdog. Additionally, your support team is amazing! We explained our issue to your team and they were so quick to jump in and help, I really appreciate your support team's responsiveness. Three of my students are on independent education plans and struggle significantly in class but switch on like lightbulbs when they get on Sumdog. I have absolutely seen attitudes towards math lessons improve since using Sumdog with both my capable students and struggling students highly engaged in learning.

Interested in trying out Sumdog?

Visit learn.sumdog.com or call 877-978-6364 so we can help get you started.