

## Classroom Spotlight:

### Augmented Reality Captivates Kindergarten Classrooms



Lorena Falasco Principal  
Jane Brittel

*New supplemental reading curriculum – Letters alive – transforms learning for English Language Learners at California school*

Lorena Falasco Elementary's motto is "Learning Is for Everyone." To engage students who may not have technology at home, the school's kindergarten teachers work with Letters alive, a supplemental reading curriculum that utilizes augmented reality.

#### Discovering Letters alive

Located in Los Banos, CA, more than half of Lorena Falasco's students are English Language Learners and have unique needs when it comes to reading instruction. Principal Jane Brittel learned about Letters alive at the International Reading Association Conference. The interactive program invites students to learn with a kingdom of animals that play, make sounds, and respond intelligently to students' actions and questions. "Using the Letters alive curriculum really makes kids excited about learning, and that makes us excited about learning," says Brittel.

By reinforcing letters, letter names, sounds, sight words, statements, and questions, Letters alive

teaches early literacy skills like reading and forming simple sentences. Because California requires kindergarten students to know letters and sounds before moving on to first grade standards, these skills are vital to students' continued success.

#### Lorena Falasco Elementary School

75% Hispanic Students  
55% English Language Learners  
75% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged

To learn more about Letters alive, visit:  
[www.kaplanco.com](http://www.kaplanco.com) or call 800-334-2014



Teacher Jenny Cotta leads a lesson using Letters alive

### Curriculum Integration

Lorena Falasco's kindergarten teachers use Letters alive to reinforce all the fundamentals of early literacy - directionality, word families, spaces between words, letter formation and sounds, initial capital letters and punctuation.

According to the kindergarten teachers, *Letters alive* has been easy to integrate into their existing curriculum. Both programs adhere to state standards and teach a letter a week. *Letters alive* comes with a variety of supplemental exercises, which they use to revisit the core curriculum, or to address each class's weak spots.

The kindergarten teachers instruct from their core curriculum in the mornings, and then with *Letters alive* in the afternoons. Teacher Jenny Cotta says the animals make a world of difference because they "give students who may not have accessed the core curriculum another way of getting it."

The technology keeps students engaged by connecting their learning to exciting animals. Cotta has seen fantastic results, and says "It is so captivating and so motivating that some of my

shiest students forget their inhibitions and speak. It's amazing."

### Engaging English Learners

Of the 31 students in Amber Ellersick's kindergarten class at Lorena Falasco, 20 are English Language Learners. As Ellersick explains, these students truly need the extra practice and visual reinforcement provided by *Letters alive*.

Principal Brittel agrees. "*Letters alive* has been a great help with our English Language Learners because it provides them with language, sentence structure, vocabulary, and background knowledge that they may not have had."

That extra assistance is key to engaging students at a critical time. Studies show that a quality early education leads to students learning better, earning more, and being better citizens - for life\*. For Principal Brittel, there's no question on the value of *Letters alive*. "We want our students to be engaged and excited about learning, and we feel the technology helps us do that."

\*Calman and Tarr-Whelan, "Early Childhood Education for All - A Wise Investment," Legal Momentum (2005).

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