



## App Accelerates English and Math Skills for Adult ELLs in Texas

**Students at Midland Need to Read, a nonprofit adult literacy center, see dramatic improvements after introducing students to learning via smartphone.**



Although it's a thriving community, 1 in 10 residents in Midland, Texas struggle with English language learners who face barriers in everyday communication including at the grocery store, the doctor's office, and with their child's teacher. For example, Lorena Castillo is an adult student at **Midland Need to Read**, a nonprofit dedicated to adult literacy. She's married with two children and commits most of her time to raising her children and volunteering in the community. When she can, she attends in-person classes with the goal of becoming more proficient in speaking English. In addition to the courses, she supplements her education by using **Learning Upgrade**, a smartphone app with English and math lessons for adults.

"When adult learners come to Midland Need to Read, we assess their needs and place them accordingly within our program," said program director Amanda Cuellar. "Along with the classes and one-to-one tutors, we offer our students a variety of apps and computer programs that help them learn English at their own pace and on their own time."

**"I use the app when I have a little bit of time, anywhere. Sometimes I'm in the laundry, waiting between washing and drying."  
– Lorena Castillo, Student**

For adult students who aren't familiar or comfortable with technology, the blended approach using smartphones with traditional classes gives them an opportunity to explore the new, digital world in a safe, familiar environment. With students at various ages and levels of education, the blended approach provides a better opportunity for each student to find the best fit.

The use of smartphones with students at Midland Need to Read is helping the learning process, giving students the motivation they need to improve their English skills, attain their GED an/or high school diploma, and get better jobs. Castillo has seen a dramatic improvement in her English skills. She can use the app to further her learning when it fits her schedule, no matter where she is or what else she may be doing. With greater accessibility comes greater engagement and universal usage, which will improve individuals' ability to hone their skills in any environment, anytime and anywhere.

**75%** of students enrolled in adult education programs also own smartphones.

**14:** average number of hours Midland students log each month.

The app is available as a free download from:

