



How Hall County teachers build student agency through high-quality, engaging content, and formative assessments

DISTRICT PROFILE

District

HALL COUNTY SCHOOLS

Location

GEORGIA

Student Population

27,000



THE CHALLENGE

To engage students and support best practices, Hall County teachers needed a platform that served multiple functions

Hall County teachers had been moving away from widespread textbook use. Instead, when it came to selecting and evaluating content, they began looking for instructional materials that engaged students and helped them build autonomy.

At the same time, Emily Lott, who serves many functions in the Hall County School District including American Literature teacher, ELA department chair, and professional learning leader, had been working to “leverage technology to quickly optimize learning,” through both her teaching and her support of other teachers.



“It’s about agility: quickly and efficiently responding to changes.”

EMILY LOTT

ELA DEPARTMENT CHAIR

So when Hall County teachers needed flexible content to support research-based best practices, ongoing formative assessments, and differentiation, Lott was tasked with helping them find a platform with high-quality content that could serve several different purposes for instruction.

Lott noted that teaching well is “about agility: quickly and efficiently responding to changes.”

THE SOLUTION

With Newsela, Hall County teachers “send kids down the rabbit hole” of engaging and safe content

When looking for a platform that could provide high-quality content and multiple pathways for instruction, Hall County found Newsela as their answer.

Lott and her colleagues have been grateful that, because of Newsela, they’ve been able to avoid “sending a kid out into Google and telling them to find whatever articles they might come across, [which] could lead to students finding low-quality resources or inappropriate content.”

Instead, at a time when engaging students has been especially challenging, teachers at Hall County are able to “send kids down a rabbit hole” with Newsela.

Oftentimes, students will begin reading one article assigned by their teacher on Newsela, and then go on to read multiple other texts that they’ve found on their own.



“We angle them in the right direction, and then let them keep going,” Lott said.

Part of the reason Lott and her colleagues feel comfortable in having this “snowball effect” happen is they know the Newsela content is not only engaging, but also high-quality.

“We can tell kids ‘you are welcome to look at any article on Newsela,’ and there’s a psychological safety for the teacher in doing that,” Lott said.

This helps teachers build students’ agency in a scaffolded, intentional way.

“We think about how we can help kids develop agency, and a lot of that is about being able to inform yourself, but doing it within the safe confines of Newsela,” Lott said.

“We can tell kids ‘you are welcome to look at any article on Newsela,’ and there’s a psychological safety for the teacher in doing that.”

EMILY LOTT
ELA DEPARTMENT CHAIR



“Newsela content allows them to find their voice and be seen in conversations that they might otherwise be isolated from.”

Emily Lott
ELA DEPARTMENT CHAIR

THE IMPLEMENTATION

How formative assessments and engaging, high-quality content give students a voice

Newsela's content and formative assessments flexibly supports Hall County teachers through the four stages of their district's lesson components. These include introduction, mini-lesson, work session, and closing.

"Newsela can be leveraged in any step of our lesson format," Lott said.

She has seen teachers use Newsela content as a lesson introduction, and then move to a discussion for the work session. She has also seen teachers give mini-lessons on skills like annotation or identifying bias, then dive into a Newsela article to apply those skills during a work session.

"We can assign articles for any part of the lesson, and differentiate the assignment, which is crucial," Lott said.

Newsela's formative assessment features have helped Hall Country teachers keep students on track.

"We can keep kids accountable through Newsela quizzes and say, 'hey, did you read this?'" Lott said.

Lott is able to provide students a daily article and get a picture of how they're progressing over the course of several days.

"I can get on a call with [a student] to make sense of the text. We pull up an article together. I have students do annotations, then do a screen grab and send it to me to share their thinking," Lott said.

Lott has also found a transcendent benefit to providing kids with content they can connect with, and that helps them grow as readers and as people.

"In a kid's very busy life, they want to be seen. Newsela content allows them to find their voice and be seen in conversations that they might otherwise be isolated from."

Expect more from your content



ACCESSIBLE TO ALL LEARNERS

Automatic differentiation so content is accessible to every student regardless of reading level or background. Teachers can add scaffolding as needed.



CONSTANTLY UPDATED

Content is fresh, so when important world events take place that impact students' lives, your content stays up-to-date with it.



AUTHENTIC AND RELEVANT

Great content for the classroom that comes from the real-world and is relevant for students of all grade levels.



ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

Engaging and timely materials that are aligned to literacy standards at the same time.

 newsela

**Learning
Found.**

Go to newsela.com to learn how you can integrate these skills alongside core literacy instruction today!