



Behind the scenes of MSM's Spanish localization

By Alex Usatine
Chief Editor

Few know the extent of the film content contained within Core Curriculum™ better than Megan LeBleu, MidSchoolMath's Director of Curriculum. "It's truly mind boggling how many individual videos are contained within our software. There's 272 alone for The Math Simulator™, 20 Domain Replays, 136 Teacher Instruction videos, and another 136 Worked Example videos," she explained. "All of the content has been produced to a high standard with great production value, and each video has closed captioning and Spanish subtitles."

For ESL students, subtitles allow for low entry access to the materials to support a basic understanding of the content. However, graphical elements, including text often related to math problems, cannot be translated through subtitles. Content producers like Netflix have found that more viewers prefer to watch dubbed foreign content, likely because compared to subtitles, dubbing decreases

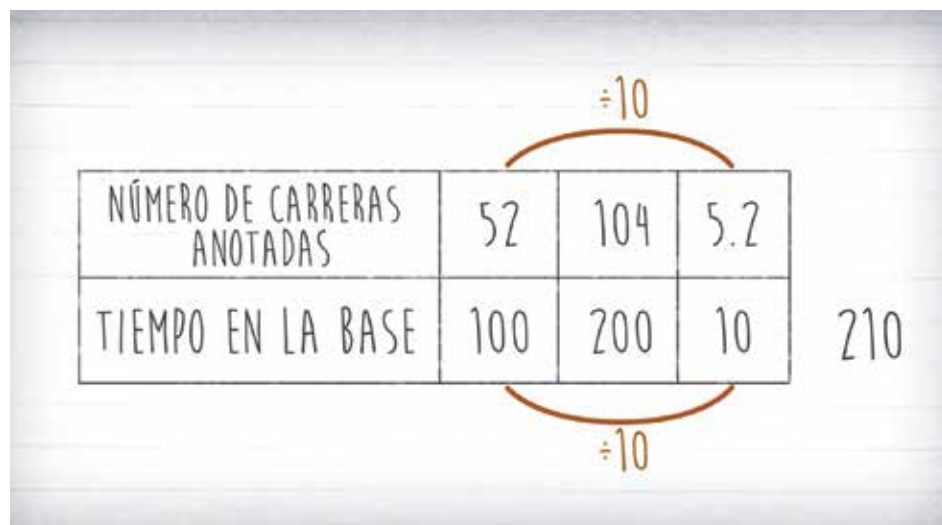
distraction and increases immersion into a story and its characters.

Since immersion is central to MidSchoolMath's approach, they borrowed a page from the film industry's playbook with the goal of seamlessly dubbing and translating the graphical content in each video in a process called localization.

To prepare, MidSchoolMath's media production team has been hard at work, cataloging and compiling all of the video and graphical assets needed for such a conversion. They then reached out to SPG Studios, a compa-

ny with over 30 years of experience in localization to complete this vision.

"Traditionally, SPG was a dubbing studio that focused on the entertainment industry," explains Max Bienvenu, SPG's senior director of business and series development. "Our legacy clients are companies like HBO, Disney, Warner Bros., where we've dubbed their tentpole movies, their TV series like Game of Thrones, Batman, Inception, and so on. And more recently we're using this expertise to benefit other companies in other industries, including education."



Part of what makes the end result so accessible to the viewer is not only the dubbing of each actor's voice by a native Spanish speaker, but in the type of dubbing performed.

"For MidSchoolMath, we're performing lip-sync dubbing, which is pretty much the top tier version of it," says Bienvenu. "That's what you use for movies and any high value content. It's pretty much matching the live movement, matching every pause. It's a tedious process in the translations part and also in the recording. In the recording studio, the actors try to mimic the energy and

the emotion, while also making sure that each word is matching the tempo of the original and the breath and the pauses and everything."

After watching some of the first videos localized by SPG, MidSchoolMath's Director of Scripted Content, Michelle Moore observes, "The audio is great, the casting is fantastic and I am amazed at how they are able to write and perform so the Spanish actually syncs up with the original actors' performance and mouth movements. It's not like watching the dubbed movies from the 1970s! I definitely feel this tool will help the

math comprehension of our Spanish speaking students."

Bienvenu of SPG agrees. "In terms of the difference between a full localization versus subtitling, it's very difficult for anyone to look at the bottom of the screen, read the content and watch what's happening on screen at the same time. You lose a lot of information. A localization is much better for the student's experience and their understanding of the content."

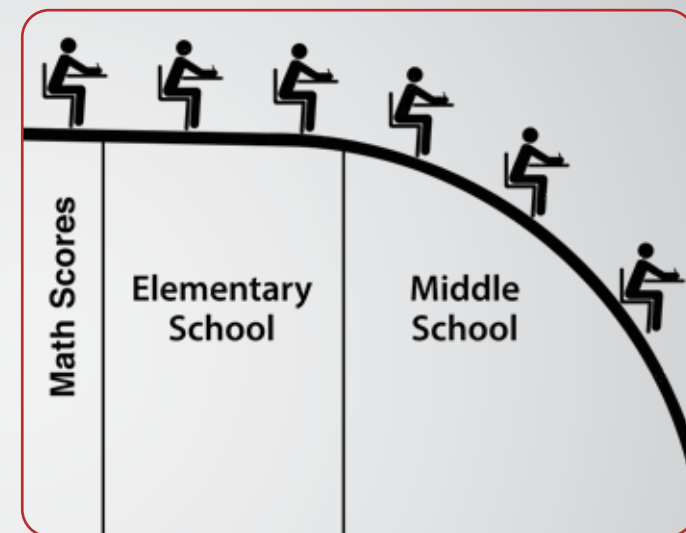
MidSchoolMath's Spanish localization is underway and will be completed in the first half of 2024.

Why We Focus on Math in the Middle Grades

Nearly every district across the country shows comparable declines in the middle grades. Thus, administrators and teachers immediately recognize and connect with this phenomenon of 'the mid school math cliff.'

From a global perspective, students in the United States typically score above average in elementary school, yet the US ranks in the bottom tier of math scores for 15-year-old students. Based on nearly twenty years of evidence from The International Math & Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Assessment (PISA), among 34 OECD countries, the US decline from 5th to 8th grade is the greatest in the world.

MidSchoolMath was founded on the idea that we can change how math is taught during the middle years, when it matters most.



'The mid school math cliff'

www.midschoolmath.com