

## TEACHING WITH BETTERMARKS: SUCCESS STORIES



“The students are not only learning mathematics, but their teamwork, achievement and motivation have also improved.”

Sabine Lemke,  
Mathematics teacher at the Heinrich-Mann school

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Heinrich-Mann school, Berlin

### Students helping students – a participation project

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Allowing students to participate more actively in the school day with control over their own activities encourages independence, a stronger group dynamic and a greater sense of belonging to the school as an institution. This was the goal of the “students helping students” project, developed by bettermarks in conjunction with the Heinrich-Mann school in Berlin.

In the project, older students are trained as “maths scouts” in a two-hour seminar where they learn how to use bettermarks to coach younger students. At the Heinrich-Mann school, students from class 9 set up “tandem partnerships” with students from class 7. They then came together weekly in an extra lesson to work on series of bettermarks exercises.

“The students don't just learn mathematics, they also get to know one another better.”

The project has proved very popular at the school, because this one-on-one peer tutoring does more than improve mathematical understanding. Ms Lemke, the supervising maths teacher at the Heinrich-Mann school, saw that the cooperation extended beyond the maths lesson: *“The students don't just learn mathematics - they also get to know each other better. The ninth graders continue to support the student they are partnered with on the school playground.”*

Liza (Class 7) had this to say in a television interview with TV-Berlin: *“Having your own maths scout is great. They help you out and after a while they know exactly where your problems are.”* The personal tuition helped Liza to improve her marks by an entire grade.

Are you interested in running a “students helping students” participation project at your school? Send an e-mail to [kontakt@bettermarks.de](mailto:kontakt@bettermarks.de) for further information and support.

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"The conferences we organise for the parents and the private parent-teacher meetings have proved very popular."

Heike Kunert,  
Mathematics teacher at the Marie-Curie high school

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Marie-Curie high school, Ludwigsfelde (Brandenburg)

### Starting off on the right foot: involving parents successfully

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The Marie-Curie high school has been using bettermarks since 2011. Beginning with three classes in the first year, the school regularly adds new ones. This wealth of experience has given the teachers important insights into how to make the transition to digital teaching material as seamless as possible.

The first challenge the teachers face is always convincing the parents of the advantages of the change. For maths teacher Heike Kunert, involving the parents is a decisive factor in making the transition a success. *"I can definitely recommend that other teachers make time for a conference with the parents. These have always been very popular, and they help to answer a lot of questions."*

*"I was able to understand and clear up concerns in private meetings."*

It was also important for Ms Kunert to take parents' criticisms seriously and to deal with concerns personally. *"In addition to the conferences, I offered the parents the chance to meet privately to talk about their reservations. These meetings enabled me to understand and clear up their concerns, and the result was that even those parents welcomed the idea."*

To get the students started with the online learning system, Ms Kunert got them to work in teams of two: *"First off, the students worked together to find topics they didn't know. They read the explanations to learn on their own before working through the exercise series together. This empowered the students to exchange ideas and help each other."*

Today, eleven classes with more than 245 students use bettermarks at the Marie-Curie high school.