

Longwood Central School District prepares students for global economy

New York district using Learning.com resources to teach and assess digital literacy

In 2007, as part of their goal to meet technology literacy standards passed by the state of New York, administrators at the Longwood Central School District on Long Island were looking for a tool that would help them both integrate digital skills into core curriculum, and assess whether those skills were being taught effectively.

“The state requires that all students be ‘technology literate’ by the end of eighth grade,” says Ellen Pitrelli, director of technology. “This was defined as ‘having an understanding of the concepts behind computing and software, the skills to use technology responsibly in the classroom, and the ability to acquire new knowledge using technology.’ ”

Pitrelli found a solution that would help the district meet these requirements for both students and teachers in the digital literacy tools available from Learning.com.

“The first Learning.com resource I was interested in was the TechLiteracy Assessment,” says Pitrelli. “It was a way of measuring and reporting growth in the digital skills of eighth grade students.” But, finding resources to teach digital skills in the grades leading up to that assessment was her next goal. “We also needed instructional materials and activities for the lower grades, and as I explored, I found that Learning.com was much more than an assessment — they offered a complete system to teach digital skills.”

In addition to TechLiteracy Assessment, Learning.com offers a digital skills curriculum



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called EasyTech. It is a self-paced, interactive program for K–8 students to learn basic technology skills, which also includes online safety, keyboarding and word processing instruction for grades K–12.

The process began with teachers. “We asked every teacher to take a technology skills assessment, which would help us determine their need for professional development,” says Pitrelli. “Then we formed a committee to develop a required curriculum for grades K–4 that would

incorporate Learning.com resources, and a recommended, but not required, curriculum for grades 5–8.”

Each teacher received two hours of professional development on using the Learning.com resources effectively, and each K–4 student was assigned one 30-minute period per week in a computer lab to study concepts such as keyboarding, word processing, using multimedia, creating presentations, and effective Internet research skills, using the EasyTech curriculum. Every K–4 student receives a technology grade on their report card, and every eighth grade student takes the TechLiteracy Assessment.

The results have been striking. In 2007–08, just 53 percent of eighth grade students met the proficiency standard for digital skills on the TechLiteracy Assessment. By 2011–12, after four years of using the technology curriculum resources from Learning.com, that number had risen to 72 percent of eighth graders meeting the standard.

“Our teachers have also benefited a great deal,” says Pitrelli. “From our initial assessment, it was clear that there were a number of areas in which our teachers needed additional support.

The EasyTech curriculum also helped teachers learn these skills, and showed them how they could enhance their classroom teaching with digital content.”

Looking forward, Pitrelli says Longwood administrators are focused beyond state mandates to the requirements of the Common Core State Standards, and Learning.com will be a key component in meeting them. “For us, Learning.com continues to be a one stop shop for all of the resources we need to teach students these digital literacy skills that are so crucial for the 21st century.”

For more information, go to www.learning.com/digital-literacy.

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About Learning.com

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