

Digital Literacy is Just a Quick Click Away for N.J. Students

EasyTech by Learning.com covers national and state standards while preparing students for a technological world

Does your district have 20 minutes every two weeks to get students proficient in technology?

That's all it's taken for elementary students in the Phillipsburg (N.J.) School District, thanks to EasyTech, a self-paced interactive curriculum that teaches students critical technology skills in the context of core curriculum and real-world challenges. The 564 students — nearly 80 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches — use EasyTech in the 4,200 student district's two schools for grades 3–5.

“I was really impressed with their system, the quality of lessons and the fact that the lessons develop the 21st century skills outlined by the ISTE NETS-S as well as the Common Core Anchor Standards,” says Rosemary Rinker, Educational Technology Specialist for the Phillipsburg School District.

EasyTech from Learning.com covers a variety of concepts, from online safety, keyboarding, and printing to spreadsheets, databases, and presentations. Material is revisited and reinforced through a spiraling curriculum, so students develop and retain skills that are now found in the Common Core, as well as state technology and core curriculum standards.

“Students entering our middle school technology program have a better foundation, so they are able to expand and do more problem-based activities using all forms of technology,” Rinker says. “As more students in grades 3–5 have this



““ The lessons develop the 21st century skills outlined by the ISTE NETS-S as well as the Common Core Anchor Standards.”

consistent instruction, they're better able to make the transition.”

Students are also working more efficiently. “What's most impressive to us is that students have exceeded half of the lessons by the end of Marking Period 2 (this year) with 93 percent accuracy,” Rinker says. “This is the first year we are seeing students on target in each grade level for completing the whole program.

“In the beginning of implementation, EasyTech was only available in individual classrooms,

where teachers used it to varying degrees; in 2008–09, third-grade students completed only 55 percent of their assigned lessons for the entire year. Today, however, the district has seen dramatic improvement, because students now have consistent access to EasyTech through the district’s media literacy program, which is overseen by media specialists.

“We know the program is beneficial because students are consistently scoring well in terms of accuracy,” Rinker adds. “The program is interactive; it’s self-correcting; it gives hints so it scaffolds for students who may just be missing a concept.”

The program also accounts for students who enter school with more digital knowledge than their predecessors. “We can tweak the curriculum to weed out the basics because they already are familiar with using a computer mouse, or know clicking and dragging,” Rinker says. “Already having these basic skills, they are able to go deeper in their use of technology, and EasyTech has a wide range of lessons that are available. We just pick and choose what we can do in the time available over the course of the year.”

Phillipsburg is also investigating Learning.com’s new Custom Curriculum Publishing Tool, which allows administrators

to create and share unique resource collections with teachers and resequence existing resources to more effectively meet specific objectives and standards.

““ The product has become integral because we’ve realized how much media and technology are integrated with English, language arts, and math.”

Soon, Phillipsburg’s second grade students will be using EasyTech in advance of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC). “Learning.com has put together a series for the PARCC assessment so technical skills don’t become a barrier for students taking the test,” Rinker says. “We’re also changing our curriculum across the board to include more technology, so the products students are using will be an application of what they’re learning on EasyTech. The product has become integral because we’ve realized how much media and technology are integrated with English, language arts, and math.”

About Learning.com

Learning.com is a national leader in providing digital literacy solutions that help prepare students for online assessments, school, college and their future careers. The company offers a complete digital literacy curriculum for grades K-8 that engages students as they develop critical skills such as keyboarding, business applications, online safety, computational thinking and coding. Founded in 1999, Learning.com currently partners with one in six U.S. school districts and serves more than 4 million students each year. The company has earned more than 30 industry awards, including ISTE 2017 Best of Show, 2017 Award of Excellence from “Tech & Learning Magazine” and “The Oregonian’s Top Workplace” for 2017 and 2016.