

Digital Evaluation Tool Analyzes Information Fluency in South Carolina District

Richland School District Two administrators gauge students' 21st century skills using Learning.com.

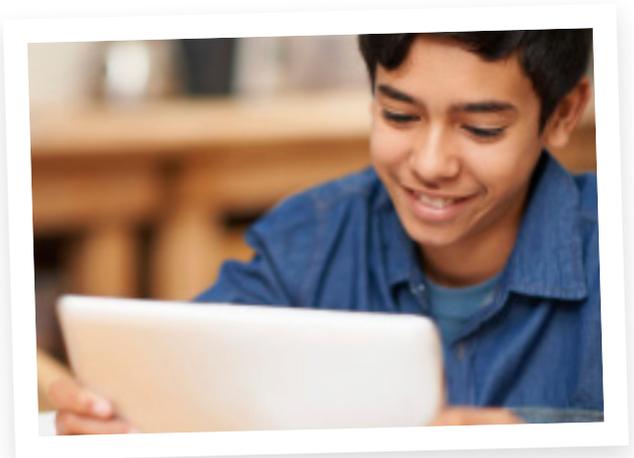
Searching for Measureable Outcomes

At the 27,000-student Richland School District Two in South Carolina, goals and strategies focus on fostering learning, character, community and joy. To meet those objectives, a 1-to-1 environment was implemented for students in grades 3 through 12.

“When we purchased the devices in 2012, we brought in an outcomes team from the University of South Carolina,” says Donna Teuber, instructional technology supervisor. “They helped us figure out what things we wanted to measure, how we would measure them and what outcomes we were looking for.”

Specifically of concern was improving 21st century skills, which are crucial for students to have for success in high school, college and beyond. “We used surveys to ask teachers and students how they felt about collaboration and communication, and held classroom observation periods,” says Teuber. “Those gave us good information but we still did not have any way to measure if students were actually building their 21st century skills.”

“ We were very happy with the content and information we would gain. We also liked that we would be able to compare our students with other students in the country. ”



Finding the Right Assessment Tool

Teuber's team selected Learning.com's 21st Century Skills Assessment to analyze students' ability to make decisions and think critically. This psychometrically validated blend of interactive, performance-based questions combines complex tasks in simulated applications with multiple choice, knowledge-based questions. The optional project-based assessment provides a rubric that allows educators to assess students' creativity and innovation in project settings. The tool also integrates with Learning.com's EasyTech, a digital literacy curriculum that provides engaging instruction to help students develop technology skills and prepare them for computer-based assessments.

“We had a team member recommend Learning.com and we all got logins to test it,” says Teuber. “We were very happy with the content and information we would gain. We also liked that we would be able to compare our students with other students in the country.”

The tool was piloted by testing eighth graders in 2011-12, says Lisa Knoche, lead for 21st Century Skills Assessment. “The following year, we assessed 30 fifth graders from all 18 elementary schools. Last year we tested 350 elementary school students and 450 middle schoolers.”

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Data-driven Decision Making

Each year, Knoche looks at the reports on student progress from the assessment and makes recommendations on which groups to test in the future. “I also share the results with the technology coach at every school in the district. The coaches can use the information to develop instructional plans with administrators.”

According to Knoche, the reports are very user-friendly. “It was easy to see that our elementary students were proficient across all of the different indicators.”

The reports provide proficiency data from Below Basic to Advanced levels. These levels account for overall proficiency, as well as the ISTE Standards for Students strands and standards measured by the project assessment.

Reviewing Trends to Improve

Through Learning.com’s 21st Century Skills Assessment, data are obtained at the district level. “We can see trends from school to school,” says Teuber. “We have flagged schools where we want to follow progress more closely.”

Also included in the tool is the option to conduct surveys to inform district plans, says Teuber.

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Helping students develop and apply 21st century skills continues to be a priority at Richland Two. Teuber says that Learning.com’s 21st Century Skills Assessment will help drive decisions based on where students are and how to get them to where they need to be.

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.