imagine **Edgenuity**®

Can An Online Program Support Students Who Are Hospital-Bound, School-Phobic, Or Who Have Disabilities?

Challenge: Students with special needs were struggling to master content and graduate.

Solution: An engaging online credit recovery, initial credit, and supplemental learning program caught students before they failed.

Outcome: After implementing Imagine Edgenuity® courses, graduation rates increased.

School Demographics

Demographics	
African American	52%
Caucasian	29%
Hispanic	13%
Asian	4%
Two or more races	2%
Special Education	30%

Overview

North of Hartford, Connecticut, Windsor High School (WHS) serves 1,500 students in grades 9–12. In 2008, WHS started the Learning Lab, an online learning program to support students who were at risk of not graduating on time and to support students with special needs. Currently, 234 students in the Learning Lab use Imagine Edgenuity for credit recovery, initial credit, or supplemental learning.

Providing Rigorous Academic Standards

Like many schools, WHS decided to offer an online learning program to help meet the needs of students who were not successful in a traditional classroom. In 2014, however, WHS leadership felt its existing online program was not interactive or challenging enough and began researching new online content delivery programs. Learning Lab Facilitator Catherine Lavallee and Principal Russell Sills sought an online program that would not only be engaging and meet rigorous standards, but would also meet the needs of learners with varying backgrounds. Windsor chose Imagine Edgenuity because its courses present content in multiple forms (text, pictures, videos, digital interactions, and audio), allow students to express what they know in multiple ways, and carefully fade support as students master skills.

Sills decided to implement Imagine Edgenuity courses with special education and school-phobic students. Special education and school-phobic students use Imagine Edgenuity courses five to ten hours a week as part of their foundational curriculum. Depending on the student's individual education program (IEP), students may use Imagine Edgenuity's math, language arts, or elective courses in the classroom or computer lab during a 60-minute period. While in the classroom or computer lab, instructors explicitly teach metacognitive skills such as self-monitoring, goal-setting, reading strategies, and note-taking to students. They also work one-on-one with students to make sure students understand concepts and skills presented in lessons. Teachers help students make their thinking more transparent by using graphic organizers. When necessary, instructors accommodate student needs by providing oral, alternative written, or visual assessments.

"Our special education team have really taken to Imagine Edgenuity. It has allowed us to provide even more personalized one-on-one attention," said Lavallee. "[Imagine] Edgenuity's data lets us know exactly how to help students and when they should be pushed to achieve their best." Teachers use Imagine Edgenuity Web Administrator to monitor daily progress and achievement. If a student is behind in pacing, teachers provide immediate positive reinforcement and strategize with students on how to catch up. In the lab, instructors review session logs to see where students spend the most time in their courses, and provide offline one-on-one help with those assignments. Teachers ask students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways, including by giving oral explanations, comparing and contrasting topics, and drawing diagrams. Once students show they understand the concepts, they are then allowed to continue in their Imagine course.

Generating Results

Preliminary evidence indicates that Imagine Edgenuity courses are having a positive impact on student achievement. After one year of implementing Imagine Edgenuity courses, the graduation rate of special education students in the program increased from 64 percent in 2014 to 86 percent in 2015 (see Graph 1).

The key to the program's success, according to Sills, was blending Imagine Edgenuity's courses with teacher support. "Our students say, 'I finally have someone who knows who I am and knows me as a learner.' When students realized they could tackle more advanced work and still receive teacher support, they excelled. They finally felt they could be successful in school."

Figure 1. Windsor High School Special Education Graduation Rates