

# Case Study

## Classical Academies

### SAN DIEGO, CA

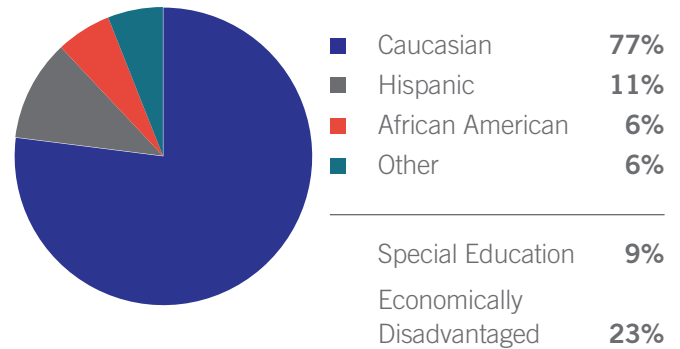


### Can an online program help a charter school system increase student choice in academics?

**CHALLENGE:** Can an online learning program provide flexible options for a wide range of students?

**OUTCOME:** A school system uses Edgenuity curriculum in four innovative ways.

### SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS



### BACKGROUND

Founded in 1999, Classical Academies serves 4,200 K–12 students in three independent public charter schools in North San Diego County, California. The organization’s mission is to prepare students for college, career, and citizenship by partnering with families, offering rigorous academics, fostering social and emotional learning, and providing academic choice.

### PROVIDING MORE FLEXIBLE LEARNING OPTIONS

Classical Academies enrolls a diverse array of students, ranging from homeschoolers, athletes, and actors to gifted, traditional, remedial, at-risk, and medically fragile students. In 2013, Classical Academies set out to provide more flexible learning options that would better differentiate instruction and create more time for conferencing with students and parents. A collaborative leadership team made up of department heads, teachers, principals, parents, and school board members began researching online curriculum providers to support this initiative.

The collaborative team wanted to find a provider that offered a wide array of courses and would simultaneously support struggling students while providing appropriate challenges to accelerated ones. They also sought to ensure that educators would have access to data and reports that could inform instruction.

Classical Academies chose Edgenuity because of its research base, breadth of course offerings, and actionable data. “At Classical Academies, we recognize that students have varying abilities, talents, and interests. We strongly believe that instruction should be tailored to each student’s unique needs,” said Dr. Stacey Perez, Online Principal. “Edgenuity’s content and learning management system allowed us to truly personalize learning without compromising the rigor or integrity of instruction.”

A core belief of Classical Academies is that schools should offer flexible scheduling of courses. Administrators believe students should be provided multiple options for when and where they complete their coursework. That's why Classical Academies offers Edgenuity in four distinct settings:

- A four-day school week program where high school students use Edgenuity courses for approximately 60 minutes per day, per subject;
- A blended instructional program where high school students use Edgenuity courses three days a week at home and receive face-to-face workshop instruction two days a week at school;
- An online learning program where students complete Edgenuity courses at home and meet with a teacher every five weeks; and
- A full-time independent study program where students are supported by certified teachers.

For middle and high school students enrolled in the blended learning program, the large majority of instruction takes place in cyber cafés that have comfortable chairs, sofas, and whiteboard tables. Half the time, students work on Edgenuity courses via Chromebooks. The remainder of the time is spent engaging in collaborative learning projects, attending science labs, and receiving small-group or one-on-one instruction led by highly qualified teachers or tutors. Students are welcome to work at the cyber café independently. However, teachers, tutors, and academic coaches are always available to assist them.

## **BUILDING EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY**

One of the elements that makes Classical Academies unique is that teachers prioritize developing students' social and emotional competencies. "We know from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs that students must have their basic physiological and psychological needs met before they can really advance cognitively," said Perez. "Our staff work deliberately with students to create a sense of belonging, build their trust, and boost their confidence. We meet the student needs when they walk in the door."

At the start of the school year, each student meets with an academic coach, who discusses each student's past educational experiences, fears, current expectations, and future aspirations. The coach then develops an individualized graduation plan for the student, and helps to set academic and personal goals related to Edgenuity.

Teachers also build students' emotional competencies by intentionally and explicitly integrating character education into face-to-face instruction. Through specialized lessons, assemblies, community service, and field trips, students are taught to do the right thing when no one is watching, learn from mistakes, keep a positive attitude, take ownership of feelings and actions, and try new strategies to achieve a goal.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Classical Academies is rooted in the belief that learning should be competency-based. Students are only allowed to progress if they consistently show mastery of 80 percent of Edgenuity content. To meet this goal, students are explicitly taught how to set goals, take notes, determine the importance of content material, and actively engage in Edgenuity. Deadlines, guidelines, and conferences are regularly put in place to help guide students to successful completion and mastery of each course.



"We have students who, when they get 80 percent on a quiz, say they can do better and want to try for 90 percent."

Dr. Stacey Perez, Online Principal | **CLASSICAL ACADEMIES**

Teachers meet every Monday to discuss student progress, achievement, and engagement using the data in Edgenuity's learning management system. Teachers then meet one-on-one with students to offer remediation and support. Educators encourage students to have a growth mindset. They help students focus on the processes that lead to learning, such as putting forth effort and trying new strategies. "Our teachers love that they can use Edgenuity's dashboard to show students how their hard work paid off," said Perez. "We have students who, when they get 80 percent on a quiz, say they can do better and want to try for 90 percent."

Parents are an integral part of student success, including supervising, communicating, and aiding in daily progress. Parents are given access to Edgenuity courses and are even encouraged to attend classes and lead activities with teachers. "Our belief is that a partnership with parents can positively impact student learning," said Perez. "We try to provide the tools and programming to make sure that is a reality."

## **GENERATING RESULTS**

Results from the past three years of data show that Edgenuity is helping to improve student achievement. Data showed that 81 percent of students earned a score of three or higher on their Advanced Placement tests and 99 percent of students graduated on time.

The theme for the 2016–17 school year is, "How will you tell your story?" Student engagement continues to rise as students find a comfortable and safe learning environment, as well as quality college prep courses through Edgenuity. Students who have struggled with a traditional public school setting are now successful in this environment. Edgenuity has provided the students and the staff with an ideal learning partnership, where students are able to accelerate, are held accountable, and are motivated to have a successful learning experience.