Case Study
Mt. Everett Regional School

SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

Edgenuity
where learning clicks

Students Report Benefits of Technology in Social Studies Classrooms

School: Mt. Everett Regional School

Grades: 7 through 12
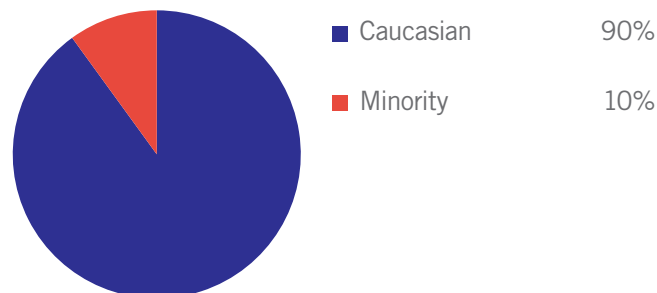
Total Enrollment: 330

Edgenuity Implementation: 60 minutes, twice a week

Implementation Model: Supplemental, Enriched Virtual

Data Collected: Software usage, interviews

Report Period: 2016–2017

School Demographics

■ Caucasian	90%
■ Minority	10%

Overview

Located in Sheffield, Massachusetts, Mt. Everett Regional School is a comprehensive junior-senior high school with an enrollment of 330 students in grades 7–12. Ninety percent of students are Caucasian; the remaining 10 percent of students are minorities. Approximately one-third of students (32 percent) are economically disadvantaged.

During the 2016–2017 school year, Mt. Everett Regional School used Edgenuity Courseware in 7th and 10th grade social studies classrooms. This case study describes how Edgenuity helped students achieve content mastery and outlines the benefits of Edgenuity Courseware for students.

Implementation

In spring 2015, Mt. Everett Regional School purchased Edgenuity Courseware to supplement core instruction in social studies. School leaders wanted to provide a digital tool that would enable students to practice and apply content knowledge to novel tasks. They believed Edgenuity's just-in-time data, multimodal content, and tailored feedback would not only teach students concepts and skills within their zone of proximal development (skills slightly more advanced than the students' current level of mastery), but could also provide students with more targeted remediation, challenge, and support.

During the 2016–2017 school year, Edgenuity was used with students in four 7th grade social studies classes and a 10th grade economics class. Three days a week, the instructor, Mike Farmer, led students in face-to-face group, project, and inquiry-based learning activities designed to develop analytical, prediction, writing, debate, and cooperative skills. During the remaining school days, students used Edgenuity's online Courseware in a computer lab.

Edgenuity Research

> "Edgenuity did a lot of the heavy lifting that made personalized learning possible. The program provided actionable data that pinpointed students' unique strengths and skill deficits. It enabled me to more precisely reteach content material that facilitated greater higher-order thinking and metacognition."
>
> MIKE FARMER, TEACHER | MT. EVERETT REGIONAL SCHOOL

Teacher-Led Strategies

Dr. Farmer recognized that the presence of technology alone would be not guarantee that all students would succeed. Therefore, he intentionally executed three strategies to maximize student learning. For example, he:

1. **Carefully aligned online and offline activities:** Dr. Farmer expected that all students would receive teacher-led instruction, read a variety of texts offline, engage in face-to-face independent projects, and complete Edgenuity online lessons. However, in order to individualize student learning, Dr. Farmer varied the order each student participated in these activities and created customized units from Edgenuity content. Each student received his or her own personal playlist of activities based on performance on in-class quizzes. For example, some students might receive teacher-led instruction, then engage in independent work, read texts, and then finally participate in online activities. Others might complete Edgenuity activities first and hear the teacher-led lecture last.

2. **Asked meaningful questions to deepen student learning:** Dr. Farmer implemented a structured routine to check for student understanding. If a student failed an online quiz, for instance, Dr. Farmer required that student to go back into the program and look up the answer. He then met with each student one-on-one and asked a series of strategic questions designed to address basic knowledge (remembering facts) as well as more advanced skills such as comparing, analyzing, or evaluating. For example, a struggling 7th-grade student might first be asked to explain what the Law of the Twelve Tables is. Dr. Farmer would then ask the student to compare the Law of the Twelve Tables to the Magna Carta, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and the U.S. Constitution. Finally, the student might be required to evaluate and explain how societies establish rule of law. In doing so, the student would be required to describe his or her thinking processes and articulate any misconceptions about the subject matter.

3. **Empowered students to take control of their own learning:** At the beginning of the school year, Dr. Farmer set expectations with his students, including academic and behavioral rules, standards for acceptable work, and the support available to students and under what conditions students could obtain it. He empowered students to take control of their own learning by teaching them to track their own content mastery and progress in the learning management system. Students were expected to look at Dashboard data and know whether they were "in the green" (ahead of pace), "in the blue" (on schedule), or "in the red" (behind pace). Dr. Farmer held students accountable by monitoring their progress, engagement, and achievement through the program's Attendance Log and Dashboard reports. Students were given rewards for staying on track.

Program Results

Course usage data were collected and analyzed from students in Edgenuity's Grade 10 Economics and Grade 7 Social Studies courses. Results show that students mastered content. On average, students completed 84 percent of the content in their Edgenuity courses and earned an average overall grade of 83 percent (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Mt. Everett Regional School Edgenuity Course Usage Data from August 30, 2016 to June 14, 2017 (N = 51)

Subject	Total Enrollments	Progress	Completion Rate	Average Overall Grade (%)
Economics Grade 10	10	100%	100%	91%
Social Studies Grade 7	41	93%	90%	81%
All Subjects	**51**	**95%**	**92%**	**83%**

Compared to other middle school social studies and 10th grade Economic classes in Massachusetts, Mt. Everett students outperformed their peers in progress, completion, and average overall grade (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Massachusetts Edgenuity Course Usage Data from August 30, 2016 to June 14, 2017 (N = 130)

Subject	Total Enrollments	Progress	Completion Rate	Average Overall Grade (%)
Economics Grade 10	49	86%	84%	75%
Social Studies – Middle School	81	77%	70%	76%
All Subjects	**130**	**80%**	**75%**	**76%**

Interviews

In June 2017, Edgenuity staff conducted one-on-one phone interviews with seven students. The large majority of students (71 percent) were 7th-graders enrolled in Edgenuity's Social Studies Grade 7 course. The remaining students were 10th-graders enrolled in Edgenuity's Economics Grade 10 course. Interviewees identified a number of aspects of Edgenuity Courseware that they found to be beneficial.

1. **Clear, consistent lesson structure**. Students noted that Edgenuity Courseware had a consistent structure, which made learning less daunting. "Learning can be overwhelming if you don't know where to start," said a 7th-grader. "Edgenuity lessons always had a warm-up activity, a video with a teacher, assignments, and quizzes. It also had clear headings, so I didn't need to worry about where to look for information."

2. **Deeper learning.** Students called attention to the fact that Edgenuity helped to deepen understanding of concepts taught in face-to-face instruction. "Dr. Farmer introduced us to social studies topics during regular classroom time. We would then practice those concepts using Edgenuity. I felt like I was getting one-on-one tutoring from an actual teacher," said a 7th-grade student. A 10th-grade student noted, "Edgenuity was helpful if you didn't understand a topic the first time it was taught. It gave us another opportunity to practice and learn the material."

Students noted that Edgenuity allowed them to apply what they learned to new settings. For example, a 10th-grade student explained that a lesson on financial literacy was particularly useful because it required students to create budgets, learn how to invest earnings, understand pay returns, and plan for retirement. Students also stated that they liked having to answer "Quick Check Questions" after watching videos. Interviewees stated that these questions ensured they were "paying attention" and "understood concepts before moving on."

3. **Multimodal, scaffolded instruction.** Several students mentioned that Edgenuity helped them better understand complex content because key information and tasks were explained using a wide array of instructional formats (e.g., video, graphics, audio). As a 7th-grade student explained, "Edgenuity presented information in a lot of different ways. This made the material I was learning come to life." Students also found the assistive tools within the online environment to be beneficial. As one 10th-grade student noted, "I liked how this class incorporated different ways of learning. You could take notes, watch videos of instructors working out examples, and also listen to explanations of material." Video captions and transcripts gave students another way to process ideas communicated within the audio and video. The tool bar enabled students to highlight and annotate important information and the glossary helped to clarify word definitions. Students stated that the eNotes feature was particularly useful because it helped them summarize key ideas in their own words.

4. **Self-regulation.** According to interviewees, Edgenuity Courseware empowered students to take charge of their learning and work more productively. Students liked that the Edgenuity Course Map showed them their exact progress in the program and what lessons and activities they were expected to complete. Students appreciated being able to control their time and pacing in the program. One student remarked, "It is pretty easy to miss a concept in class. I liked that if you missed something in Edgenuity, you could just rewatch the video." Another 7th-grade student noted, "I liked that I could always go back to the vocabulary section. The glossary was like having my own private encyclopedia."

Similarly, students reported being able to spend more time on difficult content rather than study previously mastered material. As one 7th-grade student stated, "Edgenuity allowed me to skip through stuff I already knew and focus on what I really wanted to practice. This was better than in other classes where things can just move really slowly." Students also noted that Edgenuity Courseware made them more aware of different strategies used to approach learning tasks. A 7th-grade student commented, "Edgenuity made me think about how I study. I now realize that I learn best when I take clear notes while watching videos. It also taught me that I need to take time to go slow, pay attention, and take breaks when needed."

5. **Formative feedback.** Several students mentioned that Edgenuity Courseware provided actionable feedback to help address misconceptions. As a student in the Economics class observed, "When you answer a problem incorrectly in Edgenuity, the program doesn't just tell you the correct answer. It forces you to go back online and to explain why an answer choice is correct. It does a good job of making you pay attention."

6. **Improved student motivation.** Students stated that Edgenuity's learning management system and content had a positive impact on their motivation and self-esteem. A 7th-grade student noted, "Every time I logged on, I could track my progress and achievement. I loved being able to see my actual grade, overall grade, and the percentage of the course that I completed, as well as how far I was behind. It really motivated me to try harder and learn." Other students noted that the additional online practice boosted their confidence. As a 7th-grade student noted, "After using Edgenuity, I feel more confident. I know I can always go back and review my notes. I can practice some of the skills Dr. Farmer taught me." Other students said that the program was empowering. A student in the Economics class commented, "I feel really good that I was able to manage my classroom work and my workload on Edgenuity."

Conclusion

During the 2016-2017 school year, 7th and 10th grade students at Mt. Everett Regional School demonstrated content mastery using Edgenuity's Social Studies Grade 7 and Economics Grade 10 courses. Data indicate that, on average, students completed the large majority of activities in their courses and mastered lesson content. Results also showed that students in Dr. Farmer's classes outperformed their peers in the state.

One-on-one interviews with students revealed a high level of satisfaction with Edgenuity Courseware. According to interviewees, Edgenuity Courseware was well-designed to facilitate deeper learning, with components such as clear lesson structure, scaffolded instruction, and formative feedback. In addition, respondents indicated that the program boosted confidence and motivation.

Growing interest in technology in the classroom prompted the school to pilot Edgenuity Courseware with 7th and 10th grade students. Due to the program's success and Dr. Farmer's own research, school leaders at Mt. Everett Regional School are now considering how to increase the number and frequency of classes using this blended learning model.