Case Study
Kingman Academy of Learning

KINGMAN, AZ

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Can a group of virtual teachers reengage students in learning?

Challenge: A district wants to make learning more relevant, meaningful, and authentic for students.

Solution: Edgenuity Instructional Services virtual teachers reignite students' interest in learning.

Outcome: 100 percent of students completed their elective course, with an average overall grade of 86 percent.

School Demographics

Caucasian	81%
Hispanic	12%
Multiracial	3%
African American	2%
Asian	2%
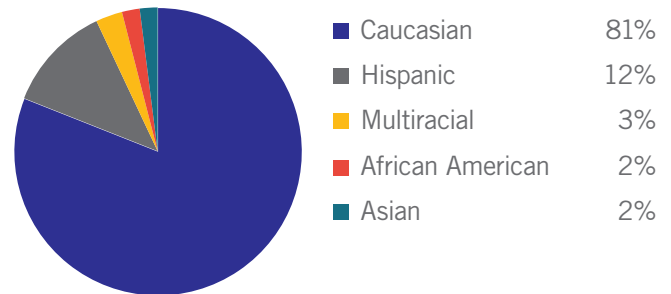
Background

Located 195 miles northwest of Phoenix, Kingman Academy of Learning (KAOL) serves 1,500 students in preschool through grade 12. In 2012, the district noticed that a small group of its high school students were disengaging from classroom learning. To reengage students in school, the district wanted to offer career and general elective courses that would help awaken students' interest in school. District leaders decided to turn to online learning as a solution.

The district sought an online learning provider that would not only offer a diverse array of engaging elective courses, but could also provide highly qualified virtual teachers. KAOL selected Edgenuity because of the company's track record of creatively engaging at-risk students and improving their academic outcomes.

Reframing School Learning

Partnering with Edgenuity Instructional Services, KAOL school leadership recognized that it would need to reexamine how it delivered instruction. The top-two priorities: courses that reflect student interests and teachers adept at rebuilding student confidence.

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MICHAEL SUCHOWIERSKI | ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Edgenuity Research

"We knew that conducting business as usual would lead to more failure for our already struggling students," said Assistant Principal Michael Suchowierski. "Edgenuity helped us see that we needed to come up with innovative yet practical solutions that would reengage students by addressing their unique learning interests and needs."

Suchowierski conducted interviews with students to pinpoint their unique career goals, interests, and study preferences. Based on these conversations, KAOL offered animation, business, computer science, digital arts, engineering design, entrepreneurship, game design, Latin, personal finance, and sociology courses to 20 high school students. Courses were taught in a computer lab 95 minutes a day, five days a week.

Building Confidence and Establishing Relationships

KAOL staff also decided to focus on strengthening relationships between teachers and students. Many of the at-risk students had been repeatedly told of their academic deficits. This constant drumbeat of criticism contributed to student insecurity and disengagement. Edgenuity Instructional Services wanted to create a different environment—one where students felt unconditionally supported, successful, and respected.

With the help of Edgenuity Instructional Services, KAOL created a multilayer academic support team. In the computer lab, KAOL staff focused on building students' self-regulatory skills. They set goals and worked one-on-one with students to cultivate a growth mindset—the belief that one can become good at something through effort and hard work. Suchowierski noted, "We wanted to teach students that their brains are like muscles that get stronger with exercise. We wanted to show students that it's okay to make mistakes. We wanted to make sure students understood that learning is a process and that they are capable of being successful in school."

Edgenuity Instructional Services teachers worked with students virtually to bolster their academic skills. Virtual teachers modeled learning and retaught material as needed. They developed customized projects tailored to each student's unique needs. For example, when a student interested in graphic novels took a digital arts course, the Edgenuity teacher coached him to create a digital comic book for his final project. "When you give students the chance to take courses that are relevant to what they want to do in life, they become motivated to learn," said Suchowierski. "I saw students who were behind in coursework do a complete 180 after taking an Edgenuity elective course. They finished course work on time, mastered subject material, and earned better grades.

Data helped drive this success. Edgenuity virtual instructors pulled reports to determine whether students were on pace, when they last logged on, and their grades. Reports were used to pinpoint student success, identify knowledge gaps, and target communication to students. Edgenuity virtual instructors kept KAOL administrators and staff informed of students' assessment grades and course progress. Together, Edgenuity virtual instructors and KAOL staff reviewed student achievement and discussed targeted remediation and enrichment strategies.

"We recognized that technology alone wasn't going to spark student engagement; we needed to bolster students' intrinsic motivation," said Eric Lillis, Director of Curriculum. "In collaboration with Edgenuity virtual instructors, we were able to come up with proactive strategies that effectively met students' academic and behavioral needs."

Results

Over the course of the program, school leaders noticed a transformation in students. "Students' confidence, interest in learning, and academic achievement soared," said Lillis. When elective course usage data were analyzed, results revealed students completed 100 percent of their courses with an overall average grade of 86 percent.

Table 1. Kingman Academy of Learning Edgenuity Students Elective Course Usage Data

August 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014

Kingman Academy of Learning	Total Students	Average Overall Grade	Percentage of Courses Completed
Electives	20	86%	100%

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ERIC LILLIS | DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM