

Cunningham Elementary Gives Students the Building Blocks for the Future with EasyTech®

EasyTech saves teachers time, teaches technology skills, and reinforces the core curriculum

Innovation: Using skills developed and honed with EasyTech, fourth-graders create technology projects to reinforce their core subject learning.

Solution: EasyTech

DISTRICT PROFILE:

10,692 students in
20 schools

White
31.6%

Black
21.1%

Hispanic
45.3%

Asian /
Pacific Islander
1.7%

American Indian /
Alaskan Native
.3%

SCHOOL PROFILE

391 students in
19 classes

White
19.6%

Black
19.6%

Hispanic
59.8%

Asian /
Pacific Islander
1.0%

District Profile

Cunningham Elementary is a center-city school within the Vineland Public School District in Vineland, New Jersey. Serving grades 1-4 (and grade 5, starting in September 2006), Cunningham has nearly 400 students in 19 classrooms.

Vineland Public School District has one of the largest Metropolitan Area Networks in the country, connecting Cunningham Elementary and all schools in the district, as well as local utilities and public buildings. Cunningham's technology team seeks to use this state-of-the-art technological framework to teach students to find, evaluate, and use information—in an effort to instill in students the value of lifelong learning.

All Vineland students in the elementary grades develop basic skills in technology by using computers to attain the core curriculum content standards. At Cunningham Elementary, all students visit the computer lab, which has 30 computers and a dedicated staff, on a regular basis.

Classified as an Abbott district, or “poorer urban district”, by the 1990 Abbott v Burke Supreme Court ruling, Vineland School District has an additional responsibility to

ensure that its diverse student body receives a thorough and efficient education. Many of Cunningham's students don't have access to computers at home, making it even more important that they develop the necessary technology skills at school.

The Challenge

When it comes to teaching technology skills, the primary challenge faced by teachers at Cunningham Elementary is time—something that teachers have less and less of each year. Many teachers simply don't have the time to think about how to integrate technology into curriculum. And with a new seven-day schedule rotation at Cunningham, students come to the computer lab only once every seven days, instead of once every five. That means Daina Karol, Computer Literacy Teacher at Cunningham, has to teach the same curriculum in fewer class periods.

The EasyTech Solution

Between the standards-based curriculum and the easy-to-use management system, EasyTech by Learning.com is helping Cunningham teachers be more efficient so students gain essential technology skills. EasyTech, the proven online technology literacy curriculum for grades K-8, supports



7_06_v1.et

21st Century skill attainment while reinforcing core curriculum learning objectives. “EasyTech helps make sure we are covering core curriculum skill lessons and that students really understand it,” explains Karol. “So even though we have less time, with EasyTech we are using our time to the maximum.”

EasyTech's online management system made it easy for Karol to plan technology-rich instruction, align lessons with state and national standards, and evaluate and report on student progress. Enrolling students and setting up classes was quick and easy, which Karol especially appreciated in light of the many other things going on at the beginning of the school year. “Without wasting time, we were able to get right into using the lessons,” says Karol.

Karol also found the EasyTech Gradebook very handy. Just one of the many types of reports EasyTech offers, the Gradebook shows students' scores on each curriculum item they've been assigned. “The Gradebook is a very useful and visual tool, because sometimes it's difficult to assess technology skills. It's good to have an objective score for students on each particular lesson,” shares Karol.

Results

It is EasyTech's ready-to-use, scoped and sequenced technology curriculum that allows Karol to more efficiently teach technology skills while reinforcing core curriculum. The computer lab reinforces the students' regular science and social studies curriculum with technology-based projects that go along with what they're doing in their classes. “EasyTech makes it easy to pull a lesson that correlates to what I'm teaching,” Karol says.

For an instructional tool to work, students have to use it—which was no problem with EasyTech. “Students loved it from the start. It was very animated and students enjoyed the interactivity. They would ask to use EasyTech when they

came into the lab,” shares Karol.

Among the skills students developed in the lab are spreadsheet and graphing skills. Students used EasyTech's Spreadsheet Basics and Graphing in Spreadsheets curriculum and did several graphing projects, culminating in an Excel spreadsheet on weather patterns. “EasyTech lessons used the same vocabulary and reinforced the skills students were using to do their projects,” shares Karol. These skills are especially essential as Cunningham's students prepare to move on to middle school. “As students move into middle school where science fairs and science projects become more important, we've given them the tools to share information,” explains Karol.

In their fourth-grade social studies class, students study the state of New Jersey. In the computer lab, students create a presentation on the state. Students use the Internet for research, use keyboarding and word processing skills to write a personal account of their home state, and use presentation skills to create a presentation they share with their classmates. This end-of-year project combines the various technology skills students have developed throughout the year—all while reinforcing the content from their core subject classes.

With EasyTech, Karol is winning the ongoing battle to do more in less time. “I was feeling stressed for time,” admits Karol, “but EasyTech reinforces what I'm teaching, and provides another opportunity for students to practice their skills so I can make sure the lessons are covered and the students are acquiring the necessary skills.”

“Computers and children are a perfect fit,” explains Karol. “Technology at the primary levels is the building block that we need to establish for the upper grades. We have to give students essential skills, good habits, and a vocabulary at a young age.” EasyTech is helping Karol do just that, despite the time limitations she faces.

