

CASE STUDY

Giving At-Risk Students the Opportunity to Get Back on Track

Los Angeles County Office of Education, California

Challenge

The unique student population at Camp Afflerbaugh-Paige, a juvenile probation camp, required an intense credit recovery program that enabled educators to meet each student's needs.

Goals

The school needed a reputable credit recovery program with a record of achievement in implementing credit recovery options for high school students, as they are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). This was particularly critical for the students at Paige High School for whom the goal is to transition back into their respective communities.

Solution

Apex Learning's digital curriculum has enabled Paige High School to provide intensive remediation and efficiently implement a systematic method for issuing credits, both partial and full, according to each student's needs.

Results

Paige High School has used Apex Learning for their Achieving Recovery of Credits (ARC) program for four years, providing a personalized learning environment that supports and motivates their at-risk student population. Principal Ray Donahue emphasizes that "from July 2016 to April 2017, Paige High School students successfully completed 152 academic courses. As a result we have also seen an increase in high school diploma-based graduates."

District Profile

- LACOE is the largest educational agency in the nation
- Supports 80 public school districts
- Over 1,100 incarcerated and at-risk youth receive specialized instruction

School Profile

- 115 Students
- Grades 7 - 12
- Hispanic: 73%
- African American: 23.5%
- White: 1.7%
- Asian: 1.7%
- American Indian/Alaskan Native: <1%
- Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander: <1%
- Two or More Races: <1%
- ELL: 29%



Addressing the Challenge

Camp Afflerbaugh-Paige houses male wards ages 13 to 18 serving sentences of 6 to 18 months. The average student at Paige High School is two academic years behind his peers in traditional high schools and requires intensive credit recovery. LACOE's Division of Student Programs sought a digital curriculum that could provide an advanced credit recovery process prescriptive to each individual student's needs.

"Many of the students are in desperate need of intense, core academic credit recovery and some need elective recovery of credits," says Mark McKinley, the ARC (Achieving Recovery of Credits) instructor who has been involved with the Apex Learning implementation for over three years. "Apex Learning meets their individualized academic recovery needs."

One of the main challenges is implementing a systematic method for issuing various credit needs (0.5 to 5.0 credits) based on each student's academic requirements. Students arrive at Camp Afflerbaugh-Paige with a spotty academic past and it takes time to demonstrate attendance at previous schools and then validate previous earned credits. Once validated, students requiring partial credit or full credit are able to enroll in Apex Learning and quickly be entered into the ARC system.

Motivated Students, Empowered Teachers

Students, teachers, and para-educators have responded enthusiastically to the Apex Learning LACOE ARC process. Apex Learning enables teachers to monitor students' results, identify learning gaps, and point out where each student should focus before retaking a quiz.

Students are motivated by immediately seeing the results from their adaptive assessments. When they complete their hours or credits and then watch the teacher input those results into the database, they actually see evidence of their academic work and the reward of successfully completing a previously failed class. Students are now inquiring more about college and university program offerings, and some are even taking online college courses in conjunction with Los Angeles City College.

A Second Chance for At-Risk Students

"The 'best practices' are really the best practices for our student clientele," explains McKinley. "We took the time to truly understand the academic needs of our adjudicated students — the socio-emotional frustrations they are caught up in. After all ... these are just kids. They do not fully comprehend the consequences of their immature actions, and these childish actions should not have permanent, detrimental consequences."

Contact

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"The end results we here at LACOE/DSP are looking for starts with the best interests of our students!"

"Providing Apex Learning for our ARC credit recovery program is the academic life preserver these educationally disregarded children need. Thank-you on behalf of our children for your continuing educational vision."

Mark McKinley

ARC Program Instructor,
Afflerbaugh-Paige
High School