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### **Online tutoring program enhances students' skills Students see an average gain of one whole instructional grade level in math**

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Primary Topic Channel: [Virtual schooling / Distance Learning](#)

In 2006, the Buena Vista School District in Saginaw, Mich., had a population of middle school students who were struggling in math and English and needed summer school instruction. The district began searching for a tutoring program that would help students in grades six through eight improve their skills in these subjects. However, Buena Vista officials also wanted a partner that would take a unique approach to learning--encouraging and inspiring students' success beyond simply an after-school program.

Three years later, after the success of the Champions Buena Vista summer school program, the district has signed on with Champions to provide its newest academic program, Champions Online Tutoring. The online tutoring program was tasked with developing the math skills of students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

Thanks in part to the success of the summer program, and the strong relationships it established with the district and local families, in January 2009 Champions debuted its newest national academic offering, Champions Online Tutoring, at Buena Vista's Ricker Middle School. Buena Vista hosted a six-week, 30-hour online math tutoring program, during which students logged in to sessions in the school computer lab. Equipped with headsets and the Champions interactive web portal, students completed lessons and communicated--through verbal discussions, instant messaging, or a virtual whiteboard--with a live tutor.

Champions Online Tutoring provides one tutor for every four students. Lessons are designed to meet individual students' needs, identified via a computer adaptive pretest that pinpoints students' skill gaps and areas of strength. Pretest results are compiled to determine individualized learning plans. Students work through the assigned lessons and are able to move on in their learning plans once the instructor feels the students have mastered the content.

Buena Vista enrolled 48 students in the winter session and will run the program again in the summer and fall. Because the program is customized to each individual student's skill level, the program was and will continue to be offered to students in need of academic intervention as well as those students looking for accelerated learning in math.

## Results

Pretest assessments administered to Buena Vista students found the average student's instructional level to be at fourth grade. After six weeks and 32 hours of math instruction in two areas, Numbers & Operations and Concepts & Applications, students completed the post-test assessment to measure progress in each area. Buena Vista students achieved an average increase of one instructional grade level over the course of the program--bringing the group from a fourth to a fifth grade math level.

Additional results included:

- Eighth grade students demonstrated an average 33-point increase between their pre- and post-tests in Numbers & Operations. The average increase between pre- and post-tests in Concepts & Applications was 34 points.
- Seventh grade students showed an average 14-point increase in Numbers & Operations between pre- and post-test assessments. Concepts & Applications showed an average 16-point increase.
- Sixth graders showed an average 42-point increase in Numbers & Operations. Concepts & Applications showed an average increase of 24 points.

## Beyond test results

When asked about the improvements seen as a result of the Champions online tutoring programs, Deb Rosebush, grant facilitator with the Buena Vista School District, remarked that the programs have given the students and teachers a renewed interest in education and teaching.

"The students have experienced a connection between learning and fun, using new technologies and activities that have inspired them to continue learning," said Rosebush. She added, "Teachers have observed the students' positive response to the new online tutoring programs and have been inspired to find new ways to approach their students in the classroom." Rosebush also noted a significant increase in the number of teachers interested in participating in the Champions programs for 2009.

Throughout the community, parents have acknowledged marked improvements in their children's exam scores and a revived commitment to schoolwork. Students have expressed gratitude for learning math solutions they could not master during the regular school year, and for helping to make learning fun. When asked what they would tell other students about participating in the Champions online program, one Ricker Middle School student replied, "I would tell them it is easy and fun, and you get to learn new subjects and review how much you know about math."

The Buena Vista School District attributes the success of the Champions program to the company's dedication to students' needs and constant revision of the program to meet those needs. "These programs have consistently met and exceeded the expectations of our district," said Sharron Jenkins Norman, superintendent of the Buena Vista School District. "It is assuring to know that a company cares about the district and the needs of the children, and that the services are personalized to the students' needs, while maintaining excellence in execution."

## Links:

Buena Vista School District

[http://linux.bvsd.us/website/?page\\_id=41](http://linux.bvsd.us/website/?page_id=41)

Champions

<http://www.discoverchampions.com>