

Illinois school system implements new digital math textbooks

New Lenox School District 122 using Math Techbook from Discovery Education

The New Lenox School District 122 serves 5,400 pre-K through grade 8 students in 12 schools, and is located about 30 miles outside Chicago. The district has been noted for its high levels of achievement, with an average of 85 percent of students meeting or exceeding the Illinois Learning Standards in each of the last nine years. Lenox administrators attribute this success to a rigorous curriculum that includes reading, writing and math, as well as instruction in art, music and technology skills.

As part of the effort to maintain a high level of rigor, as well as to meet the Common Core State Standards and to prepare students for PARCC assessments, Lenox administrators were recently looking for new tools to use in middle school math instruction. "We wanted to find something that would help us develop more inquiry-based lessons, teach higher-order thinking skills and incorporate real-world problems in our math classes," says Marianne Cucci, director of curriculum for the district. "For all of those reasons, we select-

ed the new Math Techbook from Discovery Education, and began using it in all of our math classes this year in grades 6 through 8."

Math Techbook from Discovery Education is a series of middle and high school digital textbooks that uses an inquiry-based approach to math instruction, and is designed to be core curriculum. Techbooks use a variety of multimedia content in a discover-practice-apply cycle that balances conceptual learning, procedural fluency and application to real-world problems so that students gain lasting math proficiency. Students can access dynamic content, interactives, videos, digital tools and game-like activities. Math Techbook includes multiple pathways to learn content for students of all abilities and learning styles. And teachers can collect evidence of student progress instantly and access comprehensive resources, student activities and model lessons in one easy-to-navigate dashboard.

"We liked how engaging the digital platform is," says Cucci. "As students discover, practice and apply these new skills, they are



"The multimedia content relates to real-life situations, so students aren't just working on a page of problems in a textbook, they are learning why these problems are important."

given opportunities to discover math around them. The multimedia content relates to real-life situations, so students aren't just working on a page of problems in a textbook, they are learning why these problems are important by working on real-world examples."

Professional development has been a key part of the district's implementation. "Using a digital curriculum is just as new for teachers as it is for the students," says Cucci. "So we had our teachers work together to explore how to use the tools to develop lessons. We also had a trainer visit from Discovery Education, who did a great job explaining how to utilize the Techbook to develop lessons, as well as to foster critical thinking, collaboration and creative thinking. Discovery Education takes a hands-on, engaging and interactive approach to professional development."

This is just the beginning stage of implementation, but Cucci says she is confident about the future. "Math Techbook represents an opportunity for us to move forward with technology. Our

kids are digital natives, and this type of tool is more engaging for them. The multimedia content in the Techbook is going to help us reach the variety of different learning modalities of our students," she says. "In addition, they will be using a digital platform on the PARCC assessments, so this is also great preparation for those. In the long term, we believe that our students are going to have a stronger conceptual understanding of math concepts because of this high level of engagement found in the Discovery Education Math Techbook."

Join us for the formal launch of Math Techbook on January 8, 2015, at 1:00 p.m. EST. Register for the live webcast and learn more at Discoveryeducation.com/math2015.

