ACCELERATE EDUCATION

Independent Study
White Paper

....

Overview

Our independent study program is designed to serve students who need independent, self-paced, standards-based courses. Our program allows students to progress at their own pace, and is intended to keep students on track for graduation. Our goal is to allow students to earn credits in an open enrollment system that is not tied to a fixed schedule or calendar. We believe there are some essential ingredients to a successful online independent study program, and they are outlined in this guide.

Philosophy

- Sound pedagogical practices have been implemented in the instruction delivered to the students, and has been done with a map to the standards.

- Motivation for a student in their educational career can be a challenge. Motivating factors within our program include, but are not limited to:

    » The flexible nature of our program so students can work anytime and anywhere

    » The ability to work at a pace suitable to the student

    » Engagement through video and multimedia

    » Instant feedback on multiple formative assessments throughout every lesson, not just on summative assessments

- Students are able to demonstrate a mastery of material based on competency and therefore move on to material that they truly need to learn. By allowing retakes on formative assessments, students can demonstrate mastery as well as receive instant feedback.

- Students move at a pace suitable to their skills as well as relieving the stress of a physical calendar.

- Content, Instruction, Navigation, and Assessment are presented consistently in every lesson in every unit.

- Although courses are self-paced, teachers are critical to the success of a student. Instructional staff provides support and encouragement to a population that has often felt abandoned by their teachers.

- If a student has had difficulty with the subject matter in the past, it is essential that the Learning Management System (LMS), presents no obstacles to student learning, and in fact, be an enhancement to their learning experience. Our LMS was designed with that in mind. It is easy to navigate, and provides for an enjoyable student experience.

Lesson Structure

- Each semester includes 6 modules with lessons in each module.

- Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction are implemented in every lesson, and there is a consistency in the material. Each page and lesson is such that students will intuitively know what to do next.

- Each Lesson and Activity has an estimated time to complete before the Lesson or Activity is attempted.

- Assessments include Formative Quizzes, Summative Exams and End of Semester Exams. These assessments are comprised of computer scored questions.

- Questions and choices are randomized, so cheating will be at bay and students will not be memorizing answer choices for a retake - they will need to know the material.

- Our standard for mastery is 70%. Lessons are set to release upon mastery. These settings can be changed by each school to be appropriate for your circumstances.

- Language Arts courses include writing assignments, which are teacher-graded.