Certiport IC³

And IC³ World Cup energize students to acquire digital literacy skills and credentials

Eastern High School

Location:
Louisville, KY

Total Enrollment:
2,150

Enrollment in Program:
216 (2009)

Success Metrics:

- Preparation for college and beyond
- Readiness indicator for advanced computing courses
- Third-party proof of skills

The annual team competition is a 'big motivator' for Eastern High School students to earn a global certification en route to college and more advanced computer courses

CHALLENGE

Eastern High School is Kentucky's largest high school and also one of its most prestigious. Located in Louisville, the school's mission is to prepare students for higher education. Eastern High also offers students a robust menu of computer courses---two years of which is needed to graduate.

"If you don't have basic computer literacy, you're not going to make it, especially moving into college and up through the business world," said James Coomes, one of Eastern's technology teachers.

Since 2005, the school has employed Certiport Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³®) to develop and validate students' computer skills before moving them onto more advanced computer courses. Although successful, the school's three basic computing instructors wanted to find new ways to get students excited about earning an internationally recognized digital literacy certification.

SOLUTION

Last year, Eastern High's basic computing instructors decided to register the school to participate in Certiport's global team competition. IC³ World Cup recognizes group efforts to develop digital skills and achieve IC³ certification. Though the school's three sections of the IC³ courses signed up as a single team, the instructors found value in using the Cup as means to push each other to new heights.

"We're very competitive, and we feed off each other," said John Lanham, the school's IC³ and Microsoft Office certification test coordinator.

The IC³ World Cup's athletic team imagery resonated well with students of Louisville's sports-infused community. Technology teacher Dr. Terry Holmes said his and his colleagues' background in coaching sports made bringing competitive enthusiasm into the classroom easy.

"We found that the same spirit of competition carried on into our teaching practices," he said. "We documented and bragged to each other regarding our success and collegially prodded one another or 'one upped' each other every chance we could get."

Lanham said students even got into the act, sometimes boasting to classmates that their section's achievements were better than another's. Intense inter-classroom rivalry was balanced by the instructors' desire for constant improvement as a single team.

"While we competed with one another, we realized that we are a team, so we coached and encouraged one another by comparing successful strategies for teaching and evaluation," said Holmes.

Lanham agrees: "If one of them is doing a little bit better job, they were more than happy to teach me. But at the end of the day, we look at our numbers, our pass rates, and we take pride in that."

Coomes said the instructors always kept the number one priority in sight. "Our main goal is the betterment of these kids. We want these students to succeed, and the way we can do that is to prepare them for these tests."

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>
> – James Coomes
> Technology Instructor
> Eastern High School

RESULT

As students in each class began excelling in the IC³ World Cup competition, they also began to take note of their collective performance.

"We've been doing quality work for three years, but it hasn't been until only recently, that we began gauging ourselves against other schools," Lanham said.

Students and instructors regularly checked the IC³ World Cup Web site, www.certiport.com/ic3cup, and liked what they saw. "Seeing our name on that Top 5 list every week definitely got the kids going. It was a big motivator," said Coomes. "If you can find a way to make things competitive, they're going to find an interest and work harder for you."

Not only did the school win the 2008 IC³ World Cup for its division, but Lanham, Coomes and Holmes also certified 144 students at a whopping 95% pass rate.

After earning top honors in IC³ World Cup, the team was recognized in front of their peers during a school-wide assembly. At one point in the ceremony, the school principal invited any students who had earned or were in the process of earning Certiport IC³ to stand. About one-third of the audience stood.

"It was an awesome spectacle," said Lanham.

"So many times, athletic and academic teams seem to get the attention of teachers, students and the general public," Holmes added. "It was very rewarding to see computer and technology students recognized for their efforts and hard work."

For Lanham and the other instructors, IC³ World Cup has been an effective tool in helping engage students in earning a credential that lays a foundation for future success. "There are jobs being had by getting this certification," he said. "There's certainly a level of literacy that all people need in this global economy. And the IC³ curriculum helps provide that."

CERTIPORT®

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