



New e-Learning Software Scores Big with Virtual Schools and “At-risk”, Special Education, and Gifted Students

Editor Letter

New e-learning programs for grades 3-12 take advantage of broadband, multimedia, and online gaming techniques. The results among early adopters— virtual schools, remedial, accelerated and home schooled students—are impressive.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Glynlyon product lines — OdysseyWare and Switched-On Schoolhouse — have been steadily evolving their e-learning educational content and approach and have more than 900 schools and online academies as customers. • The newest wave of e-learning products is designed to complement traditional teaching. • E-learning is growing because of its ability to individualize the learning process and because of its accessibility, flexibility, and cost –effectiveness. • With any networked device becoming a source of text, audio, and video content, the delivery mechanisms for educational content are there. As costs go down and Internet access becomes even more ubiquitous throughout the world, e-learning curricula could potentially reach millions, if not billions, of future students from all walks of life. 	<p>“Since we started using OdysseyWare for kids with emotional and behavioral disorders in 2003, the results have been really phenomenal. It gives these kids a lot of self esteem. They are finally able to handle school at their ability level and at their pace. With this tool you can do individualized instruction more easily than if you have to teach to a whole classroom of kids with different needs.” —Jan McSorley, Special Education Technology Facilitator, Austin Independent Schools, Austin, Texas</p> <p>“Since implementing the Switched-On Schoolhouse curriculum seven years ago, we have experienced increases in concurrent enrollment of our juniors and seniors in college courses, college entrance exam scores, the number of students attending college and their G.P.A.s, and the retention of our students in college.” —Jerry Perdue, Principal, Boulevard Christian School, Muskogee, Oklahoma</p> <p>“e-learning is like the flight simulators used to train pilots; it is incredibly effective technology that, when used with classroom teaching and real-life experience, engages students who learn in different ways. For many children, the new e-learning curricula has been effective as no other teaching method has.” —Bob Campbell, CEO, Glynlyon Companies</p> <p>“School is no longer a function of place. It’s a thing you do.” —Jen Salta, Curriculum Director, OdysseyWare</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Editorial Ideas

Virtual Schools

A new group of virtual schools—within public, private, charter, home school, and parochial institutions—function as online learning communities, educating students who prefer to learn entirely through e-learning programs or who supplement classroom learning with courses taken online. The Center for Education Reform estimates that there are currently 147 online-only virtual charter schools in 18 states with 65,000 students enrolled. There are many more schools taking a hybrid approach, using online courses along with classroom instruction. Like virtual workers, these virtual students are taking advantage of various communications technologies, such as Web chat, network videoconferencing, instant messaging and email, to link with fellow students and teachers.

In the remote California towns of Quincy and Truckee, 10,000 students are enrolled in two different Web academies. There are currently 78,000 students in California enrolled in virtual schools. “We can’t build schools fast enough to keep up with demand,” said one school principal, who believes the virtual school trend will grow nationally to be significant in the next decade due to a combination of trends, including a dispersed, disparate, and growing student population and dissatisfaction with traditional schools.

“At-Risk” Students

At eScholar Academy, serving the far northern California counties, at-risk junior high and high school-aged students can succeed in obtaining their high school diploma or catching up to others in their schools prior to their return to a traditional classroom. These are kids who have had problems fitting in at school for a variety of reasons, young people who are at risk of falling through the cracks in the public school system. Beta testing the OdysseyWare curriculum with 20 students in the 2004-2005 academic year, academy dean Harold Vietti saw 15 students finish their courses effectively. About 60% come into the facility and the others work from home. Students also take traditional classroom courses and are each supervised by a licensed teacher.

According to Vietti, who recently received his Ph.D from USC in computer-aided instruction for at-risk kids, **“The evolution of technology has meant that there is now a division between what goes on in the outside world and what goes on in schools. Kids live in a fast food, fast information society. Yet when they walk into most schools they walk into a dialup world.”** Vietti has seen at-risk students excel in the interactive, multimedia, individualized OdysseyWare e-learning courses.



Special Education

In the Austin, Texas, Independent School District, Special Education teacher Glenna Billingsley has become a believer in e-learning after using OdysseyWare for her students over the past three years. Approximately 160 Special Education students each year have taken the OdysseyWare program in the Austin schools. Billingsley reports that the e-learning approach “takes the audience away” from students who have emotional outbursts so entire classes are not disrupted. Students with a long history of failure in the classroom experience “the first successful academic experience since kindergarten” and the ability to grasp and stay focused on the material and to progress quickly through lessons gives these students new self esteem.

The Home School Market

OdysseyWare and Switched On Schoolhouse e-learning curricula currently serve thousands of home schooled students throughout the U.S., Canada, the Pacific Rim, Africa, and Australia, bringing affordable, accessible, flexible courses in major subjects and electives for grades 3-12 to children in big cities, suburbs, and remote and rural areas.

The Glynlyon Learning Companies are dedicated to the development and adoption of effective modalities of learning through tools, curricula, multimedia techniques, and various delivery strategies designed to best educate students regardless of their learning styles. **OdysseyWare** provides an electronic curriculum for grades 3-12. **Alpha Omega Publications** provides Christian curriculum for grades kindergarten-12, including print and electronic options. **Smart** provides a Web-based school management solution uniquely tailored to reporting requirements of Arizona schools.

For more information, interviews with students, teachers, administrators, and Glynlyon company executives about the newest e-learning products and approaches please contact: Gene Knauer, Press Relations, Ralph Silver Associates, (510) 325-3482 gknauer@ralphsilverassociates.com