



East Chambers Junior High School, Chambers County, Texas

A Case Study on Motivating Students Using Practice Path™

Quick Facts

East Chambers Junior High School

School Enrollment: 375

Grade Levels: 5–8

District Enrollment: 1,168

Number of schools: 4

School Stats

Students receiving free
and reduced lunch: 55%

English language learners: 35%

Community: Rural

School Status: Recognized

Made AYP: Yes

Title I School/District: No

The Challenge

Educators face instructional challenges all the time: diverse classrooms, year-to-year transitions, student mobility. But summer school poses a special set of challenges—distracted students, small staffs, and limited class time, to name a few. Finding an instructional program that overcomes these obstacles, and provides engaging content for students with widely diverse skill levels, is yet another summertime challenge.

The Solution

At East Chambers Junior High School in Winnie, Texas, a Web-based program called Practice Path™ has emerged as a promising way to meet the needs of summer learners in the 1,200-student district, according to Lou Ann Rainey, the junior high's principal.

"After several years with another program, our teachers were ready for something new," Rainey said. *"They were very excited about Practice Path™."* Practice Path™ provides practice and skill-building content in math, reading, and science for grades 1–8. Students move independently through an intuitive interface that covers strands and skills linked to specific state standards, working on short "testlets" in traditional practice or game modes.

For the summer school students at East Chambers Junior High, Practice Path™ is linked to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, or TAKS. *"We have a camp during the last two weeks of school for students who did not pass TAKS,"* Rainey said. *"We used Practice Path™ for the TAKS camp and for our two-week summer school afterwards."* She added that Practice Path™ was selected for the pilot because the school was already using Measuring Up®, another standards-based instructional program from Peoples Education.

For summer school programs like the one at East Chambers, Practice Path™ makes it easy for time-pressed teachers to address the needs of students with diverse abilities. Once teachers enter their students in the system the program takes over, eliminating the need for teachers to create tests or enter assignments. Then a built-in "leveling" feature automatically adjusts the grade level and difficulty of content for each student based on performance. Easy-to-read reports allow teachers and administrators to monitor student progress.

"I love the feature of letting kids earn the opportunity to move into the game mode. It makes them work harder."

"The students are excited to get on Practice Path™."

The Results

After piloting Practice Path™ early in the summer, teachers at East Chambers Junior High said the program passed the most important test of any summer school program: student interest. *"It has good questions and the kids like it,"* reported Bonnie O'Quinn, who teaches sixth-grade math. *"The students are excited to get on it."* Rainey commented that the games help to motivate students.

Another aspect of the program appreciated by the teachers at East Chambers Junior High is that Practice Path™ engages students without being too easy. *"It holds students' interest and challenges them at the same time,"* reported Kellie Rogers, who teaches reading to students in grades 5–8. *"I love the feature of letting kids earn the opportunity to move into the game mode. It makes them work harder."*

Unlike other instructional programs that offer students a single avenue towards mastering a skill, Practice Path™ allows students to pursue multiple routes, which also was important to East Chambers's teachers.

"I like that each objective has multiple strands for the students to choose from, so they can find success in each objective," said Terry Edgerly, a fifth-grade math teacher.

"The program is difficult," Edgerly added, *"but this is what we need if we are going to achieve the scores we want."*

For more information about Practice Path™, please visit www.eathknowledge.com.