The Value of Integrating Adaptive Learning Programs in the School Curriculum by Jim Wheelin

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Math is integral part of any school curriculum, and one that many students struggle with. In the past, it was believed that students who didnâ€™t excel at the subject simply did not understand the material. Since lessons learned in math are the building blocks for future schooling, it doesnâ€™t take long for students to become lost in subsequent courses. With a better understanding of how children learn and the various styles that information is absorbed, we are now able to offer valuable tools that fill in the gaps, strengthen weaknesses in learning and promote confidence.

The Role of Adaptive Learning for Young Students

Adaptive learning is an educational method that integrates interactive teaching devices that are offered on computers. Since children learn in a variety of ways, these teaching devices are designed to foster how the child learns. This information is gathered from the responses that the student gives when filling out the initial questionnaire.Â

The learning devices include a combination of online math games and puzzles that are built around the individual student. In addition to the interactive games, a rewarding environment is created that offers motivation and encouragement for students to thrive. These lessons are not designed to replace the material being learned in class, but to further enhance the material. In fact, the interactivity comes at such a high value; it takes on the role of a human teacher or tutor.

More importantly is that the games and puzzles offered are not static. They encourage students to use critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as show their work and how they came to their particular answer. These virtual tools prompt students to actually learn the material and apply the information in real-world applications instead of just memorizing or clicking on answers. And since the interactive devices are intuitive and tailored toward the needs of the student, they continue to expand on the areas that the student lags in.

Recognizing Various Learning Styles

Computer-based learning is an important step forward, as it breaks away from the notion that the traditional, large-scale teaching approaches are the only way to learn. Not only can these techniques be applied to students who have difficulty understanding match concepts in the classroom, but also to help students challenge what they do know and practice their problem solving skills in a variety of applications. Children often find that theyâ€™re able to focus on the material at hand and absorb math concepts when they work in a fun and rewarding environment with fewer pressures and distractions.

When to Introduce Computer-Based LearningÂ

Adaptive learning can be introduced to children as young as age five. Math games and puzzles are the focus, as theyâ€™re the most engaging for young children. Unlike a classroom setting, there is no set pace to follow. The interactive games will focus on one concept and not introduce another one until the first lesson is learned. Concepts are exercised in many ways so that students are completely comfortable with the material.Â

When taking this small-step approach, students avoid the snowball effect that has them falling behind in math courses. Programs are available for both advanced and struggling students and vary

based on such factors as pacing, hints given and sequencing. The best part about adaptive learning is that it creates an engaging learning environment that doesnâ€™t sacrifice fun in the process. When children are able to balance both fun and education in one setting, theyâ€™re more likely to excel in school and be comfortable with new academic challenges.

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Jim Wheelin writes about many different educational topics for parents and kids. Jim is always keeping an eye out for the latest teaching techniques and tools, including where to learn more a about adaptive learning. He also likes to test out-of-the-box educational resources including http://www.dreambox.com/adaptive-learning.

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