2019

A Program Evaluation of Student and Teacher Perceptions of an Online Edgenuity High School Course Program in an Urban High School

Titinesha Llewellyn

William & Mary - School of Education, titillewellyn@gmail.com

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A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF AN ONLINE EDGENUITY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PROGRAM IN AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL

A Dissertation

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Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Titinesha Llewellyn

December 2018
A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF
AN ONLINE EDGENUITY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PROGRAM IN AN URBAN
HIGH SCHOOL

By

Titinesha Llewellyn

___________________________________________
Approved December 2018 by

___________________________________________
MEGAN TSCHANNEN-MORAN, PhD
Committee Member

___________________________________________
GENE ROCHE, EdD
Committee Member

___________________________________________
JAMES H. STRONGE, PhD
Chairperson of Doctoral Committee
Dedication

It takes a great level of endurance, patience, and love to support a person through the dissertation process. Thank you, Dean, for maintaining that level through the years.
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Abstract

This program evaluation is concerned with the value of online learning for academic student achievement as perceived by teachers and students. Online learning programs are becoming commonplace within traditional educational settings. These types of programs resolve a variety of educational issues related to equal access of curricula, funding, and quality. The current issue lies with educational institutions’ ability to implement these types of programs using research-based methods and strategies that enhance academic student achievement. This study initiates the research by identifying the perceptions of the stakeholder participants in the Edgenuity online learning program regarding graduation rates and other comparisons between Edgenuity graduates and non-Edgenuity graduates. The study captured these perceptions using student surveys, teacher interviews, and reports from the Edgenuity program and the district’s student information system. A pragmatic approach was used with mixed methods afforded by the use of the CIPP model from the Use Branch developed by Stufflebeam and Coryn. The data analysis process included the use of the Qualtrics survey program to administer and analyze the results from student surveys and coding to analyze the teacher interview responses. The study revealed that stakeholders perceived the Edgenuity program as satisfactory with suggested adjustments regarding the processes, practices, and procedures in an effort to make relevant and necessary changes for the future of the online program.
A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF AN ONLINE EDGENUITY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PROGRAM IN AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Online, virtual, and blended programs are becoming a key method of providing instruction to today’s youth. Various methods in use by districts and systems within the United States seek to identify the issues and dangers of administering these types of programs carelessly (Bolton, 2010). Districts latch onto online courses to provide education to students beyond what their budgets or systems otherwise allow, but care must be taken to define what is taught and learned: the curriculum. Many districts that use virtual programs appear to use a systems approach in implementing these online programs: “Systemic curriculum development is more effective than trial and error” (Oliva & Gordon, 2013, p. 31). With this approach, districts operate with an agreed set of curriculum development procedures and a model that outlines the process.

The aims of online K-12 education demonstrate an awareness of the necessity to prepare all students to enter society with an adequate education and independent learning skills (Community College Research Center [CCRC], 2011). The goals of this contemporary type of education are to provide extensive educational access to meet the needs of students and to provide an effective alternative to the traditional classroom setting (CCRC, 2011). The goals of online K-12 education vary depending on the model used (Staker, 2011). Within the computer-based module model, objectives might include utilizing online education programs to decrease high school dropout rates to below 10%, or a program goal might be to increase high school graduation rates to above 90%. 

2
Further, the goals of online programs targeting high-achieving students might include increasing enrollment in online dual-credit courses by 20% by a specific year.

The impact of online K-12 education on school structure depends on a few key factors: the population served; location of the program, whether on or off campus; and student outcome data (Xu & Jaggars, 2013). Models that seek to improve graduation rates target students that have not been successful in the traditional school setting, in either their academics or behavior or both (Xu & Jaggars, 2013). Providing this online alternative can result in decreased discipline infractions, increased standardized test pass rates, and improved graduation rates (Gemin & Watson, 2008). Based on the program design, students may take courses in a computer lab as part of their regular schedule, as part of an after-school online initiative at their school, in a facility for online learning such as a performance-learning center, or in a virtual high school (DiNapoli, 2012).

Online high school courses can address and solve many issues with which school districts have struggled in the past. In adopting these types of programs, schools must develop a sound plan for implementation and design based on the needs of the district. Because school districts must determine what is best for the entire school district versus specific schools, a systems approach is necessary (Oliva & Gordon, 2013). Whether purchasing the complete package from a vendor such as Pearson (e.g., GradPoint) or providing online classrooms with a live teacher (e.g., Blackboard), districts must review and evaluate the curriculum to gauge alignment to their goals and standards. They cannot assume that items they purchase from vendors will be provided ready for immediate use. Steps must be taken to ensure a viable curriculum of the quality desired and aligned with state guidelines, standards, and pacing.
In 2000, there were approximately 45,000 K-12 students in online programs in the United States; by 2010, there were in excess of 4 million students participating in some type of online learning system (Barbour & Mulcahy, 2008). Consequently, schools across the nation are inspecting new methods and evolving online methods to meet all children where they are and to promote an alternative learning platform for student achievement. In this regard, inquiry regarding the equality between online and traditional teaching methods suggests that the fast transition to online learning may inadvertently leave behind the good qualities that were evident in traditional learning settings.

K-12 institutions display a number of ways in which instruction can be offered to students. It is known that some children are audible learners whereas some thrive in situations involving visual stimulation for progressive learning. Therefore, it seems logical that having more choices in how educators may deliver content would be an inviting scenario for educators concerned about reaching all children. In general, there are four categories of delivery (Allen & Seaman, 2007), as depicted in Table 1.
Table 1

*Categories of K-12 Learning Delivery*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of course</th>
<th>Typical description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Courses devoid of online technology content, delivered in writing or orally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web facilitated</td>
<td>Courses that use web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Use a course management system or web pages to post syllabus and assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended/Hybrid</td>
<td>Courses that blend online and face-to-face delivery. Deliver a substantial proportion of the content online, typically use online discussions, and typically involve some face-to-face meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/Virtual</td>
<td>Courses for which most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically involve no face-to-face meetings.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**District Use of Online Programs**

In Sample City School (SCS) District (a pseudonym used throughout the dissertation to represent the actual school district), online programs were sought and initially adopted by 2009 (J. Bailey, personal communication, October 20, 2015). The district had a continuing need to decrease the dropout rate in a cost-effective manner. The only plan in place prior to the adoption of an online program called NovaNet was summer school, which was offered in the traditional classroom, face-to-face with a teacher over the summer break. SCS found that many students required more courses to graduate than a summer school session could provide. Unlike earlier summer school sessions in which students could enroll in a full-year course, SCS could offer only one semester course options due to an economic downturn. Students requiring one or more
courses to graduate generally did not return to school in the fall to complete the necessary courses to graduate. An online program appeared to be an appealing option for many reasons. The online program offered a variety of courses that could be facilitated by one teacher; one class could consist of 20 students taking different courses with one teacher facilitator. This arrangement helped with the funding issue. Students could enroll in all of the courses required to meet graduation requirements. With the primary goal being to graduate students within 4 years from their entry to ninth grade, an online program appeared to be a cost-effective measure. There was little research available regarding best practices for online learning and even less regarding its implementation; nevertheless, having gained experience with its initial adoption of the NovaNet program, SCS has since adopted another online program, Edgenuity, to better address the needs of students.

**Context.** Urban High School is an urban school within the Sample City School District in the Atlantic region of the State of Virginia. The school demographics shown in Table 2 display a district that is predominantly African American with Urban High demographics mirroring those of the district.
Table 2

Demographics of Sample City Schools and Urban High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>District%</th>
<th>Urban High%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-race</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Population                    | 20,286    | 1715        |


Graduation rates steadily increased over 3 years, thereby narrowing the dropout rate, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Sample City Schools and Urban High School 4-Year Graduation and Dropout Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Graduation rate</th>
<th>Dropout rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division%</td>
<td>Urban High%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The current free or reduced-price lunch rate for the entire district is 58.12%, with 44% of the Urban High School population’s receiving free or reduced-price lunch. Urban High School maintains a school learning plan that uses Edgenuity for Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) remediation, credit recovery, and initial credit purposes. Edgenuity
replaced their use of NovaNet; however, it serves the same purpose and includes a valuable upgrade allowing for accessibility via the Internet. In the learning plan, students that struggle have the ability to work at a self-pace through Edgenuity to remediate for a variety of SOL subjects. Students that have failed previous courses can recover course credit via Edgenuity, and students that transfer to the school from districts that have a different block schedule are able to take courses for the first time through Edgenuity with a certified teacher. This program has been adapted for use within the school’s learning plan to keep students on track to graduate within the usual four years for their cohort.

**Program Description**

The Edgenuity program is currently in place at Urban High School to assist students who otherwise might not finish on time to graduate within the given 4 cohort years allowed for high school students. Edgenuity is managed by the SCS Department of Information Literacy under the direction of the Director of Research, Planning, and Evaluation. Each high school in the district has an assigned coordinator for the Edgenuity program. The program serves many purposes and is used in various ways to meet the learning needs of students. Ultimately, the program was adopted by the school district to reduce the high school dropout rate by allowing students to recover courses previously failed while remaining on track with current courses required for graduation. For example, despite failing English 9 while in the ninth grade, Student A can move on to the 10th grade and takes the necessary 10th-grade English, math, science, and history courses. Student A is allowed to continue with 10th-grade coursework and retake the English 9 course through Edgenuity. Student A can access this course online at school, at home, at the library, or wherever there is Internet access.
During the 2017-2018 school year, the On Time Graduation team, along with the Edgenuity team, met regularly to discuss areas of improvement. One of the concerns was keeping students engaged in the program and motivated to complete the course in a timely manner. The two teams discussed the following issues:

- how best to allow students to move through the program,
- redefining the role of the Edgenuity teacher (facilitator), and
- whether or not Edgenuity courses are a good fit for all students.

**Online learning within the district strategic plan.** Sample City Schools is dedicated to online learning and demonstrates this through its strategic plan (Sample City Schools, 2015). The plan includes the following key initiative: “Identifying the key skills necessary to successfully navigate on-line learning systems, assessment systems, support systems, financial and business systems and creating a self-assessment tool to identify areas for training” (Sample City Schools, 2015, p. 14). In the 2016-2017 school year the district strengthened its support of online learning with the 1:1 initiative that provided every high school student with a Chromebook.

**Origins of online programs in the district.** The Edgenuity program was not the first online program attempted by the district. The first was called NovaNet; it was adopted for the same purposes as Edgenuity but had one limiting problem: it was not web based. The NovaNet program required software to be installed on the school’s computers. Students could complete online coursework only in the school building. This limitation was the reason for the switch to Edgenuity. Edgenuity is web based, does not require preloaded software, and allows students, teachers, and parents to access it from anywhere with an Internet connection. Having a program that delivers instruction
without restraint allows students more time to work with courses than the school day provides.

The Edgenuity program had to be purchased with a specific number of site licenses. Prior to the purchase, it was necessary to consider the number of staff, the type of staff, and other resources and materials required to run the program appropriately. In the initial phase of implementation, staff were trained by Edgenuity trainers to efficiently facilitate the program. The staff then trained students in using the program. The staff met to set the expectations, guidelines, and criteria for use, as well as the process for acknowledging completion and credit recovery. Once this task was completed, the team of guidance counselors, teachers, and administrators identified students for the program, with the counselors’ enrolling students, teachers’ facilitating the program, administrators’ overseeing the process, and teachers’ and counselors’ working together to update the completed grades to the students’ transcripts for credit recovery. The team of teachers, counselors, and administrators were expected to employ an evaluation system to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve the program overall. As a result of this program, students were expected to complete necessary courses required for graduation and recover failed courses or courses missed during their 4-year cohort track. Avoiding retention keeps students motivated and on track to graduate within the given 4 years. Students then have better postsecondary options for success, thereby allowing students to become productive members of their communities and allowing for the public schools in this community to remain accredited.

The district uses Edgenuity in a variety of ways, such as online tutoring or remediation for a demonstrated area of need. Students missing significant material and requiring reteaching for a subject in which they are currently enrolled can be placed on
Edgenuity to recoup missed information. Students also can use Edgenuity to strengthen their knowledge base with a given subject to remain on level with coursework while enrolled in the same subject in a traditional setting.

Edgenuity also is used within the district as an instructional tool for a nontraditional setting. The district offers education to students that cannot attend the traditional high school classroom due to various reasons, such as disciplinary, medical, and/or special needs and situations. Some students attend an alternative school for those serving suspensions or being punished for community charges; these students then complete their courses using Edgenuity. The teacher determines placement in the specific subject area in Edgenuity after reviewing the situation through which the student’s instruction ceased in the traditional setting. Other students that are homebound due to medical issues are assigned a homebound teacher and may have a blend of teacher instruction and Edgenuity courses. A homebound coordinator determines what is best for the student and places the student accordingly.

Sample City Schools maintains a high school online program alternative to the traditional setting to assist students that request a nontraditional setting; this too is delivered via Edgenuity. Students choose this option for a variety of reasons, such as a desire to graduate early, medical issues, social disorders, preference for independent learning, or behavioral issues.

**Edgenuity program components.** Edgenuity is a web-based program that offers credit-bearing courses that are aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning (Edgenuity, Inc., 2016; J. Killinger, personal communication, April 24, 2015). Urban High has embraced the flexibility of Edgenuity, using it as either a stand-alone course or a blended course. Included among the courses are World History, Virginia/U.S. History, Spanish,
Art, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Ecology, Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, American Literature, British Literature, and Health. The courses and coursework are asynchronous; they are completely online without a live teacher. A teacher is assigned to a student as a facilitator. Instruction is provided to the student via a series of videos, written text, and activities for practice. In the way that a subject’s textbook is divided into chapters, the coursework on Edgenuity is divided into modules. At the end of each module the student must be successful with all of the corresponding assessments to be able to move forward to the next module. The assigned facilitator must move the student to the next module or release the student to repeat the module if not initially successful. Once all modules are completed for any given subject, the program evaluates the student and provides an overall grade. This grade stands as the student’s grade for the course, and credit is given to the student just as with a traditional course.

The aforementioned process follows the mastery learning approach derived from Bloom’s Taxonomy (Hattie, 2009). According to the description and research from Hattie’s Visible Learning, mastery learning embraces the notion that “all children can learn.” The criteria for this to occur are specific and include a set of clear expectations and specific learning conditions. Mastery learning requires heavy doses of feedback from teacher to student. This feedback is more than just praise; it is specific, targeting areas of concern, and must include a fluid conversation between the student and teacher. With mastery learning, students do not move forward to the next area of learning until they demonstrate confidence with knowledge and skills acquired in their current focus area. Consequently, timing and pacing can vary. For this teaching approach to work effectively, information is chunked into smaller portions and taught with pre- and post-
assessments for each portion to determine what students know and what they do not know. In this way, more time can be spent on the weaker areas identified.

In an article by Lewis, Whiteside, and Garrett Dikkers (2014), a 3-year, mixed-methods case study of an online high school is presented. The online program was designed using the mastery learning approach. Students began each unit, or module, by taking a pre-assessment before any instruction began. This pre-assessment determined the type of information that would be presented to the student. If the student reached a predetermined grade level, he or she could skip the portions of the module with which the student was successful in the pre-assessment. In this case study, students could skip an entire module if they received an 80 or above to move on to the next instructional level. The teachers’ role was identified as assisting students in answering questions, providing one-to-one feedback that was consistent, and motivating students. Students worked at their own pace in completing the modules and the overall program to earn credit for high school courses. Edgenuity functions in this manner.

**Overview of the Evaluation Approach**

A pragmatic approach was used to evaluate the Edgenuity program at Urban High School. This approach allowed for targeted data to be used in mixed methods according to the values defined by all stakeholders (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The CIPP model from the Use Branch developed by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) was chosen as the model to conduct the evaluation.

**Program evaluation model.** A pragmatic approach was used for this primarily qualitative evaluation in an effort to capture the overall picture of the Edgenuity program in action, in its natural environment, by identifying the attitudes and perceptions of its stakeholders. A pragmatic approach allows the evaluator to choose the specific area of
interest and value with regard to the needs of the organization (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Using the pragmatic approach in this study allowed the evaluator to acknowledge and assess the needs of the specific stakeholders at UHS as they naturally functioned in their learning environment. Creswell (2014) affirmed that, “qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study” (p. 185). Stufflebeam’s CIPP model appeared to best address the goals of this evaluation because it allows the evaluator to match methods to questions that are specific to the interests of the decision makers and the administration at UHS (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

To gain a particular focus on the intentions of this evaluation, less than the entire CIPP method was used; the “CI” portion, or the context and input components, was not used. The context evaluation serves the purpose of determining the necessity of Edgenuity while defining its desired goals and outcomes (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The input evaluation serves the purpose of aiding the district in the decision-making process regarding funding such a program. This would be an unnecessary step in the research as the district is vested in the continued use of the program and has secured funding for its continued use.

**Purpose of the evaluation.** The purpose of this research was to conduct a formative evaluation of the Edgenuity program that was purchased to increase the timely graduation rate of students and recover students that struggle or fail required credit courses for graduation. Vital for all stakeholders (students, teachers, guidance personnel, administrators, community members) was a web-based online program to avoid high dropout rates, students’ becoming unmotivated and getting too far behind in coursework, and schools’ losing accreditation, thereby producing a failing, impoverished community.
The process and product aspects of the CIPP model were used to provide answers to the program evaluation questions related to the perceptions of the stakeholders of the Edgenuity program. The evaluation was further enhanced and personalized with data concerning the graduation rates of seniors enrolled in the Edgenuity program.

Stufflebeam, a Use Branch theorist, developed the context, input, process, and product (CIPP) model for evaluation, which provides for a more in-depth role of the evaluator (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The CIPP model encompasses four distinct evaluations that make up a whole. The context evaluation would have been an evaluation that the Sample district used prior to choosing the intervention for the goal of assessing their specific needs for acquiring a program. The input evaluation would have then sought to align the district’s identified needs and goals to viable, cost-effective options according to their strategic plans and budget. The Sample district completed an assessment to justify the purchase and use of the Edgenuity program. The district has been implementing Edgenuity in its schools since 2011. The process of implementation has changed since its beginnings, without the benefit of a formal evaluation to gauge the appropriateness and effectiveness of the measures instituted. The design for this program evaluation used the process and product evaluation model to identify the perceptions of stakeholders involved in the state of the Edgenuity program as it was functioning at UHS by essentially questioning how stakeholders perceived the efforts being made (process) and whether they perceived that the program was successful (product; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

**Evaluation questions.** As SCS works to graduate all students in a given cohort, it is of significant value to understand the perceptions of stakeholders using the major systems in place that impact student learning. The significance of this evaluation
therefore is based upon its focus on stakeholders’ understanding of the Edgenuity program and their perceptions regarding the extent to which success is attributed to the program. Accordingly, Mertens and Wilson (2012) wrote, “The value of the evaluation is how it is used and the results of that use” (p. 90). While evaluating the Edgenuity program in its natural setting at UHS, value was placed on the perceptions of the stakeholders as well as the actual rate of graduation for Edgenuity students. Findings were derived from an analysis of stakeholder perceptions coupled with trends in the graduation rate. The guiding questions for this program evaluation were the following:

1. What are the perceptions of participating teachers regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?

2. What are the perceptions of participating 12th-grade students regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?

3. What do trend-line data demonstrate for the graduation rate of 12th-grade Edgenuity program students during the 5-year period 2013-2014 through 2017-2018?

Definitions of Terms

The following terms have been defined for their use and purposes within the context of this program evaluation:

**Asynchronous environment.** An online learning environment that typically does not have a teacher to provide the course instruction or the teacher is not online at the same time as the student, allows students to move freely through the course at their own pace, and allows students to access the course anytime, anywhere.
**Blended learning.** “Any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace” (Staker, 2011, p. 5); a school that has an assigned teacher that meets with students online and face-to-face. Teachers may supplement educational experiences using online tools while providing curriculum and instruction.

**Distance education.** “An all-inclusive term used to refer to the physical separation of teachers and learners” (Schlosser & Simonson, 2005, p. 84).

**Distance learning.** Educational or training information including the instruction and experience that learners gain, although they are physically distant from the source of that information and instruction (Porter, 1997).

**Edgenuity.** An eLearning tool used by Sample City Schools that provides engaging online and blended learning education solutions for students while enabling schools and districts to meet their academic goals (J. Killinger, personal communication, April 24, 2015).

**Freely-move option.** This is an Edgenuity term referring to the decision to allow students to progress through the course while bypassing assessments that can be proctored at a later time.

**Online charter school.** A mix of home schooling and charter schooling whereby instruction is delivered and managed by technology online and offered for free (Waters, Barbour, & Menchaca, 2014).

**Online learning environment.** Any instruction offered to students using web-based technology and exposing them to content on the Internet.
**Online learning system.** A third-party vendor used to instruct, present content, engage students, and monitor their progress asynchronously (Waters et al., 2014).

**On-time graduation (OTG) (as it is identified by this school district).** Graduation by students graduate within their 4 cohort years, beginning with their entry into the ninth grade.

**On-time graduation team (OTGT).** A team that consists of teachers, administrators, and counselors that meet regularly to support students with interventions and strategies that assist them in remaining on track to graduate within the 4 cohort years, beginning with their entry into the ninth grade.

**On-time graduation rate.**

\[
\text{On-time Graduates in Year X} = \frac{\text{(# of 1st time entering 9th graders in year X-4) + (Transfers In)}}{\text{(Transfers out & deceased)}}
\]

**Stakeholders.** Urban High School students and teachers involved in the Edgenuity program.

**Synchronous environment.** An online learning environment that has an assigned teacher who provides all instruction to students using technology and software while engaging and interacting with students online and/or face-to-face.

**Virtual school.** A school that uses online computers to provide some or all of a student’s education at the convenience of the student versus at a set meeting time in a facility (Cavanaugh, Gillan, Kromrey, Hess, & Blomeyer, 2004).
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Education has evolved alongside the evolution of technology: from newspaper to digital news and media, from landline telephones to cell phones, and from desktop computers to laptops and tablets (Waters et al., 2014). With the advancements in technology, educational systems and pedagogy have evolved to reflect these changes and have introduced distance education, known today as online learning. Distance education could mean any form of education provided to students without the physical presence of a teacher (Cavanaugh et al., 2004). Distance learning comprises generally the same ideals as those of a traditional classroom. In fact, the use of technology originally was intended solely to extend the reach of the teacher beyond one classroom to many classrooms in other locations. In contrast, online learning involves many things that have caused pedagogical perceptions to change (Hernández, Pardo, & Kloos, 2007): (a) the use of a collection of high-speed networks; (b) a pushout of information to homes, businesses, and public and private institutions digitally or electronically; (c) information and content delivered in a variety of forms, including databases, printed/digital material, videos, music, recordings (sound and screen), pictures, computer apps, or live interactions; (d) the employment of devices such as computers, tablets, laptops, cellphones, and other devices to access the Internet; (e) the use of people to generate and maintain new information; and (f) people that benefit from this information and invisible, yet dynamic web transmissions.
Distance education was practiced in the early part of the 20th century with the creation of correspondence courses or schools. Students worked with instructional materials and returned work products via the postal mail system. Today, distance education includes online charter schools, virtual schools, online-blended schools, and cyber schools (Waters et al., 2014). In the 1990s, President Clinton encouraged schools to connect to the Internet and to engage technology with learning. During that period, only 3% of the nation’s schools were connected to the Internet (Cavanaugh et al., 2004). One of the first noted Internet courses began at the collegiate level at a community college in New Hampshire in 1986, with many universities’ offering online courses by the early 1990s, before the introduction of such courses into public schools (Waters et al., 2014).

In Canada, four online high schools began in 1995. In 1996, two online secondary schools emerged for the first time in the United States. One was in Florida, called Florida Virtual School, with an enrollment of 157 students (Barbour & Mulcahy, 2008). The other, called Virtual High School, was created by a federal grant and offered 28 courses. Setzer and Lewis (2005) found that in a decade, enrollment in these types of programs had increased by approximately 300,000.

Tracking student online course enrollment has been a difficult task for researchers, as no real data collection method has existed (Waters et al., 2014). Waters et al. noted that researchers have only estimates, with one group’s reporting from the National Center for Education Statistics that in 2010, 1.8 million students participated in online schools. A second group, Ambient Insight (now METAARI), reported the figure to be more than 4 million, with a prediction that by 2016 there would be close to 5 million K-12 students enrolled in a full-time online program (Waters et al., 2014).
United States has surpassed this amount but has demonstrated a decline in self-paced learning methods and growth with mobile learning and game-based learning (Adkins, 2016). Barbour and Hill (2011) found that many early online-related studies produced high success rates, but student selectivity was noted to show that studies excluded lower performing students. Many of these students dropped online courses in the early stages of the course. These studies demonstrated that high-ability students, Advanced Placement students, or A/B students performed successfully with online learning programs.

**Growth in Online Schools**

Online schools are becoming an expectation in the fabric of today’s educational society for a variety of reasons. The way education is viewed has changed as people now have a different perspective of the traditional school. College and university expectations have evolved, thereby changing expectations at the secondary level (Cavanaugh et al., 2004). Technology access and availability is becoming a more common household likelihood, just as cell phones and television have become nearly ubiquitous. In fact, advances in technology have impacted education with the use of video conferencing, animation, downloads, faster processing speeds, file-sharing methods, and apps that allow for production versus consumption. Users of technology have moved from web surfers to creators. The emergence of online high schools or online school programming may appear to be logical given the growth of its use at the collegiate level. It must be noted, however, that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 encouraged this emergence as a means to support educational reform (Clark & Barbour, 2015). Clark and Barbour further found from an opinion poll in the early 2000s that online high schools were supported by 30% of parents polled, whereas 41% supported homeschooling. Of the
parents polled, however, most reported that their students had, in fact, taken at least one course online while enrolled in a traditional high school setting.

In the 1980s, the Virginia Department of Education used distance learning via satellite to offer courses to students where such courses did not exist, according to Virtual Virginia (n.d.). Districts struggled to provide Advanced Placement and foreign language courses due to staffing needs and/or student interests. Providing a teacher in one location that extended the reach to students across the state gave students access to an education they would not have been offered by their district alone. Today, online programs allow school districts to tackle many of the issues that school systems face. Teacher shortages such as those for Advanced Placement courses can be resolved with the use of an online program (Cavanaugh et al., 2004). Such programs can relieve budget woes as a cost-effective measure when transportation, facility use, and, possibly, textbooks are eliminated. As Cavanaugh et al. (2004) further noted, online programming also has been used to individualize student lessons that target their deficits to increase their growth and achievement. Without the use of printed materials and resources that become outdated, students participating in online learning programs can acquire knowledge via a variety of sources from around the world all on their own (Cavanaugh et al., 2004).

The purposes of online learning programs vary from institution to institution. By providing such programming to students, educational institutions may resolve economic and social concerns, serve a greater number of students, save energy and resources, and remain competitive (Cavanaugh, Hargis, & Mayberry, 2016). Cavanaugh et al. referred to this phenomenon as a shift from site to service. They noted that the focus on a physical, adequate space in which to teach and learn has moved to a focus on personalizing education according to individuals’ needs, when they need it, how
need it, and where they may best receive it. With a significant emphasis on on-time-graduation rates, closing achievement gaps, and adding credit-recovery programs, online learning environments have become economically popular (Repetto, Cavanaugh, Wayer, & Liu, 2010). Figure 1 displays a historical timeline of the evolution of online learning.

Figure 1. Timeline for online schools as presented in the previous text for visual perspective.

Types of Online Programs

To begin to understand the various types of online instructional programs there must be an understanding of asynchronous and synchronous learning environments. Online high school programs may be either asynchronous or synchronous. Table 4 displays the various characteristics of each.

Table 4

Types of Online Programs
Asynchronous online programs are typically designed using a mastery learning approach based on Bloom’s taxonomy, which moves students through programming in a consistent upward motion of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1984; Cavanaugh, 2003). The research of John Hattie extended this notion in Visible Learning, demonstrating how mastery learning looks in today’s curriculum approaches. The mastery learning approach is further applied to the functionality of Edgenuity. The tasks in which students engage allow various cognitive domains to be reached. Students move at their own pace through the course content without required interaction with a teacher or other students. Work in this environment is completely independent. Online programs that use a third-party vendor are typically asynchronous. The course program monitors the student’s progress (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008).

In synchronous programming a teacher provides instruction using technology as a tool. The teacher interacts with the students, and students interact with each other via discussion boards as well as face-to-face time. Synchronous courses are not as flexible as asynchronous courses due to set meeting times and deadlines. Students do not move

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asynchronous</th>
<th>Synchronous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students interact with websites and/or videos. All participants send and receive e-mail at their convenience.</td>
<td>Includes electronic chats and discussions. Includes video conferencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Has timelines, reduced flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically used</td>
<td>Not as popular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not require face-to-face time with a teacher</td>
<td>Includes interactions with a teacher and/or other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-paced</td>
<td>Deadlines are set by a teacher, and teacher feedback is given on assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No assigned teacher</td>
<td>A teacher is assigned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator assigned</td>
<td>Usually consists of a blended online classroom model.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

freely within the course at their own pace. The pace, instruction, and assignments are set by a teacher (Cavanaugh, 2003). Synchronous learning environments allow students slightly more flexibility than traditional learning environments while combining virtual and physical environments into one learning community (Cavanaugh et al., 2016). This type of online learning promotes social engagement that taps into students’ natural instincts as social beings, keeping them connected to others and allowing for interactions with a broader scope of engaging learning environments (Whiteside, 2015). Table 5 displays popular asynchronous and synchronous programs.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of asynchronous programs</th>
<th>Examples of synchronous programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GradPoint by Pearson</td>
<td>Florida Virtual School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="http://www.pearsoned.com">www.pearsoned.com</a>)</td>
<td>(<a href="http://www.flvs.net">www.flvs.net</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmentum (Formerly PLATO)</td>
<td>Virtual Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="http://www.edmentum.com">www.edmentum.com</a>)</td>
<td>(<a href="http://www.virtualvirginia.org">www.virtualvirginia.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compass/Edgenuity</td>
<td>University of Texas at Austin High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="http://www.edgenuity.com">www.edgenuity.com</a>)</td>
<td>(<a href="https://highschool.utexas.edu">https://highschool.utexas.edu</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edison Learning</td>
<td>Virginia Virtual Academy Powered by K12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="http://www.edisonlearning.com">www.edisonlearning.com</a>)</td>
<td>(<a href="http://vava.k12.com/">http://vava.k12.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ideas for Best Practices in Online Learning**

Online programs are implemented within school districts using a wide range of strategies. Research regarding best practices in online learning is new and developing. Educators are searching for the best methods with which to implement online programming to achieve student academic success. Wenger (1998), a social learning theorist, asserted that human beings are naturally social, which makes the social aspect a
key component of learning. Technology use in the classroom should be implemented with a traditional classroom ideal in mind (Whiteside, 2015). Students are social beings and, thus, must have a sound relationship with the teacher or others in a blended online learning environment, or synchronous environment, and with the facilitator in a self-paced online program, or asynchronous environment. Taking this notion a step further, students can build engaging relationships with each other. Many online synchronous programs use discussion boards or comprehensive online groups to solve problems or conduct research. Asynchronous programs may develop student groups as a means of peer support and continuity. Administrators or program leaders also build relationships with teachers and staff for the same reasons in both asynchronous and synchronous programs. Doing so promotes “the development of clear organizational structure and the employment of content expertise” (Whiteside, 2015, p. 6). Whiteside asserted that study of the social presence model determines the key elements of an effective online teacher/facilitator, as displayed in Table 6.
Table 6

Social Presence Model of an Effective Online Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What an effective online teacher must do</th>
<th>What an effective online teacher must be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scaffold learners through content</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate social connections</td>
<td>An active participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition students from face-to-face learning environments to an online</td>
<td>An expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think critically when developing activities and</td>
<td>A cheerleader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when considering different media in which to engage students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(primarily for synchronous environments)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Virtual Virginia’s (VVA) explanation of their program touts the use of certified classroom teachers that have been provided extensive online teacher training. Teachers in this program act as course managers, providing individual attention to students, thereby facilitating student course completion and success. As participants in a synchronous program, VVA teachers set the pace of the course, set benchmark target dates, hold online office hours, grade assignments and provide feedback, and host discussions and other interactive online activities to guide students to success (Virtual Virginia, n.d.).

Another ideal is centered on information literacy and is suggested as a key component in online learning. Cavanaugh et al. added that students must obtain information literacy skills that “[involve] collaboration and [enable] students to access information efficiently, discern quality and authority, and to apply it to decision making and problem solving” (Cavanaugh et al., 2004 p. 31).
Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) added to the small body of best online practices research with their seven principles of good practice, which should be considered when developing these types of programs:

- “encourage contact between students and facilitators,
- develop reciprocity and cooperation among students,
- use active learning techniques,
- give prompt feedback,
- emphasize time on task,
- communicate high expectations,
- respect diverse talents and ways of learning.” (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008, p. 122)

In reviewing the latest literature regarding K-12 online learning, it was noted that guidelines must be put in place to assist with decisions regarding appropriate placement of students into the correct program according to their needs and success criteria. For virtual schools such as Colorado Virtual Academy, JeffCo Virtual Academy, New Hampshire Virtual Learning Academy, and Massachusetts Virtual High School Network, steps taken were in line with the opening of a charter school (Bolton, 2010). This process entailed creating a mission and a vision and adopting or developing a curriculum that aligned with state standards and allowed students to become confident in taking end-of-course testing after participating in the program suited for them (CCRC, 2011). In online schools such as these, live teachers teach courses and use online tools to facilitate and present lessons (Pandolfo, 2012). Teachers have the ability to interact with students and parents to give feedback and provide a blended learning experience.
Many prepackaged online programs or third-party vendor programs, such as those of Pearson, create and design online programs that are specified for school districts according to their state standards. These programs do not provide interaction with a teacher and often students are left to their own devices and must advocate for themselves when additional supports are needed (CCRC, 2011). Online programs continue with the curriculum in place within the district; however, the framework of the online program must be developed (Pandolfo, 2012). Using the systems approach in a progressive school system allows appropriate implementation to lead to a successful rollout. In both types of programs, training is key. All stakeholders require training and must provide feedback to decision makers in an effort to develop a successful program.

Research has concluded that students require supports to be successful with online high school programming, such as online readiness assessments, student orientation, technology support, and mentoring (Carr, 2014). The benefits of online high school programs have been identified as having control of the pacing and students’ ability to work ahead. The challenges have been identified as students’ having issues with responsibility and time management (Burdette & Greer, 2014). Additional items cited include the benefit of being able to retake courses failed in the past and the ability of students with disabilities to graduate.

In reviewing a case study, Lewis et al. (2014) found many implications for successful online learning. One is support for students, especially for students with special needs or those identified as at risk. Students require training in online learning, which can be in the form of an orientation. This type of training allows them to become adjusted to the type of behaviors required to learn in this manner. Some students in this case study revealed that they felt alone during the initial course taken. The researchers
specifically stated, “At-risk students need a strong foundation in online learning readiness and a solid orientation to the online learning environment” (Lewis et al., 2014, p. 6.). Supports also should be provided in maintaining technology or tools to access the online program. This type of support assists in relieving barriers that can obstruct access to the online coursework.

Guidance and monitoring also have been described as vital to the success of at-risk students using online programs. Researchers have agreed that the process and procedures through which the online program is hosted should align with the mastery learning approach used by the program (and most online programs). Teacher feedback and check-ins are vital to students’ progression to completion. Face-to-face time is necessary for clarity, motivation, and improved attitudes about learning. Moreover, Ambient Insight has reported a decline in the use of self-paced online programming and a shift to game-based learning.

**Barriers to Online Learning**

Although anyone can participate in online learning, not everyone will be successful. There are noted barriers to success in online learning environments. Sutton (2013) noted that at the initial stages of implementation, the majority of online programs have been designed without considering that students must unlearn traditional methods and learn digital methods. He also noted factors such as computer access, technology tools, and overload as student barriers in online learning environments. Other noted barriers to online learning environments include the maintenance of technology, security of technology and student safety, and the types of information available online that students may be exposed to unintentionally (Cavanaugh et al., 2004).
Sutton (2013) described how online students become overwhelmed and stressed when enrolled in online coursework. Students struggle with processing and retaining large quantities of concepts presented to them online in the same manner as students sitting in a face-to-face lecture. This struggle is compounded by having to focus also on technology, troubleshooting issues, and issues associated with access. Isolation and the lack of social support are barriers primarily associated with asynchronous programs as well (Kim, Park, & Cozart, 2014). Rothermel and Eastmond (2005) emphasized that companies struggle to create online course programs that can replicate best practices of the classroom.

**Edgenuity Online Learning**

Edgenuity Inc. (2016) provides a description of its design that allows school districts to modify and adjust the program to align to the individualized needs and practices of the school district. The program can be modified to allow for a blended online learning approach or a stand-alone online program. The district that adopts this program is allowed to determine how hands-on the teacher will be, the level of supervision of the students, and any other practices that the district would like to embed in its implementation process. The open nature of this product provides schools the freedom to adopt the best practices that fit the school and the ability to adapt to changing practices over time. Edgenuity’s focus describes its concept of embracing the importance of collaborative leadership, culture, professional development, and practice while building a sound and efficient online learning program for student academic achievement.

**Summary**

The common thread noted throughout the research literature is the necessity of practices that include the involvement of a teacher, teacher feedback, social aspects, and
goal setting as key components for online learning success. Online high school environments will continue to grow, having proved their value in creating opportunities for students to learn beyond the confines of a physical building. Students can now access education anywhere and at anytime. Online programs allow for school choice and the ability for students and their parents to have greater control over their education. DiPietro (2010) noted that online learning environments allow students to “prepare for joining a global technological workforce” (p. 328). There remain barriers to online learning success with no single research-based method to define the most appropriate process or implementation strategy for these programs. As society and generations of students evolve, the continuous inquiry of educators has been how to engage students in learning. This inquiry remains relevant with the evolution of online learning. This program evaluation adds to the body of research in this area by identifying the climate and perceptions of students and teachers involved in an asynchronous online learning program. While seeking to identify the perceptions of the key stakeholders of the program as well as the graduation rate of its users, the program evaluation allows decision makers within the school to make appropriate and necessary future adjustments to the program.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS

Introduction

The CIPP (context, input, process, and product) model developed by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) uses a systematic way of looking at many different aspects of a given process: “The model presents a comprehensive approach to assessing process, involving the appropriateness and adequacy of project operations; and product, meaning the extent, desirability, and significance of intended and unintended outcomes” (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 100). The process component of this model was used qualitatively in this study to document student and teacher perceptions of the Edgenuity program in action using surveys and interviews (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). This valuable feedback will allow decision makers to make informed and relevant decisions for student learning success as pertaining specifically to this population of students. The product component defined the outcome that the online program was attempting to achieve and described the graduation rate trends of 12th-grade Edgenuity students. It also demonstrated the effects of the Edgenuity program on teachers and students as the effects pertained to the desired outcomes. It was in the product component that undetermined or unexpected outcomes were noted as well (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

The purpose of this program evaluation was to identify the elements necessary for student academic success with online coursework using Edgenuity. The study focused on the perceptions of students and teachers, as value was placed on these stakeholders that
worked with the program daily. Having the best practices in place for students creates the appropriate climate for success in graduating on time. When the climate of the learning environment is positive, students are more likely to grasp concepts that are taught (Corry & Carlson-Bancroft, 2014).

**Research Design**

The initial development of this program evaluation involved a pragmatic approach with a primarily qualitative functionality. The pragmatic approach originated from philosophers William James, John Dewey, George Mead, and Arthur Bentley, who believed truth could be determined by methods other than a scientific one (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The axiology of this approach indicates there is value in the uses of the results, thereby allowing stakeholders to reflect on their actions compared with the outcomes of these actions. In this way, they are able to make effective adjustments to programming based on their specific needs. This evaluation functioned according to the Utility Standard set by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, which focuses on “the qualities that prepare stakeholders to use the processes, descriptions, findings, judgments, and recommendations in ways that best serve their needs” (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011, p. 8).

The process evaluation component of the CIPP model involved observing and documenting the activities that occurred during the implementation process. These activities identified the processes that promoted success or those that posed obstacles. In this evaluation, results of a field-tested survey previously given to both students and teachers (beneficiaries) were reviewed, analyzed, and adjusted to create a new student survey and teacher interview questions that allowed UHS decision makers to identify the key methods necessary for successful academic achievement with the Edgenuity
program, as perceived by the beneficiaries. This process aligned with the approach of the CIPP model, with the evaluator’s observing and documenting the beneficiaries, the program, and decisions made in their natural state. The results of the survey were then analyzed using the Qualtrics software to identify the perceptions of 12th-grade high school Edgenuity students. The results of the teacher interview were coded and analyzed using both hand coding and MAXQDA Qualitative Data Analysis software to determine their perceptions. These data were reviewed and summarized with descriptions that detailed the relationship between the identified valued methods and the district’s procedures. The product evaluation focused on the graduation rate of 12th-grade students that participated in Edgenuity coursework. Trend-line data then provided comparative data for Edgenuity student graduates and non-Edgenuity student graduates.

**Evaluation questions.** The driving questions for this program evaluation were the following:

1. What are the perceptions of participating teachers regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?
2. What are the perceptions of participating 12th-grade students regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?
3. What do trend-line data demonstrate for the graduation rate of 12th-grade Edgenuity program students during the 5-year period 2013-2014 through 2017-2018?

**Participants**

**Teacher participants.** Although most UHS teachers were trained to facilitate the Edgenuity program and could use it within their classrooms, there were six teachers
facilitating Edgenuity courses in a computer lab environment. The six teachers were interviewed for the purpose of this program evaluation. This group of six includes teachers who were coordinators of the Edgenuity program at the school along with teachers who were novice facilitators and were under the direction of the coordinators. The six teachers collectively had backgrounds that covered the core subject areas: English, math, science, and social studies.

**Student participants.** At the time of this study, Urban High School had a population of 1,725 students. Of this population, 248 (14%) were students enrolled in the Edgenuity program to recover failed courses, of which 117 were seniors. The majority of those enrolled needed to complete two or more courses to meet graduation requirements, which translates to 248 students enrolled in approximately 620 courses in the Edgenuity program. Of this population, approximately 85 12th-grade students enrolled in at least one course were in the survey participant pool for the purpose of this program evaluation, with parent permission. This 2017 graduate cohort participated in surveys focusing on their perceptions of Edgenuity with regard to its value in achieving academic success using this program. Parent permissions was obtained prior to surveying the students, with no identifiable recognition item documented or used.

**Data Sources**

This program evaluation was dependent on three data sources that directly responded to the evaluation questions: teacher interviews (Q1), student surveys (Q2), and student information system data and Edgenuity reports (Q3). The teacher interviews (Q1) served to ascertain the perceptions of the teachers that administered the program daily. The teacher interview questions were derived from a survey given by the district during the previous school year. Based on the responses from teachers at the end of the
survey, it was evident that they were moved to share more in the comments section regarding various questions in the survey. The interview questions, as presented in Table 8, were designed according to the appreciative inquiry concepts of Rothwell, Stavros, and Sullivan (2016) through which teachers were able to reflect on the entire Edgenuity program’s strengths, its future, and changes necessary to make targeted and effective decisions about any adjustments to the program’s future.

The student surveys (Q2) were field tested during the 2016-2017 school year and adjusted based on the responses and the UHS current focus areas. The survey served to ascertain the perceptions of students regarding the Edgenuity program and its implementation. The survey, as depicted in Table 7, included a total of 12 questions, with 3 questions being demographic in nature to assist in potentially helpful future research.

In an effort to extract the appropriate data to determine the graduation rate and trend data for 12th-grade Edgenuity students, the district’s student information system database, PowerSchool, was used along with the reporting data from the Edgenuity program (Q3). Data were extracted from the various reports according to the student’s school identification number and imported into a password-protected Excel file on the district’s protected data warehouse database. To explain the On-Time Graduation Rate (OTGR) the Virginia Department of Education (2017) stated, “The graduation rate, as defined by the Board of Education equals on-time graduates in year X, divided by first time entering ninth graders in year X minus 4 plus transfers in minus transfers out.”

**Survey protocol.** The purpose of the student survey was simply to capture the perceptions of those involved with direct use of the Edgenuity program. These perceptions provide insight into the daily program in action, affording decision makers
the ability to make necessary and appropriate adjustments for the successful use of
Edgenuity. This survey was cross-sectional as it was given at a specific time only once to
the 12th-grade Edgenuity student population (Creswell, 2014). Students used an
organizational Google e-mail system through which a survey link was sent for their
responses after parental consent had been received. The survey was taken during their
Edgenuity class session with their Edgenuity teacher.

This survey was previously administered in a pilot test to determine the quality of
the questions based on the returned responses as they pertained to the organization’s
purpose. The survey was subsequently adjusted to a Likert scale survey to focus on the
areas valued by UHS and to eliminate inappropriate responses by students to open-ended
questions.

The survey questions also aligned with Evaluation Question 2: “What are the
perceptions of participating 12th-grade students regarding the value of the Edgenuity
program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?” This survey was
produced with many of the decision making team’s concerns in mind, as well. Responses
to this student survey should serve the team well in making progressive decisions with
regard to the direction and stability of the Edgenuity program and in providing insight
regarding student perceptions.

Using Qualtrics, the survey was created as a Likert scale survey that allowed five
response choices, ranging from the most extreme to the least extreme, such as always to
never, or a great deal to not at all. The survey included a total of 12 questions in three
question blocks or three pages. According to Yarbrough et al. (2011), Standard A7
advises evaluators to begin questioning with the most important questions first. This
practice provides for explicit reasoning. Students are then able to answer questions
appropriate to their overall perception, thereby allowing the survey questions to align throughout the survey. This survey was field tested by a group of students and timed. The survey took a total of 6 minutes with students providing feedback such as: shorten the questions and change response answer choices to be more concise. Students thought the survey was clear and understandable. The survey was adjusted based on the field test as seen in the appendix. Table 7 provides an overview of the student survey questions to provide their intended purpose. The actual survey can be seen in Appendix A.
Table 7

**Student Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student survey questions</th>
<th>Answer choice range</th>
<th>Purpose/Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current grade level?</td>
<td>9th – 12th grade</td>
<td>To ensure only senior students are participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many years have you been enrolled courses on Edgenuity?</td>
<td>0 – 4</td>
<td>To determine the depth of experience of the respondent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What courses are you currently enrolled in or have you previously taken on Edgenuity?</td>
<td>The four core subject areas: math, English, science, and social studies, plus an elective answer choice</td>
<td>To determine if a particular subject garners similar responses from the respondents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, how well do you agree with the following statement? “I typically prefer courses on Edgenuity versus being in a classroom.”</td>
<td>Strongly agree to strongly disagree (5 answer choices)</td>
<td>To present the overarching purpose of the survey in the beginning. (Yarborough et al., 2011, p. 211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, evaluate how difficult or easy Edgenuity courses are in comparison to traditional face-to-face courses.</td>
<td>Extremely difficult to extremely easy (5 answer choices)</td>
<td>To present the overarching purpose of the survey in the beginning. (Yarborough et al., 2011, p. 211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In thinking about your habits and practices that are necessary to be successful with Edgenuity coursework, how good are you at:</td>
<td>All of the time to never (5 answer choices)</td>
<td>To ascertain the perceptions of students with regard to noted best practices of online learning (Rothermel &amp; Eastmond, 2005) and the expectations of online students at UHS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• managing your time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maintaining your focus?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• taking notes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maintaining self-discipline?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• setting personal goals?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• connecting with other students?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• working independently?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How helpful is it for teachers to do the following:</td>
<td>Extremely helpful to not helpful at all (5 answer choices)</td>
<td>To ascertain the students’ perceptions of the school’s Edgenuity processes or processes being considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• frequent check-ins with you,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• regular teacher feedback,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• praise/encouragement,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide scheduled lab time,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• monitor your time on task, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• teacher to set your goals/timelines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In thinking about the processes that are necessary to be successful with Edgenuity, please evaluate each of the following:</td>
<td>Extremely necessary to never necessary (5 answer choices)</td>
<td>To allow decision makers to see what students perceive most frequently as an obstacle to their progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I like one course loaded into Edgenuity at a time;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I like all of my courses loaded at one time;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I like being provided with a computer and internet access;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I like having technical support, for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
things such as addressing broken computer, login issues, and program glitches;
• I like being able to freely move through the program without having to wait for teacher reviews;
• I like having the teacher review items before I can move forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do the following get in the way of your progress with an Edgenuity course:</th>
<th>Always to never (5 answer choices)</th>
<th>To ascertain student insight into their level of confidence with the Edgenuity courses.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am distracted/daydreaming/falling asleep.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am unable to focus?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not log into the program daily.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not work on Edgenuity once I leave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not get teacher feedback?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I typically have technology issues (e.g., not being able to log on, videos not playing, Internet connection broken, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to wait for a period of time for teacher reviews to allow me to continue to the next task.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After completing your Edgenuity course/s, how prepared are you for End-of-course tests or SOL?</th>
<th>Extremely prepared to not prepared at all (5 answer choices)</th>
<th>To ascertain the perceptions of students regarding teachers to help UHS make adjustments to their practices.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall, how helpful was your Edgenuity teacher?</th>
<th>Extremely helpful to not helpful at all (5 answer choices)</th>
<th>To allow students to think about their survey responses and summarize their overall feeling about the program.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall, how satisfied are you with the Edgenuity program? | Extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied (5 answer choices) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QR code to student survey</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher interviews.** Mertens and Wilson (2012) noted that interviews should include details of the study, gain informed consent, and allow teachers to freely respond. The evaluator summarizes and asks final questions to conclude the interview.

Interviewing teachers that were directly involved with the Edgenuity program allowed for an in-depth perspective that extended their responses into a comprehensive picture of their perspectives. During the interview, participants were allowed to express
and describe their understandings and opinions regarding Edgenuity, its process, and its use at UHS. The interview questions were derived from a summary of the previous year’s survey responses. These interviews served to clarify the perspectives of teachers while providing insight for decision makers in considering the future of the Edgenuity program as it functions at UHS. The interview further outlined the participants’ perceptions regarding the value of the Edgenuity program with regard to process, procedures, facilitation, and practices. The information about teacher interview questions is presented in Table 8, noting question design based on the Utility Standard from the Program Evaluation Standards.
Table 8

Teacher Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Program evaluation utility standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In what capacity have you used Edgenuity with your students? (i.e., stand alone, blended, initial credit, recovery)</td>
<td>Responses to this question will establish the needs of the stakeholders.</td>
<td>U3: “Evaluation purposes should be identified and revisited based on the needs of stakeholders” (p. 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is your overall perception of Edgenuity? Explain.</td>
<td>Responses to this question will establish stakeholders’ ideas and values about the Edgenuity program.</td>
<td>U4: Explicit values “clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning the evaluation purposes, processes, and judgments” (p. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the teacher behaviors and practices necessary for a student’s success with Edgenuity courses?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will allow the evaluator to observe the Edgenuity program in practice at UHS according to the vision of the stakeholders.</td>
<td>U6: Meaningful process and products “should construct activities, descriptions and judgments in ways that encourage participants to rediscover, reinterpret, or revise their understanding and behaviors” (p. 51).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. a. Describe for me a student who has done quite well with the Edgenuity program. i. What do you think contributed to that success? What proportion of students enrolled in Edgenuity would you consider to be very successful?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will allow the evaluator to observe and understand stakeholder responses with regard to students in the Edgenuity program. It gives insight into the elements of a stakeholder’s cognitive decision-making process based on his or her views of students.</td>
<td>U4: Explicit values “clarify and specify the individual and cultural values underpinning the evaluation purposes, processes, and judgments” (p. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Describe for me a student who has not done well with the Edgenuity program. ii. What are the impediments that have interfered with success? How common do you see these kinds of impediments impinging on student success?</td>
<td></td>
<td>U6: Meaningful process and products “should construct activities, descriptions and judgments in ways that encourage participants to rediscover, reinterpret, or revise their understanding and behaviors” (p. 51).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Responses to this question will advocate for the stakeholder’s success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What are the student behaviors and practices necessary for student success with Edgenuity?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will recognize the stakeholder’s understandings of students’ needs for success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What is the best thing about this program? What do you wish might be different about the program itself or how it is being implemented?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will clarify identified issues perceived by the stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How involved are you in the instructional process of administering the Edgenuity program?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will allow stakeholders to reflect on their role in the Edgenuity program and its implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>a. How durable are the knowledge and skills learned in this context? b. Do you feel Edgenuity course content is comparable to traditional classroom instruction in preparing students for end-of-course test or SOL?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will determine stakeholder confidence with the Edgenuity program outcomes and consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Overall, how satisfied are you with Edgenuity at UHS?</td>
<td>Responses to this question will provoke stakeholders to reflect, summarize, and draw conclusions about their perceptions and experiences with the Edgenuity program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Data Collection**

**Student graduation data.** Student graduation data were collected from the SCS Data Warehouse for the previous five academic school years to gain an accurate picture of the graduation trends of Edgenuity students. The Edgenuity center reported course
enrollment data for past academic school years, whereas the PowerSchool student information system identified the 12th-grade cohort for the past academic years. This information was combined into an Excel spreadsheet to manually extract the accurate graduation rate of 12th-grade Edgenuity graduates for those school years by using the common student identification number shared between the two programs. No other identifying information was collected, and the Excel file was password protected and housed on UHS’s database. Current 12th-grade Edgenuity student information was extracted as well to determine a forecasted graduation rate.

**Student surveys.** Student surveys were administered by the Qualtrics survey program within the students’ specified Edgenuity classroom period during the school day in the Spring 2018 semester. Teachers were given the link to the survey. The link was sent to only the 12th-grade Edgenuity students that returned their parental consent forms. Students used their assigned Chromebooks to log into their Gmail accounts to participate in the survey.

**Teacher interviews.** Teacher interviews were conducted in the Spring 2018 semester during the teachers’ planning periods to avoid the various after-school academy meetings planned during the semester. The interviews were recorded using the Apple Voice Memo application and downloaded into a password-protected GoogleDrive file.

**Data Analysis**

**Evaluation Question 1.** Teacher interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. The transcriptions were analyzed to determine appropriate codes for salient points. Applying the concepts of Miles and Huberman (1994), themes and trends were noted using the Interview Summary Form to appropriately code the emergent themes from the responses. This coding was then input into the MAXQDA Qualitative Data
Analysis software to provide a descriptive summary of the teacher perceptions of the value of the Edgenuity program and validated with hand coding.

**Evaluation Question 2.** Student surveys were recorded by the Qualtrics program, allowing the evaluator to determine student perceptions of the value of the Edgenuity program as well as considerations for future decision makers. The responses were analyzed and interpreted using the Qualtrics reporting features. A descriptive summary provides the findings.

**Evaluation Question 3.** Excel spreadsheets were used to analyze the graduation data and provide descriptive statistics. The Edgenuity reporting center assisted with identifying the 12th-grade students from the previous five cohort years, including their completion status of Edgenuity coursework as of the graduation reporting deadline of May 30 for each cohort year. The PowerSchool student information system provided graduation information regarding all 12th-grade students to allow for a trend-line data description. Both Edgenuity and PowerSchool used the student’s assigned school identification number, which allowed linking extracted data into one spreadsheet to calculate an accurate rate for the school years available.

According to Mertens and Wilson (2012), coding is an essential part of the analysis process of reviewing interviews. The researcher’s becoming confident in this area allows the study to maintain a higher degree of reliability and validity of the data extracted. An interview summary form, as presented in Figure 2, adapted from the research of Miles and Huberman (1994), was used to identify salient points and aid in the coding process. Once codes were determined, I manually color coded results to analyze the common themes to confirm MAXQDA analyzation results. In analyzing the data, I
was careful to use descriptive language that could be measured or pictured in a precise manner to avoid misinterpretations. Figure 2 depicts the interview summary form.
**INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person Interviewed:</th>
<th>Title/Role:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place:</th>
<th>Type of Interview:</th>
<th>Date Coded:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recorded Time</th>
<th>Salient Points</th>
<th>Themes/Aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.* Interview summary form used with participants in the study. Adapted from “Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook, 2nd ed.,” by M. Miles and A. Huberman, 1994, Copyright 1994 by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman.
Table 9

Program Evaluation Guiding Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation question</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the perceptions of participating teachers regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Coding system, MAXQDA Qualitative Data Analysis software, descriptive summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are the perceptions of participating 12th grade students regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Qualtrics, descriptive summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

Delimitations. This program evaluation explored survey data to address the perceptions of students. Interviews were used to investigate the perceptions of teachers. Reusing a previous survey was considered but rejected due to an analysis of previous responses and the need for clarity of the perceptions regarding the use of Edgenuity at UHS. The previous survey, given by the district during the 2015-2016 school year and again in 2016-2017, was used as a guide. A review of the field test of the student survey provided clarity and resulted in a more concise survey that was easier for student
response. The goal overall was to extract the perceived valued elements of the program and its implementation activities.

**Limitations.** Limitations in the process evaluation could have existed with regard to students’ struggling to articulate meaningful feedback based on their cognitive abilities. Other obstacles could have occurred during the evaluation, but they were unknown as the evaluation was based on actions occurring in a natural state. Consequently, the evaluand could have yielded a multitude of unintended findings not considered by the evaluator. Further, the findings of this Edgenuity program evaluation might not be generalizable to a larger population as its nature was quite specific and unique to its purposes and goals as well as the needs of the stakeholders at UHS.

As other interventions were likely to be in place for at-risk students, an issue considered in the product evaluation was the ability to gain an accurate depiction of the Edgenuity graduates when extracting data of the on-time graduation status of students completing the Edgenuity program. Many students that initially enrolled in the Edgenuity program might have other interventions put in place that aided in students’ on-time graduation when Edgenuity had failed to be successful for them. Careful dissection of the Edgenuity reporting center and PowerSchool data was conducted to accurately extract the correct graduation data. For the purpose of this program evaluation, any student that had completed a course for credit through the Edgenuity program and was on track to graduate regardless of other interventions in place was considered as an Edgenuity graduate.

Teacher implementation was also an area that could impact the study. Teachers used different styles and routines when facilitating the Edgenuity program. Some
required students to repeat sections of the Edgenuity program if the students performed below a certain score where other did not enforce such a requirement.

**Researcher as Participant**

It must be understood that I maintained a dual role in this research study as an administrator and researcher. The Edgenuity program had partnered with the On Time Graduation Team (OTGT), which was supervised by another administrator. With this structure, I found it manageable to be a researcher by taking a listening approach to interviewing teachers and surveying students. Overall, the OTGT, the Edgenuity Coordinator, and the Edgenuity teachers worked together as a problem solving group that continuously sought to find better methods and resolve rising issues to support students graduating within the 4 years of a student’s arrival to ninth grade. In this capacity, this unique group was open to voice matters and concerns with each other and with administration. Nevertheless, teachers were provided with consent forms noting that their responses would not have any impact on employment, as responses would not be a part of any employment evaluation. Students also were provided with consent forms to include parent permission to participate with the understanding that student participation would have no impact on their grades or graduating.

**Ethical Considerations**

According to Yarbrough and colleagues (2011), consideration should be given to “concerns about the rights, responsibilities, and behaviors of evaluators and evaluation stakeholders” (p. 106). For this particular program evaluation, students responding to surveys were assured that their responses would not have any bearing on how they were perceived and that no educational repercussions would result from their participation. The same assurances applied to teachers that might not agree with the program’s use or
its stages of implementation. As the evaluator, I understood that every stakeholder might not embrace the concept of a program evaluation; they might see it as another task added to their to-do list. This being the case, opt-out options were offered. All participants were given access to information about their rights and responsibilities as participants or nonparticipants.

Considerations in contextual viability were important as well in understanding the community, students, teachers, and their culture and politics while conducting the evaluation. All participants had a platform through which to be heard without feeling threatened. Establishing sound communication levels throughout this study was key. Ensuring that I, as an administrator and the evaluator, remained unbiased in expressing my opinion to avoid leading participants was also important. The data collected were not mishandled or modified in any way; data were reported as an accurate representation of participants’ responses.

Prior to conducting this study, I completed a course in working with human subjects in research to satisfy requirements of The College of William and Mary. This 13-module course certified the understanding and ethical ramifications of working with human subjects in research to ensure this program evaluation was conducted in the most appropriate manner. An Internal Review Board (IRB) application was completed and submitted to The College of William and Mary for approval. Upon approval, Sample City Schools allowed their own IRB application to be completed and submitted for approval. After all approvals were received, the program evaluation began.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this program evaluation was to determine and understand the perceptions of the teachers and students that engage with the Edgenuity online high school program. This evaluation also took note of the graduation trend data for the past five years for high school seniors enrolled in the program. The evaluation data will allow decision makers in the school district to make real and relevant improvements to the program as it functions among teachers and students.

Evaluation Question 1 (RQ1) was intended to capture the perceptions of teachers that administered the program and of 12th-grade students enrolled into the program within a predominantly minority school that sought to strengthen future course recovery efforts. Teachers currently administering the Edgenuity program were interviewed in person, using nine interview questions that provided a window into their perceptions of their experiences with regard to process, procedures, facilitation, and practices. The questions were derived from a previous survey given to teachers and adjusted according to the Program Evaluation Standards from Mertens and Wilson (2012). Teachers were provided oral transcriptions to ensure accuracy of their responses and to allow for opportunities for clarification.

Evaluation Question 2 (RQ2) explored the perceptions of 12th-grade students enrolled in the Edgenuity program using a field-tested survey. These students responded to a 12-question, 4-6 minute survey given in the mornings across 5 school days in March, 2018. After appropriate consent was obtained for their participation, they responded via
a computer link provided to them by their Edgenuity teacher. The survey was given to 61 of 85 potential participants in the graduating cohort of the 2017-2018 school year. The intention was to survey 85 students; however, 28% of them did not participate due to absenteeism resulting from a shortened school day, involvement in other programming, or truancy, whereas others chose not to participate for reasons such as being unwilling to miss class time or simply uninterested.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Participants</th>
<th>Students invited</th>
<th>Students participating</th>
<th>Students not participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Question 3 (RQ3) extracted data from the school’s student information system, PowerSchool, to determine trend-line data across a 5-year period. The purpose of the data was to determine the graduation rate of 12th-grade students that had taken an Edgenuity course to meet graduation requirements. Initially, the 5-year period was to be from 2012 to 2016; however, the data from 2012 were not available due to the lack of collection methods at that time. Thus, the 5-year period for this study includes trend-line data from 2013-2014SY to 2017-2018SY.

Demographic Information

Six teachers were interviewed for this study, as shown in Table 11. All of the teachers had been teaching in the district for three or more school years in a range of subjects, including special education, math, science, and language arts.
Demographic data were available for the 85 students identified for participation in the survey; however, demographic data were not available specifically for the 61 students actually completing the survey due to the anonymous manner in which the survey was administered. Table 12 displays demographics for the participant pool, showing an African American student majority and an almost balanced gender category. The mean GPA for the participant pool was 2.19. This group’s collective absences in a 4-year period represent an average of 45 days missed. For perspective, any student acquiring 41 or more missed days in a 4-year cohort averages more than 10 missed days each school year and is cited for truancy. Any student with 40 or fewer absences in a 4-year cohort averages 10 or fewer missed days per year of high school, which is within an acceptable range according to the attendance policy. Table 12 provides the student population attendance percentages.

### Table 11

*Teacher Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Subject/Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td>Special education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Special education/social studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>High school/college math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Reading specialist/language arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Language arts/college English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55
Table 12

*Student Survey Participant Pool Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>%Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>%Gender</th>
<th>%Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Female = 49</td>
<td>Truant = 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Male = 51</td>
<td>Nontruant = 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 Students with an average GPA of 2.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ1**

What are the perceptions of participating teachers regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?

The value of the Edgenuity program was noted by all teachers participating in the study. All of them had used the program for students receiving an initial credit in a course and for students’ course recovery, and half of the teachers had used the program in a blended environment within a traditional classroom. Interviewed teachers in general reflected an appreciation of the program’s versatility and its alignment with state standards. They also found the structure of the content and its presentation within the courses to be appealing. The group of six participants seemed to be unified in most of their responses; however, three teachers reported a higher experience level with online learning environments. For instance, one novice teacher limited after hour feedback and stated that once the school day ended so did any virtual responses to students working independently. The most experienced of the participants had structures in place for
students to make contact according to a set schedule of the teachers’ evening virtual hours for feedback.

**Teacher behaviors and practices.** Teacher behaviors and practices varied. All teachers cited the practice of having frequent check-ins with students and providing clarity on items presented in the program. Four teachers stated that due to their lack of content knowledge in some courses, they sought outside resources to assist students, including visits from content area teachers or online resources such as Khan Academy, especially when attempting to explain math concepts. Behaviors and practices described by the six teachers are included in Table 13.

Table 13

*Teacher Behaviors and Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors and practices identified by teachers</th>
<th># of teachers identifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and enforcing classroom expectations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing feedback to students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering rewards, praise, and positive reinforcements</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring progress</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with parents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing one-to-one status updates</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proctoring assessments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five teachers hailed the district’s adoption of a progress monitoring tool called LanSchool as a vital aid in monitoring student online activity during scheduled lab time. This tool empowered the teachers to redirect off-task behaviors when students drifted to other websites such as music videos, YouTube, or online gaming sites. The sixth teacher
was unsure of how to use the adopted progress monitoring tool and admitted the need for more training. Three of the more experienced teachers mentioned, at some point during the interview, that they had reviewed the modules of each course in which their students were enrolled to help them understand what the students would encounter and said that they took note of problematic areas in preparation to assist students once they began to work in that area. Teachers conducted one-to-one status updates with students, although each teacher seemed to do this differently. Four teachers printed weekly status reports as handouts for students, whereas two others went further by meeting directly with students to review their status and set goals. All six teachers intimated that they assisted students with content for clarity as well as a deeper explanation. Four teachers indicated the possibility of determining during this time that outside assistance was necessary from a content-specific teacher, or more commonly, from special education services.

**Student behaviors and practices.** When discussing behaviors and practices necessary for students to maintain to be successful with Edgenuity courses, teachers noted similar items, as shown in Table 14.
Necessary Student Behaviors and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student behaviors and practices identified by teachers</th>
<th># of teachers identifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diligent use and consistent attendance to scheduled lab time</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus and engagement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent time on task</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely completion of work units within each quarter</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and determination</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting of personal goals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicating work times beyond scheduled lab time</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Traits of successful and unsuccessful students. Collectively, teachers identified several characteristics and actions demonstrated by successful students. Table 15 depicts those characteristics and actions.

Table 15

Characteristics and Actions of Successful Students as Identified by Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful student characteristics and actions</th>
<th># of teachers identifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being responsible</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying sound reading and comprehension skills</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being motivated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying focused</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being notetakers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying independence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being willing to seek assistance/ask questions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a desire to be successful</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successful students may not have the same skill set as honors-level students; however, teachers agreed that students that maintain the identified traits generally are successful.
During various parts of the interview, two of the more experienced teacher participants emphasized that notetaking was the key to student success but admitted that many students had not learned how to take notes effectively.

A collective list of characteristics and actions exhibited by unsuccessful students as identified by teacher participants is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

*Characteristics and Actions of Unsuccessful Students as Identified by Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsuccessful student characteristics and actions</th>
<th># of teachers identifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being a daydreamer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being sleepy (putting head down)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being distracted (playful, talkative, playing games, watching videos)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor attendance (skipping lab times)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to log in daily or consistently</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing accommodations and additional supports</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor notetaking skills</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low reading and comprehension abilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being unmotivated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher participants readily expressed their frustrations regarding unsuccessful student traits, with the most detrimental being poor attendance, including students’ skipping the class altogether or showing up at the beginning of class and then leaving. These students inconsistently logged in to complete work tasks on Edgenuity.

**Strengths and weaknesses of Edgenuity.** According to teacher participant responses, some of the strengths of the program included its ability to teach and challenge students while effectively preparing them for end-of-course standardized assessments. The weaknesses were attributed to online coursework leading to absenteeism and there were mixed feelings about the types of students allowed to enroll in an Edgenuity course. For instance, two teachers expressed strong disagreement with regard to students with
low reading ability and/or students who were repeat violators of school policies being placed in Edgenuity courses they had failed in a traditional setting. They believed that these students required more one-to-one time with a traditional classroom teacher; whereas other teacher participants stated that the one-to-one time and other structures they used in traditional settings also worked with students in the Edgenuity classroom.

Teachers cited the large amounts of unnecessary content in many Edgenuity courses as being problematic. They perceived that the content was “over and above” what was necessary for the curriculum and pacing set within the district. Teachers also advocated for a change in the district’s method of administering the program to students by allowing students to have the “freely-move” option of advancing from lesson to lesson without needing to stop for assessments. They noted that assessments could be scheduled later with the teacher during scheduled lab time. In summary, the strengths were noted as:

- Has the ability to teach with rigor,
- Has the ability to challenge students,
- Prepares students for End of Course tests, and
- Is capable of a ‘freely-move’ option.

The weaknesses are noted as:

- Absenteeism,
- Edgenuity not being appropriate for all students (not a ‘one-size-fits-all’), and
- Unnecessary content within the program.

**Comparisons to traditional classrooms.** All six teachers held positive perceptions about the durability of the Edgenuity program and believed that, given the appropriate online behaviors, students could successfully meet the demands of end-of-course standardized assessments. Two of the teachers opined that the program should not
be administered to students with disabilities; the other four believed these students needed supports in place for successful completion. These sentiments stemmed from their perception that Edgenuity courses offered instruction on an honors level versus an average level. Edgenuity courses were robust and demanding according to the collective thoughts of the six participants. Two teachers asserted that there should be individualized exceptions considered for students to determine if a traditional classroom would be a better fit given behavioral characteristics.

**Implementation suggestions.** One of the more frequent suggestions, offered by four of the six teachers, advocated for a content review of most subjects, particularly English and social studies. Teachers perceived that those subject areas contained large amounts of content that could be eliminated to align more closely with the district’s curriculum and pacing. Every teacher supported the “freely-move” option that allowed students to proceed from lesson to lesson without being stopped to take assessments. Once students reported to their scheduled lab times, they could then receive their proctored assessments.

**RQ2**

What are the perceptions of participating 12th-grade students regarding the value of the Edgenuity program in terms of its effectiveness for student academic success?

Evaluation Question 2 was addressed using a student survey of senior students, each enrolled in an Edgenuity course, which focused on their perceptions of the online high school program as it functioned at UHS. The survey was created using Qualtrics and field tested with a group of four Edgenuity students. The field-tested group provided feedback, requesting shortened questions and, where possible, statement options using
the first person for clarity and comprehension. The survey consisted of 12 questions, providing a Likert scale for each response.

Survey Questions 1-3. The first three questions were demographic in nature to ensure the accuracy of the survey population selected:

- All were identified as 2018 cohort members, although a few had not yet been promoted to the 12th grade pending credits earned via Edgenuity.
- Student participants identified English, math, science, social studies, and electives as courses they had taken on Edgenuity.
- On average, students had experienced 1.5 years of courses on Edgenuity.

Survey Question 4. In general, how well do you agree with the following statement: “I typically prefer courses on Edgenuity versus being in a classroom with a live teacher.”

The majority of surveyed students preferred taking an online Edgenuity course instead of a course in a classroom with a live teacher, with 71.7% responding with an agreeable response, 10% neutral, and 18.3% with a disagreeable response, as depicted in Figure 3 and Table 17.
Survey Question 4: "I prefer Edgenuity vs the classroom."

Figure 3. Student responses to Survey Question 4.

Table 17

Student Responses to Survey Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 4: I prefer Edgenuity versus the classroom.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response option</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Question 5. In general, how difficult or easy are Edgenuity courses compared to classroom courses with a live teacher?

Of the students surveyed, 48.4% found that courses in the Edgenuity program were easier than courses in a classroom with a live teacher. Only 23.3% of students responded with a difficult response, as shown in Figure 4 and Table 18. It is important to
note that 28.3% of the surveyed students perceived Edgenuity courses to be neither more
difficult nor easier than courses in a classroom with a live teacher.

![Pie chart showing student responses to Survey Question 5.]

*Figure 4. Student responses to Survey Question 5.*

Table 18

**Student Responses to Survey Question 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response option</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely difficult</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat difficult</td>
<td>18.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither easy nor difficult</td>
<td>28.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat easy</td>
<td>21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely easy</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey Question 6.** In thinking about your habits and practices that are
necessary to be successful with Edgenuity coursework, how good are you at managing
time, maintaining focus, taking notes, maintaining self-discipline to remain on task,
setting personal goals or timelines, connecting with other students for help, and working
independently after school hours?
Survey Question 6 was developed based on habits and practices identified as necessary by teachers in a previous UHS survey and from the research of Clark and Barbour (2015), and Cavanaugh et al. (2004). Students considered how well they maintained online habits and practices conducive to success, as shown in Figure 5. These habits and practices included the following:

- Managing time
- Maintaining focus
- Taking notes
- Maintaining self-discipline to remain on task
- Setting personal goals or timelines
- Connecting with other students for help
- Working independently after school hours

In averaging the student responses regarding all habits and practices, 62.48% of student responses fell within the all or most option, indicating that they maintained the habits and practices all of the time or most of the time. More than a fourth (26.11%) indicated an overall response of some of the time, whereas 11.38% of the students provided an overall response of rarely or never. These averages of students’ overall responses to this survey question omitted the practice of “connecting with other students for help” due to UHS policies that refrained from promoting a practice that might cause integrity issues; the majority of students provided responses of rarely or never regarding this particular area. According to student responses, the top three online habits and practices necessary to maintain success are managing time, maintaining focus, and having self-discipline to remain on task (see Figure 5).
Figure 5. Student responses to Survey Question 6.

Survey Question 7. How helpful is it for teachers to do the following: frequent check-ins, regular feedback, praise and encouragement, scheduled lab time with the teacher, teacher to monitor use of time on task, teacher to set goals and timelines?

On the survey, students were asked to consider the habits and practices of the teacher. These habits and practices included the following, as depicted in Figure 6:

- Frequent check-ins with the student
- Regular feedback from the teacher
- Praise and encouragement from the teacher
- Scheduled lab time with a teacher
- Time on task monitored by the teacher
- Goals and timelines set by the teacher

Summarization of the student responses to this question revealed that, overall, 76.7% of the surveyed students found these teacher habits and practices to be helpful,
whereas 23.3% of the responses were neutral or indicated that students considered the habits and practices to be not helpful. It is important to note that the two areas in which students found the teacher habits and practices to be the most helpful were receiving regular teacher feedback and goals and timelines set by the teacher. More than 80% of student responses were favorable regarding these areas.

![Figure 6. Students’ responses to Survey Question 7.](image)

**Survey Question 8.** In thinking about the processes that are necessary to be successful with Edgenuity, please evaluate each of the following: I like one course loaded into Edgenuity at a time, I like all of my courses loaded at one time, I like being provided with school computer and Internet access, I like being provided with technical support, I like being able to move freely through the Edgenuity program without having to wait for teacher reviews, I like having a teacher review my work before I move forward to the next task.
Regarding the method by which program administrators load courses required to student accounts, student responses were nearly evenly split: 55% of the students preferred having one course at a time loaded to their Edgenuity accounts. This method allows students with multiple required course enrollments to work on one course until its completion before another course is loaded that the student needs to complete. On the other hand, 46.7% of the students favored having all courses loaded at one time into their student Edgenuity account; these students can work within all courses during the given time period. It is noted that a few (1.7%) of the students selected the response options of extremely necessary or somewhat necessary to both of these questions, thereby reflecting contradictory responses.

With regard to technology, the majority of the surveyed students responded that being provided with a school computer and Internet access was necessary; 86.7% of the students regarded this as extremely necessary or somewhat necessary. Being provided with technical support such as help with login issues and broken laptops elicited a similar response rate: 81.7% of students rated the practice as extremely necessary or somewhat necessary. Student responses to Survey Question 8 are presented in Table 19.
Students were asked about the “freely-move” method by which Edgenuity administrators can allow students to move through the program while bypassing assessments that can then be taken when proctoring is available; 93.3% of the students responded that the option was extremely necessary or somewhat necessary. In contrast, students still liked the idea of a teacher reviewing their work, with 66.7% of students perceiving the practice to be either extremely necessary or somewhat necessary.

**Survey Question 9.** Which obstacle gets in the way of learning on Edgenuity more often; rank in order from 1 to 7 with 1 being the obstacle that happens the most and 7 being the obstacle that happens the least.

Student responses to Survey Question 9 are depicted in Figure 7.
Survey Question 10. After completing your Edgenuity courses, how prepared do you feel for End-of-Course tests or Standards of Learning?

Approximately 45.9% of the surveyed students felt extremely or mostly prepared for their end-of-course assessments and 36.1% felt moderately prepared, as shown in Figure 8. This finding is an important reflection of the students’ confidence in the program’s ability to teach the students and foster their ability to sustain what was learned. On the other hand, the table also shows that approximately 18% of the students did not feel prepared for end-of-course assessments.
Survey Question 11. Overall, how helpful or unhelpful was your Edgenuity teacher?

An overwhelming 82% of student responses noted that the Edgenuity teacher was extremely to somewhat helpful, as depicted in Figure 9. This finding speaks to the vitality of maintaining a licensed teacher as the Edgenuity facilitator. Approximately 12% of students were indifferent as to whether or not the teacher was helpful, whereas only about 7% believed the teacher was not helpful during their course.
Figure 9. Student responses to Survey Question 11.

Survey Question 12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Edgenuity program?

Students, overall, appeared to be satisfied with the Edgenuity program as implemented by UHS, with approximately 82% indicating being extremely or somewhat satisfied, as shown in Figure 10. The responses of approximately 15% of the students indicated indifference overall, whereas only 3% were extremely dissatisfied.
RQ3

What do trend-line data demonstrate for the graduation rate of 12th-grade Edgenuity program students during the five-year period 2013-2014 through 2017-2018?

The graduation trend data include all senior students enrolled in any Edgenuity course during their graduation cohort year from 2013-2014SY to 2017-2018SY. The data presented here display the percentage of senior students enrolled in an Edgenuity course that either graduated within 4 years or did not graduate from high school by June of their graduation cohort year, as shown in Figure 11 and Table 20. It is important to note the overall growth from 2013-2014SY to 2017-2018SY, indicated by a 23.17% increase in students graduating by June of their cohort year.
**Figure 11.** Graduation trend data.

Table 20

**Graduation Trend Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>% graduating</th>
<th>% not graduated by June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>68.24</td>
<td>31.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>78.21</td>
<td>21.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>84.48</td>
<td>14.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>88.60</td>
<td>11.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>91.41</td>
<td>8.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction of these graduation data revealed other valuable trend data regarding absences, GPAs, and credits earned, which provide a snapshot of the students enrolled in Edgenuity courses across the five-year period; these data are depicted in Table 21. This
Table indicates a decrease in the average days absent over a 5-year period, an increased graduation percentage, and a slight increase in the mean GPA. However, students earned fewer credits over time due to the varying initiatives in place for student recovery each school year.

To further understand the absentee averages, it is important to understand that the data in Table 21 represent a 4-year average for senior students enrolled in Edgenuity courses in each cohort year for the past 5 years. In a given school year, a student was allowed no more than 10 days of absences; more than 10 days resulted in a student’s being considered truant in that given school year. A senior’s 4-year cohort absentee average of 50 days in 2013-2014 would mean that this senior had been considered truant one or more of the years he or she attended high school. A senior’s 4-year cohort absentee average of 44 days in 2017-2018 would mean that there had been a decrease in overall absenteeism in the 4-year period since 2013-2014; however, this statistic would still be unacceptably high in that the student would have been considered truant one or more of the years he or she attended high school.

Table 21

*Graduation Trend Data Regarding Absences, GPAs, and Credits Earned*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Mean days absent</th>
<th>% graduating by June</th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
<th>Total credits earned on Edgenuity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>135.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 604 total credits earned by seniors in the cohorts from 2013-2014 to 2017-2018, the majority of the credits were earned in math and elective courses. Science was noted to have the fewest credits earned, as shown in Table 22.

Table 22

Credits Earned by Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total credits</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social studies</th>
<th>Elective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>604</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Technology in education has transcended brick and mortar buildings and extends its lessons into the homes of children everywhere via online educational programming. Urban High School in Sample City Schools has been at the forefront of embracing online courses in an effort to meet the needs of all students and aid in students’ graduating within four years of their entrance into the ninth grade. The findings of this evaluation reflect the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the Edgenuity online program used for this purpose.

Summary of Findings

The study found that, overall, both teachers and students were satisfied with the Edgenuity program as implemented at UHS, and the graduation trend data indicated increased graduation rates over a 5-year period. Teachers particularly appreciated the rigor, alignment, and thorough curriculum content of the program. Student responses indicated that they preferred an Edgenuity course over a traditional course with a live teacher, and they perceived the Edgenuity courses to be easier. Both teachers and students believed the program prepared students for end-of-course assessments.

Based upon the perceptions of teachers and students, the program requires attention in various areas. Teachers seemed to agree that regular student attention to the demands of the program was lacking. They reported that students did not attend scheduled lab time regularly and consistently. Teachers also perceived that additional
services and resources were needed for students with disabilities. They cited the students’ needs for one-to-one assistance, such as read-aloud accommodations and regular clarifications or the need to speak to a licensed content area teacher for a particular subject to attain a better understanding of concepts presented in the program. All teachers noted that Edgenuity contained much more curriculum content than required, some of which needed to be filtered out. Students were passionate about having a “freely-move” option to have the ability to access the program in its entirety without being forced to stop until an assessment is proctored. Teachers and students noted behaviors that presented barriers to the effective administration of and progress with the Edgenuity program, with loss of focus, distractions, and inconsistent notetaking, as well as truancy, being the most often cited barriers.

Teachers and students agreed that the following behaviors promoted success with the Edgenuity program:

- Goal setting
- Teacher check-ins/praise/motivators
- Feedback, including teacher monitoring
- Structures to eliminate distractions and promote focus
- Services in place for students with learning needs

Students noted these areas as obstacles they faced, whereas teachers discussed the importance of these behaviors and practices to students’ successful and timely completion of any Edgenuity course.

The five-year graduation trend data indicate Edgenuity’s effect with regard to an increased on-time graduation rate. Student grade point averages also reflected an overall increase along with slight decreases in truancy, thereby impacting student success in
Edgenuity courses. The number of credits earned over time decreased, whereas students tended to be enrolled more often in math and elective courses. The greatest unexpected results of this study are the findings about absenteeism of students enrolled in Edgenuity courses. Absenteeism emerged as an important issue from the study. Although there were decreases over the 5-year period, 2013-2014SY to 2017-2018SY, the number of absences per student enrolled in an Edgenuity course remained extremely high. More students were graduating within a 4-year period; however, fewer students were enrolled in Edgenuity courses in 2017-2018 than in 2013-2014. This trend is attributed to the state guidelines for verified credits being changed to allow the district to award locally verified credits needed to meet graduation requirements, given certain criteria, thereby reducing the need for recovery and enrollment in Edgenuity courses. Administration had also decreased Edgenuity enrollment by targeting students with extreme difficulties and providing them with one-to-one teacher support in an evening alternative intervention to recoup missed credits for graduation.

As students began to recover missed credits, they strengthened the overall mean GPA of UHS Edgenuity students over time. Brophy (1998) asserted that students who are empowered are motivated to achieve success. When students began to maintain credits needed to graduate, they became motivated to follow through with all coursework, thus increasing their GPAs by eliminating failures. Graduation trend data further indicated that students were enrolled in Edgenuity math courses more often than any other core subject area across the five-year period. Based on this finding, it appears that math is a subject requiring supports that allow students to be successful the first time they encounter the subject. Students were also enrolled in electives more often than any one subject overall. At UHS, students failing core subjects as early as Grades 9 and 10 were
typically re-enrolled in that course in a traditional setting. This practice eliminated their participation in an elective; therefore, they were later placed in an online Edgenuity elective course to gain the necessary credits for graduation.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study focused on teacher and student perceptions along with graduation trend data across the past five years; the collected data suggest shifts in the school’s reliance on use of the Edgenuity program. The school’s enrollment of students in an Edgenuity course had decreased over time. Teachers intimated that other interventions, such as night school, where students meet with teachers face-to-face for reteaching and retesting were in place. State guidelines that affect verified credit requirements for graduation also had had an impact on the decreased enrollment in Edgenuity courses by allowing students to receive locally verified credits that satisfy graduation requirements according to specified guidelines.

There were unexpected findings in the review of the Edgenuity program over time. One major finding highlighted the issue of absenteeism. Although this evaluation’s focus concerns the perceptions of teachers and students, the fluctuation of students’ attendance was bought to light when examining the graduation trend data. This trend is important to note due to the tremendous impact of absenteeism on education and learning decisions made by school leaders. Interviewed teachers noted issues with regular and consistent attendance, and this finding supports their claims.

Overall, the data suggest that over time the school had become more selective with the placement of students in Edgenuity courses and was using other interventions to assist those not enrolled in Edgenuity courses. Future research could define this selection process and/or compare all interventions in place at the school to determine effectiveness.
of the interventions in general or to determine the effectiveness of each intervention with regard to a particular population. Overall, teachers and students appeared to be satisfied with the Edgenuity program given its rigor, specific teacher and student behaviors and practices in place, and concise curriculum alignment.

The recommendations provided are based on the results of the study in conjunction with extensive research regarding best practices for online learning coupled with the perceptions of teacher and student study participants, as well as the graduation trend data. In Table 23, recommendations are presented as identified as a policy recommendation or a practice recommendation. These recommendations seek to improve upon what UHS has already successfully established with the use of Edgenuity within their district, such as Internet access and laptops or online devices that allow students ability to access their courses online. Teachers and students appreciated the one-to-one initiative at the high school that provided every student with a laptop. They also had successfully maintained a virtual and physical classroom that was necessary to engage students and allow for connections and interactions with others (Cavanaugh et al., 2016).

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

The data from this study reflect a shared view from teachers and students regarding the Edgenuity program as it was functioning within UHS. They identified barriers to student success, with absenteeism being the most notable. Another barrier related to the need for additional supports for students with learning problems. Teachers and students agreed on commonalities necessary for success, such as the ability to maintain focus, elimination of distractions, receipt of teacher feedback, and goal setting. What this study unintentionally revealed were the inconsistencies within the Edgenuity
lab sessions from teacher to teacher. Students might experience very different classroom expectations and procedures from teacher to teacher. For example, one teacher stated that after 4 p.m. she would not review and release a student to move to another module until the next school day; whereas, all other teachers developed their own student-to-teacher notification process that allowed a student to contact the teacher after hours to continue to work on their online courses throughout the evening. There also were differences in perspective regarding the responsibilities of teachers and students. Teachers tended to believe that students should maintain independent efforts in eliminating distractions, staying on task, seeking assistance, remaining motivated, and goal setting. Students tended to rely heavily on teachers’ guidance and prompts to maintain these behaviors and practices.

Structure and consistency are vital to the program’s continued success. The program appears to be an aligned, robust learning tool that may need adjustments based on the needs of students. These types of adjustments would need to be in place for students to have success in meeting graduation requirements using this learning environment. To complement the program in place, teacher, student, and parent professional development and training should occur prior to the start of an online class. Building relationships and providing feedback are key for all involved, including administration and parents. Based on the study findings, the continuation and maintenance of all technology enhancements, such as LanSchool, are suggested to aid in monitoring, as is the one-to-one initiative allowing an assigned laptop to each student.

Change and transition are needed to adopt an attendance structure specifically for attendance in an online environment, to adopt the “freely-move” option to which students were exposed to during holiday breaks, and to adjust the curriculum within the Edgenuity
program. Based on the graduation trend data, it may be wise to review the traditional math classrooms to determine how to decrease the failure rate of students taking math, given the higher online Edgenuity enrollments in math courses. A review of the overall enrollment decline overtime suggests that other interventions had taken the place of Edgenuity. A future study could be conducted to determine how Edgenuity is being used within UHS, thereby allowing decision makers the ability to either maximize its use or review other intervention options and their values. Table 23 outlines the implications from this study for policy and practice.
### Practices and Expectations

- Teachers should build sound relationships with students when developing and incorporating goals and expectations that emphasize specific time frames for task completion (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008).
- Teachers and administrators need to develop structures, such as frequent check-ins or one-to-one scheduled consultations, to reduce off-task student behaviors.
- Teacher-to-student feedback is necessary to motivate students during student progress monitoring for the success of the program.
- Apply structures for students that promote time management and maintenance of their ability to focus and self-discipline (Clark & Barbour, 2015).
- Provide access to and allow for supports to those with learning difficulties or other obstacles that impede learning (Carr, 2014).

### Policies and Procedures

- Develop a system that targets absenteeism specifically for students enrolled in Edgenuity courses and relative scheduling procedures that include options for early completers that simplify online learning attendance expectations and management.
- Include the “freely-move” option that allows an uninterrupted, linear progression through the program.
- Teachers and administrators should adjust all program subjects when needed to reduce unnecessary material or content and activities that do not align with the district’s curriculum and pacing as it has done with the Math program.
- Administration should provide professional development that aids in teacher understanding of the course content and online facilitation of online classes to include online classroom specific observations and follow-up feedback and training.
- Policy must be developed to regularly review and make learning adaptable to 21st Century learning while addressing how to adopt and apply new technology alternatives that may not fit the traditional school structures.

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**Practices and Expectations**

All teachers noted and agreed upon the following as “must-have” behaviors and practices of an Edgenuity teacher: progress monitoring, one-to-one status updates, and
proctoring assessments. During most interviews, the school’s use of the software, LanSchool, was described as instrumental in monitoring students during scheduled lab time to ensure that they were maximizing their 90-minute session with the Edgenuity course. Teachers admitted that the adoption of this software had afforded teachers with the ability to decrease disruptions such as gaming, movie watching, unrelated web surfing, shopping, and other distractions. Due to the inconsistencies in which teachers facilitated their individual online classes there appeared to be varied classroom expectations and structures in place among the teachers interviewed as seen with status updates, goal setting, student feedback, notetaking requirements, and methods to seeking outside assistance.

In maintaining the three practices: progress monitoring, one-to-one status updates, and proctoring assessments; teachers were able to break the isolation barrier described by Sutton (2013) as a contributing factor to students’ feeling overwhelmed with online coursework. Teacher support and interaction were key. Other teacher tasks noted as important included regular feedback as well as rewards and praise. For example, two teachers reported more consistent success in getting their assigned students to complete courses through Edgenuity. They attributed this success to regular and consistent goal setting in smaller chunks of time. These teachers described scenarios in which students met weekly with the teacher to review their status and set goals, while students competed among each other to meet their weekly goals. This description lends itself to Wenger’s (1998) social learning theory, which declares that the social aspect of learning has a strong impact on the learning process. This aspect involves establishing sound student-teacher relationships, providing regular and specific feedback to students, and students’ interacting positively among peers. Two teachers detailed in their interviews these
factors in conjunction with setting classroom expectations stating that they rarely had absentee issues. In most instances, these aspects were implied in some manner within all teachers’ experiences with progress monitoring and one-to-one student assistance. The recommendations provided, however, took into consideration that not all teachers were regular and consistent with these aspects.

For success with the Edgenuity courses, all teachers stressed the importance of students’ being determined and motivated. Three teachers discussed their direct involvement in keeping students motivated, whereas the others mentioned this necessity as solely a student-driven behavior. In this regard, a rewards system and praise were mentioned in the interviews. The teachers also stressed that students became motivated when meeting or exceeding their weekly goals. Other consistently mentioned behaviors and practices required of students to meet success included regular attendance and use of lab time, self-discipline and focus, and benchmarked progress in each semester of school. Teachers agreed that having a scheduled lab time was essential to students’ completing courses on Edgenuity. One teacher that had used Edgenuity in a summer school setting noted that summer school allowed students to work from home with no scheduled lab time. She stated that of the non-senior students assigned to her, none had completed their coursework over the summer, which she attributed to their not having scheduled lab time. Teachers commonly agreed, as well, that students must be self-disciplined and focused to be able to engage independently for lengthy periods with the dense amounts of curriculum content. Teachers noted that students who were unsuccessful with Edgenuity course content were often sent back to more face-to-face interventions. They admitted that it was helpful for students to have strong reading skills and to be good notetakers. Taking notes assists with focus and allows reinforcement of key items learned.
Consequently, students that took notes were less likely to have to retake assessments, having passed them on the initial attempt.

The majority of the surveyed students preferred online Edgenuity courses over the traditional face-to-face courses. Students’ perceptions of course difficulty level were split, with half of the respondents perceiving it to be easier than a traditional course and the other half considering Edgenuity to be either more difficult or about the same as a traditional course. Teachers were accepting of student feelings of ease with the program as a motivating factor but maintained that the program was very rigorous. The portion of students’ identifying the online program as difficult aligned with teachers’ responses regarding the portion of students in each class session that struggled due to reading difficulties and other learning problems. Although teachers reflected strong confidence in student abilities to pass end-of-course standardized assessments, student views seemed to waver. Teachers noted that the majority of their students did, in fact, pass their end-of-course assessments. It must be further noted, however, that the majority of students enrolled in an online course would have taken the course at least twice; thus, more research would be needed to determine Edgenuity’s effect on standardized assessments.

Student perceptions indicated a strong reliance on teacher-driven practices and motivations, whereas half of the interviewed teachers thought students needed to be much more independent and self-reliant to meet success. UHS maintained a licensed teacher for all Edgenuity lab sessions, which was key given students’ overwhelming response about the helpfulness of their Edgenuity teacher. Students’ responses indicated their desire for regular interaction with the teacher, to include feedback, regular check-ins, and reviews of their work. With regard to teacher practices that allowed students to be successful, teacher feedback was the most valued practice, followed by frequent check-
ins and teachers’ setting goals for students based on a review of student work and progress. It is interesting to note that teachers valued one-to-one updates with students and progress monitoring although only two teachers extended this further by stressing the importance of relationship building. This pair of teachers viewed relationship building as wholly separate and more complex than one-to-one status updates, which they considered to be a factor in motivating students to desire success in their online courses.

In their responses, many students admitted to being distracted and unable to focus, identifying these factors as barriers to online learning. Their survey responses indicated that having better time management, as well as an ability to focus and to remain on task were most important for being successful in an Edgenuity course; this perception was shared by the teachers. Four teachers stressed the importance of notetaking, whereas students perceived notetaking to be the least important practice. Another difference in perceptions dealt with goal setting. Student responses deemed goal setting to be an important practice; however, only half of the interviewed teachers stressed goal setting as a mandatory, weekly routine that contributed to student success.

Teachers, overall, were satisfied with the rigorous program, given that additional efforts are provided for students with learning difficulties and important focus areas for effective implementation are acknowledged. Students, overall, were satisfied with the Edgenuity program, while acknowledging the necessary responsibilities required of an Edgenuity student. Structure and consistency are necessary to improve the Edgenuity program at UHS, to align each online class session with a common standard and expectation for all online students.

**Recommendation 1.** Teachers should build sound relationships with students when developing and incorporating goals and expectations that emphasize specific time
frames for task completion (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008). Teachers reported increased student participation and timely completion when goals were in place with weekly deadlines and while the teacher had established trusting relationships among the students. Having students produce goals to meet within smaller chunks of time, such as weekly versus by the end of a quarter or semester, is suggested based on teacher input. One teacher cited a routine she used through which she met with each student on a Monday, allowing the student to indicate the particular point within the program the student aspired to reach by Friday. This goal was written down and posted on a bulletin board. Students were rewarded when they reached their goal. This teacher also reported that, using this method, 100% of the students assigned to her completed all of their Edgenuity courses prior to June of their graduating year.

**Recommendation 2.** Teachers and administrators need to develop structures, such as frequent check-ins or one-to-one scheduled consultations with students, to reduce off-task student behaviors. Having regularly scheduled consultations with students diminishes their feelings of isolation while working in a course (Cavanaugh et al., 2016). Applying structures for students that promote time management and maintenance of their ability to focus and self-discipline (Clark & Barbour, 2015) aids in teaching students the appropriate behaviors for online learning and allows them to practice the routines.

**Recommendation 3.** Teacher-to-student feedback is necessary to motivate students during student progress monitoring for the success of the program. Teachers noted that providing feedback seemed to keep students engaged in their online learning, whereas students appreciated the interaction and relationship with the teacher.

**Recommendation 4.** Apply structures for students that promote time management and maintenance of their ability to focus and self-discipline (Clark &
Barbour, 2015). This process teaches students the appropriate behaviors for online learning and allows them to practice the routines. To do this, teachers should have common classroom expectations and routines that are enforced consistently allowing for uniformity to maintain the integrity of the program.

**Recommendation 5.** As necessary, provide access to and allow for supports to those with learning difficulties or other obstacles that impede learning (Carr, 2014). Putting structures in place for students with disabilities or learning difficulties should at least equal the effort in place in a traditional classroom, such as having an instructional assistant.

**Policies and Procedures**

The recommendations requiring change and transition will involve decision makers at the district level that target absenteeism, adopts the freely-move option, the review of course content, online professional development, and processes that consider emerging technologies. These recommendations will require adoptions of new policies and procedures specific to online learning and technological alternative learning models that may not fit within the traditional learning environment.

The data clearly indicate that both groups were satisfied with the Edgenuity program with regard to their confidence in the durability of the content and instruction; however, they identified barriers to student success, with absenteeism being the most notable. Of all the obstacles that caused students to be unsuccessful with Edgenuity coursework, teachers were most passionate and united in citing poor attendance as a major barrier for student success. Teachers in their various commentaries described instances in which students did not become motivated to attend regularly until the school year was about to end. Two teachers singled out the school’s lack of attendance policies
specific to online classrooms and discrepancies in scheduling that provided students with two or more lab sessions in one day as contributing factors to student absenteeism. With each lab session lasting 90 minutes, this finding reflected students’ lack of endurance for longer lab sessions. Another teacher voiced a concern about students who completed courses early in the school year yet remained in the scheduled lab period for the remainder of the school year, thereby encouraging disruptions and skipping of lab sessions by non-completers. Another teacher observed further that non-graduating seniors or underclassmen tended to skip class or not attend regularly because they understood that there would be additional opportunities to complete the missed coursework in subsequent high school years until their graduation. Teachers offered possible solutions, such as a school map of interventions to aid in the selection and alignment of students to the most appropriate intervention to regain required graduation credits, when Edgenuity Online coursework might not be the first line of intervention strategies. They also suggested that an alternative scheduling method be developed for students enrolled in online courses, which would allow them to leave the lab session once all coursework was completed.

Student survey responses advocated for a “freely-move” option that allowed them the independence to move through the Edgenuity coursework without having to rely on and wait a teacher’s consent to move from one module to the next. With this option, students still would have all assessments proctored by teachers. It is notable that after the survey was given, students e-mailed administration, left voice messages, and sent notes advocating for this option; it appears that this notion was their noted take-away from participating in the survey. Students, however, complimented the school in distributing
an assigned laptop to each student for their use each school year, which made online learning more accessible and promoted a continuous work flow.

All teachers agreed upon the rigor of Edgenuity courses and the challenge they present, with some perceiving that the courses were at an honors level, thereby creating at times another barrier: excessive amounts of content packed into a given course. Although teachers thought the Edgenuity courses were well aligned, they maintained that they contained more information than necessary for achievement requirements, thereby causing students to lose interest quickly and have difficulty in maintaining focus. Edgenuity representatives stated that districts had been given the ability to adjust content in the programs to assist with this issue. Narrowing content for conciseness would allow for teachers to motivate students to improve notetaking, maintain attendance as interest increases, decrease disruptions and behavioral problems, and focus on students with lower reading abilities and greater learning needs.

Teachers acknowledged that there was a lack of observable moments and regular feedback from administration as with traditional classrooms. Some noted that having observation expectations would align each online classroom providing more consistency in online classroom environments from teacher to teacher. Teachers noted that at times they lacked confidence with some subjects taken by students and lacked formal online course training. Having well-trained online teachers or certified teacher in online instruction supports and strengthens the Edgenuity program overall and student progress. Teachers perceived that having confidence in this area would allow them to avoid having to seek other educators as often.

Graduating cohorts of Edgenuity students have increasingly been afforded the ability to graduate by June of their cohort year with successful completion of courses
through the Edgenuity program. This, however, could change as emerging technologies are introduced. UHS’s enrollment of students on Edgenuity appears to have declined over time with alternative interventions such as a night school program, and due to state changes in how credits are awarded to graduates. Methods of regular review and considerations of new technologies as relevant to the current needs of their students are vital.

**Recommendation 6.** Develop a system that targets absenteeism specifically for students enrolled in Edgenuity courses and relative scheduling procedures that include options for early completers that simplify online learning attendance expectations and management. A system that targets absenteeism should be developed and tailored specifically for the Edgenuity program as it has been described by teachers as a unique educational setting that cannot be administered with the same processes and procedures as a traditional classroom. Applying traditional classroom attendance procedures has been problematic for teachers in maintaining appropriate structures for an online course that promotes consistent attendance. The data revealed that students enrolled in an Edgenuity course typically averaged a high rate of absenteeism. Creating an online attendance system to decrease this factor will strengthen student performance and completion. This system should begin with the manner in which students are scheduled and enrolled in Edgenuity courses and provide options after courses are completed. Some options to consider could be community service projects, community college coursework, and work-study opportunities that could be on or off campus.

**Recommendation 7.** Allow for the “freely-move” option that provides an uninterrupted, linear progression through the program. According to teachers, students were able to retain information by avoiding the interruption and wait time of having to
take a proctored test before being allowed to move forward to the next module. Both teachers and students advocated for this method of administering the program.

**Recommendation 8.** Teachers and administrators should adjust all program subjects when needed to reduce unnecessary material, content, and activities that do not align with the district’s curriculum and pacing as it has done with the Math program. Teachers should then review courses prior to facilitating a course to understand the content and curriculum presentation. Such preparation provides students with a ready and available resource when clarity is needed. All teachers intimated that most of the Edgenuity courses contained an overabundance of unnecessary content information that could be eliminated. In doing so, many agreed that the English and social studies courses would hold student interest and promote successful completion of these courses more often.

**Recommendation 9.** Administration should provide professional development that aids in teacher understanding of the course content and online facilitation of online classes to include online classroom specific observations and follow-up feedback and training. It is noted that there is a structured process and procedure for tradition classroom observations and evaluations that involves elements that promote coaching conversations. Online classrooms require professional development and an observation process that is specific to this unique learning environment.

**Recommendation 10.** Policy must be developed to regularly review and make learning adaptable to 21st Century learning while addressing how to adopt and apply new technology alternatives that may not fit the traditional school structures. This recommendation is primarily for the district to consider for review and adoption consideration of emerging technologies that may be better suited to target the learning
needs of future cohorts of students. With a process in place to evaluate technology in use and to determine the effectiveness of this technology as applied to the various models of online learning the district will remain at the forefront of 21st Century learning when providing the best alternatives to the traditional classroom.

**Summary**

In an effort to take Edgenuity to the next level as it is in place at UHS, the focus areas in general revolve around increasing appropriate student behaviors that promote timely, successful completion of the Edgenuity course. For attainment of this goal, structures must be in place to promote welcoming, safe, online learning environments that adopt and apply best practices of online learning environments that may be different than a traditional setting. Teachers must build sound relationships with students to develop a wrap-around intervention environment that transcends the scheduled lab time and motivates students to work independently after school hours. Specific tasks that need to occur to promote these behaviors include the following: goal setting, teacher check-ins, student-teacher feedback, teacher-administration feedback, and strategies for focusing. Another initiative should involve providing supports and accommodations for special education students to allow equal access for all learners.

Decision makers can further facilitate the Edgenuity program by choosing to support the program in a variety of ways. Given the tremendous issue with absenteeism found in this study, it is important for UHS to target resources and time to develop a system that is specific to teacher management of attendance for an online course as well as adjusting their scheduling practices throughout the school year for students enrolled in online courses. This change could include opportunities for students that complete courses early, such as community service projects, community college coursework, or
work-study. This study also found that participants advocated for the adoption of the “freely-move” option which motivated students to work beyond school hours. This option promotes student engagement by allowing for uninterrupted time-on-task sessions and compliments their being assigned a laptop for use during the school year. After tailoring the course content to align with the district’s pacing and curriculum, hosting regular professional development opportunities that train teachers in establishing and implementing this curriculum in an online learning environment is highly recommended to ensure qualified teachers and effective practices where common expectations can be observed among all online classroom environments within the school. After providing regular reviews of programs in place, a final consideration should involve a standard process in reviewing and adopting emerging technologies that may be better suited to the current needs of students and learning alternatives to the traditional environments that keep pace with 21st Century learning.
APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY

Q1 Current grade level?

▼ Select One (1) ... Senior (5)

Q2 How many years have you been enrolled in Edgenuity courses?

▼ 1 (1) ... 4 (4)

Q3 What courses are you currently enrolled in or have you previously taken on Edgenuity?

▢ Math (1)

▢ English (2)

▢ Science (3)

▢ Social Studies (4)

▢ Electives (Example: PE/Health/Art/Foreign Language/Marketing) (5)

Q4 In general, how well do you agree with the following statement: "I typically prefer courses on Edgenuity versus being in a classroom with a live teacher."

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Somewhat agree (2)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

○ Somewhat disagree (4)

○ Strongly disagree (5)
Q5 In general, how difficult or easy are Edgenuity courses compared to classroom courses with a live teacher?

- Extremely difficult (1)
- Somewhat difficult (2)
- Neither easy nor difficult (3)
- Somewhat easy (4)
- Extremely easy (5)
Q6 In thinking about your habits and practices that are necessary to be successful with Edgenuity coursework, how good are you at...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All of the time (1)</th>
<th>Most of the time (2)</th>
<th>Some of the time (3)</th>
<th>Rarely (4)</th>
<th>Never (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing your time? (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining your focus? (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes? (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining self-discipline to remain on task? (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting personal goals or timelines? (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with other students for help? (6)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working independently after school hours? (7)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q7 How helpful is it for teachers to do the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Extremely helpful (1)</th>
<th>Very helpful (2)</th>
<th>Neither necessary nor unnecessary (3)</th>
<th>Rarely helpful (4)</th>
<th>Never helpful (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent check-ins with you (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive feedback from the teacher regularly (2)</td>
<td>▼ Extremely helpful (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving praise and encouragement from the teacher (3)</td>
<td>▼ Extremely helpful (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being provided scheduled lab time with a teacher (4)</td>
<td>▼ Extremely helpful (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a teacher monitor your use of time on task (5)</td>
<td>▼ Extremely helpful (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a teacher set goals and timelines for you (6)</td>
<td>▼ Extremely helpful (1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q8 In thinking about the processes that are necessary to be successful with Edgenuity, please evaluate each of the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Extremely necessary (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat necessary (2)</th>
<th>Neither necessary nor unnecessary (3)</th>
<th>Rarely necessary (4)</th>
<th>Never necessary (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like one course loaded into Edgenuity at a time (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I like all of my courses loaded at one time (2)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I like being provided with school computer and internet access (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I like being provided with technical support (like log in issues, broken laptop) (4)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I like being able to move freely through the Edgenuity program without having to wait for teacher reviews. (5)

I like having a teacher review my work before I move forward to the next task. (6)
Q9 Which obstacle gets in the way of learning on Edgenuity more often; rank in order from 1 to 7 with 1 being the obstacle that happens the most and 7 being the obstacle that happens the least.

- I get distracted/daydream/fall asleep (1)
- I am unable to focus (2)
- I do not log in daily (3)
- I do not work on Edgenuity once I leave school. (4)
- I do not receive teacher feedback (5)
- I have technology issues (6)
- I have to wait for a period of time for teacher reviews to move forward (7)

Q10 After completing your Edgenuity courses, how prepared do you feel for End-of-Course tests or SOLs?

- Extremely prepared (1)
- Mostly prepared (2)
- Moderately prepared (3)
- A little prepared (4)
- Not prepared at all (5)

Q11 Overall how helpful or unhelpful was your Edgenuity teacher?

- Extremely helpful (1)
- Somewhat helpful (2)
- Neither helpful or unhelpful (3)
- Somewhat unhelpful (4)
- Not helpful at all (5)

Q12 Overall, how satisfied are you with the Edgenuity course program?
- Extremely satisfied (1)
- Somewhat satisfied (2)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)
- Somewhat dissatisfied (4)
- Extremely dissatisfied (5)
APPENDIX B

STUDENT LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear [Edgenuity Student],

As a doctoral student of the College of William and Mary, I am conducting a research study of student perceptions of the Edgenuity program at your school regarding its effectiveness, and implementation.

This research study has been approved by the Division’s Office of Research, Planning, and Evaluation and the principal of your school. I would like to give a survey providing you with the opportunity to share your experiences with the Edgenuity program. Survey questions will focus on the program’s effectiveness in regard to instruction, student learning, learner outcomes, and the implementation process. Students were selected based on their status as a senior within this school that has taken courses on Edgenuity.

Your survey responses will remain confidential. The survey will take approximately 6 minutes. If you agree to participate, Titinesha Llewellyn will send you a letter with further information and will provide a date and time to take the survey during your Edgenuity class in February 2018.

Are you willing to participate in this survey for the research study?

___I am willing (or I am willing to allow my child) to participate in this survey for the research study.

___I do not wish (or I do not wish for my child) to participate in this survey for the research study.

Please provide your name and email address below:

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Email: ____________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian (under 18 years old): ________________________________

Parent Email: _____________________________________________________

Thank you,

Titinesha Llewellyn
Doctoral Student, The College of William and Mary

Invitation to Edgenuity Teachers: Consent for Participation in Research Study

Dear [Edgenuity student’s name]:

You recently responded to a letter expressing your willingness to participate in a survey about your perceptions of your experiences with the Edgenuity program. You were selected to take part in a survey based on your response. Very soon, Titinesha Llewellyn, the program evaluator will be contacting you to provide you with the survey during your Edgenuity class.

The information below provides details about the survey. On the day of the survey, you will be asked to sign a consent form containing this same information.

Consent for Participation in a Program Evaluation: This study concerns Edgenuity students’ perceptions of the Edgenuity program. If you are under the age of 18, parental consent must be given for you to participate.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to determine and understand student and teacher perceptions of the Edgenuity program as it functions at your school.

Who is conducting the study: Titinesha Llewellyn is conducting this study to fulfill the doctoral requirements of the Executive EdD in K-12 Administration and Supervision program at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. You may request a copy of the study’s results by sending an email to ttllewellyn@email.wm.edu.

What are you asked to do: By agreeing to participate, Titinesha Llewellyn will provide you with a survey. The survey will provide you an opportunity to share observations, experiences, and feelings about the Edgenuity program and its effects on student learning and growth.

The questions will relate to your educational setting, the practices and implementation of the program, academic successes and concerns. The survey will take about 6 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and passcode protected.

Risks and benefits: There may be minimal psychological discomfort directly involved with this research. Edgenuity is a tool to assist students to meet graduation requirements and your role is vital to that effort. Your contributions will provide educational leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders with evidence-based information about the Edgenuity program as it functions at your school.

Your answers will be confidential. Your participant identity and responses will be kept private. Only the researcher will have access to the records. If you agree to participate, your responses will be stored in a passcode protected online file. Your name, school, or school division will not be associated with any results of this study.
Taking part is voluntary. You do not have to answer every question and may discontinue participating in this study at any time simply by discontinuing the survey. Participation, or the lack of, will not affect your current or future relationship with me as the researcher, or administrator, or with anyone else in the school district.

If you have questions: Contact Titinesha Llewellyn, the researcher at 757-825-4404 or ttllewellyn@email.wm.edu for any questions or problems that arise in connection with participating in this study. You may report dissatisfaction with any aspect of this study to Dr. Thomas Ward, Chair of the Education Institutional Review Committee at 757-221-2358, or tom.ward@wm.edu. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I’ve had. I consent to take part in this study; (if participant is under 18 years of age: I consent for my child to take part in this study).

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Student Name Printed: __________________________________________

Parent Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

Parent Name Printed: __________________________________________

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.
APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear [Edgenuity Teacher],

As a doctoral student of the College of William and Mary, I am conducting a research study of teacher perceptions of the Edgenuity program at your school regarding its effectiveness, and implementation.

This research study has been approved by the Division’s Office of Research, Planning, and Evaluation and the principal of your school. I would like to host an interview providing you with the opportunity to share your experiences with the Edgenuity program. Interview questions will focus on the program’s effectiveness in regard to instruction, student learning, learner outcomes, and the implementation process. Teachers were selected based on their current position as an Edgenuity teacher at the school.

Your interview responses will remain confidential. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. If you agree to participate, Titinesha Llewellyn will send you a letter with further information and will provide contact information to schedule the interview at your convenience during February 2018.

Are you willing to participate in an individual interview?

___I am willing to participate in this research study.

___I do not wish to participate in this research study.

Please provide your name and email address below:

Name: _______________________________________________________

Email: _______________________________________________________

Thank you,

Titinesha Llewellyn
Doctoral Student, The College of William and Mary
Invitation to Edgenuity Teachers: Consent for Participation in Research Study

Dear [Edgenuity teacher’s name]:

You recently responded to a letter expressing your willingness to participate in an interview about your perceptions of your experiences with the Edgenuity program. You were selected to take part in an interview based on your response. Very soon, Titinesha Llewellyn, the program evaluator will be contacting you to schedule your interview.

The information below provides details about your interview. On the day of the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form containing this same information.

Consent for Participation in a Program Evaluation: This study concerns Edgenuity teachers’ perceptions of the Edgenuity program.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to determine and understand student and teacher perceptions of the Edgenuity program as it functions at your school.

Who is conducting the study: Titinesha Llewellyn is conducting this study to fulfill the doctoral requirements of the Executive EdD in K-12 Administration and Supervision program at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. You may request a copy of the study’s results by sending an email to ttllewellyn@email.wm.edu.

What are you asked to do: By agreeing to participate, Titinesha Llewellyn will conduct an interview with you. The interview will provide you an opportunity to share observations, experiences, and feelings about the Edgenuity program and its effects on student learning and growth. The questions will relate to your educational setting, the practices and implementation of the program, academic successes and concerns. The interview will take about 45 minutes. With your permission the interview will be audio-recorded.

Risks and benefits: There may be minimal psychological discomfort directly involved with this research. Edgenuity is a tool to assist students to meet graduation requirements and your role is vital to that effort. Your contributions will provide educational leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders with evidence-based information about the Edgenuity program as it functions at your school.

Your answers will be confidential. Your participant identity and responses will be kept private. Only the researcher will have access to the records. If you agree to audio-record the session, the recording will be removed from the device and stored in a passcode protected online file until it has been transcribed. Once transcribed the recording will be deleted no later than June 2018. Your name, school, or school division will not be associated with any results of this study.

Taking part is voluntary. You do not have to answer every question and may discontinue participating in this study at any time simply by discontinuing the interview.
Participation, or the lack of, will not affect your current or future relationship with me as the researcher, or administrator, or with anyone else in the school district.

If you have questions: Contact Titinesha Llewellyn, the researcher at 757-825-4404 or ttllewellyn@email.wm.edu for any questions or problems that arise in connection with participating in this study. You may report dissatisfaction with any aspect of this study to Dr. Thomas Ward, Chair of the Education Institutional Review Committee at 757-221-2358, or tom.ward@wm.edu. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I’ve had. I consent to take part in this study.

Your Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ___________

Your Name
Printed: ____________________________________________________

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview audio-recorded.

Your Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ___________

Signature of researcher obtaining consent:
________________________________________________________

Printed Name of researcher: _______________________________ Date: ___________

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.
APPENDIX D

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Good Morning, I am Mrs. T. Llewellyn and although I am an administrator within the school, I am currently here in my capacity as a doctoral student at the College of William and Mary School of Education. This interview will consist of questions that are designed to understand your perceptions of the Edgenuity program as it exists within Urban High School.

All information collected and documented will be held in confidence and is for the purpose of research. Your name and school name will not be mentioned in the findings of the research study. At the conclusion of the research, the results will be made available to you.

During the interview, you may have the option to decline to respond to questions or discontinue the interview at any time. The interview will be recorded using the Apple Utility Recorder on my iPhone and at the close, it will be transferred to a password protected Google Drive file.

Throughout the interview you may find that I will take notes when necessary while using scripted questions about your experience with the Edgenuity program. Some follow-up questions may be unscripted.

Have you read, understood, and signed the consent form?

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?
This interview will take approximately 45 minutes and consists of a total of 14 questions to include any subquestions.

1. In what capacity have you used Edgenuity with your students? (i.e., stand alone, blended, initial credit, recovery)
2. What is your overall perception of Edgenuity? Explain.
3. What are the teacher behaviors and practices necessary for a student’s success with Edgenuity courses?
4. a. Describe for me a student who has done quite well with the Edgenuity program.  
   i. What do you think contributed to that success? What proportion of students enrolled in Edgenuity would you consider to be very successful?  
   b. Describe for me a student who has not done well with the Edgenuity program.  
   ii. What are the impediments that have interfered with success? How common do you see these kinds of impediments impinging on student success?
5. What are the student behaviors and practices necessary for student success with Edgenuity?
6. What is the best thing about this program? What do you wish might be different about the program itself or how it is being implemented?
7. How involved are you in the instructional process of administering the Edgenuity program?
8. a. How durable is the learning learned in this context?  
   b. Do you feel Edgenuity course content is comparable to traditional classroom instruction in preparing students for end-of-course test or SOL?
9. Overall, how satisfied are you with Edgenuity at UHS?

Finally, are there any other items you would like to share about the Edgenuity program?

Thank you for your time and participation.
REFERENCES


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VITA

Titinesha Llewellyn

Research Interests
Technological advancements in Education; and best practices for online teaching and learning with current technologies

Educational background
EDD in Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, December 2018
MA in Foundations of Education, Troy University, Montgomery, AL, December 2006
BS in Public Administration, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA, May 1995

Related training and experience
Assistant Director of Financial Aid, Goodwin College, July 1996-August 1999
Special Education/English Teacher, Bethel High School-Hampton City Schools, Hampton, VA, October 2000-June 2007
Special Education Case Manager/Teacher, North Gaston High School-Gaston County Schools, August 2007-July 2009
9th-Grade Academy Principal, East Gaston High School-Gaston County Schools, August 2009-August 2010
Assistant Principal, Bethel High School-Hampton City Schools, Hampton, VA, August 2010-Present