

We have designed each "White Paper" to explore a fundamental educational principle and key issues engaging the education community we serve. It is our goal to partner with our readers as they meet the challenges they face.



Student Review, Testing & Assessment  
CastleLearning.com



626 Layport Drive, Suite 100  
Sebastian, FL 32958  
800-345-7606  
Fax: 772-581-1066

Prepared by Bill Ingui  
President and Retired Educator

## The Early College HS and Castle Learning Online

*Castle Learning Online* has been serving early college high schools of 150 to 350 students for more than five years. They emphasize both class and individualized instruction. By offering a rich blend of high school and college classes, these schools traditionally set a goal to improve graduation rates, better prepare students for entry into high-skill careers, and graduate students with both a high school diploma and college credits.

Early colleges can be found in several states, including North Carolina, New York, Texas and California. While many of these early college high schools opened with the intent to serve affluent, high achieving students, the schools are now enrolling students who may be from low-income areas and want challenging course content to prepare them for any rigorous college program. North Carolina has more than 70 early college schools. In January 2010, the president of the North Carolina New Schools Project, Tony Habit, noted, "Last year, half our early college high schools had zero dropouts, and that's just unprecedented for North Carolina, where only 62 percent of our high school students graduate after four years." Because they see this early college model as a way to reduce the high school dropout rate and increase the number of degree holders, these schools believe they have a place in promoting better learning.

*Castle Learning Online* gives to teachers and students more than curriculum content at all grade levels. Features that have become synonymous with Castle Learning can challenge those who seek an early college experience and even those who simply must hone their basic skills. *Castle Learning Online* has provided a nice fit where teachers like to think outside the box as they use innovative ways to deliver curriculum content. For instance:

- **Differentiate Instruction:** Assignments can be specific for any student, thus targeting the weaknesses of students who must prepare for any course with a final assessment.
- **Integrated content:** Assignments can integrate several courses (e.g. infuse math content skills into sciences that use mathematics, such as Physics with a need for math background)
- **Meta-cognition:** Castle Learning is a great way to encourage students to regulate their own learning by self-pacing their work, planning their gap-filling strategies without boredom setting in, while struggling students don't feel rushed or overwhelmed by getting 'left behind' because the pace of the rest of the students is too quick for them. This easily replicates the experience students will meet in college.

Comments made by educators say a lot to us about how they view Castle Learning's advantage for any school:

- A teacher of AP students remarked that her students "actually work independently" and some "ask for more assignments." As a result, she can determine whether students are learning the material being taught.
- Another teacher in a NC school said "The way I can monitor my students from so many different perspectives is what I find incredible...this is a powerful tool for any teacher interested in monitoring student progress in the easiest and most efficient way possible."
- Considering the student's perspective, a high school teacher explained "It transfers a lot of power to the student—the advantages include feedback on questions, the links to vocabulary, flashcards, and the ability to self-create his/her own assessments."

*Castle Learning* is here for your early college high school and has already been addressing the needs of schools in states where educators strive to foster student excitement about learning.