Shasta Charter Academy is a personalized learning based charter school located in Redding, CA. When the school was formed in 1999, it consisted of just one teacher and one secretary. Today, the academy hosts over 250 students in a brand new facility. Information Technology teacher Noel Van Slyke was the third employee hired in the year 2000, offering a computer applications course that included instruction in Word Processing, Excel, PowerPoint, computer science history, and computer deconstruction. Last year, Van Slyke realized that programming was becoming an essential aspect of computer science instruction and began to seek an accessible program for a beginning coder.

“The world is changing,” expressed Van Slyke, “we need to start bringing programming courses into schools.” When he heard about Edhesive at a computer science conference, he reached out to the school partnership team and quickly realized that the Introduction to Computer Science course would be a great fit for Shasta Charter Academy, opting to utilize the Professional Development course in preparation.
Implementation and Success Shasta Charter Academy

“If I hadn’t contacted Edhesive, I would not and could not have offered this course at all,” informed Van Slyke. The teacher began working within the Professional Development course in July, pacing himself to be ready to teach by August. “I just sat down and started working on it,” he mentioned. “It was enjoyable for me. I liked the pacing and the options to further my learning with video or additional website links. The teacher forum was a great help, as well. I could communicate with my own questions or by commenting on others’ posts. The forum demonstrated a real sense of community. I could see that many other teachers were in the same boat, learning the program for the first time. I was extremely happy with the Professional Development course over all; I was easily able to finish it.”

By the time the Introduction to Computer Science course began at Shasta Charter Academy, Van Slyke felt prepared and excited to pass his new knowledge on to his students. Intro CS is being offered as a dual enrollment course through the local community college, allowing students to earn both high school and college credit. “The kids are really getting into to the course. They’re doing very well so far,” he reported. With over twenty eight years of teaching experience, Van Slyke has extensive classroom management experience, integrating the blended online curriculum with ease. “My students are freshman through seniors, so it is convenient to utilize the online component for students who are at different levels. The coding platform works perfectly for what the students need to accomplish, and the step by step videos are needed for the blended classroom.” Van Slyke also noted that the grade book has been a positive aspect of the program. “I really like the grade book. It gives me a lot of information about the progress of the students and their time spent within the course. The course has been easy to navigate overall.”

Van Slyke pointed out that the blended online structure can suit the needs of many different classrooms, students, and teaching styles. “We have men, women, teachers, a father and son who work together, and special needs students all working within the same class. The design of the online course is set up well for the special needs students, who are working closely with an aid. They’re doing well.”
Reflection

As the state of California continues to expand computer science related curriculum requirements, Van Slyke believes that “it’s become more and more important that students are exposed to computer science education in high school. I speak to them often about the job opportunities that are becoming readily available. I encourage them to start with just one semester and get a taste of it. They get the chance to see what’s out there.” To other teachers interested in teaching computer science, Van Slyke says to utilize Edhesive coursework. “Edhesive has been a gem for the kids, for the school, and for me. I’m very pleased with the program, and I’ve been consistently impressed with the quality of support I’ve received. It’s been a very positive experience overall.”

Outcomes at Shasta Charter Academy

- Students are being given the opportunity to explore all that computer science has to offer.
- Students are enjoying the step-by-step process of the video instruction.
- The Introduction to Computer Science course has been very successful so far.

Highlights for Teachers

- The Professional Development course is an invaluable resource for educators new to programming.
- The teacher forum offers real-time support and attention while creating a sense of community.
- The blended online course suits multiple learning styles.

Edhesive makes online learning accessible, personal, and meaningful. We combine online instruction from nationally recognized experts with the personal support of local teachers, who offer students face-to-face guidance and support.

Ready to find out what’s possible for your school? Email us at info@edhesive.com today.