

Project 2 Context Report  
Education 2020 Online Course Website  
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## Section 1: Product Description

The evaluated product is a grade 6-12 online tutorial called Education 2020 or more commonly referred to as E2020. This online instructional program is designed for students seeking credit recovery, Advanced Placement courses, tutoring and standardized test preparation. (Education 2020, 2012) The online program provides a mix of direction instruction, vocabulary development, and both formative and summative assessments. Courses in the core content areas such as English, language arts, math, science, social studies and even electives are aligned to state and national CORE standards.

e2020's additional multimedia components:

- Vocabulary development
- Extensions
- Homework/practice
- Support
- Various interactives including Gizmos, labs, essays, journals and threaded discussions

Technology	Direct instruction Vocabulary development Homework/practice Extensions Threaded discussion Contact teacher
Facilitated Learning	Teacher instruction Classroom discussion Intervention
Ongoing Assessment	Formative assessments Quizzes Chapter tests Summative assessments Cumulative/Semester exams

According to the Education 2020 website (2012) serves more than 800 school districts and 2,500 schools. In 2011, E2020 was the winner of several awards in virtual classroom excellence including the EdTech Digest Award: Content Provider Solution-Virtual Classroom Suite (Education 2020, 2012). Additional information about the educational product can be found at the product website <http://www.education2020.com/>.

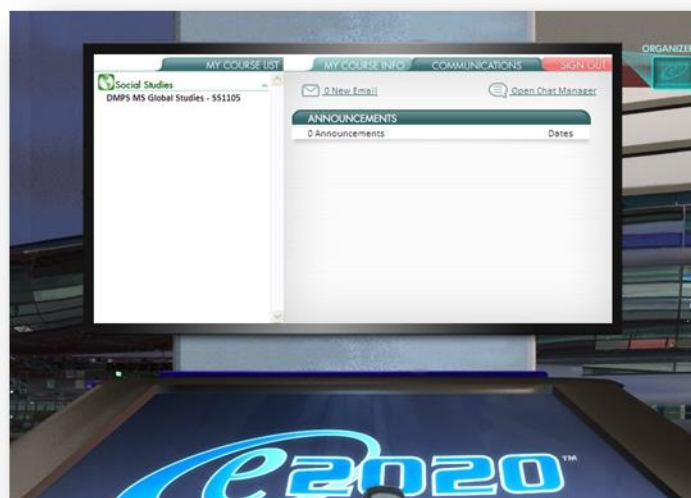
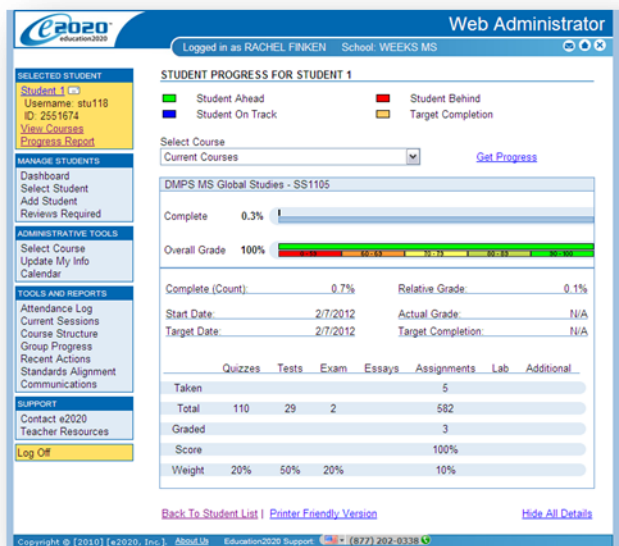
To access the program instructors and students enter the online website through two separate portals. Instructors with a username and password are able to enroll students, manage courses, monitor student work and progress, and create student groupings. The

instructor can access the Administrator portal through the website

<http://teacher.education2020.com/>.

Upon logging on to the program and viewing the Web Administrator homepage, the left-hand column of the screen contains navigation buttons for the instructor to manage student enrollment and course progress. The navigation column is organized by the following categories: Selected Student, Manage Students, Administrative Tools, Tools and Reports, and Supports. Each category

has several options to help the instructor manage the instructional programs of each enrolled student. He or she is able to review student work and make adjustments to the course if necessary. The navigation column is a permanent fixture of the program for easy navigation. The right side of the program screen is where reports, calendars, course standards, and course content is displayed for the instructor. The top of the screen contains instructor identification information and two



quick navigation buttons. One button is shaped as a house and links the user back to the Web Administrator homepage. The second button is an X, which is a quick link to log the administrator out of the program.

Student users enter the E2020 portal through the website <http://student.education2020.com/> with a user name and password provided by the instructor. The student user opens to the student homepage called the Lobby. In the Lobby, students are able to select the courses they are registered for and check their progress and grades for each course. Floating on the right side of the Lobby screen is a navigation button



labeled Organizer. The Organizer has five large navigation buttons that organize student course resources. Three of the navigation buttons are quick links to Reports (grades, progress, assignment calendars), Communications (Online chat, email, collaboration), and Resources (Support videos, glossaries, calculator), and the remaining two buttons help the student user go back and exit the Organizer. Once the student exits the Organizer and returns to the lobby he or she is able to continue onto their courses. The student will select his or her course and begin or continue on with his or her course of study.

## Section 2: Target Audience

The intended users of the E2020 program are American students in grades 6-12, but this program has also been used to help bring young adults who have dropped-out of school back into the school system. E2020 is designed to work with a variety of students including homebound, ELL, Special Education, At-Risk, Advanced Placement or those students needing credit recovery. Recently, the University of California has awarded E2020 program status of the official online virtual learning provider. (Education 2020, 2012) E2020 is being used to prepare high school students entering the University will be prepared for the rigor of university academia. Many of the courses offered are geared towards high school or college prep, but courses at the middle school level are offered. In order for students to successfully complete the E2020 online program, students must have a basic knowledge of internet and computer skills (such as typing and web browsing), along with regular access to computer and Internet resources. Depending on the content course and grade level, students should have an elementary understanding and knowledge of the core contents.

### Section 3: Description of Intended Outcomes

The online program E2020 is an educational tool intended to help students obtain mastery of skills and knowledge aligned to national and state CORE standards. E2020 should help to ease teacher burden by quickly measuring student mastery of content through prescribed assessments, and by providing instant feedback to students on their educational growth. The program should also help teachers to address any gaps in student knowledge and accelerate student progress towards mastering the content.



The educational tool should also empower teachers to accommodate student needs by selecting from a wide variety of courses and opportunities to succeed.

E2020 should also engage student learning and interest through a variety of leveled course offerings and instructional strategies. The lessons should allow students to work at their own pace with access to instructor support and monitoring. The units include multimedia components and varied types of instruction to prolong student interest and motivation for completing the course. Students should only be allowed to move onto the next skill level once an instructor has reviewed their work and made progress towards skill or content mastery. Students should find the assignments, videos and tasks to be appropriately challenging and instructional. The lessons are designed to engage students with multiple learning styles, and formats. The subject matter is aligned to state and national CORE standards, but the content is chosen to be somewhat engaging and interesting to students.

*Cognitive Objectives- Knowledge*

- Define key terms important to the content course
- Complete homework assignments and activities
- Apply knowledge to contextual situations
- Show mastery of content standards
- Online tutor focuses the most energy on cognitive domain

*Affective Objectives- Attitude*

- Students gain confidence with the online learning environment
- Students feel supported by instructional program and online instructors
- Growth the ability to work independently through problems and tasks (develop self-reliance)
- Feel successful in every course

*Psychomotor Objectives -Skills*

- Reproduce example work and skills during guided instruction
- Respond to written or spoken direction
- In electives courses, use software like Blender to manipulate objects and practice predicting behaviors.

## **Section 4: Preliminary Evaluation**

### *Strengths*

The E2020 program is a well designed tutorial program for secondary student learners. The courses range in a variety of ability levels from grades 6-12, and E2020 even provides courses for college or career preparation. Each course leads students through structured but engaging lesson to help guide students to content mastery. Each course unit utilizes a variety of instructional strategies from vocabulary development, multimedia instruction, threaded discussions, ongoing assessments, and homework practice. Teachers are able to monitor student scores, progress and responses. Students are also able to track their own progress and scores through each of their enrolled courses. Students are able to learn course material at their own pace, and the program does not allow students to move forward without mastering the materials. Instructors are able to review and reassign student activities to help students find success in learning.

Each course is aligned to Iowa Core standards and for each unit within the course a detailed list of standards is provided. The course map for the unit allows both teacher and student users the ability to see the major themes and topics covered by the unit. Each unit is broken down into small manageable chunks that allow for timely stopping points, but are long enough to maintain a feeling of positive momentum. Each unit within the course can be completed within 30 minutes to one hour depending on the pace of the student. A student's work will also be saved if he or she needs to exit the unit before completion. This flexibility in time management allows users to pick up where they left off without having to repeat

instruction or directions. A pace tracker at the top of the course screen monitors the student's progress and informs the instructor and the student if he or she begins to fall behind schedule.

E2020 offers a variety of courses to help fill academic gaps or to provide extended learning opportunities for students. A student who needs a credit recovery course for Geometry, can also complete a course in Spanish I. The amount of courses offered by E2020 allows the instructor to tailor courses for students to best meet their needs and interests.

### *Weaknesses*

The E2020 program does have its limitations for teacher and student use. Although the courses offered by the program are aligned to Iowa CORE standards, the courses may not directly support the same content covered in traditional schools. For example, the DMPS Global Studies course for 7<sup>th</sup> grade is aligned to Iowa CORE standards, but does not reflect the same material or topics covered by district curriculum. The generality of the content may be a drawback when attempting to engage and maintain student interest. Teachers are limited by the few options available to truly tailor the course and instruction to the student's needs. Students are able to retry the unit, but they must repeat the exact same lessons to obtain mastery.

The courses are offered for grades 6-12, but most of the most is geared towards high school students. The lower level courses are not entirely age appropriate for students in the lower middle levels. The web resources and content seems to be offered at lower levels as a possible way to backfill any gaps in student learning, but reading and writing levels may be too difficult for middle level students, especially those who have struggled academically. These

courses for the middle grades could be utilized for students on the accelerated track rather than at-risk or needing credit recovery.

E2020 is not a free program, and for districts the expense would be great if implemented for only a few students or schools. The investment in an E2020 subscription would entail an extensive use by multiple users, schools and programs to justify the costs. The content provider does have the ability to align existing programs to similar school course offerings, DMPS Global Studies 7 as an example, but content cannot be changed or altered to meet the needs of a school or district.

The courses are highly structured and follow the same format for each unit lesson. This predictability could help students develop a sense of confidence in completing the unit, but it could also become an automated process for students and could verge on boring. Student interests and motivations are not taken into account in the course materials and assignments. Students rarely have the opportunity to create, explore, research, or evaluate topics that are not explicitly included in the course unit. Teachers do not have the ability to add content to further engage student learning and motivation. The role of instructor in the program is for quality control, classroom discussions, and program support. Options are available for blended learning environments, but again teacher input and control is limited.

### *Recommendations*

Although E2020 is a well designed program a few changes could be made to enhance the quality of the program. A few changes I would suggest would be relatively easy and inexpensive to implement. First, many of the navigation buttons are large and easily found, but



are not explicitly labeled. This can cause confusion and frustration for both the instructor and student user. A simple label could be added or a pop-up label when the mouse is rolled over the button to identify the button's purpose. Second, for the instructor page a short description of each course offering would be helpful before enrolling a student in a course. Right now the instructor can only chose from the appropriate grade level and subject area, but for now it can be a guess and check process.

Other changes I could recommend may involve a little more time and expense. E2020 does not provide any kind of diagnostic tool to help the instructor select the appropriate levels or courses for the student. The student may just be taking coursed needed for graduation requirements, but if there are serious gaps in knowledge, the instructor has no way of knowing until the student struggles through or fails a higher level course. By including a simple diagnostic tool or pretest, the courses could be properly selected for the student and greater success would be more likely to occur.

Also, student engagement could be enhanced by adding additional tools for students to create projects and complete assignments beyond quizzes and journals. The internet is full of free educational tools students could use to enhance their own understanding of the material and engage with deeper understanding of the content. Each course unit has objectives in Bloom's cognitive domain, but very few of the objectives tackle higher order thinking like analysis, synthesis and evaluation. E2020 could partner with or better utilize web programs like Google Docs, math and physics simulators, blogs, Voice Thread or many other free or inexpensive web tools.

References:

Education 2020. (2012) Innovative Solutions for All Your Virtual Learning Needs. Retrieved February 22, 2012 from, <http://www.education2020.com>

Education 2020. (2012) Administrator Portal. Retrieved February 22, 2012 from, <http://teacher.education2020.com/>

Education 2020. (2012) Student Portal. Retrieved February 22, 2012 from, <http://student.education2020.com/>