



Reaching Students with Multiple Learning Challenges

Teachers and counselors at all grade levels at Highland School are enhancing instruction with APTPLUS, powered by *unitedstreaming*

Highland School (K–8), located in Alabama among the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, has 272 students, of whom 64% receive free or reduced-price lunch. It is a Title I school with many economically disadvantaged students who do not have access to technology at home. For many of them, school is the only place they get exposure to the skills they will need to compete in the world.

The school has several goals: Reach students who have multiple learning challenges; engage teachers and enhance their professional development; and integrate technology into the classroom, increasing usage of digital media.

A Great Reason to Use Technology

As it has been in many schools, Discovery Education *unitedstreaming* has acted as a catalyst to engage educators with the latest technology. It also provides an opportunity for kids to learn about new tools.

Alabama Public Television (APT) is providing educators with a customized digital video package that is specifically correlated to Alabama's educational standards by licensing *unitedstreaming* for every K–12 school in the state and adding original resources from Discovery Education.

Discovery Education has partnerships with public television stations across the country.

Jana Moon, media specialist/technology coordinator at Highland School, says that she uses APTPLUS to supplement the teachers' lessons when classes come to the Media Center, as well as in the classroom: "I show the students how the laptop computer works with the projector and the SMART Board, and even allow them to work on the laptop. This augments their technology skills."



“Students are thrilled to see me use APTPLUS in the library and even more impressed when their classroom teachers use it,” Moon says.

Passing the Training Along

Moon has attended at least four APTPLUS trainings, including the webinar training available from the Discovery Education implementation team, available through the APTPLUS website.

She has conducted two trainings so far for her staff, where she provides individual attention, as needed, to teachers who want to use or are currently using APTPLUS. She utilized the school kits she received from her implementation representative and distributed the teacher’s guides, and also used the PowerPoint presentations available from the website in training the teachers.

Teachers and Students Are More Engaged, Classes Come Alive

Teachers and counselors at all grade levels at Highland School are experiencing the variety of things APTPLUS can do to help them reach challenged students, improving their performance.

Stacey Brannon, a teacher of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade social studies at Highland, says the APTPLUS service appeals to all types of learners: “Most often, I use video downloads to review or elaborate on topics that we study. Oftentimes the textbook just isn’t enough to help students get a good ‘picture’ of what was going on at a particular time period in history. I feel that if the students can actually see footage of events, it greatly benefits them.”

Brannon likes the option of downloading video clips that are only three to five minutes in length. “This way it does not dominate too much class time. I use these short video clips to introduce lessons. On occasion I use the quizzes or discussion questions that go along with the videos.”

Kary Roberts, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science teacher, says, “With the movement of AMSTI (Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative) into the classroom, often it is difficult to find resources to help the kids visualize the material in different ways.”

With APTPLUS, Roberts can bring the curriculum to life. “For example,” she says, “when we reach the unit on cell division, the students love to see the ‘Mitosis Square Dance.’”



Fourth-grade teacher Teresa Smith says APTPLUS makes for “a good introductory lesson because many of the films are 12 minutes or shorter. Teachers and students can gain access to science experiment ideas, and the procedures are shown. Books are shown in movie format, which is quite interesting for younger students.”

Counselor Laurie Morgan likes the one-stop-shop quality, saying, “I currently use APTPLUS in the weekly lessons I present to the K–8 student body. I recently have used the videos available to teach Drug Awareness. The videos I chose to present also had Teacher’s Guides available for download, which also contained rationales, teaching objectives, activity sheets, cross-curricular ideas, etc.

“I found the materials provided by APTPLUS to be easy to use,” Morgan says. “The videos were engaging and up-to-date. The students responded very well to them. The activities we did were easy for the students to understand.”

In a school whose student body faces so many challenges, the future of education can be glimpsed. Discovery Education and APT are proud to support these educators as they enhance their classrooms with extraordinary resources.