

Sundale Elementary School Tulare, CA

Goals

According to Vice Principal Darin Bawks, "Our major goal was to ratchet up our middle school science curriculum. Of course we had textbooks, but we wanted something more technology-based and more interactive, to appeal to our digital-age students and improve student achievement in science."

When Sundale Union Superintendent Terri Rufert saw a demo of Adaptive Curriculum at a conference, "she was impressed, because she felt it was a good fit with the goals of our district," says Darin. In February 2010, teachers began using Adaptive Curriculum to introduce science concepts and reinforce concept mastery.

Fast Learning Curve for Teachers

With an interactive whiteboard in every classroom and two computer labs on campus, Sundale Union has integrated technology into the curriculum from kindergarten on. "Our teachers are very open to technology," says Darin, "so we were pretty confident it wouldn't take long for them to be proficient with Adaptive Curriculum."

"Students in the 8th grade improved their test scores from 31 to 59 points over the course of the year!"

*-Darin Bawks
Vice Principal*

Demographics:

- Small Rural District
- K-8 School
- Title I
- 60% White
- 36% Hispanic
- 21% ELL
- 7% RFEP

That confidence was borne out when Sundale Union science teachers began integrating the new software into the curriculum after only one Adaptive Curriculum webinar. According to Darin, "Our teachers ran with it after just one hour of training. Our teachers appreciate the curriculum support—they find the supplementary materials and assessments very useful. They are as enamored with Adaptive Curriculum as our students."



Interactive and Engaging

According to Darin, "The teachers really like that the Adaptive Curriculum lessons include video to engage and prompt the students through the steps. And most important, the lessons are interactive. The kids are not just watching. They're fully engaged."

Sixth-grade science teacher Eric Garcia works with an intervention class that includes students at and below grade level, as well as special needs, ELL, and RFEP (Redesignated Fluent English Proficient) students. "My students are more challenged," says Eric, "and Adaptive Curriculum is working well for them. They love it. As one student said, 'It's entertaining us and teaching us at the same time.'"

A Variety of Applications

Eric is implementing Adaptive Curriculum in a variety of ways. He uses the program with his interactive whiteboard for whole-class projects and to prepare students for hands-on science labs and science fairs. "Adaptive Curriculum is great for preparation," says Eric. "We do a lesson in class, and then students are familiar with the language when they start a hands-on project. So the software gives them an idea of what I'm looking for and makes it easier for them to apply what they know to other projects."

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Eric sets up four or five Adaptive Curriculum centers in his classroom for small group projects, with students spending 15 minutes at each center and completing one Adaptive Curriculum Activity Object.

For individualized, self-paced work, students go to the computer lab on Fridays, where they each complete one or two Adaptive Curriculum lessons.

"I like the design of the program," says Eric. "It's so easy to select different activities for different students and differentiate lessons based on skill level and pacing."

Sundale Union students spend one week every year at an outdoor school in the Sierra Nevada foothills, along with students from other schools, where they study environmental topics, photosynthesis, ecosystems, and more. According to Eric, "Adaptive Curriculum helps my students prepare for the outdoor school—they need to be at the same level as other students when they arrive. And it's great for review and reinforcement when they get back."

When it comes to test prep, Eric finds that Adaptive Curriculum provides the variety

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*-Eric Garcia
6th-Grade Science Teacher*

students need. "Students get sick of paper and pencil practice," he says. "They respond well to the computer option, the graphics, the built-in rewards, and the interactivity."

Improving Performance

Student scores have improved steadily on the Adaptive Curriculum assessments, according to Eric. "Initially my students were scoring only 20-40% correct on the built-in tests. They were skipping steps and trying to go through the program too quickly. But when they started to take notes and study the Adaptive Curriculum keywords, their scores went up to 80-100% correct."

Although Sundale Union only began using Adaptive Curriculum in February 2010, "we were very encouraged when students in the 8th grade—the only grade with standardized testing in science in California—improved their test scores from 31 to 59 points over the course of the year," says Darin.

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*-Darin Bawks,
Vice Principal*

For more information on Adaptive Curriculum:

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