**The Douglas Stewart Company - TechSmith**

Louisville Case Study | November 17, 2017

Updated: December 11, 2017

**Colorado Teacher Sparks Interest in Science Learning Through Camtasia**

Instructional strategies in the K-12 classroom have expanded beyond the traditional lecture. To meet the needs of diverse learners, and bolster student engagement, teachers have turned to alternate methods to introduce students to curricular content.

One school that has taken an innovative approach to instruction in recent years is Louisville Middle School in Colorado. David Crowder, a science teacher who primarily teaches sixth and eighth grade, creates videos to demonstrate phenomena in physical science and chemistry, and explain key concepts.

Five years ago, Crowder was introduced to Camtasia while creating his own website. He started using the software to create videos for the website and then entered a screen capture contest hosted by TechSmith. After exploring the user-friendly features on the platform, Crowder recognized the instructional power videos could have in his classroom.

“The videos I create with Camtasia are particularly helpful for concepts that are hard for students to understand,” said Crowder. “Providing this supplemental content gives them a go-to resource for those ideas that are difficult to understand.”

**An audiovisual route to instruction**

To provide students multiple points of reference about challenging ideas, such as acceleration due to gravity and the basics of simple machines, Crowder develops fun and informative videos. Students often need to review these concepts more than once to fully understand the components they need to know. The videos allow them to review the content they’ve learned, which is especially beneficial when they are doing schoolwork at home.

Among Crowder’s Camtasia projects is a [series of five videos about motion physics](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbbniMTSowTJbRkhtgwm10DQWHAEG6mVY). Through the software, Crowder is able to incorporate his own images, animations, classroom videos and more. Each video is five minutes on average, meaning each time a student refers to the video for the basic information already covered in class, Crowder saves valuable time by not having to repeat content. Instead, Crowder can focus on expanding on what he’s already taught the students.

The first video of the series alone has more than 27,000 views. A part of the video includes a demonstration of Crowder dropping strings with washers spaced out at different lengths to show the effects of acceleration from gravity. In the video, he is able to expand on the in-person demonstration with additional animations of what occurs when the strings drop, and different example of the same phenomena, including a sky diver exiting an airplane.

“When the students first see the video, they are often in shock that I was able to put all of this together,” said Crowder. “Most of my computer skills are self-taught, and Camtasia is intuitive enough to pick up easily.”

**More than just a means to an end**

Beyond providing accessible content for students to reference as they complete homework and study for tests, Crowder aims to make his classes more engaging through the use of video.

Crowder is a musician, and is able to combine those skills with his Camtasia projects to capture the attention of students through sounds. He also inserts caricatures of himself in the videos to make them more comedic.

“I like to make my own sound effects in the videos, partially because I think the kids respond to hearing their teacher’s voice in the content,” said Crowder. “Evoking those cartoon-like sounds hits the kids in their funny bone.”

Crowder says the lighthearted nature of the videos aims to spark interest in students that aren’t passionate about science. The humorous moments invite students to watch the videos more than once, and continue their exposure to the curriculum.

**Leveraging a wide range of features**

Crowder says the majority of features offered through Camtasia are helpful to him as he creates his classroom videos. The timeline enables him to match the timing of visuals with his narration sequence.

He also uses the screen recording feature to capture videos of what he is navigating on his computer. In conjunction with the screen recorder, he uses TechSmith’s Snagit to quickly grab images from his screen and edit them to improve the image quality or incorporate a callout.

Crowder identified transitions, green screen capabilities and custom animations as additional functionalities he frequently uses to improve video quality and incorporate additional information.

“With this technology, I’m able to accomplish something in a minute that ordinarily would have taken hours,” said Crowder. The frequency of Crowder’s use of the software is apparent in his YouTube feed, which includes nearly 50 videos edited through Camtasia.

After seeing his videos, Crowder’s colleagues have shown interest in using the platform for their own classrooms. Crowder has shown them how easy it is to incorporate annotations and colorful separations in their own content.

“Camtasia and Snagit make it really simple to develop videos and presentations that improve learning while infusing more fun in the classroom,” said Crowder. “They really have become go-to tools for me.”