



Vision Press

Beloit Memorial High School *Streaming Interactive Curriculum in their Auto Program*

Multimedia learning programs are rapidly increasing in popularity. Educational institutions see these programs as fresh and exciting, yet practical. Beloit Memorial High School in Beloit, Wisconsin is one of the many schools benefiting from these new curriculums. The school is currently using a multimedia program in its automotive department. A Plymouth based company called Convenience Learning International developed the program, called Understanding Automotive Technology and Repair, a bundled courseware package with a wide variety of automotive subjects, from steering and suspension to electronics and electricity. The courseware was developed using award winning curriculum from Thomson Learning and software from Mastery Technologies.

The courseware was initially purchased because Jim Sainsbury, the ASE certified automotive instructor at Beloit Memorial High School, wanted to teach smaller groups of students. In the large classrooms so common in today's schools, teachers often have twice as many students than is ideal. The interactive curriculum lets teachers divide a class in half and give more focused time to each group. Sainsbury says, "The biggest attraction was that I could spend time in the lab area with half of my students, while the other half was doing other worthwhile work without as much of my attention."

The multimedia course includes full-screen DVD-quality video, interactive simulations, and a "Check Your Understanding" set of questions to ensure that the student grasps the essential ideas. When a question is answered incorrectly, the course provides a video review for the student until the question is mastered. According to Sainsbury, the courseware gives students a greater understanding of key automotive concepts, because "the graphics and live action video on various aspects of auto repair are so much better than those from a text or lecture."

Automotive interactive curriculum was loaded on to the hard drives of six computers in the school's lab area, and then the program was networked to one computer to allow the instructor more control. Students input a user id and password to access the curriculum, which the instructor can view later to monitor grades and time-on-task.

Sainsbury uses Convenience Learning courseware in the five automotive courses he teaches. It has been a wonderful addition to his rotation lab, in which students are assigned to workstations—vehicles, workbenches, classroom seats, and now computers. After a given period of time, they rotate to a new station. Sainsbury says, "The interactive

curriculum from Convenience Learning has become another way for students to become exposed to and learn about a given unit of instruction."

In addition to freeing up valuable time and exposing students to material in an unusual way, multimedia programs from Convenience Learning give teachers like Sainsbury reassurance that all topics in a unit are being covered, even those the teacher does not personally address. "If time runs short for lecture and discussion to cover all the topics, I know that the interactive curriculum has covered it well," says Sainsbury.

A higher level of performance from diligent students typically results from using Convenience Learning programs like Auto Technology. Sainsbury says, "I have students who ask questions in lab activities that seem to have come from the training. It tells me that good students are getting something from having gone through the program."

Sainsbury is pleased with automotive curriculum, and he plans on continuing and expanding his use of the program in the future. Courseware topics on batteries, starting, and charging systems are currently on his wish list. Sainsbury also plans on taking advantage of some of the other features available from Convenience Learning multimedia. "Ultimately," he says, "there is a shell type program that would let me totally prepare a program from scratch. I would like to someday prepare procedural demonstrations, like changing oil or changing a tire."

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