



New Technology-Based Science Lab creates “Life Changing Experience” for Caddo Heights Student.



Living with Science is a technology based teaching system.

It is not very often that you will have a district administrator tell you that one of your programs has provided one of their students with a “life changing experience”.

That is exactly how Dr. Patsy Latin described the impact of the new Living with Science program on a struggling fourth grader at Caddo Elementary in Shreveport, Louisiana.

“We have had the program since the start of this year and it has been tremendously successful. The level of motivation and engagement we see in our youngsters is incredible. Perhaps the most powerful impact of the program has been the way it changed the life of one of our fourth graders.

The student in question had been held back in fourth grade for two years and was really struggling academically. As soon as we got the new science lab up and running in January this year the student began to take a great interest in science.

The Living with Science program we have is unique. It combines exciting hands-on experiments with computer-delivered lessons, inquiry worksheet activities, problem solving and continuous assessment.

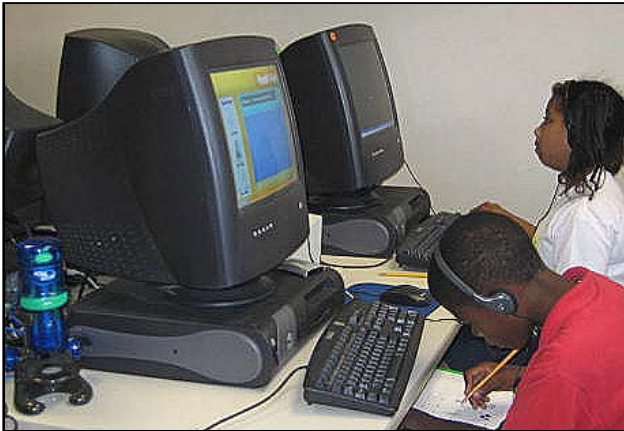
This new environment, where the students take much more charge of their learning, really “hooked” this particular student and they began to do very well in the science classes. As time progressed the student gained a real thirst for learning and this began to reflect in their other classes. By the end of the school year this particular individual took the progression tests and only missed a jump straight to 6th grade by 1 point.

That is truly amazing and it’s a great testament to the power of our new science program and its ability to engage and motivate students of all abilities.





To find out more about the incredible science program, we visited the lab to talk with science teacher Ms. Amy Whitaker. We found her working with a fourth grade class who had just started with the Living with Science materials. She told us more about her new program.



“I love this program, I have a science undergraduate which helps me with the content but the program is so complete, it is really easy to teach. We call the program Science Integrated Lab for Kids, or SILK for short.

One of the great things about it is the hands-on element. Seeing the students getting so excited when they collect their trays and get out all the different pieces of equipment really gives you a buzz.

I can sit at my desk and monitor everything that goes on at the twenty-one computer workstations we have. I can track exactly what every student is doing; I can even send them messages to keep them on task. I am just in awe with it.

Because it is designed to promote student centred learning it helps build confidence and social skills. I have found that once I have taken students through the basics of how it works a couple of times, they are able to progress really well on their own. We emphasize the scientific inquiry process in our curriculum and the design of the Living with Science assignments compliments this well. It is excellent at promoting problem solving skills and critical thinking as well. Another great thing about it is that it tracks our science textbook really well. We can use our text to cover a topic and then I can pull out an assignment from Living with Science and give them a hands-on in the lab to reinforce their understanding. As an example, we are working on classification and animal life cycles at the moment.

A lot of my youngsters are telling me, “Miss Whitaker, we know this part of the textbook, we did it already in the science lab”. This “spiralled learning” has a big impact on retention and understanding and I believe it will really help with our science tests later on in the year”.

On a final note to this story we visited with school principal, Dr. Cherry Burton, to get her reaction to the SILK program. She told us: “We are a Title 1 school, with over 96% free lunch students and we were looking for any way we could to improve our science performance. Dr. Patsy Latin, our district science specialist told me about an amazing science program she had seen in New York and she felt it would help us here at Caddo Heights Elementary.

I want anything that will be a benefit to our students and with Dr Latin’s help we got the program installed.

We started using it, with our students in January of this year and the state tests were in March. In that short period of using it we raised our science scores by eight scale score points, which is excellent. It took us from a rating of Unsatisfactory to Approaching Basic Improvement. We have never been there before. If we can do that with just three months work, just imagine where we will be after a whole year!”

Everybody who comes in to see the program loves it. I wish I could get the same thing for math and social studies, in fact, across the whole curriculum. Our grades in social studies also went up since we had the new SILK lab. Our teachers didn’t do anything different in that area, I believe it was the impact of the work the students were doing in the science lab.”

The Caddo Heights Living with Science Program is just one of the many successful programs installed in Louisiana by our representatives Sivad Inc.



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