



Testimonials - Gizmo Users and Textbooks!

ExploreLearning Gizmos award-winning online simulation library has been highlighted in two recent best-selling books on instructional best practices, *Using Technology with Classroom Instruction That Works*, by Howard Pitler et al (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2007), and *Technology in the Secondary Science Classroom*, edited by Randy Bell et al (National Science Teachers Association, 2007).

Explorelearning.com - Customer Service Rated Top-notch

"I can tell you this...I've worked with a lot of technologies (hardware & software) in the last 15 years; and, I can honestly say that by far, the people with whom I've come in contact at ExploreLearning have been some of the most professional. Not once have I made a request or a contact, whether in person, by phone, or via email, and not received a reply in a timely and favorable manner."

"I'm impressed...and that's not easy to come by."

Terri Burnham

Director of Technology, Gulfport School District, MS

According to Howard Pitler, Ed.D., Senior Director for Curriculum and Instruction at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) and lead author, "ExploreLearning's Gizmos are an effective and engaging way to move students to inquiry science and math. We show examples in the book of a number of the nine categories of effective instructional strategies that are truly enhanced by this excellent resource. This is especially true when looking at nonlinguistic representation and generating and testing hypothesis. We also see Gizmos as a good way to move students to higher level thinking skills."

Kris Campesi, Middle School Science Teacher - Stafford County, VA July 11, 2008

Teacher Posting Explorelearning:

Gizmos Help Student Scores on VA State Tests - We received this great feedback on recent state test scores from a veteran middle school science teacher:

"I wanted to pass on to you my Virginia Science SOL (Standards of Learning) results. I credit my fantastic results to Gizmos and to my classroom performance system. I had 73.5% of my special needs kids pass the test!!!! Not to be outdone I had 44 pass advance and 5 perfect scores out of 117 students testing! You would think I would stop being amazed at how well your programs work but I still get amazed every week when we use Gizmos. I have the computers signed out every week and we do at least one Gizmo a week and they students do not tire of it. They come in and chant, "Gizmo day, Gizmo day!"

Check out some of the Gizmos that Kris has used with her 7th grade students: [Food Chain](#), [Chicken Genetics](#), and [Mouse Genetics \(One Trait\)](#).

Email to Jeff Tucker (Curriculum Director) Greenwich CT, April 08

I just wanted to follow up about the Gizmo program we've been able to try through [explorelearning.com](#). I have used it quite a bit with both my 7A and 7B classes. It works great as a classroom tool with the Smartboard (which I've finally got up and running!). In addition, I have brought my classes to the computer lab twice so the students could "play" with the program themselves. I use the word "play" because the students think of it as a game, but they get so much out of this "playing." They are so excited when they get to use Gizmos, which makes them excited about learning.

The correlation to the Connected Math books is amazing. There has been a worthwhile Gizmo for every Investigation since we've had the opportunity to use the program. Using the Exploration Guide for each Gizmo, I have created Activity Packets for the students to complete while they are "playing." These Exploration Guides are very well put together and directly correlate with topics being discussed in class.

This is the best computer program I have seen to use in math classrooms.

The students get to see real simulations that they read about in the books. It gives the real life problem-solving a whole new meaning to them. It is so helpful for students who have a hard time with visualization. Since I've started using them with the students, I refer to the Gizmo as I'm teaching. I have even had a student mention a Gizmo in extra help, asking if the topic was like what they did on the Gizmo, which it was and she was immediately able to relate it to the problem she was working on. I really feel that it expands critical thinking skills and helps them connect and extend their understanding.

The assessment questions provided with each Gizmo are excellent. They are often similar to CMT multiple choice questions, which is great practice for the students. I love being able to see how the students did and where they need more instruction. I have only used the assessment questions when I have taken the students to the computer lab, but they can easily be assigned as homework. I have accessed the site from home and would not be a problem for students to be able to. The results that are provided for the teacher is great instant feedback.

I honestly would give anything to be able to use this in my classroom next year. I looked over the Gizmos that correlate with the other books I cover in my classes and my mind is already forming plans to incorporate them in my teaching plans. I hope that we are able to find the money because it would be so worthwhile for the students. I would be happy to discuss this further with you or anyone that can help us find the funds.

Wednesday, you are coming to observe my 3rd period class and my planning period follows, so we can talk about it then if you would like. This is the most passionate and excited I have ever been about a new teaching

"The outcomes after testing were phenomenal!"

Deanna Showalter, a teacher in Grapevine Colleyville, Texas writes,
The student feedback was great! The interactions with the programs took them farther, faster than anything else I have worked with... The outcomes after testing were phenomenal!

The background is that this teacher used Gizmos with 74 students who were at risk of failing the TAKS test. After using the program extensively within her review course, all but 2 passed when tested.

Florida's Polk County using Gizmos as part of technology-infused curriculum

Polk County, FL has recently initiated a pilot program to infuse technology into its secondary mathematics and science curriculum. John Miller, Curriculum Coordinator of Secondary Mathematics, explained the sound reasoning behind his county's adoption of Gizmos as part of this initiative like this:

"...the focus of this initiative, and the reason we are providing you with Gizmos and technology support to go with it, is to help students better comprehend mathematics by allowing them to be more engaged in (excited about) the learning process in our math classes and see math in a more visual and connective way."

– John C. Miller, Curriculum Coordinator of Secondary Mathematics, Polk County Public Schools, Florida

The district has purchased projectors, interactive whiteboards, and ExploreLearning Gizmos for 160 of its secondary teachers. Each teacher is receiving training on the new technology, including work with ExploreLearning's Professional Development team. Gizmos have proved to be a wonderful way for teachers to quickly integrate educational technology into their instruction and improve student performance!

Science concepts in a fraction of the time.

Pam from Nebraska let us know how she is using Gizmos in her classroom. She writes,

I teach earth Science to 8th graders and I use gizmos with each unit. I can teach concepts to kids in a fraction of the time with better results than traditional labs. Since it is truly an interactive website, students get to control it and repeat the activity until they feel they have mastery. This is a wonderful inquiry based website. One component I also use is the assessment piece. There are short quizzes after each activity to check the student understands. I can go in & check on the scores any time. What a time saver and it's good for my students too!

– Pam Petersen, 8th Grade Science, York Middle School

Thanks Pam. Here's an interesting fact about Nebraska. Did you know that Nebraska became one of the first states to provide the entire state with educational television in 1963? Wow, from educational television to educational technology, the cornhusker state is on a roll!

August 03, 2007

Algebra in the Real World!

Kim Washington, a high school math teacher in Norfolk, VA praised the real world application that Gizmos gives her Algebra students.

"When we talk about slope and rate of change, they can actually see it in Gizmos. I think that helps them. I struggle to get them to apply Math, to get them to understand that what we're doing, you're going to do every day. You pick the right Gizmo and 'Voila,' the application is there for you!"

Here are just a couple of the real world Gizmos Kim likes to use:

[Distance Time Graphs](#) -- creates a graph of a runner's position versus time

[Modeling Linear Systems](#) -- a cat and mouse chase modeled with a system of 2 lines.

ExploreLearning.com Browsing is a Big Help to Teachers

Recently, we visited with Kris Campesi, a middle school science teacher in Stafford County, VA. We talked to her about she organizes her science lessons to incorporate Gizmos. She had this to say about the ability to browse and choose appropriate Gizmos using the textbook and state standard correlations on our site:

"I click on my textbook and 'Whoa!'- you tell me what Gizmo goes with what chapter...and if I'm missing something for an SOL, I don't have to look through the Gizmos to see what Gizmo meets that standard, I just click on VA Assessments and you tell me what Gizmo meets that assessment need. You save me a lot of work and have it so well organized that it's not hard for me to integrate it."

Thank you Kris. We think our browsing capability is superior as well.

It's True: Techies love Gizmos

Recently, Elsie Rivard, Manager of Professional Development found herself presenting in front of a group of teachers in Madison, Indiana. After a friendly visit to Prince of Peace Catholic School, fourth grade teacher Eve Juarez had this to say about Gizmos.

Coming from a software background, I think they [Gizmos] are some of the best educational software I have seen in a looooooovooooonng time.

Thanks Eve, we love your enthusiasm! We think Gizmos are great too...In fact, we think they are so great that we are expanding our Gizmo library to include coverage for grades 3 to 5. Take a sneak peek of our new Elementary Science [Gizmos](#)

"More Concepts with Real Life Experiences!"

During a recent ExploreLearning Professional Development workshop in Miami, our Miami-Dade project manager, Mario Junco, received this word of praise from Mohanalatha Pamajala, an attending teacher.

Teaching engineering principles and concepts to various levels of students in the same class is made possible by Gizmos. Gizmos are more visual and interactive, and keep students on task to learn efficiently. Once I started using Gizmos in my class, I felt happy that my students were learning more concepts with real life experiences.

Mrs. Mohanalatha Pamajala, Technology Education Department, Miami Sunset Senior High School

"Where were these online toys when I was teaching math and science!?"

Shirley Owens, Coordinator for Instructional Technology for the [Mission TX Consolidated Independent School District](#) writes,

I love the Gizmos. During my 20 years as a classroom teacher, I taught computer science, all secondary mathematics courses and physics. At this point, I am teaching teachers to use technology in the classroom. One of the things I have been showing since TCEA is the wealth of material on your site ... Where were these online toys when I was teaching math and science!? Guess that's what happens when a person started teaching BC (before calculators).

Hey, we think the ExploreLearning Gizmos are pretty cool, but don't take our word for it ...

Gizmos ROCK!

My Junior High students have learned so many science concepts through the use of Gizmos that were otherwise very difficult to grasp. ...I am an advocate of your site and encourage every teacher I meet to check it out.

– Caryn Murray, Science Teacher, [Frontenac, Kansas](#).

Thanks, Caryn!

Testimonial: "Freshmen Begging to Factor"

Valerie Muller, a mathematics teacher in [Greenville County, SC](#), has had a very positive experience with using Gizmos in her classroom, in particular the Algebra Tiles Gizmo. In a recent email, she writes,

[ExploreLearning] continues to be one of the best "interactive products" available. I use it with my LCD projector as a demo in my algebra I class – students love the algebra tiles and really identify with the visual image. Since I have a [SmartBoard](#), manipulating the [algebra tiles to factor trinomials](#) is a "can I be next" experience. Isn't that funny: freshmen begging to factor?

Considering how factoring is an anathema to most math students (I know it was for me), I don't think you can have a better testimonial to for what Gizmos bring to the math classroom than what Valerie reports Greenville. Freshmen *begging* to factor. Superb.

Elementary Math Gizmos A Hit with Gifted Students

Please tell the staff at ExploreLearning how much the kids and I LOVE the Elementary Math Gizmos! I'm using them with my 1st grade gifted kids! AND THEY GET IT!

-Lee Ann Jones Teacher of the Gifted, Norland Elementary School
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL

Elementary Gizmos are designed for students in grades 3-5. As always though, these Gizmos are flexible enough to be used at many levels, as extension opportunities in lower elementary or for reinforcement of important concepts in middle school. Check out the [Elementary Math](#) and science library today!