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3D Projector Brings Lessons to Life

SEPTEMBER 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Observing blood travel through a beating heart, dissecting a diamondback rattlesnake and assembling an automobile engine are all possibilities in a 3D learning environment that is being simulated for students through new technology.

A 3DAV rover, valued at over \$14,000, was delivered this month to the Poplar Bluff Middle after a string of grants and donations were secured by the STEM department, which stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“If kids didn’t have to come to your classroom, would they?” This is a driving question STEM teacher Cody Young often asks himself. While it is difficult to take a student body of 1,200 on a field trip, he noted, virtual reality has made these experiences possible.

The rover is a portable 3D projector and theater system built inside a wheeled AV cart, according to the website of Vizitech USA, which was founded by a retired brigadier general for the U.S. Army before he expanded the business to education. The holoprojected images are transmitted into the classroom through active glasses students are supplied

At the end of last school year, Young landed a 50/50 grant through the Georgia-based company’s nonprofit foundation, Tek4Teachers. His former colleague Keri Jameson, now an instructional coach at Junior High, also wrote a successful grant for \$1,500 through the Poplar Bluff Public School Foundation. The remaining funds came from a business donation by Whitworth’s Gift Chest Jewelers, the Parent Teacher Organization, and

individual solicitations collected by the Student Council.

“Mr. Young has done a great job in bringing together community and school to show the importance and value of what the rover can do and how it will benefit our students,” said Dr. Brad Owings, Middle School principal. “This piece of equipment, along with the software, allows students opportunities that they otherwise wouldn’t have.”

While the technology complements the 3D printer, Bloxel video game builders and Sphero robotic toys that are utilized to teach STEM concepts, Young says the mobility of the cart will allow the unit to be checked out to all Middle School classrooms. The rover comes with over 3,000 lessons broken down by grade level strand, according to the instructor, who believes it will help improve MAP test scores.

“This is how kids learn,” Young stated. “It brings lessons to life in a way books can’t, and increases their understanding about topics they’re learning.”

Pictured: Students (from left) James Gambill, Braden Belknap, Bryce Millner, Molly Maurer, Ian Pierce and Ava Kingree, and STEM teacher Cody Young stand behind the rover, sporting special 3D glasses.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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