

Union School, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Expanding instruction to new heights with Mimio

Union School is a private, co-educational, and non-sectarian school that was established in Haiti to provide an American-accredited program of studies in both English and French. Two hundred sixty-five students of all nationalities attend the school, which comprises an elementary school (grades Pre-K to 5), a middle school (grades 6 to 8), and a high school (grades 9 to 12).

An iconic institution for more than 90 years, Union School has provided a robust and rich learning environment that motivates students to explore, excel, and become lifelong contributors to society. But during the past several years, school leaders realized they needed to find new tools and technology to help teachers improve upon more traditional methods of delivering instruction. They were determined to better meet the needs of the school's diverse and increasingly tech-savvy student population.



“The MimioClassroom interactive teaching tools are making a real difference to teaching and learning activities. Students are more engaged and motivated to learn, while teachers report greater participation and time spent on task.”

— Fareed Teja
DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY, UNION SCHOOL

“Early on we saw the value of MimioTeach”

To that end, in the 2010-2011 school year, Union School conducted a pilot program with the MimioClassroom™ family of products from Mimio. It wasn't long before the implementation of this integrated teaching system swelled to include nearly 50 percent of the school's classrooms, each equipped with one or more MimioClassroom devices.

“Early on in the pilot we saw the value of having the MimioTeach™ interactive whiteboard in the classroom. It creates a more dynamic learning environment, where there is interactivity between the teachers and their students,” says Fareed Teja, director of technology for Union School. “It was important for us to expand our usage as quickly as possible in order to secure greater engagement levels and create a more collaborative learning atmosphere across all grades and subject areas.”

Administrators, teachers, and even parents immediately recognized the importance of integrating the various components of the MimioClassroom solution into the school's existing American-accredited curriculum. All told, Union School acquired thirteen MimioTeach interactive whiteboards, four MimioPad™ wireless pen tablets, two MimioView™ document cameras, and one MimioVote™ assessment. In addition, thirteen classrooms were equipped with ceiling-mounted projectors, one of which was purchased through the generous donations of parents.

“Right away, our parents saw the value of the Mimio technology,” says Teja. “They understand and embrace the notion of engagement—that is to say, if we can



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engage the children in their individual learning process, then their attention span will increase. Their interest level will increase, and ultimately, their test scores will rise. I like to think of the integration of this powerful technology as changing the cognitive process of students...it's not just a tool to augment their learning; it is central to their learning."

While the excitement about this affordable and seamlessly integrated technology is palpable, the school's teaching staff has remained clearly grounded in its stringent academic goals for the MimioClassroom system—to increase both student engagement and interaction.

"We use the MimioTeach and its MimioStudio™ software as a visual and auditory scaffold ...building student interest brick-by-brick, and improving student comprehension from math and science to social studies and English," adds Teja.

Building skill sets for both students and teachers

As Union School students build on their individual skill sets, the teachers are expanding their knowledge of how to be better teachers, too.

"Some of our local teachers have never been exposed to this kind of technology and they were absolutely amazed at how simple it was to get started," says Teja. "I had them holding the pen stylus and instantly selecting objects for their lessons from the MimioStudio Gallery, annotating on maps and other content, in about an hour. And soon after that, the teachers quickly learned how to import lesson plans and capture on-screen notes and other activities—it was just intuitive to them."

"Watching the teachers evolve has been inspiring," says Teja. "Every teacher that has tried the MimioTeach has become hooked."

He notes that when teachers use the MimioPad tablet, their teaching style and classroom management techniques systematically improve. "They are no longer tied to the front of the classroom and students are engaged and not losing interest."



And with the MimioVote assessment in play, Teja has observed that the teachers now approach things differently. "One of our teachers had previously viewed assessments as more of an 'after the fact' activity, instead of something you do as you go along the way. She loves the tool for both informal and formal assessments, with results collected and put in the MimioStudio Gradebook in a matter of minutes. Plus she gets a real-time snapshot of what students understand and where they may be struggling. And it can give students a voice on even the simplest of activities—what to do during recess!"

In January, the school added a MimioTeach whiteboard to its Learning Center for students with special needs. Teja noted that this group of students was immediately more engaged, while teachers liked being able to bring the content to life via the software's comprehensive Gallery of resources.

Asked about future plans, Teja explains, "Next, we hope to bring the program to our special classes in music and French. But it won't stop there. Our driving force has been, and always will be, to deliver a clearly superior education. With Mimio we are expanding individual instruction to new heights."