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What are the pros and cons of this type of subscription service?

United Streaming is an awesome library of many teaching videos and mini lessons all compiled into one place. After signing up for the free trial, I was able to search the site and experiment with many different aspects of the site and found so many wonderful tools to help me prepare for my teaching in the upcoming school year. There is a section that does not require a subscription that allows teachers to make puzzles and lesson exchanges, as well.

The Pros: Too many to mention all. I love the fact that there are built in quizzes for many of the video segments. This is a great way to tie in the learning experience and also keep kids focused, as discussed in Lamb's Chapter 5 on introducing video into the classroom. The site also includes a great teacher section where you can check out many lesson plans and classroom ideas.

The Cons: The only con I have heard about this site is the fact that it is a must to have an up-to-date computer in the classroom. In my opinion, this is a must in all situations anyway and the pros certainly outweigh this con. I wish I was able to have found this site earlier in my teaching career so a con for me would be that Discovery could have been doing more advertising and promoting in the schools.

What do you think of the breadth and depth of the videos provide?

There is so much to offer on any one particular topic that if one video is not what you are looking for there are many others to chose. I have found that all searches I have pulled up have been in-depth and full of excellent informative materials. Again, the quizzes are a great in-depth tool for use.

Are the navigation and search tools effective in locating videos?

You can search by many different criteria on this site. Discovery makes it simple to search by grade level or by subject or even by topic. I have also been directed to many other videos through my searches that are somewhat related for that extra detail. The site also explains briefly about the segment and gives citations for more searches, if needed.

Compare the formats and quality of the videos?

Formatting on school computers can be a tricky situation with many classrooms not able to upgrade or download certain free players needed. I have not seen an issue with this on my computer as of yet. I am sure there are many other formats converters to use or simply stick with Windows media player if needed. I believe the streaming videos were uploaded right onto the web with their own player and it was basic and easy to use. The video quality is great in most cases. There are so many videos that some are older and transferred from older type formats like VHS. The quality on these can be noticed a little especially by kids in today's classrooms.

Do you think they are effective in addressing the stated standards?

I think Discovery is very effective in addressing the state standards. They have many other resources that educators can use for searching by these standards as well. Any educational web site these days must try to align to the standards and I feel this has become "standard" in the business. I would recommend this site to all teachers looking for something different than the supplied textbook.