

DVD review

High School Chemistry for A.P. Achievement: An Interactive Multimedia Course on DVD-ROM (PC or Mac)

by John Hnatow and Dr Ketan M. Trivedi
Trivedi Technology Innovations International
www.t2i2edu.com, ISBN 978-0-9817958-6-7 (Mac Version)

Reviewed by:

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During my two decades as an instructor of Advanced Placement Chemistry, I have frequently been called upon to share my experience with other AP teachers, usually in weekend conferences or full-week summer institutes dedicated to AP Chemistry. As a consequence, I am always on the lookout for new resources to share with my own students and other teachers. The exponential growth of the Advanced Placement Program in general (for further information on Advanced Placement see [apcentral/collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com) and ap.ca) has fostered the production of a large number of study guides, CDs and DVDs and other support materials for these courses. As AP courses closely mirror the first year university/college course in each subject, these materials are often useful for teachers of any chemistry course. Of the many chemistry materials I have examined lately, *High School Chemistry for A.P. Achievement* stands out as both exceptional and unique.

The DVD can best be described as “a textbook come to life”. Topic explanations are concise, yet complete, and appear on the screen as they are read aloud (various narrators are used and may be muted if you wish). Explanations are accompanied by interactive examples of increasing complexity. Inserted graphics that accompany explanations or examples frequently become video simulations. The standard illustrations found in textbooks are replaced by full video. For example, an explanation of measuring reaction rate in the kinetics chapter shows video of an entire experimental trial (with time-lapse photography) rather than simple “before and after” photographs of a solution in a flask.

The user may refer to a 43-page glossary, a list of appropriate equations or a set of the usual tables of chemical constants at any time. In addition, a built-in study guide is available via a button labeled “Notes”. These summarize each section for quick reference and review. Students may add their own information to this section if they wish. In addition to the glossary, formulas, tables and notes buttons, there is a calculator and of course, a help button to assist with the program functioning.

The content is divided into 22 chapters. These correspond to the usual chapters one would find in most year-one college level chemistry texts. The chapters most teachers don't have time to cover (“characteristics of members of the third row transition metals” for example) are not included. An appendix titled “Units, Measurements and Uncertainty” precedes the content chapters.

Chapter 22 is “AP Exam Problem Sets” and consists of actual questions from previous AP Chemistry examinations.

High School Chemistry for A.P. Achievement is very appropriate for any student of chemistry at the secondary or first post-secondary year level. The authors have extensive experience with chemistry teaching at both levels. John Hnatow is an award-winning teacher of AP Chemistry with more than three decades of experience. Ketan Trivedi teaches chemistry at Virginia Tech University and is currently using the DVD with his freshman class. Teachers could certainly use the DVD, as is, with an LCD projector in class. It is perfect for students wanting to prepare for the AP exam or wishing to cover chemistry in an independent study format. I had a student heading to Australia during our gases unit. She used the DVD to cover the material in advance. A second young man hopes to rewrite the British Columbia Provincial Chemistry Exam and used this DVD for remedial work. Both found it very useful and enjoyable as well! I intend to recommend it as a tool for review for my AP Chemistry students.

I suggest that all teachers of general chemistry experience this “living chemistry text” for themselves! ■

Science history tour: Italy

September/October 2010

This year we are going to Italy in the fall when it is cooler and less humid. Our tentative plan is to begin in Como on September 29 and travel for two weeks towards Rome, where we will end the trip on October 13. To date, itinerary and price are not available but, we will probably visit Como to see Volta; Vicenza (with a day trip to Venice) to see some Palladian architecture; Bologna; Florence, for the superb Science Museum and Galileo's hot spots; Urbino; and on to Rome for visits to the classical sites and some interesting science places. As usual, we will see museums, art galleries, sites of special interest in science and possibly Mount Vesuvius.

Many additions to this outline itinerary will be announced later. Included in the trip cost will be: all land transportation, hotel accommodation, all breakfasts and at least (on average) one other meal per day. Also included are admissions to museums, lecture fees, and many incidentals. Not included are: airfare to and from Europe, transportation to the airports, and meals on your own during free time. We are a not-for-profit and people have said over the years we are “excellent value” compared to other programs.

For information about previous trips, see Lee's webpage at <http://www.chem.uic.edu/marek/> or tour member John Oliver's great pictures from previous tours at <http://community.webshots.com/user/oliverjcomo>.

Obtain further information by emailing Yvonne Twomey, ytwomey@mindspring.com or Lee Marek, Lmarek@aol.com. ■