



Description: Enhancing Learning in a Special Education Setting Through mimio® Interactive Technology

no.003

Location: Lake Braddock Secondary School, VA



"...mimio advances their learning, and that's what teaching is all about – learning."

~ Daniel Lynch

mimio® Technology in a Special Education Setting

Daniel Lynch is a Special Education teacher at the Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, VA. He teaches three Self-Contained Math 8 classes, as well as two Team-Taught Math 8 classes. Admittedly not a technophile, Dan nevertheless has found that interactive teaching with mimio® Interactive systems is easy to master and, more importantly, engages his students.

"Unlike some technology tools," he says, "using mimio never keeps me from paying attention to my students. In fact, mimio advances their learning, and that's what teaching is all about – learning."

Goals and Challenges

Daniel has found it difficult to provide a successful learning environment for his special education students, since their learning disabilities take many forms, and many of them have poor attention spans and poor auditory processing skills. In addition, he notes that augmenting the learning experience for students with disabilities can be tricky: Too much stimulation may heighten their inability to focus, and too little involvement and interactivity often leave them where they started from – left out. Nonetheless, Daniel is charged with finding ways to facilitate learning for his students and meet the demands of 18 benchmark standards tests over three quarters of the year. As he points out, that's a lot in a short amount of time.

Meeting the Challenge

Daniel has developed his mimio technology arsenal over time, and constantly builds on his past successes. After starting with a mostly visual-support approach, he gradually added more interactive lessons, multimedia tools, and various forms of repetition and review elements – approaches that are instructional as well as engaging for his students.

He's discovered that the trick is to use the mimio Interactive system to introduce concepts, explain the salient points, and then repeatedly review the material in interesting and straightforward ways. Since repetition is critical to his students' ability to retain information, Daniel often uses the Transparency feature to add an image as a watermark for a slide. This keeps



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the students focused on what the topic is all about in a fun way. For example, Dan added an image of Mr. Burns from *The Simpsons* on a slide about finding the mean, and added a visual of water being poured in a glass to show what volume is. He also finds that using the Reveal tool is particularly helpful, since it uncovers content gradually and rewards the student for progressing from one step to the next.

Daniel uses mimio Notebook pages to create custom lessons and to edit and build on successful lessons from year to year. He can import files and draw, write, type, add visuals, and color his own materials as he needs them. For example, he relates that simply changing the color of a rectangle in an illustration can sometimes stimulate a student to recognize a past learning experience and apply it to a current lesson. And the ability to make such changes virtually instantly makes mimio that much more valuable to him and his students.

Outcome

Today, Daniel is happy to report that his eighth-grade students have a 95% pass rate for their benchmark standards tests. That's a result that he attributes directly to using the mimio Interactive system in his classroom.

"For example," he explains, "some diagrams are particularly difficult for my kids to understand. However, once I teach them with mimio, they understand completely. In fact, the students in my self-contained classes have all received 100% on all tests and quizzes. mimio makes the diagrams 'come to life' and this part of the curriculum is no longer dreaded as it once was – by both students and teacher. On the contrary, it has opened a window to success for studying graphs and statistics topics."

Even more important to Daniel is the effect that mimio technology has had on his students' self-confidence. To quote one student who suddenly "got it" during a lesson using the mimio Interactive system, "I can do this!" That's a comment Daniel is hearing more and more often these days.