



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

no.003

Location: Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, VA



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

~ Daniel Lynch

mimio® 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 has found that interactive teaching with mimio interactive white boards has been re-motivating and that the technological aspects of using mimio® are easily mastered. As he says "Unlike some technology tools, 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's overarching goal is always to provide a successful learning environment for special education students. This is particularly difficult in his classroom since many students have poor attention spans and poor auditory processing skills, but their learning disabilities take many forms. In addition, augmenting the learning experience for students with disabilities can be difficult: too much stimulation and the students' inability to focus may be heightened; too little involvement and interactivity leaves the student where he has so often been – left out. Nonetheless, Daniel must find ways to facilitate learning for his students and meet the demands of 18 benchmark standards tests over three quarters of the year, which, as he says "...is a lot in a short amount of time."

Meeting the Challenge

As many teachers do, Daniel has built his mimio arsenal over a period of time and is constantly building on past successes. Starting with a mostly visual support approach, he has added more interactive lessons, multi-media tools and various forms of repetition and review elements that are not only instructional but engaging for his students.

The trick is to use mimio to introduce concepts, explain the salient points and then repeatedly review the material in interesting yet non-confusing ways. Since repetition is critical to his students' ability to retain material, Daniel often uses the Transparency feature to add an image as a watermark for a slide. This keeps the students focused on what the topic is all about in



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a fun way. For example, Dan added an image of Mr. Burns of The Simpson's 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 using the reveal tool to be particularly helpful since it can be used to uncover content gradually and reward the student for progressing from one step to the next.

Daniel uses notebook pages to create custom lessons and to edit and build on successful lessons from year to year. Mimio allows him to import files and to draw, write, type, add visuals and color his own materials as he needs them. In one simple yet effective 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 being able to do that virtually instantly makes mimio that much more valuable to him and his students.

Outcome

Today, Daniel is happy to report that his 8th grade students have a 95% pass rate for their benchmark standards tests. That's a result that he attributes directly to using mimio in his classroom, or as he says "It would be almost impossible without mimio. For example, some diagrams are particularly difficult for my kids to understand. However, once I teach them with mimio, they understand completely. In fact, all the students in my self-contained classes have received 100% in all tests and quizzes. Mimio makes the diagrams 'come to life' and this part of the curriculum is longer the dread it once was, for both student and teacher. On the contrary, it has opened a window to success for studying graphs and statistics topics."

But even more important to Daniel is the effect of mimio on his students' ability to succeed. To quote one student who suddenly "got it" during a lesson using mimio, "I can do this!" That's a comment Daniel is hearing more and more often these days.