



Case Study: St. Mark's Episcopal School
Altadena, California



CLS721-4-03 shown with Music Maker SD

St. Mark's Episcopal School Encourages the Joy of Wireless Listening

Issue

U.S. elementary students are primarily digital natives – born in the era of the Internet, cell phones, video games, and portable, fast computers. According to a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, today's students are "media multi-taskers."

And according to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), multimedia tools can provide a rich environment for conducting project-based learning, which can help students to: increase knowledge and skills in the particular discipline being addressed; master research and higher order thinking skills; increase knowledge and skills in making use of information technology; and become further engaged in the subject.

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Keeping these facts in mind, it is important that students are taught how to use technology correctly. Therefore, it is critical that teachers utilize technology in the classroom throughout the curriculum.

Sherrie Melinat, the librarian, and Andrea Crawford, a second grade teacher for St. Marks Episcopal School in Altadena, Calif., share many things in common. As caring adults working to shape the young minds of their students, they believe that technology can play a vital role in the classroom and library.

Implementation

Using the CLS Wireless Headphones from Califone, they encourage their students to listen to books on tape. "Having the wireless headphones allows the students to be at their desks or in the reading area. They can choose to read along with the book or just listen," Crawford said.

The wireless headphone system allows students to move within a 100-foot range, permitting them to work on activities anywhere in the classroom or library while still listening. The system comes with headphones and a VHF/FM transmitter, which when connected to an audio device (e.g., computer or multimedia player) allows any number of students to listen wearing a headphone. In addition, educators can hook up a microphone to the transmitter, allowing them to provide verbal instructions to each student wearing the headphones.

The CLS Wireless Headphones can be purchased in three different color-coded packages (yellow, blue or green), allowing for easy identification, storage and tracking. And most important, with three sets of color-coded hardware that can be used simultaneously, educators can create three separate learning groups for differentiated instruction.

In addition to the set used in Crawford's classroom, another set of wireless headphones is used in the library. "Students come to study hall, and each has varying degrees of skills and different assignments they are working on. The headphones allow them to listen to the text they need without bothering other students in the library," Melinat said.

Results

Melinat found that listening to the stories encourages sustained interest in the book the student is reading. Students will visit the library to listen to a few chapters and then return to hear the rest of the story. "We want our students to love reading, and we have found that offering the ability to listen to the stories has increased interest," Crawford said.

"Having the wireless headphones allows my students to be at their desks or be in the library area with pillows, while listening and relaxing," Crawford continued. "I use 20 minutes each day for independent reading, and the wireless headphones give them the option to listen along to what they are reading, making it a more interactive experience."