



Functionality and User-Friendly Features Bring Audio to the ELL Classroom

Issue

Located in New York City's Chinatown, Public School 42 registers newly immigrated children frequently throughout the school year. With students brand new to the United States enrolling regularly, the school's student population is more than 95 percent English Language Learners (ELL). Therefore, in Shuk Wong's first grade ESL/ELL classroom, it's important to incorporate elements of music and technology to provide her students with additional activities for English language learning.

Wong understands the importance of rich listening activities, but aside from a piano, was unable to purchase instruments for her classroom. In addition, Wong's classroom, located in a building more than 100 years old, has poor acoustics, which doesn't provide an optimal environment for audio activities.

Without a musical background, and lacking additional instruments, Wong was unable to bring a variety of musical activities to her students. Recognizing her colleagues' needs for similar activities, Wong did some research, looking for a flexible audio device that would allow P.S. 42 educators to simply and effectively enhance their classroom listening activities.

“The students get excited for listening center activities... With the students being able to use the [Music Maker] Learning Center on their own, they can participate in read- and sing-alongs without any teacher instruction.”
— Shuk Wong, 1st grade ESL/ELL teacher

Implementation

After reviewing multiple products, Wong chose the 4-Person Music Maker Learning Center (2395-PLC) from Califone, and purchased three units to share with other teachers at P.S. 42. Designed to provide listening activities for multiple students, the Music Maker Learning Center supports a wide variety of language learning and literacy programs. Wong and her colleagues are also often using it to help foster phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary development.

The Music Maker Learning Center delivers classroom flexibility, providing a cassette recorder/player, programmable 20-track CD player, AM-FM stereo, and remote control. In addition, its 10-position stereo jackbox extends the number of students able to participate in listening activities simultaneously.

The 10-position jackbox was one of the key features that influenced Wong's decision to purchase the Learning Center. She also recognized the inclusion of both a CD and cassette player. As an educator for 10 years, Wong appreciated that she could continue using her collection of cassette tapes without having to replace them with CDs.

Case Study: Public School 42 New York, NY



Results

“The students get excited for listening center activities,” said Wong. “With the students being able to use the [Music Maker] Learning Center on their own, they can participate in read- and sing-alongs without any teacher instruction.”

With easy-to-use features, the Music Maker provides Wong's students with more independence, allowing her to extend more individualized instruction to students in need. “We train students on new products at the beginning of the year, and assign classroom experts to assist others who have questions or need help,” continued Wong.

The Music Maker is used primarily in Wong's classroom for listening center activities such as reading and singing, but with its easy portability, it's frequently used for outdoor class performances as well. More specifically, the multimedia player/recorder is used during read-alongs, using CDs and books-on-tape from Scholastic's SeeSaw Book Club for K-1 students. In addition, the Music Maker allows students to read-along with Scholastic's Big Books, and participate in sing-alongs using flip charts and CDs.