



Meet the
Performer Plus
2455AV-03

Connecticut School Uses Learning Center to Increase Students' Literacy Skills

Issue

In rural Granby, Conn., [F.M. Kearns Primary School](#) is the only primary school within its district for students in kindergarten through second grade. With one-fourth of the district's students enrolled at F.M. Kearns, integrating technology for enhanced instruction is essential for building students' readiness and achievement. In addition, the school's overall curriculum is very literacy-based, with its main focus on students' reading and language arts skills.

As a veteran educator, first grade teacher Nancy Shyer wanted to find a product that would encourage individual student participation and balance literacy instruction to include multiple activities. It also was important that the equipment provide the option to use both cassettes and CDs, as many of the teachers have personal libraries of books on those media.

"A few teachers first started researching new products last year, but the equipment was costly," said Shyer. "Since we typically use our own money to fund these types of purchases, new technology isn't always an option, but I knew an upgrade was necessary."

With this in mind, Shyer searched for a product that could play audio material from cassettes and CD, and was accessible for multiple student use. It also was important that the equipment be user-friendly for easy instruction.

Implementation

With funds provided by the Granby Elementary PTO Enhancement of Learning (ELF) Fund committee, Shyer purchased five Performer Plus Learning Centers (2455PLC-03), made by Califone International, Inc. The [Performer Plus Learning Center](#) enables educators to enhance literacy instruction with rich audio content available via cassettes and CDs. It also features variable speed playback, allowing students to slow down audio to help comprehend material and develop literacy skills.

Currently, Granby PTO's ELF funds can be used to enhance or supplement an educator's current curriculum, or can be used to support a creative idea. Aligning with ELF's purpose, the committee chose to fund Shyer's purchase after identifying how the Performer Plus could help enhance teaching, create engaging classrooms, and provide creative opportunities for student learning.

With six built-in headphone jacks, the Performer Plus offers teachers the ability to set up learning centers for small group participation and discussion. *"The Performer Plus allows students to listen to stories in small groups, which is a great way to develop fluency skills,"* commented Shyer. *"With these small listening centers, students are able to work on meaningful activities, while teachers instruct individual students or groups using worksheets and other instructional tools."*

The Performer Plus features a built-in mic for in-class recordings, which can help document students' progress and provides later playback. In addition, the learning center is equipped with five stereo headphones, featuring volume control and noise-reducing earmuffs to protect students' hearing. Rugged [ABS plastic](#) adds to its durability and classroom safety.

"I would encourage any teacher who has the funds available to purchase a Performer Plus Learning Center"

— Nancy Shyer, 1st Grade Teacher

The product includes another unique feature – a [remote control](#) for flexible classroom use. *"I've made simple modifications to my Performer Plus to make it even easier for the students to use,"* said Shyer. *"On the remote, I've placed a red sticker on the Stop button and a green sticker on the Go button to provide easy instructions."*

Results

"We're so thankful to have funding from the [Granby PTO](#) to purchase multiple learning centers," Shyer continued. *"With our limited budget for supplies, buying one would've eaten up an individual teacher's budget for the entire year."* Using funds from the PTO, Shyer procured five Performer Plus Learning Centers. Keeping one for her own classroom, she distributed the other four among the remaining first grade teachers to set up on their own.

"Most of the teachers are trained in a 'responsive classroom' style of instruction, which encourages a guided discovery approach to learning," said Shyer. *"This includes instruction on using new equipment. Once the other teachers received the learning centers, they presented directions in a step-by-step manner to teach students how to properly and respectfully use the product."*

In first grade classrooms, students are encouraged to use the Performer Plus individually or in small groups as a literacy workstation. With its easy-to-use features, students most often set up their station with a partner to read along together to books on tape or CD.

In Shyer's class, she's also used the product for teaching direction following skills. Using an activity kit from [Lakeshore Learning Materials](#), Shyer has students listen to and follow directions using pre-made illustrations and CDs. *"I would encourage any teacher who has the funds available to purchase a Performer Plus Learning Center,"* Shyer commented. *"It's really a great product."*