

A classroom audio brought in for a hearing-impaired student engages the entire class

EXPERIMENTING WITH CLASSROOM AUDIO TECHNOLOGY

When a hearing-impaired student was transferred into Jennifer Miller’s* class last year, a new piece of technology was transferred as well.

“This student had an FM system, but the district wanted to do a trial with Lightspeed’s Redcat,” said Miller, a teacher in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The Redcat was one of only a handful in Bartlesville Public Schools, and Miller was eager to see if it could help her new student.

“Taylor* had actually been bullied at another elementary school for being hearing-impaired and came to our school for a fresh start. We were hoping the Redcat would help Taylor feel less singled out and wanted to see how it would impact the students who were not hearing-impaired,” said Miller.

“I wasted a lot less time repeating myself, so my students were able to get to work immediately. Being able to hear myself through the speaker was also helpful because it was easier to identify when I needed to clarify something. So not only did it help my students receive more clear instructions; it helped me as the teacher to give more clear instructions.”

Jennifer Miller
Bartlesville, Oklahoma Teacher

Of course, said Miller, one of the biggest benefits to communicating with every student in the class using the microphone and speaker system was that her hearing-impaired student didn’t feel singled out.

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BETTER TEACHING LEADS TO BETTER LEARNING

The technology worked like a charm, and Miller immediately began to notice benefits for everyone in her class—including herself!

“I’m a very loud speaker just by nature, and before we started using the Redcat, I think sometimes the kids would just shut me out like the Charlie Brown teacher,” said Miller. “With the Redcat’s microphone on, I was paying more attention to my tone of voice and how loud I was. I could tell that my students were listening to me more attentively.”

Miller also found that the volume and clarity of the Redcat speaker improved her instructional style.

A MORE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

It wasn’t long before Miller’s students wanted to try out the technology for themselves, and she began handing off the Redcat’s microphone to students who were presenting to the class.



BARTLESVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BARTLESVILLE, OK

CHALLENGE

Enable all portable and traditional classrooms with the ability to deliver intelligible audio

LIGHTSPEED SOLUTION

Lightspeed Topcat ceiling-mounted audio system



RESULTS

- Students can all hear equally throughout the portable
- Teachers have fewer incidence of voice strain
- Digital audio is delivered easily
- Engaging in new instructional techniques with small groups

“My students felt like I was wearing the microphone for all of them. There was no stigma of anyone saying, ‘Oh, she’s only wearing that for Taylor,’” said Miller. “Taylor didn’t feel any different from the other students and blossomed very well that year.”

“When people look at the Redcat, they might think it’s just a speaker to help kids who can’t hear, but it’s so much more than that. The children comprehend more, so it saves the teacher time in the instruction process because it doesn’t require as much repetition. Ultimately, that allows teachers to give their kids more information and help students be more prepared for testing.”

Jennifer Miller

on!” she said. “I really believe Redcats belong in every classroom.”

REFLECTING ON A YEAR WITH LIGHTSPEED

Now that it’s a new academic year, Taylor has moved on. Because the district’s audio systems travel with the students who need them, the Redcat has moved on as well, and Miller has missed using it every day. She’s teaching third grade this year, which is an important testing year for students in Oklahoma.

“If my students don’t pass the state reading test, they’ll be retained. So I really find myself repeating instructions a lot more than I had to last year,” said Miller. “I’ve also found myself raising my voice a lot more, and I do see some kids shutting down and not listening. I was very spoiled with the Redcat last year.”

As the only teacher in her school who’s had a chance to test the Redcat, Miller said she frequently shares her experience with the technology with her colleagues.

Miller said she’s hopeful her district will be able to invest in more audio systems in the future.

“People don’t know what they’re missing out



“The kids all thought that it was the coolest thing. They really liked hearing themselves. I noticed that my quieter students felt more important because everyone was listening to them more, while students like me who were naturally loud speakers realized that they didn’t need to shout.”

Jennifer Miller