

Organic student collaboration transforms 4th-grade classroom

Collaborative learning and small-group activities are transforming the 21st-century classroom. While small-group instruction facilitates higher level thinking in students, it can present a challenge for teachers in effectively evaluating that all students are on-task and learning. As collaborative learning becomes the “new normal” and class size continues to grow, how are teachers supposed to effectively monitor and manage small groups?

LIGHTSPEED TECHNOLOGIES SOLUTION

Ashleigh Schulz, 4th-grade teacher at Calcasieu Parish Public Schools, was thrilled when she discovered Flexcat from Lightspeed Technologies. “I used to struggle when I taught my students in small groups. Were the students on topic? Were they doing what they were supposed to be doing when I moved to a different group? I had a classroom of students on different levels, and I needed to make sure they were each being pushed to their highest potential. Flexcat enabled this and much more.”

ENHANCING SMALL-GROUP INSTRUCTION THROUGH LIGHTSPEED TECHNOLOGIES

“It has revolutionized my classroom. I have gained a new level of insight to my students that I never had before. I can identify which student has been talking a lot, and which one I have not heard from. When I click in, I can ask the non-contributor to contribute.”

Ashleigh Schulz,
Calcasieu Parish Public Schools
4th-grade teacher

and to hear how they communicate with one another.”

With Flexcat, Schulz says it feels as if there are six teachers in the room and she can be everywhere at once, without interrupting the natural flow of conversation.

Flexcat is designed for teachers like Schulz to listen in on organic conversations without being physically present. “The Flexcat allows small groups of students the freedom to work together in an uninterrupted manner,” said Schulz. “I can monitor and listen to each group separately through the Flexcat pods that stay with the group.”

PERKS OF USING NEW TECHNOLOGY

Schulz enjoys the mobility of the pods and moves them wherever her students are working. “If they are in the classroom, under the tables or in the hallway working—even across the hall in another classroom—they can take the mobile pods with them and it’s like I’m right beside them because of the Flexcat system.” She has found that the system helps keep students on task when working in small groups because they know she may be listening at any time. “Flexcat allows me to listen to the most natural student conversations. It is really awesome to step back and listen to how their brains work,



CALCASIEU PARISH PUBLIC SCHOOL LAKE CHARLES, LA

CHALLENGE

4th-grade teacher Ashleigh Schulz found it difficult to effectively monitor and manage small groups of students during collaborative learning without being intrusive on conversations.

LIGHTSPEED SOLUTION

Flexcat Small Group Collaboration



RESULTS

- The teacher gains a new level of insight into student conversations
- The teacher can listen in on conversations without being physically present
- The mobile pods move to where students are working
- Keeping better documentation on how students progress saves valuable instructional time
- Students take more ownership of their learning

CASE STUDY

A DEEPER EVALUATION

Schulz says Flexcat has saved valuable instructional time by helping her keep better documentation on how students are progressing throughout the year. “On top of managing everyone’s learning and tracking their CCSS progress, I need to manage special education and ESL students. With the things I hear with my Flexcat, I am able to identify how my students are progressing better than ever before.” Additionally, since Flexcat has been integrated into the curriculum, “students have taken more ownership of their learning. I never want to go back to teaching the way I did before I had the Flexcat system!”

“The Flexcat has allowed me to catch my students shining and they do not even know that I am there!”

Ashleigh Schulz, Teacher



“We certainly saw the potential of this tool, but our big ‘aha’ moment really came when we seeded a couple of classrooms and saw for ourselves the power of this technology to transform learning.”

*Sheryl Abshire,
Calcasieu Parish Public Schools Chief
Technology Officer*