



Usage Profile with Learning Specialist Anne Fishburne

Summary Observations of Beamz Over 3-Year Period

Anne Fishburne is passionate about working with kids, especially the students that struggle with learning or behavioral difficulties. As a learning resource specialist for El Cajon Schools in San Diego, Mrs. Fishburne has been using the Beamz in her classroom over the past three years.

Positive Effects

Mrs. Fishburne uses the Beamz daily in a variety of ways. She uses it to give her special needs students a sensory break, where they are really not touching anything, but are able to get their body up, moving and creating. It has become an alternative way for kids to get active when they can't go to recess or be outside. It's also used as a reward for many of her students who get their work done early. She also uses the Beamz as a station while she is facilitating independent small group discussions.

Over the past few years, Mrs. Fishburne has focused usage of the Beamz with her autistic students to meet their sensory goals. Beamz has empowered these students to learn how to take a sensory break and time themselves, as well as teach them sequence. How they can manage the Beamz from step 1-2-3 to create music on their own.

Beyond Expectations

"Sometimes sounds and activity can overwhelm kids with autism," said Mrs. Fishburne. "I thought a couple students would step back from it because of the beat, sound and rhythm was just too much. I'm always surprised when they go for it and get such joy creating music and sounds on their own. My kids are amazed when playing the Beamz. I'm amazed how they quickly catch on to navigating it with the computer and being able to select the songs they want and go back and forth to pick the rhythm, lead and bass. Kids as young as 1st and 2nd grade can manage and navigate the Beamz system with ease."

Measuring Results

In terms of measuring the effects of using the Beamz over a period of time, Mrs. Fishburne has witnessed individual students as well as specific groups flourish from their interaction with the Beamz. Some kids start off uncomfortable at the beginning and end up teaching other younger small groups how to use the system. "It also teaches my kids responsibility in being in charge of special equipment. This is a big deal in our classroom," she added.

Benefiting Kids with ADHD

Mrs. Fishburne said kids with ADHD have different needs. They really don't have sensory needs as much, but mostly inattention and focus issues. The Beamz allows their bodies to get the energy out so they can get to focusing on their learning activity. They are moving and watching what ever is happening on the computer screen while creating something. That in itself allows them to focus, and it also gives them a break from sitting in the classroom and learning the conventional way. So when they are done with a 5-10 minute period with the Beamz, they are able to join the group and do a typical division lesson or whatever is going on. It gives them the break and the movement they need to stay focused.

IEP Meetings

Mrs. Fishburne has shared her experience with parents of specific special needs students at their IEP meetings. "I talk about all kinds of strategies and modifications I might use in the classroom and have brought up the Beamz and how the kids are using it for sensory breaks, a focusing tool and motivator or reward. I stress how fortunate these kids are to be able to use the Beamz as a part of my resource program. It is awesome to have a technological device that helps me engage my students both educationally and physically. Nobody else in our school or district has this special program. Teachers want to come and see it in action, people want to try it out, and kids are fired up about it."

Movement in Using Technology

Teachers are being held to the standard of 85% engagement in their classrooms, and every kid has plans to receive a one-to-one device now. There is a big technology movement in education. "We are bringing in Chrome Books, Tablets, iPads and have had iPods for some time. We are now going to be teaching to kids learning on a computer. Yet, kids need to still be able to get up, get creative, be imaginative and change their activities than just answering questions on a Chrome Book or using an iPod to access information. The Beamz allows kids to create something. It allows them to get up and move, to have sensory input, be artistic. Kids can be successful at something they don't have to put too much thinking power into," Mrs. Fishburne said.

The reason for technology is not to just produce work, you are actually being taught through technology so teachers can facilitate independent small groups. The Beamz offers creativity, sequencing, sensory, while still freeing up teachers to pull small instructional groups. It can be its own rotation. It's an invaluable interactive tool that helps educators do something unlike any other device out there – be creative and engaging at the same time.

General Ed

The Beamz is versatile and can be used in the younger grades, even general education, not just special education. It is an engaging active learning feature for the classroom to have kids be able to create their own music. It teaches rhythm, beats and patterns. "You can add academics around it for general education kids. You can add math to it. 3rd grade times tables. For the older kids without special needs, they think they are DJs. It boosts their self esteem when they use this interactive system," Mrs. Fishburne added.

Summary

Images on TV change every 13 seconds. So today's kids are depending on that type of movement to stay engaged. "A standing lecture in front of a classroom is only hitting the visual learner and maybe some auditory learners, but not any kinetics learners. So, if we are not using all multi-modalities to teach our kids, they are not going to get it. They are not used to watching someone stand and give a lecture for 20 minutes. Beamz offers a new modality to keep young learners, both general ed and special ed, engaged!"