

Case study:

Aspect Vern Barnett Best Practice



ActivPanel enables engaging education for all

"We love using technology which helps us be interactive and not just consumers with our learning".

Bradley Muffett

Teacher at Aspect Vern Barnett

A bit of background

Based in Forestville, New South Wales, Aspect Vern Barnett School is a specialised school catering to around 130 students of various ages with autism. Aspect Vern Barnett endeavours to foster an open and collaborative environment for staff, parents and students, and works with five satellite classes around Sydney where their pupils go to integrate with mainstream students.

The school is dedicated to meeting the individual needs of all comers, and celebrates the strengths, interests and unique abilities of every learner. Bradley Muffett, a teacher at Aspect Vern Barnett, was among the staff who recognised the capacity for technology to help empower students and provide engaging teaching and learning experiences.

In his words: "We love using technology which helps us be interactive and not just consumers with our learning".

Why the ActivPanel?

Bradley teaches in the Pink classroom at Aspect Vern Barnett, where there are six learners around the age of five. "Each child has high support needs as they are non-verbal, so we rely very much on visual learning to help with communication," explains Bradley.

Along with other staff, Bradley was looking for technology to help the school provide visually expressive and engaging education. They also recognised the need for the technology to be robust and accessible to all of their students.

Teachers from Aspect Vern Barnett had seen the ActivPanel showcased at the EduTECH expo, and with the help of their students went on to win one through The Promethean Grant 2017. The ActivPanel worked so well in Bradley's classroom, in fact, that the school has since invested in installing them in five more classrooms.



Meeting the needs of every pupil with ActivPanel

Promethean's commitment to learning in the moment, embodied in the ActivPanel, enabled Bradley and his fellow teachers to teach more spontaneously.

The Instant Whiteboarding feature especially supports this reflexive style of teaching, allowing the teachers to draw and display on-screen whilst switching between different resources to reinforce and consolidate on a given topic. Bradley found it effective for his young students to bring up pictures and videos on the ActivPanel - many of the children being non-verbal, it is hugely important for the school to give them ways news to learn and motivate them to express themselves visually.

Having access to an ever-expanding ecosystem of apps via the Android device, the ActivPanel has helped teachers at Aspect Vern Barnett School meet the individual requirements of every pupil. "Certain apps really engage students - we can create lessons and have options that really suit the nature and needs of the kids," explains Bradley. Adapting the lesson on the fly maintains an enthusiastic environment in the classroom.

Bradley also pointed out that the ActivPanel is set to stand the test of time at Aspect Vern Barnett, commenting: "The ActivPanel is durable, and can withstand daily use by the children with respect to their varying needs." The nature of the display also

"Teaching spontaneously allows us to cater for students with shorter attention spans, who get easily distracted and disengaged with other learning practices. It is crucial that lessons flow and the children remain interested."

Bradley Muffett

Teacher at Aspect Vern Barnett

means that writing and drawing on the ActivPanel is an intuitive experience for the students, sidestepping the frustrations of input lag when clicking or dragging.

Not only did the school's first ActivPanel lead them to invest in bringing the technology to more classrooms, Aspect Vern Barnett has also been sharing the benefits with other institutions in the Autism Spectrum Australia group. The staff have been keen to showcase how the panel can meet the needs of individual learners, and encourage engagement across the curriculum.

Aspect Vern Barnett School continues to provide fantastic educational experiences for autistic students in Australia, and their use of the ActivPanel to underpin and exact their own values is nothing short of exemplary.

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