

Case Study

Getting Ahead in English Class with the AVerVision355AF

– Saltash.net Community School, Saltash, UK –



Saltash.net Community School, located in Saltash, UK, describes itself as being at the forefront of developing the use of new technologies to enhance the learning experiences of its students. They believe that to engage, inspire and challenge their students effectively they have to listen to their views on how they feel they can thrive as 21st Century learners.

Saltash.net Community School has also received formal recognition for its excellent practice/innovative use of ICT. The school also proclaims a total commitment to fulfilling the Every Child Matters' belief that all students should be able to both 'Enjoy and Achieve.'

Saltash.net Community School is a large comprehensive school in a rural section of Cornwall in the UK. An AVerVision355AF was recently trialed in some English classes at the school, where they believed it could assist with their focus on reading texts – particularly Reading AF2, AF4 and AF5 at KS3 and AO2 at KS4. When Ms. Suzie Allen, an English teacher at Saltash, first found out that she would be receiving a Visualizer for her classroom, she knew right away that she wanted to use it in a variety of lessons aimed at analyzing text – particularly the layout and structure of texts, where scanning difficulties or the excessive cost of color photocopying prohibit thorough analysis.

Analyzing Texts with Great Results

The Visualizer proved invaluable in a Year 7 unit on reading and writing children's fiction. The first part of the unit was reading and analyzing the conventions of children's fiction books. Since Ms. Allen's class lacks a whole class set of books, students used to read selected books in small groups. The introduction of the Visualizer meant a single page could be shared with everyone in class simultaneously. At the outset, the Visualizer was used to model the close reading and analysis of particular texts. Having the Visualizer meant that the teacher could model good reading effectively – the book could be moved to reveal different sections of the text with the AVerVision355AF's auto-focus and auto-image features correcting the image almost seamlessly, and the teacher could point to important sections to demonstrate the reading processes.

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The teacher could also zoom in on features of importance and discuss the layout and presentation of the text. Because the entire class could see the selected text, both the teacher and the students could annotate and highlight the text displayed on the Interactive Whiteboard. The next step involved students working in small groups to complete a similar analysis on a chosen book. Each group had a different text, so when it came to presenting feedback, the Visualizer became the preferred method of sharing.

Combining Technologies

In a Year 9 class, Ms. Allen used the Visualizer as an introduction to media studies, connecting the Visualizer with a 'Wii' and playing the videogame 'Guitar Hero' to study 'representation' and 'institution' through the creation of bands and publicity material. The Visualizer was also used to study samples of texts from both books and magazine articles. Students were able to share features, articles, band memorabilia and even CD covers by placing them beneath the lens of the Visualizer. All of these activities led to a detailed class discussion that ended up involving every student in class.

“Students love using the Visualizer, as they find something magical in putting the text under the lens and a real-time image of the text appearing on the whiteboard!”

-Ms Suzie Allen, Saltash.net Community School

Demonstrating the Versatility of the AVerVision355AF

Ms. Allen found herself employing the Visualizer in ways that she hadn't originally planned. One such example was when she used the Visualizer to fill in the GCSE coursework coversheets. According to Ms. Allen, some students find it challenging to complete these forms accurately when they are just given verbal instructions. By putting a blank form under the Visualizer and filling it in with the students, she said she was able to model what went in each box and zoom in on her own handwriting so that the students could copy it correctly. She shared this approach with her colleagues at break time and soon had demands to borrow the Visualizer from four other teachers. Remembering the whole event, Ms. Allen simply said, "It was miraculous!"

Better Performance and Greater Enthusiasm in the Classroom

The students definitely benefited from the clearer modeling that the Visualizer helped the teachers to achieve. It was clear from class discussions to planning sessions to lessons where the Visualizer had been used to conduct close analysis that the AVerVision355AF was an effective tool. Students' responses in class illustrated a better focus on features and conventions of a text, serving as stronger evidence that they might reach the requirements of some of the higher levels of assessment for reading at their school. Students

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enjoyed being able to put their own work under the camera and being able to share it with the class. Feeding back their own work with the use of the Visualizer meant higher levels of engagement, as well. Getting a turn at the Visualizer became a great incentive for exhibiting good classroom behavior.

Ms. Allen shared her experience using the Visualizer with her colleagues. The more technically-minded colleagues in the department already knew of the Visualizer's benefits, since they had already begun to use Visualizers in their own lessons. As for those teachers who have yet to integrate the use of a Visualizer into their lessons, Ms Allen said she would encourage them to do so by showing them how easy it is to set up and how it reduced the need to prepare paper resources.

Our thanks to Wendy Delf at Cornwall Learning and Flic Hampton, Advanced Skills Teacher, Cornwall Local Authority, for leading the pilot across all eight schools and enabling teachers to come together to share good practice at regular intervals throughout the duration of the project. The project would not have been possible without their commitment and hard work, and AVerMedia are indebted to their continuing support for the use of Visualizers across Cornwall Schools.