

CASE STUDY: VISION

New York School District Uses Vision Classroom Management to Create New Learning Dynamic

Students are distracted less, receive more attention from the teacher and remain on task longer. Learn how classroom management software helped create a 21st century learning process and yielded an increase in student performance in this case study.

Hornell City School District serves a student population of fewer than 2,000 students in Hornell, N.Y., a small city in the southwestern corner of the state.

Students love to use computers at school. This simple, irrefutable fact creates two distinct challenges for school districts - how to manage student computer use and how to best maximize the time spent using computers. For Peter Baccile, technology director for the Hornell City School District in Hornell, N.Y., the two challenges become one as he strives to redefine the teacher's role in the 21st century classroom.

Located in the picturesque Canisteo Valley of New York state's southern tier, one hour south of Rochester, Hornell is a small city of 10,000 people. The school district, made up of two elementary schools, an intermediate school and a high school, serves approximately 1,900 students. To help meet its goal of providing a high level of learning for all students, Hornell City School District has adopted several online and software-based curriculum products. However, managing student computer use when they are using those products presented a challenge for the district's teachers. That's when Baccile turned to Netop's Vision[™] classroom management software.

Vision is easy-to-use classroom management software that empowers teachers and trainers to supervise and control student computer activity from the instructor's computer screen.

Prior experience as a classroom teacher gave

Baccile a perspective unique among technology directors - first-hand knowledge of the potential for combustion when young adults are confronted with Internet access, with or without limits. "It's universal - the bottom line is kids will be kids. As structured a classroom as you have, as tight as the filters are, you're still going to have kids who try to find music or surf the Web the minute you turn away. The kids are incredible, how they'll get around our firewall. There become a lot of discipline issues, so you have to pick your battles and keep your policies in place."

Great Technical Support

Baccile was familiar with Vision from experience as a teacher before joining the Hornell City School District. "The Vision interface is very comfortable to use, and you can do a lot with it," he said. "Hornell had another classroom management software product in place when I got here, but I really liked what Vision had to offer when I was using it hands-on, so we decided to implement it here."

Switching the Hornell City School District network to Vision was a smooth transition. Baccile was able to implement a trade-out of old licenses for Vision, with no additional cost. The district's technology trainers found Vision easy to navigate, and so computer lab and media center personnel were trained individually. "We managed our training with very limited staff," Baccile recalled. "When I was out and about trying to help train, the phone support was absolutely unbelievable. They walked us through it step by step, managed my computer remotely and showed us how to teach it to the staff." Baccile was particularly pleased with Vision's wireless performance, since 60 percent of

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the computers using Vision operate on a wireless network.

Benefits of Using Vision

- Creates new ways to use technology for learning
- Easy training and support
- Student performance improved

Transforming Computer Use

The implementation of Vision has had a dramatic effect on student computer use. Infractions are down and discipline has become easier. "For the most part, the students remain on task, but if someone decides to venture on his own, we've been able to document it exactly, so there's no gray area," Baccile said. "From an administrative standpoint, it's always easier when you have documentation for your use policy. We had one student who was surfing for porn,

and we captured his screen. We could see what he typed, that the page somehow got around our filter and came up. Word got out among students, and it had an exponential effect because the other kids realized they were being watched. After that, the numbers dropped dramatically on our filter report."

21st Century Learning Environment

With greater control over student behavior, teachers are now free to concentrate on the learning process. "One of the biggest components of using computers in instruction is to create the 21st century lesson," Baccile said. "This means each of the teachers becomes less of a directed instructor and more of a facilitator, and the computer becomes a learning medium."

In a class of 20 to 30 students, teachers are hard-pressed to keep an eye on everyone's progress. Vision eases that challenge by allowing the teachers a window into the students' learning process as it happens, so help is there when the student needs it. "To have the teacher engage with the student on the computer during the

lesson has had a really positive impact," said Baccile. "Everyone in the room has become more accountable. We're always concerned that all stakeholders are accountable, and with this tool in this setting, it works."

The integration of Vision has yielded an increase in student performance, particularly in the school district's new alternative placement program, which serves students who were not successful in the traditional high school setting. He said, "We found that because the students are distracted less, receive more attention from the teacher and remain on task longer, they're finishing their assignments faster and with better results."

Sandy Hillman, a teacher at the alternative placement academy for grades seven through nine, finds Vision gives her a better sense of security in the classroom environment. "In my classroom, they're all doing totally different things at the same time, so it's important to keep an eye over the entire situation," she said. "I have kids who don't excel in a traditional setting. Some of them have very limited exposure to a computer and the Internet, while others are incredibly savvy at getting around things. It's like a silent partner that gives me better, more subtle control that we all know is there."

These students use Compass Learning and EDUCATION 2020, a distance learning tool, Baccile added. "With Vision and an engaged teacher in the classroom, no one is failing, and some of the students are reaching honor roll status," he said.

"While Vision is a great security tool, a way to successfully manage the computer labs, it's also much more," he continued. "When it's effectively incorporated into the 21st century lesson, it gives us more virtual face time with students and really enables teachers to facilitate a new kind of learning process."

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