



Case Study: Hort Elementary School Bakersfield, California



Hort Elementary School Engages ELL Students One Card at a Time

2010AV CardMaster™
shown with
Basic Vocabulary
#2 Cards

Issue

Carla Kliever, Reading Specialist and CELDT Coordinator at Hort Elementary School in Bakersfield, Calif., is passionate about teaching English Language Learners. With more than 250 English language learners under her direction, Kliever works hard to maintain each child's record, monitor CELDT testing, train each test proctor, gather scores for the district, and to take care of the classification of each student, determining their proficiency levels.

“A card reader system is ideal for reading lab students to practice English at their own pace, provides instant feedback and allows for remediation.”

The majority of students attending Hort Elementary School come from Hispanic families, with a diverse set of English and Spanish language skills. Kliever wanted to provide her reading lab students with a way to practice English on their own time, at their own pace. Kliever believed a card reader system would be ideal for this type of varied learning. She wanted a device that would provide instant feedback to her students, correct mistakes immediately, and allow for remediation.

Implementation

Kliever decided to purchase the Califone CardMaster, and quickly found it helpful in teaching students with a wide range of literacy backgrounds – reaching students with various reading, writing and oral skills.

Purchasing blank cards, she worked to engage her ELL students by crafting the cards to match the school's reading and language arts textbook. “The more you align these kind of reading and language lessons to what the students are doing in their regular classes, the less likely they will be confused,” Kliever said. “This helps them stay on task and engaged.”

Arranging the cards to meet the needs of different students, she created cards that addressed everything from single letters to complex words, and allowed her students to practice using the CardMaster throughout the day.

She stores the cards in a box next to the card reader, leaving stacks of cards labeled with post-it notes for each student, so they know which set to use for practice. During the day, students take turns using the CardMaster, saying the word, and sliding each card through the machine for feedback. Listening with headphones, students can determine whether they need to further practice the word or sound.

Results

Kliever carefully monitors each student's progress by having them repeat their cards with her, separating the cards into two piles: words or sounds they have mastered, and those they need to practice. “I love anything that is self-correcting, that is not a waste of time for the students, and not just a toy. The CardMaster allows for flexibility, fitting the needs of many students,” Kliever said. “It encourages my students to monitor themselves.”

Kliever shared the example of one student from El Salvador who was very motivated to learn his letter sounds and various words. She created a chart for him with all the letters, and when he mastered one, he could color in the chart. Working hard to complete his stack of cards, he came up to her after practicing, and said very proudly, “I'm prepared.” And he knew them all with confidence.

“Our goal is to have one CardMaster in each room in our school,” said Kliever.