



Activexpression learner response devices dazzle with ActionTestBuilder

CASE STUDY

Spanning 47 square miles and two counties just east of Wichita, Kansas, Andover Public Schools is one of the fastest growing districts in the state. With no end in sight to its growth spurt, the 4,000-student district—comprised of five elementary, two middle and two high schools—is doing amazingly well at keeping pace with professional development, student achievement and technology integration. Their success is based on a well-rounded support staff, active parent volunteers, committed administrators and, according to Technology Trainer Shannon Fisher, a go-getter mindset. “Andover prides itself on being on the cutting edge of technology. We’re not afraid to try to new things—we embrace them.”

This attitude is exactly what helped garner the district top national honors in October 2008 for its use of digital technology. Today, it is what keeps them open to innovative teaching and learning solutions, such as LearningStation’s ActionTestBuilder and Promethean’s Activexpression learner response devices. Together—the cutting-edge district, the standards-aligned formative assessment software and the engaging student response devices—are keeping Andover Public Schools at the height of their success.

ActionTestBuilder, Activexpression combination powerful

Andover Public Schools began the 2008-9 school year by placing a Promethean Activboard into every elementary


classroom, and later, into numerous middle and high schools rooms. When ActionTestBuilder was matched with Activexpressions, nearly every district teacher felt the impact.

LearningStation’s ActionTestBuilder has allowed teachers to seamlessly integrate the information gathered by Activexpressions into planning more standards-driven quizzes and tests while honing in on student strengths and weaknesses. No additional resources are required.

Immediate feedback invaluable

Fisher explains that with ActionTestBuilder teachers can pick from main content areas and create formative tests for students in about two minutes. When it comes to test-taking time, students see a test displayed on the Activboard and use Activexpressions to click in their answers. ActionTestBuilder generates immediate feedback about student understanding of curriculum against standards. The teacher is then directed back to the standards-aligned content needing further review.

Because ActionTestBuilder enables teachers to pinpoint opportunities for further instruction within moments of test completion, adjustments to teaching are instantaneous. “Teachers can redirect their teaching right away,” Fisher explains.



8008 Corporate Center Drive • Suite 210
Charlotte, North Carolina 28226
888.679.7058 • Fax 704.926.5401
www.learningstation.com

“When it’s a short quiz and there’s time

left in class, for instance, a teacher can tell whether to move on to something else or, if they see a certain question was missed by many students, go back and give it more focus.”

For the tandem, the district pays just \$3 per student—about the cost of a bottle of water--and receives invaluable results. District Technology Director Rob Dickson thinks the immediate feedback is extremely helpful, particularly because teachers need computer lab access to hone in on student performance. “For our district, using Activexpressions with ActionTestBuilder means we can have formative assessments that have a bigger impact on small learning sessions instead of a full schedule of rolling kids in and out of computer environments, then waiting to see the results. Individual teachers have the power to do much more in much less time, right in their classrooms.”

ActionTestBuilder generates real-time reports and data on student understanding not only for classrooms, but for schools as a whole and entire districts, too. At Andover, this information was quickly added to the materials reviewed regularly in grade-level teams. What’s more, ActivTestBuiler is allowing educators to *share* tests so “they’re not reinventing the wheel,” says Fisher. “The big benefit of using ActionTestBuilder with Activexpressions is the amount of time it saves. So many times teachers are given all sorts of resources to use separately. This has really decreased teachers’ workload.”

Student test-taking turns into student expression

Among the options provided in the Activexpression-ActionTestBuilder combination is the ability to view results by question or collectively. Additionally, teachers like that students are registered anonymously. When a teacher shows the class its results on the Activboard, students look for their number, not their name. Of course, the blatant celebrating displayed by some exposes a few identities. “Students clicking in their answers to tests is definitely a nontraditional way of gathering feedback. I really see kids getting excited, even punching the air in response!”

By all accounts, Andover students love using Activexpressions with ActionTestBuilder. The response systems encourage and motivate even the most reluctant students. Many actually look forward to taking tests if they know they will be using Activexpressions. Fisher believes that because the response devices look like cell phones and involve something akin to texting, the experience resonates with students. She offers, “These kids have been raised in a technological society, so anytime they have access to technology, they’re more excited. With ActionTestBuilder and Activexpressions combined, they’re not just taking a test anymore--they’re expressing themselves.”



Commitment to professional development aids smooth implementation

Andover Public Schools takes pride in its professional development program for teachers and staff. Fisher and her colleague Dyane Smokorowski provide ongoing hands-on technology training right through the summer, including half-day workshops on ActionTestBuilder. There, teachers practice planning classes and create standards-based tests using ActionTestBuilder, then incorporate Activexpressions. Next, teachers take on the student role and practice using Activexpressions themselves. Fisher laughs, “A lot of teachers text only minimally—myself included. *We struggle* texting, but we know it’s a student’s whole world. The true benefit of Activexpressions is the benefit to students.”

Fisher cites that they are seeing increased motivation among teachers, especially those that tend to shy away from new technology. “Some technology resources *are* hard to use; but, ActionTestBuilder has great navigability and makes it easy to build tests. It’s a whole new life and a whole new outlook on teaching, too.”

ActionTestBuilder and Activexpression for comprehensive formative assessment

ActionTestBuilder is a valuable teaching and learning tool for use in all content areas and grade levels. Its robust question database is developed around state-tested subjects, such as reading and math, but also allows educators to create

original questions and tests, perfect for specialized content areas, like foreign language, music and consumer sciences.

And because teachers can utilize resources within reach—not steeled away in a lab--the opportunities for increased mastery of standards-aligned content are endless. Dickson sums up, “Because we have Promethean Boards in every classroom, we’re facilitating learning in every classroom. Using Activexpression with ActionTestBuilder maximizes the potential for student achievement.”

