



Implementation: The Key To Success

A VizZle Value Report from LAUSD

Featured District:



Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Special Education, Director LRE:
Nancy Franklin, MA, BCBA

Autism Specialist: Debbie Moss, MA

Students Served: ~11,000 students with an eligibility of autism, with 10% of those students currently utilizing VizZle

VizZle Licenses: 104

Needs:

- Lessons supporting behavioral/social goals as well as academics
- Visually oriented lessons and supports
- Best utilization of hardware, interactive white boards
- Data collection supporting IEPs
- Sharing resources efficiently
- Engage students and enhance communication

Solution:

- 6,000+ pre-made lessons supporting curriculum and therapy goals
- VizZle multi-media lessons all designed for visual learners
- VizZle lessons touch-ready and present on multiple hardware platforms
- VizZle data collection for IEP goals
- Easy sharing via shared folders and VizZleGrams
- Access to usage data as well as performance data
- Highly engaging individual and group screen-based lessons

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In an era of challenging funding and heightened public awareness to the needs of children with autism, selecting and implementing a program throughout a district is a high stakes decision. Increased attention to the needs of students in special education has elevated the conversation about student needs and best practices, but belt-tightening budgets make finding the right tools to implement change more important than ever.



Meeting Challenges On An Urban Scale



Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) faces the same challenges as any school district—but on a much larger scale than most. Stretching beyond the confines of the city of Los Angeles proper, spanning 710 square miles and 8 sub-districts, LAUSD is the second largest school district in the country. In recent years, the number of students identified with an eligibility of autism has increased exponentially. The district has to work both hard and smart to manage the demands this increase represents.

In 2010, LAUSD's Autism Specialist, Debbie Moss, took full advantage of the funding opportunities presented by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Using dollars won from that funding stream, she equipped a group of LAUSD special education teachers with education technology to help them meet the challenges they faced. The team selected laptops, LCD projectors, a mobile interactive white board solution, and VizZle.

Ms. Moss took charge of acquiring and implementing VizZle. She says, "I am always seeking resources that will support the cognitive, social, and behavioral goals we have for our children. We were excited about using technology that focuses on the learning style of students with an autism spectrum disorder to enhance lesson engagement and learning."

Adoption Strategy

The implementation plan designed by Ms. Moss and the VizZle professional development team for the introduction of VizZle into the district was so successful that it has become the recommended model for any district looking for a comprehensive adoption strategy.

The LAUSD team first launched the effort with an introductory webinar, followed by 2 days of on-site professional development. The plan also made best use of VizZle U (www.learnvizzle.com), the on-demand, on-line portal to interactive professional development courses, archived webinars and discussion forums dedicated to VizZle and best practices in visual learning. Teachers were given time to delve into all aspects of VizZle, support to create 3 IEP goals for each student, and encouragement in the form of a contest to show off their skill and creativity as they worked with VizZle.

During the implementation period, LAUSD teachers created 100 unique, moderated lessons that they contributed to the VizZle library—an unprecedented number by a team new to VizZle. Even better, it created a congenial sense of team. Before the school year ended, the group convened a final in-person professional development seminar. Teachers shared lessons learned, best practices and exemplary lessons with one another, and a VizZle trainer was there providing feedback and

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answering questions virtually. The session ended with a celebration and recognition of the work these teachers had done during the 3-month contest.

Candid Reactions

Stories and comments from the teachers involved in the implementation process proved Ms. Moss's expectations to be correct:

We had only been using VizZle for 1 week and I had not had a chance to train my staff. They had been observing me but had not been presented with the opportunity to try VizZle. There was an emergency in the room and I had to step away from the computer. I asked my staff to carry on and they agreed, but we all knew that they were not familiar with the program. When I returned, the students were still engaged and the staff seemed to be doing great. I asked how they felt about taking control and they laughed. Apparently, they got stuck and did not know how to access a different activity... so they asked one of the students. This student does not have verbal language but was able to navigate the staff through the process by taking the lead... He trained my staff!! - Nancy Rubalcava, Gridley Elementary

VizZle is an amazing tool. It has changed our classroom and the students' desire to participate. I am able to get so much more out of the students while getting data! The idea of having so many useful tools in one place makes teaching much easier and more enjoyable. - Suzy Hernandez, Walgrove Elementary

Some of my students were unable to take pen and paper assessments, but were able to be assessed by quizzes on VizZle. It has changed the way I teach, review, and assess students in my classroom. It even works as a reward because some students enjoy it so much they will work hard at other tasks to earn time on VizZle. My colleagues and I have really enjoyed using VizZle and even plan on having a VizZle party over the summer to create visual supports for the coming year. VizZle and the accompanying technology have helped me meet my personal goal of bringing more technology into the classroom to engage and enrich my students. - Jennifer Timmons, Huntington Drive Elementary

"We immediately saw that students were engaged and performing at unprecedented levels," commented Ms. Moss. "VizZle not only affected student learning, but was embraced by the teachers quickly. The program was easy to learn and provided a rich library of existing lessons."



Oversight Made Easier

Ms. Moss and her team have a full plate. The four Autism Support Teachers on her team, all of whom are experienced teachers themselves, work with teachers in the classroom, supporting them through coaching, helping to apply methodology, improving IEP reporting methods and more. The team was instrumental in bringing

VizZle into classroom practice, and they continue their work through individualized training.

Throughout the implementation process, Ms. Moss's team was given access to usage data so they could gauge adoption by teachers and the amount the program was used in the classroom. It allowed them to effectively maximize the benefits of their investment by doing things like shifting distribution of VizZle licenses as needed, or recommending specific lessons for specific situations.



"I love working with VizZle--having the VizZle Player app on the iPad can be a game-changer for these kids. I can find any kind of lesson for nearly any topic [social, behavioral or academic] for any cognitive ability in the VizZle library. And, if needed, we can edit a lesson so it addresses a specific need. This is a program we can use to support almost any need," says James Koontz, one of the Autism Support Teachers.

Ms. Moss adds, "We chose to buy multi-year licenses to provide the teachers and students continuity, and we place the licenses where they are most needed. The ability to monitor teacher use and transfer the license from one teacher to another has been invaluable and easy. We found the VizZle team to be resourceful and committed to our success. It has become a great resource for our teachers. We are expanding our use of VizZle as we continue to see how different students would benefit from the program."

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Process + Planning = Success

The LAUSD team succeeded using a carefully planned and well executed implementation strategy that has become a gold standard for VizZle implementation everywhere. They chose schools in every region throughout the district, at every grade level, and thoughtfully explored and monitored the student and teacher effectiveness of VizZle to make sure their dollars were being utilized effectively.

The process gave the LAUSD team a high level of confidence in the benefits VizZle provides. With the VizZle expertise they acquired, they have had requests to speak at regional conferences to share the lessons they have learned through their work. The VizZle team and LAUSD have formed a rewarding partnership, which supports and celebrates the successes of the LAUSD organization. Every classroom story recounted or wonderful lesson shared strengthens that bond, and gives us even more to celebrate.

About Monarch Teaching Technologies (MTT)

MTT produces VizZle - an award winning web-based tool for teachers that enables educators to create fun, interactive visually supported curriculum customized for children with autism and special learning needs. For more information on VizZle or MTT visit www.monarchtt.com or call 1-800-593-1934.

