

About SpecialNeedsWare

SpecialNeedsWare is a leading provider of software solutions dedicated to special education students, families, teachers, and organizations around the world. It was founded after years of research in 2011, by computer scientist Jonathan Izak, whose younger brother is on the autism spectrum and was the initial inspiration for the formation of the company. Since that time SpecialNeedsWare has developed the award winning AutisMate platform, acquired a board that consists of leading industry experts, partnered with Boston Children's Hospital, and most recently launched two new platforms: the language development game PuddingStone, and the learning management system, TeachMate365.

Board of Advisors

SpecialNeedsWare has built a diverse and active advisory board consisting of leading educators, researchers and professionals in the special needs community. Its advisors are committed to the success of the company, its products and most importantly, its users. They participate in trainings, implementations and conduct regular webinars and guest lectures around the country.

						
Howard Shane, PhD Director, Boston Children's Hospital	Dr. Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D. Chair, OAR Scientific Council	Melanie H. Johnston, MA Executive Director, BRITE Success	Tammy Taylor, MS Speech Language Pathology Center	Kelly Fonner, MS Consultant, Assistive and Educational Technology	Gemma White, CCC-SLP Director, Spoonful of Sugar, Inc.	Jennifer Dantzer Executive Director/Founder, Including Kids, Inc.

In Proud Partnership With Boston Children's Hospital

SpecialNeedsWare partnered with Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical's world-renowned research institute in 2012. Since that time, SpecialNeedsWare has collaborated with Boston Children's Hospital to develop PuddingStone - a first-of-it's-kind virtual learning game, and TeachMate365, a learning management system for special education.

SpecialNeedsWare's Vision

As SpecialNeedsWare continues to grow, develop, innovate and push the boundaries of what technology can do for the special needs community, the company's foundation remains in its passion to improve the lives of individuals with special needs by addressing the unique abilities they have and struggles they face every day.




WOONSOCKET PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUP ACTIVITY CASE STUDY



The Center Grove Case Study - Group Activity

“TeachMate³⁶⁵ has changed the way therapists, teachers and families approach the task of teaching language development, social expectations and functional communication for our diverse student population.”

Beth Campanelli, CCC-SLP
Pothier Elementary School

GROUP ACTIVITY IN A CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

Individualizing group instruction can be a difficult task for both teachers and students. Individualizing instruction is a critical part in our learners success because it allows them to access targeted goals at a level that is most meaningful to them. To maximize our learners potential, it is important that we personalize group instruction. Group instruction provides our learners with the least restrictive environment for learning and participating in small group instruction is a prerequisite for our learners to be successful in a fully inclusive environment.

Our learners traditionally face challenges in group settings particularly in the areas of attending, managing distractions, understanding social cues and engaging in conversational exchanges appropriately. This often comes from a breakdown in language comprehension and makes understanding expectations virtually impossible. Due to the visual nature of our learners, we can further target these skills in a visually immersive environment to set clear expectations and communicate these expectations in a meaningful way.

TeachMate365 encompasses an array of customizable visual supports including visual scenes, visual schedules, visual stories and video modeling all of which address the challenges our learners face during group instruction. Using these tools, we can support our learners varying needs helping them successfully learn and participate within a group setting.

This case study examines the implementation of TeachMate365 with a group of four 7 year old male students with varying cognitive disabilities. Quantitative data were collected by the classroom teacher to measure the ability to independently request wants and needs during group instruction. The study indicated that using visual scene displays with embedded language hotspots that addressed the differentiated needs of each group member successfully increased independent requests by 20 percent over the course of 60 days.

METHODOLOGY

Group activities varied weekly and consisted of sensory activities, tabletop games and social snack. The goal of this intervention was to increase spontaneous requesting amongst peers within a small group. Prior to implementation, students utilized paper based visual supports and teacher prompting to assist them with group engagement by requesting appropriate items from their peers. Teacher reports indicated high levels of physical prompts to engage students in various social activities during group instruction.

FINDINGS

Results of this brief case study indicated that the use of visual scene displays with embedded language hotspots increased spontaneous requesting and significantly decreased prompt dependency. Data indicated that students spontaneously requested an object from a peer within a group setting 88 percent of the time with the use of visual scenes.

