

NEWS

Kindergarten teacher uses technology to bring learning to life

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A local kindergarten teacher on the Western part of the state is using technology to increase her students' interest in learning, and the innovation has all the students talking to their parents about it.

For Bowman County School District kindergarten teacher, Amy Burke, the conventional way of teaching kids their ABC's and 123's just wasn't cutting it.

"You could just tell. A lot of them would lay their head down, be tired. . . they just needed something to spunk their interest," said Burke.

She came across the spark she needed at a kindergarten conference, when she noticed a program called Learning alive™ from Alive Studios.

It is an interactive early childhood reading and math learning program designed for student engagement.

This past Fall Burke received a Continental Resource grant, so she could purchase the \$2,100 program for her classroom, and so far it seems to be paying off.

"What I like is that the kids ask for it, and if they ask for it that means they enjoy it," said Burke.

The program is so easy a child can use it.

The kids have a list of alphabetical letters associated with an animal (Q is for quail, A is for alligator) that they can build sentences with, and the interactive animal science part of the program also allows the kids to learn about the animal.

"Not only is she (Megan) learning the letters and the sounds, she is learning what the animals say and how the animals move," said Kelsey Brosz whose daughter Megan is in Burke's class

Megan said elephants are her favorite animal because of their long trunks.

Burke has fewer than 20 students in her class, and she said she's already seen an improvement in her students' performance since purchasing the program.

"We have worked on sentence structure, sight words, and color words have increased drastically".

The students were also able to show off their new toy to Governor Doug Burgum this past Wednesday in Bismarck, ND at a technology showcase at the Capitol.

The Showcase was an opportunity for North Dakota schools to "highlight best practices and innovative approaches to technology in K-12 education".

Ten schools were selected to participate in the Showcase.

Burke said the governor enjoyed Bowman's Alive Studios program almost as much as the kids.

The kindergarten teacher said the students use the program twice a week, and they also use it for math, reading, colors, and shapes.