Classroom tech is not making the grade: poor screen visibility is impacting student exam results

40% of UK teachers have noticed a direct correlation between pupils sitting in classroom ‘cheap seats’ and their performance, according to new Epson research

Educators across the country use display screens as a core element to deliver an engaged and effective learning process. However, new research from Epson, conducted with UK primary and secondary school teachers, has revealed that ‘cheap seats’ exist in the classroom. The display technology used in many schools is restricting the viewing, and thus learning, experience of many pupils, and having a detrimental effect on their education. The survey revealed that 40% of teachers have noticed a correlation between pupils being unable to see a screen properly and lower test/exam scores.

Previous Epson research has revealed that 58% of students cannot read all content on a 70-inch flat-panel screen – while 79% of teachers are still using flat-panel displays, including whiteboards, blackboards and TVs, in the classroom. This means that many visual displays used in UK classrooms are failing to provide a screen size that can be viewed by an entire class. This is leaving those seated at the periphery of the classroom unable to benefit from an equal educational experience to that of their peers.

45% of teachers identified the desks at the edges of a classroom using flat-panel screens as the ‘cheap seats’ – as they offer...
restricted viewing compared to those towards the front of the classroom. This means that students in these areas are at a
disadvantage, compared to pupils sitting closer to the screen. Two-thirds (66%) of teachers surveyed think that restricted viewing
hamper the learning experience, whilst 64% believe this leads to poorer lesson scores for students, compared to those who can see
a screen fully.

Ross McGill, Founder and CEO of @TeacherToolkit, comments: “For the past 25 years, I have always prioritised seating plans for
every class that I have taught, but this new research flagged something I had never really contemplated before – the fact that some
students may be sitting in ‘cheap seats’. These results show that there’s a misconception in education that needs to be addressed.
Schools have the challenge of choosing the correct projectors, screens and positioning in classrooms, but need sufficient funds able
to do so.”

In audio visual (AV) installations, there is a common standard used for determining screen size – the 4/6/8 rule – which is used widely
in lecture halls and large venues. This rule establishes that ideal viewing distance, in correlation with room size, should be four, six or
eight times the height of the screen for analytical viewing, basic viewing and passive viewing. However, many schools neglect to
follow it, leaving students unable to see displays clearly and completely. More than two-fifths (42%) of teachers surveyed were
unaware of the rule and the role that it plays in classrooms, whilst two-thirds (66%) claimed that not being able to see a screen fully
could hamper a pupil’s learning experience.

With poor screen visibility impacting test and exam scores, and exam results ultimately setting the bar for education standards, the
right tech could be the key to raising pupil performance. It could also help improve student discipline – as 45% of teachers reported
that pupils who can’t see a screen properly are disengaged and/or distracted in lessons.

These problems could easily be overcome by the use of projectors – which offer a large adjustable display size, so that an output can
be seen by all, no matter the size of the classroom or the number of students. There’s clearly an appetite for projector technology
from educators: more than three-quarters (76%) of teachers said the use of better display technology would allow classes to engage
more fully with lessons. In addition, two-thirds (60%) of teachers find they can be more creative with their lessons when using a
projector.

Craig Blurton, end user sales manager for education at Epson UK, comments, “Our research has revealed that the technology in
schools today is simply not up to scratch – and given the impact that poor screen visibility can have on students, modern projection
technology is a practical solution to helping pupils perform better. With visual and interactive displays now at the very heart of
learning, and closely linked to the exam results by which so many are judged, educators simply cannot afford to ignore the
appropriate display size any longer.”

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