

Nicole Bishopric
SMART Board
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SMART Boards have recently been introduced to the education system, which presents a new way of learning to students. Technology is becoming more and more prevalent in young learners lives, so it is important for this to transfer into the classroom. SMART Boards are providing this technology interaction and are becoming a tool to enhance teaching while supporting learning. (Interactive Whiteboards: boon or bandwagon?, Smith, Higgins, Wall, and Miller) A SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard that is used as a large touch screen monitor.

With these SMART Boards learners have the ability to control the computer with a touch screen making learning physically at their fingertips. Users have the ability to manipulate words and graphics for better understanding of material. The interaction between learner and information is closer than ever before. By making learning more relevant to the learner they are more motivated to want to learn more and the content becomes more interesting. (Interactive Whiteboards: boon or bandwagon?, Smith, Higgins, Wall, and Miller) All of these factors helps to make the information students are learning “stick.”

With SMART Boards in the classroom, students are getting a better overall learning experience. Learners are able to physically see their manipulations of what they are learning and understand relationships. These interactive whiteboards can be used by the learners in whole class activities to create more inclusive and interactive lessons where everyone can feel comfortable participating. As the learner manipulates the relevant examples they are going to be able to remember the information much better rather than learning examples that are formatted similarly and try to make the connection. By learning information in a way that is relevant to how they would use it in the real world, the content is more likely to stay in their memory better. (E-learning, Clark, and Mayer)

SMART Boards are teacher friendly as well because they allow lessons to be saved for future use. Even though lessons may take longer to put together, through

instruction “down time” is almost eliminated. The lessons are moving at a faster pace and are more fun and exciting for the learner. The time it takes to erase the board, or write out instructions can be accomplished with a click of a button. Paper assessments can be eliminated with the use of a SMART Response system, which can be used to assess the learner’s understanding throughout the lesson and at the end of the lesson. The extra time it does take to make the lessons is reflected as worthwhile in the students’ work, understanding, and impression of the content.

Teachers can use the SMART Board to give directions of what students are expected to do on their individual computers so everyone can see at the same time. This helps to keep giving directions to a minimum and everyone can see clearly on the large monitor. Learners will gain explicit directions of what they are expected to do and they will be able to see the steps they need to take when they are on their own. These directions will be relevant to what they are expected to be doing on their own which will help when recalling the information. This will allow the learner to apply their understanding of the concept to an actual example. (e-learning, Clark and Mayer)

Many skeptics ask if the use of a SMART Board in a classroom can really make a significant difference in student achievement. Research has done a great job of testing this information and finding results that do support the predictions that this classroom technology does in fact provide a better learning experience, resulting in a greater percentage of passing students. (The Digital Learning Classroom, Lopez) Although the SMART Board reviews are better when they come from teachers who have one in their own classroom, not all teachers use them to their full ability. This could hold back the learner from achieving their highest learning potential. There should be multiple learning opportunities presented to teachers in the various uses of the SMART Board including relevant examples to their classroom and teaching styles. This will help the information seem more useful and more easily incorporated. Teachers who use these interactive whiteboards say that they do need to make adjustments from how they were used to teaching to accommodate this new technology. For example the instructor now needs to stand to the side of the board to prevent a shadow from casting in front of the projected

light. Also, as the student participation increases more time is taken for the students to walk from their seat to the board.

The positive aspects of the SMART Board as an interactive whiteboard outweigh the negative. It has become a major trend in many school districts across the country. Educators are hoping that over time they will see a major increase in test results compared to the years before using interactive whiteboards as means of teaching. So far the results have shown an increase in both Language Arts and Mathematics for ELL and struggling students.