

Professional development ensures the success of a school-wide SMART Board implementation

Researchers are seeing an improvement in student attention and engagement following the successful integration of SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards at a New Brunswick elementary school. The researchers credit the success of this initiative to the school's focus on teacher training during the implementation.

Dr. Bill Morrison and Dr. Patricia Kirby from the Health and Education Research Group of the University of New Brunswick have released a report called *Applying SMART Board Technology in Elementary School Classrooms: Investigation of a School-Wide Initiative*. The report summarizes findings from their one-year study into the impact of professional development on the integration of SMART Board interactive whiteboards at Park Street School.

To analyze the outcomes, Morrison and Kirby conducted a series of classroom observations, facilitated teacher focus groups and distributed both a baseline survey and a post-initiative teacher survey. Results indicate that teachers at Park Street School focused on obtaining comprehensive professional development during the implementation of SMART Board interactive whiteboards. Teachers took part in product training, skill-development sessions, mentorship programs and project collaborations, improving their ability to effectively use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard in daily instruction.

In their report, Morrison and Kirby evaluate the implementation's impact on four key areas – teacher knowledge and confidence, classroom instructional practices, pedagogical benefits and differentiation of instruction.

Teacher knowledge and confidence

- 90% of teachers strongly agreed that they feel comfortable using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard as an educational tool in their classrooms following the implementation, whereas only 10% felt comfortable before the implementation took place
- All participants indicated the implementation of SMART Board interactive whiteboards increased their own understanding of the general use of technology for instruction, with 76% in strong agreement
- Focus group participants indicated that organized training and skill sessions on SMART Board interactive whiteboards in the classroom were relevant and effective

Classroom instructional practices

- 95% of teachers reported using their SMART Board interactive whiteboard on a daily basis to present instructional content or to engage students in learning activities

Research
Brief

- 50% of participants indicated they used resources from education.smarttech.com as supplementary instructional content in conjunction with their interactive whiteboard
- Researchers found that teachers effectively use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard to transition from one curricular theme to another or to instantly access more detailed information on a topic
- Teachers reported using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard to perform the following activities in their classrooms:
 - Presenting and reinforcing learning routines and schedules
 - Eliciting unique and specialized information for instructional presentations or enrichment projects
 - Facilitating individual or small-group learning activities
 - Investigating themes relevant to students' interests, passions and experiences
 - Incorporating interactive learning games
 - Reviewing curriculum content
 - Practicing skills in literacy and numeracy

Pedagogical benefits

- Teachers unanimously agreed that SMART Board interactive whiteboards are a benefit in their classrooms, and 85% strongly agreed
- All teachers felt the SMART Board should be a part of an overall framework for better practices in an inclusionary educational system, with 75% strongly agreeing
- 80% of teachers strongly agreed that the SMART Board interactive whiteboard increased students' engagement in the learning process
- Every teacher agreed that the SMART Board interactive whiteboard improved their ability to teach, with 70% in strong agreement
- Researchers noted that when the SMART Board interactive whiteboard was combined with a classroom audio system, students' attention and engagement in lessons improved

Differentiation of instruction

- 81% of teachers said that having access to a SMART Board interactive whiteboard enhanced their ability to differentiate instruction
- 62% reported that they had sufficient understanding of how to use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard to plan instructional activities for students on Student Educational Plans (SEPs)

Read the [full report](#).

In April 2008, UNB researchers also released an interim report summarizing their initial findings about Park Street School's implementation of SMART Board interactive whiteboards and the impact on teacher practices and student engagement. Read the [interim report](#).

