

Lotus Gardens Primary School

Case Study, Pretoria, South Africa



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– Mags Moodley, Teacher

Overcoming learning obstacles with technology

The students and staff of Lotus Gardens Primary School in Pretoria, South Africa, face many obstacles to learning and teaching. With 1,213 students and only 28 teachers, the average class has 43 students. The school is located in a poor community and has little money for basic tools like protractors, let alone technology such as computers. Consequently, students don't always learn the skills they should before changing grade levels.

But with the help of the SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard, the school has overcome these problems and is helping to provide students with a solid education.

Creating confident learners

Despite its financial constraints, two years ago the school bought a SMART Board interactive whiteboard, a projector and a computer with the help of a grant offered by OMEGA Digital Technologies, SMART's South African distributor.

Teacher Mags Moodley was involved in the purchase. He says the school bought the interactive whiteboard because staff saw the potential the product had for solving some of the problems they were having in their classrooms.

The technology's interactivity instantly captivated students. The students benefit considerably from a tool that enables interactive, whole-class teaching even in large classrooms. Now, students can work directly with lessons on the interactive whiteboard, helping them become more confident learners.

'In our maths classes, learners who were previously nervous and lacked confidence suddenly became the ones who would go up to the interactive whiteboard, pick up the pen and work. These learners have shown a remarkable improvement in the classroom', explains Moodley. 'Many students actually enjoy mathematics now.'

Providing essential tools

Using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, teachers have also found a unique way for students to access some of the resources the school can't afford to buy.

Moodley says although there are many interactive educational CD-ROMs available to buy or borrow from libraries, the school's computer centre doesn't have enough PCs for each learner. The computers are also not networked, so it is impossible for multiple learners to view one CD-ROM at the same time.

Challenge

Ensure that students learn the required skills for their grade level before moving to the next grade

SMART Solution

SMART Board
interactive
whiteboard

Result

Students are more confident and prepared to move to the next grade level

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'Now an educator can show the entire class a CD-ROM on the interactive whiteboard's large screen.'



Students at Lotus Gardens Primary School have overcome learning obstacles, such as large classes and a lack of technology and supplies by using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard.

'This problem was circumvented with the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. Now an educator can show the entire class a CD-ROM on the interactive whiteboard's large screen.'

The school's lack of supplies extended to basic measurement instruments such as a protractor. As a result, many learners went on to high school with a limited knowledge of angles and how to work with a protractor.

'But the protractor available in SMART Board software offered the educator the opportunity to show the entire class, at one time, how a protractor should be used and read', says Moodley.

Developing new skills

Besides benefiting students, the interactive whiteboard has helped teachers develop new skills.

'Since only around 40 per cent of our staff were computer literate, we assumed that it would be a problem for the rest of the staff to learn how to use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. To our amazement, the majority of the educators grasped the use of the technology very quickly, simply because

they were not using a mouse, but their finger, which feels more natural.'

The school also shares this product with the rest of the community. People visit the school to use the interactive whiteboard for everything from adult literacy classes and educational television shows, to film night fundraisers and strategy discussions for the community's cricket and football teams.

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Moodley says the SMART Board interactive whiteboard has become an education tool for the entire community – it is a resource everyone values.

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is both the industry pioneer and global market leader in easy-to-use interactive whiteboards and group collaboration tools. The award-winning SMART Board interactive whiteboard is the most widely installed product of its kind in the world. It enhances teacher productivity and improves student learning outcomes, and is used in more than 250,000 classrooms spanning more than 75 countries and every Local Authority in the UK. SMART products also include interactive pen displays, interactive digital signage, wireless slates and software. Using SMART products, groups can access and share the information they need to meet, teach, train and present. SMART's education customers include Oxford University (UK), Barnier Public School (Australia), University of Ottawa (Canada), United World College (Singapore), Stephen-Hawking-Schule Neckargemuend (Germany) and Harvard University (U.S.). SMART Technologies Inc. is represented exclusively in the UK by Steljes Ltd. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com.

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