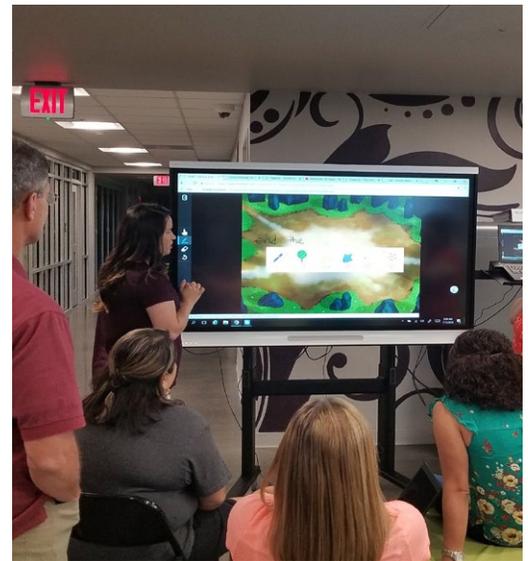
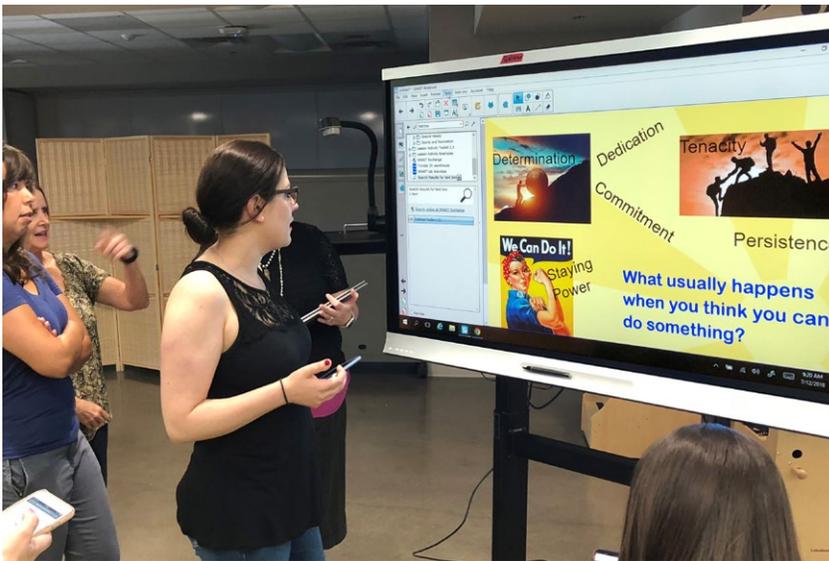




Unlock Greatness: Creating Interactive Learning Environments that Build Social and Emotional Skills

A Professional Development snapshot with Ector County ISD, Texas



Motivation

Ector County ISD in Odessa, Texas, recognized the need for a purposefully designed professional learning opportunity that supported their teachers as well as their core district principles: academic excellence, college and career readiness, purposeful communication, and creating safe and supportive learning environments. Renee Jones, Director of Instructional Technology, sought to collaborate with a strategic Professional Learning partner that could model a student experience using the schools' interactive displays as a collaborative workspace. The district was interested in providing a PD experience that would inspire teachers to support a collaborative and interactive learning environment with technology, while emphasizing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills.

Why SMART?

Ector County ISD has used SMART hardware and software for many years, and recently invested in new SMART interactive displays for many of their schools. District leadership envisioned their new SMART Board® displays to be a hub of active learning and collaboration in the classrooms. They chose to collaborate with SMART's Efficacy and Implementation Team to create an out-of-the-box professional learning experience that would leverage their boards as a collaborative workspace, and help their teachers develop lessons that would create a safe and supportive learning environment, through a focus on SEL skills.

Teachers and School

Ector County ISD, Texas. Educators, Kindergarten-12th Grade. (Age Range: 5-18)

Key Challenge

To design a purposeful professional learning opportunity that would help teachers develop a safe and supportive classroom environment focused on collaborative student-centered learning.

SMART Solution

SMART Board 6000 interactive displays
 SMART Notebook®
 SMART Learning Suite Online

Result

Teachers experienced the benefits of participating in a collaborative SMART Professional Learning exercise at the SMART Board that was student-centered. They left with 15 classroom-ready lessons designed to empower their students to develop a mindset that will positively impact the way they approach learning.

Aligning District Principles & Professional Learning:

In developing training for educators in Ector County ISD, there were two goals: 1) to provide teachers with an opportunity to create a classroom-ready lesson, and 2) to enable understanding of the benefits of having students work actively and collaboratively at the SMART Board. With these two objectives in mind, Unlock Greatness was born. Unlock Greatness is a SMART Professional Learning experience inspired by escape rooms, a social game that has become popular in the last few years. Rather than breaking out of a locked room, teachers worked to create a lesson to unlock greatness in their students.

SMART's Unlock Greatness began with a question: "What superpower would you like your class to develop this year?" This superpower was not about having the ability to fly or x-ray vision. Instead, teachers focused on creating a positive mindset to help students feel safe and supported in order to reach their learning goals. In this training, teachers broke into groups based on the mindset they wanted to foster within their students. Then, instead of using a traditional model of direct instruction, teachers worked in teams to solve puzzles at their SMART Board displays and uncover directions for the next challenge in their lesson creation process.

For example, one group of middle and high school teachers focused on fostering accountability. An aspect of their lesson was a differentiated choice board using SMART's Flip Out activity that included a variety of tasks, such as creating a motto for accountability and visually representing this mindset. Every group of teachers learned how to create a comprehensive, interactive SMART lesson that would engage their students in a variety of ways to facilitate adopting a superhero mindset.

Outcomes:

Ector County ISD teachers witnessed first-hand the benefits of participating in a student-centered learning activity at the SMART Board. The rich conversations taking place at each board demonstrated what is possible when teachers put learning in the hands of students. They saw how emphasizing SEL skills would empower their students to take charge of their learning in a new way.

"I appreciated the escape room concept and that most of our time was spent hands-on with the board to learn more about the activities. I also enjoyed that I can use the activity created during the first week of school".

– Yesenia Gonzalez

This professional learning experience was a reminder that developing a safe and supportive environment can unlock greatness within students, and encourage them to persevere in the face of challenges. The teachers left with this knowledge, as well as a library of lessons to use with their students.

For more customer stories visit: smarttech.com/greatness



"I love the "student-led" training! I was able to learn hands on!"

– Natalie Rubalcado

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is a world leader in simple and intuitive classroom technology solutions. We are an innovator in software and interactive technologies that enable natural collaboration, helping every student and teacher discover and develop their greatness. To learn more, visit smarttech.com.

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