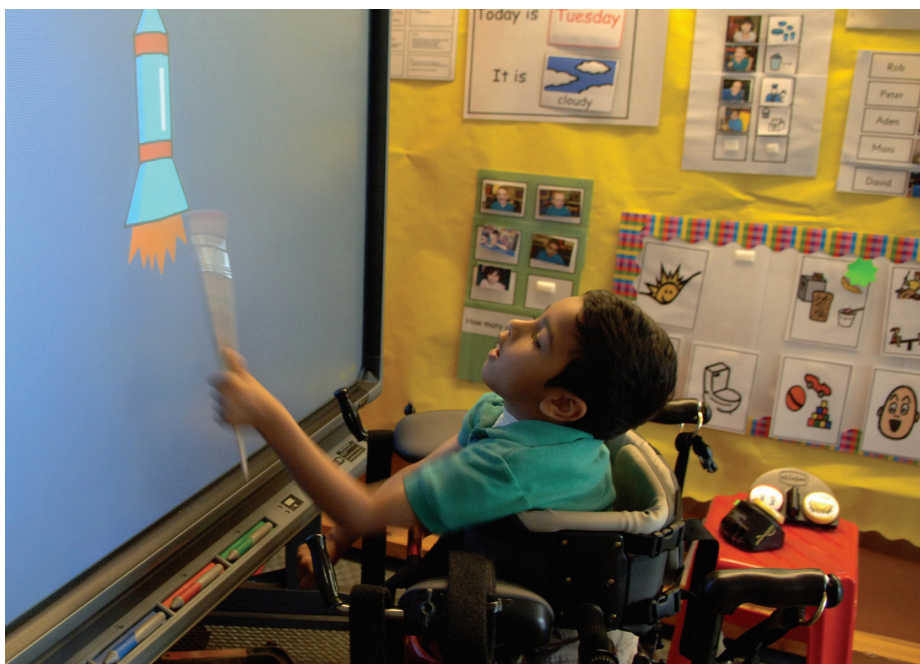


Case study



The Bridge School Students with Learning Disabilities Succeed Using Interactive Whiteboards

The Bridge School teaches students five to nineteen years old who have Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD).

The right combination of technology and support from innovative teachers is helping special needs students at The Bridge School make major learning breakthroughs.

In 2004, school staff took part in a research project studying the impact of ICT on students with PMLD, ASD and SLD. During the project, staff visited similar special education schools and witnessed the positive effects interactive whiteboards were having on students. Bridge staff wanted these tools for their classrooms, but they had to find a brand of interactive whiteboard that would accommodate all of their students.

"We did some research and decided that SMART Board interactive whiteboards would be the best fit for our needs," explains Sally Paveley, a special educational needs consultant for Bridge.

"A major thing the SMART Board interactive whiteboard has going for it is that you can use your fingers on it. Although 90 percent of our students could use a stylus or some other device, there is always going to be that 10 percent who can't. To exclude them wouldn't be fair."

Paveley, who is also a teacher at the school, says her students have shown higher levels of concentration since she began using the interactive whiteboards during lessons.

Challenge

Find an interactive whiteboard that all students can use, even students who can't hold a pen.

SMART solution

SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards installed throughout the school and used in all key stages.

Result

Students are making significant learning breakthroughs; they are more focused and have higher concentration levels.

Through activities that involved pressing on the interactive whiteboard, one student with profound learning disabilities learned to understand cause-and-effect relationships and to extend the range of movement in her arms.

"In just about every lesson now, I start by using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. The students are paying attention and focusing on what's happening. That's a big thing; we have a lot of students who have big problems with concentration."

Eleanor, a young Bridge student, has profound learning disabilities, but is making significant learning achievements using the interactive whiteboard. When she first arrived at the school, her range of motion in her arms was very limited. She tended to hold her arms tightly to her chest and just flap her hands.

Her teacher, Andrew Beswetherick, wanted to work with Eleanor to achieve two goals. First, he wanted her to extend her range of movement and second, determine if she could understand a cause-and-effect relationship.

Beswetherick spoke to Eleanor's parents and learned that she enjoyed the music of Eric Clapton. So he made PowerPoint® files that would play bits of Clapton's music when Eleanor touched the interactive whiteboard's screen. After a while, he made the activity more difficult by requiring her to touch a picture to make the music play.

"I was able to work on two things at the same time," explains Beswetherick. "One was to have her touch her target more accurately and understand that touching a specific spot would produce an effect. The other was, by putting a picture high up in, say, the right hand corner of the screen, to have her reach outside her normal range of movement to touch it.

"She will do it now, and every time she does it, it lays down a new template in her brain. It's been a real success," he confirms.

Beswetherick says when a student is just beginning to understand cause and effect, it is important for them to get a big effect. That's why he dims the lights and turns up the volume on the speakers. "When they touch the interactive whiteboard, they really get a massive amount of feedback, which helps them to develop cause-and-effect understanding."

Paveley says staff and students are pleased with the success they've had with the products. Now that teachers are using the interactive whiteboards, all students can see what is happening during a lesson and everybody feels included.

And as for Eleanor, with the help of Beswetherick and the interactive whiteboard, she continues to set and achieve new learning goals everyday.

"The students are paying attention and focusing on what's happening. That's a big thing; we have a lot of students who have big problems with concentration."

Sally Paveley, Special Educational Needs Consultant

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is both the industry pioneer and global education market segment leader in easy-to-use interactive whiteboards and other group collaboration tools. The award-winning SMART Board interactive whiteboard is the most widely installed interactive whiteboard in the world.

Many school jurisdictions have standardised on the product, which is used to provide interactive learning opportunities and enhance student achievement in more than 450,000 classrooms spanning every U.S. state, every Canadian province, every Local Authority in the UK and in more than 100 countries worldwide. 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 New York City Board of Education (U.S.), Oxford University (UK), Kobe City Board of Education (Japan), Barrier Public School (Australia), University of Ottawa (Canada), United World College (Singapore), Stephen-Hawking-Schule Neckargemuend (Germany), Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (U.S.) and Harvard University (U.S.).

SMART is a private company founded in 1987. Employing more than 900 people, SMART is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with assembly facilities in Ottawa, and offices in Bonn, Tokyo, China, New York City and Washington, DC. SMART has been issued and maintains a broad portfolio of patents with numerous U.S., Canadian and other patents pending. In 1992 SMART formed a strategic alliance with Intel® Corporation that resulted in joint product development and marketing efforts, and Intel's equity ownership in the company. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com.

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Steljes creates opportunity for partners, customers and end users by pioneering innovative technologies that enable people to interact and communicate more effectively while working and learning.

