

Case Study



Teacher mobility and responsiveness improve at Woodcroft Primary School

South Australian school integrates AirLiner wireless slates and SMART Board interactive whiteboards

Sitting in a desk receiving information is no longer an adequate way for contemporary students to learn, according to Woodcroft Primary School's assistant principal, Judy Beal. Along with her colleagues, Beal is using technology to equip students with the skills required by a knowledge-based society. "There should be mobility for students and teachers as the task requires," she says. "That's what life is like. The world is so much richer now in its content of visual media and multimedia literacy, that textual literacy isn't enough."

This practical outlook prompted Beal to request additional SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards when she joined Woodcroft early in 2006. The funding committee, having gauged teachers' positive reactions to the SMART Board interactive whiteboards already in use, greeted her request with great enthusiasm. Beal was pleased to find that the new SMART Board interactive whiteboards would come bundled with additional products, including SMART's AirLiner™ wireless slates.

As Beal notes, contemporary teachers are aware that technological dexterity, collaboration and student-centered learning are integral to a 21st-century education. Woodcroft's new SMART products help create just such an innovative learning environment by helping teachers break away from the front of the classroom and challenge conventional teaching methods. "With the wireless slate, I can annotate on the interactive whiteboard from the back of the classroom," Beal explains. "I don't often sit down, and I don't expect the teachers to, either. I'm an engaged teacher and learner."

Challenge

Use technology to make learning environments more collaborative and interactive.

SMART solution

AirLiner wireless slates and SMART Board interactive whiteboards

Case result

Digital tools help prepare students for knowledge-based society.

"It's really cool. We can be anywhere in the classroom and we can draw on the board without having to be right in front of it."

Brooke (student)

Julia Herbert appreciates the extra flexibility the AirLiner wireless slate gives her, particularly when teaching math. "I'll get students to do a sum from the back of the room, or I'll get them involved in a game, or I'll get them to draw a shape and find the lines of symmetry – it's endless, when you start thinking about it." As teachers grow accustomed to instructing from anywhere in the room, traditional lines between student and teacher are blurred. Students take on the role of teacher and presenter, and learning becomes doubly enriched – and much more fun.

Woodcroft children are indeed enjoying learning with the help of SMART products. They star in their own fairy tale films, magnify spider legs and roll digital dice – and they have the freedom to move as they work. "It's really cool," says 10-year-old Brooke, who regularly uses the AirLiner wireless slate. "We can be anywhere in the classroom, and we can draw on the SMART Board without having to be right in front of it."

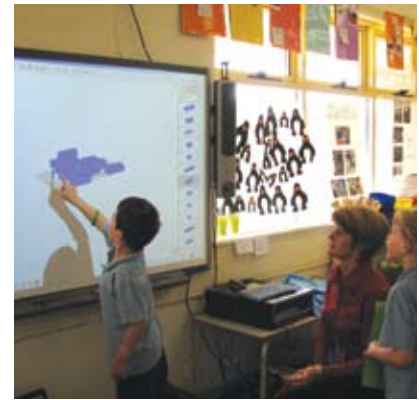
For teachers, integrating SMART products into their classrooms is both easy and rewarding. "The SMART Board interactive whiteboard works brilliantly with the other technologies we have," says Beal. "It's plug and play." SMART products integrate easily with tools like digital microscopes to make lessons dynamic, meaningful events that children will not soon forget.

Teachers at Woodcroft are also using SMART products to ensure that all students, even the most tentative, take an active role in class discussion. Standing in front of the class can be intimidating for young students. "Some kids don't want to do that in front of their peers," Beal explains, recalling one of the first times a student used the wireless slate at Woodcroft. As class members took turns navigating the Internet with the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, Beal handed the slate to one of the more timid class members, who used it to override what another student was doing on the interactive whiteboard. The result was gratifying. "You could see the joy in her face," says Beal. "She realized, 'I'm not up there, I'm not embarrassing myself in front of everyone, but I've still got a voice in the classroom.'"

When Woodcroft teachers move through the classroom with AirLiner wireless slates, they can offer students opportunities to receive extra help without giving them unwanted attention. "Those kids who don't understand after the instructional mode have a chance to have one-on-one time with the slate, not right up at the board where everyone sees." Teachers can also draw on the instructional power of the SMART Board interactive whiteboard as they explain a concept using the AirLiner. The connection with the interactive whiteboard is never sacrificed, and the teacher doesn't have to leave the student's side. "You can bob down next to Johnny," Beal explains, "and say, 'Have a look at the board – this is what I'm talking about, and this is what I want you to do with this piece of writing.'"

Encouraging students to work together is one of Woodcroft's objectives, and teachers have found AirLiner wireless slates useful in fostering collaborative learning. Groups of students can work on the wireless slate and interactive whiteboard, sharing information and constructing knowledge collectively. "I tend to see teachers that are successful working in groups and collaboratively planning together, kids working together in teams," says Beal.

With their assistant principal's encouragement, Woodcroft students are bound to be dynamic learners, able to work individually or with others, and proficient with digital tools. They gather around the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, pass around the AirLiner wireless slate and debate ideas. Their classes are filled with spontaneity, motion and collaboration, so Woodcroft students will leave the school ready for a world where technology changes quickly and thinking is a team sport. Because that's what life is like.



Woodcroft students demonstrate their knowledge on the SMART Board interactive whiteboard

"I'll get them involved in a game, or I'll get them to draw a shape and find the lines of symmetry – it's endless, when you start thinking about it."

Julia Herbert, teacher

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 standardized on the product, which is used to provide interactive learning opportunities and enhance student achievement in more than 330,000 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 800 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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