Raising student achievement

IN THIS ISSUE

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Each school year, you work toward improving your students' achievement levels to prepare them for their future and to ensure that they're getting the best possible education. In this issue of the newsletter, you can find tips and best practices to help you do just that. The feature article and the Showcase School profile provide examples from teachers across North America that are using a variety of SMART products to achieve success with their students. And in our Product Spotlight, we'll tell you about the second generation Senteo™ interactive response system that will be available this summer.

You also have three chances to win SMART products in this issue. We have two contests, plus a survey where you can give us feedback on the newsletter and be entered to win a SMART Board™ 600i interactive whiteboard system. Look for details on page 2.

NANCY'S NOTES

Engagement and assessment

The topic that I hear everyone talking about these days is the challenge of engaging children in today's classrooms. We all hear the chronic complaints about absenteeism, bad behavior and unmotivated students. Are we looking at the root causes of poor performance, or are these just symptoms of children who are disengaged from the learning process – a process that they feel is uninspiring and boring?

At SMART we have been talking about engagement for many years because we have repeatedly seen what happens to children who experience an interactive, visual environment. Once in an environment that more closely matches their expectations, these seemingly unmotivated learners thrive.

We have continued that tradition of delivering the best experiences for learners with the introduction of our student response system. We know the value of this product from the teacher's perspective, but what does it mean for student engagement?

In short, it can mean everything. This nifty device means that every student has a voice in the classroom. Every child gets to answer every question. Every child is heard. It's not just the keeners who are always volunteering an answer. Through the anonymity of the clicker each child can answer and assess his or her own progress. Peers don't need to know what he or she does or does not know.

Want children to be committed to their learning? Give them the tools to allow them to commit. Get them involved. Tell them what they think, learn and know matters. Let them in on everyday assessment. Personalize the learning and put the tools in their hands – literally.

Nancy Knowlton is the CEO of SMART Technologies.

SMART Technologies™

Notebook™ software lesson activities

Find hundreds of high-quality [K–12 lesson activities](#) on the education solutions website. Each lesson is correlated to local curriculum standards and created by classroom teachers or SMART's team of curriculum resource developers.

We've got two Valentine's Day lesson activities for you to try, and there's also a popular social studies lesson activity for your secondary students.

Valentine's Day Word Fun
Language arts students in grades 3–5 can practice their spelling skills using a Valentine's Day vocabulary list.

Valentine's Day Math Fun
Math students in grades 4–6 can practice adding and subtracting, with money and time problems.

The League of Nations
Social studies students in grades 10–12 can learn about the League of Nations and why it was formed. This lesson activity also contains questions that integrate with the Senteo interactive response system.

Speak up and win

Tell us what you think of ED*Compass*™ newsletter, and you could win a SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboard system for your school.

As a valued reader of the newsletter, we want to hear what you have to say. Tell us what you like, what you don't like and what topics you would like us to cover.

[Complete the reader survey now](#) for your chance to win. You have until March 31, 2008, to complete the survey.

Upload your lessons to the SMART Exchange

We're holding our first lesson activity contest on the SMART Exchange. Submit your best lesson activities about the environment to the SMART Exchange for a chance to win a SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboard system and a one-year subscription to the SMART Learning Marketplace. The deadline for submissions is February 21, 2008.

The top 20 lessons will be selected by a panel of judges and highlighted on the Exchange from February 28 to March 27. During that time, members of the Exchange can vote for their favorite entries. The lesson activity with the most peer votes wins.

If you are not already a member of the Exchange, [sign up today](#) and start posting your lessons, then get ready to vote for your favorites!

Visit the [SMART Exchange](#) for contest details.

Take a SMART quiz

All you have to do is answer five questions about the Senteo interactive response system for a chance to win one of three SMART product packages for your school.

You could win the grand prize of a SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboard system, a Senteo interactive response system with 32 handheld remotes and an AirLiner™ wireless slate.

Two second-place winners will receive a Senteo interactive response system and an AirLiner wireless slate.

The contest closes on Friday, February 29, 2008. [Take the quiz now](#) to participate.

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Get connected

The SMARTer Kids™ Foundation is now accepting applications for Connections 2008–2009, a collaborative learning and exchange program for sixth-grade students and teachers.

Through this program, teachers and students from Canada and the United States engage in curriculum-based projects that allow them to collaborate and communicate with each other, regardless of their geographic location.

The Foundation equips participating schools with education technology for easy, effective collaboration and also provides professional development focused on the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. The program culminates in spring 2009 with teachers and select students visiting Calgary, Alberta, Canada, for a week of friendship, adventure and learning.

The deadline for applications is March 31, 2008. Visit our website for program details, eligibility guidelines and to complete an online application.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Mixing up SMART products for student achievement

Cindy Savio's kindergarten classroom has a palpable buzz of excitement as her students learn all about the letter T, and most of that buzz centers around the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. Similarly, in Susan Vienneau's eighth-grade mathematics class, students are eagerly using SMART's Senteo interactive response system to answer geometry quiz questions. And in Shawn Schwerman's sixth-grade language arts class, students can't wait to take a turn up at the interactive whiteboard, as they add character descriptors to their concept map.

When it comes to sharing their success-in-the-classroom stories, teachers like Savio, Vienneau and Schwerman are quick to mention how much they rely on SMART's products to take their teaching and their students' learning to a higher level. SMART's products, they insist, support and complement their teaching strengths and skills, and help them create a fertile and vibrant learning environment. Read the full article.

SMART-accredited software

The **SMART Software Accreditation Program** now includes 167 multimedia content and software titles from over 50 companies, and the list keeps growing!

The program recognizes content and software based on their level of compatibility with SMART Board interactive whiteboards and Sympodium™ interactive pen displays.

Consider these new SMART-accredited software titles for your next lessons:

Pixie 2 is a communication tool for your students' ideas. They can create original artwork and edit their digital photographs. Students can write and illustrate stories, and record their narration. The software also lets them create newsletters, greeting cards and digital stories with photos.

Destination Reading – Course IV focuses on complex vocabulary and comprehension strategies that will take students in grades 4–8 beyond reading and help them apply their reading skills across the curriculum.

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SMART Learning Marketplace update

Through the SMART Learning Marketplace, you'll find professionally developed and copyright-cleared images, video files, audio clips and manipulatives. [Sign up today](#) and get instant access to content from world-renowned publishers.

This month, we're highlighting [Reuters](#), the world's largest international news agency, spanning 131 countries. A global resource for your students, Reuters' content captures the events that shape the world.

You and your students will have access to a broad range of subjects that includes

- General news
- Culture and living
- Politics
- Health
- Environment
- Science and technology

Technology enhances learning at Bennion

In Lachelle Poffenberger's business class, students are focused, and there are fewer disruptions since the introduction of the SMART Board interactive whiteboard and SynchronEyes™ classroom management software.

Poffenberger is one of more than 40 teachers using SynchronEyes software at [Bennion Junior High School](#) in Taylorsville, Utah, and she says it has given her more control of her class. "I like that I can monitor what my students are working on when we're in a computer lab. If a student has a question or is struggling on a problem, I can immediately pull up their screen on my computer and we can walk through the question together. Meanwhile, I am able to continue monitoring all students from my desk and I don't need to disrupt the class."

In Cathy Thompson's eighth-grade English classroom, SynchronEyes software is loaded on 24 laptops. Thompson uses the software for reviewing concepts in a fun and more engaging way for the students. "We created a game called Showdown, where I ask the kids questions to review a particular lesson we are working on. In pairs, the students think about their answer and type it out on their computers. I then freeze their computers and project all their screens on the SMART Board interactive whiteboard as I give the correct answer. The students can see if they got the right answer, and I can see if students require further discussion. Everyone participates and the class is really engaged by this kind of activity."

Showcasing technology

Administrators at Bennion are pleased with the success they've had since integrating SMART products into their school, and they were recently awarded SMART Showcase School status. The school's principal, Mary Rhodes, is enthusiastic to share their successes with representatives from neighboring schools. She hosted a district principals' meeting, where they had a chance to see SMART products in action. "I brought the principals around so they could watch how the teachers and students are interacting with the products," says Rhodes. "The principals were very interested and Taylorsville High School now has three SMART Board interactive whiteboards."

"We are thrilled to be a SMART Showcase School," says Rhodes. "Not only for the chance to show off, but it's opened the door to many new resources and opportunities, and we've only just begun to explore."

If you would like to visit Bennion Junior High School to see firsthand how they're putting SMART products to work, visit the [SMART Showcase School](#) section on our website. On this page, you can also find a Showcase School or District in your area.

SMART Technologies

New Senteo interactive response system

Since June of last year, the Senteo interactive response system has been transforming classrooms around the world to be more learner-, knowledge-, assessment- and community-centered.

The system allows you to poll every student in your classroom and receive immediate responses to assess student comprehension during and after a lesson or unit. You can access the Senteo interactive response system's menu directly from within Notebook software and easily ask your students planned or spontaneous questions. The answers you receive help you respond appropriately to the needs of each student, immediately address any issues and quickly make informed decisions about where to focus your time.

What's new?

In June 2008, we are releasing the Senteo interactive response system version 2.0. The new version will enhance your teaching experience even further with extensive improvements to tracking, reporting and analysis functions. We've also incorporated all the relevant quiz features from SynchronEyes classroom management software, making the new system fully compatible with the next generation of SynchronEyes software, available in the fall.

In version 2.0, enhancements to Senteo assessment software include a full-featured gradebook that keeps track of each student's score on all assignments and the ability to tag students' names with keywords to indicate core attributes, such as gender. The interface has also been improved to enable you to search, sort, organize and monitor your student grades.

Senteo question sets

You can now access a database of Senteo question sets from a new section on the education solutions website. Each question set includes 10 questions that are correlated to U.S. state standards and can be used with a matching SMART-created lesson activity on the same topic. Visit our website today to start using them in your next lessons.
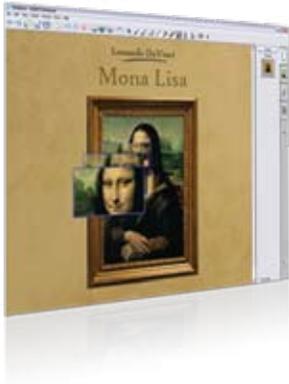
We'll be adding more Senteo question sets and lesson plans, so keep watching for updates.

Quick Senteo interactive response system 2.0 facts

- Range of up to 100 feet (30 m)
- Easy-to-read LCD screen has room for three lines of text
- Receiver hooks up via USB and doesn't need additional power adaptor
- Works on radio frequency and does not require a line of site
- Weighs under 6 oz. (165 g)
- Seamless integration with Notebook software
- Comes with packages of 24 or 32 remotes
- Works with Microsoft® Windows® and Mac OS X operating systems
- Advanced gradebook functionality
- Tagging allows for class, individual and subgroup performance analysis
- 21 input buttons make responding to questions quick and easy
- Question types include true or false, yes or no, multiple choice, numeric response and multiple answer
- Decimals, fractions and negative numbers can be incorporated into questions and answers
- Improved tracking, reporting and analysis functions

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Countdown to Notebook software 10

Magic Pen

Use the Magic Pen's three tools to help you deliver lessons in a fun and effective way. You can write notes that will disappear in 10 seconds, direct your students' attention with a spotlight tool or zoom in on an image with a magnifier tool.

In art class, for example, use the pen's magnifier tool to focus on a specific detail of a famous painting and discuss the artist's brush stroke techniques.

Keep watching this monthly column for a glimpse of more new features available in Notebook software 10.

Up next

Watch for the next issue of ED*Compass* newsletter titled Distance Learning, coming out mid-March. In this issue, you can read how teachers are collaborating with students in a distance learning environment, learn about SMART's new document camera and find out how to maximize collaboration and enhance learning with Bridgit™ conferencing software.

Senteo interactive response system jazzes up lessons

Teachers and students at Pelion Elementary School in Pelion, South Carolina, recently started using the Senteo interactive response system in their classrooms. Fourth-grade students use it for science and social studies activities, and second-grade students are building a survey to assess the interests of their classmates, so they can better understand student dynamics. Teachers at Pelion are saying that the system has helped them generate classroom discussions, review activities and assess the specific needs of each student.

"The Senteo system improves the way you assess student learning and achievement," says Heather Gresham, fourth-grade teacher at Pelion. "It motivates my students to learn and achieve at rates that they have not in the past. My students beg to use the Senteo system and it makes testing fun!"

"The capabilities seem endless!" says Winnie Rickenbaker, technology integration specialist at Pelion Elementary School. "The Senteo system is user friendly, and it's easy to import questions from previously constructed assessments or surveys.... As we introduce more teachers to this product, I am sure they will be interested in it."

Read what some of the second- and fourth-grade students at Pelion are saying about the Senteo interactive response system.

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