



We're Listening

IN THIS ISSUE

Nancy's notes	1
Classroom content	2-4
News	2-3
Feature article	3
SMART Showcase School profile	4
Product spotlight	5-6

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back to the classroom!

We hope your holiday was joyful and relaxing.

In this first EDCompass™ newsletter of 2008, we're giving you a sneak peek of what SMART has planned at FETC next week and TCEA in February. You'll read about how a SMART Showcase School District seamlessly implemented more than 1,000 SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards into 28 schools, and you'll find out how you can add a SMART Exchange membership badge to your school website.

If you plan to attend either FETC or TCEA, be sure to stop by the SMART booth to say hello.

As always, if you have any comments about the newsletter or any of the articles featured in this issue, we'd love to hear from you. Please e-mail your feedback to education@smarttech.com.

NANCY'S NOTES

Pardon me



Maybe it's happened to you. A little bit of noise in a classroom and children are straining to hear while you are straining your voice to be heard.

It makes sense that children who sit at the back of a classroom often will not hear as clearly as those closer to the teacher. In good acoustic environments, even students with normal hearing recognize only 71 percent of the speech they hear. In poor listening environments, perception can fall to less than 30 percent.* It's remarkable to learn that many children are misdiagnosed with learning disabilities when all they have is difficulty hearing.

As group work becomes a more common teaching method, teachers find they have to raise their voices repeatedly throughout the day. It's no wonder that by the end of the day, teachers are either speaking at a lower volume or complaining of voice strain.

SMART is releasing a voice amplification system at FETC and TCEA that will resolve auditory issues for both teachers and students. Like all SMART products, the SMART classroom audio enhancement system will be nicely integrated with our other products, making it easy to use in the context of a fully enabled 21st-century classroom. Teachers and students will love it. No more straining to hear or be heard.

For those of you who are planning on visiting FETC or TCEA, please come and see us at our booth. We have many new products and updates that we would love to show you.

*Crandell, Carl C. & Smaldino, Joseph J. (2000). Classroom acoustics for children with normal hearing and with hearing impairment. Language, speech, and hearing services in schools. Vol. 31. October 2000: 362-370.

[Nancy Knowlton](#) is the CEO of SMART Technologies.

CLASSROOM CONTENT

Notebook software lesson activities



Find hundreds of high-quality K–12 lesson activities at www.smarttech.com/EdCLA. Each lesson is correlated to local curriculum standards and created by classroom teachers or SMART's team of curriculum resource developers. SMART-created lesson activities in French and Spanish are also available.

Create your own

Don't forget about all the tools we provide to help you develop your own professional-looking lesson activities. You can find these tools through a link at the bottom of every lesson activity download page or through the Teacher's Hub at www.smarttech.com/EdHUB, our one-stop shop for resources.

Check out our most popular geography, chemistry and math lesson activities for January:

Geography Key Words

Geography students in grades 4–6 can learn the meaning of key geography words. This lesson activity is also compatible with the Senteo™ interactive response system.

The Origin of the Atmosphere

Chemistry students in grades 7–9 can learn how the earth's atmosphere was formed. This lesson activity is also compatible with the Senteo interactive response system.

Area of a Polygon

Math students in grades 10–12 can learn how to determine the area of a parallelogram.

NEWS

SMART at FETC and TCEA



We've been preparing for FETC and TCEA, two of North America's biggest conferences devoted to education technology in K–12 classrooms. We're introducing new products and product updates for the first time in North America, and we're excited to show you what we've come up with. We hope you can join us there.

Florida Education Technology Conference (FETC)

January 22–25, 2008
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Florida
Visit us at booth 142

Texas Computer Education Association Annual's Convention & Exposition (TCEA)

February 4–8, 2008
Austin Convention Center
Austin, Texas
Visit us at booth 2055

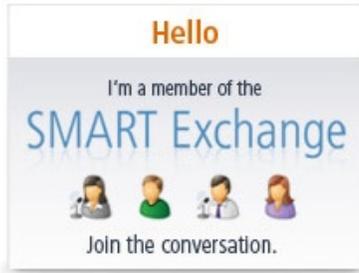
Chat with SMART's product experts, and don't miss the great lineup of presentations and demonstrations at our booth. You can get details about the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, Notebook™ collaborative

learning software 10, the SMART Learning Marketplace, the Senteo interactive response system, SynchronEyes™ classroom management software and our prize giveaways.

We've also planned free professional development workshops at FETC. Get hands-on practice with our products and enter a draw to win an AirLiner™ wireless slate. Find a full schedule of presentations and workshops at www.fetc.smarttech.com. If you're attending the show, print it out and carry it with you.

Later this month, you will also have access to a schedule of our booth presentations and demonstrations at TCEA, along with product giveaways and other booth activities. Be sure to visit www.tcea.smarttech.com on or after January 23 to learn more.

SMART Exchange offers membership badges



We launched the SMART Exchange last month and the buzz it's received has been astounding! In six weeks, over 1,100 educators from around the world have joined this online community, and the database is growing quickly.

If you are a member of the Exchange, you can post a SMART Exchange badge to your school's homepage, or to your personal blog or teaching website. This designates you as a member and

makes visiting the Exchange easier for everyone. Click on the badge, and you are immediately directed to the Exchange website. Adding a membership badge to your website simply requires copying and pasting a snippet of HTML code onto your page. To learn more, visit the Exchange at www.exchange.smarttech.com and add your badge now.

SMART Learning Marketplace update

When you sign up for the SMART Learning Marketplace you get instant access to content from world-renowned publishers.

skool™ Education Technology is an Intel® driven initiative that helps secondary students understand and explore key science and math concepts. Through the Marketplace, you can find skool technology's high-quality innovative and interactive learning resources.

Sign up today to access content from skool and many other trusted education publishers at www.learningmarketplace.smarttech.com



FEATURE ARTICLE

SMART Champions

When it comes to innovative interaction in the classroom, SMART Exemplary Educators are setting the bar higher and higher. The common trait among these teachers is their willingness to go above and beyond the standard level to better present the curriculum and better reach their students. They are in a word, champions.

[Read the full article.](#)

SMART-accredited software



The SMART Software Accreditation Program includes 167 multimedia content and software titles from 58 companies – and the list is growing!

The program recognizes content and software based on their level of compatibility with SMART Board interactive whiteboards and Sympodium interactive pen displays. Visit the website at www.smarttech.com/EdCSAP.

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

Kid Pix® Deluxe 4 for Schools is a painting, animation and multimedia tool for K–8 classrooms. Designed with extensive input from teachers and students, this application includes everything you need to create your own animations and drawings and bring them to life in powerful lessons and presentations.

Wordbar is a bank of words that sits at the bottom of your screen. Click on a word to send it to your word document. Right-click on the word, and you will hear it spoken. Wordbar supports a variety of languages.

CLASSROOM CONTENT

Online resources



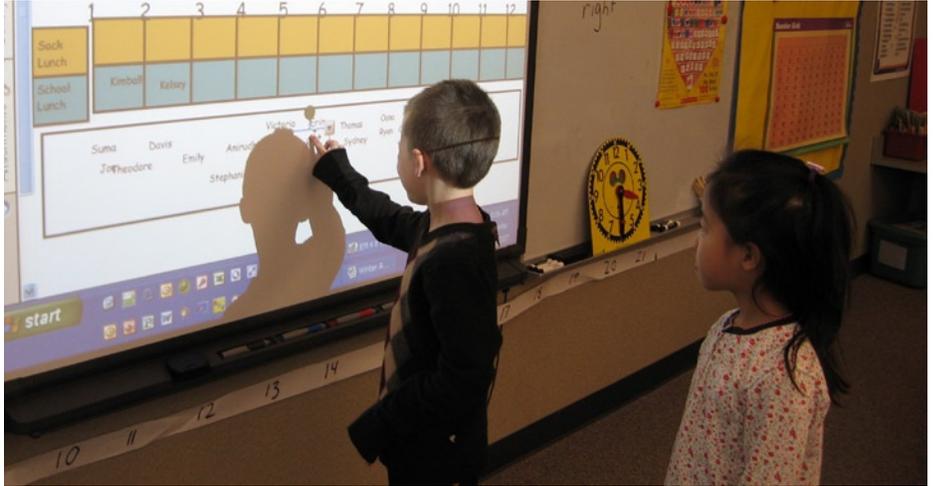
Exploring the Secret Life of Trees helps students in grades 3–5 observe and gain an appreciation of trees, and develop an interest in discovering more about them. Visit www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/trees2/02.html for more information.

Project Gutenberg is an online searchable library of free books and works of fine literature that have been digitally republished for your classroom. You can find full versions of *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan* and *Moby Dick*, works by Shakespeare, the Bible and other religious documents, and references such as *Roget's Thesaurus*, almanacs, encyclopedias and dictionaries. Visit <http://promo.net/pg> for more information.

NASA Education is a K–12 teaching and learning resource that will help you easily find NASA resources for classroom subjects like science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Students can learn about topics such as the Space Shuttle Endeavour's STS-118 mission last August or participate in a NASA essay competition. Visit <http://education.nasa.gov> for more information.

SMART SHOWCASE SCHOOL PROFILE

Bellevue School District standardizes on SMART



Bellevue School District in Washington State is one of six SMART Showcase School Districts that has standardized on SMART Board interactive whiteboards. The district has outfitted its 28 schools with more than 1,000 SMART Board interactive whiteboards – one to every classroom. Successfully pulling off an implementation of this size requires planning, and Bellevue district leaders were up to the task.

Because administrators were committed to helping teachers use SMART Board interactive whiteboards right across the district, they developed a teacher professional development program focused on Notebook collaborative learning software and SMART Ideas™ concept-mapping software. Today, teachers are so comfortable with the technology, they create their own lessons to use with the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, the AirLiner wireless slate and the Senteo interactive response system. The lessons are stored on the district's server and curriculum website for teachers to share and build upon.

Peggy Strauss, a secondary instructional technology specialist at Bellevue School District, felt that choosing a single technology company for all its schools helped make the transition seamless. "The fact that all the SMART products we're using complement each other makes the learning curve minimal. If a SMART Board interactive whiteboard isn't physically possible in an area within the school, the AirLiner wireless slate is a logical substitution because it operates with the same software and applies the same instructional strategies."

The Senteo interactive response system also integrates with Notebook software, so they use it on a daily basis. Bridgit™ conferencing system is also becoming an effective distance learning tool that teachers are using to collaborate with students and teachers in remote locations.

"These SMART products are met with enthusiasm by our teachers because they realize the potential impact they can have on student learning without over-burdening the teacher's skill set," says Strauss.

If you would like to visit Bellevue School District to talk with educators about their success and see firsthand how they're putting SMART products to work, visit the SMART Showcase School section on our website at www.smarttech.com/EdCShowcase. From this page, you can also find a Showcase School or District in your area.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

SMART's new audio system



Next week at FETC in Orlando, Florida, and in February at TCEA in Austin, Texas, SMART is introducing the SMART classroom audio system, a new product that will maximize the sound of learning throughout K–12 classrooms. This system evenly distributes your voice throughout the classroom, eliminating the need to speak louder or repeat instructions to students that sit at the back of the room. You can now speak at your normal voice level, and every student will hear your words clearly, helping to improve recall, performance and understanding of lessons and instructions.

How does the SMART classroom audio system work?

The system comes with a clip-on teacher microphone, a handheld student microphone, two infrared sensors, an amplifier and four speakers that can be ceiling or wall mounted.

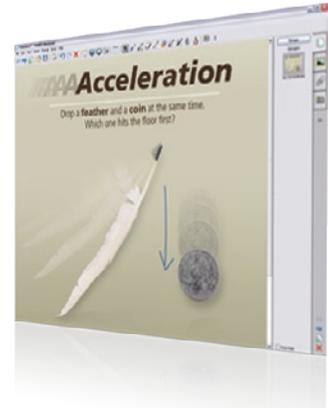
When you speak into the microphone, your voice is broadcasted to all areas of the classroom through the four speakers. Give the handheld microphone to your students so they can also be heard when they're participating in a lesson.

Unlike other classroom audio systems, SMART's product features a USB connection, so you can connect the system to your computer with just one cable. You can also connect it to a portable MP3 player, DVD player or other audiovisual device, enabling teachers to narrate over multimedia. It's also integrated with Notebook collaborative learning software, so you can record your voice during a lesson and save it for future playback.

Quick facts

- Wireless infrared technology allows you to move freely in the classroom
- Integrates with Notebook software
- Handheld microphone can be easily shared between students
- Simple USB connection
- Compatible with multimedia devices, such as a portable MP3 player and DVD player
- Both teacher and student microphones can be used simultaneously and heard over any multimedia audio
- Rechargeable batteries and charger means the system is always operable
- Tone control allows you to adjust the audio output to suit your classroom's natural acoustics

Countdown to Notebook software 10



Object Animation

Animate any Notebook software object with the Object Animation tool, and create effects such as fading in, spinning or flying in. When quizzing your students on the capital cities of each state, use the pulsing animation to draw attention to the correct answer.

Would you like to beta test Notebook software 10?

The beta is now live, and we're looking for teachers to try it out before it's launched in spring. E-mail beta@smarttech.com if you would like to get involved.

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

DID YOU KNOW...



Acoustic pollution in classrooms

can be reduced with simple tricks such as standing on a stage, furnishing the classroom with bookshelves and curtains, and placing rubber under the feet of tables and chairs.

Studies comparing traditional classrooms to audio-enhanced environments reveal that students in classes where teachers wear a microphone are likely to achieve a minimum 10 percent overall gain in standardized test scores, especially in subjects relying heavily on verbal instruction.

Up next

Watch for the next issue of *EDCompass* newsletter, *Raising Student Performance*, coming out mid-February. In this issue, you'll read about best practices in the classroom, find out how to enter a new contest and be the first to hear about the new version of the Senteo interactive response system.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Research suggests...

A study, commissioned by the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network, suggests the education of today's students is substantially hindered because of classroom noise.

The research suggests that more than 90 percent of first-grade classrooms have inadequate listening conditions, which can contribute to students having poor understanding and decreased attention.

In a recent MARRS study, audiologists and speech pathologists say that as students get older, noise-induced hearing loss increases. Current estimates suggest almost one-third of the school population has minimal, temporary or permanent hearing loss and don't know it. The study concludes that amplifying the teacher's voice resulted in significant improvement in test scores of students with minimal hearing loss.

According to the study, teachers using an amplification system experienced less voice strain, spent less time repeating instructions and had fewer disciplinary problems. Findings also suggested that special education referrals and learning disability placements were reduced by 40 percent when an amplification system was used. Fewer teacher substitutes were hired because teachers were experiencing less sick days due to voice strain.

References

- Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network <http://www.cllrnet.ca>
- MARRS project www.marrs-study.info
- Statistics on the positive effects that an audio enhancement system brings to the classroom www.audioenhancement.com/ae/SiteDefault.aspx?pgid=44

A teacher's perspective



"It is often very difficult to be heard in a class of 20 chattering five-year-olds. That doesn't even include other noisy distractions like students walking by in the halls, lawn mowers, air conditioners or heaters and the music class next door," says Sandy Armstrong, instructional technology coach at Auburn Early Education Center in Auburn, Alabama. "I often have to repeat myself until I am tired of my own voice. I also find that kids are very loud until they have to speak to the whole class. Suddenly, they can only whisper, and I have to repeat everything they say as well. Needless to say, there are many days that I go home and refuse to speak because my voice needs a rest!"

"Our solution to this issue was to use our Karaoke machine as our 'sound system,'" says Armstrong, "Although this helped, it left a lot to be desired and wasn't much of an improvement. I am excited about the SMART classroom audio system because it will cut down the number of times I have to repeat myself, and that alone will make me be a more effective teacher. I also believe that it will encourage more students to participate in class discussions. As with all SMART products, this audio enhancement system will motivate more students to be actively involved and engaged in the learning process."