

EDCompass newsletter

News and resources for educators using SMART products

smarttech.com/EDCsubscribe

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome



Professional development (PD) that effectively links pedagogy with classroom technology is critical to the success of teachers and schools. Read this issue of the newsletter for an inside look at some of SMART's PD programs that are designed to support you as you integrate technology and digital content into your lesson plans every day. In this month's [feature article](#), learn about two school districts that are experiencing professional development success through SMART user groups and events. And in the [SMART Showcase School profile](#), you can travel to Wisconsin to find out how teachers in the School District of New Berlin are receiving and benefitting from professional development.

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

THIS MONTH'S POLL

How do you engage in professional development?

NANCY'S NOTES

The Limits of the Mind

During the last year, hundreds of thousands of interactive whiteboards have been put to productive use in classrooms around the world. Futuresource Consulting, the leading independent market-tracking firm for interactive whiteboards, forecasts that over the next two years, worldwide adoption will equal the adoption of the first twenty years of interactive whiteboard use.

This development is important and exciting because there is now a critical mass of teachers in an increasing number of schools, districts, states and provinces, and countries who are willing and able to use these new tools to transform the teaching and learning experience. Rather than remaining an isolated experiment by a few trailblazing teachers, whole departments, schools and districts are now adopting interactive whiteboards and other technology products.

It's one thing to know the features and functions of a product and quite another to use them in a pedagogically appropriate fashion. There are no shortcuts on this journey. Seeing good practice modeled, sharing experiences, reflecting on good teaching practices and applying new learning are all part of internalizing and embedding new strategies and approaches.

Professional development and professional learning communities have never been more important for new and veteran teachers as they work to transform their classrooms into vibrant, technology-enabled learning environments. Acquiring new skills and ingraining a new approach take time and sustained professional development.

For those of you who are well along the way, help some other teachers on their journeys by sharing the strategies and techniques that have worked for you. Don't forget to share what hasn't worked as well, to save your colleagues time and frustration.

Teachers can also take advantage of what SMART has to offer. In this issue of the newsletter, you'll learn about the wealth of resources and support available to you.

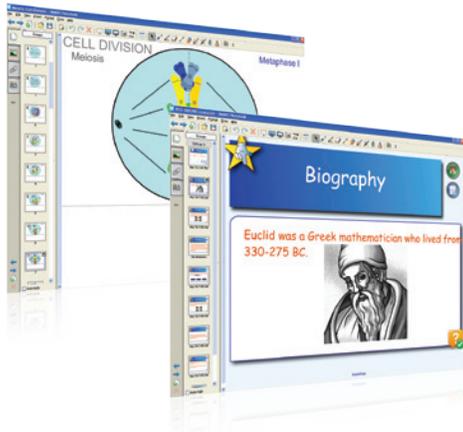
It's not about the buttons you push to make things work – it's about the limits of the mind, yours and your students.

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



CLASSROOM CONTENT

SMART Notebook™ Lesson Activities



Find a comprehensive database of **K–12 lesson activities** on the SMART Exchange™ online community. The activities, many of which are standards correlated, are created by classroom teachers or SMART's team of curriculum resource developers.

Try one of the following SMART Notebook lesson activities during your next social studies, language arts, math, music or science class.

Conservation

K–2 social studies students can learn how they can help to conserve.

William and Mary Patterns of Change Lesson 8

Fifth-grade language arts students can work with art and poetry to identify cyclic patterns and metaphors.

Euclid

Math students in grades 6–12 can learn about the life and accomplishments of Euclid, the Greek mathematician who lived from 330 to 275 BC.

American Vaudeville Circuit

Music students in grades 8–12 can learn about different vaudeville acts and analyze the rules that governed the circuit theaters.

Meiotic Cell Division

Science students in grades 9–12 can review meiosis and identify the characteristics of each phase.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Attend a Professional Development Session

Professional development not only helps you gain the confidence and skills to proficiently use your SMART products – it also can inspire you to use technology in new and innovative ways.

Here are a few upcoming events to keep in mind as you map out your professional development plan. To find out how to get involved, send us an e-mail at training@smarttech.com.

Content creation seminars

SMART puts on a variety of content creation seminars throughout the United States and Canada. During these seminars, teachers learn the skills they need to create standards-correlated lesson activities using SMART-created or district-approved templates. The sessions are run by SMART education consultants, who are experts at using SMART Notebook collaborative learning software and creating digital lesson activities.

When you attend, these are just a few of the things you'll receive:

- A certificate of participation that can count toward your professional development credits
- Direct access to SMART's team of content developers
- New lesson activities that can be shared and used immediately in your classroom
- Networking opportunities with other teachers in your grade level or discipline of study

SMART summer school

Our annual summer event offers teachers two days of advanced product use and lesson development training that even experienced users of SMART Notebook software will appreciate. Get a head start on building your digital lesson activities for the next school year!

Learner conferences

This spring, SMART is hosting its first learner conference. The theme – C³: Connect, Collaborate, Create – will ensure there is something of interest for all educators using SMART products. This three-day event held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, will include a variety of hands-on workshops, professional development opportunities and keynote speakers.

Create an account on SMART's **Learning Management System** to keep track of your PD sessions, and then check back often for details on these and other SMART events.

Get Involved with SMART

There are many ways to take advantage of SMART's professional development offering. Regional SMART user conferences enable you to connect with peers from other schools – you can learn about upcoming conferences by regularly visiting the **SMART Exchange**, a vibrant space where you can find support and new ideas from your peers.

We also run recognition programs, such as the **SMART Exemplary Educator program**, to help you become a technology leader in your community. Visit our **education website** to find out how to get involved with this and other programs available from SMART.



Master Your Products



SMART offers a range of product training sessions available for all experience levels. Visit the [Training Center](#) on smarttech.com to find a training session that suits your time and needs. The following are a few new product training offerings you can take advantage of.

Fundamentals of SMART Notebook

This course provides you with the knowledge and skills to develop professional looking SMART Notebook lesson activities. Participants will complete three modules and an online summative evaluation. Upon completion, each participant will receive a certificate.

Similar events are also available for the SMART Table™ interactive learning center, to help teachers create their own customized content, and for SMART Classroom Suite™ interactive learning software, to show teachers how to teach effectively in computer-enabled classrooms that use this software.

SMART Notebook Math Tools

At this on-site, half-day course, you can learn how to use SMART Notebook Math Tools software to create and explore math content and enhance your lessons. Hands-on practice from both a student and teacher perspective will offer you opportunities to collaborate and share content with your colleagues.

Become a certified user

This summer, we're implementing a new certification opportunity for teachers who are proficient users of SMART products or who have attained advanced skills at developing engaging and interactive teaching content and resources. Participants will be required to take part in SMART training sessions as a prerequisite and will be assessed on their product knowledge and dexterity. Then, they can use this certification to indicate their skill in teaching with SMART products. E-mail certification@smarttech.com to find out how to get involved.

If you attend a SMART training session, you may be eligible for professional development credits. To find out if you qualify, please contact training@smarttech.com.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Strength in Numbers

When professors and students from Texas Tech University visited Candace Tickle's first-grade class in Lubbock, Texas, they weren't there to teach but rather to learn. Tickle and her five- and six-year-old students spent a full period walking the college students through the basics of how to operate the SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard and the SMART Document Camera. [Read the full article.](#)

SMART Response™ Question Sets



Find a database of [SMART Response question sets](#) on the SMART Exchange. Each set includes 10 questions that are correlated to state and provincial curriculum standards.

Try one of the following SMART Response question sets in your next science, language arts, math or social studies class.

Insects and Spiders

First-grade science students can test their knowledge of insects and spiders.

Long Vowel Cloze Sentences

First- and second-grade language arts students can test their ability to identify long vowel words.

Standard to Expanded Notation

Math students in grades 4–6 can test their ability to change from standard to expanded notation and vice versa.

Ancient Greek Soldiers

Fourth- and fifth-grade social studies students can test their knowledge of the weapons and practices that ancient Greek soldiers used in battle.

Conic Sections

Math students in grades 10–12 can test their ability to write equations for conic sections and their translations.

Educator Resources



The SMART Exchange offers more than just lesson activities and question sets. Here are three professional development resources that educators like you are sharing.

Do you have a resource, lesson activity or question set to share? We'd love to see more files like the ones below uploaded to the SMART Exchange, so even more teachers can benefit. [Upload your content.](#)

Setting Up Blogs in the Classroom Using TeacherWeb

This resource was designed for teachers of all grade levels and subjects who want to learn how to create a blog using TeacherWeb. You can learn the purpose, uses and etiquette for blogging in a classroom setting.

Staff Development for SMART Content Creation

This high-level overview covers lesson plan development for grades 6–8. It is intended to be used in conjunction with staff training to address step-by-step instructions for creating interactive content using animation, layers and ordering.

Digital Planning Template

This lesson template can be used for any subject or grade level. It includes pages for each of the different elements of a lesson activity, with step-by-step instructions and suggestions for content to use.

Attend a PD Webinar

Earlier this month, we featured a webinar that outlined how a good professional development strategy can enhance student achievement and ensure faster uptake of classroom technology products. In the webinar, titled Building a Professional Development Strategy to Effectively Support Your Technology Implementation, administrators shared how they prepare teachers in technology-enabled classrooms to quickly put SMART products to use. Though this webinar was designed for administrators and technology directors, teachers will find much that is relevant to their practice.

If you missed the webinar, you can still watch it using our complimentary [on-demand viewing](#). Then, visit our website for a list of [upcoming webinars](#) in our spring series.

Research on the Impact of Professional Development

Dr. Bill Morrison and Dr. Patricia Kirby, from the Health and Education Research Group at the University of New Brunswick, released a report called, Applying SMART Board Technology in Elementary School Classrooms: Investigation of a School-Wide Initiative. The report summarized findings from their one-year study of the impact of professional development on the integration of SMART Board interactive whiteboards at Park Street School. [Read the full report.](#)

SMART SHOWCASE SCHOOL PROFILE

Extreme PD Makeover in the School District of New Berlin



When Kevin Messman talks about creating better lesson plans, he's really talking about transforming learning. Coordinator of instructional technology at the School District of New Berlin in Wisconsin, Messman organizes the district's annual Technology Academy, a three-day professional development program that attracts up to 150 teachers. [Read the full article.](#)

The SMART Table – New and Improved

Want to approach interactivity from a different angle? We suggest the horizontal approach – with the **SMART Table interactive learning center**. It's just been updated and is getting rave reviews from prekindergarten to third-grade students and teachers. The SMART Table is the world's first multitouch, multiuser interactive learning center designed specifically for early education. This new product offers a novel approach to collaboration that has struck a chord with students and educators – it is now being used in more than 500 schools across North America and the UK.



Since we created the SMART Table in 2008, teachers have been telling us that learners are drawn to its surface, where work seems like play. Students can get started with hands-on, collaborative activities with very little help, thanks to the intuitive interface and visual and audio prompts. And because natural gestures are used to manipulate objects on the screen, the SMART Table is simple to use. Students can instinctively shrink an octopus or toss a train as they work together.

If octopuses and trains don't fit into your lesson plan, don't worry. You can design an almost limitless supply of activities to complement any lesson using the **SMART Table Toolkit**. Simply alter backgrounds, write new questions and import images and videos that support your curriculum. As students learn and grow, you can refine and redesign activities to keep the class challenged and engaged.

Whatever activity you create for the SMART Table, it's bound to encourage collaboration. The applications are designed for students to work together to solve problems, and some even require them to come to a consensus before giving their answer. And for teachers wanting to increase the collaborative power of their SMART products, the SMART Table works with the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, helping teachers move easily from whole-class to small-group learning.

For an even closer look at the SMART Table, watch our [product demo](#).

Attend a SMART Table webinar

There's no better way to learn about the SMART Table than from teachers who use it. In our [complimentary webinar](#), All Hands On: Promoting Collaborative Learning in Primary Classrooms, educators share stories about teaching with the SMART Table. Tune in Thursday, March 25, 3:00–4:00 p.m. EST.

What's Different



Over the past year, we've used the feedback we collected from early education teachers to make the following improvements to the SMART Table:

- On the SMART Exchange, we've set up the SMART Table Virtual User Group, where you can share ideas and best practices with other teachers
- The SMART Table Toolkit offers direct access to more than 6,600 Gallery items and now lets you preview activities on your computer
- The display screen is brighter and has greater contrast, making it work in even the most challenging lighting conditions
- SMART Table software is better integrated with the SMART Board interactive whiteboard, SMART Document Camera and SMART Sync™ classroom management software
- The SMART Table now includes built-in Wi-Fi
- More learning applications are supported by the SMART Table

Special Report

For an in-depth look at how the SMART Table makes learning fun and collaborative for early education students, read our [special report](#). It includes comments from educators, information on special needs applications and more.

The Future of the SMART Table



If you've visited our [Facebook page](#) recently, you may have noticed a photograph of a concept version of the SMART Table that's geared for secondary students. It's one of the ideas we're exploring as we consider further development of the product.

Since input from educators is crucial to designing effective products, we'd like to ask for your assistance. Please e-mail your feedback to SMARTtable@smarttech.com.

Let's talk table

Did you know there's a SMART Table Virtual Users Group? Why not join us? If you're starting to integrate the SMART Table into your daily lessons, this forum is a great place to share ideas, best practices and content with other teachers. Sessions are free and held monthly, and you can join right from your own computer.

Join us now. Our next chat session is Tuesday, March 23, at 5:00 p.m. EST.

Up Next

Watch for the next issue of *EDCompass* newsletter, where you can learn assessment strategies and best practices from other teachers. We're also taking an in-depth look at the SMART Response product line.

Ask a Teacher

Beth Sullivan is a teacher and technology mentor at [Horace Mann Elementary School](#) in Binghamton, New York. She's been using the SMART Table in her classroom since September 2009. We asked her about the effect it has had on teaching and learning.

EDCompass When we talk about the SMART Table, we say it makes work seem like play. Do you find this to be true?

Beth In general, learning needs to be fun. We remember what we enjoy. Also, play is often repeated practice in disguise. With the SMART Table, the students get playing the games and forget that they are learning. They don't, however, forget what they learn. They often ask, "Can I play SMART Table?" They think it's a game – and I just keep it that way.

EDCompass As a result of the SMART Table activities, are your students becoming better at communicating and collaborating?

Beth Yes – this collaborative work has led to conversations about how to convince someone. Just stating the correct answer again, only louder, is much less effective than giving a valid reason why it is right. This carries over into other learning as well. Proving to yourself and others that an answer is correct is where the real learning comes from. I am never happier than when I see a student pull out a notebook and start drawing a demonstration of why the answer is the correct one.

EDCompass Have you found that using the SMART Table interactive learning center has had an effect on student achievement?

Beth So far I have seen improved achievement in the areas of science, social studies vocabulary and money (currency addition and subtraction).

EDCompass Do you use the SMART Table with any other technology products?

Beth We use several SMART products in my classroom. Often skills are taught on the SMART Board before they are practiced on the SMART Table. Then the knowledge is assessed using SMART Response, along with SMART Notebook SE bracelets, which contain each student's portfolio. My students record their learning using the SMART Recorder, sometimes in conjunction with the SMART Document Camera. They also create SMART Notebook presentations that demonstrate their knowledge. These presentations are all housed and edited on the SE bracelets. The final learning will be demonstrated at the end of the year at a potluck supper where families will be invited to view student portfolio presentations and SMART Table demonstrations.

We enjoy the SMART Table, but it is just one in a collection of SMART tools that bring all the learning together. It is hard to believe that two years ago I had no SMART products in my classroom – now I am not sure I know how to teach without them.

