

SMART Showcase School

EDCompass newsletter

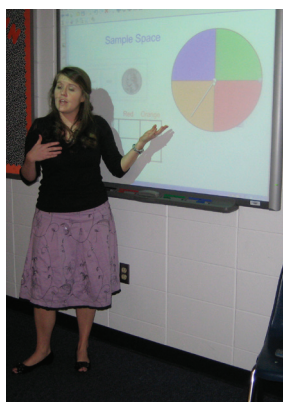
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Finding Multiple Ways to Make Math Exciting

By **Lucas McConnell**

How do you get students excited about math?

It's a question that many teachers have puzzled over, but one to which teachers at SMART Showcase School **J.F. Drake Middle School** in Auburn, Alabama, think they've found an answer. And the **SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards** that are installed in every one of the school's classrooms are a big part of it.



"If I'm doing probability and I want to flip a coin, my students aren't going to be able to see if I flip a real-life coin in my hand," says Lauren Allgood, a seventh-grade math teacher at Drake. "But if I flip the SMART Notebook coin, they can all see that. There are so many more things that you can see as a class on the SMART Board, and I think that's really important to get students interested in math lessons."

But engagement isn't the only area where teachers at Drake are seeing improvement. Bob Cloud, an advanced math teacher, says the new ways that he can explain concepts have helped students understand ideas they've previously struggled to conceptualize.

"When we graph, my students used to ask, 'Do we have to draw our lines all the way across the grid or can we just stop when we get to our points?' The concept of a line never ending is not easily grasped," Cloud says. "But now, I'm able to show them by moving the coordinate plane on the SMART Board that the line keeps going and going. Now they ask, 'How far does it go? Can we see how far it goes?' It piques their interest, makes it more real for them and is immediate."

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Lauren Allgood

Seventh-Grade Math Teacher
Auburn, Alabama

The difference a SMART Board interactive whiteboard makes

These stories aren't news to **SMART Exemplary Educator** Sandy Armstrong, who is the technology coach at Drake. Armstrong is regularly stopped in the hallway by enthusiastic teachers telling her the effect their SMART Board interactive whiteboard is having on their students – or by those who are temporarily forced to do without one.

"Bob [Cloud] had to move to a new classroom this year and it didn't have a SMART Board in it yet," Armstrong says. "Every time I saw him I would run the opposite way in the hallway because he would tell me, 'I can't teach without a SMART Board. You need to get me a SMART Board.'"

It wasn't Cloud's first experience teaching without a SMART Board interactive whiteboard, but he'd rather not revisit the days before he had one.

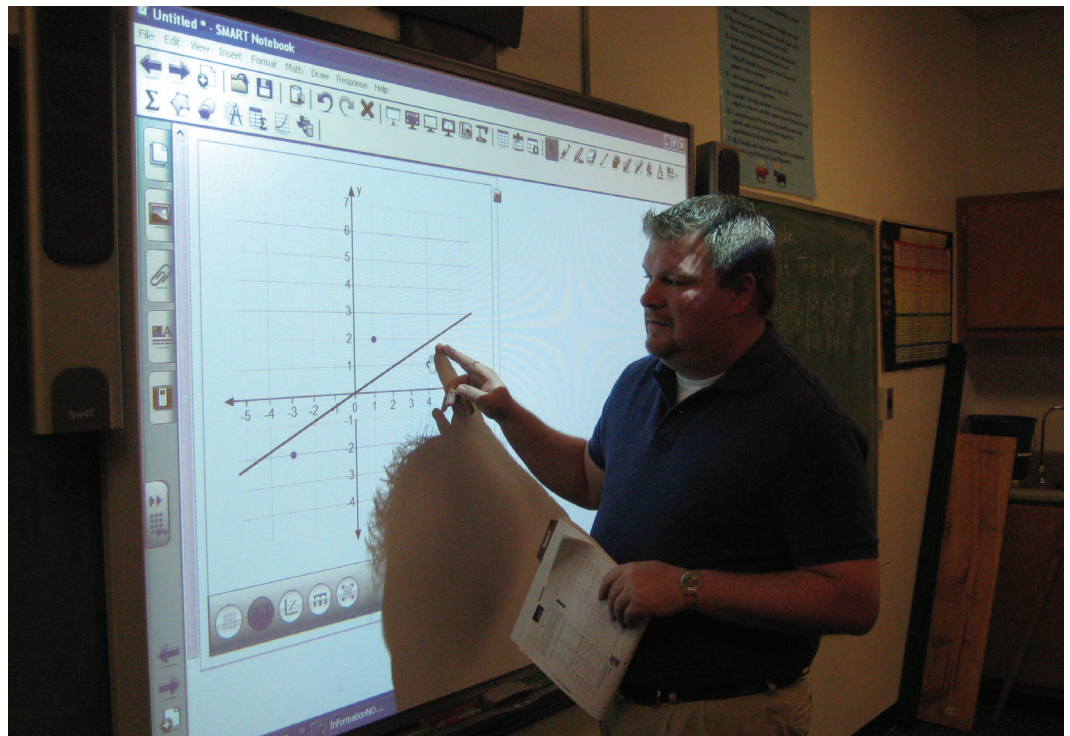
"I sometimes train other teachers how to teach math. Last time, I didn't have a SMART Board because I was off campus, and it was like I was lost," Cloud says. "It was not the 'aha' moment of look what I can do on a SMART Board, but the 'aha' moment of look what I *can't* do because I *don't* have one."

Allgood still remembers what it was like to teach without a SMART Board interactive whiteboard and says that having one makes it easier for her to teach and for her students to learn.

"When I taught scale factors without a SMART Board, I had to pass out a map to all the kids, try to explain it on the whiteboard and then go to every student's desk and waste a lot of time showing it individually," Allgood says. "But now I can put a map from the Internet on the SMART Board, I can



If you would like to visit J.F. Drake Middle School to talk with educators about their success and see firsthand how they're putting SMART products to work, visit the [SMART Showcase School](#) section of our education website. From this page, you can also find a Showcase School or District in your area.



measure the scales with the ruler application in [SMART Notebook™ Math Tools](#) and then show them how I bring that ruler up into the map. That makes a world of difference in understanding scale factors for my seventh-graders.”

SMART Response™ interactive response systems provide results

With increased levels of engagement and understanding, teachers are also beginning to see better results – and those results can be measured using J.F. Drake Middle School's 11 [SMART Response systems](#).

“I’ve seen their scores coming up since we started using the SMART Response systems,” Cloud says. “I think they actually take a bit more time to make sure they’re answering the way they want to answer because using the SMART Response is a little more final to them.”

Allgood says that when students use the SMART Response systems, they are more likely to ask questions about answers they got wrong because they are more involved in the process.

“If I’m saying, ‘Number one is five, number two is nine, number three is...’ I start to sound like Charlie Brown’s teacher. And if a student misses number three, they might not have even heard me because they weren’t paying attention,” Allgood says. “But when students type answers into SMART Response, they’re going to know if they got it right away, and if they don’t understand why they got it wrong, they ask. And I think more questions lead to better results.” **EC**

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