

SMART Showcase School

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Learning How to Learn Together at Pattison Elementary

By **Lucas McConnell**

Learning together comes naturally to students in Jennifer Tang's kindergarten class. And the teacher at [Pattison Elementary](#) in Katy, Texas, knows her [SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard](#) is a big reason why.

"Having a SMART Board in the classroom develops more teamwork because instead of one person trying to answer a question, the whole class is engaged in helping to support that person," Tang says. "When that person makes a mistake, it opens up communication. So it's no longer, 'I got it wrong,' but rather a teamwork environment where they are talking to each other to help find a solution."

First-grade teacher Alisha Satterwhite agrees, saying that having her SMART Board interactive whiteboard on a SMART Height-Adjustable Wall Mount helps create a collaborative learning environment and ensures that all of her students can work on the interactive whiteboard.

"In first grade, we have such a height difference. I have some students that are almost as tall as me and then I have some teeny, tiny ones," Satterwhite says. "They can easily pull the SMART Board down and lift it back up. It makes it really accessible to all the students, which is great."

Her SMART Board interactive whiteboard also helps students learn together by engaging those students who aren't physically doing the lesson.

"Students are so involved in what other children are doing just by being able to watch them and the movement that's happening on the SMART Board," Satterwhite explains. "It's so hands-on and so visual."

If you engage them, they will learn

The engagement that Satterwhite is seeing is exactly what Pattison Elementary, a SMART Showcase School, was looking for when the school decided to introduce SMART Board interactive whiteboards into its classrooms.

Instructional coach Whitney La Rocca says that at Pattison, the SMART Board interactive whiteboard is not to be used as a glorified overhead projector, but as an integrated part of lessons across all subjects, all day long. This means that if teachers want a SMART Board interactive whiteboard in their classroom, they must write a proposal that emphasizes equally how both the teacher and the students are going to use it.

"You're more of a facilitator in learning now with the SMART Board. We want our students to be the ones touching it," La Rocca explains.

The role of facilitator is one being adopted with enthusiasm by teachers at Pattison. And it's changing the way the teachers are teaching and the students are learning.

"The SMART Board has removed me from the stage a bit and put students more in charge," Satterwhite says. "I find them teaching each other on it a lot instead of me having to be up there telling them what to do. I think that's the awesome part of it – the teacher doesn't always have to be right there telling them exactly what to do."



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Alisha Satterwhite

First-Grade Teacher
Pattison Elementary
Katy, Texas



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The Pattison SMART Team

Instead, what Satterwhite says she's doing a lot more of these days is working with [SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software](#) to create lessons for her SMART Board interactive whiteboard or searching for content on the [SMART Exchange™ website](#).

"It is so worth it to find good lessons and create good lessons for the students to actually learn from," she says.

And when she does find or create a good lesson, Satterwhite shares it with her colleagues on the Pattison SMART Team, headed by fourth-grade teacher Suzanne Crawford.

Crawford says the Pattison SMART Team was created not only as a forum for teachers using a SMART Board interactive whiteboard to share discoveries and insights, but also as a way to challenge teachers to create dynamic, engaging lessons in SMART Notebook software.

"Each time we use a lesson, we look at it and think how can we make it better? How can we engage the students even more this time? The more we learn, the more we see, the better the lessons become," Crawford says.

By combining the energies of the Pattison SMART Team with SMART products to make learning more visual and hands-on, Crawford believes Pattison Elementary is better engaging the many students who need tactile, moving and visual learning experiences to be successful.

Back in Jennifer Tang's kindergarten class, this hardly comes as news.

"Before, we had the students all sit around in a circle and then we'd take the manipulative out and put it in the middle," Tang says. "With the SMART Board, you can move the pieces around and show them what you want them to do. So now you don't have all the 'I can't see' and 'you need to sit on your bottom.'"

Tang says losing that part of teaching is just fine with her.

"Whenever we sit on the carpet and get ready to work, there is enthusiasm and excitement to do the activity we have on the SMART Board," she says. "You can really see that eagerness, and it's a good feeling to know they really want to learn and do the activity." **EC**

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