

INTERWRITE Lessons

Northeastern Education and Library Board

Northern Ireland

The Northeastern Education and Library Board has embarked on an ambitious project to enhance education in the more than 50 secondary schools they oversee in Northern Ireland. As Sean Maguire, the General Advisor for Science and Technology, explains "The board is focused on using technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning." To achieve their objective the board adopted the InterWrite School Suite as their preferred interactive solution and has installed over 100 InterWrite SchoolBoards and 100 InterWrite SchoolPads in chemistry, physics, and technology classrooms throughout the district.

Teachers Embrace the Technology

Since installing the SchoolBoards and SchoolPads, Maguire has been pleased by how enthusiastically the teachers have embraced the new technology. "To date, every single teacher that has used the SchoolBoard and SchoolPad has applauded the technology and would not go back to the traditional teaching methods."

While both the SchoolBoard and SchoolPad allow students and teachers to control their computer, each teacher appreciates different aspects of this interactive technology.

As Tony Ross, a physics teacher, notes, "The SchoolBoard is good because you can get students, who normally would not have come up to the blackboard, to come up and add something to a diagram, for example, because they like using the board."

For Kyle Crooks, a chemistry teacher, it is the freedom to teach from anywhere in the classroom provided by the SchoolPad that he appreciates. "I like to use the

SchoolPad because I normally walk around the room to check to make sure the pupils are working on what they should be working on," Crooks comments. "I can have something up on the screen and use the SchoolPad to advance to the next set of notes or add an annotation to a diagram."

For Andrew Atkinson, a technology teacher, being able to reach a diverse set of learners is the real benefit. "Because this is a multi-media system, you can design lessons that allow you to use animations, video, color, and sound; each one of these appealing to the different learning styles of students."

Improving Student Performance

While Maguire and the Library Board have appreciated the positive response from the teachers, it is the impact on the students that they view as most important. Since the introduction of the SchoolBoard and SchoolPad into the science and technology classes, a positive impact on the students has been observed. As Maguire notes, "In terms of effective learning, the focus has shifted from the teacher teaching to the student learning. The pupils take more responsibility for the lesson because they can use the SchoolPads to directly input material to the computer."

As Ken Irwin, the principal at Carrickfergus School, one of the schools in the district, observes, "I have discovered, with the use of the School Suite, that the children are no longer afraid to be wrong. They realize that other students can add in their own thoughts and comments. So, one student can learn from the other."



A student uses the SchoolBoard to add notes in physics class. "I think the technology helps us get more out of the lessons."



Kyle Crooks uses the SchoolPad to teach from anywhere in his chemistry classroom.

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