

Eight Ways to Integrate Whiteboards into Instruction

West Middle School in Tullahoma, TN had a goal: to reach and teach students the way they like to be reached. How? By appealing to students' need for interaction and visual stimulation.

The teachers knew they would have to make some adjustments in their teaching. Kids were tuning out and sleeping with their eyes open.

To address their goal of getting students excited, school administrators started working with Technology Coordinator, Ronnie Murry, and eighth grade algebra teacher, Faye Neel. Their mission . . . to find out what instructional technologies would really work with students and other subject area teachers.

The educators and administrators began writing grant proposals for technology funding. After a period of sending and waiting, they happily received some funding. A group of teachers agreed to explore the use of new teaching devices never before used in their school district. Two of these teaching devices were an interactive whiteboard and a wireless tablet.

The interactive electronic whiteboard displays an image from a computer at the front of the classroom. The teacher uses this whiteboard and a portable wireless tablet (which has the same functions as an interactive whiteboard) for the following uses:

- * Polling;
- * Recording data from students and teachers;
- * Manipulating images, such as selecting and enlarging type, moving copy and highlighting graphs;
- * Solving math problems;
- * Highlighting lecture notes;
- * Saving information from the tablet and whiteboard onto a desktop;
- * E-mailing notes to students who may be home sick.

What follows are eight ways teachers around the country are using the whiteboard and wireless tablet in various content areas.

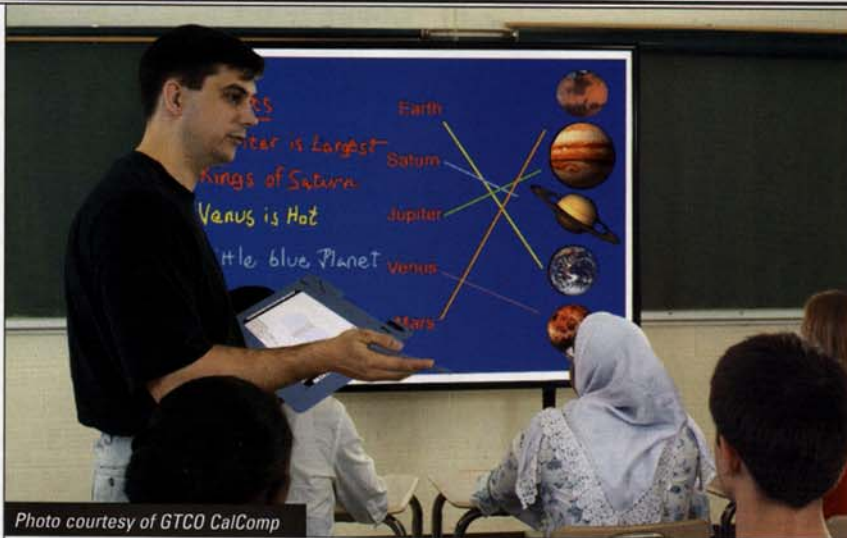


Photo courtesy of GTCO CalComp

1 Answer Questions - The wireless tablet is given to a student to have them answer questions presented by the teacher on the whiteboard.

2 Do Homework Problems - Students go up to the whiteboard to work out homework problems so that answers can be reviewed by the whole class.

3 Saving & Printing Lessons - Teachers save and print out lessons that were displayed on the whiteboard specifically for students who missed a class. Notes and examples are simply printed out on a printer or can be e-mailed home.

4 Control Images from Anywhere in the Classroom - Teachers use the wireless tablet to walk around the room and control images on the large whiteboard just as they would if working directly on the whiteboard. A math problem being displayed on the whiteboard can be solved by a student who uses the wireless tablet like a remote mouse from their seat.

5 Demonstrate Science Software - A science teacher can use the wireless tablet to demonstrate a software presentation depicting cell division. She can interrupt the presentation to capture the screen and write on the tablet to explain cell characteristics.

6 Show Websites for the Whole Classes to See - In a Social Studies class focusing on Ancient Egypt, certain

websites are shown on the whiteboard providing more details on their unit of study. The advantage here is the information, such as definitions and spellings for ancient Egypt words, can be projected onto the board for review.

7 Categorize and Organize Information - Science teachers project a list of genus and species of animals onto the whiteboard. Students use special markers to draw lines on the whiteboard to connect specific types of animals with different species.

8 Project Maps & Online Databases - Students identify different climates on a world map from an online encyclopedia that is projected onto the whiteboard. They come up to the whiteboard and use special markers to select climates and seasons.

Bringing whiteboards and tablets into the classroom in Tullahoma, TN has altered many lessons and units. Most teachers believe these devices have expanded their repertoire of ways to teach. Some say they even detect higher test scores and increased student participation. A common expression you might hear in Tullahoma is, "Great things are happening at West Middle School."

Mike Landis is Principal of West Middle School in the Tullahoma School District in Tullahoma, TN. The district uses the InterWrite SchoolBoard and InterWrite SchoolPad from GTCO Cal Comp.