

Getting Active with ACTIVboards

Stacey Mosher, Teacher, Chinook Winds Adventist Academy, Calgary, AB

How often do we see some students just sitting in our classrooms and we ask ourselves “How can we motivate them to participate?” It is a fact that students must be involved, must interact with the lesson, for learning to take place. We see and hear this phenomenon almost daily as we watch them sing along with their favourite songs (on their iPods) or listen to them describe, in detail, their newest video games. Both of these use technology as do the cell phones, digital cameras, and laptops that students use regularly. Students today are used to interacting with the world around them in a variety of technological ways. If we want to engage them in the classroom, we need to incorporate these methods into our instruction.

One such technology that I believe can be a great asset in the classroom is the Interactive White board. Most teachers have heard of SMART boards but, in my personal opinion, the ACTIVboard by Promethean is much better. An ACTIVboard is used with a computer and a dedicated video projector (no having to book one out!) and is used in place of a white or chalkboard; think of it as an electronic flipchart. Along with the ACTIVboard, teachers have a choice of software that has been designed specifically for either elementary or junior/senior high classes. The toolbars that are designed into the software can be modified to suit your own individual needs. My own personal use with the ACTIVboard and its educational software has sold me on its merits within the classroom.



Imagine lessons where every student is focused, motivated and involved. The free software (either elementary or junior/senior high) that comes with an ACTIVboard helps to achieve just this by helping teachers to prepare and present lessons. Anything that you can produce on your computer or find on the internet can be displayed and annotated over. Illustrations, PDFs, PowerPoints, WebPages, and even an included library of images can all be accessed, along with an amazing array of tools. There is also a free resource library (yes, FREE!), Promethean Planet, with over 150,000 teacher members sharing and contributing lessons and resources that help you get started right away.

While many teachers are intimidated by the idea of losing their whiteboards or chalkboards to an ACTIVboard, only one day’s training is usually all they need to be up and running and sold on its merits. You don’t have to be able to use all of the capabilities of your ACTIVboard right away. What I enjoyed the most was that I could take anything that I could do on my laptop, even if I had created it years ago, and display it on the ACTIVboard screen. From there I worked on the board exactly as if I was sitting at my computer. This really opened up a whole new world for my students in the classroom. I was now able to display all types of information from many different sources with very little effort. Even better is the built in flipchart capability of the software that allows me to go backwards and forwards in the lesson without losing any information. No longer do I have to erase and rewrite because I ran out of room.

As a math and science teacher who had used an ACTIVboard for about a year and a half and then had to go back to teaching without one, I can say that I really notice the difference. For example, rather than being able to pull up videos instantly of an experiment that was performed on the space station and then being able to graph the results in a multitude of colors with great precision and publish to the school’s website, I have to book out a projector, hook it up, show the

video and then try to draw a graph that hopefully gets my point across. While this may not be the best example, I hope that everyone can appreciate the benefit of having a fulltime dedicated computer, projector and screen in your classroom all the time. While I tend to be naturally biased towards math and physics (no apologies), ACTIVboards and their software can, in my opinion, enhance the curriculum and the overall learning of any classroom be it kindergarten or grade 12 biology.

For more information, check out the following links:

[Presentation Partner](#) (Distributer)

[ACTIVboard Quick Tour Video](#)

[Promethean Planet](#) (Id and username are case sensitive)

Planet Id: CWAA

Username: CWAA