

Intimidating Technology Or An Open Mind

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With the recent push for more technology integration into teaching lessons, Parkview Adventist Academy has made it a big priority to update the technology that each of the teachers have in their classrooms. Smart Boards seem to be the latest fad and so I had the task of being the test dummy for my school. This article will not really interest anyone who is tech savvy; I geared it for people who are a little timid to explore the ever-expanding realm of technology.

When the administrative team approached me and asked if I would be willing to try out a BrightLink 450Wi Smart Projector, I was really excited to be the first staff member to try this technology in my classroom. As I reflected on my eagerness, however, I realized that I was extremely intimidated by the thought of having to use this smart projector. I am not a digital native. I did not grow up with the Internet and so, although I have a fairly decent grasp of technology, I usually prefer to watch others use a tool and then follow their instructions. I decided to bring along a friend when I installed the software and “played” with the projector. The installation process was relatively easy. But I was glad that I had “tech support” during this process because I find myself getting frustrated if something does not happen correctly right away and the way I want it to.

Once the software was installed, I began the process of adjusting the projector so that it was in focus and in the right position on my white board. One of the features that I really like about this smart projector is that I do not lose any whiteboard space in my classroom. Instead of working on an interactive white board, I have two pens with sensors that act as either a mouse on the screen or as a pen. The first day I was really excited because the set up had work really well. The second time I went to use the pens, they needed to be recalibrated and I found this frustrating because I had not done this before my class started and so had to spend a few minutes of class time.

Some of the really great features that I have enjoyed using are the different tools that can focus on specific points from my notes. I also really like the feature that allows me to cover all the notes and then drag the pen to uncover only the sections that I need. This allows the students to stay on task when writing notes. Also, the projector bulb is bright enough that I do not need to shut off my classroom lights for the students to see the board. The students have really enjoyed becoming part of the process. The pens allow for more student interaction and the students really enjoy watching DVDs on the “big screen”.

I have not scratched the surface of the many different ways that this projector can be useful to me in the class. But I overcame my the biggest hurdle when I had to step outside my comfort zone. I really encourage teachers to keep an open mind to the new technologies that are becoming part of our profession and think about how these tools can make the lessons that we teach more interesting for our students.