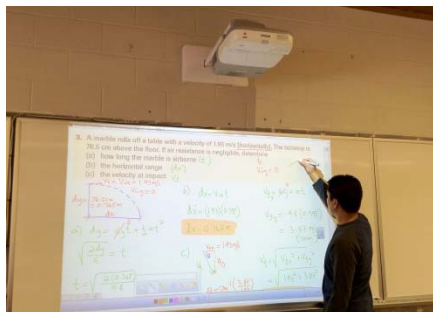


## Achieving Mobility and Interactivity in the Classroom

*Edgar Pilapil, Teacher, Kingsway College, Oshawa, ON*

“Interactive” – is the tone of the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. An interactive classroom is a classroom where students are engaged and play an active role in the learning process. Gone are the days when the students sit, listen to the teachers, and scribble some notes. So how do we change the educational tone from being a passive classroom to an interactive classroom? We have all heard of SMARTboards, ACTIVboards, and INTERWRITEboards—these boards are made by different manufacturers but they are all the same, “an INTERACTIVE board”. Is one superior than the other? I don’t think so!

A few years back, our math and science department decided to purchase four INTERACTIVE boards for our math/science classrooms. It was a privilege to use these boards within my



classroom and the culminating experience has benefitted me and my students. I cannot imagine reverting back to the use of chalkboards or whiteboards. After this trial run, the administration decided to put up an INTERACTIVE board in every classroom as our capital project. We shopped around for the best deal, and discovered a product called an “INTERACTIVE projector.” This projector operates the same way as the INTERACTIVE board but with specialized features; namely, it comes with two interactive pens that

communicate with your projector through infrared with every key stroke, giving users the comfort of using a tool that they already know how to operate. I believe that this INTERACTIVE projector is the better than the INTERACTIVE board for the following reasons:

1. You can use your existing whiteboard as your screen. Our classrooms have three spans of whiteboard, so we use the middle one as the screen and two remaining whiteboards for important notes and reminders. This is the main reason why we decided to go this route; it saves us space and money.
2. This is a short throw projector, meaning the projector can be mounted just above your head and it eliminates the echoes of shadow being projected on to the board.
3. This is a widescreen projector, which means that you have more writing space; this projector has a 1280 x 800 resolution.

Whether it’s an INTERACTIVE board or an INTERACTIVE projector, the fact is, either one would make an excellent classroom resource benefitting student and teacher alike. Imagine having the capabilities of saving an active interactive lesson, or recording a lesson in advance? This technology gives educators the ability to save and create lessons for future use and reference. Imagine being able to send today’s lesson to the student/s who missed your class that

day! These are just a few of the things that you can do when you integrate these classroom technologies at your school.

There are some limitations, though, that should be factored in before integrating these technological resources at your school: 1: You may be limited in terms of moving freely within the classroom. 2: Only one person can utilize the technology at a given time. So how do you create an interactive classroom? Well, one solution is a newer type of INTERACTIVE projector. Recently, I was invited to a seminar entitled “Classroom Connect”, where one of the gadgets demonstrated was the Dell S500WI Ultra Short Throw Projector. This projector is similar to the one previously described, but this one comes with pens that can be used on any surface within an area of 9 meters. What this means is that an educator is no longer stuck at the front of the classroom. As an educator, mobility is essential to the learning environment, and with this newfound mobility, I now have the ability to teach and write on the board from anywhere within the classroom, increasing positive interaction with my students. This projector is also capable of handling up to 9 pens. This feature allows an educator to easily engage in collaborative learning by mobilizing the class into learning groups, each with the ability to interact with their fellow classmates and the teacher without leaving their desks or work stations. This projector has wireless functionality, which means that you can project your other gadgets such as your iPad or tablet through this projector without cables. Your VHS player, dvd/blu-ray, and all other video players that most classrooms currently utilize can all be connected and integrated to this projector. This interactive projector comes with robust interactive software that is useful in all subject areas. It is a great tool to start an interactive classroom. Technology awaits!



Resources:

<http://accessories.us.dell.com/sna/productdetail.aspx?c=us&cs=555&l=en&s=biz&sku=s500w2c&redirect=1>