

# Informing Parents

Parent Information Newsletter: Term 3 ♦ Week 3 ♦ Wednesday, 1 August 2007

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## Integrating interactive whiteboards into student learning at Narrabri West!

**T**his year we have purchased and installed two interactive whiteboards. These are also referred to as 'Smartboards', which is the brand name of the versions we have.



They have been placed in the 1M and 6C classrooms. Mr Cornish and Mrs Moore are already using them extensively with their classes; however we have made arrangements for all classes to have access so that all students can benefit from the exciting learning opportunities they provide. Our teachers are undergoing training in the use of these and are eager to implement them into their classroom learning programs.

We have committed ourselves to purchasing at least one more this year. This one will be installed in the Kindergarten rooms so that our 2008 Kindergarten students can benefit from them as soon as they start school. It is exciting to think of the skills they will develop as they move through their schooling having had the opportunity to use this technology from such an early stage.

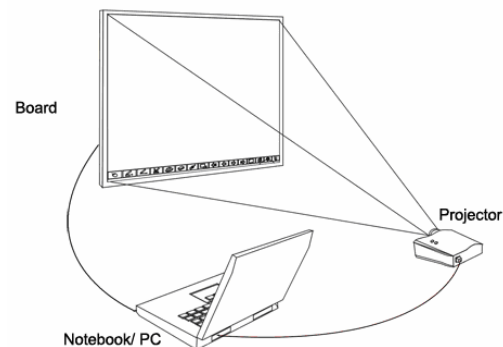
We are also hoping to use the proceeds from this year's school fete, as well as other sources of funding, to purchase additional units. Each 'Smartboard' costs approximately \$7000 installed, so equipping the school with these is a major financial undertaking, however the opportunities they offer make this an important priority in our future planning. A 'Smartboard' in every classroom is our ultimate goal and we hope to have achieved this by at least the end of 2009. By the end of 2008 we hope to at least have a 'Smartboard' in each classroom block, so that they can be shared by adjoining classrooms.

This issue of 'Informing Parents' will explain some of the uses and benefits of these technology tools.

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### What is an interactive whiteboard?

An interactive whiteboard is a large touch-sensitive display panel. When connected to a data projector and computer it allows a computer image to be projected onto the board. This image can be controlled by touching the board either directly or with a stylus, as well as by using the computer mouse or keyboard. Users can interact in multidimensional ways with the board, as well as write or draw on the surface, save and re-use content, and print off the image. It can also be used in place of a normal whiteboard, blackboard, overhead projector, video recorder and television.



### What is happening with interactive whiteboards in schools?

Public schools across NSW are purchasing interactive whiteboards with funds from various sources. The State Government recently announced it would spend \$66 million over the next four years, providing every NSW public school with an interactive whiteboard to enable more students and teachers to benefit from learning with this technology.

The use of interactive whiteboards in Australian classrooms is relatively new. Few schools have been using them for more than four years; most have been installing them over the past two years.

The benefits to learning of using an interactive whiteboard, especially in terms of engagement and motivation, have been clearly identified in extensive NSW, Australian and international educational research.

Research findings indicate that:

- The interactive whiteboard is a stimulus for teacher learning.

- The interactive whiteboard provides for a wide range of learner interactions and responses.
- There is a positive response by teachers and students to the whiteboards' physical interactivity, convenience and immediacy.
- The visual nature of the board is its strength, as is the engagement and student ownership displayed when teachers use it.
- It makes a link to students' "digital culture" and confirms international research demonstrating that students, especially boys, find this technology engaging and motivating because of its visual appeal, pace of learning and its ability to bring "their world" into the classroom.
- Interactive whiteboards are able to support many of the elements of the NSW model of Quality Teaching.
- The likelihood of successful implementation is increased when the school culture encourages innovation, especially if this is combined with a supportive parent culture.

All research findings indicate that student engagement in learning is greatly enhanced through the use of interactive whiteboards. This is certainly something we are seeing at Narrabri West in the short time that we have had these resources.



### **What are some ways we can use interactive whiteboards in the classroom?**

The possibilities that interactive whiteboards present for classroom learning are certainly exciting. Some of the ways whiteboards are used in the classroom are:

- Use the built in maps to teach continents, oceans, countries, or states and capitals;
- Present presentations created by student or teacher;
- Digital storytelling;
- Teach whole group computer skills;

- Brainstorming;
- Reinforce skills by using on-line interactive web sites;
- Teach editing skills;
- Use the highlighter tool to highlight nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc;
- Teaching students how to navigate the Internet;
- Illustrate and write a book as a class;
- Teachers can create lessons in advance at home or at school, then save them for future use or to be shared with other teachers;
- Teaching steps to a math problem;
- Have students share projects or work during Three-Way interviews;
- End each day by having students write one thing that they learned;
- Save lessons to present to students who were absent; and
- Use 'Google Earth' to immediately visit places talked about in class or in the news.

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### **How can teachers use interactive whiteboards in the classroom?**

- Teaching with an interactive whiteboard means teachers can address the whole class in a new way, using the latest in educational software as part of lessons, rather than students having to crowd around a small screen to benefit from computer-based learning materials.
- Utilise access to a large range of materials when teaching using an interactive whiteboard, including software, web pages, CD-ROMs, DVDs, videos and television.
- Enhance lessons by adding video, animation, graphics, text and audio to presentations.
- One of the main advantages of using an interactive whiteboard is that it's interactive. The computer is controlled by touching the screen with a special pen or with fingers; students can come up to the board to solve problems on it or move images around. Any changes to work can be saved as you go along.
- Interactive whiteboards are versatile. Most software will work with them, or teachers can create their own. Because of this, they can be used to support any area of the curriculum.

Interactive whiteboards also:

- Encourage spontaneity and flexibility in lessons;

- Enable the integration of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) into lessons and reduces the need for explicit teaching of ICT skills;
- Enable work to be reviewed, saved and printed, including notes;
- Allow teachers to share resources;
- Are easy to use, providing efficient presentation, quickened pace and professional delivery; and
- Encourage teacher professional development.

*It is however important to remember that what the teacher does with the interactive whiteboard is much more important than the nature of the tool itself. Technology does not replace effective teaching.*

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### What are the learning benefits for students?

- Pupils can benefit from the full range of educational software without having to wait for a turn on the computer when a teacher uses an interactive whiteboard.
- They can interact with the board by being invited to solve a mathematical problem on it, or to drag words across the screen to form a sentence. Work in progress can be stored in the computer as the lesson goes along.
- Interactive whiteboard technology is well suited to supporting whole class teaching; it is flexible, efficient and motivating for students and it supports lesson preparation. The interactive whiteboard's ease of use is the critical factor in its popularity with teachers and students.

Other benefits include:

- Versatility and flexibility with applications for all ages across the curriculum.
- Ability to provide instant access to a variety of digital resources for whole class use.
- Increases the enjoyment of lessons through more varied and dynamic use of resources.
- More opportunities for interaction and discussion in the classroom.
- Reduces the need for note taking.
- Students are able to cope with more complex concepts as a result of clearer, more efficient and more dynamic presentation.
- Different learning styles can be accommodated as teachers call on a variety of resources to suit particular needs.
- Students do not need to use a keyboard to engage with technology, increasing access for younger children.

- Students are highly motivated and can be more creative.

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### What do Narrabri West students think about interactive whiteboards?

These are some comments written by Year 1 and Year 6 students about their use of our whiteboards:

- It's more exciting than the chalkboard. (Ashley)
- It will be a great help to our education (Ben)
- It has plenty of interactive activities on it (Tim)
- We can save our work instead of having to rub it off (Alison)
- It makes the internet easy to use (Sarah)
- It helps with our independent learning activities (Jett)
- It makes writing fun (Courtney)
- We can play maths games on it (John)
- It's fun when we move things on the screen (Taylah)
- We use it for our Spelling and Homework charts (Ruby)

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### WANT TO SEE HOW WE ARE USING OUR 'SMARTBOARDS'?

At our next Parent Day Club meeting, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> August (1.00pm in Gumbuya), there will be a demonstration lesson with 6C showing some of the ways we are using the new interactive 'Smartboards'.

Everyone is invited to come along to discover how this exciting technology works!

We are also planning to have some demonstrations at this years school fete on September 14<sup>th</sup>.