

GET STUDENTS INVOLVED

There is, of course, no magic formula to getting children involved in their learning, even when using interactive whiteboards. As stated in a report on interactive whiteboards by Becta, the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency: "It is clear from our observations and discussions that it is still quality teaching that ensures progress; the IAW [interactive whiteboard] alone does not guarantee it."⁽¹⁾ In this article, therefore, we want to discuss just how interactive whiteboards, specifically, can be used to help teachers get their students more involved in what they are learning. The methods used in this article can, hopefully, supplement teachers' skills, showing how interactive whiteboards can help to improve their teaching.



By Simon Green

Using basic creative touches

One of the key advantages to using an Activboard is the vast range of sources of materials available. Even at the most basic level, however, Activboards give the chance to be more interesting. If teachers are always using fonts such as Arial, Comic Sans or Times New Roman, they are not stretching the creative possibilities of interactive whiteboards. Teachers can use simple techniques to keep creativity flowing: keep changing the color and size of the pen; use different backgrounds on different days.

When using Activstudio with other teaching resources, such as the internet, it is worth taking the time to root out an excellent way of demonstrating a topic. If it's good, it can then be reused, helping to save time in the long run.

Using the opportunity to be spontaneous

A well organised flipchart can, logically, lead to a well organised lesson. A well organized lesson, in turn, frees up the teacher to react to the class, helping to create a rapport between students and teacher.

If further explanation is needed, just right-click on the page

and select **Insert>New Page After Current Page**. A new blank page will be placed after the current page where an alternative explanation can be given. Using the Page Reset button, in the meantime, pages can be repeated as many times as necessary.

More rehearsed forms of "spontaneity" include the inclusion of a page containing a joke to break up an exercise, or quick, entertaining tasks which can liven up their students. Activstudio gives teachers full opportunity to seem like they're going off at a tangent without actually losing track of their topic.

Spontaneity can also include fun. Be entertaining by including video clips in classes. Use tools such as the Tickertape tool to add fun messages to a class. Use the Dice tool and the Clock tool to create revision games, to liven up even the dullest Friday afternoon.

Being aware of techniques available

Here are four techniques, quoted

in the previously mentioned Becta publication, which help to increase interactivity in the classroom:

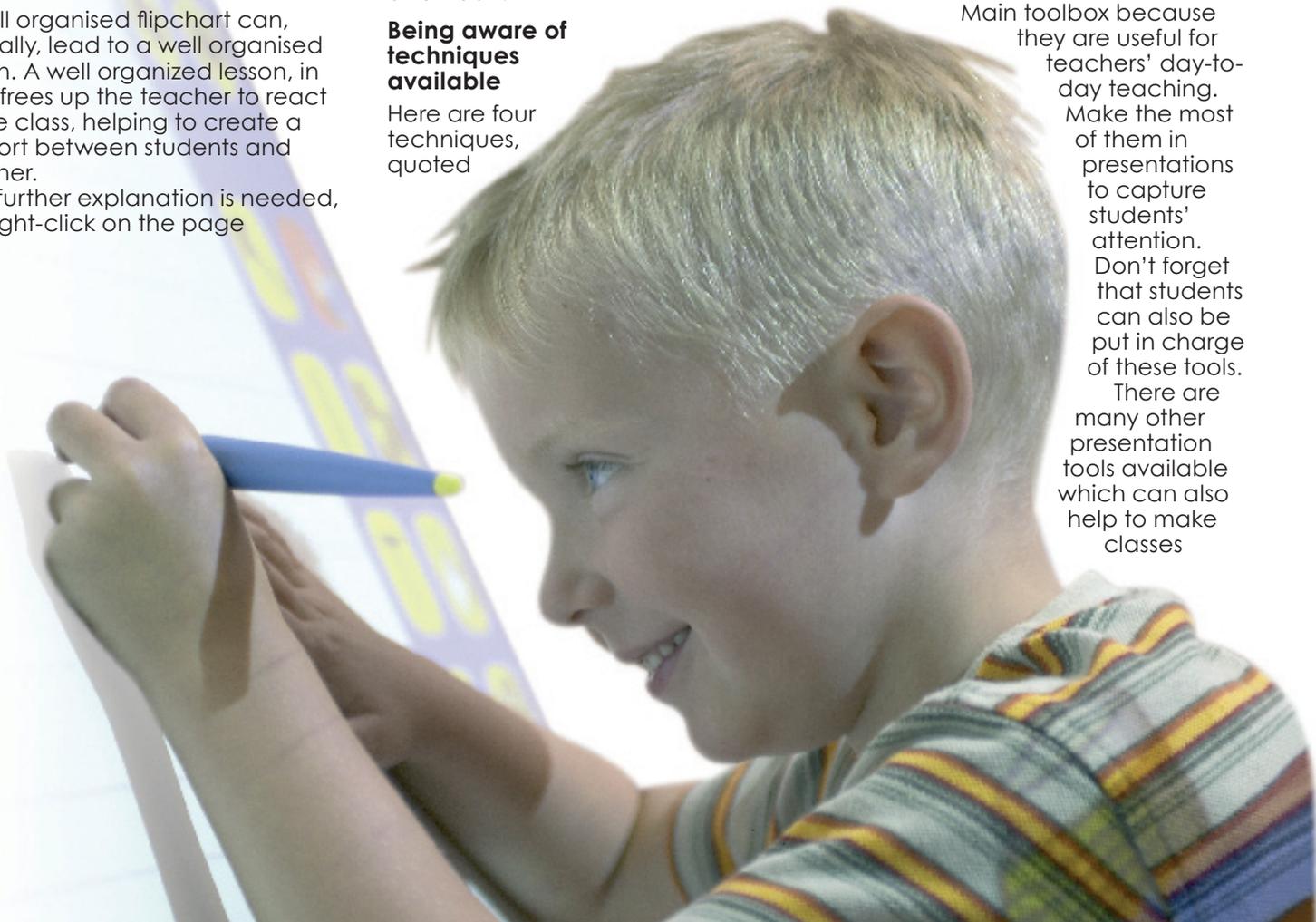
- drag-and-drop: matching a response to a stimulant
- hide-and-reveal: opening a response when a stimulant is understood
- matching items: using equivalent terms
- movement: to demonstrate principles (2)

Just the fact that teachers or students can move images around the page opens up a huge range of possibilities. The four points listed above are just a starting point for the range of techniques available.

Using Activstudio's presentation tools

The Spotlight tool and the Reveal tool have been placed on the Main toolbox because they are useful for teachers' day-to-day teaching. Make the most of them in presentations to capture students' attention. Don't forget that students can also be put in charge of these tools.

There are many other presentation tools available which can also help to make classes





clearer and more engaging. Move a ruler around the board to help students focus on particular texts; Use the Clock tool to time a task and add a bit of pace to an activity; use tickertapes to give a title to a class or to emphasize a point. Using the Dice tool, in the meantime, can add an element of chance to a task, making it more interesting for both students and learners. All these tools have been created because they help teachers make their lessons more interesting.

Making the most of the ability to save

Teachers should keep hold of the original copy of their flipchart for future classes, but while they give their class they will, inevitably, make changes to the flipchart as students answer questions and perform activities. As they do this, teachers personalize their flipchart for each class.

By saving the flipchart with a new name, therefore, teachers will be able to access their students' answers in future.

Days later they'll know exactly from which point to continue their class; they could even revisit their students' own answers. Months later they could revisit the flipchart to help their students' revision.

Multimedia

Some teachers can be a little intimidated when terms such as multimedia are thrown around. It is, however, surprisingly easy to incorporate video or sound into classes. This is where the Activclassroom can really make traditional whiteboards a thing of the past. Teachers could record their students performing a task or doing a speech and play the results back to their class. Videoring a field trip helps to engage students and can be a fun activity in itself.

Using sounds and videos, from a range of sources, can help to bring fun and interactivity into the classroom. Such sounds or videos can be saved as part of a flipchart and then played at the click of a button. Teachers can also create links to a website which can contain an activity to illustrate their point.

Making the most of the chance to print

The ability to print is perhaps one of the most underused possibilities offered by interactive whiteboards. By printing, teachers can tie in what students see on the board with the exercises they perform at their desk. The results of a class discussion or a brain storming session, in the

meantime, can be printed out and discussed in greater depth.

Creating many pages in one flipchart

The traditional blackboard is a tried and tested technology. An Activboard is like having a vast number of blackboards in the class. Images can be repeated on a number of pages and students can all have a go at labeling them in different ways. During group work, groups can take charge of different pages of a flipchart. Mistakes can be made, kept and then revised at a later stage. Teachers can progress through a topic and then revise or review previous segments of the theme. In this way, Activboards offer the opportunity to study the same text or image in a number of different ways.

When working on flipcharts with many pages, make the most of the chance to create links by creating a menu page. Students themselves could then choose the order in which they study topics using the menu. Deciding the order in which to study a topic can become part of an introductory activity in itself.

FOOTNOTES

1. Miller, Dave; Averis, Doug; Door, Victoria; Glover, Derek. (2005) *How can the use of an interactive whiteboard enhance the nature of teaching and learning in secondary mathematics and modern foreign languages?* Accessed via the Becta website <http://www.becta.org.uk> on 4/9/06. pp16
2. ibid pp5-6

BIOGRAPHY

Miller, Dave; Averis, Doug; Door, Victoria; Glover, Derek. (2005) *How can the use of an interactive whiteboard enhance the nature of teaching and learning in secondary mathematics and modern foreign languages?* Accessed via the Becta website <http://www.becta.org.uk> on 4/9/06.

Whalley, John (2004). *Teaching Interactively with Electronic Whiteboards.* Accessed via the Ferl (Further Education Resources for Learning) website <http://ferl.becta.org.uk> on 4/9/06

Last revised 6/8/07

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