

# text tricks

Using Activboards often means using text. If you're just putting text on the interactive whiteboard and then pointing at it you're not making the most of the hundreds of text techniques available which will engage your students. Here we'll give you just a few starters to fire your imagination and get you using interactive whiteboards more creatively. Read on for ideas on how to work with words in your classes.

By Simon Green

## Drag and drop techniques

The drag and drop technique can be used in many ways to create exercises which involve your students. Label a diagram, match text to images, match text to definitions. Get your students up from their seats to perform these tasks, making the exercise more interactive.

**Focus circle**  
One particularly popular drag and drop technique involves placing a circle on the page and placing a number of key words around the circle perimeter. Students can drag related words into the circle so they can be discussed.

**Ordering and sorting**  
Ordering and sorting exercises are easy to set up and perform on Activboards. Write each sentence of a sequence of events in separate text boxes on the page. The text boxes can be jumbled up and placed around the page. Your students can then come to the board and put the text boxes in order. You can do the same with questions and answers.

## Block and reveal

A quick way to create an exercise is to copy text from a Word document or the internet onto your flipchart page. Using a dark pen, draw a thick line over key words in the text and get your student to guess what those words are. You can move the line so your students know if they have guessed correctly or not.

## Discussion bucket

Type a series of questions or comments on the page. Place them all on top of each other and then place another shape or image on top of the bucket. Right-click on the shape and select **Edit>Lock**. Now you'll be able to click on the shape and drag another topic out to be discussed.

**Highlight words**  
You could ask your students to read the text on a flipchart page and then ask them to tell you the key words in the text. Use the Highlighter tool to highlight important words in the text, taking advantage of the range of colors and pen widths available.

## Rub and reveal

Make sure you have a plain background on the page. Place your text on that blank background and then, using a pen the same color as the blank background, write over the words. When using the page in front of the class you can then use the eraser to reveal the text.

**Off stage**  
Number your strips of text – whether they are a series of questions or discussion topics – and make sure the whole sentence and its number fit on one line. You can then drag the sentence off the page altogether, leaving just the number visible on the page. This is a good way to prepare your questions, giving you the ability to drag questions on or off as they are answered.

## Summarize text

You can ask your students for the key words in a block of text. Right-click on a word and select Deconstruct. A copy of the word will be made. Drag this word into its own space. In this way, drag more key words from the text, building up a summary of the block of text.

**Headlines and rewrites**  
Use the Deconstruct feature to create headlines for your text. Move the deconstructed words onto a different page and get your students to reconstruct the text with the help of the key words.

## Reveal tool

Take advantage of the Reveal tool when presenting text. It works particularly well when working with a series of bullet points. You can activate the Reveal tool then drag the blank screen down to reveal each of your bullet points as you discuss them.

**Dice and texts**  
Don't forget that simple tools such as dice can be used to make text exercises more interactive. One way of using dice, in language lessons, is to have one column of vocabulary and one column of grammar points on the page. Roll two dice. If the result is 2 and 5 then students must create a sentence using the second word from the vocabulary column and the fifth grammar point from the grammar column. Delete each point as you use them. This sort of exercise, with Activboards, can be turned into a team game or an individual exercise for all students.

**Text and colors**  
This technique works particularly well when working with foreign languages. Make half of your page dark blue and half of it white. In the same text box type a word and its meaning onto the white half of the page. Select the meaning and change its color to the blue used in the other half of the page. Now, when finished, drag the text box onto the blue half of the page. The word remains visible but the meaning will now be hidden. Build up a series of words and test your students with the words and their definitions, getting them to drag the words back onto the white background to see if they are correct.

## Text recreation

It's easy to extract whole sentences from text. Double-click on text to open the Object Edit toolbox. Select the Edit Text button then click and drag on the text to select the sentence you want to extract. Click and drag on the selected text. A copy of the text will be created which can be moved to wherever you want on the page. Get your students to read the full text. Deconstruct each sentence from a block of text, delete the original text and get your students to reconstruct it.

## Anagrams

Don't forget that your ability to create and move individual words and letters gives you the opportunity to create exercises using anagrams. When used with the Clock tool's Count Down option, you can recreate your own variant of the game show.



PROMETHEAN

© 2006 Promethean Technologies Group

Last revised 4/9/06