

ACTIVVIEW

News and Views on Activboard

The world's most advanced interactive whiteboard system | September 2008

ACTIVboardNZ launches hot new device

The most versatile learner response system yet.

One could be forgiven for thinking that the latest addition to the Activboard classroom was in fact the latest in cellphone technology. The new learner response device, Activexpression, is the result of Promethean's discussions with educators in over 50 countries. It's designed to give students the opportunity to contribute thoughts, feelings and perspectives to both pre-planned and spontaneous quizzes, polls and complex questions.

The cellphone design is entirely intentional. Since most students know how to text message already, it's a very comfortable device for them to use. Each student or group of students can contribute to all questions by texting a response which can be instantly displayed on the Activboard for reference or discussion.

The software included provides a question master which allows teachers to create a full range of question types: multiple choice, true/false, yes/no, put-in-order, gap fill words, Likert scales, confidence checking and alpha numeric response.

Julie Faulkner, a teacher at Southland Girls' currently teaching year seven is using Activexpression in her classroom. She says "One of the advantages of using Activexpression is the immediate feedback it provides which enables me to instantly adapt the lesson or to group the students to meet their individual needs. It has been very easy to use for both me and the girls and takes students to a higher level of thinking and engagement."

The students are equally keen. Aside from thinking the cellphone design was 'cool' they felt they were being heard rather than just following teacher's instructions and were often willing to take more risks in their responses when it was anonymous. It unleashes a whole new level of confidence and enables teachers to really understand what their students are thinking.

Activexpression will be available from October 2008.



eTime

eTime is an education consultancy company in Christchurch providing professional development for principals and teachers, and programmes for students. Its highly respected, technology rich centre provides innovative programmes for teachers and students, such as Digital Kids, Gifted and Talented Education, Video Making, Digital Storytelling, Digital Music and Photography. Aside from their e-learning programmes, eTime also provides educational tours, support for school-based curriculum development, and programmes aimed at developing whole brain thinking and an enterprising school culture.

To further enhance their state-of-the-art technology experience, they have just taken delivery of the new Activboard+2 package and are very pleased with their purchase for a number of reasons. The robustness and durability was a big plus in their books as it will stand up to the rigours of classroom environments. They also like the fact that the Mac and PC software versions are the same. This makes it easier for teachers who operate in a mixed-platform environment. In fact the software impressed them full stop – especially because of the number of NZ specific resources and Maori language software and the fact that all Activboard software is designed by teachers. Activboard is very proud to be chosen out of all the other interactive providers eTime looked at. Chris Le Cren, director of the centre says "In our opinion, an Activboard is the best pathway for

schools to pursue, which is why we are putting our support behind it. We also believe it is the most cost-effective solution for schools long term when considering all the costs involved in translating interactive whiteboard technologies into learning outcomes."



Activboard around the world

New South Wales schools to get Activstudio



Activstudio will soon be in 2200 classrooms across New South Wales after the Department of Education and Training chose the award-winning software as part of its \$158m 'Connected Classrooms' initiative.

The 'Connected Classrooms' initiative aims to allow students to engage in one extended, connected classroom. The vision is that students at all sites will be able to see and interact with the same materials, participate in shared brainstorming and discussions and be actively involved with their peers and with teachers based at other locations.

Paul Klotz, Promethean's general manager for Australia and New Zealand, said: "Promethean are delighted that our software will play an active role in facilitating this connected and shared learning experience across classrooms of NSW. This opportunity for schools in NSW will bring teaching experiences and student learning to a greater level and help eradicate passive learning practices."

One of the initiative's key aims is to offer students virtual field trips and online simulations. Activstudio will help teachers to do just that by enabling easy creation of electronic flipcharts incorporating text, images, video clips, sound and web page content.

Planet Awarded highest honour



Promethean Planet, the world's largest online interactive whiteboard community, has just been awarded a Worlddidac 2008 award by an international jury of education experts.

The Worlddidac Award is the most recognised international prize in the education sector.

The award is presented every two years to innovative and pedagogically-valuable products and services with a high potential to improve learning or teaching.

Promethean were also awarded a Worlddidac award for Activprimary, the third such Worlddidac award for Promethean's innovative Primary classroom software.

Promethean Planet - a new look!



Visit the Planet to see the results of the recent upgrade – you will find easier navigation and great new features for Activboard users. Try searching by Themes to find collections of resources for teaching and learning, grouped by topic to make your lesson

planning easier. All the Activboard support sites are easily accessible through drop-down tabs, and Searching for resources is greatly enhanced with new options.

www.prometheanplanet.com

Learning disability specialist endorses Activpen for special needs students.



George Zayed

George Zayed, RTC, LLP has been working with children with learning disabilities, autism, attention issues as well as closed head injuries for nearly 20 years. His background is in Developmental and Cognitive Psychology.

He recently reviewed a number of Interactive White Boards for the developmental advantages of using them with special needs students. The results were both surprising and interesting.

He found that boards which require fingers to write could be detrimental to developmental growth, whereas boards which require the use of a pen are valuable developmental tools for students. Here are his thoughts:

"Motor skills allow the control of gross and fine motor musculature. The ability to make accurate voluntary muscle movements is crucial to a child's development. Children must first have accurate hand-eye coordination or they will be unprepared to learn to read and write. A common characteristic of children with learning disabilities is that they display poor coordination of gross and fine motor functions. Children who are superior readers score better on tests measuring motor precision than children classified as reading disabled. Motor skills are the foundation for building successful learning strategies.

Motor skill development is a three-step process. We first develop our gross motor skills (big muscle group like arms and legs), then we develop our fine motor skills (smaller extremities like our fingers) and lastly we develop our ocular motor skills (the smallest muscles in our body, the muscles in our eyes). If there is a delay in the development of coordination in any of these areas it can and will delay our emergence as visual thinkers or higher cognitive functions.

Writing is a combination of many skills but most importantly, visual memory and fine motor. You have to first form a picture of what you are going to write in your head and then get that picture onto the paper using your hand and pencil, or in this case the Activboard and Activpen. The Activpen in essence, becomes a therapy tool enabling the teacher to recognise signs of delayed fine motor, the 'developmental thumb'. The developmental thumb is defined as a poor grasp of the pencil; the thumb overlaps the finger or fingers. This inappropriate grip inhibits the use of fine motor skills thus causing the student to use their gross motor skills when writing. When the teacher notices a developmental thumb they can address the student's need for fine motor enrichment. With continued practice and fine motor exercises to increase ability this motor delay can be essentially redeveloped and matched with the student's age, removing fine motor as a stressor for this student and writing will emerge.

Conversely, if the student has a fine motor delay and they are using their fingers to write on the board their delay will go unnoticed. The resulting compensatory act of finger writing will actually hinder their growth and writing may never emerge as a quality academic task.

In summary, writing with your finger is not only an unrealistic practice, it could actually stunt the developmental growth of our students. Using your finger to write on the board will actually inhibit the student's Fine Motor development. The Activpen is not only the correct way the student should interact with the board; it is also a valuable developmental tool for the students as well as educators."

New staff member brings international flavour



Born in Rotorua, our new sales representative, Simon Butcher has travelled a bit since then. He spent seven years as an English teacher in Japan after teaching for three years in Spain and France.

Simon is excited to be back in New Zealand and working for ACTIVboardNZ because he feels that our technology has real value for education. "It's really important for children to get involved with technology at an early age and with ACTIVboardNZ we offer cutting edge tools to inspire kids and teachers to greater heights of learning."

We look forward to drawing on Simon's international experience and having him on board.



What's Hot?

New Activboard+2 Version 2

The latest version of the Activboard+2 system was launched at the recent NZ Principals' Federation annual conference in Christchurch and over 600 primary principals attended. The event had the theme "Learning Leaders, Leading Learners".

Delegates were able to see both the Activboard+2 'adjustable' and 'fixed' systems demonstrated, as well as a prototype of the proposed new 'free standing' Activboard+2 expected later this year.



A key event on the conference social programme was the ACTIVboardNZ Soirée held in the foyer of the stunning Christchurch Art Gallery. The lucky door prize of a complete set of Activote3 went to principal Christine Sutton of Riwaka School near Motueka, just out of Blenheim. Christine was delighted with her win and thanked both Promethean and ACTIVboardNZ for awarding a valuable prize.

iPod Nano Winners



Some great flipcharts were submitted for the iPod competition in the last edition of Activview – evidence that excellent teachers can create inspiring classroom activities using the Activboard software.

We are delighted that NZ Activboard users are sharing resources through KnowledgeNet and Promethean Planet websites so that other teachers can benefit from their ideas.

The two winners were:



Rachel Clapp Titirangi Primary School



Maggie Shepherd Dannevirke South School

The winning flipcharts can be seen at www.activboard.knowledge.net.nz on the TeacherShare page in the Primary Curriculum area.

Congratulations to our winners
Excellent effort.

New ACTIVboardNZ website

Our website has had a facelift!

Go and check it out at

www.activboardnz.com

Copyright

Copyright in education is a grey area for many teachers, especially now that for interactive whiteboard users, the reprographic process has been replaced by printouts of flipcharts.

The most recent copyright act (1994) has five sections devoted to the use of copyright in Education but the main one of relevance to teachers is section 44 which talks about 'Copying for educational purposes of literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic works or typographical arrangements'.

It outlines that copying of work by means of reprographic process (photocopying) or any other means is permitted if it is done for use in the course of instruction. It also says that the copying must be done by or on behalf of the person who is giving this instruction (a lesson at an educational establishment).

No more than one copy of the whole or part of the work or edition is to be made on any one occasion. It also clearly mentions that copyright is not infringed as long as no charge is made for the supply of a copy of work to any student or other person who is to receive, is receiving, or has received a lesson.

It is always important for educators to contact the publisher of the work in question if they think that their intended use of the work may be going outside the lines of the act or to refer to the copyright act 1994 sections 44-49.



NZ Resource Packs

Add to your Activboard library with free Resource Packs downloaded from Promethean Planet or the NZ Activboard KnowledgeNet www.activboard.knowledge.net.nz

General NZ resources, Maori language for all schools, and Pearson Science for secondary level have now been joined by NZ Traffic Signs. The Water Safety pack is out just in time for planning EOTC activities for Term 4, and there is a new Numeracy Number Games collection.

Check for the new NZ packs that will be produced each Term from now on.

Top Tips Exploring the Power Tools



Clock

Use the clock tool to encourage the speedy recall of basic number knowledge. Create a flipchart with a different question on each page. Next select the countdown clock > adjust the time to the length of time you want the students to have on each questions > select 'repeat' > and after time out perform the following action – Turn to next page. The only thing you have to keep an eye on is the end of the flipchart to know when to stop the clock!

Making it easier: have a blank page in between each question or give the students more time.

Differentiate it for a whole class starter: have three questions on each page in different colours eg. Level 3 in blue, Level 4 in Orange and Level 5 in Green.

Time Saver: re-use a previously used flipchart but start at the end and select 'turn to the previous page' – the students will never know!

Flipchart Recorder

One of the best uses of the flipchart recorder is still the modeling of handwriting as it is easy for children to see and can be set to repeat if required. Set up your page first with a lined background and the letter of the day (which you can get from the Shared Collections under English>Primary>Handwriting). Next click on 'Flipchart Recorder > Area Screen Recorder' and define the area which you are going to be using the rectangle > select 'okay'. Next click on the red icon to start recording. It will ask you to give the saved file a name. Once you have selected 'saved' it'll automatically start recording. Press stop to finish.

Time Saver: get together with another teacher and share recordings. That way you get twice as many!

Extension: plug in a microphone and record your voice at the same time. This way students can see and hear the explanation.

Notes and Pointers

Have your learning outcomes displayed at all times using this power tool. It works much the same as a yellow post-it note however it is digital and can be saved and re-used at any time. A note will float over the top of any application so even if you are using MS Word, Inspiration or the Internet the students can be reminded of their learning intention and keep on task at all times!

Extension: ask the children to contribute to the note. For example: they may add strategies or ideas to the note that have helped them to achieve the learning intention. Alternatively they may record how they know they have achieved the learning outcome.

Alternatively: try using the ticker tape to display your learning intention. Once again this will run over any application and you can change the speed in which it runs.

Weblinks

Visit the Weblinks area on Promethean Planet to search the collection of sites to use on your Activboard. Submit your own favourites as well.



Make sure you know your school's logon details for the Digistore collection of digital content. www.tki.org.nz/r/digistore

Activboard-friendly sites:

Quintura for Kids

Search tool for younger students – visual and colourful. www.kids.quintura.com

ARKive Education Free multi-media science and environmental resources for educators
www.arkiveeducation.org

Enriching Mathematics
www.nrich.maths.org/public/leg.php

Maths Games for Primary
www.oswego.org/staff/cchamber/techno/games.htm

BBC Schools for Primary
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/4_11

BBC Schools for Secondary
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/11_16

iKnowthat.com online educational games
www.iknowthat.com

International Children's Digital Library including some NZ books.
www.childrenslibrary.org

Absorb electronics, mathematics, physics & chemistry interactives
www.yenka.com/freecontent/search.action#search

Just for fun...

Virtual Magnifying Glass
www.magnifier.sourceforge.net



If you know of a great site to use on the Activboard, email it to hilary@activboardnz.com for sharing on our website.