

# Interactive Classroom

Preparing today's students for tomorrow's world

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## LEADERS IN EDUCATION

# Empowering teachers to become ICT champions

Anvar Sadath



**For Anvar Sadath**, using ICT to enable teachers goes hand in hand with improving the quality of education. His philosophy stems from his experience as executive director of the [IT@School project](#) in the state of Kerala in India. In this role, Sadath has seen over ninety thousand teachers trained in ICT use and over four million students now benefitting from technology in their classrooms.

The IT@School project began as a pilot four years ago, and SMART is one of many private companies offering support. SMART's aim was to turn the focus of education away from passive learning and rote memorization, and toward critical thinking and independent learning.

Sadath says that because India is a nation with limited resources and a large population of teachers and students, the most effective way to initiate this paradigm shift was to upgrade teacher training.

"Empowering teachers means an improvement in educational standards," he says. "The beauty of the IT@School project is that it is empowering every

teacher to become an ICT champion and to teach any subject via IT tools." Sadath's strategy includes incorporating technology into curriculum across the board, rather than teaching IT as a subject.

"We are already using many ICT tools for teaching subjects like mathematics and physics," says Sadath. "The introduction of interactive whiteboards will enable us to cover more subjects effectively via ICT, thereby improving educational quality."

Sadath and his team set out to accomplish this goal by implementing a master training strategy at the start of the project. They identified teachers who were already champions of IT and then gave them the skills to be master trainers, able to carry out teacher training in all schools. In addition, the team trained school IT coordinators to handle every IT need within each school. There are now 200 master trainers and 5,600 IT coordinators.

The result is that teachers have the support they need to be competent and confident in their use of ICT, and students have the opportunity to develop skills in using the technology, which will prove helpful when they enter the workforce.

The impact of the IT@School project is clear to Sadath.

"Last year, there was a record pass percentage for tenth-standard public examination," he says. "The project and the government of Kerala strongly believe it is because of the project's intervention in the educational system."

But the paradigm shift hasn't taken place only in the methods used to teach students. Both the education structure and the curriculum have been transformed by the project's influence.

The success of the IT@Schools program is becoming visible on the world stage. At the eINDIA 2008 conference, the program won the Best Government initiative of the year award in the Digital Learning category. And according to Sadath, countries like Sri Lanka and the Maldives have shown interest in adopting the same model of implementation. [ic](#)

## NEWS

# Who's behind the evolution of SMART Board interactive whiteboards?

**Educators.** With their feedback on SMART's interactive whiteboards and other products, SMART improves and tailors its products to their needs. Following are a few innovations that resulted from their feedback.

### The wide-format SMART Board

Educators from around the world say they can't have too much space on which to work. The new wide-format [SMART Board™ 685](#) interactive whiteboard offers 20 percent more working space than the 680 model, which used to be SMART's largest board. Its area is similar to that of a chalkboard or regular whiteboard, measuring 87" (221 cm) on the diagonal. And the [SMART Board 690](#) interactive whiteboard has 33 percent more area than the 680, making it even easier to view multiple items or work with two applications at once. The wider screen also provides a truer playback experience when viewing DVDs and other multimedia. Having more room on their interactive whiteboards not only helps teachers be more efficient, but wide-format interactive whiteboards are also likely to become a standard in classrooms everywhere.

### SMART Board interactive display frame

Teachers can now transform a plasma display into a SMART Board interactive whiteboard. Attaching easily to most commercial plasma displays, this slender frame lets teachers interact with SMART Notebook lesson materials right on screen. Because the SMART Board interactive display frame is glass free, teachers can touch the surface of the plasma display directly for precise touch control and writing accuracy while enjoying brilliant, sharp images and clear readability.

The interactive display frame doesn't require a projector, so teachers do not cast shadows on the screen or have glare in their eyes from projector lights. The [SMART Board interactive display frame](#) also features an innovative pencil tool that lets teachers write on the screen with one end and erase with the other. Of course, they can always use their fingers to interact with the screen if they choose. [ic](#)

## One million SMART Board interactive whiteboards and counting



**SMART is proud to announce** that on August 12, it celebrated the creation of the millionth SMART Board interactive whiteboard. More than seven hundred thousand of those one million SMART Board interactive whiteboards now enhance teaching and learning in classrooms around the world.

SMART is the first interactive whiteboard manufacturer to reach this significant milestone. Over the past 17 years, SMART has sold approximately three times as many interactive whiteboards as its closest competitor. [ic](#)

## SMART speaks your language



**SMART knows how** important it is to have education content in your own language. So several more have been added to the list. Teachers can already get SMART-created lesson activities in French, German and Spanish, but now they're also available in Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Finnish and Norwegian.

All of [SMART's lesson activities](#) are compatible with SMART Notebook software. They're an easy way for teachers to make learning interactive, visual and fun. [ic](#)

## Coming soon. The SMART Table.



Children work together on a tangram puzzle.

**SMART announces** the world's first multitouch, multiuser table for primary education.

The [SMART Table](#) interactive learning center is a brightly colored table with an interactive screen for its surface. It comes with several digital activities, which can easily be customized to suit any lesson. Many of the activities are designed for collaboration, so students quickly learn to work together.

The SMART Table is standard innovation from the company that invented the SMART Board interactive whiteboard. The SMART Table lets groups of students explore learning activities, from shape puzzles to spelling games. Although the table is not on the market yet, it has already captured the imaginations of hundreds of children. Young product testers could not wait to gather

round the table, and they figured out how to use it in seconds.

But students are not the only ones captivated by the interactive table. SMART demonstrated it at the recent National Educational Computing Conference in San Antonio, USA, and visiting educators stood in line to try out the multitouch surface. Then they shared dozens of ideas on how to use the product as an interactive learning center.

No separate computer is required for the SMART Table – simply open the box and turn it on. Students can manipulate images with their hands, turning learning into a tangible, engaging experience.

If you're attending the 2009 BETT show in London, England, look for the SMART booth and see the table there. And watch future issues of *Interactive Classroom* for more information. [ic](#)

## NEWS

### SMART takes its third Comenius award

**SMART has won** the prestigious Comenius EduMedia Signet 2008 Award. The award for exemplary education media was presented June 20 in Berlin at a ceremony hosted by the Society for Pedagogy and Information. Two SMART products – the [Sento™ interactive response system](#) and the [SMART Board 600i2](#) interactive whiteboard system – were recognized by an independent jury for their functionality, features and ease of use. And both products were noted for having had a significant impact on education across Europe. This is the third Comenius award for SMART in the past four years. [ic](#)

### The SMART community goes German

**SMART is known for** its enthusiastic and energetic online community, and now it is even more accessible. The company is expanding the SMART Exchange to include German-speaking educators around the world. The SMART Exchange is a free resource center and community network that provides a wealth of resources for technology-enabled learning, from success stories to practical teaching tips. It's powered by teachers, administrators and SMART experts, and it's spreading around the globe – French and Spanish versions are also being developed. Find the German version at [exchange.smarttech.com/deutsch](http://exchange.smarttech.com/deutsch). [ic](#)

# Students absorbed by “cool” technology

Montagu Drive Primary School  
Cape Town, South Africa



**Montagu Drive Primary School** first opened its doors in the sprawling Mitchell’s Plain area of Cape Town in 1983. Its 1,041 students are drawn from six suburbs in this economically disadvantaged area. The school caters to children from the foundation phase, which prepares them for school, to grade 8.

In 2005, donor funding was secured to establish a computer laboratory at the school that would give students hands-on experience with technology, including various software applications. The funding was also used for the purchase of a SMART Board interactive whiteboard that the school believed would engage the children more readily in the learning process.

Initially, teachers were hesitant about using the boards as they felt their lack of experience with

the technology might let them down in front of their students. However, after initial training and sessions where teachers shared their learning experiences with each other, they felt confident enough to brave the classrooms.

First up was principal Felicity Sasman, who used her grade 7 mathematics class as her proving ground. The SMART Board interactive whiteboards “give pupils the confidence to take part in lessons,” says Sasman. “They find it easier to express themselves through using the whiteboard. They become so absorbed in their lessons that it makes teaching a pleasure, and much more fun. The technology is ‘cool,’ so they feel advantaged in being able to use it – something that is important to these youngsters.”

Other teachers’ uncertainty also dissipated as they used the interactive whiteboards and found their students totally receptive to their lessons, particularly those with audiovisual content. The technology has also sparked the teachers’ creativity in preparing lessons.

The head of the Afrikaans language department created an interactive worksheet for synonyms and linked it to music. When the students matched the correct words, a favorite pop song would play. This created excitement and motivated students to remember the work taught.

Today, the school’s interactive whiteboards are in use most of the school day as classes take turns with them. “They enhance our teachers’ lessons, and are especially valuable in being able to use illustrations and sounds to explain concepts. They are wonderful teaching tools that help us enhance the learning experience.” **ic**

## NEWS

### New VP for SMART in EMEA



**As part of an** ongoing effort to develop relationships in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), SMART has created a new vice-presidential position. Patrick Lelorieux is the vice president and general manager for EMEA, and he knows these regions well. In a previous role, he was VP sales for EMEA with a division of Cisco Systems, Inc. “Patrick’s background and skills give him deep insight and extensive understanding of sales and customer support in EMEA,” says Nancy Knowlton, SMART’s CEO. “He and the team he is putting in place will build on SMART’s strong leadership position in the region and allow us to continue to deliver an extraordinary customer experience.” **ic**

## NEWS

### SMART reaches out

SMART helps earthquake victims

**SMART is lending a hand** to the earthquake-stricken province of Sichuan in China as it struggles to get back on its feet. The company has donated 100 SMART Board interactive whiteboards to more than 20 Sichuan schools in an effort to create optimal learning conditions for children in the area.

At a ceremony at Dongqi Middle School in September, SMART’s president and COO, Tom Hodson, made the donation personally, saying that SMART is hoping to have the interactive whiteboards in place before the new semester begins. Hodson also said that SMART will assist with installation and provide training for teachers so they can get the products up and running as soon as possible. **ic**

### “Building back better” in the Maldives



**Students at a teacher resource center use a SMART Board interactive whiteboard.**

**“Building back better”** is the motto for UNICEF and the Maldives ministry of education, following the devastation of the 2004 tsunami. Part of their rebuilding strategy entails the creation of 20 teacher resource centers, which include computer labs each equipped with a SMART Board interactive whiteboard and a broadband Internet connection. A resource center is placed in a key school on each island to make teaching and learning more participatory for both students and teachers. Implementing ICT-based learning is an essential step in the Maldives’ recovery program, since the population is dispersed across 200 islands. The resource centers have helped significantly to decentralize services and resources for schools. **ic**

# Life gets easier with the SMART Board interactive whiteboard

## Study shows the SMART Board interactive whiteboard helps lower stress for student teachers



**Monitoring hallways.** Meeting with parents. Marking tests. Demands on teachers' time and energy can be draining, particularly for those just getting started in the profession. So attending to teachers' quality of life is becoming increasingly important for many administrators.

A study currently taking place at the University of Virginia, USA, shows that classroom technology helps to reduce stress levels, boost confidence and save time. The pre-service teachers in this study were equipped with a technology package that included computers, projectors, SMART Board interactive whiteboards and SMART Notebook software.

The project is run by Dr. Joe Garofalo and his colleagues in the education department at the university's Center for Technology and Teacher Education (CTTE). Funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the study originally set out to examine how multiple representations and visualization in teaching math and science concepts affect understanding.

Things took an unexpected turn when Garofalo discovered that his student teachers were relying on the technology to help make their lives less stressful, putting in extra time to prepare digital lessons. They found they could teach spontaneously and respond to the unexpected needs of their students without worrying about losing track of the lesson. When asked if the extra prep time was worth it, the answer was yes, absolutely. So Garofalo and his team expanded their study to include the quality-of-life issue.

One positive effect of the technology was the confidence it gave teachers to instruct while dealing with the sheer newness of their environment – from an unfamiliar curriculum to classroom management issues. As one participant commented, "With so many distractions, anything that can help organize a lesson so that it runs like a well-oiled machine once it begins is essential in calming a nervous new teacher's nerves when teaching."

SMART Notebook software allowed student teachers to storyboard their digital lessons, see thumbnail views of all their lesson pages and access multiple resources easily. They had all their information at their fingertips, so they felt more confident about functioning effectively in front of their students. They could access everything from webpages to The Geometer's Sketchpad® files to Microsoft® Excel® software files without losing sight of the big picture. They could answer extra questions, go back to a previous question or skip ahead, depending on the direction of each individual class. They simply glanced at the thumbnail pages on their SMART Board interactive whiteboard to get back on track.

With lesson activities – including math problems – solved in digital ink and recorded as digital files, teachers also saved time as they prepared to teach more than one section of a course. "I like having it always accessible," said one participant. "It's not on a piece of paper where I have to make a transparency of it. It's just there. I can use it in different computers. So that makes my life easier."

In the end, the CTTE's student teachers found that using technology in the classroom not only reduced stress, but it also helped them lead their students to a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. And the effects of the study extend well beyond the university program. The student teachers take their passion for technology with them when they find jobs at schools across the state. As Dr. Garofalo puts it, "They have all these ready-to-go lessons now, and yes, they could work from a laptop and projector if need be, but they're all finding ways to get SMART Boards at their schools."

[Read more about the study.](#) **ic**

## SMART stays in touch with educators

**SMART continually** sends representatives to education conferences around the world. They participate in discussions, speak on panels and listen to the concerns and visions of educators. Here are examples of recent events in which SMART staff have participated:

- eLearning Africa (May 2008): 1,500 participants gathered in Accra, Ghana, to share ideas on ICT implementation strategies
- Digital Learning India (July 2008): As Platinum sponsor, SMART participated in knowledge-sharing sessions, both formal and informal, at this international conference
- Innovative Learning Conference (October 2008): This hands-on conference in San Jose, California, will give SMART staff a chance to connect with superintendents and administrators about technology and education
- Worlddidac Basel (October 2008): Billed as "the most productive three days of the year," the Worlddidac exhibition gives educators and private business an invaluable opportunity to collaborate on international projects **ic**

## Interactive Classroom archive is now live



**If you would like** to read more about classroom technology and how it's being used by educators around the world, visit *Interactive Classroom's* online [home](#). SMART's new publications page on [education.smarttech.com](http://education.smarttech.com) has current and archived issues of all three SMART education newsletters. Take a look – we hope you'll come away with new inspiration for implementing ICT. **ic**

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