

Interactive Products Division Numonics Corporation **Case Studies**



Meadboard creates learning environment and provides opportunities for students to master technology skills.

By Susan Brooks-Young

“**G**reenwood is a public elementary school located in Tahlequah, OK which serves students in grades pre-K through 4. The student body is diverse, representing a variety of cultures and ethnicities. The staff at Greenwood is committed to the belief that all students can achieve academic success. During the last three years the school has participated in Oklahoma’s Great Expectations (GE) program, a research-based model for school administrators and teachers. The program promotes academic achievement through supportive learning environments. Adoption of this model and the teachers’ hard work is paying off. Greenwood has been designated a GE model school and in 2009 the school earned a perfect Academic Performance Index (API) score.

Creating learning environments where students are prepared to be successful in today’s world includes providing opportunities for students to master technology skills and then use those skills to support their own learning. In 2009, the district’s Executive Director of Technology and Operations, Terry Garrett gave teachers an opportunity to have Mead interactive whiteboards installed in their classrooms. Every teacher at Greenwood accepted Garrett’s offer.

Compatible with Windows and Macintosh computers, the Mead Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) has a 77” screen and 14 pre-defined softkeys which include Annotate, Spotlight, and Reveal. When connected to a computer and LCD projector, the IWB creates a large interactive projection screen. The rugged Formica surface makes this IWB perfect for classroom use and the matte finish insures high image quality. The multimedia pen, which has full mouse capabilities, enables users to easily navigate between applications by touching the pen to the board. Free Web-based training is available Monday through Friday and users pay only for the software features they want to use. Then, as their skills and needs change, additional features may be purchased as software upgrades.

Deena Jones is one of two teachers at Greenwood who run Multiage 1st/2nd grade combination classes. Jones’ students range in age from six to nine years of age and represent a wide variety of ability levels. A veteran classroom teacher with 18 years experience, Jones is also an experienced technology user. In addition to the IWB and supporting hardware, her classroom is equipped with a document camera and three netbooks for student use. Jones and the teacher of the second Multiage class were eager to see how the IWB would impact instruction in their classrooms.

One of the initial, and perhaps most significant changes Jones noticed was that when she started using the IWB during directed lessons, she spent much more time working with students and assigned far less seat work to make sure students understood the material. Her students use individual whiteboards and markers at their desks as she models an activity or checks for understanding using the IWB. Because she can see student work immediately, she is able to monitor their understanding of the content as she is teaching, providing remediation when needed or moving more quickly through familiar content. An added bonus—Jones is grading fewer worksheets!

The children enjoy these activities as well as the online resources Jones shares with them and then links to the class blog (<http://blog.tahlequah.k12.ok.us/jonesd/>). Because they like to use these resources and practice skills like spelling and penmanship during center time, Jones has taught her students the basics for operating the IWB. All of the children know how to turn the IWB on and off, use the softkeys and menu bar, and operate the tools. For those times when she needs to document children's work in centers Jones can capture and save everything the students have written or drawn on the IWB.

Schoolwide implementation is encouraging teachers to share ways they are using the Mead IWB and to learn from one another. For example, early in the year all staff members created activities to exchange with one another. Jones reports that while she has spent this school year learning basic strategies for using the IWB as a tool for teaching and learning, she plans to take time next year to learn more about the capabilities of the IWB software and the free electronic encyclopedia and clip art collection that are included with the board.

Impact on teaching:

- More time spent with students.
- Easier to provide feedback and remediate right on the spot.
- Now able to document student work by capturing text and images on the whiteboard screen.

Impact on students:

- All students are actively engaged in learning.
- Increased understanding and retention of content.
- Students are more willing to stick with difficult tasks.