

Case Study



Montgomery County Community College (MCCC)

Blue Bell, Pennsylvania and Pottstown, Pennsylvania

Integration of SMART products helps build flexible learning environments

Whether students learn through distance education or in the traditional classroom, they will find the pedagogy to suit their needs at Montgomery County Community College (MCCC). The college offers open admission to students and prides itself on providing a cutting-edge education technology environment that will prepare students for the current technology-based workforce. "I think what the college is trying to do is to provide different modalities to address different learning styles," comments mathematics professor, Roseanne Hofmann. Voted among the top five most Wired Colleges by *Yahoo! Internet Life* magazine, MCCC now has SMART Board interactive whiteboards in over 75 classrooms at their central campus in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, and 32 at the west campus in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Servicing 30,000 credit and noncredit students from varied backgrounds with an average age of 27, the college wanted to diversify its teaching methods and improve course offerings to create more flexible learning environments.

Largely as a result of professor demand, the integration of nearly 110 SMART Board interactive whiteboards has happened in little more than five years. In 2000, Hofmann returned from an education technology conference convinced that she wanted a SMART Board interactive whiteboard. Hofmann was initially given an electronic whiteboard but found it difficult to use. Two semesters later, she was successful in her quest for a SMART Board interactive whiteboard. "February 2001 ... February 14 was the exact day. And it was a sweetheart of a day!" The trend she started hasn't slowed down since. "By the end of that semester, everybody wanted one.... There is a big difference between electronic whiteboards and SMART Boards," says Hofmann.

Challenge

Integrate interactive whiteboards seamlessly with third-party software and MCCC's course-management system to create more flexible learning environments.

SMART solution

SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards and Sympodium™ interactive pen displays

Case result

Students are finding it easier to pursue their studies with the help of interactive technologies and pedagogies, and to understand abstract concepts through visual and digital means.

Susan Hauck, director of instructional technology and self-described technology evangelist, notes that the large-scale demands for training on, support with, investment in and integration of SMART Board interactive whiteboards started from the ground up. "Every budget cycle, we go out to the faculty and academic administration in general and ask about their technology needs for the next year. Invariably, each year, the thing that seems to float to the top is that they want more SMART Boards," she explains.

In *smart classrooms* (classrooms equipped with PCs, projectors, DVD players, VCRs, as well SMART Board interactive whiteboards and Sympodium interactive pen displays), instructors can create dynamic learning situations that encourage active student engagement.

When teaching multimodal learning styles in flexible environments, Hofmann videoconferences between the central and west campus and also to a local high school. Students write directly on the interactive whiteboard at one campus and participate in real time. "I can get students who are at the remote site to write, and then students who are face to face can see it. So, it is truly interactive."

Students share her enthusiasm for the integration of technology products. Richard A. Golden, a math student pursuing an associate of science in business administration degree, says "the college is getting better and better at using the technologies available by designing and structuring classes that make learning the subject easier than ever." As someone who is also raising a family and working part time, Golden appreciates the flexibility the technology has given him – "the opportunity to further his career ambitions and earn a college degree."

Math student Kathleen Sapio says the "visual aids are really the key to helping one to understand the more difficult problems, and the study materials that were made available were terrific." She praises the "strong starting point for the next algebra course and additional math courses" that she developed through the use of integrated technologies.

The SMART Board interactive whiteboards enable professors to offer more streamlined lessons. Using Notebook™ collaborative learning software, Hofmann and other math professors can write or type in the lengthy problems ahead of time, and recall and revise for future use. "When the students come in, you can just say, here's the problem, let's read it and then start to pick it apart, instead of waiting five minutes for the problem to be written on the board," explains Hofmann. Rather than spending all their time writing notes, students can relax and participate more fully in the class. Class notes are then saved and posted on Blackboard Academic Suite™ or on the professor's website for students to review.

The SMART Board interactive whiteboard is compatible with many third-party software packages. Hofmann uses a graphing calculator and supplementary homework packages, such as MyMathLab and Eduspace®. She integrates the SMART Board interactive whiteboard and Notebook software with ScreenWatch™, which lets her capture and record the audio, video and notes for the entirety of her lectures for students to review online. New polling systems allow her to quiz and gauge student understanding before moving on to a new topic, and she is testing SMART's Senteo™ interactive response system because of its seamless integration with existing products. To equip its new Advanced Technology Center that opens in fall 2008, MCCC also has ordered 13 of the new SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboard systems with integrated projectors, and 2 more SMART Board 690 series interactive whiteboards.

MCCC's faculty look to SMART to provide innovative and fully integrated technology products to meet the needs of its ever-growing and changing student population. Both Hofmann and Hauck feel confident that with technology integration and blended-learning models, the college is remaining true to its mission to provide high-quality education for those who otherwise might not have the opportunity.



Mathematics professor Roseanne Hofmann helps students visualize abstract concepts on the SMART Board interactive whiteboard.

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Susan Hauck, director of instructional technology

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is both the industry pioneer and global education market segment leader in user-friendly interactive whiteboards and group collaboration tools. The award-winning line of SMART Board interactive whiteboards is the most widely installed in the world because of its unsurpassed product quality, versatility and ease of use. The SMART Board interactive whiteboard is used to teach over 15 million students in more than 500,000 classrooms in more than 100 countries around the world.

SMART is a private company founded in 1987. Employing more than 1,000 people, SMART is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with assembly facilities in Kanata, Ontario and offices in Bonn, Tokyo, Shanghai, New York City, Chicago and Washington, DC. SMART has been issued and maintains a broad portfolio of patents with numerous U.S., Canadian and other patents pending. In 1992 SMART formed a strategic alliance with Intel® Corporation that resulted in Intel's equity ownership in the company. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide. To learn more about SMART visit www.smarttech.com.

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