

A Fruitful Way to Teach – and to Learn

The banana sealed the deal.

When Heidi LaFleur, Assistant Principal of Chicago's Garvy School, saw a trainer use a piece of fruit to demonstrate a Hitachi StarBoard interactive whiteboard, she knew her district needed the product.

"She walked up to the StarBoard with a banana and just started writing. She said, 'Let's say you were doing a health unit. Bring out a banana. Let's say you were doing a unit on pumpkins. Bring out a pumpkin. You can write on this interactive whiteboard with anything.' I thought: Kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, I mean even 8th graders would think that was cool."

LaFleur brought the idea – and her enthusiasm – back to her principal, who agreed to give the whiteboards a try. Hitachi, which provides training and support by a network of former teachers, sent over a representative to show the boards to technology teachers, but news about the cutting-edge tool quickly spread to the rest of the staff. Garvy's sixth and eighth grade reading teachers were the first to sign on, but soon their colleagues were hooked, too.

There are now 22 StarBoards in the school, most of them used for the majority of each school day.

Karen Martin, a 4th grade teacher, shares: **"The Starboard allows me to make my teaching hands on and the kids love to use the Starboard. The best part is they don't even realize they're learning."**

Unlike traditional interactive whiteboards, which require a battery-powered, hard-to-replace stylus, the StarBoards can be controlled with a finger, or any object. The StarBoard's electronic-free surface means that dings, scratches and punctures won't interfere with the device's functionality.

LaFleur was impressed with the quality of the system, which is easy to use with other types of technology. But most

importantly, she and her staff appreciated how the StarBoards allow them to connect with their students by speaking their native language – technology.

"Teachers were just looking for better, different ways to instruct. And we've come so far from teachers standing in front of the class teaching 30 students all the same way."

Now, she said, with new categories and leveled groups, "we need different ways to teach those kids. And this technology seemed like an awesome way to do that." The StarBoards help teachers instruct smaller clusters of kids within a large classroom by rotating them in and out of activities. The StarBoard serves as the center of learning, LaFleur explained, with three students using it while others focus on math facts, engage in competitions or share reading skills, for example... all while waiting their turn at the board.

"The kids will make the teacher use the technology. That's the best part, because they think it's awesome."

The teachers, she said, are equally motivated to use the system. They request more training whenever possible, and share creative ways to use StarBoards at weekly Tech Talk staff meetings. They'll discuss whiteboard techniques they've picked up on their own as well as describe new strategies that have worked well with students.

The StarBoards have proved especially effective in reaching the 15 percent of Garvy's 725 students who require special education services.

"Their motivation may not be as high as other kids, so putting something in their hands or letting them go up and touch the screen and make it do things, it automatically gets them more engaged than they would be if they just had a paper and pencil."

Or just a banana.



"The StarBoard allows me to make my teaching hands-on and the kids love to use the StarBoard."

Karen Martin
4th Grade Teacher
Garvy Elementary School

"The kids will make the teacher use the technology. That's the best part, because they think it's awesome."

Heidi LaFleur
Assistant Principal
Garvy Elementary School

Hitachi Solutions America, Ltd.
StarBoard Group

900 Hitachi Way
Chula Vista, CA 91914

www.hitachisolutions-us.com/starboard
starboard@hitachisolutions-us.com
1-800-HITACHI

StarBoard® is a registered trademark of Hitachi Solutions, Ltd. in the USA and other countries.

HITACHI StarBoard