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Lori Long, *Technology Integration Specialist*
Gothenburg Public Schools, Gothenburg, Nebraska

Challenge

District needs portable interactive whiteboard solution for elementary through high school classes.

Solution

eBeam Projection transforms teaching methods for a broad range of subjects including history, government, consumer science, math, science and English.

Benefits

- Allows school district to offer interactive whiteboard technology to more teachers
- Provides an engaging visual and tactical learning experience for students
- Improves communication between teachers and students
- Offers a user friendly yet very effective technology tool to enhance teaching and learning

Location

Gothenburg, Nebraska



Small Nebraska School District Discovers Portability and Versatility of eBeam Interactive Whiteboard Technology

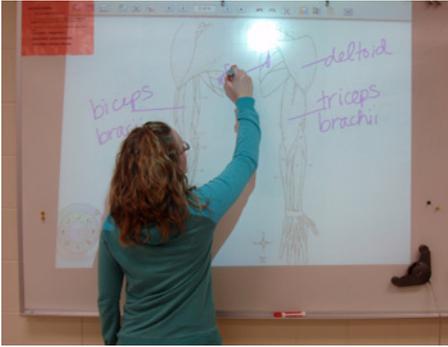
Background

Lori Long has been the technology integration specialist for Gothenburg Public Schools for three years. When she first saw Luidia’s eBeam interactive whiteboard solution being demoed, she thought it would be just the tool her district needed—a way to provide interactive whiteboard technology to more teachers. The eBeam units were portable and could be shared. Now that the district has purchased 10 eBeam units, she has a new dilemma. “Once the teachers start using them, they won’t let them go,” says Long.

One of the smaller districts in Nebraska, Gothenburg Public Schools boasts an enviable student/teacher ratio of 13 to 1 at the elementary level and 13.5 to 1 in the secondary schools, affording a more individualized learning environment. Gothenburg students consistently rank in the upper third of the nation on test scores.

Around 3,700 residents live in homes along the tree-lined streets of Gothenburg in the south central area of the state. This is one of those small towns where community spirit is strong, so it was no surprise that a \$12.3 million school building project was passed by voters 2 to 1 for new construction and renovation of the public schools, completed in 2004. Two creatively designed large buildings now house both the K-6 elementary classrooms and the middle school and high school classes for grades 7-12. The buildings are connected and share some facilities.

According to Long, this K-12 campus has four interactive whiteboards mounted on the walls, one in the elementary computer lab, one in the high school lab, one in the high school technology classroom and one in the technology CAD space. These boards have not been easily accessible for all the teachers and the teachers who have used them have had to take their class to one of the labs, making it difficult to integrate the technology into their daily lessons.



Portable Need

“We wanted something we could use in the other classrooms, something portable,” says Long. Then she and high school science teacher Maggie Tiller attended a technology workshop directed towards science teachers, sponsored by Educational Service Unit 10. There they saw a presentation by a teacher in their area who was sharing the eBeam technology. Combined with a computer and projector, the small eBeam activated a large area on a regular board, turning it into an interactive whiteboard. Both Tiller and Long thought, “This is what we’re looking for!”

Long ordered the 10 eBeam units and began to lend them out to interested teachers. She immediately saw how versatile and user friendly the eBeam solution is, and quickly realized it could be used at all grade levels.

Broad Appeal

“We have a kindergarten teacher using one,” Long says. “There are other elementary teachers and then middle school and high school teachers who are use using them, in all subject areas, including history, government, family consumer science, math, science and English. Teachers who have them in their classrooms love them.”

Tiller teaches high school biology, general science and anatomy and physiology. She’s been using her eBeam interactive technology for two years now in all her classes. When Long first purchased the eBeam units, Tiller asked for one and after a week, she “fell in love with it.” She’s had one in her classroom ever since.

She doesn’t use a textbook in her classes and delivers much of the content by lecturing and adding in interactive activities for her students. “I provide my students with a skeleton outline for them to fill in, which helps them learn to take notes,” says Tiller. She then takes those outlines and copies and pastes them

from Microsoft Word into the eBeam Scrapbook so she can project them onto the board so that everyone can work from the same outline. “This works really well for labs” she says.

Every day when her students arrive, they see a warm-up on the board in the eBeam Scrapbook, multi media software that’s included with eBeam Projection. The warm-up includes daily notes along with an outline of what they’ll be doing in class. Tiller also adds a final page to her scrapbook that includes her own notes, perhaps reminders of what went well and what didn’t.

Tiller loves to use the eBeam unit for labeling diagrams of pictures or anything she might find on the web. Sometimes she’ll label the diagrams, other times the students will. “They love it,” says Tiller. “They enjoy any chance they can get to come up and work with the eBeam.”

English and Spanish Use

High school English and Spanish teacher Pat Zwink likes to incorporate interactive activities even in her larger classes. Doing so can be a challenge when it comes to time and space. She finds the eBeam to be helpful for both. She can use the white board for multiple activities instead of writing, erasing, rewriting, or even skipping certain activities. Her students can also manipulate the screen easily to make things like charts.

“I like to use it for note taking as well so I can highlight important issues as the students watch,” says Zwink. “For 9th graders, this really helps reinforce note-taking skills.” She continues learning about the potential of using the eBeam and plans to use it with PowerPoint presentations and games for Spanish grammar and vocabulary.

Elementary School Use

At the Dudley Elementary School, third-grade teacher Kim Sudbeck uses the eBeam solution for math. Her students enjoy coming up to the board and working on problems with the eBeam. She makes up worksheets for the whiteboard that are similar to the ones she hands out to her students. If the class is stuck on a problem, they can work through the problem together. “It’s a great visual tool for my students,” says Sudbeck. She also puts up math rules and directions on the board that students can reference during work time and then saves them for later use.



Sudbeck also uses the eBeam solution during journaling time. It's easy for her to share a starter page for students to use as a guide when writing in their journals.

Overall, she likes how students are able to interact with eBeam. Also the worksheets she has made have saved on teaching time and are a great reference for her students.

Classroom Interaction

Long sees major benefits to incorporating the eBeam technology into the curriculum. "The eBeam brings everything to the forefront," she says. "For example, our history teacher can go through a PowerPoint and link to Google Earth or the White House web site. He has everything at the tip of his pen." She observes how the teaching and learning process becomes seamless and how the technology makes things come alive.

"The eBeam gives students the chance to interact, to actively participate in their learning," she emphasizes. "Teachers can keep the lessons moving along and all the students' senses are engaged." Classroom management is simplified when everyone is so engaged in the learning process. Lesson planning is streamlined, too, with everything a teacher needs being so easily available. "You can put the eBeam in any classroom, at any grade level and find immediate benefits for both teachers and students," says Long.

Tiller likes the fact that she can reach her tech savvy students, who are sometimes more advanced with technology than their teachers. "Even if they like using the eBeam because it's a cool technology, they're still going to learn the content and process along the way," says Tiller.

She also finds that the eBeam technology allows her to communicate the material to her students. Whatever she can capture on her computer, she can use with her students. She likes that the tool is easy to use. "Sometimes as teachers, we get so busy, we don't have time to learn new technologies. But this tool is very user friendly."

All of the teachers who are now using eBeams appreciate this ease of use and the portability. Being able to use interactive whiteboards in their own classrooms allows them to integrate this technology creatively into their curriculum on a daily basis.