

SMART solutions help students prepare for their careers at Burgdorf Vocational Schools

Burgdorf Vocational Schools, Lower Saxony/Germany



SMART solutions are used during a lesson in the lighting technology classroom.

Thanks to modern technology equipment in the classrooms of Burgdorf Vocational Schools, 3,500 students are well prepared for a technology-based career. The school offers education in 30 different professions across 10 different fields of learning, including automotive, structural engineering, home economics and information technology.

Burgdorf Vocational Schools has become the first professional school in Germany to be named as a SMART Showcase School. The school was chosen because of their exemplary use of SMART education solutions related to the effective pedagogical approach and meaningful lesson planning and delivery employed by the schools.

Here and now

"In the past we taught using chalkboards. Because of our key training areas, we knew we had to implement advanced technology in our classrooms," says Christian Sebens, Assistant Principal at Burgdorf Vocational Schools. Using funds from a stimulus package, the school implemented SMART Board® interactive whiteboards, SMART Document Cameras™ and SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software in 38 classrooms on one of their two campuses. Two years later, they implemented SMART solutions in 40 classrooms on their second campus.

"SMART solutions offer our 185 teachers features that are desperately needed in our schools. In the past, teachers had to recreate their notes on the chalkboard, but now they can store their lessons on the server and send lessons via email, easily making the content accessible to students," says Sebens.

Challenge

Find a classroom technology that supports the vocational schools in 30 different professions and prepares students for a technology-based future.

Solution

Currently 78 SMART Board 680i interactive whiteboards and SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software are implemented on both campuses of Burgdorf Vocational Schools. Teachers also use SMART Notebook™ Math Tools and SMART Document Cameras™.

Result

Students are more motivated, teamwork has increased and their competence with technology and multimedia has been strengthened.

Promoting teamwork

"Now classrooms don't have only front-of-class teaching. The teacher no longer disappears behind a PC. All computer applications are used intuitively with the finger directly on the SMART Board and technical explanations of software become mere child's play!" says Sebens. Many classes emphasize teamwork, which increases the engagement and motivation of students. "Each group collects information from different sources such as the internet, results can then be discussed, evaluated and marked up with a pen directly on the SMART Board. The learning process is also supported visually with the SMART Document Camera, enabling us to show visuals such as moving objects, graphic calculators or cross-sections of plants," explains Sebens.

Software applications

"The teachers love to search the Gallery in SMART Notebook and browse for lines, templates or other materials that they can drag and drop onto the page to support lessons," says Sebens. Teachers also appreciate features in SMART Notebook™ Math Tools, such as the recognition of handwritten functions. The school purchases professional teaching materials to support their teachers in preparing and creating lesson content. They have used ready-to-use content for SMART Notebook™ that has been created by educational publishers including Bildungsverlag EINS and Verlag Handwerk und Technik. "To be prepared for their careers students need to learn how to use software applications, such as Microsoft® Office®. Some of our lessons require special software for programming, AutoCAD® or Adobe® Photoshop®. The big advantage is that everything that works on our usual computers can be operated clearly and visibly on the SMART Board," says Sebens.

Training initiative promotes acceptance

Teachers at Burgdorf Vocational Schools have always had an affinity for technology. "Since the team was not new to technology, this was an easy change. From the beginning, especially the younger colleagues, teachers were enthusiastic about the new systems and found SMART products very intuitive. We also had a staged approach to training that eliminated the concerns of any colleagues who had doubts," says Sebens. "After a successful installation, 160 teachers attended two basic training courses that were conducted by the SMART authorized reseller. We have already booked an advanced course because it is very important to us that the technology is always in use," adds Sebens.

Train the teacher and SMART Sync™ classroom management software

In addition to advanced training, some teachers will participate in the Train the Teacher program. Each department will have a trained teacher who will offer annual training that includes a pedagogical emphasis. The school plans to implement SMART Sync™ classroom management software in their computer-based classrooms to foster teamwork and cooperation among students. The software will also enable the teacher to work individually with each student and see what students are working on.



The basics of automotive engineering are discussed and then students get practical experience on the SMART Board® interactive whiteboard.

"SMART education solutions provide us with the enormous advantage of being able to create digital lesson content. We are now able to look at the lesson materials at any time, modify them, print them, send them via email and store them on the server. We're also able to easily convert the content into many different formats. "

Christian Sebens, Assistant Principal,
Vocational Schools Burgdorf

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is a leading provider of collaboration solutions that change the way the world works and learns. As the global leader in interactive whiteboards, our focus is on developing a variety of easy-to-use, integrated solutions that free people from their desks and computer screens, making collaboration and learning with digital resources more natural. Our products have transformed teaching and learning in more than two million classrooms worldwide, reaching over 40 million students and their teachers. In business, our Freestorm™ visual collaboration solutions improve the way that people work and collaborate, enabling them to be more productive and reduce costs.

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