

# EDCompass newsletter

News and resources for educators using SMART products

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

### Welcome

Educators understand that waiting for the unit test or year-end exam to find out how well students are grasping a concept can be risky. Going back and reteaching a lesson or providing a reference for additional study can mean the difference between success and failure – for both teacher and students. This issue of the newsletter addresses assessment and offers tips, tools and best practices from teachers to help you find new ways to evaluate the learning outcomes of your students and facilitate ongoing improvement. In this month's [feature article](#), read about a teacher in Florida who has found that frequent quizzing allows her to better gauge students' understanding and modify her teaching accordingly. And in the [product spotlight](#), we're featuring the SMART Response™ interactive response system product line, which offers you a variety of options for assessing student understanding and performance.

As always, if you have any comments about *EDCompass*™ newsletter or any of the information featured in this issue, we'd love to hear from you. Please e-mail your feedback to [newsletters@smarttech.com](mailto:newsletters@smarttech.com).

## THIS MONTH'S POLL

What is the main reason you use an interactive response system in your classroom?

## NANCY'S NOTES

### Going for Lunch

Later in April, Dave Martin, executive chairman and SMART co-founder, and I will travel to have lunch with a teacher and a group of children who participated in the Connections program six years ago. The teacher took part in the program, which included collaborative projects and a camp, because she wanted to give her students additional learning opportunities. The students have all thrived since their time with us and are about to head off to postsecondary education this fall.



With graduation around the corner, this teacher reached out to us, thinking we would be interested in seeing how these children had developed and hearing firsthand their aspirations and thoughts. She could not have been more right, so off we'll go.

In her invitation, the teacher told us of one student in particular who was positively affected by our products. They seemed to bring out an innate technical ability that opened other opportunities to him.

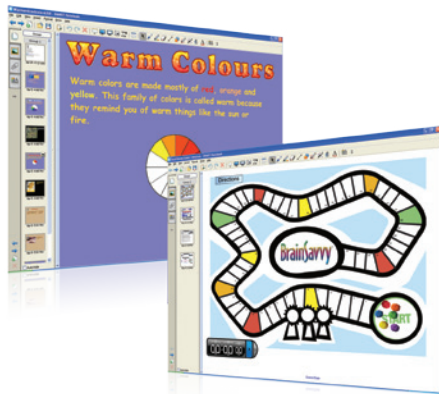
This type of feedback is what we live for – to know that somehow we made a difference for teachers and students. To hear that children find a love for something and discover a skill and ability, a way to contribute and do something meaningful, is very rewarding. The best part for us is that children find this capability within themselves. No one extracts it – it simply rises to the surface and becomes evident.

As thoughts at this time of the year naturally turn to assessing student learning, this issue of the newsletter offers a wealth of information on our expanded SMART Response line. There's something in this range of products for every teacher concerned with real-time assessment and feedback.

Involving students in their own assessment so they care about how they do in school is an important part of bringing out an enduring will to learn.

[Nancy Knowlton](#) is the CEO of SMART Technologies.

# SMART Notebook™ Lesson Activities



Find a comprehensive database of **K–12 lesson activities** on the SMART Exchange™ online community. The activities, many of which are standards correlated, are created by classroom teachers or SMART's team of curriculum resource developers.

Try one of the following SMART Notebook lesson activities during your next art, Spanish, library or math class.

## BrainSavvy Teaching Tool

Students in all subject areas in grades 2–12 can use this brainstorming warm-up activity to review for tests and practice drills.

## Warm and Cool Colors

K–3 art students can learn about warm and cool colors.

## Spanish Adjectives

Eighth-grade students can work in groups to learn about and define Spanish adjectives. They can then translate them from English to Spanish.

## Understanding Dewey

Students in grades 5–12 can learn how the Dewey Decimal System helps organize nonfiction books in a library. This activity is especially useful for library orientations.

## Graphing Circles

Math students in grades 9–12 can review and then graph circles from a series of equations or descriptions.

# Become a SMART Exemplary Educator



Would you like to join the global network of SMART Exemplary Educators who are transforming teaching and learning with the help of SMART? This popular program brings together teachers, technology coordinators and administrators who lead the way in using SMART products to engage students and improve learning outcomes. To find out more about this program, visit the [SMART Exemplary Educator page](#) on our education website.

We are accepting applications until April 30, 2010. If you'd like to join us, submit a video showing yourself presenting a lesson activity you created using SMART Notebook collaborative learning software. Also include a reference letter from your school administrator. [Apply now!](#)

# Engagement and Assessment – A Student's Perspective

Today everyone is talking about the challenge of engaging children in a 21st-century learning environment. We all hear the complaints about the trouble in today's classrooms – absenteeism, bad behavior and generally unmotivated students. Are we looking at the root causes of poor performance, or are these just symptoms of children's disengagement from the learning process – a process that, for many, is uninspiring and downright boring?



At SMART we have been talking about engagement for many years – even before there were any data to suggest its particular importance to 21st-century learners. We knew what we saw in the classroom when children experienced an environment that more closely matched their expectations. We saw students' reactions firsthand when the learning environment was one that energized them and responded to their learning and participation needs.

We have continued the tradition of delivering the best in learning experiences with the introduction of our student response system. Many people know the value of these products from the teacher's perspective, but just what can they mean for student engagement?

[Read more](#) of this article written by SMART's CEO, Nancy Knowlton

## Share Your SMART Notebook Lesson Activities to Win

Participate in the [SMART Exchange Content Challenge](#) for a chance to win SMART products for your school. We're giving away over 60 products worth a combined value of more than US\$85,000.

This contest is open to teachers in the United States (excluding Florida), Canada (excluding Quebec) and the United Kingdom. All lesson activities will be judged on originality, creativity, presentation and ease of use. The following prizes will be given out:

- One grand prize winner will receive a [SMART Interactive Classroom PE](#)
- Three runners up from each country will receive a [SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard](#) (first place), a [SMART Response interactive response system](#) with 32 remotes (second place) or a [SMART Document Camera](#) (third place)
- Fifty shortlisted entries will each receive [SMART Classroom Suite™ interactive learning software](#) with 40 site licenses

The deadline to upload your activities to the [SMART Exchange](#) is 11:59 p.m. MDT on May 31, 2010. This is a contest you won't want to miss – find out how to [participate!](#)

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### Assessing Success

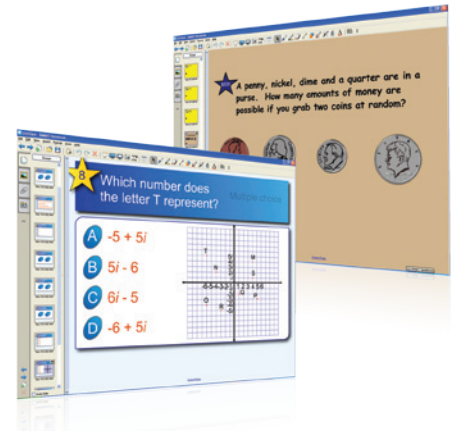


In Paula Rovnak's fourth-grade class at Reedy Creek Elementary in Kissimmee, Florida, there are only right answers. Or at least that's how it feels to her students.

Since last fall, Rovnak has been quizzing her class regularly using the SMART Response interactive response system. Throughout each school day, Rovnak brings up SMART Response questions on her SMART Board interactive whiteboard, students respond using their handheld remotes (or clickers), and then the whole class discusses the right answer. [Read the full article.](#)

## CLASSROOM CONTENT

### SMART Response Question Sets



Find a database of [SMART Response question sets](#) on the SMART Exchange. The majority of these sets include questions that are correlated to state and provincial curriculum standards.

Try one of the following SMART Response question sets in your next language arts, math, science or social studies class.

#### ABCs and Words

K–2 language arts students can test their ability to recognize letters and words.

#### Jeopardy

Math students can test a variety of skills while playing a Jeopardy-style game.

#### Animal and Plant Cells

Science students in grades 4–6 can test their knowledge of the structure of animal and plant cells.

#### Investigating Ancient Egypt

Social studies students in grades 5–6 can test their knowledge of ancient Egypt.

#### Converting Energy

Science students in grades 7–9 can test their knowledge of different forms of energy.

#### Real Numbers, Complex Numbers and Plotting Complex Numbers

Math students in grades 10–12 can test their ability to solve problems with real and complex numbers and graph them.



## Assessment Resources



The activities and websites listed below are just a few of the teacher-submitted assessment resources available on the [SMART Exchange](#). You can use them to help you assess your students' performance, no matter what grade level or subject you teach.

Do you have any educator resources, on any topic, that you would like to share with your peers? If so, [upload them](#) to the SMART Exchange. They could be featured in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

### Balanced Assessment

On this website, find over 300 mathematic assessment tasks that cover a variety of topic areas for all grade levels.

### Tech Assessment

This SMART Response question set can be used to complete a pre- or post-assessment of your students' knowledge of technology and its applications.

### SMART Response for Beginners

This SMART Notebook file introduces educators to our interactive response system. It explains how to set up and use SMART Response, create an assessment and report and evaluate results.

### Student Led Conferences

This template can help you and your students document academic performance. It assists students as they lead parent-teacher conferences, sharing how they're doing and communicating their academic skills and goals.

## Share Your SMART Support Stories

If you've had a chance to work with anyone from SMART's [services and support team](#), we want to hear about it. E-mail your contact details, and give us a brief description of your involvement and how our support team was able to assist you. Your story could be featured in the services and support issue of *EDCompass* newsletter this fall, and in an issue of [SupportLink](#), our latest publication that offers support tips and information from our services team.

E-mail your stories to [newsletters@smarttech.com](mailto:newsletters@smarttech.com), with "SupportLink story" in the subject line. If yours is chosen, someone from our services team will be in touch to schedule an interview.



## New SMART Notebook Express™ Features

If you've been using the SMART Notebook Express web application beta, you know how easy it makes it for anyone with an Internet connection to download, edit and share files created in SMART Notebook software.

SMART Notebook Express already incorporates many popular features of SMART Notebook software. And we've just updated the application with even more features, including the eraser, infinite cloner and screen shade. You can now save files with different names, order objects and view tables. Animation, video and audio are also supported.

Find out how you can start using [SMART Notebook Express](#).

### SMART SHOWCASE SCHOOL PROFILE

## SMART Response Clicks at Ware County High School



"SMART Response lets me know if I have to reteach, repeat or move on," says Debbie Dixon, advanced placement (AP) calculus teacher at Ware County High School.

[Read the full article.](#)

# SMART Response – Immediate Insight into Student Learning



When things can be done in an instant, our lives can be greatly improved. We've all benefitted from oatmeal that's ready in seconds, real-time chats over the Internet and immediate replays of astonishing moments in sports.

In education, speedier outcomes are having a big impact in the area of assessment. Getting instant insight into your students' comprehension of a lesson enables you to evaluate whether you need to adjust your instruction or clarify concepts. And the SMART Response interactive response system offers you an effective, fun and simple way to do it!

## Assessment runs in the family

SMART Response is a line of interactive assessment products that provide both immediate and ongoing insight into learning. Each system has a unique set of features, designed to meet a variety of classroom needs. But what all these products have in common is their ability to help you efficiently assess and track student performance.

SMART Response is also integrated with SMART Notebook collaborative learning software, so whether you are creating and delivering formative or summative assessments, you'll have access to all the same tools and features you already use to engage your students.

There are five different versions of SMART Response, so it's easy to find a system that meets the needs of your students and your classroom setup:

**SMART Response PE** – designed for most K–12 classrooms. It includes wireless remotes that can be used to assess students using a variety of question types.

**SMART Response LE** – created for early education learners or for students with special needs. The system features simple and colorful remotes (or clickers) that allow students to respond to questions using easy-to-understand symbols.

**SMART Response CE** – designed for computer-enabled environments. It features specially created assessment software that lets students answer questions from their own computers.

**SMART Response XE** (coming soon) – created to meet the sophisticated needs of secondary students. It has a full QWERTY keyboard that allows students to enter complete mathematical and scientific equations.

**SMART Response VE** (coming soon) – works on any Internet-enabled device. It's a browser-based application that enables students to respond to questions using wireless mobile devices, such as the iPhone or the BlackBerry® smartphone.

## Fast Facts



- **Instant** – Deliver spontaneous or planned quizzes. You can capture and graph the results right away to assess understanding, provide feedback and evaluate progress.
- **Versatile** – Create quizzes and tests with different types of questions, including true or false, multiple choice and numeric response. And with SMART Response XE, your students can respond using complete mathematical and scientific equations.
- **Easy to manage** – Use the Teacher Tools feature to access, view and manage all your assessment data in one location. You can create class lists, manage students' progress and conduct tests and quizzes.
- **Intuitive** – Build dynamic question sets, quickly and easily. The software guides you step by step as you create and revise.
- **Time-saving** – Use the built-in gradebook to track performance reports, which are automatically collected and saved in one easy-to-access file. You can also create reports that show grades for the entire school year.
- **Flexible** – Assign different values to test questions. You can also mark multiple-choice and short-answer questions with more than one right answer.
- **Integrated with SMART Notebook** – Access SMART Response assessment software directly from a tab in SMART Notebook. You can use all of SMART Notebook software's interactive tools and features and add items from the Gallery to your questions.

## Learn More about SMART Response



### Success story – Hurst Junior High

View our [video success story](#) to learn how SMART Response is helping math scores soar at a Texas junior high school.

### Assessment webinar

Watch a one-hour, [on-demand webinar](#), Improving Assessment with Technology: Instant Insight into your Students' Learning, to learn how to enhance formative assessment in your classroom and increase student comprehension, retention and engagement.

### SMART Response podcast

Listen to this [podcast](#) to learn how SMART Response works and how it benefits both teachers and students. The podcast features an educator who describes her first experience with the interactive response system.

### Research summary

Find out how the interactive assessment capabilities of SMART Response are helping teachers engage their students in this [research summary](#).

## Up Next

In the next issue of *EDCompass* newsletter, we're highlighting 1:1 learning environments. Find out how SMART Classroom Suite gives you the tools to support students in computer-enabled classrooms.

## Ask Tyrone



Photo by: Jon Pernul

Products may not be exactly as shown. The handheld remotes in the photograph are not to scale.

*We talked to Tyrone Chou, product manager for the SMART Response interactive response system, to find out more about this product line. We asked him specifically about the benefits of the two newest systems – SMART Response XE and SMART Response VE.*

**EDCompass** How does the SMART Response line increase teachers' ability to improve engagement and, ultimately, student learning outcomes?

**Tyrone** SMART Response gets students engaged. With a device for each student, everyone has a voice. Students can answer confidentially, without worrying about what their peers think. Every student can participate, so teachers get an accurate view of the learning progress and can adjust instruction as needed, for everyone or just specific students. SMART Response empowers teachers with information.

**EDCompass** Why has SMART created so many interactive response systems?

**Tyrone** We've designed these models to bring the benefits of SMART Response to diverse K–12 learning environments. Engaging students and giving teachers vital insight into student learning is important for all grade levels, subject areas and classroom technology configurations.

**EDCompass** SMART Response XE features a full QWERTY keyboard. What is the benefit to secondary classrooms?

**Tyrone** Classrooms at the secondary level are more likely to cover advanced concepts and mathematical expressions. Compared with standard keypads, the full keyboard of SMART Response XE makes it much easier for students to enter math and science expressions and open-ended text.

**EDCompass** Can you tell our readers about SMART Response VE? Why would schools choose a browser-based assessment product?

**Tyrone** SMART Response VE is our beta version of a browser-based solution. In situations where mobile devices are used as educational tools, SMART Response VE lets students answer directly from their web-enabled device, eliminating the need for a separate clicker. And because it's browser-based, SMART Response VE can also be used in distance learning environments.