

Interactive Products Division Numonics Corporation **Case Studies**



Southwest Tennessee Community College, Memphis, TN: Whiteboard Takes Education into 21st Century at Southwest Tennessee Community College

Case Study by Ellen Kollie

With a full-time enrollment of 7,300, simply being the largest two-year college in Tennessee isn't enough for administrators at Southwest Tennessee Community College (Southwest) in Memphis. Indeed, they have a plan in place to make sure that every department has access to one 21st-century classroom, including an interactive whiteboard, computer, data projector, DVD player and whatever else is needed.

When it comes to whiteboards, the college is choosing the interactive whiteboard from Montgomeryville, Pa.-based Numonics Corp. called the Interactive Presentation Manager (IPM).

The IPM interactive whiteboard uses fast and accurate electromagnetic digital technology to turn a computer and a data projector into a powerful teaching tool. Numonics' IPMII 2000 interactive whiteboard is sized to capture students' attention: the active area measures 63.3 in. by 45.6 in., producing a large 77 inch diagonal image. Plus, while all interactive whiteboards must align the desktop mouse cursor with the mouse pointer (in this case, a multimedia pen), the IPMII 2000 is easily calibrated in just four points. It's compatible with either Windows or Mac operating systems.

Mary Ann Bodayla, associate professor of History at Southwest has been using an interactive whiteboard since 1998. "I use it every time I go into class," she says emphatically.

"I like that I can create items and keep them for the next time I teach that class. For example, I recently created a piece of pseudo real estate and demonstrated how, if every family member could inherit, the property would get smaller and smaller as it continued to be broken through the generations. Now that visual aid is saved, and I don't ever have to re-draw it."

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Being able to save your hand-written notes and hand-drawn graphics is just one advantage to using an interactive whiteboard. Materials gathered from other areas, including the Internet, can be downloaded, saved and retrieved for use during class. This is courtesy of 17 user-definable Softkeys (located on each side of the interactive whiteboard), which the user defines to launch applications, files and keyboard commands.

"I like that I can give a body of information, and then explore that information with the students by clicking backward to refer to something specific," Bodayla sums. "It's so much easier than text that disappears from a chalk board or marker board."

Speaking of older presentation methods, Bodayla is quick to note that, with an interactive whiteboard, there is neither chalk dust to make you cough nor marker that smells bad and doesn't erase cleanly.

Students appreciate the many abilities of the interactive whiteboard, too. "It's clean, easy and fun because it has colors," says Bodayla, referring to the Windows operating system color options. "[The IPM] adds drama, and students like the drama. It makes them pay attention."

One element Bodayla uses to get her students' attention is the text box, which is displayed in a corner of the screen. This is an element of the Virtual Whiteboard software that permits a teacher to write and save notes automatically or use a variety of graphic backgrounds from a resource file (for example, preparing a lesson plan around maps or images of a historical event). "Sometimes I put notes in there to remind students of deadlines or things happening on campus. And, when I need to see a specific student after class, I'll put that student's name in the box."

The IPM whiteboard comes with 14 different Presentation Tools, two of which Bodayla uses frequently. The first is the Annotation Pen, which allows her to draw circles, lines, arrows — anything she needs to make a point — and it doesn't damage the original image or text. The second is Reveal. "It's like a window shade," she says. "When it's closed, nothing can be seen on the screen. I can talk, then reveal a bit of text for the students to copy. Then I can talk some more. It ensures that the students are paying attention, and not just copying notes."

Today Southwest boasts more than 40 interactive whiteboards in 14 different departments, all being used in a variety of ways. Perhaps the college's innovative spirit explains why it is the largest community college in Tennessee.