

# Pupils get high-tech, interactive experience

## Technology helps gain attention for teaching

By **Greg Gelpi** | *Staff Writer*

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It's not a video game, but it has the same mesmerizing effect on pupils in Richmond County classrooms while also being educational.

Wielding a "pen without ink," Rhonda Bell, 41, uses technology in delivering lessons to her pupils at Jenkins/White Elementary School. A projector casts images from a computer on an interactive Promethean ActivBoard where Mrs. Bell and her pupils can write.

Sensors detect the pen's movements, and the projector shows the writing on the board.

The advantages of the ActivBoard are plenty, Mrs. Bell said. First and foremost, the technology grabs the attention of the children.

"You put it up there with color, and they're fascinated," she said. "Just because you're clicking a few buttons, you have them."

Leon'Tra Brown, 9, said it's cool using the electronic pen, adding that it's fun to work problems on the interactive board.

Although not all classrooms in the county are equipped with an ActivBoard, for Mrs Bell, at least, the days of the dusty chalk and erasers are gone.

She drags a rectangle from a menu and quickly jots down a few dimensions with the pen so the pupils can practice finding the perimeter. After another click of the pen, the board is blank once again. With the computer software, though, she can recall the math problem, print it or save it for later.

"Wow, when I was a student, we didn't even have technology," she said, explaining there were no computers.

The ActivBoard is "children friendly" and designed so that pupils can easily grasp how it works and understand how to use it, she said.

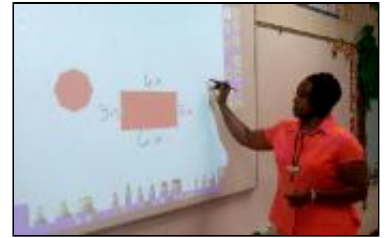
That's something that 9-year-old Jasmine Reeves agreed with, saying it's much easier than using a mouse.

Mrs. Bell said the math problems and geography are the same that she taught before the interactive technology, but the children pay more attention to the information when it is presented on the electronic board. Rather than using a mouse, she clicks on menus projected onto the board with the pen, switching instantly from math problems she prepared at home the night before to a list of world maps for geography.

"I could put the same information on a transparency and they think, 'OK not this again,'" she said, adding that she doesn't really understand the difference because it's the same lesson. "It's a new toy to them."

Mrs. Bell said there's a hidden lesson in using the ActivBoard. While teaching her pupils how to solve word problems, she's also teaching them how to use computers, something she called vital in today's society.

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**Annette M. Drowlette/Staff**  
Fourth-grade teacher Rhonda Bell uses the ActivPrimary program to teach math on the ActivBoard at Jenkins-White Elementary.

### Classroom Technology

They're not just learning about technology, but learning with technology. Richmond County schools have the following technological tools in the classroom:

- Promethean ActivBoard
- SmartBoard
- Graphing calculator
- Digital camera
- Video camera
- Computer scanner
- Palm Pilot
- Scan converter

Source: Richmond County Board of Education

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