

## InterakTABLE

*"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand" - Confucius*

For the teacher with an InterakTABLE in their classroom, this quotation sums up why, in combination with an interactive projector, it is an invaluable educational tool to use in a classroom.

Differentiated instruction is an ongoing challenge in the classroom. It is based on the premise that students differ in terms of abilities, prior experiences and learning styles. Children have different learning styles. Some learn through listening using auditory skills, some through seeing using visual skills and others learning by moving, doing and touching, using tactile skills. These styles can also be intermingled depending on the situation. Students learn best when they are actively engaged, progressing at their own pace and activating their prior knowledge. The role of a teacher is to deepen children's understanding by challenging students with engaging activities that are appropriate for their level and learning styles, and by using a variety of groupings that are continually changing to meet various needs.

The InterakTABLE, with an interactive projector, engages students in educational activities that simultaneously stimulate their auditory, visual and tactile modes of learning. Typically activities involve all three modes of learning as children listen to information while following colourful visual images and use an interactive pen to complete the tasks. Often these activities are self-checking, giving instant feedback. Varying the size and abilities of the groups allows students to work on levelled activities at their own pace. Success is evident in their

*For more information on the InterakTable and other products, please visit:*  
[www.copernicused.com](http://www.copernicused.com)

Copernicus Educational Products  
Arthur, Ontario, Canada  
1-800-267-8494



confidence and enthusiasm as they interact with the creative activities and with each other.

The InterakTABLE, designed by Copernicus Educational Products Inc was introduced to the market in spring of 2011. Copernicus, a Canadian company, has built its product line with a focus on 'making teaching easier'. Started more than 20 years ago by George Phillips, a school principal, and now run by his son Jim, Copernicus is a recognized leader in innovative products for school and daycare settings that focus on teacher needs. Working with a team of 'Teacher Advisors' allows the Copernicus team to gain valuable insight into how teachers work and will use a potential product, ensuring that products always bring value to the classroom.

## Putting the InterakTABLE to use

For six months this past school year (2010-2011), I had the opportunity to use the InterakTABLE as part of an interactive centre in my grade 2/3 classroom. Although its placement was dependent upon the positioning of the laptop for internet access, it resulted in an invaluable educational centre that was more removed from the bustle of the classroom. This turned out to be very beneficial to allow students using the unit to focus on the activities while the rest of the class could work on other tasks at the same time. Due to the placement of the InterakTABLE, projector and computer being close to a wall, the students used the front and sides of the table for optimum viewing. With the back of the unit inaccessible, students stayed away from the wires.

The actual set up of the InterakTABLE is very easy. You need any light-coloured table that is large enough and sturdy enough to take the weight of the projector. Being sturdy is very important as students often lean on the table while working at the centre. Once set up, I feel the table should be solid enough to sit on without it tipping



over. It also needs to be thick enough so that the InterakTABLE clamp securely attaches to the table edge. There are no tools required to do this. You simply tighten the levelling clamp until it is firmly in place. The projector is then attached to the clamp with a screw driver. After connecting the projector to the computer, you have essentially turned a regular tabletop surface into an interactive teaching centre.

Having the InterakTABLE unit in the classroom provided an invaluable educational tool in a variety of group situations. During a direct teaching lesson, I could introduce a concept which was then followed up by small groups of students exploring it. This cumulating activity was often led by an educational assistant, co-op student or a peer who was knowledgeable about the task. A group size of no more than four seemed to work best so that all students could have turns using the interactive pen. During these activities, the children were typically engaged and enjoying the tasks.

Teaching a split grade with different curriculum expectations is always a challenge to meet the varied needs of students. Using the InterakTABLE as part of an interactive centre allowed for small groups of one grade to do an activity while the other grade was involved in teacher-led learning or working independently. One subject that this worked particularly well for was Mathematics. Using educational activities downloaded from internet sites, small groups of students could work on reinforcing concepts that we were currently focusing on or review previously taught material. The students gained confidence in themselves as learners as they experienced success with completion of the tasks while working at their own pace. Using the InterakTABLE, as part of an interactive centre, was a motivating, fun way to learn.

Students that were lower academically also benefitted from using this educational tool. Without the stigma of



being centred out, this group worked on engaging activities geared to their level that were not “paper and pencil” tasks. An example of this occurred daily during Working With Words or Spelling time. Along with language- based activities downloaded from a resource site, they would “write” their weekly unit words on the table in different colours and thicknesses. Using the interactive pen, weekly words were also used in sentences and very simple stories complete with drawn pictures. With having fun, their knowledge of basic sight words, self-confidence and motivation for learning all increased. Even a relatively shy child was at ease participating with fellow group members. Leadership skills began to emerge.

In our ever-changing technological age, interactive educational tools such as the InterakTABLE, combined with an interactive projector, and electronic whiteboards like Smartboards, play an important role in facilitating learning. These can make an significant impact on developing students’ confidence and encouraging utilizing different learning styles while participating in engaging activities. Using a Smartboard, teachers can do direct teaching and collaborative activities on which the whole class or a large group would focus. This is useful when introducing a new unit or concept, brainstorming or problem solving to name a few examples. The main difference between these two interactive tools is that a Smartboard lends itself very well to whole class lessons or large group situations, while the InterakTABLE unit is an invaluable resource to strengthen learning of concepts in a small group setting.

In my experience, small groups of students were more inclined to take risks to try new tasks. In this non-threatening environment they were engaged and attentive while using the InterakTABLE combined with the interactive projector. There was evidence of students working together to solve problems. Because the placement of the InterakTABLE learning centre was



removed from main focus of the classroom, it was also less distracting for the other students. As a result the unit became an integral part of our classroom environment as another learning centre.

It goes without saying that this learning centre was popular due to its technology and the ever-changing, engaging activities. All students felt comfortable using the unit. The interactive pen was easy to use as it glided freely on the table surface. The table was at their height so that they could sit or stand. Being able to stand was important for the kinesthetic learners who often needed movement to help stay focused. At least four times a week each student worked at the InterakTABLE with the interactive projector. Usually the students were in groups of four, but depending on the purpose of activity, there could be two or even one student working at the centre. Typically the children were very engaged, on task and having fun.

Activities were rarely repeated unless it would be beneficial to reinforce concepts or skills to keep the interactive centre exciting and fresh. Often students were shown how to lead a new activity so that they could introduce it and act as a student teacher for their peers. Children of all levels eagerly took on this role resulting in increased self-confidence, leadership skills and enjoyment in learning.

The InterakTABLE in combination with the interactive projector, is an excellent educational tool that encourages students to become actively involved in their learning.

Engaging activities encourage children to activate their prior knowledge and utilize their own learning style. Small levelled groups provide an non-threatening setting as students work at their own pace, communicate ideas and develop interpersonal skills. The InterakTABLE unit would be beneficial to a wide age range of students and abilities. As children are drawn to technology, I could see

### **Stable**

The sturdy mount attaches to most tables.

### **Flexible**

The InterakTABLE supports WXGA images from 50" to 60" diagonal. The simple design allows schools to use a variety of tables they may already own.

### **Portable**

Through the use of a simple clamping system, move the InterakTABLE from table to table without the use of tools.

it appeal to students from kindergarten through to high school. Many students with special needs would find the unit easy to use, motivating and beneficial for their learning.

In the future I look forward to continue using the InterakTABLE with the interactive projector in the classroom. I plan to expand the use of this interactive centre into more subject areas such as Social Studies and Music. I also want to explore its technological capabilities further as I know there is more I can do to promote my students' love of learning.

Beth Leibovitz  
*Elementary Teacher*  
*Priory Park Public School*

*Beth Leibovitz is an Elementary school teacher with 28 years of experience working with children from Kindergarten through Grade Six. She is a Primary Education Specialist, with the majority of her experience focusing on the Primary Level. Besides teaching in the classroom, Beth has also worked as an Early Literacy Teacher and a Primary Success Teacher.*

## Frequently Asked:

### Dimensions

7.5"W x 12.75"D x 19.5"H

### Packaged Dimensions

19.25"W x 22.88"D x 6.2"H

### Supported Work Surfaces

White or light colour tabletops, minimum table size of 43" x 40" rectangular, or 53" diameter circular.

### Warranty

5 year

### Price

MSRP \$189

*(InterakTABLE only, projector sold separately)*

### Available Through

[www.interaktable.com](http://www.interaktable.com)

or a local dealer

*(Visit [www.copernicused.com](http://www.copernicused.com) for a list of dealers near you)*

## The School

Priory Park Public School is located in the South-end of Guelph, Ontario. There are 175 students and they range from Kindergarten to grade 6. Priory Public is a dynamic and growing school committed to improving student learning. They take their strength and energy from a supportive and engaged school community. The school has a large population of English Language Learners which gives the school a wonderful mix of diverse cultures. Students, parents, and staff are all committed to the school's philosophy of "Caring, Sharing, Learning, Growing" which permeates everything they do.

Priory's use of technology is limited, but growing. The school has three SMARTBoards that are on wheels so they can be moved from class to class. Two are located in classrooms and the other is located in the central library. Even though the SMARTBoards, data projectors and laptops are mobile, it is only those teachers who have the SMARTBoard stored in their room, that use them regularly. Staff tends to only use the technology if they are comfortable with it and not having the technology in their room, gives them limited opportunities to play and learn on their own. There is time required to set up the SMARTBoard which makes some teachers reluctant to use it. The SMARTBoard is large and is therefore often used as a point of instruction for the whole class only. It is difficult to tuck the SMARTBoard in a corner and have small groups work with it. The InterakTABLE is a smaller size which made it nice for small groups to work with it.

## The Investment

Our school would definitely benefit from investing in an interakTABLE. The cost of an interakTABLE is approximately the same for similar technology that currently exists. Our school has a small budget and



I think the InterakTABLE is great! If I had one in my classroom, I would use it to work with small groups of children on specific concepts and to model how to use different computer programs. I like that it is very hands on and visual. It meets the different learning styles of children.

Susan Melnyk - Elementary Teacher

spending \$2200.00 can't be taken lightly. I would want to feel confident that the technology would be used often and that it would increase student learning.

As Principal at Priory Park, I saw the table in use almost on a daily basis, which is a sign to me that both the teacher and the students saw this technology as a benefit. Student engagement is key to successful learning and the interakTABLE helps to provide engaging hands-on experiences. Teachers can ensure the software students use will supplement the learning that is happening in the classroom. The interakTABLE is used far more often than other technology that is available in our school. Once the table was initially set up by the teacher students could often work as a small group with the teacher or independently.

I feel confident that the interakTABLE is a good investment. It is engaging to students and teachers can use it to supplement the learning that is happening in the classroom. I would recommend the interakTABLE to other administrators over similar technology.

Blair Conrad  
*Principal*  
*Priory Park Public School*

*Blair Conrad has worked in education for 16 year. He has taught grades five through eight, science and technology and phys-ed. He has been the Vice Principal for four years at a Kindergarten – Grade 8 school and the Principal for two years at a Kindergarten to Grade 6 School.*

