

# Accessing Interactive Whiteboards

## *Avoid Martian Smartboards!*

**WHAT AND WHY:** I know you've seen it – that student in the classroom for whom the smartboard might as well be on Mars! They simply can't access the board like their peers can. Why is this happening?

- a) **Poor Visual Access:** Students who have vision issues, including cortical vision impairment (CVI), often have issues with distance viewing. Glasses won't fix CVI, as it is more of a "brain processing" issue than an "eyes" issue.
- b) **Wheelchair Makes Access Difficult/Impossible:** Often, board placement means that the term 'interactive' is basically a joke.
- c) **Height or Location of Interactive Board is Not Accessible:** Many boards are permanently affixed to the wall at a height that is not reachable – or even viewable – to many students in a classroom.



**WHO IS THIS FOR:** This tip is especially for teachers, therapists, and anyone else who works with students with the challenges described in the previous section.

### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

**Use a Portable Interactive Whiteboard.** This has solved the issue for some classrooms, as the smartboard can be moved to the students and raised and lowered. *Cons:* This solution requires funding, and some portable boards don't allow for wheelchair placement below the board, or are difficult to raise and lower.



**Use a Mirroring App.** Apps such as *Reflector* mirror what is happening on the whiteboard, and some allow direct access through the tablet (e.g., iPad). *Cons:* Many schools have unreliable wireless access.

**Make a Fake Video with a Tablet.** Simply aim at the interactive whiteboard, turn the camera on, and view through it, putting the images on the whiteboard within viewing range. *Cons:* This quick fix will not be truly interactive, as the student will not be able to touch items on the whiteboard.

