

SmartClass+

Digital Language Lab Platform



Practice, Practice, & Practice

Learning a second language is very much like learning to play a musical instrument. There is certainly merit in studying the theory, but the major way to improve virtuosity is through hands-on practice. The more a student practices, the more proficient he or she becomes.

Hands-on Practice

What does hands-on practice mean for language learning? In a language lab, students do not play a passive role:

- **Interactive, multimedia exercises:** Students interact with multimedia materials in which native speakers of the target language are communicating in authentic situations.
- **Recording exercises:** Students record themselves and listen to themselves speaking the target language – comparing their responses to a model speaker.
- **Live speaking & listening exercises:** Students converse in the target language with their fellow students in pairs or in groups – giving every student sufficient time to practice their listening and speaking skills.
- **Live testing activities:** Students are able to participate in live testing activities, such as advanced placement (AP) testing to assess their progress.

Motivation & Focus

The second major factor affecting language learning is motivation: Motivated learners accomplish more in less time.

- **Get students excited:** Language labs, with their interactive, multimedia activities, can actually get your Nintendo generation of students excited about learning.
- **Focus student attention:** Teachers are able to manage student attention and ensure that workstations are being used to further the learning effort rather than subvert the learning effort.



The SmartClass+ Competitive Advantage

The Changing Face of Language Labs

In the late 20th century, most language labs were modeled around a dedicated room, and the major technology choice facing schools centered on whether students would be equipped with individual desktop computers – or not. Nowadays, educators have a plethora of available options:

- **Workspace:** Many schools still use a dedicated room, but there is a growing number of portable systems, virtual labs, and self-study language resource centers.
- **Workstations:** On the technology side, we now have desktop computers, laptop computers, tablet computers, and a variety of hand-held devices that can play a role in language learning. In many schools, students even bring their own workstation to class.
- **LANs, WANs, and the Internet:** Wireless networks are becoming more powerful, and the Internet has become multimedia proficient. This means that students could access their lessons and even connect to their classes from just about anywhere.

The challenge facing educators is not so much which options to choose, but rather how to ensure that non-technical teachers and students are comfortable in using whatever technology is selected.

The SmartClass+ Advantage

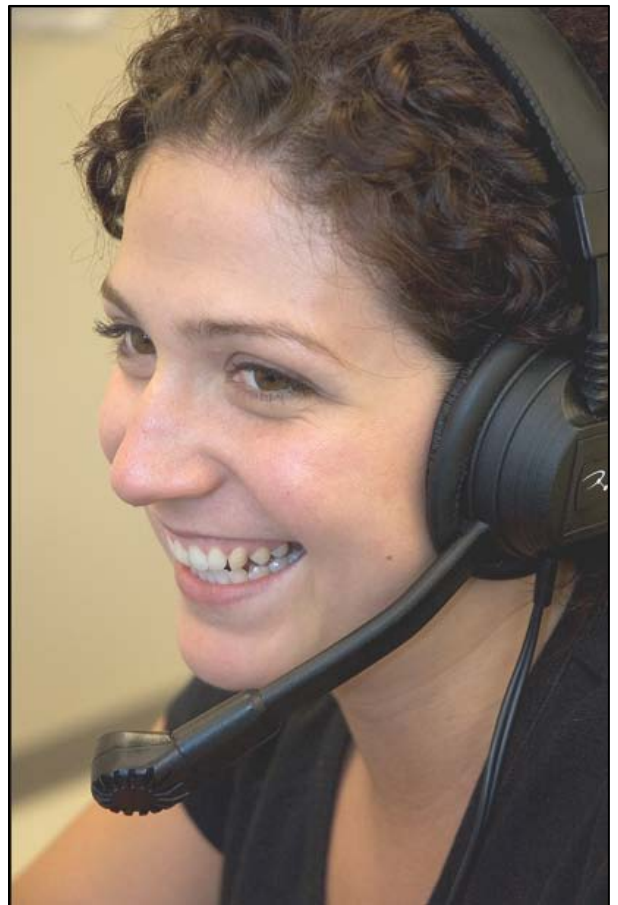
When we set about designing the new SmartClass+ platform, we focused on two main objectives:

- **Modular & Flexible:** The first objective has been to provide a system that can deliver a pedagogically sound and economically viable solution – no matter what the workspace model, the workstation type, and the communications network.

SmartClass+ uses a robust, unique, and modular architecture that allows us to configure the system to work with virtually any type of language learning environment. (See the back page of this brochure for a more detailed technical overview.)

- **Intuitive & Easy-to-Use:** Above all else, we have insisted that the system be easy for non-technical teachers to use.

This has been achieved through a revolutionary new graphical user interface - called a *dashboard* - that uses a combination of simple language, step-by-step processes, and well thought-out functionality.



The SmartClass+ Dream Solution

Flexible Learning Activities

There are two broad types of language learning activities: Live (classroom) and Media (self-study).

- **Live Activities:** Live activities are teacher-led activities conducted in a class environment, where the teacher is present, and orchestrates the activity (e.g. pairs of students conversing with their partner).

Live activities are managed from the SmartClass+ platform's *Live Activities Dashboard* running on a dedicated screen at the teacher's workstation



- **Media Activities:** Media activities are exercises that the teacher has prepared in advance, and has made them available to students to work-on individually. Students execute these exercises at anytime, from any location.

Media activities are accessed using the SmartClass+ platform's *Media Activities Dashboard*, which can be launched on any workstation that connects to the school's data network.

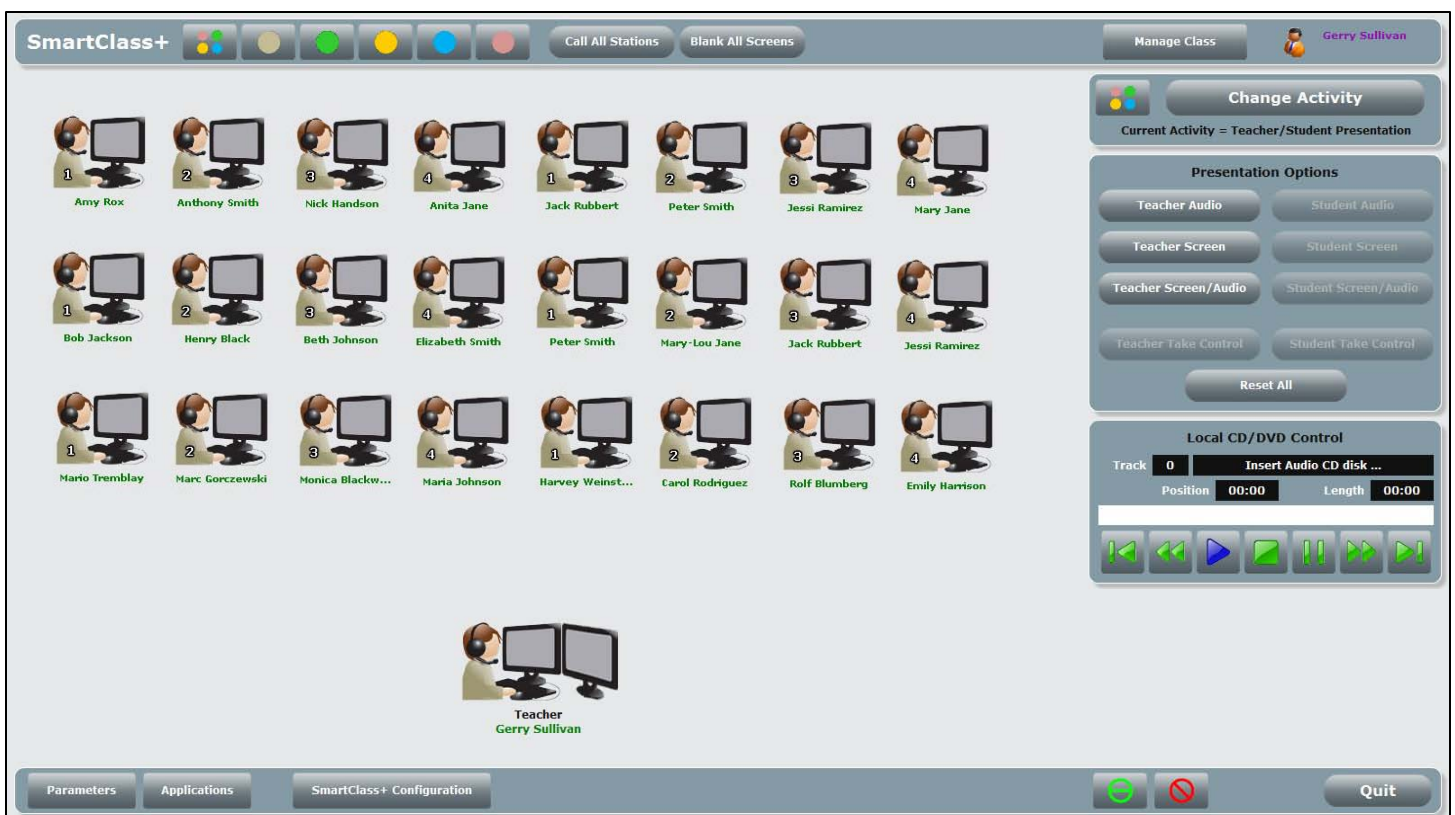
Simple Navigation

Teachers use the *Live Activities Dashboard* (shown at the bottom of this page) to orchestrate all live activities in the lab. Dashboard navigation is structured to ensure that teachers can quickly master the system.

- **Clear Visual Feedback:** Workstations icons are displayed with student names immediately below. This provides a simple and clear visual model of the class for teachers.
- **Logical Control Organization:** Functions that need to be accessible at all times are always visible, while activity-specific functions are displayed only when the corresponding activity has been selected from the home page menu.

By restricting the number of on-screen functions, clutter is reduced and teachers can confidently locate every control that they need.

- **Step-by-Step Guidance:** For sophisticated activities, a pop-up wizard provides step-by-step guidance to teachers to ensure that the activity is always done correctly.



The screenshot displays the SmartClass+ interface. At the top, there is a header with the 'SmartClass+' logo, a row of colored status indicators, and buttons for 'Call All Stations' and 'Blank All Screens'. On the right side of the header, there are 'Manage Class' and 'Gerry Sullivan' (with a user icon). The main area features a grid of 24 workstation icons, each with a student name below it. The names are: Amy Rox, Anthony Smith, Nick Handson, Anita Jane, Jack Rubbert, Peter Smith, Jessi Ramirez, Mary Jane, Bob Jackson, Henry Black, Beth Johnson, Elizabeth Smith, Peter Smith, Mary-Lou Jane, Jack Rubbert, Jessi Ramirez, Mario Tremblay, Marc Gorczewski, Monica Blackw..., Maria Johnson, Harvey Weinst..., Carol Rodriguez, Rolf Blumberg, and Emily Harrison. At the bottom center, there is a 'Teacher' workstation icon for 'Gerry Sullivan'. On the right side, there is a control panel with a 'Change Activity' button (showing 'Current Activity = Teacher/Student Presentation'), a 'Presentation Options' section with buttons for 'Teacher Audio', 'Student Audio', 'Teacher Screen', 'Student Screen', 'Teacher Screen/Audio', 'Student Screen/Audio', 'Teacher Take Control', and 'Student Take Control', and a 'Reset All' button. Below that is a 'Local CD/DVD Control' section with a track indicator (Track 0), a button to 'Insert Audio CD disk ...', a position indicator (00:00), a length indicator (00:00), and a set of playback controls (play, stop, next, previous, etc.). At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Parameters', 'Applications', 'SmartClass+ Configuration', and 'Quit'.

Powerful Live Activities

Practical Teaching Tools

Making Presentations: Teacher and student presentations to the class are easily configured using the Broadcast, Model, and Blank Screens functions shown at right. This provides an excellent way of sharing with the class.

Monitoring Students: Teachers are able discreetly listen to students and view the student's screen using the Monitor/Autoscan function described at right. Teachers can intervene by speaking with or chatting with students who need help. Teachers can even take remote control of a student station using the Remote Control function.

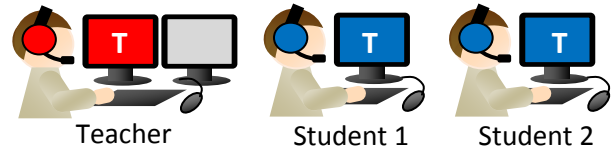
Launching Partnering Activities: Teachers can organize students into pairs or small groups for speaking practice and/or for team projects. Partners can be randomly assigned, teacher-selected, or student-selected.

Running Media Exercises: Teachers are able to launch media exercises (described in detail on page 7) using any media file or exercise in the media library. Because the media player-recorder is intrinsically linked with the Live Activities Dashboard, students are able to execute teacher-selected exercises in class.

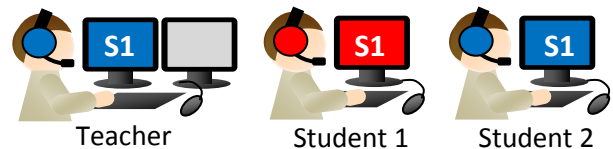
Conducting Tests & Quizzes: SmartClass+ supports live testing activities in which test materials are broadcast from the teacher's microphone or local CD/DVD player. Student recorders are launched and managed by the teacher from the dashboard. (A special test mode is also provided for Advanced Placement (AP) testing.) Quizzes with auto-correction are supported as a media exercise.

Managing Student Stations: Teachers are able to launch programs or websites on student workstations, block access to applications from student stations, and remotely power-on or power-off student stations.

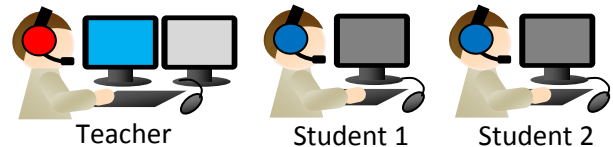
- **Broadcast:** Send the instructor's screen and sound to the class for teacher presentations.



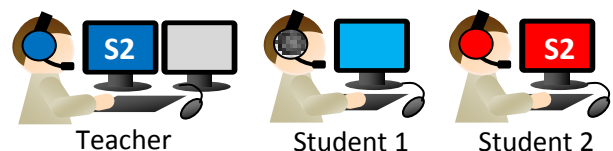
- **Model:** Send any student's screen and sound to the class for student presentations.



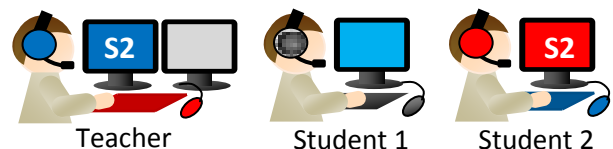
- **Blank Screens:** Blank student screens and lock all keyboards and mice to focus student attention on the instructor for oral presentations.



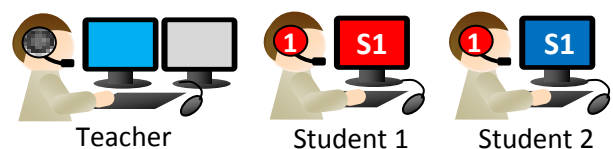
- **Monitor/Autoscan:** Monitor individual student screens or scan the entire class to ensure students stay on topic.



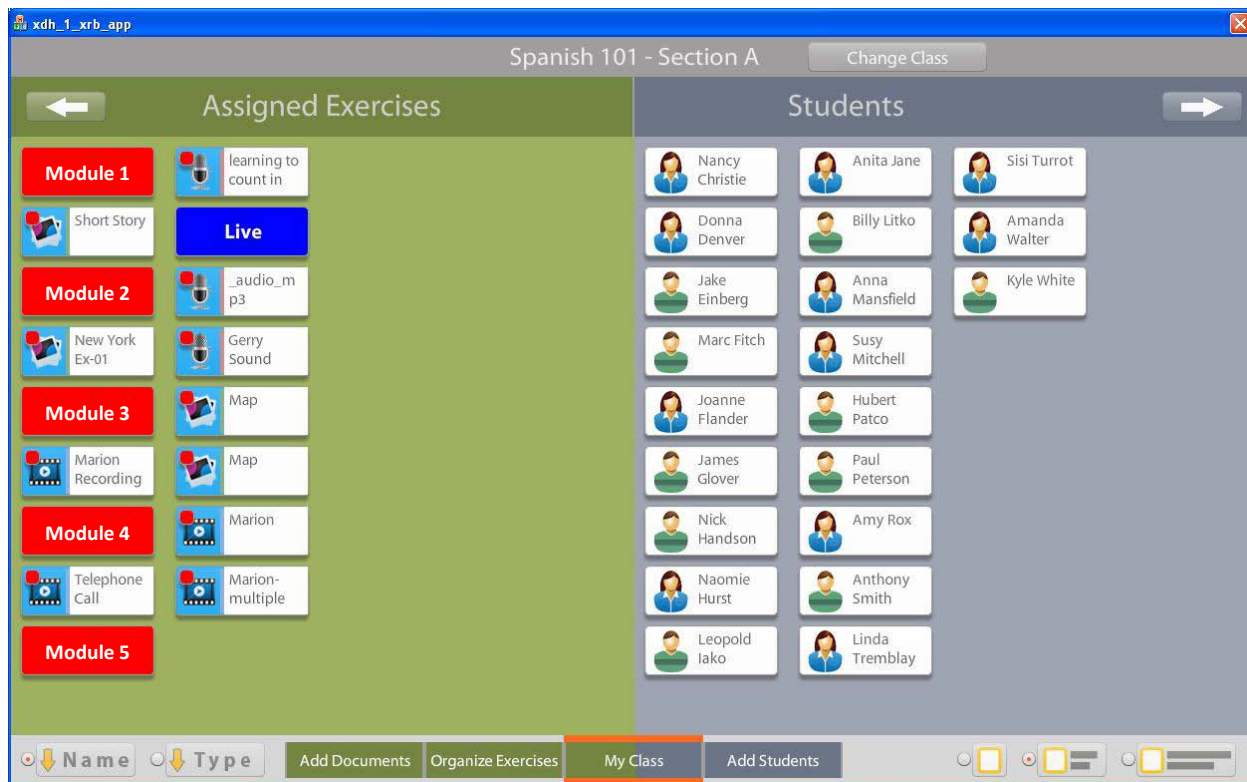
- **Remote Control:** Take remote control of any student station using your keyboard and mouse to demonstrate an idea or a solution.



- **Partnering:** Pair (or group) students randomly, with teacher-selected partners, or with student-selected partners. Both sound and screen pairing/grouping is supported.



Compelling Self-Study Activities



Anytime, Anywhere Teacher Access

The **Media Activities Dashboard** (shown above) can be accessed from any computer workstation on the school's network at any time.

Simple Content Management

Teachers use the Media Activities Dashboard to import or digitize content into the media library, build exercises for their students, and follow-up & review student responses.

The content management process includes the following sequential steps:

1. Import Documents
2. Build Exercises
3. Assign Exercises
4. Review Student Responses

Flexible Content Options

Teachers can import video clips, audio clips, images, text documents, and PDF documents. Teachers can also author text documents or digitize audio documents within the system.

SmartClass+ supports a broad range of file extensions, (including WAV, MP3, WMA, MPG, MP4, FLV, JPG, and PNG), so that you can copy content from just about any source – including YouTube and TeacherTube.

Easy-to-Build Exercises

The system includes several built-in templates for student exercises; simultaneous recordings, repeat-after-me (audio comparative) recordings, open recordings, open text, questions & answers, multiple choice quizzes, and captioning.

An **exercise wizard** helps teachers to build exercises in a simple step-by-step fashion. All exercise-specific information is bundled into the exercise, including instructions, response timing, and the allowable number of re-tries, so that exercises are entirely self-contained.

Unique Class Assignment Workspace

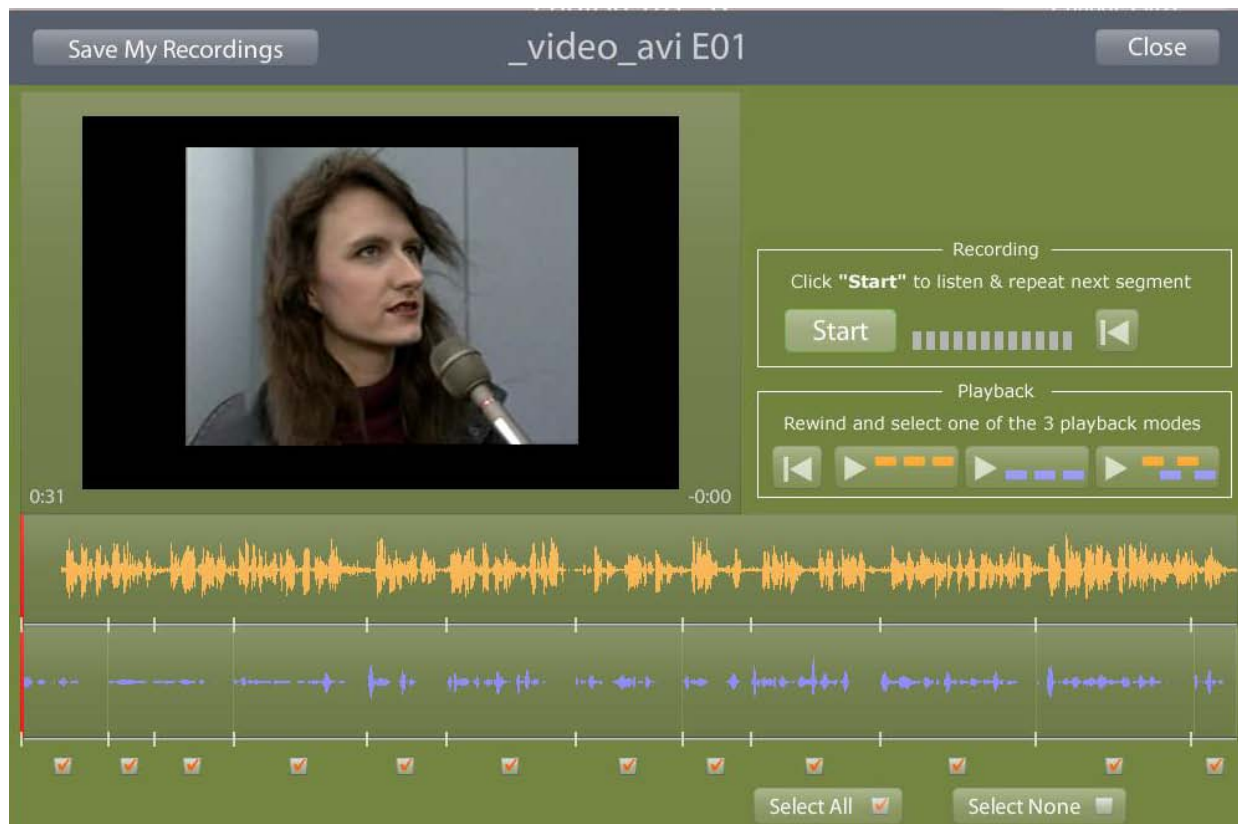
Students have access to exercises only for their classes and only after those exercises have been assigned to the class. This allows teachers to build exercises in advance, but manage availability of sensitive activities like tests.

Review Responses & Provide Feedback

Teachers are able to follow-up on student work by assignment (e.g. list of student responses) or by individual student (e.g. list of completed exercises).

Teachers are able to provide written or oral feedback to students by appending this to the student response. Quizzes are automatically assessed and graded without teacher intervention.

Multimedia Dual-Track Recorder



Anytime, Anywhere Student Access

The **Media Activities Dashboard** can be accessed from any computer workstation on the school's network at any time.

Students use the **Media Activities Dashboard** to view and execute the exercises assigned to their classes.

Compelling Multimedia Exercises

Motivating students to learn a second language is a challenge, but today's Nintendo generation of students actually gets excited about using interactive, multimedia exercises as part of their language learning curriculum.

Exercise templates are included for:

- Listening/viewing
- Simultaneous audio recording
- Repeat-after-me audio recording
- Open audio recording (with images and text)
- Open text
- Question & open answer text
- Captioning text
- Multiple choice quizzes

Powerful Dual-Track Recorder

Clicking on an exercise launches the **Media-Player Recorder**, a modern software application that functionally replaces the old audiocassette recorders used in early language labs.

Since exercises include all pertinent information about the assignment, the media player-recorder automatically configures itself for the appropriate activity: (In the image shown above, this is a repeat-after-me recording activity for the student.)

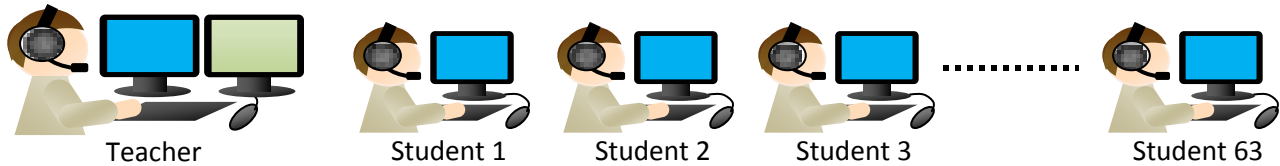
The media player-recorder includes the following features & capabilities:

- **Dual-track recorder** (program & student tracks)
- **Bookmarking** (unlimited)
- **Speech waveform display** (for visual feedback)
- **Captioning display**
- **Variable speed playback**
- **Loop** (for repeating a segment)

Modern Icon-Based Dashboard

The Media Activities Dashboard uses an icon-based design with a modern look and feel. Students are able to choose their user avatar to personalize their screens, and teachers are able to choose flag icons for each of their courses.

SmartClass+ Technology Overview



Flexible & Modular Configuration

SmartClass+ has been developed from the get-go to support a wide range of language lab models.

- **Workspaces:** This includes traditional labs having a dedicated room, portable labs, and even virtual labs.
- **Workstations:** Additionally, SmartClass+ has been architected to work with traditional desktop computers, laptop computers, tablet computers, and even without student computers.
- **Networks:** SmartClass+ also supports traditional wired networks, wireless networks, and Internet connections.

The key to supporting these diverse requirements is having a highly modular design, which is shown in the diagram below. In addition to the two Dashboards presented earlier in this brochure, there are three independent and optional high-level modules; Keyboard-Video-Mouse switching, Intercom, and Content Management.

Keyboard-Video-Mouse Module (KVM)

This module is responsible for sharing screens and handling remote station control. We offer both software and hardware versions of the KVM switch to meet differing user needs for economy, flexibility, and video quality.

Intercom Module (INT)

The Intercom, which supports inter-station audio communications, features matrix-switching technology with multiple independent communication channels. We offer both software and hardware versions of the Intercom audio matrix to meet differing user needs for economy, flexibility, and audio quality.

Content Management Module (CMM)

The Content Management module is entirely software-based, and supports an integral Media Player-Recorder for playing media content and recording student responses.

