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University of Melbourne and SMART Technologies partner in groundbreaking global research on technology supports for neurodivergent learners

Calgary, Alberta (ots/PRNewswire) -

SMART Technologies and the University of Melbourne's collaborative research promise impactful ways to engage neurodivergent students.

SMART Technologies, a global leader in interactive education technology, has partnered with the University of Melbourne to launch the first-of-its-kind research initiative exploring how classroom environments can better support neurodivergent learners. The study identified key strategies and tools that promote engagement, reduce barriers, and empower these students to succeed. By bringing the voices of neurodivergent students to the forefront, SMART is fostering inclusive classroom practices and developing research-backed technology that facilitates authentic inclusion.

It's estimated that over 20% of the global population is neurodivergent, but traditional classrooms often exclude these students by prioritizing norms designed for neurotypical learners. These environments create significant challenges, forcing neurodivergent students to expend energy masking their differences rather than focusing on learning. This research tackles these barriers head-on, reshaping how we think about inclusion and engagement for all.

"A learning space where everyone feels safe, happy, and part of the community"—that's the vision of Matt Harrison, lead researcher at the University of Melbourne and co-founder of the University of Melbourne Neurodiversity Project. Identifying a significant gap in education, Harrison's collaboration with SMART set out to amplify the voices of neurodivergent students.

"Our extensive literature review found that only a very small number of studies actually included the voices of neurodivergent students. By engaging directly with these learners, we gathered authentic insights into strategies and tech tools that make a real difference," said Harrison. This groundbreaking, student-centered approach delivers unparalleled data to empower educators with evidence-based solutions for fostering inclusive classrooms.

The research identified 36 actionable recommendations tailored for education leaders and teachers. These insights provide a roadmap for implementing technology and designing inclusive spaces that support diverse student needs. From specific tech tools to enhancements of existing classroom practices, the findings offer practical, scalable steps that educators can use immediately to increase inclusion and engagement.

Among the actionable steps emerging from this research are:

- **Transforming Engagement:** Adopt specific EdTech tools that affirm student voices, identities, and self-identified needs.
- **Empowering Student Voice:** Involve students as collaborators in choosing and implementing tools and other classroom options.
- **Child-Centered Practices:** Shift away from traditional behavior-based approaches and focus on each student's strengths and needs.

This research highlights technology's transformative role in creating equitable learning environments in classrooms around the world. "These recommendations offer educators and education leaders a clear pathway to designing classrooms that prioritize inclusivity," said Jeff Lowe, SMART Technologies Executive Vice President. "By listening to the voices of neurodivergent students and understanding their needs, we can ensure our technology considers those needs, creates meaningful change and success for all students."

For SMART, inclusion has always been a priority. This collaboration not only validates the positive impact of its current products but also drives future innovations designed to meet the needs of all learners. By incorporating neurodivergent perspectives into future product design and development, SMART is setting a new standard for inclusive technology that supports every student's success.

SMART is showcasing this groundbreaking research and technology to support neurodiverse learners for the first time at Bett 2025 in London. Educators and school leaders are invited to visit SMART's block party launch event at Stand SP20 at 11:00 am on day one of Bett to take a session with Tisha Poncio to explore the findings and experience the technology, including an informative session. Plus, join Katie Novak and Anthony McGeeney at the SEND Village for a deep dive into the recommendations for ensuring neurodivergent student success. To explore the full findings and begin implementing these strategies in your school or classroom, [access the research report here](#).

About SMART Technologies

SMART Technologies is a pioneering force in the development of interactive technology solutions. Renowned for SMART Board® interactive displays and comprehensive software offerings, the company is dedicated to creating engaging and collaborative learning and working environments, creating connections that matter for users worldwide since 1987. With a focus on quality, innovation, and inclusion, SMART Technologies continues to drive advancements in education and business technology worldwide. To learn more, visit www.smarttech.com.

About the University of Melbourne

As a place of discovery and enquiry, the University of Melbourne's purpose is to benefit society through the transformative impact of education and research. Established in 1853, it is one of Australia's oldest universities and the first in Victoria. Today, the University's vibrant community comprises over 53,000 students, including 45 per cent international students from more than 150 countries. Our students are supported by over 10,000 academic and professional staff, who play a vital role in fulfilling the University's mission. The University's commitment to excellence has earned it its place among the world's best universities, delivering education and research that are global in reach, ambition and impact.

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