



**Mark Ylen/Democrat-Herald**

Katy Kelly leads her class in a Jeopardy-style science quiz game at North Albany Middle School.

## Group honors N. Albany teacher

By Jennifer Moody  
Albany Democrat-Herald

Most of the time, Katy Kelly and technology are the best of friends.

That's what led to her selection by the Northwest Council for Computer Education as 2008 Outstanding Technology Educator of the Year.

However, after the umpteenth playing of the "Jeopardy!" game show theme song, the North Albany Middle School teacher is starting to wonder.

Kelly added the tune herself to a computerized Jeopardy-style program she uses when her science classes review for a quiz. She's halfway through the second period game and isn't positive she'll make it to third.

She wouldn't give up the technology that makes the game possible, though, even with its tootling, tick-tock tune. The eyes of her sixth-graders are riveted to the interactive whiteboard — known as a SMART Board — at the front of the room, which alternately displays the review "answers" and the point tally for each team. They compete for the chance to touch the board to choose the next category.

And when she forgets to turn on the theme song, someone is sure to point it out.

"I think technology energizes a classroom," she said. "It takes good classrooms and good teachers and makes them better."

Kelly, 35, received her award in February at the annual conference of the Northwest Council for Computer Education. The council has members in 29 states and six countries.

"Her ability to use technology in instruction in really innovative ways is highly motivating to students, and also involves students in activities in ways that enhance learning," said Principal Randy Lary, who wrote one of the letters recommending Kelly for the award. "We're very proud of her award. Her work in this area has been inspiring to all of our staff and staff around the district."

Four years ago, Kelly's room was the first at NAMS, and one of the first in the district, to receive a SMART board.

"I wrote a hundred million grants to get it," she recalled. "I walked around the streets of Albany asking for money, 'cause I really wanted one."

Why? "I don't like a stagnant classroom," she said. "I want kids up and moving and doing. I think they learn by doing."