

St Peter's Cambridge embraces interactive classroom tech

By Mandy Clarke,
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An independent, co-educational school with a roll of 1150 students, St Peter's Cambridge has developed a 10-year plan to centre teaching and learning technology.

In 2019, budget was allocated to undertake a pilot of interactive technology in a Year 7 classroom and a mathematics classroom. If successful, this project would then frame up a significant budget spend in the 2020/21 financial year. The school knew the magnitude of the spend and change required, so a significant amount of research and trialling was undertaken before committing further.

The pilot principles and design were based on: *The Association for Audio-visual & Education Technology Management* (AETA) experience from Waikato University's award-winning AV implementation. Knowledge gained from the *ICT Management and Leadership Conference/School* tour and the results of pilot testing and teacher feedback.

Understanding that each faculty has different technological needs, St Peter's faculty was clear about its aim to provide a platform that improves the learning experience of all students. The pilot included testing televisions, projectors and screen sharing hardware and software over two



school terms. As a result of the pilot period, the school selected the Epson interactive projector as its preferred teaching tool, providing the following reasons:

- High lumens (brightness)
- Large projection area (100-inch max)
- Interaction for students, e.g. student can project their work
- Enabled technology integration for learning in the classroom, e.g. touch-based interactivity, annotation, whiteboard, projection with grids and lines, collaborative sharing interactive education software features

The school also found the quality projection hardware and software had:

1. Security of access to projecting using keyword
2. Low ongoing maintenance with no bulbs to replace (the projectors use laser interactive technology and do not require bulbs)
3. A 13-year life span compared to our current projectors that have a six to seven-year life expectancy

The school also noted that this was a recommended choice at the *ICT Management and Leadership Conference*.

At the end of 2019, installation commenced on the first twenty projectors, twenty-one in 2020 and the balance will be replaced in 2021. Over 30 Epson projectors were installed as part of this project, the models mainly used were *EB-1485UI x 20* and *EB-710UI x 14*.

Some staff utilise DVDs as part of their classroom teaching, so the need to integrate DVD-

use with the Epson technology was imperative. The issue was overcome with connectivity to the wall mounted controller and with ongoing training. An additional modification was required in the form of a white wall for the projection surface, enabling the use of pens and fingers. The school's maintenance team installed a smooth board surface, which improved the accuracy and use.

In terms of a teaching tool for St Peter's students, the new projectors have seen instant results. Student participation and engagement has increased to the point where some teachers are basing their entire lesson plan on the interactive technology. The biggest difficulty appears to be managing the student's enthusiasm - a good problem to have.

There is a new sense of empowerment. In *Digitech*, students are able to share work and demonstrate new skills. Year 7 teacher, Duncan Baird said: "it is easy to monitor the student's activity, as with one switch I can shift their screen view to the main projector. I have been teaching for 20 years, and have been a lead teacher in ICT across all the schools that I have taught in. I am yet to use a technology tool that has had such a dramatic impact on teaching and learning." ▲

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