

CASE STUDY



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Michael Fitzgerald, Assistant Principal, Heathmont College

Challenge

- ◆ Create more engaging lessons through greater use of visual stimulus
- ◆ Deliver effective projections in high ambient light conditions
- ◆ Provide a learning environment in which students and teachers can operate in a more interactive manner

Solution

- ◆ 10 Epson EMP-1715 projectors

Benefits

- ◆ Students are able to connect USB memory cards to the EMP-1715 or connected hubs to present their work to the class
- ◆ No need for in-depth training on use of the projectors
- ◆ Advanced Quick Power up and Instant Off technologies ensure projectors can be quickly moved between classrooms
- ◆ Excellent output quality regardless of ambient light levels
- ◆ Quick classroom projector setup with the EMP-1715 auto keystone correction

At Victoria’s Heathmont College, students are afforded an education environment in which a broad and engaging curriculum, dedicated staff and excellent facilities combine to deliver a progressive learning experience. Playing a significant part in this is the use of technology, forming a standard component across the entire curriculum from Years 7 through to 12.

For the college’s assistant principal, Michael Fitzgerald, the importance of projectors in education should never be overlooked; and at Heathmont, it’s a case of Epson EMP-1715s taking centre stage. “A good projector in the classroom gives students and teachers the opportunity to share work and operate in a more interactive manner,” he says.

The right choice

In mid-2006, Fitzgerald undertook an evaluation of various projectors, aiming to provide the college community with more ready access to the learning and teaching benefits arising from their use. “A great number of people learn more effectively with visual stimulus,” he explains. “With projectors, teachers are able to create more engaging lessons that capitalise on that fact and result in their students more readily grasping concepts that might otherwise have proved difficult to understand.”

While a number of vendors provided the college with demonstration units, Fitzgerald comments that it was Epson alone that sent out a representative to discuss the school’s needs. The result was the purchase of ten Epson EMP-1715 portable multimedia projectors – six of which were ceiling-mounted in classrooms connected to wall-mount USB hubs, another three set up on multimedia technology trolleys and one used as a general purpose portable projector.

According to Fitzgerald, the main drawcard of the EMP-1715 was its combination of wireless connectivity and PC-free capabilities. “We looked at a number of other projectors; and while some had wireless functionality they lacked the ability to plug in a USB card and deliver a presentation without the need for a PC,” he says.

Using the projector’s wireless feature, teachers are able to walk into a classroom, turn on their notebook computer and connect almost immediately to the projector,



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whether ceiling mounted or portable. In PC-free mode, students can bring in their PowerPoint presentations* or other digitally prepared works on a USB memory device, plug it into the USB port or connected hub and, using the projector's remote control, deliver their work without any PC requirement.

In commenting on the remote control, Fitzgerald states that is one of the various features that make the EMP-1715 an ideal projector in the education environment. "We have approximately 75 teachers on staff and around 950 students. Providing them all with training on how to use a projector simply isn't a viable option," he says.

"With the Epson projectors and remotes, there's no need for in-depth training."

Brightness when it counts

In contrast to projector environments where lighting conditions are easily controlled, the classrooms at Heathmont are designed specifically to allow the entry of maximum sunlight; and with a total absence of curtains or blinds, the EMP-1715s need to contend with high levels of light. "This is another of the main reasons why we chose the EMP-1715," Fitzgerald states.

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Quick and easy

Among the many features of the EMP-1715 that Fitzgerald points to as making the projector an ideal solution for schools are Quick Power up and Instant Off. He explains: "When a lesson is over,

there's little if any time available to wait for a projector to cool down before putting it back in its case and returning it to the library. The chances are that in the five or so minutes between periods, another teacher is going to want to set up that projector for their own lesson.

"With the EMP-1715 it's a case of turning off the unit and packing it up without any need at all to wait for it to cool down. The result is that teachers are able to return the portable units to the library in time for another teacher to take it for their lesson."

Adding even further to the EMP-1715's ease of use as a portable projector within Heathmont is its automatic vertical keystone correction functionality. With this feature, teachers are able to position the projector directly in front of the screen, switch on the unit and within a matter of seconds it automatically adjusts its lens to deliver an optimum square-screen projection.

The reliable projector

During his initial assessment of the various projectors that were considered possible contenders for use in Heathmont, Fitzgerald looked to reliability as one of the key factors. Lesson disruptions caused by faulty equipment was the last thing he wanted teachers to face. "In the six months that we've had the EMP-1715s in place, they have all been used extensively for classroom activities, teacher personal development sessions and parent briefings," he states.

"When I started looking at projectors for the school, Epson was one of the first names I considered," Fitzgerald continues. "I've had experience with Epson printers and know them to be among the most reliable on the market. Epson has a name for product reliability; and it's being demonstrated daily through the heavy use of the EMP-1715s. They just keep on performing."