Untethered Teaching

SSA Schools Experience the Joy of Freedom of Movement in Classrooms

Founded by the Sisters of The Society of the Sacred Advent, both St. Margaret's Anglican Girls' School and St. Aidan's Anglican Girls' School are situated in the picturesque, leafy suburbs of Ascot and Corinda, Brisbane, Queensland Australia. The schools pride themselves on their excellence in innovative teaching and learning complemented by a broad range of extra-curricular activities.

The schools are also recognized for their forward thinking use of technology to empower teachers. Technology has transformed curriculum options, and the vast amount of available material has enabled teachers to customize curriculum as never before.

But one of the greatest limitations of using technology is teachers are tied to wherever their computers are placed—typically their desk at the front of the classroom. The schools wanted to untether their teachers and provide the freedom to circulate amongst their students and use the entire classroom for teaching and learning opportunities. Their vision was to provide all the teachers the flexibility to engage directly with students, with the intention of increasing student engagement and collaboration.

The Challenge: Interactive Whiteboard is a Misnomer

St. Margaret's and St. Aidan's deployed short-throw projectors and whiteboards in each classroom and equipped the teaching staff with pen-enabled tablets. However, without a wireless display solution that allowed the teachers to project content from anywhere in the classroom, the whiteboards were glorified chalkboards at best. The teachers needed a better way to use the projectors in the classroom—and provide freedom of movement to engage with the entire classroom or incorporate one-on-one instruction time with students. Additionally, with approximately 140 learning spaces, the IT department needed a stable platform that could be supported in an enterprise manner and was device agnostic.

School
SSA Schools:
St. Margaret's Anglican Girls' School
St. Aidan's Anglican Girls School

Population
Approximately 1,600 pre-preparatory (kindergarten) to year 12 students, 100 teachers across two campuses

Number of classrooms
Approximately 140 classrooms across two campuses

Installed
Approximately 140 ScreenBeam wireless display receivers in all learning spaces across both campuses

Devices
Windows 8 pen-enabled tablets

The Solution: ScreenBeam Wireless Display

After an initial solution deployment proved not to be stable, the schools conducted a secondary search and selected the ScreenBeam wireless display solution that can project any content from a small screen such as a tablet, smartphone, or laptop to a large screen HDTV or projector. ScreenBeam receivers provide a direct connection between the device and display without unsightly cables. Both schools connected the ScreenBeam receivers to the projectors in all 140 learning spaces. Because ScreenBeam has no content limitations, teachers are able to project any material they want from anywhere in the classroom. The school found ScreenBeam easy to install, and teachers of all technical levels were able to quickly learn how to use the solution.

"ScreenBeam gave us the ability to move away from the traditional 'chalk and talk' teaching model where teachers are positioned at the front of the room. Our teachers can now fluidly inhabit their entire classroom space—while interacting with the content being displayed. They can now project either teacher or student work from the tablet anywhere in the room to collaborate on a math problem or convey an idea for example, while also providing individualized attention to a student in need."

—Peter Cottle, Head of eLearning & Research, St. Margaret's Anglican Girls' School

Results: Putting students in the driver's seat

One subject where "untethered teaching" has made a real difference is math. Vicki Strid, Head of Faculty at St. Margaret's, uses a combination of enabling technologies: OneNote Class Notebook App in Office 365 to quickly compile lesson plans and GeoGebra which she uses to demonstrate geometry and algebra concepts. Furthermore, Intel's wireless display technology allows her to wirelessly project her tablet screen onto the whiteboard.

"Untethering from a fixed position at the front of the classroom has been liberating. I can walk around the classroom and simultaneously annotate notes and diagrams which I am projecting from my computer onto the whiteboard. In addition, I can freeze the image on the whiteboard for students to annotate over while sitting beside another student, conduct part of the lesson from the student's desk and provide one-on-one assistance if needed."

—Vicki Strid, Head of Maths

With ScreenBeam Vicki can observe from any point in the classroom and instantly seize opportunities to challenge her students to work together at the front of the classroom and solve a math problem. Putting students in the teacher's role both increases self-confidence and reinforces learning. In effect, by surrendering the front of the classroom for collaborative and extension learning opportunities, Vicki has increased her control and overall impact. As Peter notes, "Our use of innovative technology has allowed our teaching staff to work more collaboratively with students rather than simply 'stand and deliver content' and in effect, democratize the learning process."

Industry Leader

ScreenBeam Inc., a leading wireless display and collaboration provider, delivers an app-free screen sharing experience on any modern device to bring intuitive wireless collaboration into any meeting space or classroom. ScreenBeam is Microsoft's co-engineering partner for wireless display enabling wireless Office 365 experiences.

ScreenBeam solutions are used as the validation platform for wireless display functionality by companies like Microsoft and leading PC OEM and device companies. Headquartered in San Jose, CA, ScreenBeam has offices across the United States, Europe and Asia.