

Creating an Agile, More Connected Learning Environment

Open Access College

Size: 200 teachers
Industry: Education
Location: Australia

Solutions

- Enhancing remote teaching with interactive online platform
- Expanding access to connected learning with a high performing network
- Improving staff interactions with video conferencing for meetings and training

Results

Using Cisco technology to digitize and transform education, OAC:

- Increased agility to meet future course enrollment needs
- Reduced annual phone costs by over 96% with connected network learning
- Achieved a tenfold increase in enrollment over five years for statewide language classes

From One-Way Communication to Digital Interaction

Teachers at Open Access College (OAC) campuses in Adelaide and Port Augusta, Australia, are currently leading lessons remotely. These sessions are designed for those unable to access learning in any other way.

Until recently, classes used audio conferencing, delivered to students between five and 18-years-old who were isolated through illness or geography. But this type of communication was pretty much one-way, and it was costly. When its annual phone bill reached nearly US\$ 1.2 (AUD\$ 1.5) million, OAC was asked by the state education department to cut spending by a third.

“We sought technology that would not only significantly reduce costs, but also enhance our teaching in a more engaged manner,” recalls Julie Taylor, Principal.

To address those challenges, OAC introduced Cisco WebEx® Training Center. This interactive platform conjures up an exciting virtual classroom where teachers and students share resources, including visual

materials and movies. Children can work on projects in breakout groups while the teacher monitors their progress. Everyone can use a whiteboard and see each other’s desktops.

Teachers have more flexibility in how they use their time. They can give extra help at the end of classes to individuals who need it, or set up feedback sessions on the fly. With this approach, teachers can deliver high quality education in a flexible, agile manner.

“Through WebEx we can bring more color and life to our lessons,” says Robin Sleeman, Assistant Principal. “That’s very powerful. It gives us enhanced contact with students, so we can support their learning in ways that weren’t possible before.”

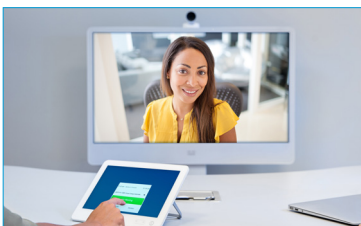
More Effective Teaching with Connected Learning

Students are able to access learning anywhere, any time, on almost any device. Teachers can work freely on campus with reliable connections supported by Cisco wireless access points. No longer tied to a single location, they can offer a more enriched educational experience.

Using Cisco technology to digitize and transform education, OAC:



Increased agility to meet future course enrollment needs



Reduced annual phone costs by over 96% with connected network learning



Achieved a tenfold increase in enrollment over five years for statewide language classes

Quality distance learning is underpinned by highly reliable, secure WAN connectivity to remote locations. The Cisco Catalyst® switching foundation also provides speed for bandwidth-hungry applications like graphics rendering, which is ideal for subjects like photography.

“With Cisco networking, we have greater agility and can reliably connect to multiple remote areas simultaneously over video,” says Kenneth Burgoyne, Data and Infrastructure Manager.

Staff and leadership meetings between campuses now occur over a Cisco TelePresence® system. With video conferencing endpoints in meeting rooms and all leaders’ offices, interactions are much more engaging. Additionally, the school can cut travel costs, while retaining face-to-face interactions.

OAC staff and students can meet the way they want, with video, audio, and content sharing. Cisco Collaboration Meeting Rooms Cloud combines the simplicity of Cisco WebEx meetings with an all-inclusive video bridging capability. This gives an always-on, always-available meeting experience. For example, OAC can provide teacher training, or make it easy for remote students to participate in onsite workshops.

Lessons are recorded, so students who missed a class can watch it in full. All recordings are stored in the school’s learning management system for reference or revision purposes.

The system also captures evidence of students’ progress, vital for teachers’ records and planning.

To safeguard this connected learning environment, the college selected award-winning Cisco technical support.

“We can’t afford any downtime, so we have Smart Net Total Care on all our Cisco products,” says Kenneth Burgoyne. “That level of maintenance and support is critical to our operation.”

Higher Student Engagement at a Far Lower Cost

Cisco WebEx is now the default platform for scheduled OAC lessons. Between 10 and 15 concurrent sessions run at any one time. That’s more than 1,000 teaching hours every day.

With one annual Cisco WebEx subscription, the college has slashed its phone bill by over 96 percent, for a savings of US\$1.37 (AUD\$ 1.8) million per year.

The Cisco connected learning foundation, with secure wired and wireless connections, helps OAC scale quickly and grow faster. The primary years’ language partnership program is a good example. This popular program offers specialist teaching to school classes throughout South Australia. By its fifth year enrolment had soared from 400 to 4,000 students. That success and scalability wouldn’t have been achievable before.

“Students have better relationships with their teachers and each other, and a deeper understanding of their work requirements. That helps them achieve to the very best of their ability.”

Julie Taylor
Principal, Open Access College

All age groups use the technology effectively. Senior students develop independent learning skills by logging in, unsupervised, to classes. The school will soon offer adults the chance to participate in parents’ forums and consultations remotely.

Teachers have been empowered to enhance their methods and practices through face-to-face interaction with students. The improved learning environment has stimulated much higher levels of student engagement.

“Though digitization, we’re able to innovate and be more agile in the way we deliver education to remote areas,” Julie Taylor concludes. “Students have better relationships with their teachers and each other, and a deeper understanding of their work requirements. That helps them achieve to the very best of their ability, which is exactly what we’re aiming for.”

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco solutions featured in this case study, visit the following webpages:

Customer stories:

www.cisco.com/go/customerstories

Collaboration:

www.cisco.com/go/collaboration

Networking:

www.cisco.com/go/networking

Services:

www.cisco.com/go/services

Products and Services

Switching

- Cisco Catalyst 2960-X Series Switches

Routing

- Cisco 2900 Series Integrated Services Routers

Wireless

- Cisco Aironet 2702I Series Access Points
- Cisco 5520 Wireless Controller

Collaboration

- Cisco WebEx Training Centre
- Cisco Collaboration Meeting Rooms
- Cisco TelePresence SX10 Quick Set
- Cisco TelePresence SX20 Quick Set
- Cisco TelePresence SX80 Codec

Services

- Cisco Smart Net Total Care



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