



Calrossy Anglican School



About

Calrossy Anglican School is an independent school in Tamworth, in the North West of NSW. This co-educational institution has around 1000 students, across Primary and Secondary, and prides itself on being “a dynamic, caring and Christian environment in which boys and girls may grow to be adults of faith, integrity, courage and compassion, with a love of learning.”

Catriona White

Teacher-Librarian talks to us about how the school went digital, why they chose ReadCloud to provide their digital resources and the impact it has had in the classroom.

Background

Calrossy Anglican School became a ReadCloud school in early 2014, with the introduction of the new junior curriculum in NSW for Years 7 and 9. “As part of the introduction to the new curriculum, the school decided to go digital. As a textbook hire school, this meant no longer purchasing physical copies of texts.”

Calrossy introduced a Bring Your Own Device policy, with iPads in years 7 and 9, due to the breadth of educational apps available, as well as the ease with which younger students were able to use the devices. Prior to this, they had predominantly been using Windows devices, with laptops for staff and standalone PCs in labs and classrooms around the school.

Transitioning to Digital Textbooks

Introducing a new tool, inevitably brings challenges that need to be acknowledged and managed. For Calrossy, in 2014, devices were less ubiquitous than they are now. Being new to the classroom, the introduction of digital had a small impact on ability to focus. But now that the novelty has worn off, devices are now seen as a tool in the school, just like a pen and a piece of paper.



Initially students were hesitant to have digital textbooks and asked for physical copies. This request soon diminished when students realised the advantage of not having to carry heavy physical copies around with them in their school bags... for books that are not available digitally, there is disappointment from the students.

When it came to teachers, some were also hesitant at first. “But once [teachers] realised the advantage of being able to project the text, annotate and also not have to lug textbooks around the school and home, they too now request digital..”

ReadCloud became a part of the teachers toolkit. It enabled them to curate content, add assessments and other resources to the class cloud or text (depending on text) to support student learning to be focused in the one area without having to go to the LMS.

Catriona described the impact of ReadCloud in the classroom as one of the key reasons why Calrossy needed a platform like this.



ReadCloud assisted in maintaining focus as students were not navigating to various websites for publisher content. Students' texts were readily accessible and for the teacher, the text was specific to the Class Cloud, so always starting a class where the last left off. The ability to add additional content and links to appropriate stimulus within the Cloud was a bonus.



The ReadCloud Advantage

For Catriona and Calrossy, the ReadCloud proposition was not just about getting access to resources and simplifying teaching and learning. Having a partner who could show consideration for school and student needs was important. This included:

Offline accessibility for when there is no or limited internet: "ReadCloud provided access to a range of digital resources including textbooks, novels and plays which were accessible to our students on their BYOD both at school and at home, but more importantly, when the Internet was not available as PDF files."

Managing the different publishers on behalf of the school: "A one stop shop for all digital content, such as ReadCloud reduced the difficulties of subscribing students to various publishers' content. ReadCloud dealt with each Publisher and liaised with them for technical difficulties."

Considerations for Schools and Leaders

Catriona provides this advice for schools and leaders on moving to digital:

Access Code Management - different publishers have different means of supplying the digital resources. Access codes are an acquired characteristic of digital eBooks that need to be managed.

Financial costs - if a bundle for several years is offered that meets the majority of your needs then this is financially more effective than purchasing each year.



I strongly recommend using a platform such as ReadCloud to manage your activation with publishers. Having distribution of digital texts linked to timetables and student details reduces lots of the issues... It is wonderful to use ReadCloud as it completely removes the stress of having to manage access codes for distribution and logging in.

