

School cloud transforms curriculum creativity and collaboration.

When technology pioneer, Frankston High School, put their curricula in the cloud, they made it easy for teachers to custom-build content for each class while powering collaboration and student inclusion.

COMPANY SUMMARY

Frankston High School in Victoria is a recognised world-leader in using technology in the classroom. They were the first state school in Australia to implement a 1:1 program and the first to move to a 1:1 tablet computer program. They regularly host visits from educationalists across the globe.

THE CHALLENGE

Teachers already kept their course curricula online using Microsoft SharePoint but they wanted to make the content more accessible, dynamic and useful. They wanted students to collaborate more intensively when working from home, and have the ability to observe progress on students' work, so they could informally coach and steer them in the right direction.

THE SOLUTION

Using SharePoint Online in Microsoft Office 365, Director of Technical Services, Daniel Anderson gave teachers the ability to quickly create their own branded class and project collaboration sites. Teachers build curriculum material into master notebooks using Microsoft OneNote and store them on dedicated class and project sites. Students download the notebooks, work directly into their own versions, and save them in the cloud with SkyDrive Pro.

Anderson enhanced SharePoint Online functionality, creating site drop boxes for students to submit completed work, and workflows to alert teachers to missed deadlines. Site discussion forums enable students to pose and answer questions, while teachers provide newsfeeds and updates. With a single sign on managed via Active Directory, students can access all sites and workbooks online via the school website.

THE RESULTS AND BENEFITS

Dynamic curriculum management: Teachers customise course content more easily, keeping it fresh and accessible. "They build master notebooks to meet the specific needs of each class, and students access all materials and updates from one site," says Anderson.

Real-time collaboration: Students enjoy greater flexibility because they can log onto class sites from anywhere, and collaborate on project documents in real-time from home. All their work is stored and backed up in the cloud.

Targeted coaching: Teachers have real-time visibility on all work stored on class sites. Using a stylus, they hand-write comments directly into project work, encouraging students to develop points, consult other sources or expand their ideas—before submitting.

Active discussion: Online conversations stimulate inclusion. "There is far more interaction and collaboration outside the classroom than was ever possible before," says Anderson. "We've observed that students who are reticent in class are far more forthcoming in SharePoint Online discussion forums."

"Most schools just don't have the servers or skills to create rich discussion and collaboration forums for each class or project. SharePoint Online doesn't just make it possible; it makes it easy."

Daniel Anderson, Director of Technical Services, Frankston High School

Greater flexibility: School IT staff don't need to maintain specific application suites on student devices, because SharePoint Online documents open in Web Apps. 25 Gigabytes of SkyDrive storage per student eases pressure on school file and email servers.

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