

Online learning an opportunity to enhance technology skills



Unprecedented times in education are providing an opportunity to develop technological skills that can be used well after the online learning period, teachers and students of St Rita's College have found.

The Secondary Girls' school already combined digital and traditional learning, but is now seeing an enhancement of content delivery and connection via creative techniques and new platforms.

Head of Program – Senior Studies and Science Teacher, Ms Caroline George, said her first challenge was working quickly to deliver two virtual microbiology experiments.

“We performed the experiments in the laboratory at school, filming and photographing the steps, the next stage being teaching the students how to analyse the data,” Ms George said.

“I filmed my screen to show the girls how to conduct data analysis in Excel and recorded my voice over a slideshow; after several failed attempts, I mastered it and was able to provide resources the girls could easily refer to at home.”

Ms George said she also used free-form information and multi-user platform OneNote extensively.

“We developed some more hands-on lessons for younger students such as using Oreo biscuits to model the movement of tectonic plates in Year 8 Science,” she said.

“I have found I have been able to provide individual targeted feedback much faster online than I'd otherwise been able; I think accessibility to the teacher has been really easy in the online environment.

“My use of technology has improved significantly and I will take these skills further into the future.”

Mathematics Teacher and Head of House Benjamin Babao said for him, technology was to thank for a smooth transition to online learning.

“While teaching online, I am still able to utilise the class OneNote projected on the screen so the girls can follow along; they have found this really helpful and have said it is similar to being at school,” Mr Babao said.

“Whenever I need to swap applications, to a graphing website or the calculator emulator, I just drag it on screen and the students can see it as well.”

He said the use of video chat platform *Zoom* had served him well in Senior classes.

“The students benefit from being able to follow along in real-time because they are able to ask questions straight away verbally, instead of after-the-fact in a written format.”

Zoom has also been a virtual helping hand for Health and Physical Education subjects, in particular 10PHE.

“With one click, all students can see the same PowerPoint which would normally be on the board in class,” HPE Teacher Sarah Crellin said.

“Students are always engaged as everyone gets asked a question at random throughout the lesson.

“Students have learnt their anatomy and biomechanics through one teacher going through a skeleton model or performing actions on screen. Their first exam was also conducted while on *Zoom*.”

Years 11 and 12 students have now returned to school, with Years 7 to 10 continuing to follow the College’s ***Learning at Home*** program.