

# Today's Learners – Our Digital Life

21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning has nothing to do with iPads, iPod Touches, Android devices or Tablet technology. In fact, the only 1:1 that we should be concerned with is; equitable access to **rigorous, relevant and irresistible** learning experiences that reflect and harness the times, environment and ultimate goals of learning. The use of technology should ultimately help students to become resourceful and habitual learners. Having students simply 'use' technology in the classroom will not necessarily result in their preparation for life in the world as it is today and will be tomorrow. Technology should be interwoven within the student's learning experiences and should be used to facilitate an experience that is relevant and engaging . It should allow each student the chance to customise their learning to best cater for strengths, weaknesses and learning styles. **Successful schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be laced with a curriculum aimed at engaging students in addressing real-world problems, issues that are important to humanity, and questions that matter.**

My name is **Kylie Taig** and I am the **Head of eLearning** at Carey Baptist Grammar School. As you probably already know Carey is a co-educational, independent school that is committed to learning, wellbeing, service and spirituality. At Carey learning is dynamic, empowering and lifelong and as stated in our school charter all decisions are made to improve student learning. I have the privilege of overseeing the integration of information and communication technologies into the school curriculum and ensuring their effective use to prepare students for learning and working in the digital age. **More importantly** I am also a Maths, Science and Health teacher.

As part of my eLearning role I have successfully introduced a **1:1 iPad program from Prep to Year 6**, where all Prep - Year 6 students work with an individualised learning companion during the school day. This includes a bank of iPads in the ELC at both the Kew and Donvale Campuses. The Year 5 and 6 students manage their own devices and are allowed to take their iPad home. I have also played a major role in continuing our **1:1 digital learning program from Year 7 to Year 12** where students work across both the Mac and PC platforms. To say I cause a headache for our IT department is an understatement!

So why technology in the classroom??

According to the **Melbourne Declaration** "Young people need to be highly skilled in the use of ICT". The Declaration also states that while many schools are beginning to employ the use of these technologies it is vital that there is an increase in their effectiveness over the next decade.

The most common - and in fact, nearly **universal** - teacher-reported result of using technology in the learning process, is an increase in **motivation**. Teachers and students are sometimes surprised at the level of technology-based accomplishment displayed by students who have shown much less initiative with conventional tasks. Students thrive on the **immediate feedback** that technology can provide and students experience an increase in confidence as they learn at their own pace on their own terms.

**Realistically** if we think about it - we wouldn't be here if we didn't believe that technology has great implications for teaching and learning

So lets rewind back to the begin and see where Carey's digital journey began.

Using technology at Carey is nothing new. We have had a successful **1:1 laptop program in our Middle School since 1998**. In 2006 we introduced a **tablet device** and today in 2013 we run a **multi-platform environment** where the devices are chosen specifically to support learning. We are well aware that learning is different for every child and therefore devices most suit the **context and goals of learning**.

Four years ago in 2009 Carey made the bold move to rid our Junior School classrooms of **desktop computers** and replace them with banks of **portable laptops**. Back then this change was seen as a large leap into the unknown. Staff were wary, some fraught with despair and apprehension – **how could** they possibly cope with such a tremendous change? **How would the classroom space be managed? Could our infrastructure cope with the demands? Would authentic, valuable teaching and learning experiences be lost forever??**

In 2012 the decision to move slightly to the left and integrate an **iPad** was easy! Why you may ask?? Simply because we had done our homework! In mid 2010 when iPads were fresh out of the box we began our first iPad trial – teachers, students and parents were sceptical. How could such a simple device have such an impact on teaching and learning? **In December 2010** we gave our Yr 5 Staff an early Christmas present – a shiny new learning companion. That summer we begun our journey – a journey into what was very much unknown territory.

**In 2011 we put iPads to the test.** The Year 5 students at both our Kew and Donvale campuses were given the opportunity to use a device for a term. During this initial trial we gathered data, spoke with students, parents and teachers, made mistakes, learnt from our mistakes, but most importantly it was a time to sit back, watch and learn. What could this device really do? We knew that regardless of the brand no device can or ever will replace quality teaching and learning – but to be completely honest we were amazed by the work students were producing, the **experiences** they were participating in and the **collaborative, engaging nature** in which they approached their learning. At the end of each term it was devastating having to remove the iPads and send them on their journey to the next class. There were many stories of success including the one Student who told me that for the first time she had felt a part of something. The iPad had given her freedom – she could seek answers, explore and learn all at her own pace.

Our experiences in this initial trial clearly highlighted that iPads could allow students with diverse learning styles to engage with ideas in ways not previously thought possible. Students were exposed to rich visuals and audio and teachers could easily bring new and innovating approaches in to the classroom. **In 2012 we were ready for a wider trial – 1:1 for all Year 5 students across both campuses.**

The laptops that were once seen as an intrusion into teaching and learning, were pushed to their limit in their fourth year while we waited to see if iPads were the way of the future. These devices had served the students well, BUT by the end of 2012 it was time to move forward with a device that fostered 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, encouraged **collaboration and creativity and promoted inquiry** – based learning and differentiated instruction. **2013 was the year to empower and inspire our young learners.**

### **So were we ready?**

John Hattie suggests that the biggest influence on student learning and achievement is unquestionably the **teacher**. The teacher is central to the success of the initiatives in the classroom so we must invest in their professional development and training to ensure best practices are modeled.

For the second part of 2012 we began to prepare for a wider rollout of iPads. All Junior Staff were given iPads and regular Professional Development sessions were held to ensure that staff were familiar and comfortable with their new learning companion.

### **So were we ready for such radical change?**

- **Techy Breakys** took place on a regular basis and over a croissant and a glass of orange juice teachers gathered to discuss improved practice, develop skills and expertise and learn from the experiences of others. These informal sessions continue today and are teacher led and focus on issues and challenges that are of immediate importance. This could range from an EverNote 'how to' session, to an App sharing session or even how to integrate and use Green Screen Technology in the classroom.

- **While iPads are definitely not just about 'Apps', early** on in our introductory phase we ran some App sharing sessions where teachers were randomly chosen (random name picker) to talk about their favourite App and of course more importantly its application for learning. We had over 50 teachers wanting to share their Apps and as a result created an iBook which is widely shared within the Carey community. This book focused on teaching ideas and gave teachers an excellent starting point to using the iPad within their classroom.

- **Like most schools we have struggled with the concept of transferring files on an iPad.** Very early on we realised that one method does not fit all and as one of our file management solutions we have used the platform EverNote to set up shared Notebooks with Students and Teachers. One of the features of our EverNote Business account is that we have a library which allows teachers to share Professional Learning Notebooks. These Notebooks are available to all Staff and Students and consist of titles such as:

- EverNote How to
- iPad Resources
- Junior School App of the Week
- Thinking Routines

- Staff were and continue to be involved in regular Carey **TeachMeet events**. These short 5 - 7 minute presentations are given by teachers and focus on something that has worked for them in the classroom. It could be a great interdisciplinary project, a tried and tested discipline technique or a quick attention grabber. The length of these sessions is what makes them appealing - don't like what the presenter is saying - you only have to wait 7 minutes to hear the next presentation.
- **Speed dating with the iPad** was a great way to learn about the iPad and what teacher would say no to wine and cheese! These informal get togethers allow staff to ask questions, share ideas and understand the importance and varied use of the iPad within the classroom.
- When introducing the **SAMAR Model** (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition) Learning buddies were implemented so that Staff had someone to share their curriculum initiatives and ideas with.

### **Support for Students and Parents:**

Technology now provides us with a means to ensure that 'no child is left behind' but it does create some difficulties for parents some of which may have limited technical ability. **Teachers**, Students and Parents must all be on the same page when it comes to working and playing in a digital world. Carey is committed to the **iKeepSafe Generation Safe** 360 degrees program and as a result have implemented a whole school approach to technology at our keystone year levels: Year 5, Year 7 and Year 10 - which is when students receive new devices.

In order to receive their **device** students and parents are required to attend a **compulsory** 1 hour Digital Citizenship session. The rules are simple - non attendance means no device! The session covers general set-up and maintenance, student and parent responsibility and gives parents some tips and tricks for instilling **good digital citizenship in their child**.

The main messages to parents are

- Talk to your students about the appropriate use of technology – this is not just the school's responsibility!!
- What goes on the Net stays on the Net
- and Choose your identity **carefully**

We also highlight rules for use at home - no devices should be in the bedroom, appropriate games for **appropriate ages etc.**

Ok so now for the fun stuff!

The things that all good teachers cannot live without!

### **EverNote**

<https://evernote.com>

- Just like a student workbook
- Share work between teachers
- Can include text, pictures/photos and embed other documents
- Creation of ePortfolios
- Simple to use and works across all platforms

### **Pinterest**

<https://www.pinterest.com>

- Search for boards that interest you (someone has done the handwork of collating all the good stuff!)
- Create your own boards to look at later on - 'Pin' your favourite things
- Follow people of interest and see what they are doing in their classrooms!

### **Best Apps for Kids website**

<http://bestappsforkids.com>

- Subscribe and get notified when Apps are on sale
- Receive weekly emails - usually on the weekend about new Apps
- Emails contain examples of how to use Apps/iPads in the classroom
- Search for Apps based on age and categories

### **CommonSense Media**

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>

- Provides unbiased information, trusted advice and innovative tools to help teachers and parents harness the power of media and technology
- Search for ratings on Apps, books, movies etc.
- Gives reviews from Parents, Students and Teachers
- Provides lesson ideas

## **Books!**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/id448923255?mt=8>

- There are a lot out there but this is one of my favourites!
- Little Bird is designed to help parents initiate conversations around internet safety in an age-appropriate manner.
- Can even print out a PDF to display in the classroom ([https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Faa-download.avg.com%2Ffiledir%2Ffas%2Ffamily-safety\\_little-bird.pdf](https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Faa-download.avg.com%2Ffiledir%2Ffas%2Ffamily-safety_little-bird.pdf))

**To finish with here is my top Apps that enhance student engagement, inspire creativity and promote inquiry based learning and differentiated instruction**

## **AniMatch**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/animatch-animal-pairs-sounds/id293548481?mt=8>

- Big easy to navigate buttons
- Match animals and hear their sounds
- Develops concentration, memory and cognitive skills

## **The Monster at the end of this book**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/monster-at-end-this-book...starring/id409467802?mt=8>

- This 12 page book offers different activities on each page.
- App is hands on asking students to untie ropes, touch a knot to make it unravel, knock down brick walls, and tickle Grover by tapping on his image.
- As the book's words appear on each page, various characters say them out loud and reveal hints that help kids interact with the book.

## **Reading Raven**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/reading-raven-hd/id496586135?mt=8>

- Activities include letter and word matching, letter tracing, letter recognition, word spelling, word grouping and read aloud
- You can change the level of difficulty (basic activities for ages 3+, medium difficulty for 4+, advanced for 5+ age group)

## **Tellagami (Teacher Tool)**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/tellagami/id572737805?mt=8>

Tellagami is an app that allows you to create a 30 second clip to share information with others. You design an avatar-like character, add a background, then type in the text or record your own voice to share the knowledge you want.

- For story telling
- Introduce a new topic
- Give instructions to an activity
- Tell parents about activities
- Used to explain a students thinking

## **Word Salad (Teacher Tool)**

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/wordsalad-your-salads-redefined/id545164778?mt=8>

- Reading comprehension
- As a story Stimulus
- Practice grammatical knowledge
- Practice reading
- Recall and review texts
- Assess understanding
- Show progress
- To introduce a new topic
- To show parents what has been covered in a day/week

Education has been through various changes over the centuries. However, none have been greater than the one occurring in this technological age. For the first time the way learning occurs is truly changing. Educators have limitless resources at their fingertips and have access to technology that can help them deliver their lessons effectively and efficiently. Students have access to vast stores of information and already have technological knowledge to access this information even before entering the classroom. What a truly exciting time to be a teacher!

**Thank- you**