<case study left menu header>
Nazareth Catholic College (Primary)

<Title>Making a difference in Digital Technologies

<Subtitle>Inspiration for teachers, by teachers

**<H1>Project summary**

The Digital Technologies Hub launched at the beginning of 2017, and has been closely followed by a team of teachers from Nazareth Catholic College (Primary). Nazareth’s Digital Technologies Team, facilitated by learning coordinator Mrs Emma Fowler, is passionate about leading learning in the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies. It started its campaign in the year when the Hub was launched, and you can [see details of the team’s formation and previous work here.](https://www.digitaltechnologieshub.edu.au/school-leaders/making-a-difference/three-key-initiatives)

In 2018, the team continued its work by developing a Scope and Sequence that allocated a specific area of coding and digital technologies to each year level so that learning could be progressive rather than repetitive. The implementation of this set of clear guidelines means that students’ learning, experience of devices, and opportunities changes each year. It also ensures that teachers who may change year levels regularly know what to teach and when.

The Digital Technologies Hub developed various pilots across a variety of year levels and classes, and our school participated in a pilot. Each participating teacher in the team from the college supported their own year level in developing units of work with assessment tasks. In this way, they gained significant insights and invaluable experience. Their commitment to the Hub’s pilot included many hours dedicated to ensuring Digital Technologies had its place in the weekly timetable. Individual staff also pursued expert-level professional development through webinars, and utilised the experience of others worldwide through YouTube, considerably increasing their skills and knowledge.

Being current classroom teachers, Nazareth’s Digital Technologies team members understood colleagues’ difficulties when faced with change.

Many of us remember all too well the classrooms from the last decade, which had one desktop computer and a group of children huddled around its screen, sharing a set of headphones. Memories may also include the weekly trip to the computer room with children who, more often than not, spent half the lesson logging on. Fast-forward to 2018 and we have access to world-class technology at our fingertips and the potentially overwhelming responsibility to teach this to our increasingly tech-savvy children.

**<H2>Our focus**

We quickly realised that we had a team of people at Nazareth who could help meet a growing need; our teachers were now experts in their own areas, ready and capable of leading change. We had the knowledge, passion and skills to address the limited professional development opportunities by creating our own.

**<H2>The project grows: a Nazareth-hosted conference**

A successful professional learning day (led by the Digital Technologies Hub team) and a visit to the National Future Schools conference in Melbourne provided the impetus for our school’s development of a new initiative: *The NazTECH – Digital Technologies Conference*, sponsored by Google.

We held the first Adelaide conference at the Nazareth’s Primary College in Findon, South Australia, and welcomed 150 educators from 12 schools all over the Western Adelaide region. Dr Neil McGoran, Director of Catholic Education South Australia, gave the welcome address, inspiring educators to embrace the opportunity. It was, he said, ‘a wonderful showcase of Catholic Education’s commitment to cultivating the new Digital Technologies curriculum’.

This *NazTEC* conference was dedicated to meeting the needs of teachers who were trying to cover diverse and unfamiliar content within the scope of the Digital Technologies curriculum. As one presenter put it, ‘Our students’ futures will be digitally rich, and we as educators need to prepare every student for jobs we have not yet imagined’.

The success of the day was largely due to the sessions presented *by* teachers, *for* teachers.  This was both reassuring and motivating for colleagues attending. It encouraged the possibility for change and showed that goals were not unreachable or unachievable. Classroom teachers juggling timetables and responsibilities had trialled and revised the learning opportunities so that attendees could return to their own schools, inspired and ready to commit to change. The sessions also provided attendees with some guidance about which tried and tested technologies would be both safe and valuable investments in providing a starting point for the creation of a relevant and exciting Digital Technologies curriculum.

Pam Ronan (Strategic Educational Leadership and Corporate Governance, Catholic Education Office South Australia), was at the conference. She was ‘impressed by the confidence and competence of each presenter and their ability to engage educators from different schools and with diverse technology expertise … and … to see how technology is being embraced and used at Nazareth to foster student learning and engagement’.

**<H2>Our second Nazareth-hosted conference**

The Nazareth team hosted its second conference in the state’s mid-north, with staff from six regional schools in attendance. We were thrilled to offer the same smaller scale learning opportunity for teachers who are often disadvantaged by distance. We are dedicated to continuing to share our wealth of knowledge with the wider community.

**<H3>Masterclasses at the conference**

Ten masterclasses were developed and offered as part of the conference. We provided learning opportunities through a range of sessions, ensuring that all year and skill levels were catered for. Each attendee had the opportunity to book four sessions most suited to their needs. This enabled the best possible outcomes for future implementation. The small-group classes allowed participants to learn and problem-solve with like-minded peers while being able to seek support and advice from the lead teachers who were facilitating.

Masterclass learning opportunities included these:

* Coding with Dash Robots
* 3D Printing
* Scratch
* Sequencing with Osmo
* Cyber Safety – Where does it Fit?
* Coding in the Early Years
* Website Design
* Game Design using Bloxels
* Understanding Algorithms
* Plug and Play with Arduino
* Wearable Technology
* Neuron Inventor
* Unplugged Coding
* Integrating Digital Technology into Literacy.

These masterclasses allowed visiting teachers to experiment, ask questions, discuss the tasks with peers and develop their confidence. ‘Being a part of the conference allowed me to be a pioneer for change. Seeing people’s positive interactions within the masterclasses left me in awe of the importance of collaboration both within the school and the system,’ said facilitator Rozanna Elmassih.

We in the Nazareth team are passionate about children developing the skills they need for the future and believe the only way this can happen is through teachers sharing best practice. We share our knowledge and resources for the common goal and benefit of all students in our care.

**<H2>Tips and advice**

Tips for leaders wanting to coordinate a team.

* Tip #1 Trust
Extend trust – place trust and patience in your team who are developing their capacity to teach, learn and lead.
* Tip #2 Risk
Take risks - be bold and be brave and try something new.
* Tip #3 Play
Play with the technology – you can't break it! Remember what it was like being a kid. Explore and discover what is fun and engaging, that is what will get the students excited too.

**<H2>Key resources accessible from the Nazareth Catholic College website**

You can find useful resources on the [Nazareth Catholic Community website](http://www.nazareth.org.au/) by entering ‘digital technologies’ into its **Search** field.

**<H2>About Nazareth Catholic College and its Digital Technologies Team**

Our school is a Foundation to 12 college located in the western suburbs of Adelaide. It is multicultural, with over 25 nationalities represented across our campuses. The 2018 Digital Technologies Team is led by Emma Fowler (2018 winner of the EdTechSA Leading Light award), who is joined by Olivia Abarno, Kristen Bueti, Stephen Crook, Rozanna Elmassih, Libby Gowen, Catherine Hamilton, Lauren Holmes, Natalie Horan, Sarah Hughes, Claire Krawczyk, Lin Low, Stephen Miller, Emily Parrella and Nicole Violi.

We are fortunate that each of our learning areas has a Smart Board, 1:1 devices from years 3 to 7, 3D printers and a range of robotic and coding devices used from Foundation onwards.