

St Philip's Christian College, Newcastle

Case Study

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BACKGROUND

Among the most important skills a child must learn at school is the ability to focus on the task set for them. Managing distraction is an essential part of the learning process and forms the basis for successful comprehension during class. But it's not always easy in open-plan learning spaces where excessive noise and other distractions can have a negative impact on students' concentration levels.

Paul Wellham of St Philip's Christian College, Newcastle has overseen the opening of a new large open plan learning space in the Junior School's new building.

CHALLENGE

While open plan classrooms are known to offer many benefits including greater creativity and collaboration – they also are more susceptible to mismanaged noise.

These large spaces can generate distracting sights and sounds when students are required to take part in critical listening activities in small groups or when working on their own.



Installing acoustic curtains in classrooms can not only help keep noise levels low, but create flexible learning spaces and alleviate visual distractions.

SOLUTION

St Philip's installed sound-absorbing wall murals and other elements when the new building was fitted out. The installation of acoustic curtains has further improved the sound properties of the space used by students. But the curtains have had an additional benefit – they break up students' line of sight so they aren't distracted by a neighbouring class when doing class-based activities.

Feedback from the teachers using the space has been overwhelmingly positive, Wellham says. They report that being able to reduce visual distraction is one of the key advantages of the new curtains. They add that the curtains are easy to move and have been installed in a range of colours that complement the décor of each room.

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