

Oldham College – OrCam Learn user story

## **OrCam Learn empowers students with learning challenges at Oldham College**

Oldham College is a further education college based in Greater Manchester. It offers its students a range of technical and professional qualifications and many courses, including vocational courses, T Levels, Apprenticeships, adult courses and university courses.

There are a variety of learners at Oldham College, many of whom face challenges in their reading and writing. The College decided to offer its students access to the OrCam Learn to support their learning through assistive technology.

The interactive OrCam Learn solution empowers students with learning challenges – including dyslexia – to effectively read and learn, resulting in enhanced comprehension, reading fluency, and improves overall confidence in an education setting.

Faye McLaughlin, Assistive Technologist at Oldham College, said: *“Some of our students have dyslexia, whereas others have general reading challenges. They don’t have confidence with reading and aren’t ready when it comes to preparing for their exams. The vision for our learners here at Oldham College is for them to be able to use assistive technology as an independent tool, and to be able to read and write confidently.*

*The students have been completely blown away with the OrCam Learn’s ability to read text back to them. It has given our students independence and we’ve seen a very positive response in their learning experience since its use. We’re now recognising that assistive technology is also having a huge impact on reducing anxieties for our learners, especially during exams.”*

The wireless, pen-sized OrCam Learn operates with a simple point-and-click operation. With its two precise laser guidance options, a student can either read an entire page of text with a single click or focus on a single word, significantly cutting down on study time.

*“What I really love about the OrCam Learn is it’s so simple to use”,* said Liz Wilcox, Programme Leader for Dyslexia at Oldham College. *“You can literally just point the device at a piece of text and it will read it to you. That same device will then read text off a whiteboard, off a computer screen, or even text from a poster on a wall.”*

## **Life-changing technology**

The OrCam Learn has been transformational for one Oldham College student, Maddie, as her teacher, Angela Owen explains: *“Maddie has autism and anxiety around reading. She’s been using the OrCam Learn for her studies, but also taking it to her work placement where she needs read a lot of materials to complete her tasks at a local bakery. Since using the OrCam Learn, the change in Maddie’s demeanour has been instant and very noticeable. She’s enthusiastic, excited, and keen on engaging with you. She says that the OrCam Learn has made her ‘feel normal’ for the first time in her life. It has literally changed her life.”*

## **Feedback and reading pace**

The learning solution also comes with a reading pace feature. The OrCam Learn will match the student’s desired pace of reading and can also be paused between words to allow the user to get the most out of the text. It can also be used within examination settings by activating ‘Exam Mode’ that ensures there is no possibility of any Wi-Fi, cloud or Bluetooth connectivity.

OrCam Learn's Reading Pal feature, gives students the ability to practise reading fluency by reading text to the OrCam Learn, and then receiving live positive feedback and reporting via a companion app or web platform.

*"We've been using the Reading Pal in lessons with the students which provides instant feedback on how well they are reading", explains Faye McLaughlin. "This has been an exciting new approach for our learners that we've never had before. We can also access the Reading Pal through the web portal which gives us a full breakdown on how well the learner has performed with their reading, which is an invaluable resource for us."*

Sharing her experience with the OrCam Learn, Oldham College student, Emily Peterson explains: *"The OrCam Learn has massively improved my reading. It's awesome. When I'm reading to it, it tells me how many words I'm reading correctly. And the feedback is always really positive too. My confidence has really improved, it's amazing!"*

### **Discovering the love of reading**

Another student, Demi Collins, who is dyslexic with ADHD and autism has been using the OrCam Learn with her studies. Demi explains how beneficial the learning solution has been for her.

*"As a dyslexic adult, you don't want to admit that you have difficulties in reading, but I've really struggled. Reading has always given me a feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach. The OrCam Learn is such a cool piece of technology. I was able to use it in my GCSEs which was brilliant as it cut down my time in exams massively, and I could focus on my answers instead of worrying about reading the questions."*

*I can't express enough how amazing the OrCam Learn is. It helps people so much and gives them independence in their learning that they never had before. It's really helped me in English and given me a new love for reading. I've asked for books for my birthday for the first time in my life."*