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Teacher preparation aimed at integrating technology

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Teacher preparation aimed at integrating technology

Since Fall 2015 Dominican University of California has enhanced its teacher preparation curriculum in order to prepare elementary, middle, and high school teachers to integrate technology into their classes. This comes as more schools embrace tablet computers and laptops, presenting teachers with challenges related to developing and organizing digital courses.

Twenty five students entering Dominican's [Single Subject Teacher Preparation Program](#) received iPads and custom-designed course instruction designed to teach them how to use classroom technologies effectively. The coursework equips, educates, and supports teaching credential candidates to meet the level of technological expertise required in today's K-12 classrooms, said Dr. Elizabeth Truesdell, associate professor and chair of Dominican's [Single Subject and Master's Degree programs](#).

"The goal is to help teaching credential candidates select and adapt instructional tools to address and engage students' varying learning styles and abilities," Truesdell said. "Today's students live in a digital world, and teachers must recognize that and be prepared to use technology effectively."

A key focus of the teacher preparation program will be how to use iPads to enhance learning literacy. The credential candidates are learning to use iPads for lesson planning, flipped classroom instruction, and teacher/student communication. Another goal is to reduce a teacher's technology learning curve.

Truesdell and colleague Dr. Rebecca Birch, technology facilitator, have designed the course instruction, including an iBook that was loaded onto the iPad. Dominican has been working with Apple, which identified iTunes U courses that Dominican faculty can access in order to create and manage their course.

In preparation for the iPad initiative, 10 faculty members from [Dominican's School of Education and Counseling Psychology](#) spent a semester learning how to integrate iPad technology into their own course offerings, including two pedagogy courses, two seminars, and the "Using Technology in the Classroom" course.

Dominican is ahead of the national curve when it comes to its approach with technology, Truesdell said.

"What makes us unique now is that we are modeling this in our classroom so our students are seeing it. Additionally, students are required to utilize new technologies in their Dominican lessons and assignments."

A former high school English teacher, Truesdell realized development of a common thread program was needed based on data from the 2011 California Commission on Teaching Credentialing, feedback from pre-service teachers, and a faculty technology survey she and Birch commissioned at Dominican. They concluded that many teachers today are experiencing digital naiveté in the classroom. These teachers are not fully prepared to help students learn curriculum subjects with computer-based applications and technology.

"There was a technology learning curve going on that was taking away from their actual teaching," Truesdell said.

Truesdell and Birch designed a three-tier framework focused on literacy, augmentation, and transformation of the credential program whereas the activity of learning can only be accomplished through leveraging technology. The goal is to help teaching credential candidates select and adapt instructional tools to address and engage K-12 students' varying learning styles and abilities.

"It's a pedagogy of learning how to incorporate different types of instructional tools and be able to access them and leverage them as they evolve," Truesdell said.

