

Middle grades education students use iPads to teach and learn

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Today children learn to use technology, in many cases, as soon as they learn to walk and talk. They have access to smartphones, tablets and the Internet in ways previous generations did not.

The same is true for today's classrooms, the use of technology marks a vital piece to the educational puzzle. Teachers must be ready and able to use technology to both engage and relate to students.

Georgia College teacher education candidates now have a resource in hand to help provide technologically-driven education for both themselves and their future students.

All 16 of the fall 2018 juniors entering the middle grades education program received iPads, which they use as a learning aid in their education and a resource to help educate their students.



Student teachers work with middle schoolers at Gray Station Elementary.

“The world around us is constantly changing, and technology has become more and more prominent. I think since technology is such a big part of our students lives, it should be part of the classroom too,” said Christina Saraiva, a junior middle grades education student.

It's about using apps to enhance teaching and learning, as well as fostering creativity, according to Middle Grades Professor Dr. Joanne Previts, and teacher candidates are doing just that.

“There are tons of ways to use iPads in your classroom, from taking notes, making projects, using Geoboard, finding math apps and games, researching ideas, to watching YouTube videos,” said Saraiva. “There is even an Apple app available called Classroom, where the teacher can create a class and watch what their students are working on, check their battery percentage, see their screen, or lock their iPad remotely.”

The idea for bringing this technology into the classrooms for education students has been in the works for more than a year.

“Apple came to campus about this time last year and presented on ways to use technology in education,” said Previts.

Administration in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education decided this was a worthwhile pursuit. The goal is to eventually have all undergraduate education majors equipped with an iPad, but for the initial launch, they knew they needed to start small. The middle grades cohort was the perfect size.

Then, when the challenge of purchasing the equipment came up, an alumna and her husband were quick to step in.

“I'm a 1961 graduate of Georgia College and have always tried to stay involved,” said Rosemary Strickland, '61.

Rosemary and her husband, Dr. Wade Strickland provided the funding to purchase iPads for all 16 students in the cohort.

“We own a telephone company in Brantley County, so we see the impact of technology and how it's changing,” she said. “I was also given a scholarship to help with my education at Georgia College, and we just want to give back in any way



Christina Saraiva teaches using the iPad.

we can.”

Truly a campuswide effort, representatives from the Department of Information Technology, the Center for Teaching and Learning, as well as College of Education helped make this a reality for students.

“A group of us took a trip to Apple headquarters in Austin, Texas. It was several faculty members, staff and a student,” said Dr. Chris Greer, professor of instructional technology. “The Apple representatives were really excited to work with us, and said we were the first to bring a student to the training.”

Junior Renee Cunningham joined faculty and staff for the visit where the group learned how to use the iPad in the classroom and opportunities for training teachers.



Renee Cunningham uses technology to teach Gray State Middle School students.

"I am extremely grateful that I was able to be a part of the whole process with the iPads. It was exciting to be in Austin when it was still in the works and then discover in December we would actually receive the iPads," said Cunningham, a junior middle grades education major.

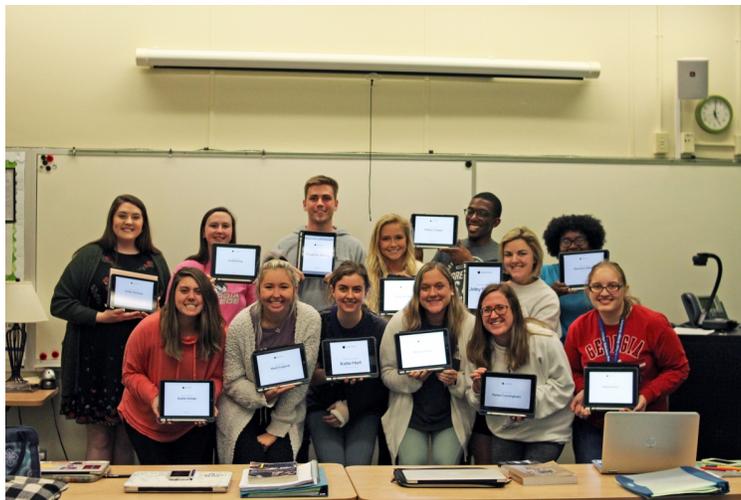
Although she was involved throughout the process, the big reveal came in January, much to the surprise of the entire group.

"I knew before my other cohort members knew and didn't tell them because I wanted it to be special for them," Cunningham said. "I was thrilled to learn new technology skills and see all the ways we would be able to use them in the classroom. As a cohort, we were all so excited when we found out that we would be given this opportunity."

Since getting the iPads, all students have become Apple Educator certified. They completed the training and passed a test for the certification.

The group is currently placed in two Jones County middle schools, Clifton Ridge and Gray Station. Both schools have iPads available for student use, so the Georgia College teacher candidates are able to integrate them into their lessons.

"Recently, I used the iPad to record myself teaching. This was such a rewarding experience because I was able to notice things that I do while I teach, as well as take a closer look at what the students do while I teach," said Savaira. "From my body language, to my facial expression, to my tone of voice; how I address students can be observed through a video. This provided an opportunity to self-assess myself as an educator by noticing areas of strengths and areas of needed improvement."



All students in the cohort recently received their Apple Certification.

Previts and Greer have received their Apple Teacher Certification as well and use the technology in their courses. The goal is for faculty to receive the designation in the future.

"It fosters collaboration and creativity in new ways," said Previts. "My students are doing digital reflections, using clips to make videos, the possibilities are endless."

Several students are also planning research presentations at conferences in the next year on the benefits and uses of iPads in the classroom.



Teacher candidate Broughton Bellamy works with students.



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