Integrating Microsoft Digital Literacy Enables Law Enforcement Education

Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: Vocational Education

Student Profile

Detective Mayes is a 16-year veteran of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, and has been teaching law-enforcement tactics courses for over 12 years.

"Seeing is believing. When I'm able to use computer technology for my class it makes a visual impact for students, and when we go for the hands-on part, we're that much further ahead. It has really made a huge difference."

Detective Orrlando Mayes, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

In the last decade, using computers to teach traditional classroom topics has revolutionized the teaching profession. Today, an increasing number of vocational fields are starting to benefit as well. In Sacramento, a program is helping veteran trainers in areas such as law enforcement and fire science bring technology to their non-traditional students.

Business Situation
Now that law enforcement itself has been revolutionized by computer technology, practitioners need to be familiar with ICT skills in addition to the more traditional hands-on skills of the discipline.

Solution
Mayes's teaching strategies include using PowerPoint, integrating internet and video in classroom discussions, and encouraging dialog through e-mail and social networking.

Benefits
- Provides computing competencies
- Microsoft Digital Literacy Certificate
- Comprehensive ICT overview
- Precursor to Microsoft IT Academy

"Letting my students know about the great resources from Microsoft like Digital Literacy will really help them integrate computing skills effectively for their students."

Lani Fraizer, MSIT, MS. Ed, Instructor of EDS 113

Situation

Detective Orrlando Mayes, a 16-year veteran of the Sacramento County Sheriff's department has been teaching fellow peace officers and new academy recruits SWAT tactics and other specialized topics for over 12 years. Through a course at California State University Sacramento Mayes discovered strategies for integrating technology in the classes he teaches.

Detective Orrlando Mayes of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department always knew he wanted to go into law enforcement. "I started watching police TV shows as a kid, and could see myself riding the motorcycle and wearing the boots." He chose not to go into highway patrol, but has been a part of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department for over 16 years and is a member of the elite Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team.

In that time, the impact of computer technology in law enforcement has been tremendous. "I never thought that computers would be involved with anything in law enforcement at all," says Mayes. At the start of his career, the sheriff's department had computers in patrol cars to take calls, but reports and documents were still written or typed. "They've really evolved," says Mayes. In the patrol cars, "we have full Internet access, can pull up documents, and can get information that we weren't able to get even five years ago."

Of course, law enforcement needs for computing skills have evolved as well. Officers are required to have a good foundation of ICT skills. "Without basic computing skills, you wouldn't make it on patrol, because it's all integrated into the job," Detective Mayes says. For the last 12 years, Mayes has been an instructor for his department, and is on the panel for California's Police Officer Standards and Training (POST). As an instructor, his teaching methods have also evolved to integrate technology, even in very hands-on courses like SWAT tactics. Mayes has found that strategies like using a PowerPoint presentation to introduce a topic, use of the Internet, and online collaboration are effective ways for his student to visualize the concepts taught. "Seeing is believing," says Mayes. "When I'm able to use computer technology for my class it makes a visual impact for students, and when we go for the hands-on part, we're that much further ahead. It has really made a huge difference."

Solution

Mayes is currently working on his bachelor's degree in vocational education at California State University Sacramento College of Continuing Education (CSUS/CCE). The first class he took in the major was EDS 113: Introduction to Technology-Based Teaching Strategies in Vocational Education. His instructor, Lani Fraizer, MSIT, MS. Ed, re-designed an existing classroom based course that was originally offered to adult and vocational educators, such as K-12, adult schools, community colleges, healthcare, and prison and juvenile justice systems. The re-designed version was offered online and piloted to law enforcement and fire science professionals. The course provides a comfortable command of basic computing skills, an introduction to social networking technologies, and strategies for integrating ICT in their own lesson plans. Most of the students are seasoned teaching professionals within their discipline. What they learn in EDS 113 is how to integrate technology into their teaching and training courses specific to their vocation. Students emerge from the course with improved confidence in their computing skills, a vision of how to integrate technology in their classes, and with the confidence to help students with computing challenges. "One of the things I aspire to accomplish when I teach EDS 113 is to impart an overall excitement

CSUS/CCE Senior Program Manager Jill Matsueda, Detective Orrlando Mayes, Program Coordinator Carole Taylor, and Instructor Lani Fraizer

"EDS 113 is technology in the classroom but it is much more than that. It's important that the students get a good comprehensive introduction to digital literacy and current and emerging computer technologies. They get an overall big-picture of how technologies can be used in their professional roles, as well as personal day-to-day needs."

CSUS/CCE Senior Program Manager Jill Matsueda

about technology and digital literacy," says Fraizer. "Technology can be a powerful catalyst for change for a better life and economic opportunity for students of any discipline, anywhere in the world."

Benefits

Creates a Foundation of Computing Competencies

In developing the curriculum for EDS 113 online, Fraizer drew heavily from Microsoft Digital Literacy. Says Fraizer: "About 95 percent of my students were not using confident in their use of computers prior to taking the class. Some were not aware of the technologies available, and were excited to be exposed to them. Many had used e-mail, and the class explored software applications, but prior to the class, many weren't aware of social networking technologies such as Microsoft Live. On a day-to-day basis, we were using LiveSpace and Office Live Workspace to use the discussion forums, share files, and blog." Fraizer used the Microsoft Digital Literacy e-learning and assessments to help her students build a strong foundation of computing competencies, and was pleased to find that over 90 percent of her students expressed improved confidence in and comfort with computer technology at the end of the course.

Provides Microsoft Digital Literacy Certificate

The Digital Literacy Certificate Test was optional, but the experience for students was so positive that Fraizer plans to make it a requirement going forward. Students will take the Certificate Test as part of their final, and receive their Microsoft Digital Literacy Certificate by the end of the course. Fraizer comments: "A lot of what I do is to help increase awareness for teaching resources available to them. I wanted to make use of curriculum that would be flexible and adaptable to a number of learning scenarios so that my students could take it back with

them and immediately integrate these resources into their own teaching. Letting my students know about the great resources from Microsoft like Digital Literacy will really help them integrate computing skills effectively for their students."

Comprehensive IT technology overview

In discussing how she plans to evolve EDS 113 online, Fraizer comments that the curriculum CSUS/CCE piloted this year was pivotal, and as a result of its success, she has been collaborating with CSUS/CCE Senior Program Manager Jill Matsueda to explore how to take the course to the next level. "EDS 113 is technology in the classroom but it is much more than that. It's important that the students get a good comprehensive introduction to digital literacy and current and emerging computer technologies," states Matsueda. "They get an overall big-picture of how technologies can be used in their professional roles, as well as personal day-to-day needs."

Acts as a Precursor for Microsoft IT Academy

Matsueda plans to sign up CSUS/CCE as a Microsoft IT Academy so that they can offer more hands-on e-learning curriculum to their students. Says Fraizer, "Microsoft Digital Literacy was a precursor to that decision, and had it not gone well, I don't think ITA membership would have been considered. However, with the level of student interest and success we've had with the pilot, the program is moving forward in expanding its technology resources for students through membership in the Microsoft IT Academy Program." Matsueda states, "Technology is an integral component of academic programs across the board and should be weaved through every program regardless of discipline."

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Detective Mayes has referred several colleagues to the course and the CSUS/CCE bachelor's degree program and in the future, he plans to continue his own learning and teaching with computer technology. Says Mayes: "I feel like I've just scratched the surface. There's so much more to learn. I want to go as far as I can with it. On a personal and a professional level, I think it will really enhance my opportunities, and be a benefit to the sheriff's department as well."

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