

The Prentice School

Transforming children's lives with technology



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Organization

The Prentice School is a non-profit, independent day school in Orange County, California designed to empower pre-K through high school students with dyslexia.

Solution Details

The Prentice School evaluated the latest computing infrastructure and implemented cloud computing along with an array of other innovative technologies to engage with students in new and more powerful ways.

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- Carol Clark, Executive Director,
The Prentice School

Organization

The Prentice School is a non-profit, independent day school in Orange County, California designed to empower pre-K through high school students with dyslexia. The school takes a unique approach to education that helps students who struggle in the traditional classroom learn, grow and gain confidence. By helping children celebrate their strengths and develop a toolbox they can use for lifelong learning, the Prentice School gives kids a foundation for success. The school is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2011 and currently has more than 190 students enrolled.

Objective

The curriculum at the Prentice School is taught using a systematic, explicit multi-sensory approach to teaching with technology as a supporting element. In 2005, the school wanted to increase its technology proficiency to ensure it was providing students the most impactful learning environment possible.

Solution

The Prentice School partnered with Zumasys to update its computing infrastructure and ensure it had the most effective foundation to support its students' unique learning needs. The school started by evaluating its existing computing systems, implementing campus-wide wireless access, and looking for innovative technologies that could powerfully support its multi-sensory teaching philosophy. According to the school's Executive Director, Carol Clark, "Solidifying our infrastructure was an important first step. With a better grasp of the available technology resources, we are now able to advance efforts like Assistive Technology to provide even greater support for our students."

To ensure students had the full support of technology at home as well as on campus, the school was an early adopter of cloud computing. By moving all of its applications and data for assignments and other needs to the Zumasys data center, the school made its wealth of learning resources accessible anywhere, anytime via Citrix.

Because sound is a critical component of multi-sensory learning, the school also implemented a leading-edge sound system in the PC Lab with a wireless microphone the teacher can use from anywhere in the classroom to keep students engaged. And in celebration of the school's 25th anniversary, Zumasys contributed to and installed a state-of-the-art A/V system to help ensure the school's auditorium reflects the technological direction that the campus is embracing.



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- Stanley Tom, Assistive Technology Specialist,
The Prentice School

Results

- ▶ Updated technology platform expands learning mediums, enhances interactivity and facilitates greater teacher/student engagement
- ▶ Solid IT foundation enables Assistive Technology to help students get more out of class and homework
- ▶ Anywhere access to files and applications allows students and teachers greater convenience and connectivity
- ▶ Cloud computing automates back-ups and provides a more stable platform

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- Carol Clark, Executive Director,
The Prentice School

Results

With a strong technology infrastructure in place and access to an expanded suite of multimedia resources, teachers and students at the Prentice School benefit from an array of learning mediums and opportunities. Today, when students step into the school’s auditorium and PC Lab, they are met with a state-of-the-art experience. The ceiling mounted LCD projectors allow the instructor to share students’ desktops with the class for remarkable interactivity. While students work independently at their desks, the instructor can monitor their workstations and control individual PCs remotely, which helps keep students on task. The lab’s in-class sound system also aids in keeping students’ attention. Additionally, wireless connectivity throughout the campus enables access to a wealth of content and vital learning resources from anywhere.

Assistive Technology (AT) is another important area of added value the Prentice School offers its students. By using computers to help dyslexic students cope with reading and writing, Assistive Technology removes barriers to learning and encourages greater participation. Notes Stanley Tom, the school’s Assistive Technology Specialist and IT overseer, “Zumasys has helped ensure we can focus on strengthening our educational expertise, while they manage the technical details.” For students with learning challenges, Assistive Technology can help them get more out of class and homework rather than just exhausting themselves trying to get through it. Adds Tom, “Having these AT tools in place can totally change a child’s outlook on education, because it shows them that they really can learn.”

“Providing our students access to software, files, and documents from home has expanded the variety of programs we can teach and is truly preparing our kids for the 21st century,” states Clark. Now all students are working with the same software versions at home and at school, and no longer have to transport files or flash drives. Everything is saved in the cloud. The hosted environment also helps teachers achieve better work-life balance. Instead of having to stay at school to finish lesson plans, grading or other responsibilities, they can go home, relax with their families, have dinner, and then develop worksheets, lesson plans or other materials later in the evening.

From an IT perspective, the move to the cloud has also had important advantages for the Prentice School. By outsourcing all of its servers, applications, and data, the school no longer has to worry about back-ups. What once was a daily chore for the business office is now handled automatically. Stanley Tom adds, “Our IT platform is much more stable now. Plus, we have real technical experts solving our more serious technology challenges so we can stay focused on providing our students the best education for their needs.” ■