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College of Education: High Tech Teaching  
By: Alyson Seligman  
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Scott Waring, PhD, found an opportunity for faculty at USF St. Petersburg that he could not pass up: The University of Findlay in Ohio wanted to form a one-year partnership and purchase thousands of dollars worth of digital cameras, computers and other innovative equipment to help faculty integrate technology into their curriculum.

"I am so excited about this partnership because I have always found technology to be so useful to engage students in social studies and I know it can do the same for other fields," said Waring, a visiting assistant professor in the College of Education. "It's amazing how interested a 7-year old can become when you give them avenues to express themselves.

In Waring's course, Teaching Elementary Grade Social Studies, he requires his students to develop Web sites, draft online lesson plans and turn in work electronically. This enables students to learn from each other and get more ideas, he said.

"I always thought social studies was boring but it was the way that it was taught that makes it so interesting to me... so if I can integrate technology to teach, we can really get these students hooked," said Waring, who earned his PhD in Social Studies Education with a minor in Instructional Technology from the University of Virginia.

Three years ago, the University of Findlay (UF) was awarded a PT3 grant from the Department of Education's new program, Preparing Teachers to Use Technology, which works to transform teacher education to integrate technology throughout teaching and learning. After developing a Teaching, Learning and Technology Center for UF faculty, two UF faculty members wanted to disseminate what they learned to other universities and selected USF St. Petersburg.

"This is such a perfect fit because we are right where they were when they were starting to integrate technology into their curriculum," said Waring, who has spearheaded this program at USF St. Petersburg.

In December, UF faculty and staff visited USF St. Petersburg to set-up a smaller version of their Teaching, Learning and Technology Center for College of Education faculty. Twenty-seven faculty members were given their own digital camera and UF equipped USF St. Petersburg's Center with a Mac desktop and laptop, a Dell desktop and laptop, an LCD projector, a camcorder, extra digital cameras as well as other gadgets.

"They wanted to duplicate the technology center they had for us so faculty had a place only they could go and learn how to use everything in a non-threatening environment," Waring said. "This is such a wonderful partnership because UF faculty really want this to be about what we can get out of it; this is a very individualized partnership for each of our faculty members," Waring said.

But the partnership gets better: UF faculty and staff will visit USF St. Petersburg for the next four to six months to offer faculty at the College of Education technology workshops. This month's topic will cover how to use a digital camera and the best ways to use it in the classroom.