



EDUCATION

Pandemic Changes How Future Teachers Are Trained

August 22, 2021

Students who are working toward a master's degree in education at the University of Washington are required to take a technology class. Before last year, that technology class was not seen as especially important. Then the coronavirus health crisis hit. Schools across the country went to online learning. Suddenly, materials from the class were being included in other classes.

“It's become so **relevant**, and it's staying that way,” said Anne Beitlers. She directs Washington's master's program for secondary education.

The pandemic is already creating lasting effects on the education of future teachers. Many U.S. educator preparation programs are including more information about **digital** tools, online teaching and mental and emotional wellness in their classes.

School system leaders across the U.S. are hoping to offer in-person teaching as widely as possible this year. But education experts say the increased focus on technology will improve teacher quality no matter what happens with the pandemic.

The education school at Iowa's Drake University has introduced a class about best practices in online teaching. Other schools say they have added digital tools, videoconferencing and educational technology to their classes. They aim to help future educators do the same.

Jennifer Krawec is director of teacher preparation programs at the University of Miami in Florida. She said, “I think it's our responsibility to train teachers to be able to do that, and if they find themselves teaching face-to-face, nobody's hurt by additional information about teaching online.”

Officials at Columbia University's Teachers College say its students will continue to get training in skills that became increasingly important during the pandemic. These skills include designing digital teaching materials and finding ways to keep the attention of children in virtual or combination learning environments.

Southern Methodist University in Texas plans to make sure those who complete its education program get trained using Google Classroom. Teachers at New York University have become more purposeful about explaining how and why they choose to use **certain** digital tools.

At North Carolina State University's College of Education, instructors are trying to include **remote** learning methods and tools that can still be used in face-to-face teaching, said Erin Horne, an official at the school.

Horne said the college's instructors have also been including more class time to discuss social-emotional learning and **trauma**-informed care. Those issues are getting increased attention at programs across the country.

Phillip Rogers leads the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. He said he believes skills in virtual instruction will one day become a more common part of teacher training. However, there are so far no major changes among states to require it in teacher preparation programs.

I'm Ashley Thompson.

The Associated Press reported this story. Ashley Thompson adapted it for VOA Learning English. Susan Shand was the editor.

Words in This Story

relevant - *adj.* relating to a subject in an appropriate way

digital - *adj.* relating to a subject in an appropriate way

certain - *adj.* used to refer to something or someone that is not named specifically

remote - *adj.* connected to a computer system from another place

trauma - *n.* very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long time
