

iPad

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# Textbook vs Apple iPad

Given that tablets are no longer cast in stone but have great possibilities for teaching, the Chance 2 Advance Programme hosted three Apple iPad workshops on 8 March to give academics and staff a platform to learn more about these digital tools.

Facilitating this workshop was Dawid de Villiers, Core Group, Apple IMC, who brought to Unisa his love and knowledge for technology and gadgets.

The question that most teachers may ask is, "Why the iPad in learning?" De Villiers was more than ready to tackle this question, and others, as he believes that the iPad is proving to be an incredibly cool tool for education.

Accessibility is one of those reasons, more so for special needs in education, such as Speak Auto-text and devices for the visually impaired. And with more than 200 000 applications or apps for the iPad alone, teaching and learning have no limits. "This is where the iPad becomes real because all these applications really bring it to life," said De Villiers. He also talked staff through the iPad's great organisational features, the ability to multitask (run all favourite applications and switch instantly), video mirroring (good for teaching children), and the fact that the gadget is built for compatibility.

With the iPad already changing the face of education, de Villiers demonstrated a few applications for the various learning phases ranging through foundation, intermediate, senior and higher education. He sees this as the future, as the present black and white textbook gives way to the vibrant images, 3-D, sound effects and interactivity of a tablet.

At the end of the workshop, *Focus* spoke to a few academics to find out their thoughts on the benefits and challenges of using the iPad in teaching.

Dalize van Heerden, School of Computing, believes a valuable benefit is that it allows true mobile learning wherever you are. "The apps available for science and engineering are amazing and would enable more interactive learning for the students. ... The biggest challenge would be to convince Unisa to make use of this amazing tool."

Keen to use the iPad to teach his eight-year-old daughter, Dr Jabu Maseko, College of Education, sees immense value in the iPad. "This is a good tool to present lessons to students, undertake research and search for journals, and explore the internet."

Whilst Rachael Molotsi, Department of Science and Technology, does worry about the rapid change of technology as new gadgets become available before one has mastered the existing, she too sees the value of the iPad in her teaching. "This is a smart way of conveying information to learners because of the many educational websites and software. With our 21st century learners so used to technology, they barely need manuals to navigate their way through it."

Excited about the advent of digital learning, Dawid de Villiers (Core Group, Apple IMC), Rachael Molotsi (Department of Science and Technology), Dalize van Heerden (School of Computing), and Dr Jabu Maseko (College of Education) proudly display their Apple iPads.



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