

Orange Unified School District

Teachers Create Content at OrangeLIVE!



Orange LIVE! (Learning through Interactive Virtual Education), the virtual school of the Orange Unified School District in California provides an exciting and diverse set of resources for students and a rigorous set of requirements for teachers.

The OrangeLIVE! teachers are fully credentialed and frequently teach the same courses in the face-to-face environment. They create their own content; courses are not purchased from publishers or other outside sources. SoftChalk's ease of use plays an essential role in this unique virtual school program since it requires their classroom teachers to not only teach online, but also create their online content. Pam Quiros, Orange LIVE!'s Coordinator of Educational Technology states that "SoftChalk is a tool that allows our teachers to more easily present material to their students in the online environment. Our teachers are able to efficiently create accessible and engaging content."

The OrangeLIVE! program is 10 years old and because of the ease of use and rapid development tools, like SoftChalk, they currently offer 24 courses consisting of thousands of learning units. These courses are offered to all of their high schools and alternative schools. These courses are in core curricular areas (e.g., English, history, social science, and science) as well as electives (e.g. Spanish, Psychology, Web Design, Marketing and Society), including two Advanced Placement courses. Courses offered can vary from year to year depending on teacher availability.

Since teaching an online course is time consuming, particularly in the first year, Orange Unified offers an extensive and continuous professional development program for using software tools that are easy to learn and use. The teacher's support consists of a summer training program and mentoring from teachers who have taught in the online program before. During the school year online teachers are released once a month for half a day to meet with the program coordinator, where professional development continues. Teachers new to the program meet more frequently.

While all students are in traditional face-to-face classrooms in their alternative and high schools, they are allowed to take

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Pam Quiros

Coordinator of Educational Technology, Orange LIVE!

up to two courses online per semester. OrangeLIVE! students actively participate in weekly discussions via the online Discussion Board or Blogs and in periodic "virtual chats" with the teacher and other enrolled students. They complete a technology-rich variety of assignments including projects, surveys, digital videos, tasks from interactive textbooks, web-based assignments in reading, and problem-solving and analysis. Students take all tests face-to-face with a teacher on campus, and must log into their Learning Management System, Blackboard, to complete weekly assignments. Together, students and parents are introduced to the OrangeLIVE! program during an orientation meeting in August. In addition, students attend a mandatory "meet and greet" where they meet in person with their teachers in order to become familiar with their courses and the expectations of their teachers.

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The Orange Unified School District serves approximately 30,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12th, and encompasses all or part of the cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove, Orange, Santa Ana, and Villa Park. The District has a long history of excellence that continues to grow and be enriched by the accomplishments of its students, teachers, staff and community.

Since 1987, twenty-three OUSD schools have been awarded the honor of California Distinguished School, with three of these schools receiving the award more than once. California Elementary received the Title I Academic Achievement Award for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years.

Orange LIVE! classes provide students with opportunities to experience a technology-rich learning environment, gain graduation credits, and enroll in class that might be otherwise unavailable at their schools. To learn more visit <http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/orangelive/index.asp>.

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