



# Microsoft® Office Specialist

Readies Students for Real-World Success with  
New Classroom License



## Academy of Our Lady of Peace

### Location:

San Diego, California

### Students:

730 Students

### Success Metrics:

- Industry-recognized credential
- Validation of skills
- Valued addition to course



## PRIVATE SAN DIEGO HIGH SCHOOL FINDS ANSWER TO TEST-PREPARATION NEEDS AND BUDGET REQUIREMENTS THROUGH CERTIPREP AND THE UNLIMITED-USE CLASSROOM LICENSE.

### CHALLENGE

Chris Boyer had originally planned to send students from the Academy of Our Lady of Peace to take the Microsoft® Certified Application Specialist (MCAS) exams off-campus. Yet he wondered if teaching the test objectives through textbooks and in-class application training was enough. Something didn't quite click.

First, he initially told parents that students would need to cover the cost of the exams taken off school grounds. Because Boyer felt he couldn't make certification a requirement for that reason, not everyone would be able to leave the class with a credential—Boyer's ultimate goal. Second, he wasn't sure students were getting the practice and self-assurance they needed to pass the certification exam.

"I wasn't feeling confident in the textbook we were using," Boyer, the school's technology director, said. "I had heard of Certiprep previously, but I didn't realize [there was a] program set up for the classroom."

### SOLUTION

With some investigation, Boyer learned that he could not only offer MCAS exams on-site but also provide students with unlimited access to certification exams through the Classroom License and test preparation software through the Certiprep™ for 2007 Microsoft Office Certifications license. For Boyer, who was already knee-deep in his first attempt to teach to the certification standards, the finding was a revelation.

"Changing over to Certiprep ... immediately once I logged in, I saw the difference in the positive feedback I knew I was going to get from it," Boyer said.

Aside from acquiring Certiprep to aid students in preparing for the exams, Boyer found the Classroom License would help resolve funding issues. By moving the testing to the school, the administration of the all-girls private school sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet agreed to allocate budget for both the Certiprep and Classroom License's yearly license fees. With the fees now covered, Boyer has made taking the certification exams for Word 2007 and PowerPoint® 2007 a requirement in his Computer Applications 2 course. He said he readies students for the certification exam by teaching them a new application function then turning to Certiprep to complete and review one or two practice problems.



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– **Chris Boyer**  
Technology Director  
Academy of Our Lady of Peace

Sally Boettger, a teacher at Our Lady of Peace who assists Boyer, noted the addition of Certiprep in the course was an instant success. "The interactive, hands-on approach of this software helped students apply what they learned and retain the knowledge for the certification exam," she said.

Boyer agrees. "It just seemed like it was more tailored to passing the exam, rather than just [teaching] random skills in Word. It seemed like it would prepare you more for the exam than other things I had seen."

## RESULTS

The move to Certiprep and the Classroom License paid off. In the first semester, 19 of 22 students in the class passed the Word 2007 exam on their first attempt. With unlimited exams, another two have since retaken and passed the exam. Ever determined to have everyone in class walk away with an industry-recognized credential, Boyer said he is working with the last student to certify.

"I was extremely pleased," Boyer said of the initial results. "Right there it just validated everything we had been trying for. I really wasn't confident we were going to be able to do it until we got the Certiprep software."

The students who certified know their achievement speaks volumes about their skills and future employability. One student plans to use it on her work resumé but has already put it on her college applications. "The certification program opened many doors for me," said senior Iris Vildosola. "It [was] challenging, but the hard work was worth it."

"The most rewarding part was not only receiving the certification but all of the new skills I have developed that I can apply not only in work but [also] in my daily life," said senior Lauren Lorber.

"Although I was familiar with Word before, I never knew how much one could do with the software" senior Mariana Dimla said. "I feel more comfortable using it; I know how to use the different [functions] very well."

The popularity of the course is growing. Boyer says the MCAS program has energized both parents and students who are eager to have students earn a valued credential at no charge. And with the Classroom License, Boyer was able to open up the course to the entire school. Next year, an additional class will be added to support the 43 students who have signed up to take the course.

"I probably wouldn't have reached out as much to them if I didn't have the tools for that," he said.

And with the right tools, Boyer feels he can help give students valuable skills and credentials. "I really wanted my students to leave my classroom with something. That was my main focus—to get that certification on their resumé."

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