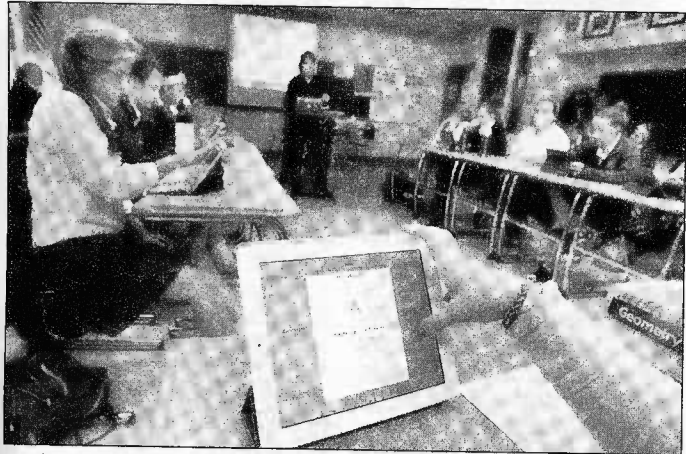


Detroit Free Press

## METRO

313-272-6600 localnews@freepress.com



Students in Lynn Waldsmith's sophomore British literature class at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills take notes on their iPads, one of several uses of the tablet at the school. PHOTOS BY ERIC SEALS/DFP

# Mercy High receives an Apple award for innovative iPad use

## Tablets put speech, art on a new level

By Joe Guillen

Detroit Free Press Staff Writer

While more and more schools throughout metro Detroit are using iPads in the classroom, Mercy High School in Farmington Hills has been recognized for its innovative adoption of the portable tablet.

The school's pairing of two courses — speech and a digital art class — shows how the iPad is enhancing both of the traditional subjects at Mercy and giving students technology skills, said associate principal Laurence Baker.

For a speech last year about Niagara Falls, sophomore Izzy Baughman recorded video of herself talking about the topic. She then took the video into the digital art class, called design foundations, and produced and edited a video package that blended her speech, sound effects and pictures of the waterfalls.

"The idea isn't (to) learn tech tools. The idea is learn how to design and create digitally," Baker said. "That is the

achievement and represent the company's vision of an ideal learning environment. Mercy is the only school in southeast Michigan and one of three in the state to receive the award.

Since 2012, incoming ninth-graders and transfer students have been required to purchase an iPad and to take the design foundations class, which integrates artistic principles like color and texture with the creation of digital content such as videos and web pages.

For \$754, students in the 2014-15 school year will get a 32GB iPad Air, a two-year warranty, a case and an account that will provide all necessary apps for their four years of high school. Mercy, a Catholic, girls school, did not receive any money for winning the award, Baker said.

Just as students at most schools carry a binder or notebook, students at Mercy carry their iPads with them throughout the day, to all types of classes.

Teachers distribute lecture material to students in .pdf format, allowing students to

Schools throughout metro Detroit are using iPads in the classroom, Mercy High School in Farmington Hills has been recognized for its innovative adoption of the portable tablet.

The school's pairing of two courses — speech and a digital art class — shows how the iPad is enhancing both of the traditional subjects at Mercy and giving students technology skills, said associate principal Laurence Baker.

For a speech last year about Niagara Falls, sophomore Izzy Baughman recorded video of herself talking about the topic. She then took the video into the digital art class, called design foundations, and produced and edited a video package that blended her speech, sound effects and pictures of the waterfalls.

"The idea isn't (to) learn tech tools. The idea is learn how to design and create digitally," Baker said. "That is a literacy kind of skill that we see our students needing immediately and in their future. So they learn how to edit a movie. They learn how to Photoshop. They create a web portfolio. It's required of every student."

In November, Apple awarded Mercy the "distinguished school" designation from 2013 to 2015 for its integration of the iPad into its curriculum. The recognition is for schools that show innovation, educational

graders and transfer students have been required to purchase an iPad and to take the design foundations class, which integrates artistic principles like color and texture with the creation of digital content such as videos and web pages.

For \$754, students in the 2014-15 school year will get a 32GB iPad Air, a two-year warranty, a case and an account that will provide all necessary apps for their four years of high school. Mercy, a Catholic, girls school, did not receive any money for winning the award, Baker said.

Just as students at most schools carry a binder or notebook, students at Mercy carry their iPads with them throughout the day, to all types of classes.

Teachers distribute lecture material to students in .pdf format, allowing students to scribble their notes directly over the lecture notes shown on their iPad screens. Textbooks and books for English classes are stored electronically. For Spanish class, students can listen to voice recordings to learn proper pronunciation.

"I really like our math book. They show you step by step people writing on a white board of problems and examples," sophomore Hadley Hrdlicka

See **MERCY**, Page 5A



Sophomores Emma Mason, left, and Hadley Hrdlicka do some homework on their iPads in the media center.

# MERCY: High school praised for iPad use

FROM PAGE 3A

dlicka said. "Now, if I click on one of the problems, the problems have step-by-step solutions in them. So it's getting a lot more interactive."

For all of its advantages, school administrators have taken steps to make sure students aren't using the iPads inappropriately at school. The school's wireless Internet, to which the iPads connect, blocks Facebook, Instagram and other websites or applications that could distract students. Teachers can selectively open windows for students to access social media if needed.

Apple heavily promotes the iPad's uses in a variety of educational environments, from music classes to teaching special-needs children. There are more than 40,000 apps for education, according to the company's website.

At Mercy, Hadley said using the iPad has influenced her career interests.

"I've always kind of known I wanted to go into something with art. I've always thought art and technology were totally separate," she said. "Now I'm getting into automotive design."