

First Cohort of SDSU's MA in Education with a Concentration in Educational Leadership and a Specialization in PreK-12 — Blazing the Innovation Trail

According to **campustechnology.com** — an online publication covering education technology on college and university campuses — the burden is now on universities to advance the culture of innovation, to foster environments that accelerate learning and creativity, and to create the conditions for innovation to happen at all levels.

A group of 25 students are doing just that by taking the first cohort of SDSU's Master of Arts in Education with a Concentration in Educational Leadership and a Specialization in PreK-12 program. The program is fully online and offered in cooperation with SDSU's Department of Educational Leadership and the San Diego County Office of Education.

The WASC-accredited program is designed for school administrators and teachers who aspire to a leadership role in educational technology within their school or district.

Michelle Snyder, a mother of three, said the program is a perfect fit for her. Not only is she able to take her classes online from home, she can also apply what she learns to her current position as an English teacher at an accredited Vista Unified School District high school that offers online and blended learning.

"I'm learning the same way my students learn," she said. "It really has changed the way I teach. The class is a good balance of technology, pedagogy, and leadership."

Before taking the MA program, which focuses on technology, Snyder checked with SDSU College

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of Education administrators to make sure it was a match for her.

"For a long time, I wanted to get a master's degree with a program that appealed to me," she said. "This one came along and it was right up my alley. I could tell it was very cutting-edge in education."

Alex Gonzalez, technology coordinator at a San Diego charter school, already had two degrees from a local computer training college and a master's degree in educational technology from Michigan State University.

He said SDSU's 15-month program, which runs through December, gives him insight into how administrators facilitate education. (The second cohort began in May.)

"It's a good experience to pull back the curtain and see why things are the way they are," he said. "A lot of people want to change education;

you have to look at the changing landscape of education first.

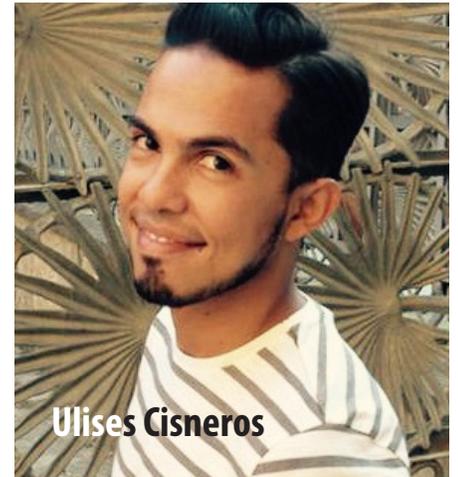
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Michelle Snyder



Alex Gonzalez



Ulises Cisneros

Those strategies involve both educators and their students.

"You can't just drop devices on teachers and students and expect them to learn it," Gonzalez said. "When these students graduate from high school, they're going to be on their own. The global workforce is looking for people who can think on their feet."

Ulises Cisneros, second-grade Spanish-immersion teacher at a Lakeside Elementary School, noted how fellow students in the inaugural program refer to themselves as "trailblazers."

"It's been an amazing experience getting to start from the beginning," he said. "We see how things work and don't work. We get to collaborate with our instructors on how to make the program better."

As Cisneros noted, students are learning aspects from their professors that you cannot "Google" to find out. The SDSU course includes discussion groups and management systems designed for master's students to think deeper, and ultimately challenge the students they teach at the K-12 level to do the same.

"This program really makes us think big-picture," Cisneros said. "We think far into the future, not just the near future. It helps us become better leaders in education."



For more information on SDSU's MA Education Leadership program, visit neverstoplearning.net/edleadership.