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College of Education Undergoes Major Renovations to Update Classrooms

Winthrop University

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College of Education Undergoes Major Renovations to Update Classrooms

Quick Facts

- Dean Jennie Rakestraw said the classrooms were configured to model the instructional strategies that education majors will need to succeed in today's classroom.
- Education faculty and administrators have spent the last few years rethinking how the university prepares future teachers and have transitioned to a clinical approach in partnership with nine local school districts.



Jennie Rakestraw

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – [Withers/W.T.S. Building](#), the home of Winthrop University's [Richard W. Riley College of Education](#), underwent a major renovation this summer to update its classrooms for **21st century learning**.

The project was associated with two federal education grants awarded to Winthrop in the past five years, [NetSCOPE](#) Teacher Quality Partnership and [NetLEAD](#) School Leadership programs.

Among the Withers renovations were:

- Adding Wi-Fi to all of Withers
- Installing **Mediascape technology** in four classrooms for small group collaboration
- Realigning classrooms to allow them to be interactive and to provide space for group work. There is no "front" of the classroom.
- Replacing furniture and carpet, and painting classrooms

[Dean Jennie Rakestraw](#) said the classrooms were configured to model the instructional strategies that education majors will need to succeed in today's classroom. These include skills such as collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking and problem solving.

"We are teaching our education majors how to use technology to enhance their teaching and student learning," [Rakestraw](#) said. "We're also teaching them about personalized learning where our future teachers are being taught strategies so that they can accommodate individual learning needs and meet children where they are in learning."

As the **anchor higher education program** for South Carolina public universities, Winthrop is leading the way to change educator preparation. Education faculty and administrators have spent the last few years rethinking how the university prepares future teachers and have transitioned to a clinical approach in partnership with nine local school districts.

[Lisa Johnson](#), associate dean and director of the [Jim and Sue Rex Institute for Education Renewal and Partnership](#), led the college's "21st century learning spaces" initiative. [Marshall Jones](#), director of Learning Technologies and Graduate Studies in the College of Education, is guiding collaborative efforts to enhance teaching and learning and Winthrop's teacher education program.

Here are some changes in the last five years that Winthrop has incorporated into its programs:

- Installing a robust Wi-Fi network that will allow Winthrop students and faculty members to access the Internet with different mobile devices so they can be used for projects and research.
- Preparing for classrooms where students regularly use tablets, smart phones and other mobile devices as teaching and learning tools. Students are being encouraged to use their mobile devices for more than texting, phone calls and social media.
- Encouraging teachers to share with other teachers successful strategies that incorporate technology, whether through tweeting, blogging and inventing best practices.
- Training in how to use social media for schools so they can communicate with parents and others on upcoming special events or projects students are working on.

For more information, please contact **Rakestraw** at rakestrawj@winthrop.edu.

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