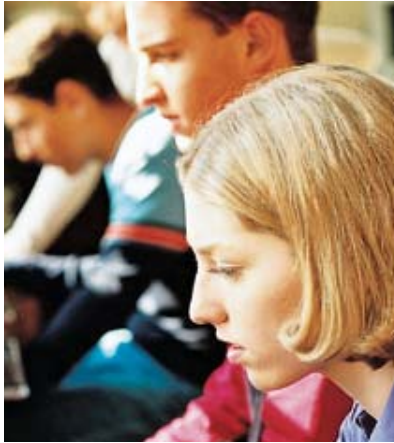




Spring Branch School District/ Harold D. Guthrie Center for Excellence



Houston, TX — When Josh Franer took home the \$5,000 first prize in the film division of the Culture Shapers art contest, no one was really surprised. After all, it was the second year in a row that the high school senior had earned top honors in the competition. This year, fellow Guthrie Center media technology student Coleman McFarland also picked up \$1,500 for his third place–winning project. In addition, six out of ten Honorable Mention citations went to Guthrie students. Every one of these projects was edited on a Power Mac G4 with Final Cut Pro.

Advice to Other Districts

- Let the curriculum and industry standards—rather than the information technology (IT) department—determine what tools you use
- Build a solid advisory team of industry professionals; network frequently and solicit their input
- Set realistic expectations for your students—they'll produce work that is interesting and creative
- Give your students' work as much visibility as possible; enter as many competitions (such as film festivals) as your budget will allow

Located in Houston's Spring Branch School District, the Harold D. Guthrie Center for Excellence was formerly a traditional vocational school. There, students not destined for college learned such trades as air-conditioning repair and printmaking.

But in recent years, the Center has evolved into one of Texas's biggest success stories. Now students throughout the district can visit the campus to study an exciting array of courses, such as computer animation and networking, culinary arts, hotel management, and architecture. And in the Center's media technology/digital filmmaking program, in which more than 90 percent of the participants are now college-bound, ninth- through twelfth-grade students are learning to become digital media and communications masters.

"Six years ago we revamped the program to be as close to the industry standard as we could get," notes Patty Nilsson, media technology teacher. "With our digital cameras, our Power Mac G4 systems, and Final Cut Pro, our students can now produce quality work that goes beyond the classroom."

Expensive PC Maintenance

Before the decision was made to switch to Mac-based systems, editing video projects was often a painful process at the Center, says Nilsson's colleague Michael Radler. Not only were the PC-based editors expensive to purchase and maintain, but system failures were practically a daily occurrence.

Profile in Success

Spring Branch School District/Harold D. Guthrie Center for Excellence

Quick Study

Challenges

- Provide multiple editing systems for growing digital media program
- Ensure stability of hardware and software
- Enable entry-level as well as experienced students to use technology tools

Solution

- 30 Power Mac G4 computers with FireWire
- Final Cut Pro
- DVD Studio Pro
- Full complement of animation and digital video production tools, including Adobe Photoshop*

Benefits

- School was able to purchase more Mac systems than PC systems because of lower hardware, training, and software costs involved
- Mac ease of use and administration ensures 24/7 productivity
- Students creating award-winning projects, learning important career skills

“Originally we had high-end PC-based systems that cost more than \$10,000 each,” Radler remembers. “We always had one down and one limping along...and because of a ‘certain’ operating system, there were lots of errors. It was also expensive to maintain the PCs. When they went down we had to send them out to a technician who specialized in building video systems, and have them rebuilt.”

Mac Conversion

Radler, a former computer animation teacher and devoted Mac user, suggested that the school consider an alternate solution. Following the purchase of a Power Mac system and Final Cut Pro, Radler’s advanced digital media class was instantly converted.

“After the kids played around with Final Cut Pro, we bought several more systems,” Radler says. “They were much cheaper than the big PCs we’d bought. And since Final Cut Pro was gaining big acceptance in the industry, we felt we’d made the right decision.”

Class Enrollment Up

Thanks to district support, the Guthrie Center now houses approximately 30 Power Mac G4 systems. Each is outfitted with Final Cut Pro, digital production tools such as Adobe Photoshop, and screenwriting software. Since word has spread about the availability of the high-end tools, the beginning, intermediate, and advanced digital media classes now include more than 100 students per semester.

After becoming familiar with the hardware and software, each student is required to create a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) about the dangers of drinking, drugs, and driving. Once their PSAs are “in the can,” the students then produce a short (three- to five-minute) video about a topic of their choosing, then finally develop a documentary—and that’s just the first semester. The second semester takes them through keyframing, basic animation, and production of a DVD portfolio.

National Notoriety

Nilsson and Radler proudly point out that these short projects have garnered Guthrie students multiple awards in the past couple of years. In addition to the honors in the [Culture Shapers competition](#), which draws student-created entries from seven Texas counties, Guthrie students have received multiple awards at the [Spindletop Film Festival](#), hosted by Lamar University in Beaumont.

The kudos don’t stop there. Senior Brendan Lankford has just inked a deal with the HBO Family channel to air his 3.5-minute project, entitled *No Way Home*, on the cable giant’s daily *30 By 30: Kid Flicks* program.

“The practical price of the Apple editors enabled students to double their productivity, and solved the problem of too many students sharing one machine. Now we have an editor for almost every student!”

Dr. Yvonne Katz, Superintendent
Spring Branch School District

“The thing I love best about Final Cut Pro is the color correction. Final Cut Pro helps you make the picture so much more vivid and professional looking.”

Brendan Lankford, Student Filmmaker
The Guthrie Center

“Patty Nilsson and Mike Radler don’t just teach kids how to make movies, they teach about truth and ethics and media responsibility,” observes Dr. Katz. “They get kids to reach deep inside for what’s real and valid and important in their lives, and the students’ projects reflect this. Their videos often sweep awards in film festivals, they’re shown on local public television, and now we’re proud to say they’re even being sold to HBO!”

Productive Futures Ahead

Aside from the notoriety, the Guthrie students are gaining invaluable experience for their future careers. Many will emerge with prestigious awards and TV credits by the time they leave high school; all will have digital resumé and solid credentials in hand. Franer, who’s using DVD Studio Pro to create a resumé on DVD, hopes his credits will be sufficient to gain entry into one of the nation’s top film schools, where he will focus on directing commercials.

Thus far the students agree that Final Cut Pro has helped virtually every one of them create sophisticated, broadcast-quality projects. “The thing I love best about Final Cut Pro is the color correction,” Lankford explains. “When you work with video, you can’t really control the look of it as well as with film. But Final Cut Pro helps you make the picture so much more vivid and professional looking.”

For McFarland, it’s all about getting things done faster. “I like the fact that you can plug a digital video camera into a Mac, and the footage is there two seconds later. When we used PC editors, that was such a painful process...using Final Cut Pro on a Power Mac G4 has made it much easier to be productive.”

All of the media technology students expect that their familiarity with Final Cut Pro will give them a huge advantage when it comes time to settle into multimedia and communications careers. “Final Cut Pro is where things are going,” Franer predicts. “It’s a great starting point for me, and knowing it just gives me a leg up on the world.”

Better Grades, Too

Should further endorsement be needed, Nilsson reveals that the students participating in the media technology program have significantly improved their academic performance. “In several studies we’ve learned that students who take career preparation classes actually do better on their SATs, in their regular classes, and on standardized testing,” she says. “I don’t know what propels what, but the real fact is that the students who are taking these high-tech, hands-on, career preparation courses place higher than kids who do not.”

Superintendent Katz says the Mac-based systems have made one-to-one learning possible at the Guthrie Center, without breaking the district’s bank account. “The practical price of the Apple editors enabled students to double their productivity, and solved the problem of too many students sharing one machine,” says Katz. “Now we have an editor for almost every student!”

Joe Kolenda, principal at the Guthrie Center, says the level of engagement at the school is higher than ever, as is the quality of the students that the digital media program is attracting.

"We just don't get students who aren't serious about being here," Kolenda confirms. "Once they get in, they want to work hard and learn more. Plus, with the Apple tools we have in place, the students can concentrate on their creative effort and their output—they don't have to worry about whether this software will crash that system," he adds. "It all just *works*."

For More Information

For more information about other Apple education products, visit www.apple.com/education on the World Wide Web or call 800-800-2775.

Visit the Macintosh Products Guide at www.apple.com/guide for the latest information on thousands of hardware and software products for your Mac.

*The mention of third-party products is for informational purposes only and constitutes neither an endorsement nor a recommendation.

© 2003 Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo, DVD Studio Pro, Final Cut Pro, FireWire, Mac, Macintosh, and Power Mac are trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Adobe is a trademark or registered trademark of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the U.S. and/or other countries. Other product and company names mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective companies.