



Apple Tools Develop Digital Pros

Jamison, PA—Chris Tully’s classroom has a special slogan: “Preparing for your future is as easy as walking through the door.” His students in the Multimedia Technology program at Middle Bucks Institute of Technology (MBIT) have discovered that these are words to live by. Although most are still in high school, they’re already producing public service announcements (PSAs), websites, training videos, and other projects for cable TV and local businesses. While working with a full complement of Apple hardware and software tools, Tully’s students are preparing for careers in the digital realm—and the future looks rosy for all.

The Multimedia Technology curriculum is divided into three segments: the 100 level, an introduction to multimedia technology which focuses on web development; the 200 level, which makes use of such tools as Final Cut Studio to teach video and audio production; and the 300 level, in which students acquire advanced digital media proficiency and assemble DVD portfolios showcasing their work, and produce cable television shows and record local bands. In every level, and regardless of the project, students use such tools as iCal, iChat, and iWeb to stay organized and on track.

Amber Ryder, a college freshman who has returned for 300-level studies, says the curriculum is equipping her with the skills she’ll need to step into a job in media production. “I have a portfolio complete with everything I need to show a future employer,” Ryder confirms. “I can show video, audio, graphic design projects; a little bit of everything. The multimedia program has really allowed me to jump ahead in college, too. And, since I’m using Apple technologies, I’m really getting prepared for what’s to come in my career.”

The Only Choice: Apple

When Tully was first crafting the curriculum for the multimedia program, he had to identify the technology tools that would support his classes. Though many of the computers at MBIT were Windows-based, he says there was never a doubt that he would opt for the Mac.

“I met with every leading manufacturer in multimedia technology,” he recalls. “For me it was a no-brainer: we had to get the Apple products. It was cost-effective for our school, plus we’d be able to teach our students the real-world applications they’re going to need in the future. Final Cut Studio has become so popular. And, its ease of use—the interoperability between applications—is amazing.”



Objectives

- Prepare high school students for careers in digital media
- Replicate facilities found in the digital production industry
- Ensure students acquire proficiency with industry-standard technologies

Solution

- 26 Power Mac G5 workstations, each with 17-inch Apple Studio Displays
- Xserve, Xserve RAID
- Final Cut Studio, iLife, digital authoring suite
- Apple Pro Training Series
- iLife suite, iWork, .Mac
- Apple Remote Desktop

Results

- Students enjoy a comprehensive college preparatory experience
- Students receive college credits for several of their classes
- Apple Pro Certification signifies students’ mastery of industry-standard tools

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Chris Tully, Multimedia Instructor, Middle Bucks Institute of Technology

"I'm definitely an advocate for Apple; I've always been an Apple user," Tully adds. "But more importantly, I'm adamant that we teach our students the tools that will make them successful. Even though the majority of our labs were PC-based, I stuck with Apple. There was just no other way we could go."

Pro Certification Gives Students a Head Start

Tully took his faith in the Macintosh platform and Apple products a step further: He took the course-work necessary to earn Final Cut Pro user certification, then immediately followed up by becoming a certified Final Cut Pro instructor. "Now our students will not only be prepared for what we're teaching them," he notes, "they'll also be able to get certified. That will be a huge advantage when they start looking for jobs in the industry."

Ryder was one of the first Multimedia Technology students to seek the Final Cut Pro certification. Currently, she's aiming to add certification in Apple's Motion and DVD Studio Pro to her resume. Her experience with the Apple products helped her land an internship with the local PBS affiliate. "Amber was working as an editor at the station," Tully reveals proudly. "She obtained nine college credits, gained real-world experience, and received her Apple certification . . . all while earning her high school diploma."

Apple Server Solutions Power Digital Production

At the back end of MBIT's technology infrastructure are an Xserve and an Xserve RAID, which provide storage for students' projects. Tully also is using .Mac accounts, which enable students to publish podcasts to the Internet that capture lectures, lessons, and student projects. Tully says the use of podcasts has proved extremely popular with all of MBIT's teachers.

"When podcasting first came out it seemed like the technology would benefit every classroom, so we provided a day of training for the rest of our teachers," Tully says. "Now we even have teachers doing podcasts for welding, construction carpentry, and plumbing classes. Students and teachers can videotape lessons, and use them for individualized instruction or remediation. Also, students can tape demos of their work and use the videos as podcasts to show prospective employers their skills."

Digital Media Program Garners Industry Acclaim

The work completed by the Multimedia Technology students is receiving wide-spread acclaim in the digital domain. Comcast and the Independent Film Channel (IFC) recognized MBIT's multimedia technology program as one of the finest in the region, inviting MBIT to become one of two Independent Film Channel (IFC) film schools.

"Both my students and I recognize how lucky we are to have the opportunities we do," he observes. "It's not often high school programs develop relationships with industry the way MBIT has. Our students are completing projects usually reserved for collegiate-level students. One day we're developing a PSA, the next we're recording and mixing a live music show with 20 channels of audio."

"With the Apple products," Tully concludes, "my students are learning industry-standard, new-millennium technologies. In the future, I'm betting that when they tell people where they went to school, they'll hear, 'You went to Middle Bucks? Wow!'"

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Chris Tully

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