



Design high

Brevard County high schools prepare students for digital arts and media careers using Adobe® Creative Suite® 4 software



In the spring of 2007, the Brevard County School Board in Florida discovered a startling statistic. While many Florida high school graduates attended postsecondary education courses, 66% didn't finish. The board quickly realized that high school career and technology courses needed to offer more industry certification that would prepare students for college success, or give them the option to move directly into the workforce at a competitive salary level.

The district set a goal of identifying the best possible curriculum for its high school career courses. Pete Episcopo, a digital arts and media instructor at Viera High School, signed on to help develop a digital design and media curriculum and academy that would address this need. At the time, Episcopo was teaching an Adobe Total Training series focused on visual design, and knew Adobe was a good place to start.

Students at Brevard County high schools work on a variety of projects that make use of Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection including digital photography, collages, and identity packages. They create logos in Adobe Photoshop® CS4 Extended and bring them into Adobe InDesign® CS4 to create layouts for business cards, letterhead, envelopes, and more.



“Using the Adobe Curriculum with Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software, we can better prepare students to succeed after graduation.”

**Pete Episcopo, digital arts and media instructor,
Viera High School**

Matching skills with needs

Episcopo identified the Adobe Visual Design curriculum that aligns with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for Students (2007), as well as the new Adobe Certified Associate objectives to prepare students for certification. The Adobe Certified Associate exam validates entry-level skills needed to plan, design, build, and maintain effective communications by using different forms of digital media.

The school board carefully examined the curriculum from Adobe and found it to match the district’s overall goals. In addition, the curriculum alignment to existing Florida state standards via the ISTE standards gave the school board the necessary confidence to approve the curriculum. The school board asked Episcopo to begin teaching it in 2007, with the goal of eventually rolling the curriculum out to other high schools in the district.

The career and technical education curriculum from Adobe is designed for students to develop key digital communication skills using Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software. Florida’s Space Coast has many technology companies and organizations—from the space program to defense contractors—that need skilled employees in the areas of graphic design and illustration for a wide range of projects. The district saw the new program as a great opportunity for students to learn valuable 21st century literacy skills.

Episcopo began teaching the curriculum using class assignments that included collages and photography, logos, business cards, advertisements, portfolios, brochures, and newsletters along with digital audio, video, and motion graphics assignments. The work that students create is stored in a portfolio that they can use when applying to a postsecondary school or for a professional position. Episcopo likens his classroom to a Lucasfilm post-production room, with equipment representative of what students will be working with in the industry. “Using the Adobe curriculum with Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software, we can better prepare students to succeed after graduation,” he says.

Branching out

The district moved quickly to implement similar programs in other high schools. Brevard Public Schools serve nearly 75,000

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Barbara Fine, digital arts and media instructor, Palm Bay High School

students in Brevard County Florida. Today, 4 of the district’s 16 high schools—Viera, Palm Bay, Satellite, and Bayside—offer some form of digital arts and media education.

Barbara Fine teaches a communications technology course at Palm Bay High School, where 43.3% of students come from low income families. In addition to the Adobe Visual Design curriculum, Fine uses the Digital Video Workshops and has printed out entire books of the Visual Design curriculum to use as her classroom textbook.

Students work on a variety of projects that make use of Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Premium including digital photography, collages, and identity packages. For the identity packages, students learn to work in creative teams, much like a real working environment. They create a logo in Adobe Photoshop CS4 Extended and bring it into Adobe InDesign CS4 to create the layout for business cards, letterhead, and envelopes.

“When students create identity packages, they learn about the integration between Adobe Photoshop CS4 Extended and Adobe InDesign CS4 and the benefits of a workflow that enables them to easily move back and forth between design and editing,” explains Fine.

Students also use Adobe Illustrator® CS4 to complete an environmental postcard project. With Adobe Dreamweaver® CS4, students

build personal websites to use as online portfolios to showcase their projects. Adobe Flash® CS4 Professional helps students learn the basics of web design and animation.

Collaborative instruction

The four high schools offering digital design and media programs take a collaborative approach to the new curricula. “The great thing is we visit each others classrooms and share what works,” says Episcopo. “We all have different areas of expertise and we’re able to take little things from each other to improve our programs.”

Fine shares how she uses Dreamweaver CS4 for web design and also how she incorporates Photoshop CS4 Extended and Illustrator CS4. Carrie Robinson, digital media instructor at Bayside High, has a business background, and focuses heavily on print production while Yvonne Weinstein, digital media instructor at Satellite High, has a fine arts background and her classes carry that influence.

Episcopo has a sound/audio background and shares how his class uses Adobe Soundbooth® CS4 to edit, clean up, and add effects to high definition podcasts, as well as add new sound effects to real Hollywood action scenes. The other instructors also learn about how Episcopo’s students use Adobe Premiere® Pro CS4 and Adobe After Effects® CS4 to produce stop-motion videos.

Organization

Brevard Public Schools

Brevard County, Florida
www.brevardschools.org

Challenge

- Offer industry certification programs at the high school level
- Prepare students to enter the workforce at a competitive salary level
- Foster collaboration among teachers at different schools

Solution

- Implement a digital arts and media program based on Adobe curricula
- Prepare students to pass the Adobe Certified Associate exam using Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software

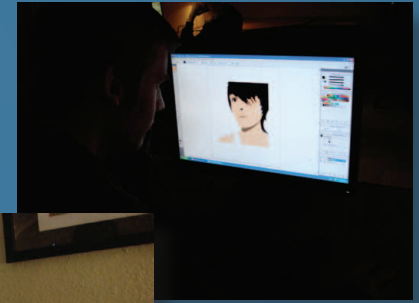
Benefits

- Adobe certification helps students develop career paths
- Students learn to work in collaborative, team environments
- Teachers share best practices to improve programs for students
- District created four year program in digital arts and media

Toolkit

- Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection. Components used include:
 - Adobe After Effects CS4
 - Adobe Premiere Pro CS4
 - Adobe Soundbooth CS4
 - Adobe Photoshop CS4 Extended
 - Adobe InDesign CS4
 - Adobe Dreamweaver CS4
 - Adobe Illustrator CS4
 - Adobe Flash CS4 Professional
 - Adobe Acrobat® 9 Pro

Pete Episcopo, a digital arts and media instructor at Viera High School, worked with Brevard County School Board to develop a digital design and media curriculum for the schools. Based on the Adobe Visual Design curriculum, the program is designed for students to develop key digital communication skills using Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software.



“Marrying the power of the Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software with the inherent benefits of the student experience in the Academy of Digital Arts & Media will provide our students with a springboard to success in postsecondary education and the workplace.”

David Baldaia, Ed.D., career and technical education, Brevard Public Schools

The creation of an academy

In support of the new program, the school board authorized the creation of an Academy of Digital Arts & Media (ADAM) at Viera High School. ADAM is a comprehensive program that embraces all of the key components of the district’s Secondary Schools of National Prominence initiative to enhance Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships in the secondary school experience. The school board also approved the Students Embracing Technology (SET) Academy at Palm Bay High School for incoming freshman. Students enter the four year academy with opportunities to obtain Adobe Certifications in Photoshop, Flash, and Dreamweaver.

Courses offered through the academy provide students with cutting-edge technology to learn the skills and competencies that are in demand by industry and postsecondary education. Students learn in small cohort groups, gain practical experience through industry-sponsored internships, and work in teams in an industry-like environment. Most importantly, students use the equipment and software that industry professionals use.

At the end of the four year program, students have the opportunity to earn the Adobe Certified Associate credential, recognized as the entry industry certification. The school board appreciates that ADAM students will graduate high school with a leg up on the competition and an appetite for success in their chosen field.

David Baldaia, Ed.D., career and technical education, Brevard Public Schools, sees the academy as a promising addition to the district’s curriculum. “Marrying the power of the Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection software with the inherent benefits of the student experience in the Academy of Digital Arts & Media will provide our students with a springboard to success in postsecondary education and the workplace,” he says.



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