

Lights! Camera! Action!

Katy ISD's Miller Career and Technology Center prepares students for technology careers in broadcasting, TV, and film

Written by Julie Estep | Photography by Jason Lehecka



Instructor John Bertram in the audio/visual production studio, which is available for students to use for projects and assignments

During a football game at Rhodes Stadium, as all eyes are on the gridiron, one group of Katy students is focused instead on the graphics, instant replays, and five live action cameras. For the 11-member student-run crew in Katy ISD's Live Action Media Broadcast System (LAMBS), this hands-on experience gives them invaluable knowledge in television broadcasting. Offered through the Miller Career and Technology Center (MCTC), LAMBS represents just one unique course in Katy ISD's arts, audio/visual technology, and communications program.

Opening Doors to Tech Careers

Now in its fourth year, the audio/visual technology program at MCTC features interactive coursework designed to prime students for careers in highly technical fields, such as movies, video, and TV. Each of the three available courses offers students two college credits and endless prospects, like being able to participate in LAMBS. "This is a unique opportunity for the students to have hands-on experience that is invaluable on their resume," shares media technology and films instructor Jack Degelia.

Second-year students recently had the chance to edit a video for the Juilliard School program at Texas State University. "Juilliard was extremely impressed with the standard of professionalism and quality of the students' work," says Degelia. "It is these types of opportunities that make these programs so important in the professional development of students' careers."

The editing equipment used by audio/visual technology students is part of a state-of-the-art facility featuring a Mac Lab with computers loaded with current industry standard software, like Apple's Final Cut Pro X and Motion 5. Even more important than the cutting-edge equipment are the highly qualified instructors. "These courses offer real-world training by teachers who have a track record of excellence in their field," says Degelia.

Camille Brooks, a junior at Seven Lakes High School, is currently enrolled in the audio engineering course taught by instructor John Bertram. "There is not a single question he cannot answer, because he's done it all," she shares. "He works so hard for us."

A Head Start in the Digital Age

At the end of the year, students can go on to take the Apple End User Certification exam for Logic Pro, an industry standard exam that tests knowledge of editing software. MCTC students currently have a 100% pass rate on their first attempt, setting the record for the highest number of certified graduating students in the nation, including college programs. Last year alone, 12 students reached the highest level of certification offered by Apple.



Many former students go on to work for production companies, TV stations, and advertising agencies

As they enter college, many former MCTC students find themselves taking sophomore- and junior-level editing and audio engineering courses during their freshman year. They might even hold more certifications than their professors.

Degelia and Bertram have seen their former students go on to have careers working in production companies, TV stations, and advertising agencies. They learn about everything from special effects to screenwriting to cinematography. William Landry, a senior at Seven Lakes currently enrolled in the program's level-one courses, has already been accepted to the University of Houston's film production program. Having got a head start, he is well on his way to accomplishing his dream of becoming a camera operator and editor of a TV network like Showtime or MTV.


Going Beyond the Classroom

The program links Katy students with a purpose even higher than a certificate. "Our programs bring students from every high school campus together in a creative environment," says Bertram. "Students form friendships and working relationships with a diverse group of individuals from all over Katy, which helps prepare them for working in a professional environment in the future."

Along with learning to write scripts, level-two student Brandon Lumsdon has enjoyed the chance to work with a variety of people who share his interest in the field. "I really enjoy the people, people who love filmmaking as passionately as you do, who are willing to help and support you with your ideas and work, individuals I never would have met if the program didn't exist," he shares.

The audio/visual technology program mirrors the environments of both a college and a workplace. Bertram's goal is not only for each student to become proficient in this field, but also to discover their abilities to be creative and think outside the box. "In most professions, employers are looking for self-motivated problem-solvers," he says. "I want each student [to be able] to view the big picture when facing any problem, to see multiple possibilities and paths to a solution." KM


JULIE ESTEP is Katy born and bred and wishes this program had existed when she was in high school.



FOUNDATIONS Academy

Private Preschool & After-School Care

© 2011 Katy Magazine



Because these years are the most critical season of a child's life, we strive to teach the whole child using a well-rounded curriculum.

- Hands-on learning
- Academic concepts
- Character development
- Problem solving skills
- School readiness

281-599-1200
 20817 Westheimer Pkwy., Katy
 (near S. Fry Rd.)
foundations-academy.com

Preschool 12 mos. and up
 After School (to 6th grade)
 Hours: 6:30 am – 6:30 pm



BECOME A LIFEGUARD WITH AQUATICO

Aquatico is a fun team oriented company that is very excited to be hiring lifeguards at neighborhood pools in your area. Not certified yet? We are proud to be providing top notch training classes for future employees.

- American Red Cross Approved Training
- Competitive Pay & Certification Cost
- Job Placement & Advancement



Apply online at www.aquatico-pools.com or call 281-578-7665 (POOL)