



Video Production at the Western PA School for the Deaf

Long before the TV studio at the Western PA School for the Deaf was completed, students were learning to digitize and import video clips into a computer for editing. In 1993, the Buhl Interactive Lab offered students the opportunity to use computers with the very first video cards to import short video clips into multimedia research projects, autobiographies and lab reports.

Today students use digital cameras and the software program iMovie to learn the basics of video production and editing. The procedures which provide the foundation for all areas of television and film production are taught to students in an entry level course. Students learn to create story boards and scripts and to direct, film and edit movie clips for a variety of purposes, including school promos, daily announcements and creative skits.



WPSD's new Video Production Department opened in the Fall of 2002, thanks to friends, including the Alumni Association of WPSD, Massey Charitable Trust, the Rockwell Foundation, the Robert and Mary Weisbrod Foundation, the William V. and Catherine A. McKinney Charitable Foundation and an anonymous foundation. The department consists of a state-of-the-art television studio, control room and video production classroom.

The television studio is equipped with Parkervision's PVTV system which allows the students to control all of the primary functions of 2 robotic cameras from a single panel in the control room. All events are preprogrammed with a specialized computer which sets up camera angles, fades, special effects and taped sequences.



Students use a computer with script viewer software to type in the dialogue for their daily broadcasts and then time the running of script viewers above each camera for the talents to read "on air". This script is also fed into a computer with special captioning software which adds text to the bottom of the screen for open captioning. A third computer is used to create graphics and other special effects for the show.

The studio set is designed to be flexible, with a newsroom setting that can easily be moved for other kinds of programming and backdrops that create unique settings for each show.





A robotic camera on one side of the studio allows for weather maps, storybooks and other visuals to be displayed as a backdrop for the show, providing a professional studio experience.

A visual communication system has been built into all areas of the TV studio. Small cameras and monitors in the control room allow the director and crew to communicate visually with the floor manager and talents in the studio and also with a student doing voiceover work in the sound booth.



Through the use of the robotic cameras and the visual communication system, WPSD students can run an entire show independently.

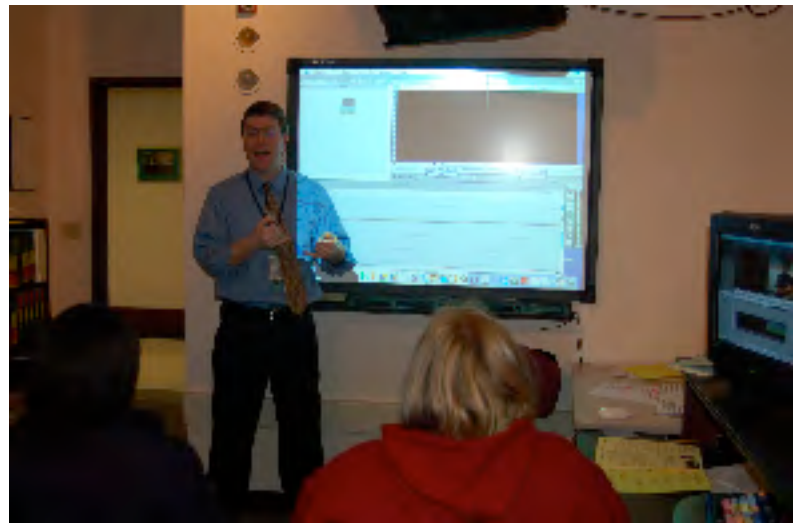
The students currently produce a 10 minute school news program 3 times a week and other special events projects for the school as needed.





As part part of the advanced video production class, students also learn how to use the higher-end Final Cut Pro and AVID editing systems. Three digital editing stations in a classroom adjacent to the TV studio are used for more advanced training in video field production and editing.

A SMARTboard interactive white board, connected to a ceiling mounted LCD projector, allows the teacher to project one of the editing computers on a large touch screen to teach the students the more complex techniques of video production and editing.



Students produce their own projects, which are stored on large external hard drives and then either transferred back to tape for broadcast through the school's video distribution system or pressed onto DVDs.

With an in-depth video production curriculum, and state-of-the-art technology, WPSD students learn advanced video production skills.

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