



San Francisco State University

College Of Extended Learning, Digital Media Program

Location

- San Francisco, CA

The Situation

- The College of Extended Learning prepares students for career advancement and career growth.
- The school offered an Avid-based digital video production program, but no audio program.
- They had a single Pro Tools® workstation but no Pro Tools curriculum.

The Program

- The school invested in a full Pro Tools Studio and added Pro Tools to the curriculum.

The Results

- Students are creating videos with Pro Tools-produced audio, ads for cable TV, and concert videos.
- A Pro Tools Certification Program is helping them find their place in the digital workplace.

The Right Tools for the Digital Age

Offering a wide variety of continuing adult education, the College of Extended Learning at San Francisco State University prepares students for career advancement, career change, or personal growth. The College offers a Digital Media Production Program and a Digital Video Intensive Program, along with Multimedia Studies, to students aged 16 to 62. The College implemented a single Pro Tools workstation in the late 1990s, but there was no Pro Tools curriculum. By 2003, the College offered a Music Industry Program but students were learning on 2-inch analog tools. At that point, Professor Craig Abaya recommended changing to digital editing, and, “if people want job skills in this changing industry, that it better be Pro Tools.”

From Classroom to Concert Stage

The Digital Video Intensive Program is a filmmaking program for people of varied ages and interests. It offers instructional coursework with real-world exercises, working across a variety of media in the process. For example, the first exercise given to students is to conduct an interview. On the audio side, students need to have taken audio fundamentals and the interview field recording class. On the directorial side, they have had an interview techniques class, and camera and lighting classes. All of these courses are prerequisite to the interview exercise.

Recent student projects using Avid tools for video and sound have included:

- A cable TV ad for the College of Extended Learning, mentored by an instructor who commutes from Hollywood
- A film for a San Francisco radio station, ALICE, with all the sound editing running through Pro Tools
- Extracurricular video coverage of San Francisco’s Stern Grove summer music festival, featuring multicamera editing, artist interviews and conversations, and artists such as Joan Baez and Lyrics Born (available on iTunes or at sterngrove.org).

“As far as the job market is concerned, there really is no second choice; there’s just one choice, period—learn Pro Tools.”

Craig Abaya, Program Director, Digital Media Production



Students are “amazed at what they are able to do,” said Abaya. “It’s all about their creativity, so the tool becomes like an appendage to them.”

In addition to the projects and exercises that parallel their progression of courses, DVI students often participate in extracurricular projects. Digital Video Intensive students film concerts in the summer every weekend at San Francisco’s Stern Grove. Visit iTunes or sterngrove.org to see these videos. This year, students will be filming Joan Baez and Lyrics Born, among others. These projects include the use of multiple cameras, filming and editing the concerts, extensive interviews with the artists, conversations with the artists, the pre-concert talks, and backstage interviews.

Technical Skills for the Job Market

In addition to their certificates, students have the option to earn Pro Tools certification. “They don’t have a track record,” noted Abaya, “but when they have on their resume that they have Pro Tools Certification, at that stage in their career, that might be the full third-party testimonial to their level of expertise. Most people who are first starting out need some kind of a gauge that shows, in this case on the technical level, what they’re capable of doing. And the technical level is vital, particularly to entry-level positions, internships, and things like that.”

Graduates of the program are working at E! Entertainment in Hollywood, Fox Sports in Century City, and at PBS, where one former student is a DP and producer.

