SOUTH TEXAS BUSINESS, EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY (BETA)

Location:
Edinburg, Texas

Program Enrollment:
175 students per year

Success Metrics:
- Exams validate current course curriculum
- Gives students workforce skills in high school
- Industry-recognized certification to build resumes

CERTIFIED ASSOCIATE

Adobe Certified Associate Gives Students More Job Options During and After High School

South Texas Business, Education & Technology Academy Arms Students with Workforce Skills Through Certification

CHALLENGE

South Texas Business, Education & Technology Academy (BETA) opened in August 2003 as a college preparatory high school offering experience for tomorrow's leaders in business, education and technology. Ranked in Newsweek's Top 100 High Schools, BETA provides hands-on instruction in addition to a rigorous academic curriculum.

BETA courses are designed with the help of business partners to ensure students are learning the most relevant and timely workforce skills. The school believes in validating skills with certification, and freshman students take the Certiport Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³). BETA hoped to validate other technology skills, especially in their digital and interactive media courses.

Technology Department Chair Vickie Roge always had her eye on helping BETA students obtain the skills employers' desire. Roge heard about the Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) exams while teaching Photoshop and brought a proposal to her principal to implement new certification exams.

"At BETA we push kids to go above and beyond what everyone else does," said Roge. "I wanted my students to be known not only by word of mouth, but because they have industry-level approval for their technology skills."

SOLUTION

BETA Principal Magdalena Gutierrez was a proponent of Career and Technical Education and was open to the idea as soon as Roge proposed ACA certification. The ACA exams were attractive to BETA because they tested the right level of proficiency in Adobe products.

"As an educational leader I know there is a need to prepare our students with these digital

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Vickie Roge
Technology Department Chair
South Texas Business, Education
& Technology Academy

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Visit **www.certiport.com/adobe**
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CERTIFIED ASSOCIATE

skills," said Gutierrez. "Over the years as I worked at different jobs, very few people had Photoshop skills, so I knew this was the right time to offer this very specialized skill to our students."

ACA offers four areas for BETA students to gain certification for entry-level skills: Adobe® Flash® Professional, Adobe® Dreamweaver®, Adobe® Photoshop® and Adobe® Premiere® Pro. Since BETA sophomores already took Photoshop, juniors took an animation course using Flash, and seniors used Dreamweaver in a web design course, ACA fit easily into the curriculum. In addition, BETA was already using the free Adobe Education curriculum for higher education, which made the implementation even easier.

BETA became a Certiport Testing Center, and the appropriate teachers became Adobe Certified Educators. BETA started with one Classroom License purchased from Certiport, the exclusive provider of ACA, and they had 35 students sign up for 30 certification spots.

"Once our students began taking the certification, it spread like wildfire," said Roge. "Now we require ACA certification for every student in the program."

Soon after implementing the Classroom License, BETA purchased a Campus License and expanded ACA into the curriculum for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students.

RESULTS
Principal Gutierrez says ACA certification has made students competitive in the workplace, giving them options to find part-times jobs while they earn their degrees. "We want our students to have choices, and proving they have these specialized Adobe skills is valuable in the workforce."

In two years, BETA has awarded 347 ACA certifications. The school has seen ACA make a difference in their technology internship program, where students work for local employers such as t-shirt graphics shops or university graphics departments.

"These students are more respected at their internship sites because of their skills, and their supervisors trust them," said Gutierrez. "Many have been offered jobs at the colleges where they intern during high school. We have several graduates currently working at the University of Texas-Pan American and going to school."

Luis Alvarez is one BETA student who has benefitted from the ACA certifications he earned in high school. He recently interned at a doctor's office and was in charge of designing, coding and deploying the doctor's website.

"The experience and all of the shortcuts I learned in my Adobe courses at BETA made launching the website at my internship simple," said Alvarez. "I think ACA certification will help me out a lot in my education and future career. The certification proves to someone that you know your way around Photoshop blindfolded or not."