

Students Gain Reel Experience.(Macs used for digital video at high school in California)

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Marco Torres, a teacher of social studies and media at California's San Fernando High School, had a vision: a room full of Power Mac G4s, iMacs, and iBooks--machines that would turn students into media marvels. The resulting Community Inspiration Studio has made the school a hotbed of digital-filmmaking creativity.

"We focus on project-based learning," Torres says. Take a recent assignment: to make a video about immigration--a subject that hits close to home at a school where a majority of the students can trace their family roots to Mexico. Students wrote an outline and drew storyboards. "They know every part of their story before they ever take a piece of equipment out of this room," Torres adds.

After collecting their footage with DV camcorders, students imported it to iMac DVs and used iMovie to capture and edit clips. The student videographers compressed their videos with Media 100's Media Cleaner and saved them to QuickTime.

Even if these students don't pursue film careers, the work is giving them an appreciation for the art of filmmaking. "When I first saw Toy Story, I thought they could have done it better," says sophomore Jose Juarez, who worked on computer animation in Torres's class. "Now I know how amazing it is, what they did, how hard it is, and how long it takes."

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