Nation's largest high school journalism program uses Adobe® Creative Suite® 5.5 Master Collection to cultivate the next generation of award-winning print, broadcast, and web journalists

Palo Alto High School (Paly) is surrounded by a rich legacy of excellence. Situated in the shadows of the esteemed Stanford University, adjacent to the innovation of Silicon Valley, and just a short trip to the cultural diversity of the San Francisco metropolitan area, the school has ample influence for developing inventive approaches to student learning and academic achievement.

With an outstanding academic reputation, a long list of national awards that grows each year, and a strong belief in quality public education, life at Paly is good—particularly in the journalism program. With an enrollment exceeding 500 students, Paly's journalism program is the largest high school program of its kind in the United States and is a place where students have amazing opportunities to shine.

Founded by Esther Wojcicki, the Paly journalism department is a revelation in education. Over the last 25 years the department has flourished, growing into a full-blown multimedia publishing concern to rival almost any organization—let alone a high school—and has been recognized at the highest levels by organizations such as the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for outstanding instruction and student achievement.
Students at Paly use Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Master Collection software to explore their creativity and express ideas and opinions. "Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Master Collection empowers students to communicate complex ideas in compelling, creative ways that are uniquely theirs," says Wojcicki, a teacher, advisor, and founder of Paly’s journalism department. "The freedom this kind of curriculum offers helps them learn valuable life skills such as how to gather information, analyze it critically, and present their conclusions clearly and concisely in a variety of media."

Soon, students will have even more opportunities to use cutting-edge resources to further their education when the school district opens a new 25,000 square foot media center to house the journalism program. The first of its kind in the country, the center will feature a professional-grade media studio equipped with the latest media technologies including cameras, audio equipment, and others.

Rewriting the future

When Wojcicki first came to Palo Alto High School’s journalism department, the small program had one six- to eight-page student newspaper. Today, students produce four professional-grade publications online and in print, as well as broadcast daily news features and stories on the school’s television network.

The crown jewel of the journalism department is *The Campanile*. Published every three weeks, *The Campanile* boasts the greatest longevity of all Paly publications. Originally started in 1918 as a six-page monthly with eight students on staff, it has now expanded to more than 26 pages with 70 student staff members who collaborate in integrated Adobe production workflows.

Taking advantage of Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Master Collection software, students use Adobe InDesign CS5.5 software to create multi-page layouts, Adobe Photoshop CS5 Extended software to edit and enhance photos, and Adobe Illustrator CS5 software to create more complex vector graphics. Students also organize thousands of digital assets using Adobe Bridge CS5, which streamlines the workflow in a highly visual manner.

The production processes are consistent across the program’s multiple publications, including *Verde*, Paly’s news and general feature magazine, and the multimedia sports magazine, *Viking*, a recipient of the Student Journalism Impact award. *Verde* is produced by students six times a year and showcases a more subjective look into news and reviews on music, restaurants, and film. Well received by the Paly community and acclaimed by the scholastic community, the magazine has received numerous awards. Most notably, its first issue won a Pacemaker—one of the two most prestigious awards in scholastic journalism—from the National Scholastic Press Association and later, the Gold Crown from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.
Following the integrated media approach essential in today’s publishing world, the faculty at Paly moved beyond traditional journalism classes into broadcast journalism. In Focus, the television news station at Paly, serves to disseminate campus news and selected features to the school community with professionalism, humor, and unbounded creativity. Students use Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5 software to digitally edit content for in-depth, web-based video segments.

No curriculum would be complete without web journalism, replete with social media, blogging, and live feeds. The Paly Voice, a website created using Adobe Dreamweaver software, lets students present their own reporting, writing, and photography along with repurposed content from the school’s magazine, newspaper, and broadcast classes. The site also serves as a searchable archive of the content from all Paly publications. Students are using Adobe Fireworks® CS5 software to optimize graphics and Adobe Flash® Professional CS5.5 software to create web animations.

The new face of education

Wojcicki is passionate about the impact journalism has on student achievement, noting that students in her program develop transferrable life skills such as professional-level writing, research, and analytical capabilities that are essential for 21st-century learning. Several studies, including one published by the University of Oregon, support Wojcicki’s vision, concluding that students engaged in journalism programs surpass the performance of non-journalism students on standardized tests in as many as seventeen areas of scholastic achievement.

As a strong advocate of providing career- and life-advancing skills, Wojcicki bases Paly’s journalism program on the philosophy that students learn by doing, not by watching. But she believes that these skills and experiences are not limited to just journalism students and has begun a new initiative, www.21stcenturylit.org, that aims to use the power of modern technologies—social media platforms, blogs, video, and other interactive mediums—to enhance learning for students in other disciplines.

Funded by a grant from the prestigious John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the initiative focuses on 21st-century learning methods, based on Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Master Collection software, to help students become more aware of current events and developing strong technical, writing, composition, and collaboration skills—essential for success in today’s world. The program has gained significant notoriety, with other institutions such as the State University of New York at Stonybrook (SUNY Stonybrook), University of Oregon School of Journalism, and Gunn High School in Palo Alto adopting similar curriculums in pilot programs in an effort to expand the use of non-traditional curriculums.
“Journalism is a great uniter. It brings all the other disciplines—social studies, grammar, math, science, and others—together in a way that gives them meaning. The learning curve with Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 is very short, so students can spend more time focusing on refining vital communications skills and less time struggling to learn new software programs.”

Esther Wojcicki
Teacher, advisor, and founder of the journalism department,
Palo Alto High School

Toolkit
Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Master Collection. Components used include:
• Adobe Illustrator CS5
• Adobe Photoshop CS5 Extended
• Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.5
• Adobe Dreamweaver CS5.5
• Adobe InDesign CS5.5
• Adobe Fireworks CS5
• Adobe Bridge CS5
• Adobe Flash Professional CS5.5

For more information
www.adobe.com/education
www.adobe.com/products/creativesuite/mastercollection

Get off to a quick start with Adobe software. Join the Adobe Education Exchange to access free teaching and learning resources contributed by a community of educators and the Adobe Education Team. http://edexchange.adobe.com

“Journalism is a great uniter,” she says. “It brings all the other disciplines—social studies, grammar, math, science, and others—together in a way that gives them meaning. The learning curve with Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 is very short, so students can spend more time focusing on refining vital communications skills and less time struggling to learn new software programs.”

According to Wojcicki, changing curriculums and teaching methods that have been ingrained in society for generations is a monumental task. She notes that with the right resources and a unique approach, educators can get away from just teaching to the test and begin really engaging students in active learning that brings about more impactful and valuable outcomes.

Her vision has been validated and justified, if her students’ successes are any indication. Graduates of Paly’s program have gone on to journalism careers in some of the most revered, notable publications such as Forbes Magazine, The New York Times, BusinessWeek, Rolling Stone, the San Jose Mercury News, and many other papers.

“Our entire Paly journalism program is incredibly useful for students as they move into higher education and careers paths,” Wojcicki says. “Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Master Collection gives students a proactive, creative arena for developing skills essential to success in life and the workplace. Without a software solution this flexible, intuitive, and robust, a program of this magnitude would be simply impossible to maintain.”