

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *Why did the Texas Cultural Trust (TCT) create these courses?*

Journalist Edward R. Murrow once stated, “The newest computer can merely compound, at speed, the oldest problem in the relations between human beings, and, in the end, the communicator will be confronted with the old problem of what to say and how to say it.” Despite the abundance of tools for electronic communication, our students are still confronted with the challenges involved in discovering and communicating their message clearly. TCT developed these courses to show how arts education can respond to the changing needs of students today. Quoting the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, “The arts are uniquely situated to provide links from school-based learning to themes that are essential to every child’s understanding of the modern world.”

Inspired by a talk she heard by Apple Founder Steve Jobs, Amy Barbee, previous Executive Director of the Texas Cultural Trust, secured funding to create a new curriculum that integrates the power of visual arts with digital media. Working with Austin-based Resources for Learning, the Trust first brought together a group of media leaders from the Central Texas area, including KLRU-TV, the Austin Film Society, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Digital Media Council, Big Thought, Ricochet Labs, the Austin Children’s Museum, the Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, Communities in Schools of Central Texas, and the University of Texas College of Fine Arts. When asked what skills they would like to see in job candidates, advisory group members said that they wanted employees who knew how to reflect and evaluate, give and receive feedback, think conceptually, work as a team and in various roles, and create meaningful projects of value to them and their communities. They also said that students entering the work world needed hand and technical skills, the ability to articulate a project goal, familiarity with processes such as storyboarding and writing, the ability to tell their stories through media, and application of research to creative projects. These courses were developed with those goals in mind.

### *Why should these courses be offered at my school?*

High schools should implement these courses to offer students exciting opportunities that bridge real-world technology skills with fine arts learning experiences and to bring more students into their fine arts programs. These project-based fine arts curricula establish the connection between traditional fine arts education and digital media. Digital literacy is the future of communication and commerce and these courses create learning experiences that develop students' capacities for critical thinking, creativity, imagination, and innovation. The courses are based on a combined set of fine arts and technology standards, resulting in arts instruction that is rigorous and designed to specifically develop students' media literacy, providing integrated, relevant skills that will prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

### *How can I implement these courses at my school?*

You can implement these courses as new standalone courses or you can implement various modules and lesson plans into your existing fine arts classes.

### *What professional development is being offered?*

This initiative is a partnership between the Texas Cultural Trust and the University of Texas at Austin College of Fine Arts. The College of Fine Arts offers various trainings every year. Please contact Caroline Hammond at the Texas Cultural Trust (contact information listed at the end of this section) if you would like more information about trainings.

### *How do I access the curriculum?*

You can download the curriculum and additional resources on: [www.txartandmedia.org](http://www.txartandmedia.org). In addition to the curriculum, there is an online community, complete with a discussion forum. You must login and create an account to access these resources.

### *What resources are available?*

On the website, [www.txartandmedia.org](http://www.txartandmedia.org), you can download the following materials: course curricula, implementation guide, technology cost model, teacher evaluation rubric, power points for teacher training on each course as well as the TEA innovative course applications.

### *What technology do I need to teach these courses?*

Each course assumes implementing schools have a *Bring Your Own Device* or similar program. These courses are technology agnostic, meaning multiple programs and software are suggested in the curriculum for each course. This program enables students to utilize their own personal laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones within the classroom. Teachers should check with their campus administration and district technology support specialists to determine the protocols and details. In the absence of this type of program, the class will need access to internet-connected computers, still and video cameras, and a projector at the bare minimum. The minimum ratio of computers to students is one computer per three students, although to maximize success, course designers recommend a 1:1 computer-to-student ratio. Each student needs access to digital still and video cameras, although with some modifications, it is possible for a pair of students to share one camera. Details on the types of hardware and software utilized per module can be found in the “Understanding the Technology” section in this guide. For cost estimates, please see the Cost Implementation Model, attached.

### *Who can teach these classes?*

Only certified Fine Arts teachers can teach these courses for students to receive credit.

### *Who is the intended audience for taking these courses?*

These courses are intended for high school students who have not been previously exposed to the arts. The AT&T Foundation provided the original funding for these courses and wanted these courses to benefit at-risk students. We define at-risk students as those who are not experiencing success in school and are at risk for not completing high school. These may be students who do not fit the profile of the typical high school fine arts student, especially the kind who take four years of arts courses.

### *What prior fine arts experiences or knowledge will students need before enrolling in these courses?*

All of the Level I courses are aimed at students with no prior experience. Therefore no prior fine arts experiences or knowledge are required for a student to take the Level I courses except for Dance and Media Communications I. This was the decision of the TEA-appointed committees working to update the

Fine Arts TEKS in 2012. It should be noted that exempting a student from this requirement is at the discretion of the district.

*At what grade levels are these courses offered?*

These courses are intended for high school students.

*May we teach these courses at middle school and/or elementary school?*

In 2014-2015 the courses are available for elective credit at the high school level, and middle school students are not eligible to receive elective credit. In 2015-2016 when the courses are all available for fine arts credit, younger students will be able to earn a credit for these courses just as they can other high school courses, such as Algebra I.

*Do I have to teach the whole year of the course, or can I use one lesson or unit as stand-alone?*

You can implement these courses as new standalone courses or you can implement various modules and lesson plans into your existing fine arts classes.

*How much do these course materials cost? Will the Trust ever charge for accessing these materials?*

The Texas Cultural Trust has made this curriculum available to teachers and schools for free. You do not have to pay to use any of the course materials or additional resources on the website. Presently, there are no plans to charge teachers or schools in Texas for using these materials.

*What kinds of credit do these courses satisfy?*

Once the new Fine Arts TEKS are implemented during the 2015-2016 school year, each of these courses will count as a fine arts credit. Until the implementation of the new Fine Arts TEKS, these courses can be offered as an elective credit. Currently, all Texas high school students are required to have one fine arts credit for graduation.

*Will these courses count for dual credit? Can my students receive college credit for these courses?*

Currently, no, these courses do not count for dual credit.

*How will these courses impact my fine arts program?*

The Texas Cultural Trust developed these courses as a way to bring more students into the fine arts and increase the number of students involved in fine arts programs. These courses will not detract or take students away from existing programs.

*What is the Texas Cultural Trust?*

Established in 1995, the Texas Cultural Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that promotes the importance of the arts in educating our children and sustaining our vibrant Texas economy, through awareness, outreach, economic research, and the development of a fine arts and digital literacy curriculum for public school students. The Texas Cultural Trust supports the programs of the Texas Commission on the Arts and other qualifying state agencies. Programs of the Texas Cultural Trust include the biennial Texas Medal of Arts Awards, the Young Masters Program, Arts and Digital Literacy

Initiative, Create Texas, *Adventures in the ARTS*—a children's book, Texas Women for the Arts and Founders for the Arts. For more information, please visit [www.txculturaltrust.org](http://www.txculturaltrust.org).

*Who is the primary point of contact for questions?*

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