



United Kingdom's Walsall Academy Turns to **Camtasia Studio®** for Dynamic, Flexible Multimedia Resources for Students



Walsall Academy

On the 4th September 2003, The Walsall Academy opened its doors for the first time. It welcomed 192 eleven year old students into Year 7 and 150 Sixth Form students. The School will grow annually to a full enrolment of eventually 1150 students. The School is one of a number of City Academies to be established in England and is sponsored by The Mercers' Company of The City of London and Thomas Telford School, Telford, Shropshire. Free education is provided for all students. The School is funded through a joint scheme between the Government and the Sponsors. There are no fees and applications are invited from eligible students whatever their ability.

A New Approach to Education

Walsall Academy is one of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's flagship City Academy schools. It is a new breed of educational center introduced by the government to overcome educational underachievement in designated areas. The basis of these new schools is to put technology at the center of the curriculum.

By any standard, Walsall is truly a school of the future. In Design and Technology there are sixty flat-screen computer terminals. Every classroom has an interactive whiteboard on which the teacher can draw, display learning materials, and call up stored video or live television on-demand. Teachers can monitor what every student is doing and even take over their computer remotely to provide assistance when needed.

School starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. with only two learning sessions, allowing students to become fully immersed in both the theoretical and practical aspects of their studies. The ages of the students range from 11-18, and the academic abilities of the students span the entire spectrum, from those with special needs to the most gifted.

The teaching methodology is wide ranging, including traditional didactic methods, investigative, group work, independent work, team teaching, etc. However, modern technology underpins the learning environment with state-of-the-art Information Communication Technology facilities easily accessible to all teachers and students.

Teaching and Learning CAD/CAM with Camtasia Studio

The first thing a student, parent, or visitor sees when they enter through the school's automatic doors is the Computer Aided Design (CAD) learning area -- the homeroom of Jonathan Boyle. Currently, Mr. Boyle is the Deputy Head and has had full responsibility for Art & Design and Design & Technology since the Academy opened in September 2003 and is also tasked with promoting technologies to other schools in the United Kingdom. Throughout his thirteen years of teaching CAD, Mr. Boyle's students have enjoyed success through a variety of learning methods.

Over the last four years, Mr. Boyle, a Fellow of Technology with the Gatsby Technology Enhancement Programme, has been using Camtasia Studio to create multimedia resources for Design and Technology education. In this time, he has learned to greatly appreciate and understand the difference that learning with real-world video makes.

Camtasia Studio is the world's most popular screen recording software. It is used to create application training modules, software simulations and video tutorials. Simply click "Record" and Camtasia Studio records all the activity on a PC screen, complete with narration and special effects that can be added in real time or after the fact. When the student plays back the recorded screen video, it is equivalent to looking over a teacher's shoulder as he uses software or navigates a Web site.

"Not all children learn the same way, at the same rate, or retain the same information, especially when you're dealing solely with a text-based environment," said Mr. Boyle. *"Intriguing exercises with layers of multimedia content delivered via video, with high-fidelity quality, makes learning and teaching exciting and effective. While the students are the beneficiaries, the teacher, as always, plays a critical role in the outcome. Camtasia Studio makes this role easy and enjoyable."*

Mr. Boyle finds using Camtasia Studio in the classroom to be a natural fit because it goes with the technology landscape and doesn't hinder the natural flow of learning and teaching. And for an educator who might not be as technically adept, a new user can become proficient with Camtasia Studio in just a day. Whether he's creating multimedia course content for the next day's lesson, or recording a class session live, complete with questions from the students, Mr. Boyle can provide dynamic and interesting videos to better help his students understand the complexities of CAD.

Common uses of Camtasia Studio in Mr. Boyle's class is to demonstrate how to generate three-dimensional models, how to save or print files, how to import and export images, and how to use various CAD software programs. Once this is demonstrated, students can replay the video as many times as necessary or they can actually perform the steps themselves. Additionally, Camtasia Studio makes it possible to add interactive hotspots to the recorded tutorials where the student is required to click on a certain object before the video continues. Teachers can also add text, annotations, and zoom to specific areas for emphasis along with many other special features.

These videos are then placed on the school's network so educators, students and parents can access them at school or from home. In the coming years, it's the goal of Walsall to have its entire curriculum online.

The Results

Unlike some course subjects, CAD is especially challenging to learn because of the complexity and breadth of most CAD software. In these instances, Camtasia Studio can be used as a continuing education tool to "Educate-the Educators" on how to use the newest software.

Since joining Walsall Academy, Mr. Boyle has created over 40 different videos with Camtasia Studio that he constantly updates to fit with the current class subject or adapts for the a particular group of students. All told, Mr. Boyle has created hundreds of videos since he first started using Camtasia Studio. Experience has proven that a length of about eight minutes is most effective for each video. By breaking down complex routines into short independent tutorials it creates a sense of progress in the individual child allowing them to cover lots of ground.

"You can do a video in one take with a bit of experience," said Mr. Boyle. *"In the morning I might produce a video before my duty and it is there for the children when they start 20 minutes later. I even sit with the microphone on and record live with an actively involved audience. They like to play it back on the network and you can see them laughing and joining in again with the jokes they heard 10 minutes earlier."*

Not only is Camtasia Studio the standard for learning CAD/CAM but it is also used in different departments at Walsall Academy, from the Foreign Language department where they narrate PowerPoint content and output it to Flash for online presentations, to the Business Studies department where content can be updated year round to reflect what is happening in the current economic landscape. Because the textbook approach doesn't allow for such flexibility, Camtasia Studio continues to expand its role for both administrators and educators throughout Walsall.

Last year a new and exciting course consisting of both traditional video and Camtasia Studio tutorials called "CAD CAM Cookies Platinum" is now being shared with over 6000 members of the Design and Technology Association in the UK. And this year's course content, "CAD CAM Cookies Laser Edition", will be streamed by the Technology Enhancement Programme in the UK providing students and teachers with even easier access.

"Camtasia Studio gives educators more one-on-one time with those students that require greater assistance and more quality time with those students who want to push the boundaries," said Mr. Boyle. *"And any educator will tell you, this is a wonderful goal to meet."*

While Walsall is replete with technology and creative teaching ideas, it is still required to teach the National Curriculum like all other schools. Mr. Boyle understands that his multimedia teaching methods can be just as effective for teaching traditional subject matter as more advanced material. He used the same methods years ago at Thomas Telford School that he now uses at Walsall. While there, Thomas Telford was the first school to ever receive a 100-percent pass rate for the U.K.'s GCSE examination.

“We are preparing children for the 21st century,” said Boyle. “The tools of this era need to be at their disposal now if we are to provide them with the necessary skills, options, and advantages the workplace will demand of them.”

“In the morning I might produce a video before my duty and it is there for the children when they start 20 minutes later. I even sit with the microphone on and record live with an actively involved audience. They like to play it back on the network and you can see them laughing and joining in again with the jokes they heard 10 minutes earlier.”

-Mr. Boyle, Deputy Headmaster Walsall Academy

Get product details, attend a webinar, download a free trial:

www.camtasiastudio.com Sales line: (888) 750-0685