



DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CAREERCONNECT

CreativeConnect Industry Summit – May 2, 2016

Student Presentations

Students showed their work on projects from animation to theater production including costumes and sets.

One student described his experience at an internship this summer with the Sand Creek Trail area. He created a video for them and has continued to do freelance work for the company. This internship taught him how to work with people who are extremely busy, meet people who work on the greenway, and that he likes the contracting world and will continue to do that work. He also learned persistence in communication and hopes to go to CSU and keep up with contract work.

Another student had an internship with Curious Theater Company and talked about how they worked with the technical director and worked on building sets. Met daily to figure out what needed to happen that day. Each day was different, each day had a focus. Got to work with people who did lighting and other design work. Owen's specialty was in costume and scenic. Will go to Denison University to study theater and figure out what aspect of theater he'd like to focus on.

Goodwill Rep Explained How Denver School of the Arts Works

It's a 4 year program, each student starts as a freshman and chooses a major. They then create an artist bio, build websites then they progress with detail and work so that by senior year they are very specific with their portfolio work. They also provide internship opportunities and present portfolios to local businesses/experts so they can practice presenting and showing their work.

Panel Discussion

- RJ Owen - Director of User Experience - Universal Mind
 - Dad was an engineer and he wanted to be an artist, he said, "Find the thing that you have to do to make money, but you don't have to let it stay morning, you have to get creative about it." He found ways to make things that seemed boring more interesting.
 - His advice: Biggest quality they hire for is scrappiness, people who are willing to get in there and figure out how to get the project done. There's so much new coming that it's best to really be able to dive in.

- Brian Tinker - Graphic Design Program Director - Colo Mtn College
 - Spent 20 years as a creative/art director. His dad worked at publishing company and worked with designers so he got internships and learned about the production side of design.
 - His advice:
 - He's noticed many students are not prepared for the pace that the real world works at so he suggested that, in addition to major projects, that teachers consider adding in smaller projects as well so they learn how to do multiple things at the same time. He said, "Be creative on demand and learn how to solve a problem on deadline."
 - Sometimes clients don't know what they're thinking, they're hiring you to do something that they're not an expert in this so chance to take charge.
 - Students can't possibly learn enough skill sets or programs, don't let them get too narrow in their skill set



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- Sara Pacheco — UX Designer from Universal Mind - DPS Alum from Lincoln
 - Works at Universal Mind and is a “design practitioner” and started very young. When she was in high school, she started doing everything she could - summer programs, internships, work-study. She was encouraged by her teachers and landed an internship with TCI (cable company) and ended up on the engineering team writing tech user manuals which gave her the tech knowledge, now she’s a UX designer. She said, “I just feel fortunate that there were people in my life who saw I had potential and encouraged me. here I am 20 years later and I’m so blessed to do what I do and I love doing it after all these years.”
 - Her advice: Remind students that we’re always learning. In my work, the older I get, the less I know, so come in with confidence and capability but always be open to learning.
- Andy Sherman - Creative Director - Can of Creative
 - Graphic designer who works independently. There was no program for him in high school, it was an ambiguous industry. Studied design in college. It’s visual communication and it’s not just about it looking good, you have to know your audience and what language they speak. What’s their language? Learn how to interpret criticism and critique. When you present, you always get feedback and the instinct for the designer is to take it personally and not take it seriously. Dissect what the criticism is, and come up with a creative solution to process that feedback.
 - You don’t always have the right information/research to start a project so encourage students to ask good questions and see if they can figure out what’s missing.
 - Learned how to read software manuals so he could learn how to learn software. Can watch tutorials.
- Max Peterson - Audio Engineer - Denver Center for the Performing Arts
 - The labor force of the entertainment industry is as powerful as the creative side. Started in theater as a child since his mom was involved in community theater. Public education didn’t work for him so he got is GED, went to college eventually. Had teachers in high school helped gear him towards problem solving.
 - His advice:
 - Biggest role is to do problem solving and customer service (to make the client happy/audience happy). What’s the criticism you’re getting and how are you trying to solve it. “Get rid of the ego and sensitivity and fix the problem that’s in front of you.”
 - Stuff changes so it’s important to learn how to learn and adapt to new things, technology, practices...
 - Technology is technology - but as you learn one thing, you can learn another because much of it builds on the next
- Hawk Vaccaro - Video Director - Cinematographer
 - His advice:
 - Be willing to collaborate, if you’re going to be a jerk to your crew, you’re not going to have a crew. Learn to let someone do their job and go their path. Let people do their jobs, be open and not try to do it all. Let it be ok to let projects get scrapped or fail. Learn how to adapt after something changes on you. There’s always more going on then you messing up.
 - You have to be able to do it all. It all goes hand in hand.
 - Break it, you can always reinstall it.
 - Use whatever is good at the moment

The audience asked the question how students can better learn how to prioritize and balance multiple projects:



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- Universal Mind does work to help learn some exercises that help your brain get going very quickly (like come up with a user interface in 5 minutes)
 - ideas: come up with as many ideas you can in 5 minutes and whoever makes the most ideas wins, or who can come up with the worst idea...
- Practice ideation - come up with multiple ideas so they're not so emotionally attached to their ideas
- Learn how to do something over and over again, and then the next week do it again so they learn to move and think quicker
- Make a list of everything you need to complete in 5 days, then a list of everything you need to complete that day, then the little quick things that you can knock out right at the moment. That frees time to get the little details out of the way and the bigger projects to take more focus and time.

Broke into small groups to talk about curriculum and projects you're working on in classes

- Filling your time with what you love to do whether it's through "formal education" or not, if you love it, find a way to work it into your life.
- There's a huge progression of learning, it all builds on itself.
- Learn the business aspect of the business - learn how to negotiate, how to market yourself, what jobs to take...the more that people can learn to negotiate their value and stick to their value the better.
 - All the people you're negotiating with are businesses, if you don't speak their language, they're going to take advantage of you on purpose
- "I got where I got for showing up on time, working hard, asking what's next, and not being a jerk."
- Learn how to sell themselves as artists.