

# Certiport IC<sup>3</sup>

Exam Prepares Students in Career Training Program  
for Advanced Technical Certification



## The Stride Center

### Location:

San Francisco, California

### Total Enrollment:

120 people per year

### Success Metrics:

- Preparation for advanced certification
- Technology training to bring students out of poverty
- Employer-valued credential



The Stride Center offers technical training to help students achieve economic self-sufficiency

### CHALLENGE

Since 2000, the Stride Center has offered technical training to prepare students in the San Francisco Bay Area for professional careers in the information technology field. The nonprofit provides a comprehensive career development program that includes job skills training, credentials, career coaching, work experience and job placement assistance.

Every Stride Center student is given an assessment and placed into a basic computer literacy course, an A+ PC Technician course, or an advanced technical certification course such as CompTIA's Network+ or Microsoft's Certified Desktop Support Technician.

Barrie Hathaway, Executive Director of the Stride Center, says students of all ages and backgrounds come to the organization to receive technical training and get out of poverty. One of the Stride Center's key challenges is educating entry-level students on basic computer skills to prepare them for more advanced technical courses. Since its inception, the Stride Center has worked to improve student success rates, quickly realizing the basic computer literacy course was key to preparing students who are new to the technology field.

"You can't take an A+ level class without a basic understanding of using a computer," says Hathaway. "Many of our incoming students need to learn the basics before they move on to our advanced technical courses."

In 2007, the Stride Center officially began to look for a new introductory course to better prepare their students for advanced technical certifications.

### SOLUTION

Training Manager Isaias Leiva researched industry certifications to find one that would offer a broad introduction to computer skills. The Stride Center found Certiport's Internet Computing and Core Certification (IC<sup>3</sup>) and Leiva quickly determined it would provide excellent content and validation for the basic computer literacy course.

"IC<sup>3</sup> fit our goals and objectives, while covering more material that would prepare our students for the A+ level course," says Leiva. "In addition, the IC<sup>3</sup> exam would give students an immediate credential to place on their resume to assist in finding employment."

Leiva spent a few months developing the curriculum for the new IC<sup>3</sup> course at the Stride Center. The 14-week course includes 16 hours of instruction each week, and Leiva incorporated his own methods and objectives with Certiport's IC<sup>3</sup> materials to create a custom curriculum.

Once the curriculum was ready, the Stride Center implemented the course immediately. Today, the Computer Literacy Basics course trains participants on the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access,) Internet fundamentals, email and basic hardware/ troubleshooting skills. The course prepares students to earn their IC<sup>3</sup> certification, as well as for the next level of Stride's training, the A+ PC Technician Certification.

"Of all of our certifications, the IC<sup>3</sup> exam is the hardest for our students to pass since this is their introduction to both computer skills and certification exams," says Hathaway. "There is a lot to know to pass the IC<sup>3</sup> exam, which is what made it a good fit for us. We needed a broad introduction to multiple tools and the IC<sup>3</sup> exam has been very successful at the Stride Center."

## RESULTS

Approximately 120 Stride Center students take the Computer Literacy Basics course each year. The Stride Center has recently achieved a 95 percent pass rate for the IC<sup>3</sup> exam, with 41 out of 43 students earning the IC<sup>3</sup> certification in the last two classes.

"We are very pleased with our pass rate – this is a very intense certification and not for the weak of heart," says Hathaway.

Stride Center students are also very pleased with the exam, understanding the value of the Computer Literacy Basics course and the certification. Richard Willis came to the Stride Center in 2009 without any knowledge of computers – not even knowing how a mouse functions. He had been out of work for two years, was about to complete his parole and was looking for a way to support his four children.

"I was impressed with the Stride Center program and the certifications they offered, so I enrolled," said Willis. "It was a very good experience, extremely challenging. I had to learn and understand everything about computers and practice new life skills and professional mannerisms. I had to learn a new way of thinking and I enjoyed it very much."

It was no surprise to the Stride Center staff when Willis completed the IC<sup>3</sup> certification successfully, even earning a perfect score on one exam. After receiving his IC<sup>3</sup> certification through Certiport, Willis continued to take the A+ certification course at the Stride Center, where he learned all the skills he needed to become a computer technician. Upon completion of the program, Willis was offered a position giving technical support to various banks in California. Willis' supervisors have been impressed, and they have recently offered him the position of Lead Technician.

"One of the most noticeable results I see from people who go through our program and get their IC<sup>3</sup> certification is their level of confidence," says Leiva. "It really changes their perspective about themselves when they are able to pass the exam."

Hathaway believes students who take the IC<sup>3</sup> exam are better prepared for the A+ course, even more prepared than those who test directly into the A+ course at the time of assessment. "Students who took the IC<sup>3</sup> class know the drill, have been tested, and have proven they can be successful."

In addition, students who do not end up moving on to more advanced technical certifications have the IC<sup>3</sup> certification to place on their resume. Hathaway believes the certification gives job seekers a second look because they have proven a level of professionalism.

"This job market is extremely competitive, and individuals need a resume that proves they have a particular skill," says Hathaway. "Certification is key for us, and that is why we offer IC<sup>3</sup>. We know when people go out into the workplace they need some credential on their resume and this certification becomes a credential for them."

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– isaias Leiva  
Training Manager  
The Stride Center



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