GETTING STARTED WITH THE

ithemes

EDUCATION
PROGRAM

Getting Started with the iThemes Education Program

iThemes.com

Contents

Introduction

How can we make your classroom better?

That's the driving question at the iThemes Education Program.

See, we love the Internet. We're amazed at how it gives everyone a platform and puts opportunity back in the hands of the people. But the Internet can be overwhelming. There's a lot to learn and you need a powerful geek to make it work.

That's where WordPress comes in. It's a simple but powerful website management tool that puts the power of the Internet within reach of normal people. You don't have to be a geek to build awesome stuff with WordPress. But if you are a geek, it makes the cooler stuff easier.

So if you're going to teach web design, WordPress is the way to go. You still teach the foundational elements of HTML, CSS and PHP, but there's a framework to help you move faster. Beginners get a sense of accomplishment and advanced students can tackle more intense projects.

Pairing WordPress with the right themes, plugins and training from iThemes can make it even more powerful. iThemes Builder makes it quick and easy to build a WordPress site with interchangeable elements. Our plugins can add pizzazz to a simple site and offer sturdy backup to a major project. Our training can save you time and add depth to your teaching.

The Internet is awesome. Teach it!

WordPress makes web creation easy. Use it!

iThemes makes WordPress ever better. Love it!

OK, we're a bit biased on that last one, but we're serious. And we're ready to help. That's why we offer the iThemes Education Program with access to our [WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit](#) for educators and students.

New to WordPress?

If you're new to WordPress, you might want to check out our free *[Getting Started with WordPress](#) eBook* for a thorough introduction to all things WordPress.

WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit

The iThemes Education Program gives educators free access to our [WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit](#) and makes student access available at a vastly reduced price. Our Web Designer's Toolkit is everything you need—160 themes, 20 plugins and over 400 hours of training videos.

- For professional developers, it's an $590 package.
- For educators, it's free.
- For students, we offer a $97 version (or less: we offer classroom discounts).

It's a software and training package to make your classroom better. Let's talk about how you can get started.

What You Get in the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit

So what's in it? Here's what the Educator's Edition of the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit includes:

- **160 Themes** – Themes bring style and structure to WordPress, giving students a place to start. You get access to the entire library of iThemes WordPress themes, including the Builder and Flex frameworks.

- **20 Plugins** – Plugins add extra functionality to WordPress, expanding what you can do. You can use all 20 iThemes plugins, including BackupBuddy.

- **WebDesign.com Training** – You have access to over 400 hours of video training in the vast WebDesign.com library. New videos are added every week and there are all kinds of live events to check out.

- **Support** – When you need some help you have full access to the iThemes support forum.

- **Education Advisor** – Exclusive to the Educator Edition, you also get access to our educational director, [Lindsey Miller](). Her role is to answer questions and help you out.

That's a lot of stuff. Let's take a closer look at what you get.

Themes

WordPress uses themes to control the look and presentation of your site. You can quickly change themes and change the entire look of your site, while still maintaining the underlying WordPress software that powers your site.

Themes come in all types and varieties, including free and premium themes. There are also theme frameworks that allow WordPress to do even more and utilize what's called a child theme. This allows you to edit the look in the child theme while the new functionality of the parent theme isn't lost. You can also customize a theme or create your own from scratch.

Many web design educators will use themes to give students a head start. You can show students an existing theme as an example to see what's possible and start customizing it to see how the CSS works. This can be a great foundation before diving in and creating a theme from scratch.

iThemes Themes

iThemes has been creating WordPress themes since 2008. We offer more than [160 premium themes](#)—all of which are available to you in the Educator's Toolkit. Some are stand alone themes intended for specific purposes, like ecommerce sites or real estate agents, while others are frameworks with multiple child themes available.

Builder

[iThemes Builder](#) is one such framework that goes above and beyond the call of duty. Builder allows you to literally build your own layout without knowing code. It provides an easy way to get started, quickly building that foundation and giving students a sense of accomplishment. Then it's easy for students to go back and apply what they've learned, creating their own child theme.

Builder is also a good framework for students to work with because its ease of use is a good fit with clients. Making life easier for potential clients can be a big help as students are getting started with their own freelance work.

It might be helpful to check out our free *[Getting Started with Builder](#)* [eBook](#) for more on how Builder works.

Flexx

[Flexx](#) is another premium theme framework that gives more options, versatility and customization than the standard free theme. It features customizable layout options, billboard ad management and a contact form template. It's another theme that clients can tweak without knowing code, making it a good option for students to use with potential clients.

Plugins

WordPress plugins are pieces of software that extend the core capabilities of WordPress. They let you do more.

Since WordPress is open source software, these are all third party tools that add on to what WordPress can do. They're easy to download and install. Some are premium (there is a fee to purchase them) and others are free.

Plugins can do things like improve your search engine optimization ([All-in-One-SEO Pack](#)), display related posts in your sidebar ([Yet Another Related Posts Plugin](#)), do complete backups of your WordPress site ([BackupBuddy](#)) or create stunning web forms quickly and easily ([Gravity Forms](#)). You can add just about any functionality to WordPress with plugins.

You may want to read our free *[Getting Started with Plugins](#)* eBook for more on how plugins work and some best practices.

Plugins are a great opportunity for educators because they allow you to go deeper into coding and open unlimited possibilities for student projects. You can create extremely simple plugins that add very minor functionality and you can create complex plugins that expand WordPress into a whole new area (like social networking with [BuddyPress](#) or ecommerce with [Shopp](#)).

In addition to the educational opportunities in creating plugins, you can also make the task of setting up and running student sites easier. Plugins make functionality quick and easy to add right now, leaving you free to enjoy the functionality and still teach students how to do it themselves down the road.

iThemes Plugins

iThemes currently offers [nearly 20 plugins](#) with more coming all the time. With the Educator's Toolkit you get access to all of them, including support (something you rarely get with free plugins). Some offer enhanced display features, such as [embedded videos](#), [notification bars](#), [slideshows](#) or [rotating text](#). Others offer features such as [post ranking](#), [custom login screens](#) and [social media integration](#).

A few of the iThemes plugins are more involved and offer even greater functionality:

BackupBuddy

[BackupBuddy](#) allows for easy backup, restoration and migration of your site. Everybody has heard horror stories about a computer that died and someone lost everything because they didn't have a backup. Students somehow seem to generate the best of these stories. But BackupBuddy offers peace of mind. It's a good investment to protect the time and effort you and your students put into your site.

LoopBuddy

This is a more complicated plugin that gives you exact control over how content is generated and displayed in WordPress. [LoopBuddy](#) does this by overwriting the WordPress loop that generates and displays content with queries. This plugin can help you show advanced students how to do more with WordPress and give them a quick start before diving more deeply into the code.

WebDesign.com Training

There's always more to learn with WordPress, and that's why we offer the ever-expanding training library at WebDesign.com. Currently the library includes more than 400 hours of video training. Explore a wide range of topics for various skill levels from the very beginner to advanced, giving you exactly the skills and information you need.

Each month there are also 10-15 hours of live, power-packed webinars exploring fresh content. WebDesign.com can help you stay up-to-date on the latest with WordPress developments and help your students sharpen their skills and techniques.

You can build lessons around WebDesign.com content, using the webinars to bring yourself up to speed or get ideas for how to approach a topic. You can also use WebDesign.com as an extra resource for students, sending them to the site to get an in-depth lesson when they're stuck or to tackle new projects when they're ahead and ready for more.

Support

Everybody needs help at some point. That's why our team of expert moderators is ready to help when you need it, offering support for all iThemes products on our support forum. It's good to have backup in the classroom, and solid support means you're not alone. When you can't figure out how to do something, when something goes wrong or when your students stump you, we can help.

Educator's Toolkit vs. Student's Toolkit

We make the entire Web Designer's Toolkit available to educators for free. This allows you to check out iThemes and evaluate what we have to offer without making any investment.

But if you want your students to use iThemes products, they'll need to have the [Student's Toolkit](#). This is our reduced pricing for students that puts all these benefits within their reach, a $590 package for only $97. Or less: we also offer bulk discounts if institutions want to outfit entire classrooms.

The Student's Toolkit offers the same benefits as the Educator's Toolkit, with one main difference. Instead of access to the iThemes support forum, students get access to a Student Community Forum where they can connect and engage with other students. Unfortunately, we can't offer full support to students. It's our hope that students will help one another in the Student Community Forum and if they're still stuck will then go to their teachers.

While the Educator's Toolkit gives you a lot to work with, you'll want to give your classroom access to the Student's Toolkit to really make the most of our Education Program. Remember that we offer [bulk discounts for classroom purchasing](#).

What You Need to Get Started

Ready to get started in the iThemes Education Program?

Here's what you need to do:

1. Apply for the iThemes Education Program

2. Prepare Your Space:

   - Domain

   - Hosting

   - WordPress

3. Access the Educator's Toolkit

   - Download & Install Themes

   - Download & Install Plugins

   - Access WebDesign.com Training

   - Access iThemes Support

4. Get Access to the Student's Toolkit

Let's get started:

1. Apply for the iThemes Education Program

The first step is to apply. We want to help all qualified and selected educators, but first we need to know that's you. We don't give away more than $590 worth of stuff to just anyone. [Fill out our simple online application](#) and tell us a bit about yourself as an educator. We want to know where you teach, what you teach and how long you've been doing it.

Once you fill out the application , Lindsey Miller—our education director—will personally evaluate your application. She'll contact you if she has any questions, but if you meet the requirements you'll more than likely get that happy "accepted!" email in your inbox and you can move forward.

If you're not sure if you fit our requirements, go ahead and [contact Lindsey](#). We're happy to consider all kinds of situations. We want to help teachers teach, even if that's not in a traditional classroom. If you're unsure if you should apply, let's talk.

2. Prepare Your Space

Once you're accepted in the iThemes Education Program you'll have the entire WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit at your fingertips. That's pretty cool. There's a ton of great stuff you can use and we'll talk about how to make the most of it. But before you dive in, you need a few things in place: domain, hosting and WordPress.

School Space

Your school might have some of this space set up already. There might be an intranet or other internal system where students can build sites online without having them fully available to the world wide web. Or your school might have a hosting package set up for students to use. For example, in Oklahoma teachers can access OneNet for free domains and hosting for classroom purposes. Check with your IT department to see what kind of options you have. If they have something set up, they can probably help you through it and you might not need a domain and hosting (so feel free to skip those steps).

Do It Yourself

If your school doesn't have anything set up, you'll need to do it yourself. Here's what you need:

Domain

First things first, you need a domain name. This is the URL of your site, like YourClass.com. It's how people get to your site.

Domains are fairly cheap and there are all sorts of places you can register them. You can also get your domain and hosting (we'll cover that next) at the same place, often as a package deal.

We typically recommend Site5 and GoDaddy (though we only recommend GoDaddy for domain name registration *only*—don't get hosting through GoDaddy).

Of course the hard part about getting a domain is picking one. You'll want to pick a domain name that fits with what you're doing. If you're planning to host all your student projects, you might want to pick something short so you can keep subdomains and project URLs from getting too long. There are all kinds of tips on picking a domain, though if this site is primarily for your classroom and not the general public, then you probably don't need to sweat it.

Hosting

Next you need a host. A host is where you store all your stuff on the web. It's the place where your website—all the files, images and more—resides.

There are a lot of hosting companies you can work with, but not all are created equal. You're going to want one that's WordPress friendly.

We recommend Site5—they're easy to use, have fair prices and good WordPress capabilities. Page.ly is another option, especially if you want to avoid some of the maintenance work.

If your students are going to need their own hosting space, you might consider setting up a reseller account with whatever provider you choose. Take advantage of the bulk purchasing power of your class. With a reseller account you could offer a discount to your students and minimize the cost for everyone.

WordPress

Once you have your space set up—whether it's school space on a local intranet or your own host and domain—you'll need to install WordPress. You can download WordPress for free from WordPress.org and then follow their instructions.

3. Access the Educator's Toolkit

Now that you have your space ready, it's time to access the Educator's Toolkit. The Toolkit is available in the password-protected [iThemes Members Panel](). When you received your welcome email to the Education Program you received directions for setting up your account. If you haven't set up your account, do it now. If you already did, you'll need the username and password you set up.

Go to iThemes.com and log in to access the Members Panel. Just look for the login area at the top where you can enter your username and password. If you have any trouble logging in, contact Lindsey Miller.

Once you're logged in, you'll see a long list of files on the left under Your Subscriptions. It looks a little overwhelming at first, but this is where you can download all the iThemes goodies, 160 themes, 20 plugins and more. On the right you can find links to the support forum and the WebDesign.com training library (both require logging in again).

Each theme or plugin comes as a compressed ZIP file that can be downloaded, then directly uploaded to WordPress and installed. You only need to download and install what you want to use, so each offering has a separate link.

If that list of links is feeling too overwhelming, a good way to sort through it all is to open a separate browser window to the main iThemes site and view the public listing of themes and plugins. View the public listing and the private Member's panel side by side. Decide which one you want from the public descriptions, then go back to the Toolkit and download that one.

To Use Themes

Once you download a theme, you'll need to install it in WordPress. When you're logged in to WordPress, go to **Appearance > Themes**. Click on the Install Themes tab at the top and you can install a new theme. Click on Upload and you can browse your computer for the theme you just downloaded. Once your theme is installed you'll need to click Activate to actually put it to work.

To Use Plugins

You can add plugins to your site in much the same way you added themes. When you're logged in to WordPress, go to **Plugins > Add New**. Click on Upload and you can browse your computer for the plugin you just downloaded. Once your plugin is installed you'll need to click Activate to actually put it to work.

To Access Support

You can access iThemes' support by visiting the [iThemes Community Support Forum](#). You can also find the link in the Member Panel. The left side has the list of available downloads, but the right side has a list of Useful Links. You'll need to log in to the support forum using the same user name and password.

To Access Training

Go to [WebDesign.com](#) (or find the link in the Member Panel under Useful Links) and log in. This is the same login you use to access iThemes.com. Once you're logged in, you have access to the full library of training videos and can register for live webinars.

Check It Out

Now that you have full access to the Educator's Toolkit, check it out. Install the Builder theme and create some layouts. Install BackupBuddy and see how easy it is to set up automatic daily backups. Check out the training at WebDesign.com

4. Get Access to the Student's Toolkit

Now that you're starting to see how the Educator's Toolkit can help in your classroom, it's time to make it available to your students. Just like picking a textbook, you'll need to make sure your students can get access to the Toolkit.

On Their Own

Students can apply and purchase the Student's Toolkit directly from our site for $97, a vast discount from the regularly priced Toolkit.

We can also set up coupon codes for your class and save your students the trouble of applying. You can put the code in your syllabus and students can immediately make the purchase on their own.

Education Pricing

You can also work directly with us to secure a bulk discount for your entire classroom. We offer discounts for full classroom and multi-classroom uses. Whether you need the Student's Toolkit for your classroom or your entire campus, we can set you up.

Meet Lindsey Miller, iThemes Education Program Director

Lindsey is here to help. She's our education director and here to make sure you get the most out of the iThemes Education Program. She's pulling together lesson plans and sharing ideas, ready to answer questions and offer tips. If you have a problem, just ask. Lindsey is only a phone call away.

Seriously. Here's a typical day for Lindsey:

- Give a teacher a one-on-one tour of the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit.
- Offer classroom pricing for the Student's Toolkit, outfitting an entire web design program.
- Answer questions for an adult learning educator and determining that they qualify for our Education Program.
- Approving educator applications and then walking a teacher through the download process.

If you need some help, don't hesitate to call or email Lindsey.

Lindsey Miller

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How to Use the Toolkit In The Classroom

Now it's time to have some fun. Let's put the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit to work in your classroom. In general, the biggest advantage WordPress and iThemes offer is that you can get moving quickly. You can get a site up and running in minutes, giving students an immediate framework to start working. Good luck making that kind of progress with Dreamweaver.

Note: Your students will need their own copy of the Student's Toolkit. Students can purchase it on their own or we have bulk discounts for classroom purchases.

Create a Website
Have your students create a simple website using WordPress and the Builder theme. They can learn the basics of WordPress and themes, plus be encouraged by how quickly and easily they can post a professional looking site. Have them use WordPress to keep a journal of what they're learning in class. For coding classes this is a good foundational step, but for non-coding classes it offers an easy opportunity to make projects online. Use plugins to add functionality like video, photo galleries and more.

Backup Everything
Push the importance of backup by having your students install BackupBuddy. Have them backup their sites, delete them, and then restore them from the backup. They'll learn how WordPress plugins work and how important it is to have a

backup. This is a good time to stress that they keep backups for everything—they could easily lose that USB dongle or SD card.

CSS Lessons

With Builder and a child theme you can give students simple lessons in CSS. Tweak the different styles to see how they work and show the basics of CSS. Then use a blank child theme to have students start writing their own CSS. Give your students more CSS lessons with the CSS Dojo videos from WebDesign. com (lessons cover images, typography, tables and more).

PHP Lessons

Use Builder and FireBug to see how templates work and cover the basics of PHP. Students can begin to manipulate PHP and see their changes take effect. Have students start editing and writing their own template files to show they understand PHP. Let your students dive deeper with PHP Dojo videos from WebDesign.com (lessons cover variables, conditional logic and arrays).

Build Your Own Theme

Working with other themes and using Builder to get a leg up is great, but eventually students need to learn how to build their own theme. This is a chance to test their PHP and CSS knowledge. You can use the WebDesign.com training video about how to build your own WordPress theme.

Build Your Own Plugin

Use iThemes plugins to show students what it's possible to accomplish. Then use the WebDesign.com training video for a complete how-to on building your own plugin. Use it to bring yourself up to speed or give students another resource if they get stuck.

Get Adaptive

With mobile screens, tablets, laptops and widescreen desktops, websites need to adapt to fit in. Teach your students [how to create adaptive sites](#) using Builder and javascript with this WebDesign.com video.

Go Mobile

Make your code portable by teaching [how to code your first mobile app](#), using this WebDesign.com course. They use trigger. io to create, build and deploy apps across platforms.

How Did They Do That?

If your students are always asking how to code something they find online, this new series from WebDesign.com is for you. They're taking apart current sites and figuring out how they do it, with lessons using Builder, CSS and jQuery.

The Real World

A lot of times education is less than practical. You teach your students how to code, but who teaches them how to deal with clients? Or how much they should charge? Or how to run their business? WebDesign.com has done a number of practical trainings on how to run your business, including topics like [negotiating a contract](#), [handing off a site to a client](#), [finding new clients](#), [billing](#) and more.

Need more ideas?

Take a look through the WebDesign.com training videos for more ideas. You could always assign projects with these videos as extra background material to help students out.

Lesson Plans

Check out our Lesson Plans for more detailed ways to educate with WordPress and iThemes. The iThemes Lesson Plan Guide is organized as a series of 20 topical lessons organized into six modules:

1. Web Fundamentals (HTML & CSS)
2. WordPress Foundations
3. Media
4. Customization
5. Maintenance and Upgrades
6. Presentation

The lessons can be modified for a 15-week university course, a K-12 setting or other training environments. Each lesson includes objectives, lecture teaching points, assigned readings, tutorial videos, hands-on practice activities and additional resources. Several options for student web design projects and evaluation rubrics are also included.

Some of the projects will even be taught in WebDesign.com training videos, so you'll have even more resources to share with your students.

All the plans are on available on GitHub to encourage sharing and collaboration with other educators.

FAQs

Who is eligible for the Educator's Toolkit?

Anyone who teaches web design in an accredited school, high school, college, university or vocational center and is based in the United States or Canada is eligible.

While the Education Program is geared for web design instructors, we will consider other disciplines. If that's you, contact us to discuss your needs.

How do I apply for the Educator's Toolkit?

Complete the online application, including all required sections. Once submitted, we'll review your application and contact you if we have any questions.

How do I apply for the Educator's Toolkit?

We offer the Educator's Toolkit to teachers for free, but the Student's Toolkit costs $97, with discounts available for bulk and classroom purchases.The benefits in each toolkit are the same, with one main difference. Instead of access to the iThemes support forum, students get access to a Student Community Forum where they can connect and engage with other students.

Unfortunately, we can't offer full support to students. It's our hope that students will help one another in the Student Community Forum and if they're still stuck will then go to their teachers for help.

Can I share my Educator's Toolkit with my students?

No. When you apply to the program you agree not to share your account. We make the Educator's Toolkit available for free to give educators a chance to evaluate what we have to offer without making any investment.

If you want your students to use iThemes products, they'll need to have the Student's Toolkit. This is our reduced pricing for students that puts all these benefits within their reach, an $590 package for only $97 (or less: we also offer discounts for bulk purchases).

Can I show WebDesign.com videos to my class?

You can share WebDesign.com videos with your class, but only if all students in your class have the Student's Toolkit.

WebDesign.com is a premium training site and we can't give everything away for free. The free Educator's Toolkit allows you to evaluate WebDesign.com content before making any financial investment. Remember we offer a huge discount for students— an $590 package for only $97. We also offer further discounts for bulk classroom purchases.

Can I use the Educator's Toolkit for commercial purposes?

Nope. We offer the free Educator's Toolkit as a resource for classrooms. It's not a free ride for your on-the-side consulting. If you'd like to use the Educator's Toolkit for commercial purposes, please upgrade to the full Web Designer's Toolkit (we'll even give you a discount).

Can students use the Student's Toolkit for commercial purposes?

Yes. We understand that a lot of students have freelance work to help pay their way through school. We remember what it's like. We encourage students to use iThemes products from the Toolkit for their commercial projects, though they should keep in mind the limitations of the Student's Toolkit. Namely that there is no access to the support forum and upgrades will end with the school year.

If a student is using the Toolkit for commercial purposes and needs support or they need upgrades after they graduate, we hope they'll consider upgrading to the full Web Designer's Toolkit (we'll even give them a [discount](#)).

Who is eligible for the Student Edition of the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit?

Any full-time student enrolled in a college, technical school or high school in the United States or Canada is eligible. Students do not have to be in a web development or design program, but have an interest in developing their WordPress web development skills and an ability to learn and study on their own.

How can students apply for the Student Edition of the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit?

Students can complete the [online application](#), and include a copy of their official, current schedule showing they are enrolled full time. By "official" we mean the schedule the school provides

that has school-specific identifying information on it. Students may black out their personal school ID number for privacy. Students can upload their schedule via the application form or email it to education [at] ithemes.com.

What's included in the Student Edition of the WordPress Web Designer's Toolkit?

The Student Toolkit includes all themes and plugins at iThemes. com, plus updates and new releases during your membership year.

Over 400 hours of on-demand video training at WebDesign.com, including 10-15 hours of live training each month.

Access to the Student Community Forum where students can develop connections with other students interested in web design, helping each other learn these tools together.

Why would someone get the Student Edition of the Toolkit instead of the full edition?

That's completely up to the students. The Student's Toolkit is a super affordable way to gain access to premium web design products so they can learn to use them on their own. If students prefer the full edition, which includes access to the support forum, they're welcome to purchase that. We can extend a 30% courtesy discount to any students wanting the full edition.

What if students need help?

Access to the official iThemes support forum is not included in the Student Edition because of the drastically discounted price.

We encourage students to post on the student discussion board area of the forum and get help from fellow students.

We also assume that students who get stuck can also go to their teachers for help. Students can also turn to the [iThemes codex](#) for documentation and instructions.

If they really need full support, they can purchase individual products they want support on—at a 30% discount. Access to the support forum is included with the full license.

What happens after six months?

After six months, educators maintain all the products they've downloaded. They are yours to keep and use. If you want to have access to updates and/or the support forum, you would need to renew a full Toolkit membership, or renew individual licenses for the products you use the most.

Students are welcome to reapply for the Student's Toolkit as long as they're still enrolled full time in school. Any student who is no longer in school will need to purchase the standard Toolkit.

Educators are also welcome to reapply after six months. As long as they continue to teach WordPress in the classroom, they can get access to the free Educator's Toolkit.

Next Steps

Ready to join the iThemes Education Program?

Ready to join the iThemes Education Program?
[Fill out your application](#) to get started today.

Interested, but you're not sure if it's the right fit for you?

No problem. [Contact us](#) and let's talk about whether or not it'd be a good fit for your situation.

Need to know about bulk pricing for the Student's Toolkit?

[Contact us](#) and we can talk about discounted pricing based on your situation.

Have an idea of something we could offer?

Our Education Program is still growing and we're happy to consider ideas and find the best way to provide you with the right tools. We can't promise immediate action, but the first step is to [contact us](#) and start the conversation.

Educator Stories

Kristen Harris
Online Instructor in Web Design and Development
Francis Tuttle Technology Center

What I like about the Student's Toolkit is that it exposes students to a lot of WordPress fundamentals that they can build on throughout their time in our program. I have my students install Builder and a Builder child theme, along with BackupBuddy in their first course, and they set up their initial student portfolios using these products. They get to experience the excitement of setting up and customizing a site for themselves at their own domain name the second week of class! This is very motivating for a new web design student—they can't wait to see what they'll learn next.

After they've gotten some coding basics under their belts, they then learn how to customize a child theme using their own CSS and FireBug to help them figure out how Builder's theme code works. By starting with a framework like Builder, students learn about content management systems, child vs. parent themes, CSS customization, and other WordPress essentials. And BackupBuddy is there to ensure that they have a current backup of their work.

Carol Mortensen
Campus Technology Integration Specialist
Deer Park High School

The support is tremendous and I am able to be completely set up with a look I love and ready to tweak as needed. I've added plugins, watched and learned from videos and tutorials, and used the forum. Excellent, excellent product and great for educators!

Christy Sooter
Web Design & Development Instructor
Francis Tuttle Technology Center

The iThemes Education Program is a great way to get students creating content on the web quickly! In no time, students can have a site online with the tools and resources available in the Student's Toolkit. Many of my students have purchased the Toolkit to expand their WordPress skills and use the resources available on WebDesign.com. It allows them to produce high quality websites for clients. One of the students' favorite resources available is BackupBuddy.

Steve Cunningham
Assistant Professor
University of Southern California – Thornton School of Music

My experience has been that the iThemes Education Program has substantially helped improve not only the quality of students' work, but also their grasp of both design and programming concepts. Because they're spending less time struggling with code to get results, we get to spend more time exploring typography, layout, SEO, and yes even the code. The bottom line is that the outcomes after 16 weeks are noticeably improved, and students remain engaged throughout.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the best thing about using iThemes' Builder is its modularity. Each of Builder's modules is optimized for a specific use, and that gives students opportunities to focus on the "why" as well as the "how" of each module, and to see how they work together. The plug-ins are well-documented, so they continue to provide students with a sense of accomplishment along the way, which keeps them engaged.