

The Standard-Times

S E R V I N G T H E S O U T H C O A S T C O M M U N I T Y

Preparing for the future

Internship holds many lessons for TV-tech students at DHS

By SARAH CONERY, *Standard-Times* correspondent

By now, high school seniors have made that all-important decision about whether to continue their education or take those first tentative steps into the working world.

Whichever way they go, participating in an internship program is a major asset for them, academically, professionally and personally.

"It helps you to prepare for the future because it teaches you to work independently," says Cory Martin, a senior at Dartmouth High School. "We get less guidance on projects so we can change our minds and take more risks."

Cory is one of seven advanced television-technology students at DHS who interned last fall through the school's school-to-career program. It was the first time TV-tech students have participated in the internship program, during which they produced promotional videos widely cheered by their employers.

TV tech, part of DHS's Unified Arts Department, ranges from introductory courses where students learn all the basics of TV production while working on various group projects, to an advanced class where work is on a more individual basis.

The curriculum begins with learning how to use cameras, cables and editing programs and ultimately involves designing, directing and completing an entire project, which range from a simple commercial or public service announcement to more complicated projects, such as those using Claymation.

The seven students -- six seniors, all of whom will be continuing their education in the fall, and one junior -- produced promotional videos for Thinktech Computers Inc. and the Buttonwood Park Zoo, both in New Bedford.

"We wanted the students to choose what interests them," says Donna Sachs, coordinator of DHS's school-to-career program. "It makes the projects student-centered and they put parts of themselves into the projects. They learn better with interest."

The Thinktech interns -- Cory Martin, Adam Parr and Justin Medeiros -- spent a block of their mornings at the company, taking still shots of the equipment and office, as well as "casting" employees to star in the promotional video. Later, back at school, the students conveyed their footage to editing computers and assembled their film using a professional program called Final Cut Pro.

The boys worked under the direction of Pamela Viveiros, vice president and co-owner of Thinktech, which has been in business since 1998 and has worked with DHS before.

"There really was no downside," says Ms. Viveiros of the internship. "They get to learn and we have the opportunity to help them learn."



JOHN SLADEWSKI/*Standard-Times* special
Denise Audette's advanced TV-tech students work on editing their latest project at Dartmouth High School. Sitting from left are Justin Medeiros, Jared Rita, Cory Martin and Justin Coriatty. Standing from left are Ms. Audette, Adam Parr, Jon Gotlib and Scott Tetrault.

Ms. Viveiros was impressed by her interns from the beginning. They had prepared carefully for their initial meeting, outlining their promotional project and questioning the direction she wanted the video to go. When the actual filming began, the boys understood how important it was to listen carefully to the needs of their client.

The students finished the video in early January and Thinktech will be adding the DVD to the marketing package they send to small businesses interested in their services.

Meanwhile, seniors Jonathon Gotlib, Scott Tetrault, Jared Rita and junior Justin Coriaty spent their fall semester videotaping the animals and patrons of the Buttonwood Park Zoo. Officials there were so impressed with the final project that they took the group on for another film.

"We are doing a safety video for schools to show kids before they go there on field trips," says Jonathon.

David Prentiss, executive director of the Buttonwood Park Zoological Society, was impressed both by the students' professionalism and the caliber of their work.

"This was a great service to the community," he says. "We are very proud of our zoo and they conveyed that in a creative way."

The students' next video will be done in conjunction with the Zoological Society's Education Department.

Personality and creative differences caused a few setbacks for both teams. They had to resolve their problems quickly and learn to compromise. What they learned during the internship will be carried on into their professional lives, they all agree.

"The community saw a different side of youth," says TV-tech teacher Denise Audette. She says the program has improved over the past few years. The TV studio and classroom is easily twice the size of the studio in the old Dartmouth High and the equipment is much more sophisticated.

"We are now part of the Unified Arts Department, which is important because it helps to attract a variety of students," Mrs. Audette says. "Many of the art students are discovering the program."

She has recently been in touch with Diversified Marketing and District 3 of the Dartmouth Fire Department, who have expressed interest in working with a team of students on their own promotional videos.

Judy Cronin, chair of the Unified Arts Department, praised the TV-tech internship program.

"Mrs. Audette's program is a classic example of authentic assessment-creating opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge to 'real life' situations," she says. "Students receive positive recognition for their hard work, which motivates them to move further with their learning. It's a win-win situation."

This story appeared on Page B1 of The Standard-Times on May 3, 2005.

