

# School Professionals to Bring CPTV Experiences to Classrooms at Edison.



Rob Beecher / Record-Journal

Edison teachers Lucy Fonseca, language arts, right, and Fran Castiello, technology integration, stand with camera equipment in the media center of Edison Middle School in Meriden. The two teachers recently attended an externship at CPTV to learn about video production.

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**MERIDEN** — Lucy Fonseca's first year as a language arts teacher at Thomas Edison Middle School ended in a new beginning.

Fonseca was one of two teachers from the school who spent a week at CPTV in late June and discovered video production as a way for students to broaden their learning.

From their seats in the control room, Fonseca and Edison's technology coordinator Fran Castiello got a first-hand look at what went into CPTV's documentary "The Warming of Connecticut," and helped staff a live special that followed the documentary entitled, "The Warming of Connecticut: A Town Meeting."

The experience left enough of an impression on the two women to spend their summer developing ways to transfer their experience into next year's lesson plans.

“This multi-media approach has such value,” Castiello said. “Kids have that intuitive sense. They’re not afraid to use this equipment.”

For Fonseca, video opens the doors to new ways students can use language to tell stories and draft essays, it also gives them another way to interact with the material.

And it can get them a head start on possible careers.

Video development and production is used in more than just broadcasting news and documentaries. Video communication skills are used to create corporate training, or marketing programs and multi-media presentations in most industry sectors.

The CPTV experience gave Fonseca a link between her students and the professionals that produce and air documentary videos every day.

“I was so encouraged by them and their willingness to come talk to the kids,” Castiello said.

The CPTV externship was just one of several opportunities in a new pilot project called STEM Experts in Schools. STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering and math, connects teachers with business professionals who use these skills every day in their work.

Ten teachers took part in the program, organized by Workforce Alliance, Area Cooperative Education Services, Thomas Edison Middle School, New Haven Board of Education CT Scholars, University of New Haven, Gateway Community College, CT Technology Council, and New Haven Manufacturers Association.

“We’re still getting the feedback but I think it’s been great,” said William Villano, executive director of Workforce Alliance. “There’s nothing better than getting teachers out into the world of work see how that affects the teaching curriculum. We were excited to add this component to our youth initiative.”

Edison school is a regional magnet school that emphasizes technology, math and science studies and is well equipped to offer video instruction. Several other Edison teachers also participated in the Stem project.

In 2003, Edison received a Blue Chip grant from the state for \$120,000, and the school was able to purchase a multimedia technology lab. It has its own cameras, lights, studio and control room with digital editing equipment. And each student has a laptop computer.

Every morning for the past three years, a core group of students arrive at 8 a.m. and write the morning’s script of the day’s announcements for an 8:30 a.m. live broadcast that airs on televisions in every classroom. The students write the script, and man the cameras and run the broadcast themselves. A teacher supervises the day’s production.

Castiello and Fonseca want to take the video aspect further in the learning process. She shows teachers how to instruct sixth-graders in Web design, and in video animation and flash in seventh-grade, and video editing added sounds and narration in eighth grade. She also works with the students on editing and planning video. Next year, Fonseca will introduce a unit on health and wellness. In addition to the required eighth-grade essay, the students will be required to make an accompanying video highlighting an issue or a career.

The project will draw upon the students’ resource gathering, planning, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

“They’ll be taught how to judge sources and synthesize that information further and apply it to a small documentary,” Fonseca said. “It asks, how does this apply to real life? They will be researching and becoming an expert.”

Castiello said there is a lot of planning and writing before the students get their hands on a camera.

A history project about grandparents could involve gathering old documents such as passports or social security cards, scanning them in, and taping voiceovers. Next, the student could film an interview their parent to talk about their memories of the grandparent. It’s up to the student to gather materials and set up the interviews. Ken Burn’s videos will be their guide, because they all use multiple medias.

The two women said their relationship with CPTV is ongoing. And the experience has both of them watching more documentaries more closely.

“Now, I know why they used a close up there,” Fonseca said. “Or, why a they used a wide angle.” Fonseca hopes to take some of her new techniques to her students — and in these days of YouTube where anyone can be a producer — them how to make quality videos.

“She’s going to be a pioneer Castiello said.

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