CABRILLO YOUTH SUMMER INSTITUTE

Students begin career development camps

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APTO5 — If you don’t watch out, a 13-year-old may soon out-compete you for a job.

Santa Cruz County middle school students are learning job skills such as editing videos with FinalCut Pro, creating Flash animation and installing computer hard drives at Santa Cruz County College Commitment’s Cabrillo Youth Summer Institute campuses this summer.

“They’re all digital natives. They’ve been breathing this stuff since they were born,” said Seth

Instructor Steve Hardin helps Mission Hill eighth-grader Marshall Carter install a new operating system at the Cabrillo Youth Summer Institute camp.

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Williams, instructor of the video production camp, “There’s a big wave of tech competence that’s going to be arriving soon, and they’re going to start outclassing a lot of the teachers.”

More than 250 middle and high school students have registered for 29 five-day camps, ranging in subject from culinary arts to entrepreneurship. Morning and afternoon camps are offered until Aug. 16 on both Watsonville and Aptos campuses of Cabrillo College.

SAT preparation and college readiness camps are also available for high school students. Registrations is still open at http://www.sccommits.org/programs/camp.

Many of the camps are in the science and technology fields. Wilson said he recognizes the growing need for computer skills, especially with video production.

“Forty years ago people didn’t have video publishing or use video or have the tools available, but now everybody does,” Wilson said. “Whatever industry they go into, this is going to be a valuable skill.”

Beyond emphasizing technical skills and college readiness, the camps focus on beginning students on their journey to an eventual career.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 40 percent of first-time full-time students who begin seeking a bachelor’s degree in fall 2004 did not finish within six years. Part of reason for the slow rate is students not knowing what they want to do after graduation, said Luan Seaman, director of the CYSI program.

“We want to get students and families to start thinking, start exploring, do job shadows, camps, informational interviews and start learning as much as they can to figure out what it is going to take them to get there,” said Seaman.

Wendy Temblador, assistant director of the CYSI program, said that her experiences as a counselor at Aptos Junior High and E.A. Hall Middle School have taught her about the attention spans of the average middle school student.

“They can’t think 30 years from now,” said Temblador. “I’ve learned that you have to talk to them about now.”

She talks to students about their hobbies and emphasizes their skills and strengths. This year she required her school-year students to register for a CYSI camp because she wants to spark an interest with hands-on activities and get students thinking about college and eventually a career.

Alexandra Peters has signed up her son Jack, a student at Pacific Collegiate School, for three CYSI camps so far. “He just loves to learn, and he’s interested in technology,” Peters said. “I just want him to find things he truly likes to do. It’s all about exposing him to what’s out there.”

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