

Specs Howard School of Media Arts Blog

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Life Lessons From The Field: Taylor Sharpe

Posted by Abby Cook on Wed, Jul 2, 2014

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"My motto towards learning has always been don't tell me, teach me. To me that means don't just tell me what to do, how to operate a switch board, how to shoot a video.. show me how it's done so that I can confidently take the task on

myself. That's exactly what they do at Specs.

After graduating from two of Specs Howards programs, Taylor Sharpe gives some life lessons from the field of video editing.

Where do you work and what do you do there?

I work for Channel 7 News WXYZ as an Overnight Video Editor for the Monday-Friday morning show.

What do you feel separates Specs Howard from other schools?

Well, when I first went off to college I declared Broadcasting as my major and my stepdad always told me if you want to go into **Broadcasting**, you go to Specs Howard. I've always had a passion for movies and music. I ended up going to Grand Valley for a year and then decided to come home and go to Oakland to pursue a career in teaching.

One day I had ended up taking my little sister to an event at her school and Radio Disney was the host. I thought to myself, "Why are you becoming a teacher?". Yes, I love little kids and to influence their lives and make a difference was a big deal for me, but I love music and movies and to get to talk about that all day long and discover new music was so exciting to me. So, I asked my stepdad what the school was he originally told me to go to and that was it. I pulled out of OU before classes even began and went to talk to the people at Specs. When they told me what was offered in the now Broadcast Media Arts program I was sold. All the things I wanted in one package.

If someone were to ask what it's like to attend Specs Howard, what would you say?

I love that the programs are hands on and that you really get to experience what the situations would be like in the real world. My motto towards learning has always been *don't tell me, teach me*. To me that means don't just tell me what to do, how to operate a switch board, how to shoot a video.. show me how it's done so that I can confidently take the task on myself. That's exactly what they do at Specs.

Did you enjoy the mix of on-campus and online work within each class? What were the benefits?

I'm not normally a huge fan of online classes but it kept you engaged with class and kept your focus on school and learning even more when I wasn't physically in class. I loved the environment of the **DMA** class. It was at the Farmington Hills satellite location and that smaller atmosphere was perfect for me. I knew everyone in the building and it made it feel even more like a family.

How does Specs Howard prepare you for the real world?

The hands-on experience is invaluable. Specs literally teaches you what to do and what not to do by showing you. Not making you read about it in a dusty old book, but by letting you get your hands on the equipment and practicing the skill.

What advice would you give a student currently attending Specs Howard?

My advice would be to keep in contact with your teachers & advisors, they want you to succeed just as much as you do, but you have to show them that you're willing to put in the work. Also, never give up on your dreams no matter how big they are. Everyone starts off small and works their way up the ladder, give it time.

What was the most important thing you learned at Specs?

One of the most important things I learned at Specs was to never give up, if I felt like maybe some of my work wasn't good enough there was always a way I could make it better with the help of my teachers or fellow students. Also, networking is key. Keep in touch with people you meet along the way, you never know when an opportunity may present itself.

Have you encountered other Specs grads in the workplace? Explain.

Absolutely! When I worked on movie sets I met about four or five people from Specs and the number of students who came from Specs to Channel 7 is incredible.

What is your favorite part of the editing process?

My favorite part of the editing process is the 'in-between' of working with the director and going through footage. That's when you're finding the bloopers or seeing a really intense scene come together just the way the director pictured it. And of course the final product is always amazing, seeing everything everyone worked on finally done and complete.

How did you get started working where you are now?

Specs had called me and said that Channel 7 was looking for a part-time editor and asked if they could pass my resume along. So, I said yes! They called me after a month for an interview and then it was maybe a week after my interview I got offered the position.

What was it like your first day on the job after graduating?

The first day on the job at Channel 7 after graduating was really intimidating. It was right in the main hours of the day.

There was a lot of shouting back and forth and people rushing to get stuff done before it hits the air. It was just really intimidating for someone right out of school but so exciting at the same time.

What character traits should a person in your profession have?

You need to have a thick skin, be able to take responsibility if you make a mistake, be prompt and professional, a fast learner, and don't be afraid to ask questions! You should constantly be looking to improve.

Describe where you work and the people you work with.

It's very mellow when I first come in in the morning. Mind you, I get here at 1 a.m. but once it picks up it can get hectic, especially with breaking news. The people I work with are great. They're all people I would consider friends. It's very easy for me to come to them with questions, comments, or concerns and know that it will be taken care of in some way, shape, or form.

What are your daily responsibilities?

Responsibilities I have on a daily basis are to cut the special opens for the 5am show, cut our ABC sponsored cut ins for the show, and the looklives for our 7:25 cut ins.

Finish this sentence. My job is anything but ordinary because I get to _____.

My job is anything but ordinary because I get to do what I love everyday and make a living from it!

What do you hope to achieve in the next 10 years?

I hope to be on a different time slot at my work, hopefully dayside. Not that I don't like my overnight position, but I definitely would like to be awake and go to bed at a normal time like the rest of my family and friends.

Why would someone want to be a video editor?

If you like editing and news this job combines both of those things into one. You are educating yourself about the world while working.

What motivates you?

What motivates me would probably be my family and the constant drive I have to be better and get better at what I do. I want to someday be able to take care of my family which took care of me for so long, so my drive and determination stems a lot from wanting to be able to help them when the time comes.

What is the biggest challenge you've had to face in getting where you are today?

My biggest challenge is the fact that I'm so young and many positions can require that you have a good amount of experience.

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