

Pilot Program Aimed at Careers in Electricity

By Kathryn Kirby



Left to Right: Melvin Malavé-Workplace Readiness Instructor, Daniel Dwarska, Jesus Rodriquez, Daniel Bastos, Cam Yee, Gary Torres. Not shown: Hien Troung, Justin Journet and Shedrick Harris.

A group of students at Putnam Vocational High School in Springfield are spending the next 15 weeks learning about careers in the electrical industry.

The program is called the *Technical High School Workforce Readiness Initiative* and consists of an online course, *Mathematics of Electricity: Careers in Electric Power*. The online course teaches math skills used at energy companies and is offered by the Council on Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL) and administered through Virtual High School (VHS). The successful completion of the class leads to a paid summer internship at Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECO).

In addition to the online learning, students also receive workplace readiness skills. In

February, students spent 3 hours of their winter vacation at FutureWorks Career Center in Springfield. “The students learned about interpersonal skills and how to deal with different workplace scenarios through case studies, said Melvin Malavé, workplace readiness instructor.



Putnam Vocational High School students learning workplace readiness skills.

Eleventh grader, Cam Yee says the experience has been worthwhile. “The teacher is great. He taught us how to do resumes and cover letters. I would like to see workplace readiness offered as an elective in school.”



Left to Right: Steven Trudeau, FutureWorks IT Assistant conducting a mock interview with 10th grader Dan Dwarska.

Mock interviews were also conducted for the students with FutureWorks staff. IT Assistant, Steven Trudeau interviewed 10th grader, Dan Dwarska. “The interview helped me prepare for when you go to any interview for any position. I liked having that practice, even if it’s with a family member because it shows you how to act.”

The Technical High School Workforce Readiness Initiative is a two year program funded by the Northeast Utilities Foundation. The program is offered to students at Putnam Vocational High School in Springfield, MA and Franklin County Technical School in Franklin/Hampshire County.