

# Former COMM Major Robert Colaianni ('12) Returns to MC as an Instructor

by John Jackson

Seven years ago Robert Colaianni '12, donned in a black cap and gown, walked across a stage in Draddy Gymnasium to receive his Communication degree. Fast forward a few years, and you can still find Colaianni around the Manhattan College campus, but this time as a instructor.

Colaianni was hired by the Communication Department to teach the Field and Post-Production course offered in Spring 2019 for the media production concentration. In this class, students learn the ins and outs of shooting footage outside of the classroom, as well as how to use Avid Media Composer to edit their footage.

Next semester, Colaianni will teach the Introduction to Story and Post-Production course, which aims to help students build video editing skills earlier on in their education. Colaianni's teaching debut has come with feelings of surrealness - it was not long ago that he was the one sitting at a desk and calling his now-colleagues "Professor."

"It feels weird because I don't feel too far removed from being a student here," Colaianni said. "But I've gotten to experience a lot in the industry in the last seven years."

After graduating in May 2012 without a job, Colaianni used the next three months to search for one. Eventually, he landed a job as a production assistant at Nickelodeon. Since the start of his career, however, his ascension up the career ladder to his current position at the network has been quick.

Colaianni arrived at Nickelodeon just as the company was getting ready to release their Nick App. So instead of a typical production assistant role, he got more hands-on experience creating and editing original content for the app.

A little over a year into his position, he experienced something many people in the industry strive for, but very few achieve: winning an Emmy. His team won the 2013 award in Outstanding Creative Achievement In Interactive Media - User Experience And Visual Design for their work on the Nick App.

"Just being able to contribute something like that to a big network made me feel like I was in the right spot," said Colaianni. "It made me feel like all the hard work from college and all the things I had accomplished there were translating into success [in my career]."

With his experience in editing content on the app, Colaianni then sought an opportunity where he could further hone his craft. "At a certain point at Nickelodeon as a production assistant, I said, 'I need to make a jump to somewhere else where I can really become a good editor and establish my craft,'" said Colaianni.

After two years at Nickelodeon, Colaianni therefore accepted an assistant editor position at Definition 6, a post-production company that worked closely with Nickelodeon.

"That's where I really learned the ins and outs of how 'technical' editing is - all this different software, how to do certain things that I never would have learned at Nickelodeon because there just wasn't the support there to teach me," said Colaianni.

Soon, however, he received a call from someone at Nickelodeon, who informed him that much of the video editing at the network was recently coming back in-house. Colaianni interviewed for an open position as an in-house editor, and was offered the job as a junior editor. Two years later, he was promoted to his current position as editor for the network in July 2018.

Colaianni not only brings expertise as a video editor to his group of students, but also brings his knowledge of the industry as someone who recently graduated and found early success.

"Personally, for me, I feel like I can give the students a little bit more of an upper hand on what's going on in the industry," said Colaianni. "Sort of how to establish that foundation, so that you can have a good jumping-off point when you get out there."

Colaianni mentioned that he and his peers who succeeded early on all had the same thing in common: they were prepared. His advice to current media production students is to set themselves up to be prepared for anything.

"If you're ready for anything, you don't have to do everything" said Colaianni. "Being prepared for all those factors is definitely going to be the best sort of jumping-off point when it comes to being a college graduate from here and taking the next step in the industry." •