

POLK COUNTY SCHOOLS INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION

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ITV Best Practices

Best Practices for Operating a Model ITV Program

These practices justify the allocation of studio space, the purchase of equipment & software, and the training of personnel.

1. Each school produces a daily news show that is viewed by everyone in the school simultaneously in classrooms and other student meeting areas.
2. That news show follows ITV's published Best Practices, preferably taped or computer generated because of the potential quality computer editing provides. Five of these shows are then entered in the district's Video Awards competition so that they may be effectively evaluated.
3. Each school produces other videos, especially of an instructional nature, at least some of which are also entered in the district's Video Awards competition so that they may be effectively evaluated.
4. Students other than those who produce this daily news show also receive instruction on the use of equipment in the studio, insuring the use of the studio throughout the day.
5. Teachers other than those who supervise the news show also receive instruction on the use of equipment in the studio so that their students can produce multimedia projects.
6. Middle schools and high schools have at least one TV production class open to all grade levels. The ideal model is at least three middle school classes, one per grade level, and four high school classes, one per grade level. The continuing success of the program depends on students who return to take all four years of TV production.
7. Elementary schools are strongly encouraged to form ITV teams of two or three adults so that the responsibility for using the TV studio and producing the news show does not fall on the shoulders of any one person. This team could consist of a media specialist, network manager, lab manager, regular classroom teacher, music teacher, art teacher, etc.
8. Schools use their closed circuit system as the primary and, to whatever extent is possible, the only means of communication on a daily basis except for announcements of an emergency nature.

Best Practices for Production of a School News Show

These practices ensure that the news show will function as an effective communication tool and have a significant impact on both the overall atmosphere and the academic success of the school. They also have a direct bearing on the staff's perception that viewing the show is a worthwhile use of class time.

1. School news shows strive to promote academic achievement by recognizing students, teachers, whole classes, and even the entire school for small and large classroom successes.
2. Using a game-show approach or other creative methodology, school news shows include math, science, English, and social studies "problems" which students or whole classes compete to answer.
3. School news shows promote FCAT success by posing example questions and by promoting a positive school attitude towards the exam.
4. The majority of announcements have accompanying graphics, especially graphics which include both text and pictures or clip art. These graphics should be large enough and stand out from the background enough to be read from across a classroom. Animation of graphics is encouraged, but such animation should enhance rather than distract from the actual announcements themselves. Legibility is always the most important aspect of television graphics.
5. The majority of announcements are accompanied by interviews, reports, and cutaway shots so as to minimize the unwanted talking head syndrome and enhance the journalistic content of the show. News crews remind themselves constantly that television is a "show me" medium, not a "tell me" one.
6. Professional name bars are used to identify anchors, reporters, and all interview subjects. These name bars, also known in the industry as *lower thirds*, are usually enhanced with thematic pictures and clip art and are usually animated. Like all graphics, they must be large enough to be seen from across a classroom.
7. Show segments are taped in the digital format or loaded directly into and smoothly edited on a computer. This best practice strongly encourages the use of taped or digitized news shows rather than live ones.
8. The video aspects of shows are comparable to that found on regular television, which is only rarely plagued by shaky camera work, dark or out-of-focus video, or silhouettes. A tripod is used in almost every taping situation, the rule of thirds is followed, and only reporters and anchors look right into the camera.
9. The audio aspects of shows are also comparable to that found on regular television, which has consistent sound levels. Instead of the built-in camcorder mic, clip-on (lavalier) or hand-held microphones are used in almost all cases. Hand-held mics are not passed to or held by interviewees.
10. Anchors and reporters have the best on-camera skills available in the school and represent good role models, having been chosen by the combined methodology of audition and teacher recommendation.
11. Written scripts and storyboards, including effective transitions, are used to provide shows with a more polished look.
12. All on-camera personnel should practice consistent eye contact with the camera and use emotion and inflection in their voices so as to prevent a robotic voice.
13. Although the effective use of humor will often increase viewership, such humor should always be in good taste, should have specific relevance in a given news show, and should not be perceived as the misguided efforts of a limited number of TV production students to entertain each other.
14. News shows should minimize the use of superfluous segments (like asking students what their favorite dog is) and, instead, should include segments with higher journalistic integrity.
15. School news show teams should pursue comprehensive coverage of not only activities and sports, but classroom projects, community events, and local and national issues of importance to youth.
16. Music videos, especially ones which showcase large numbers of the student and staff, are incorporated into news shows as often as time permits. Music must be chosen carefully so as to reflect different tastes (not just those of the news team) and must not include any offensive or suggestive lyrics.
17. Shows open with edited introductions and close with credits. Both should be kept to a reasonable length, however.