

RTNDF's Teacher-to-Teacher Guide

Introduction

By Dave Davis

They are stranded on an island, those diverse characters of the popular TV show *Lost*. Each has a back-story that is unique, one that helped mold them into the person they are today. For whatever reason or coincidence, each character on this popular show has crash-landed onto a remote, uncharted island where the only thing they can expect each day is the unexpected.

There are thousands of teachers across the nation inhabiting islands of their own, and many feel as isolated as the fictional characters from *Lost*. But this new tool, this guide by teachers, *for* teachers, will offer a life raft and, we hope, some fresh food for thought to those in need of new approaches, new ideas, and tools for survival in the broadcast classroom.

With the affordability of video technology today, schools from the tiniest to the largest are developing scholastic broadcasting programs. Broadcast journalism classes are simply popping up everywhere, and kids and teachers are coping with a relatively new set of challenges. What is the story? How do we tell it? How do we use audio and video, combined with writing and research, to tell a good, objective story, and to package it all into a cohesive, *watchable* show?

So many broadcast teachers are alone in their buildings, alone on those "islands" where the issues are not food or shelter, but rather equipment, administrative support, curriculum, daily or weekly or monthly deadlines, and the challenge of keeping teenagers on target when they often want to veer toward inappropriate projects that have little to do with journalism, and a lot to do with imitating what they see on cable every night.

shows. But it can take years to get there. This guide just might shave a year or two off that process. Written by teachers who have been there, done that, and bought the T-shirt, it's a publication by professionals who have made every mistake you can make in the broadcast classroom. We have struggled with the problems we all face, and somehow, we have turned our islands into thriving communities. Some of us have condos on the beach, some of us are still lighting the cave with candles. But we are all advocates of teachers helping teachers.

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Read this guide for fresh ideas. Find suggestions that fit your circumstances and your comfort zone. The diversity of the nation's scholastic TV classrooms requires us to offer tips from a diverse group of educators. We have come together between the covers of this electronic publication to share our own successes and experiences. There are simple and complex lessons here, and a number of resources to help you navigate the treacherous waters of teaching broadcasting to a generation that "gets it." Your kids know the medium, understand the technology, and have no fear of it.

With this teacher-to-teacher tool at your fingertips, we hope any fear you might have of teaching these dynamic classes will fade away. You are not "lost" as long as you have colleagues like the ones who

There are many ways to find your niche as a broadcast teacher, and to find a comfort zone for your student-produced

you will find here, helping lead you to the safe side of that TV teacher's island.



Dave Davis, founder and director of the award-winning HTV at Hillcrest High School in Springfield, Mo., has just completed his 17th year as a teacher of broadcast journalism. Dave is also a founder of the Student Television Network and well known as the director of the annual **Camp STN**, and intensive and comprehensive boot camp for broadcast teachers. Now in its seventh year, Camp STN packs a single week with a wealth of information on journalism, teaching and production techniques. For more information, or to join STN (we really recommend it), go to <http://www.studenttelevision.com/>.

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