



May 8, 2009

Series Review

Title: Real Life 101

Episodes reviewed: Two

Program length: 30 minutes

Real Life 101 features stories about real people doing real jobs and is targeted at teenagers, ages 13 – 16. There are three students who host the show and interview real people in a variety of careers.

Several characteristics of the show make it engaging for kids between 13 and 16 years of age. Each episode deals with two or three different careers so that keeps students who are watching the shows interested. The journalists are young, involved, energetic people who are also trying to figure out their place in the world. These episodes would fit nicely into nearly any high school curriculum as most courses require some sort of career component, but especially in English or Business classes. For example, in the English II class at Florida Virtual School, students complete an I-Search paper, where they research a dream they have for their future. Many students choose to research a possible career choice, so these episodes would be great resources for them. The short length of each of the segments means that teachers can use these to introduce topics and spark discussion as well.

Another place where Real Life 101 would be useful at Florida Virtual School is within our Student Advisement Center, "The Hub." This is a "one stop shop" for our FLVS students where career, college, scholarship, financial aid, advisement area, personal growth items, social skill building and other resources can be found. These episodes about career choices would be excellent resources for this student advisement area on our website. As students end middle school and start high school, it is so important to start thinking about their future and taking steps to prepare for this future. Many students think they can wait until high school ends before thinking about the real world, but we know that is not the case. It is more important than ever before to have a plan.

Our English II class uses a "dreams" motif throughout the modules and lessons, and we chose that motif because it is so appropriate for students at this age. They all have dreams and goals, but don't always know how to make those dreams come true. One of my personal goals for my students is they leave my class with a plan for getting started on their dreams. On the Real Life 101 website, there is an entire section devoted to volunteering and that is often the best place for young adults to begin. The young hosts of the show "...**highly recommend volunteering** and getting involved in service learning opportunities." Through volunteering, students gain insight and real-life experiences and makes them contributing members of society. Real Life 101 stresses the importance of getting involved.

I look forward to using Real Life 101 with my students more in the future.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Lynda W. Williams".

Lynda W. Williams



Reviewer:

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Lynda Williams received her B.A. in English (1989) and her M. Ed. in English Education (1991) from the University of Florida. She began working at Florida Virtual School in January 2000. Prior to her current role as an instructor of English II, she worked as an Application Development Specialist and taught FCAT Prep - 10th Grade Review, English I and English II for FLVS. She developed the FCAT Prep -10course, co-developed Language Arts 3, and worked on several other development projects including GED, SAT Prep, and adult education courses. Lynda has been working in the education field in Central Florida since 1991. She taught middle school language arts for six years in Osceola County, Florida, and served as the K-12 Language Arts Resource Specialist for Osceola District Schools. Currently, she also facilitates the FOR-PD professional reading endorsement course for educators and supervises student teachers. Lynda lives in Longwood with her husband, Steve, and their sons, Derek, Jason and Luke.