

Leslie Nicholas

Wyoming Valley West High School, Plymouth, PA

Applied Fields Education

High School Journalism and Communications



2005 Honorees



“My classroom is innovative because I stress life skills. Students must see that the skills they learn are applicable to real situations. Since pragmatism is a key to keeping students interested, I strive to provide them with as many realistic learning experiences as possible. I just don’t see how journalism can be a theoretical subject; it

must be made practical. I built our radio and television stations to give students a realistic broadcast experience. Journalism students broadcast music and announcements into the cafeteria during lunch and produce a midday report that airs daily on a closed-circuit television system. I inject realism into the print aspect of journalism as well because students publish their work in the school newspaper, yearbook, or parental newsletter.”

“A good teacher too must motivate his students beyond just getting them to want to do well on a test. The good teacher’s students know that, if they prepare, they can expect to do well in life. A coach must make everything practical so the athlete can see how the drills in practice translate to skills in games. So too should students see how class work translates into marketable skills in life.”

“This emphasis on the practical becomes a part of what I call stealth education, where students learn life skills without even knowing they’re learning them. If teachers allow freedom in the classroom and encourage introspection, students learn teamwork, responsibility, critical reading skills and so much more.” – *Les Nicholas*

“Mr. Nicholas, in his calm and unassuming manner, is a professional and dedicated teacher...While at Wyoming Valley West, where Nicholas has taught since 1981, he has the sincere admiration of students and peers. His involvement with the students reaches far beyond the classroom with his many advisory positions. Presently, he is the advisor to the Radio Club, Yearbook, Literary-Arts Magazine, Journalism Club and Honor Society. As the list continues, it catalogues not simply his involvement, but his true commitment. It is through his efforts that Wyoming Valley West High School boasts a radio station and a television station for student broadcasts.”

– Mary Mattern, parent of former students

Other Highlights:

Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year (2004)

Participated in a Washington, D.C. roundtable discussion on No Child Left Behind legislation as a guest of the Department of Education (2004)

Radio and Television News Directors Foundation’s Educator in the Newsroom Fellowship (2003)

Radio and Television News Directors Foundation Teacher Ambassador (2003)

Pennsylvania School Press Association Journalism Teacher of the Year (2002)

Radio and Television News Directors Foundation’s Teacher Ambassador (2002)

Walsworth Publishing Company’s Yearbook Advisory Council (2001)

Member, Journalism Education Association

Years Teaching: 24

Average Class Size: 15

Classes Taught Per Day: 5

School’s Percent of ESL Students: > 1

School Type: Public, Suburban

Type of Class: Self-contained