More GIFTs for You!

Here is a gift for teachers looking for innovative ways to share their knowledge of journalism and mass communication with their students anywhere: the 2002 special limited edition Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) journal!

Forty GIFTs were selected this year, which appropriately match the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) convention theme: "Ways of Knowing: Inside and Outside the Classroom."

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The Newspaper and Scholastic Journalism divisions have joined CCJA and SPIG in its third year to expand the program. More GIFTs, door prizes at the convention poster session, $100 for the grand prize winner and a new website are some of the improved features this year.

So here are some ways of knowing how to share your gift of teaching inside and outside the classroom.

Enjoy!

Edna R. Bautista, Chaminade—Honolulu
GIFT Program Coordinator

2002 GIFT Committee
Beverly S. Bailey, Tulsa Community
Dennis R. Bautista, Washington State
Beth Dickey, South Carolina
Christopher Karadjov, State University of New York—Oswego
Michael Longinow, Asbury
Carroll Ferguson Nardone, Sam Houston State
Laura Schaub, Oklahoma
Jim Sernoe, Midwestern State
Carol Zuegner, Creighton

Great Ideas For Teachers 2002

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The GIFTs

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Carol S. Lomicky
University of Nebraska—Kearney
Enliven History and Public Record Research—in the Cemetery
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Read her winning GIFT on page 53. Congratulations from AEJMC, CCJA, SPIG, Newspaper and Scholastic Journalism divisions!

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http://www.wsu.edu/~bautista/TEST_Chaminade/COM_HTML/GIFT_Home.html

Temporary e-mail for GIFT:

aejmcgift@yahoo.com

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The Live Remote
How to bring professionals to students
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A Fairy Tale Approach to Writing for the Web

How to use a well-known children's story to demonstrate how Web writing differs from print media writing

Clyde H. Bentley
University of Missouri—Columbia

Introduction

For journalists, one of the most frustrating aspects of working with Web pages is the shortage of "real estate." Author Crawford Killon estimates a Web page will hold only 100 words—and that only if no art graces the page.

While many journalists throw in the towel and resort to "scrolling" (long streams of text that run off the bottom of the page), Killon and others advocate "chunking," breaking the story into small, one-screen pieces that are held together by hyperlinks.

After finding that my students had a very difficult time with this concept, I resorted to a story that they all knew by heart—Little Red Riding Hood. I found a copyright-free version of the story on the Internet (http://www.information-resources.com/Library/library.html). Students were assigned to edit or rewrite the text into an ersatz web site using only a word processor—no HTML allowed.

Rationale

Most online journalism texts focus more on design than on writing. After reading those texts, students are often overwhelmed by technology and design "tricks" and lose track of their basic journalistic writing skills. By taking away their HTML, Dreamweaver and even Quark, I forced them to concentrate on the words and the very restrictive environment of the Web page. Using a familiar fairy tale put all the students on equal footing and allowed me to assure them that Web writing is mere "child's play."

Implementation

• Students download a plain-text version of the Little Red Riding Hood story.

• Students must convert the 1,004-word story into a coherent set of linked pages.

• Students must indicate a link by typing the link title in bold—Link 3.2 (second link on the third page).

• Each page must carry a one-line header similar to an HTML tag—Mary Student/Red Riding Hood/Page 2 (or Link 2.2).

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• Links could be scanned artwork (inserted via the word processor or simply just described in a text block), URLs, links to a page of supplemental text or just to the next page in the story.

• No page could contain more than 100 words of text—less if it also contained art.

• I allowed my students to rewrite the story as they wished as long the result was recognizable as the Little Red Riding Hood story.

• Students were encouraged to use the linking process to develop secondary messages—a very common procedure in online journalism but seldom possible in print journalism.

• The end product is stapled together so the reader—and the student writer—can see the physical relationship between a Web site and a conventional document.

Impact

Students quickly figure out that this fairy tale is not a toddler's assignment. Although they often agonize over it, this is one of my students' favorite assignments. At the base level, they find a simple 1,004-word story takes 15-20 pages to tell well on the Web. They also quickly learn not to overuse links, especially to the same piece of art.

This assignment also brought out the "new media creativity" in many of my students and was a great way for me to screen for journalists with cyber potential.

For instance, one student set the story in current times and had Red riding a city bus to grandmother's. When she saw a particular store or restaurant on the trip, we were offered an advertising-based link for that establishment.

Another student used the main text as a vehicle for a subtext on animal rights. At appropriate places, links were inserted for "Save the Wolves" or "The American Humane Society."

The core value of this assignment is that it lets students demonstrate to themselves that the intellectual skill of storytelling is what defines a great Web journalist, not technical wizardry.

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Researching, Creating and Designing a Legal Research Web Page

How to introduce media law graduate students to the world of legal research on the Internet by having them research, create and design their own Web page focusing on legal resources on the World Wide Web

Sandra F. Chance
University of Florida

Introduction

An integral part of the media law graduate course involves teaching students how to do legal research. At many colleges and universities, students have access to subscription legal research services and databases, such as Lexis/Nexis or Westlaw.

However, these services are expensive and many students will not have access to the subscription-based research tools once they graduate. They will, however, have access to the World Wide Web, which has an amazing array of helpful and sophisticated research sites. Students who master the art and science of Web-based research will have gained valuable insight and expertise.

Rationale

Many new legal resources and research tools are now available on the World Wide Web with a click of a mouse. Understanding the variety of legal resources on the Web opens a whole new world to media law students and scholars.

While the Web is not a substitute for understanding traditional legal research methodology and research tools, it does offer a massive amount of additional material worthy of review for the serious scholar.

An ability to evaluate the credibility and trustworthiness of the sites is an important first step. In addition, the researcher must learn to distinguish the best sites from the millions available in cyber space. Once the students learn what's out there, and how to determine the most reliable and useful sites, they can use that knowledge to develop a very helpful legal research resource tool for themselves and others engaged in similar research on the Web.

Implementation

Design the project and pass out the assignment early in semester, complete

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Implementation

Design the project and pass out the assignment early in semester, complete

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with the following goals, objectives and components. Project is due on the last day of class when students explain and demonstrate their Web pages to the entire class and their classmates evaluate each home page according to the listed criteria.

• **Goals and objectives**: The class is learning how to use a variety of tools to do legal research. As a result, students are becoming experts in legal research. This project is designed to help students continue to learn about legal research tools and demonstrate their knowledge and expertise in a unique, yet useful manner.

• **Components**: Your home page must contain the following elements:
1) An introduction and short biographical sketch.
2) A paragraph explaining why someone should visit your home page. Remember how searching tools work and choose words which will likely point to your home page if someone is interested in doing legal research on the Web.
3) A compilation of what you believe are the most useful legal resources for legal researchers on the Web. This must be more than a simple link. It should be a guide for the potential user about what information the legal resource will provide. You should include your own analysis of the site's strengths and weaknesses. You must include at least 15 such sites and links on your home page.

You can either create a list which would deal with a variety of resources and topics, or if you are interested in a particular area of the law, you can concentrate on that area. For example, if you are interested in freedom of information or access law, you can concentrate on sites which focus on access law. Or, if you are interested in the inherent conflict between privacy and the mass media, you can find sites which focus on the legal issues involving privacy rights and the media.
4) At least three interesting graphics that you either create or receive written permission to use. You can include a photograph or clip art (if you own the software) or create your own. We've talked about copyright and you understand the importance of respecting the legal rights of copyright holders. People often include their e-mail addresses on their home pages and you can e-mail them for permission to use something from their page. To ensure we don't violate a copyright in this class, you must include a link to the written permission to use the graphic on your home page.
5) Links to your position papers for this class.
6) During the last day of class, you must turn in a hard copy of your home page and the home pages of the legal resources to which you have linked, and any other written material that is important to your link.
7) During the last week of class, we will visit each other's home pages. So, you must have launched your page onto the World Wide Web. Your classmates will critique your home pages and suggest a grade based on the how effectively you met the goals and objectives of the assignment. I will make the final decision on your grade for this project, taking your classmates' evaluations into account.

• **Important to tell students**: It is not necessary to rush out and buy a computer program for designing home pages to get an A on this project. You can make an attractive, informative and interesting home page using simple programs, like the one which comes on Netscape or other browers. The Web also has lots of infor-

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mation on creating a Web page, including very helpful tutorials.

• **Options**: I give the students an option of writing a final research paper (18-20 pages) in lieu of this project. This has been helpful, as there is usually one or two students who have not had much experience with the Web or design and are initially intimidated by this project.

• **Publicizing web pages**: During the last class, I take digital photographs of each student. Then, I put their pictures up on my home page, linking their home page to their picture. So, by clicking on a student's picture, you are automatically taken to their home page. The students are excited about the additional publicity this gives their pages.

Impact

From a pedagogical perspective, I find this exercise fascinating. It's an innovative way to educate both myself and my students about the variety of hidden research treasures available on the Net. It has the added benefit of putting pressure on me initially to learn about this revolutionary new technology and then to update my own Web pages with new and interesting material. A number of my colleagues have learned about the project and created similar assignments tailored to their classes.

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Bringing the Newsroom to the Classroom

How to combat videotaping to convey the messages of the newsroom battlefield

Sue Ellen Christian
Western Michigan University

Introduction

Making your own videos of working journalists in their own settings is a simple, effective and engaging way to reinforce the lessons of a journalism textbook.

Rationale

Brief video snippets on interviewing, writing and reporting that feature journalists at your local newspaper, at newspapers in cities you visit or those visiting campus, are engaging and effective ways to augment textbook lessons and bring the diverse faces of the newsroom into the classroom. With an emphasis on featuring female and minority journalists, the video clips typically focus on a single "textbook issue" that a journalist experienced while reporting and writing a specific story. Such a narrow focus allows instructors to assign students to read a journalist's published story after viewing the video clip about that story. In this way, students can read about an issue, hear and see a journalist discussing that issue as applied to a specific story and then read the published piece to see that technique in use. Class discussions on the articles can conclude the process. It is a layered educational process that yields great results.

Implementation

• **Keep it simple:** This is not a professional video, nor is it meant to be. Think of it as combat videotaping. Most communication departments have a handheld video for classroom purposes that teachers can borrow. Most reporters are flattered to be asked to talk for 5 to 10 minutes on tape for classroom purposes only. If you go to the newsroom, it's far easier to get that clip—which you can show again and again to classes—than it is for a reporter to find time to come to just one of your classes. If you doubt reporters will want to talk on videotape at the request of a complete stranger, remember what they do every day of their lives; they ask people to tell their stories to thousands of people, and you are just asking for a word with a classroom of students. One way to approach journalists is to work backward, identifying a story they wrote that illustrates a textbook point you want to emphasize. Calling in reaction to a specif-

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ic story you'd like a writer to talk about on tape makes the request more natural and timely.

• **Keep it narrowly focused:** Select key textbook lessons you want to be sure students learn; for example, organizing a story, interviewing victims, developing a lead or finding sources. Know what you want your on-camera journalists to talk about so you can tailor the interview (with you behind the camera) to a specific teaching point. Often, asking a journalist to walk through how they handled a particular story produces usable and clearly presented material. Some questions that have worked well include: describe a time in which you chose not to name a source and why; give a specific example of how you got a source to speak on the record and why that source was essential for the story; offer a reporting technique you used to add color to a story; relate an ethical dilemma you faced while reporting a certain story.

• **Keep it current:** Making your own videos means you can respond to current events and, in essence, report the story on behalf of your students. It's a wonderful reminder for teachers of what it feels like to be a journalist, as you are interviewing sources for the camera. Videotaping reporters on the latest local controversy or changing newspaper ethics helps to fulfill a major calling of all journalists: Timeliness.

• **Keep it dynamic:** This doesn't mean your video has to be anything but a simple head-and-shoulders shot. What it means is that your video is emphasizing one of the most exciting things about journalism: No day on the job is the same. Capturing a reporter on camera talking about what they do and how they do it conveys that notion in ways a textbook can't. With each reporter's unique approach to handling a lead or getting a source to talk, students learn about the many ways that a single problem can be approached. Also, while it's not always possible, shooting video of a reporter or editor on the job also gives the feeling and pace of a newsroom that a visiting journalist can't convey nearly as effectively to students in their own classroom setting.

Impact

This teaching tool has been used in both entry-level and upper-level reporting and writing courses. Upper-level students are presented with more in-depth discussions of news stories, while 100-level students respond best to shorter, more narrowly focused topics. The videos provide students with access to role models, including female and minority journalists, when direct contact is not possible. The videos also allow students to see journalists in their own environment (one clip I use impresses students in part due to the two-foot-high stack of papers covering the reporter's desk), to hear reporters' viewpoints and see their faces—they are no longer just faceless bylines. Reading the published stories allows for a more detailed, in-depth analysis. Student response on anonymous evaluation forms is that the videos are a valuable part of the class.

Instructor evaluation of the tool through exams is that the concepts emphasized in the video clips and accompanying news stories and class discussion were among the most memorable in the course. Also, highlighting female and minority journalists in the videos sends an important message to all students about newsroom diversity.

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7

Service Learning in Audio Production

Joan Conners
Regis University

Introduction

One assignment in my audio production class was a student production of an audiotape that could be sent to prospective students who were visually impaired, for whom a traditional admissions videotape would not be ideal.

Rationale

• Student attention to projects: With an outside "client" for the assignment, students are more concerned about having a quality production, not just getting the assignment done "good enough".

• Great hands-on learning about sound quality, interviewing and editing audiotape.

• Learning the importance of deadlines: When one student's work on the project relies on another student's contribution be completed, there is greater pressure to meet assigned deadlines.

Implementation

• Students viewed the existing admissions videotape to develop ideas for content and topics to be covered in an admissions audiotape.

• Students held meetings with the Director of Disability Services to learn about issues for visually impaired students, which helped focus their attention on content and production quality issues for the tape.

• The class of 15 was divided into groups of three and assigned to complete particular tasks for production: Interviewing university officials and students, gathering natural sound from campus, screening music that could be used, scriptwriting, narration recording and editing and post-production editing.

Impact

• Positive feedback from students, many saying they learned more about production from that assignment than from the rest of the class and text combined!

• Positive feedback from our college Admissions Office and Disability Services (good "community building" on our campus for our department).

• Changes for future: Students felt they did not have enough time to complete some portions of their assigned tasks, and were also frustrated when their work relied on getting tape from other classmates who were missing deadlines.

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8

The Game of Life and American Values

How to teach the concept of ideology

Mia Consalvo
Ohio University

Introduction

It is often difficult to teach students about the concept of ideology without resorting to the idea (or having students take away the idea) that ideology is a form of "propaganda" which only foreign governments try to "push" on their citizens.

This exercise shows how ideologies are prevalent in everyone's daily life, and how America has specific ideologies as well, by having students play various board games intended for children that contain ideologies (such as the benefits of capitalism, the prevalence of gender stereotypes and the assumption of heterosexuality).

Rationale

Often when introducing potentially controversial ideas, students are resistant and may claim the instructor is "biased."

This exercise uses materials students are familiar with to show the presence of ideology in everyday life, and how it is taught to us at a very young age. Students are asked to reflect on the experience and come to their own conclusions, which generally leads to greater acceptance of the idea that ideologies are pervasive in everyone's lives, and can even be positive forces.

Implementation

• Depending on how large your class is, buy (or borrow) 3-6 board games such as *Life, Monopoly, Payday, The Battle of the Sexes, The Barbie Board Game or Mystery Date.*

• Plan a class period of at least 90 minutes in length (if possible) for the activity, as students should have enough time for a brief introduction, time to set up and play the game and time for discussion afterwards.

• Begin the session by talking about the concept of ideology, giving a general definition and discussing different institutions that have historically promoted particular ideologies (the church, schools, governments). Usually after giving the definition and using one example to describe it, have students try to come up with other examples in small groups to see how ideologies can be part of daily life.

• After talking about how various institutions promote ideologies, shift focus a bit to mention how nations can promote ideologies, and how they can become "com-

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mon sense" enough that people end up transmitting them through the culture in various ways.

• At this point take out the board games and tell the students that they are going to get into small groups and play a game, to see how even young children can learn the ideology of the nation or place in which they live. Distribute the games to the groups and have them play the game either to completion, or for a set time (at least 30 minutes).

• While students are playing, put these questions on the board (or PowerPoint) for them to think about while playing, and to discuss afterwards:
1) How do you win the game?
2) What are you penalized for in the game?
3) What are you rewarded for?
4) How does the game reflect "real" life?

• When the students finish their games, have each group talk about their own game in terms of the above questions to come up with some answers. After 5-10 minutes, have the class reconvene to discuss how each game tied in with the above questions. Usually students are eager to discuss how their game worked, and to share how surprised they are at the values being expressed in the games.

• The class can be ended by discussing (briefly) the concept of "hegemony" and how a government can keep its citizens under control either by force or through persuasion. Talk about how these games are one method for persuading the very young that the values of the culture are rewarded and right, and are part of "common sense."

Impact

Students generally love this class exercise. It is something that I generally use during the first week of class, as the concept of ideology is an important basis for my courses. Further, since the students are having fun playing in small groups, the exercise works well as an ice-breaker, allowing the students to get to know each other a bit and get used to participating in my class in a "safe" way. Discussion is also generally good, as students can draw on their past experiences with games and feel that they can contribute to class. This helps establish a comfortable atmosphere for the rest of the semester.

If you can find one, it is great to have a board game from the 1950s (or earlier) to show students how ideologies can change over time. They can usually identify very well how stereotypes of gender have evolved, and many also pick up on how games such as *Life* demand that players engage in certain traditional rituals such as getting married and having children. Also, I've found that having male students play games such as *Barbie* works out particularly well (even if they object initially), because it forces them to consider stereotypes of gender.

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10

Developing a Companion CD-ROM

How to digitally distribute course materials

Judi Cook
Salem State College

Introduction

Advances in technology offer us new opportunities in the classroom. This project takes the traditional paper method of distributing the course syllabus, handouts, etc. and replaces it with a CD-ROM version. The CD allows for an abundant amount of information to be stored in one convenient location. It also encourages us to add new media formats such as digital graphics, digital video and web links to our course materials.

Rationale

The purpose of the CD is three-fold. For one, it serves a purpose for housing the course materials in an untraditional way. Students respond positively to the CD as they are consumers of CD products. Second, the CD provides an opportunity to discuss the impact of digital publishing. I found that while I saved my department money by means of reducing my print copying costs, I shifted the responsibility of printing to the students. This can serve as a discussion point on the impact of new media. Third, the CD serves as an example of how students can distribute their own materials on CD. After using the CD in class, several students expressed an interest in putting their own portfolios on CD.

Implementation

• Begin by deciding what materials to include on the CD. For example:
1) A syllabus created in MSWord
2) A scanned image prepared in Adobe Photoshop
3) A PowerPoint presentation
4) A digital video clip
5) A hotlink list of relevant websites

• Next, consider how you want to present your materials. Here are just a few possibilities:
1) For a simple CD, you may just want to arrange your files in well-organized folders for the students to access on a file-by-file basis.
2) To develop a more sophisticated CD, consider creating a graphical user interface consisting of hyperlinks to all the files on the CD. You can quickly develop such an interface with MS PowerPoint or with Macromedia Director. Both programs will allow you to incorporate text, graphics and animation in a self-running application. Students will simply run the

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program and then view a hyper-linked table of contents.
3) A third option would be to create an html document for the CD, which would require a browser such as Netscape Navigator in order to run. This option would differ from a course website in that it would only be available on the CD and would not require an Internet connection. However, links to external websites would seamlessly connect when the students used the CD on a computer connected to the Internet.

• Once you've created your files, the next step is to burn a test CD. It is a good idea to burn a hybrid CD that can be used on both Windows and Macintosh platforms. If your files require any "helper" applications, such as the PowerPoint Viewer, you may wish to burn them on the CD as well. I also recommend preparing a "Read Me.txt" file that details how to use your CD as well as what the necessary minimum system requirements are to access the files. Test your CD on as many different computers as you can in order to anticipate compatibility problems.

• The final step is to create labels for the CDs. These can be purchased at any office supply store and printed on any desk jet or laser printer. Many label packages come with templates for designing CD labels.

Impact

A small survey was distributed to students who used the CD (N=15). The results indicated that:

• 86% of the students thought the CD was a useful tool.

• 93% of the students thought the CD was easy to use.

• After viewing the CD, 87% had ideas for developing their own CDs.

• 93% of the students said that incorporating technology into the classroom was important to them.

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Micro-Creativity

How to use Creativity Tickler Exercises to improve students' facility in developing fresh language for advertising assignments

Linda Conway Correll
University of Florida

Introduction

Turning your classroom into a copywriter's office, where students use Creativity Ticklers, a series of 45-minute word and ideation exercises to develop facility in nontraditional applications of language, is an innovative teaching approach that improves students' facility with advertising executions.

Rationale

In creating advertising, the professional copywriter is constantly challenged to find fresh language to express ideas. Creativity Ticklers provide new tools that you can use in the classroom to assist your students in accomplishing this goal. These exercises are also useful in helping students develop headlines and slogans, two of the most important elements of copywriting. Additionally:

• Creativity Ticklers transform the classroom into a copywriter's office, where students build headline and slogan writing skills.

• Ticklers improve students' concentration by directing their focus to a single task for a predetermined amount of time. This increased ability to concentrate carries over into other in-class assignments.

• Ticklers introduce a sense of play that students find relaxing and confidence-building.

• Ticklers provide a sense of creative accomplishment as students use their new skills to complete assignments.

• Ticklers raise the level of interest and participation, which gives a greater sense of accomplishment for both students and teacher.

Implementation

Once a week for 10 weeks, set aside a class period where you introduce your students to one of the Creativity Ticklers and give them 45 minutes to complete it.

• **Creativity Tickler 1:**
Word Dissemination
Make a list of 50 four-letter-or-more words found in one of the following phrases:

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Media Planner
Target Audience
Art Direction
Radio Production
Research Director
Senior Copywriter
Creative Brief
Account Service
Positioning Line
Demographics
Avoid proper names, foreign words and multiple forms of the same word.

• **Creativity Tickler 2:**
Bacwards/Forwards
Make a list of 50 three-letter-or-more words that when spelled backwards spell a different word.
Examples:
ton/not
loop/pool
regal/lager
Plurals are acceptable; proper names and foreign words are not. (The game of Boggle is an excellent tool to facilitate this Tickler.)

• **Creativity Tickler 3:**
…Two, Three, Switch
Select 25 four-letter words. Change the second letter to form other words; change the third letter to form other words. Form three or more new words. Avoid proper names and foreign words.
Example: slap
slap, soap, swap, slop, slip

• **Creativity Tickler 4:**
Be Homophonic
Make a list of 50 homophone pairs (words that sound the same but are spelled differently).
Examples:
pear/pare/pair/pere
suite/sweet
cereal/serial

• **Creativity Tickler 5:**
Rhyme Time
Select five product categories (cosmetics, fast food, etc.). Create five rhyming promotional ideas for each, with explanations.
Example: low-calorie foods
"lite bites " (lower calories, lower price)
"spare fare" (both lean and frugal)

• **Creativity Tickler 6:**
Position is Everything
Create 15 slogans for an advertising campaign. (Adverteasing is an excellent game to facilitate this Tickler.)

• **Creativity Tickler 7:**
Gnu Zoo
Using homophones and alternative definitions, put together a collection of 25 "new" animals.
Examples:
bare - a grizzly with no fur
mouse: a rat that attaches itself to computers

• **Creativity Tickler 8:**
Come to your Senses
Using your five senses, create 20 more questions outside of the box, and answer them.
Examples:
What does happiness smell like?
What color is Tuesday?
What flavor is truth?
What do you feel when you touch a scream?
What sound does curiosity produce?

• **Creative Tickler 9:**
Letter Swapping
Select 20 four-letter words, and rearrange their letters to create at least two anagrams.

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14

Example:
last: salt, slat
tide: diet, edit

• **Creative Tickler 10: Do it Yourself**
Create your own Tickler.

Impact

This GIFT has been implemented in an Advertising Copywriting and Visualization course where students apply what they have learned from their Tickler assignments to print advertisements and radio commercials. (The homophone exercises are proving particularly helpful.)

Students are encouraged to enter their work in competition. This year, 38 entries were submitted to the American Advertising Federation District Four ADDY competition. Students captured 21 Gold and Silver ADDYs. Entries are being assembled for a department exhibition, and faculty and students will be invited to view the work. Additionally, student-written radio commercials captured first and second place in the Commercial Radio division of the 2002 Missouri Broadcast Educators' Student Media Competition, and a student-written radio commercial captured first place in the commercial division of the 2001 National Broadcast Society Student Competition last fall.

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Example:
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Create your own Tickler.

Impact

This GIFT has been implemented in an Advertising Copywriting and Visualization course where students apply what they have learned from their Tickler assignments to print advertisements and radio commercials. (The homophone exercises are proving particularly helpful.)

Students are encouraged to enter their work in competition. This year, 38 entries were submitted to the American Advertising Federation District Four ADDY competition. Students captured 21 Gold and Silver ADDYs. Entries are being assembled for a department exhibition, and faculty and students will be invited to view the work. Additionally, student-written radio commercials captured first and second place in the Commercial Radio division of the 2002 Missouri Broadcast Educators' Student Media Competition, and a student-written radio commercial captured first place in the commercial division of the 2001 National Broadcast Society Student Competition last fall.

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The Front Page Game

How to encourage students to develop news judgment

Mary Carmen Cupito
Northern Kentucky University

Introduction

Students play the roles of editors at a news meeting to decide which stories belong on tomorrow's front page. At the end, they compare their choices with those of a real newspaper.

Rationale

This is a simple activity, but it effectively challenges new journalism students who have little understanding of how reporters and editors evaluate news stories. Students also learn that news judgment is just that—a judgment call that depends upon an individual's perspective, audience and values.

Implementation

• First, discuss and define the characteristics of a good news story: timeliness, impact, conflict, proximity, novelty and celebrity.

• Then write a dozen headlines from the front page of a recent newspaper on the board, taking care to include every one that appeared on the front page, as well as some from deep inside. Include a sensational crime story and an international story, if possible.

• Because some students will not have read the paper, describe each story briefly.

• Then ask students to assume they are editors at the daily news meeting of a metropolitan daily. Or assign students to play the roles of metro editor, business editor, etc. Their job is to decide which five stories (or however many stories really were on the front page) belong on the front page for tomorrow's edition. Have students think for a few minutes, then vote for their choices for the front page with a show of hands.

• Write the vote tally beside each headline. Then ask who voted for it and why, and who didn't vote for it and why.

• Show them the real front page.

Impact

It is remarkable how effectively this simple exercise engages students and encourages them to use news judgment. Students typically perk up as the teacher begins to write headlines and to describe each story from the local newspaper. They become animated as they argue for their favorite stories. And they enjoy the mental challenge of debating why certain sto-

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ries are more newsworthy than others.

Four things invariably happen during this exercise:

1) Students learn that stories in the newspaper are interesting.

2) They realize that other people evaluate stories differently than they do, and that journalists view stories differently than many of their readers do.

3) They learn to think on their feet, crafting arguments for or against a story as a real journalist would—arguing for example, that because a story's impact was small it should be bumped inside, or that placing a particular crime story on the front page would be sensationalism.

4) The stories that earn the highest votes from students are never the same as those on the real front page.

This exercise is a terrific starting point for a discussion about news judgment. It allows students to see that reasonable people may disagree about the value of individual stories. It helps the professor demonstrate how real newsrooms work, noting that such discussions occur daily in real newsrooms. It enables the professor to point out that at many newspapers, the decision about what goes on the front page is made by an editor or group of editors who presumably have more refined news judgment than reporters—and that the professor will assume such a role in the classroom. Finally, it is an entertaining way to encourage students to think like reporters.

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Interviewing: The Public Radio Files

Carolyn Stewart Dyer
University of Iowa

Introduction

Most of the interviewers on public radio programs such as "All Things Considered," "This American Life" and "Fresh Air" are masters of this form of both gathering information and presenting them in an interesting manner. With the advent of streaming audio, we have the opportunity to bring these expert interviewers into the classroom and to send them home with students for listening on demand. Using a web page with links to a variety of interviews and interviewers' work, this project makes demonstrating and analyzing the successful or unsuccessful interview a snap. Students often get hooked on public radio, too.

Rationale

For years both the textbooks and I told my advanced reporting students they needed to prepare for interviews, to know their subject and the subject's subject thoroughly and to plan their questions, yet students would go into interviews at the last minute, unprepared and uninspired. They were lucky if they got a good quote and luckier still to get complex ideas and information to enrich their stories.

Published Q & A interviews with famous people from *Rolling Stone, Playboy* and elsewhere are only partially successful in engaging students in the interview process. Students often can't imagine having the opportunity to interview their heroes or idols. In fact many are fearful of doing any interviews at all.

With radio interviews of folks both ordinary and extraordinary, students clamp on their headphones, pay total attention and hear the exchange, the pauses, the occasional false starts and tune in to the process much more immediately than they can to print. One can point students to interviews representing a variety of styles to meet class or individual student needs. And one can select interview topics that are particularly likely to appeal to students.

Implementation

• To lure students into the project and demonstrate that even the pros make big blunders on interviews, I play an interview by Ira Glass from "This American Life" with Margy Rocklin, the Hollywood reporter, about her very first interview with a celebrity—Moon Unit Zappa. During the interview Rocklin laughed, choked on coffee, blew it out her nose and recovered only after Moon's mother performed the Heimlich maneuver on her. The piece is funny. I follow it up with a

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clip from "Valley Girl," the song Frank Zappa did with his then prepubescent daughter.

• Because students will find such different interviews interesting, the second part of the assignment is homework. Students must listen to several interviews linked from the class web page and write an analysis of each. Linked interviews include ones by Susan Stamberg, especially the 30 posted to commemorate her 30th anniversary with National Public Radio in 2001; Noah Adams of NPR; Terry Gross, host of "Fresh Air;" and Michael Silverblatt, host of "Bookworm" on KCRW Santa Monica. There are also links to the NPR programs, "Morning Edition," "All Things Considered" and "Weekend Edition" as well as the archives of "This American Life."

• In their written analyses students identify what the interviewer knew about the subject before the interview and how he or she conducted the interview. What sorts of questions did they ask? How did they build up to questions? How did they follow them up? Did the interviewer have an apparent strategy for the questioning? How were inadequate answers handled? What was the apparent relationship between the interviewer and interviewee? What did the student learn about interviewing from this interview?

• In the next class session, students are asked to nominate interviews for the whole class to hear. Students who nominate them provide the commentary and analysis for the interviews we listen to.

Impact

The Margy Rocklin interview generally hooks students on the project. Students usually listen to more interviews than are assigned and more than they write analyses for. For example, they may listen to an entire hour-long "This American Life" after selecting one segment. In class students participate actively and enthusiastically, sometimes shouting their nominations and interrupting each other to comment on the pieces. (In classes at this university, that is highly unusual.) They are clearly impressed by the amount of preparation these interviewers have done, meeting the primary objective for the assignment. And the amount of preparation they do for future assignments increases. They also report that they have expanded their repertoire of interviewing tactics and strategies. Their stories provide evidence.

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Copy Edit the World!

How to motivate students to be critical readers and sharper editors

Frank E. Fee Jr.
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill

Introduction

Copy Edit the World! uses extra-credit for continual reinforcement and learning. Students see for themselves how precision is important in their work of professionals in their career tracks. Student participation also gives the instructor additional feedback on learning objectives and motivation.

Rationale

This easy-to-administer program meets two important classroom objectives in a way that promotes out-of-class learning and is fun for students as well. It promotes critical reading and attention to detail in communications. Benefits include that it:

• Provides an extra-credit opportunity that is relevant to course content and objectives and supplements classroom learning.

• Promotes critical reading and sharpens students' eyes for errors of all sorts.

• Motivates students to become better readers.

• Encourages precision communication.

• Helps identify knowledge gaps and expands the available "teachable moments."

• Offers students opportunities to apply the lessons of lectures and readings.

• Is self-paced and rewards student initiative.

• Drives home the point that errors of all sorts creep into a wide variety of public communications and that it must be somebody's job to guard against them.

Moreover, this program follows reward theory found in management studies. Copy Edit the World! is:

• Immediate—The points are easily calculated with each entry.

• Consistent—The reward is available for every instance.

• Equitable—Anyone can participate.

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• Impersonal—Quantitative, not subjective; students can see what they'll get.

Implementation

The following is taken from the syllabus: Extra Credit. You have the opportunity to gain extra credit by joining the Copy Edit the World! project. Basically, for the first half of the course I give:

• 4 points for an error (typo or other) found in a publication intended for general public circulation.

• 2 points for an error found in a newspaper, magazine or journalism Web site.

• The rationale is that newspaper, magazine and journalism Web site errors are too easy to find, and that by expanding the scope of the 4-pointers you will see how errors creep into lots of other publications (menus, course syllabi, posters, fliers, church bulletins, etc.).

• The points go to 2 and 1 after Midterm.

• You may hand in examples right up to the last day of class, and there is no maximum on points.

• The points are applied to the quiz grades.

• The instructor is the final arbiter on what counts as an acceptable submission in Copy Edit the World!

• Examples you submit must identify the error, say what's wrong and show how you'd correct the error.

• As it is expected that this will be your own work, and not the result of a collective enterprise, please sign the university honor pledge with each submission.

• The instructor reserves the right to amend the rules as experience indicates.

• To avoid student and instructor overload at term's end, a total of no more than 30 points will be accepted in each of the last two class meetings.

Impact

• For Students

There is an anecdotal correlation between participation in Copy Edit the World! and final grades. Since the extra points go toward a portion of the final grade that is worth only 10 percent to begin with, the reasonable inference is that the exercise sharpens their work in other areas of the course.

Students report the exercise turns them into rabid fact-checkers and editors. Some continue to send particularly egregious examples years after taking the course.

• For Instructors

Copy Edit the World! fosters student interest in precision and using the skills being taught in the classroom and promotes an appreciation of their application in the "real world."

Lack of participation can be an early clue to the student who is trouble and an opportunity for timely intervention—an office chat.

Lack of participation also offers a discussion point when students come in to complain about low grades (yes, there is a correlation there, too). Bringing up a low or non-existent bonus bank can help students see and take responsibility for their own success.

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Analyzing Magazine Covers Pre- and Post-Sept. 11

How to help students think critically about the role of mass media

Carol T. Fletcher
Hofstra University

Introduction

After 9/11, consumer magazine covers changed significantly. These changes included greater use of red, white and blue, more frequent portrayal of authority figures and people in uniform, increasing use of men rather than women and more mention of patriotic words, comforting images and words about home and healing in cover lines.

By setting up an exercise in which students discover these differences on their own, professors can urge students to think critically about bias and the role the media play in American culture.

Rationale

Students are quick to recognize censorship in the foreign press, but slow to notice the ways in which their own press fails to represent a full range of possible ideas. This exercise shows students that self-censorship can be the most powerful constraint of all.

It also forces students to consider whether the principal role of the press is to reflect or to mold society, and whether the function of magazines is to entertain or educate.

Implementation

• On one side of the classroom, spread out a couple of dozen magazines that appeared on the newsstand immediately prior to 9/11. Include not only news magazines, but also publications devoted to sports, health, home, teens and other topics.

• On the other side of the classroom, spread out issues of the same magazines that appeared on the newsstand after 9/11. Since many monthly magazines are produced several months ahead of time, it is best to use magazines from, say, December 2001.

• Ask students to walk around and examine the covers of the magazines. What differences do they notice in the colors, words and images used? Do the covers

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• Ask students to walk around and examine the covers of the magazines. What differences do they notice in the colors, words and images used? Do the covers

show a single, large photo or several smaller ones? Do they show men or women, authority figures or dissidents, people smiling or angry?

• Have students write down a description of post-9/11 covers. They will most likely say things like, "The covers are all red, white and blue" and "most of the covers show male authority figures."

• Ask students: What impact do the visual attributes you just described have on the reader?

• Ask students: "If you went to a foreign country you knew nothing about, visited a newsstand and saw that all the magazines had the attributes you described above, would you say the press in that country was free?"

• Discuss whether magazines ought to play a comforting or placating role in society. Should they reflect popular opinion or critically examine it? Should news magazines play the same role as service magazines? Do magazines have a responsibility to educate, or simply to entertain?

Impact

• Students are surprised to find bias in their own media. They are also astonished to see that they have such different views from one another on the questions above.

• Several students came back the following semester to tell me that when they discussed bias in their ethics or media criticism classes, they shared this example with the class. The exercise has a visual impact that makes it memorable.

• Several teachers at other universities—one in a journalism department, one in history and one sociology—tried this exercise at my suggestion and were delighted with the results.

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Keeping Your Focus with Fizzies and Oprah

How to transform your topic into a thesis statement

Scott Fosdick
University of Missouri—Columbia

Introduction

Too many beginning writers either try to jam too many elements into one article or try to write without having any central idea at all in mind. This multi-method approach uses Fizzies to drive home how icky it tastes when you mix separate story ideas together.

Step two is putting your idea on the Oprah Winfrey show to see if it will earn and keep audience interest.

Rationale

Research shows that different people like to use different senses when learning. Research also shows that today's youth watch a lot of television. This idea combines the sense of taste with the students' natural understanding of how a talk show works to encourage them to think about the essence of a story in new ways.

Implementation

• Fizzies are soda pop in dehydrated tablet form—like flavored Alka Seltzer. Hold one aloft and describe it as the boiled down essence of a great piece of journalism—the story's thesis. Plop it in a clear glass of water and let students watch as it seeps into every corner of the story.

• Do the same with another Fizzie of a different flavor.

• Blindfold a volunteer and invite him or her to taste the first one, then the other, then a mixture of the two beverages. Ask the guinea pig to guess the flavor: "Grape!" "Orange!" "Ewwwww!" Invariably, the mixed brew tastes awful, like a mishmash, neither fish nor fowl. Declare your first point: One thesis is better than two.

• Define your terms: A good thesis is a statement with a point of view that is both astonishing and credible.

• Transform yourself into Oprah Winfrey and your students into members of the audience who are desperate to be invited up on stage. Their ticket is a good thesis.

• Remind students that every magazine has a different host, with different interests. Winners are those who can do the following:

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1) Interest the host of the target publication
2) State their thesis clearly and simply
3) Astonish
4) Make their claim credible

• Offer an extended example: Suppose the host publication is Cat Fancy. "Dogs and cats are evil agents of the warlord Xandar," is clear, simple, astonishing and of interest to the publication. But it's not very credible. Oprah moves on when she hears comments like this. But credibility is not enough. We might agree that "Most pets are friendly," but wouldn't want to read a story on that topic. A good thesis never evokes cries of "So what?" Here's one that, if true, would be a sure bet: "Recent research shows that the urea in most deodorants drives cats crazy."

• Pass out worksheets full of a mixture of topics and theses, and ask students to decide which are which. Then ask them to transform the topics into good theses.

• As a final illustration of the importance of one voice driving one central thesis, ask students to pair up for a tandem writing exercise. One person writes the first paragraph to a story. The partner reads that paragraph, adds a second that extends the story line and passes it back to the first writer, who adds a third—and so on, until they reach a conclusion or time runs out. The result is almost always a two-headed monster at war with itself.

Impact

You can expect two results from these techniques:
1) More focused student writing
2) Most importantly, students will have a firm grasp on what a thesis, or central idea, is, so that when you point to a split-focus in their writing, they'll know what you're talking about and why it's important.

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3) Astonish
4) Make their claim credible

• Offer an extended example: Suppose the host publication is Cat Fancy. "Dogs and cats are evil agents of the warlord Xandar," is clear, simple, astonishing and of interest to the publication. But it's not very credible. Oprah moves on when she hears comments like this. But credibility is not enough. We might agree that "Most pets are friendly," but wouldn't want to read a story on that topic. A good thesis never evokes cries of "So what?" Here's one that, if true, would be a sure bet: "Recent research shows that the urea in most deodorants drives cats crazy."

• Pass out worksheets full of a mixture of topics and theses, and ask students to decide which are which. Then ask them to transform the topics into good theses.

• As a final illustration of the importance of one voice driving one central thesis, ask students to pair up for a tandem writing exercise. One person writes the first paragraph to a story. The partner reads that paragraph, adds a second that extends the story line and passes it back to the first writer, who adds a third—and so on, until they reach a conclusion or time runs out. The result is almost always a two-headed monster at war with itself.

Impact

You can expect two results from these techniques:
1) More focused student writing
2) Most importantly, students will have a firm grasp on what a thesis, or central idea, is, so that when you point to a split-focus in their writing, they'll know what you're talking about and why it's important.

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The Beginner's Portfolio Project

How to develop both conceptual and executional skills in the introductory advertising design course

W. Glenn Griffin
University of Texas—Austin

Introduction

Most introductory design courses for advertising students teach basic layout principles and offer training for various software programs. The Beginner's Portfolio Project is an end-of-the-semester assignment that offers students an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of these basics, plus the chance to think conceptually, write copy and work according to "real-world" client guidelines.

Rationale

The Beginner's Portfolio Project offers ad students an early opportunity to do what they are dying to do from the day they enter the major—to actually create ads on their own! This assignment is designed to test students' mastery of basic conceptual and executional skills in the context of working for a "client." Students will gain an appreciation for the fact that creative work isn't done in a vacuum—it is also a function of understanding the product and meeting clients' needs.

Additionally, the Beginner's Portfolio Project requires students to apply their design/creative skills across a variety of advertising media—not just the traditional 8.5" x 11" magazine ad. By creating an end-of-semester portfolio, students are required to apply and synthesize their knowledge in a campaign context.

Implementation

• **Choosing/Developing a Client**: For this type of project, it is probably best to use a fictional product. Given that ad design classes are about developing students' visual literacy and layout skills, you'll want to avoid having them create advertising for an authentic client with an established visual identity. I also recommend choosing a rather simple product with which your students will already be familiar. They shouldn't have to do a lot of background research to understand what it is or how it is used. Additionally, you'll want to choose a product that would realistically be advertised across a variety of media. (I even asked my students to do some package design work that falls outside traditional ad design.)

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• **Selecting Media:** Once you've chosen a product, the next step is to select three or four design projects that will constitute the student portfolio. Obvious choices are print ads, billboards, specialty items, etc. I would recommend avoiding broadcast storyboards, since this category of creative work is usually too advanced for students at this stage in their coursework.

• **Writing the Assignment:** I have developed a format for presenting the assignment that I find is easy for the students to use and understand. Please refer to the example on the next page. The instructor also creates a basic logo for the fictional client and chooses preferred colors as part of putting the assignment together. (These visual elements are usually already fixed when creating advertising for a product.) You'll notice that I include "quotes from the client" as a means of communicating mandatory requirements for each project. Since this assignment is intended for a design course, most copy is provided to students in text files, leaving layout and aesthetic decisions to the student.

• **Preparing the Laboratory/Computer Files:** Most mid-sized to larger ad programs provide students with a computer laboratory where they can complete assignments for a design course. The instructor can load the product logo and any other specified graphics onto the lab machines in advance of distributing the assignment. The location of electronic files to be used by the students should be indicated on the assignment.

• **Presenting the Assignment:** On the day that the assignment is to be distributed in class, I recommend going over the actual document with your students to make sure that clarification is made where necessary and that questions are answered. Instructors can make transparencies or put the documents on PowerPoint for this presentation.

• **Grading the Portfolios:** Here's the beauty of this idea. Although it may seem that grading 20+ portfolios at the end of a semester would be a nightmare, grading can—and for purposes of this assignment—should be rather simple. Students should understand that the key to success on this assignment is to follow instructions carefully and to give the clients what they requested. Instructors can develop a "checksheet" to score according to how well the student matched the requirements of each project. I tended to focus on neatness and accuracy far more than the aesthetic beauty of the work, especially when one considers that only a few students in these courses want to pursue creative careers. Don't get mired down in subjective evaluation of the conceptual aspects—focus on how well the portfolio demonstrates the students' mastery of the basic skills an introductory design course is intended to teach.

Impact

• The Beginner's Portfolio Project is an assignment that offers students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned in a practical sense, rather than via a lengthy multiple choice exam. It's a final exam that they can get excited about rather than dread.

• This idea offers students with a learning experience that transcends the traditional content areas of introductory advertising design courses.

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Great Ideas For Teachers 2002

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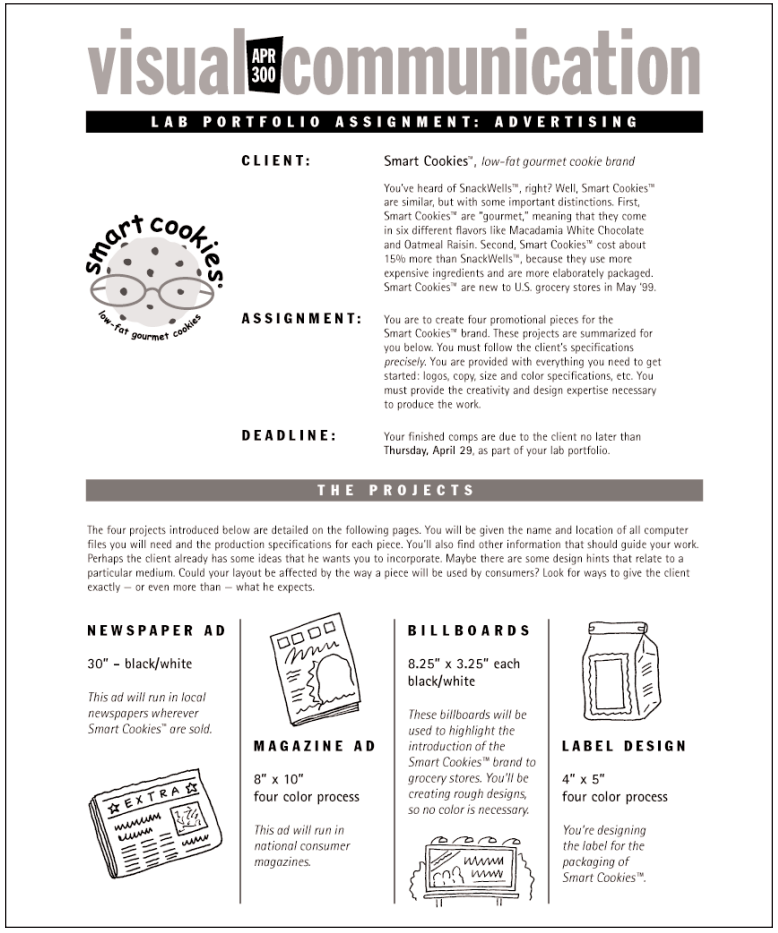
academic program, students are better prepared for the challenges of upper-division advertising courses (creative ad campaigns, for example).

• The vast majority of my students who completed this project said that they enjoyed working on it and preferred it to other forms of final evaluation such as multiple-choice exams. Positive mention of this project was made on course and instructor evaluations collected at the end of the term.



visual communication APR 300

LAB PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT: ADVERTISING

CLIENT: Smart Cookies™, *low-fat gourmet cookie brand*

You've heard of SnackWells™, right? Well, Smart Cookies™ are similar, but with some important distinctions. First, Smart Cookies™ are "gourmet," meaning that they come in six different flavors like Macadamia White Chocolate and Oatmeal Raisin. Second, Smart Cookies™ cost about 15% more than SnackWells™, because they use more expensive ingredients and are more elaborately packaged. Smart Cookies™ are new to U.S. grocery stores in May '99.

ASSIGNMENT: You are to create four promotional pieces for the Smart Cookies™ brand. These projects are summarized for you below. You must follow the client's specifications *precisely*. You are provided with everything you need to get started: logos, copy, size and color specifications, etc. You must provide the creativity and design expertise necessary to produce the work.

DEADLINE: Your finished comps are due to the client no later than **Thursday, April 29**, as part of your lab portfolio.

THE PROJECTS

The four projects introduced below are detailed on the following pages. You will be given the name and location of all computer files you will need and the production specifications for each piece. You'll also find other information that should guide your work. Perhaps the client already has some ideas that he wants you to incorporate. Maybe there are some design hints that relate to a particular medium. Could your layout be affected by the way a piece will be used by consumers? Look for ways to give the client exactly – or even more than – what he expects.

NEWSPAPER AD

30" - black/white

This ad will run in local newspapers wherever Smart Cookies™ are sold.

MAGAZINE AD

8" x 10"
four color process

This ad will run in national consumer magazines.

BILLBOARDS

8.25" x 3.25" each
black/white

These billboards will be used to highlight the introduction of the Smart Cookies™ brand to grocery stores. You'll be creating rough designs, so no color is necessary.

LABEL DESIGN

4" x 5"
four color process

You're designing the label for the packaging of Smart Cookies™.

Example: Assignment Format

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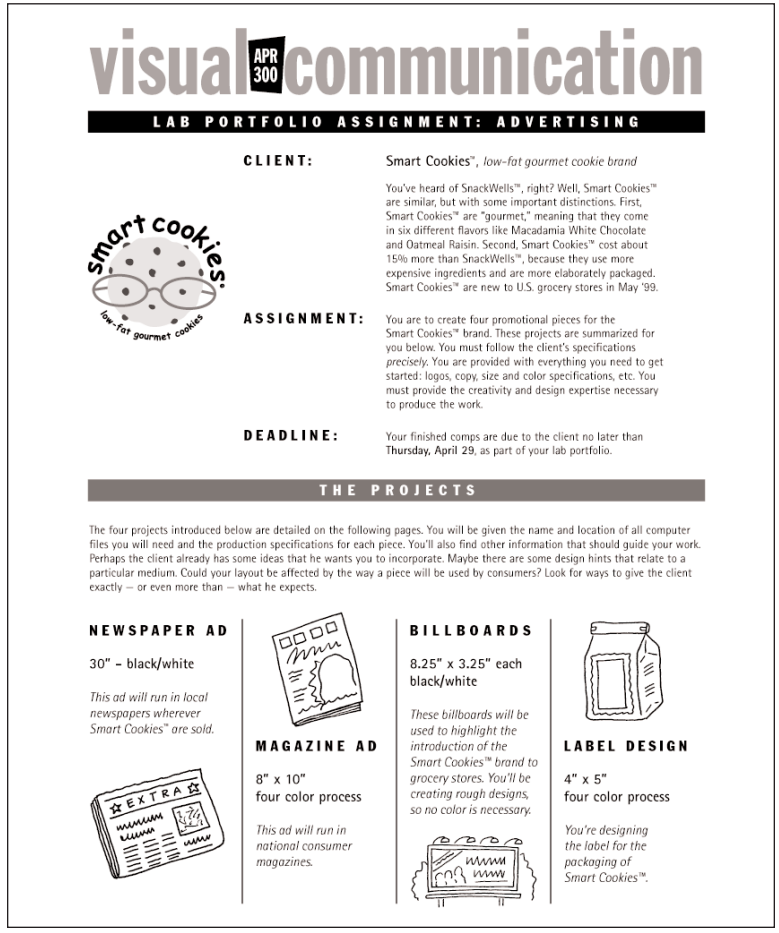

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Better Than Bleeding All Over It

How to use a tape recorder to improve feedback on student writing assignments

Jim Hall
Virginia Commonwealth University

Introduction

This GIFT is about the use of an audio tape to record teacher comments on student writing assignments.

Rationale

One of the first things I noticed when I became a journalism teacher was how similar the job was to the job of newspaper editor. This was especially true when it came to written assignments. Since I gave my students "real-life" assignments, such as covering school board meetings or interviewing newsmakers, their finished assignments were similar to the stories done by real reporters—not nearly as accomplished, of course, but similar nonetheless.

But I quickly realized that the review process for the two assignments was very different. Good editors talked with their reporters before they went on assignments and after they returned. They insisted that reporters sit beside them at the computer terminal as they reviewed and discussed their finished stories.

I had no such opportunity with a class of 25 students. I invited students to talk with me individually while they were working on their assignments, or after I returned their graded papers. But few came to talk with me. I missed the give-and-take that was a regular part of my relationship with editors. And I think the students, without realizing it, missed it too. These "coaching" sessions between writer and interested reviewer are an excellent way to learn.

I searched for a way to recreate this process with students, and I hit upon the use of a tape recorder. The use of a tape recorder followed from my insistence that my students read their writing aloud. I believe that reading aloud is a great way to test for clarity and grace. As historian Barbara Tuchman has said, "After seven years' apprenticeship in journalism, I have discovered that an essential element for good writing is a good ear. One must listen to one's own prose." So I tried to practice what I preached by reading aloud my students' work. What I ended up doing was "talking" to the students, as if they were beside me. Finally I decided to record these sessions. A recording would give the students far more information

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Implementation

The implementation of this GIFT is very simple.

• Students are required to turn in blank, standard-size audio tapes whenever they hand in written assignments.

• When the teacher grades the paper, he or she inserts the student's tape into a tape recorder and records the grading session. This requires the teacher to read aloud the student paper and to verbalize his or her thoughts and reactions. For example, if the teacher finds a misspelled word, the teacher might underline the word in the text and say aloud into the tape, "Check your dictionary, Phillip." If the teacher reads a particularly well-written paragraph, he or she might place a check mark beside it on the paper and say aloud, "Perfect metaphor, Joan. Good job."

• The teacher also can summarize at the end, adding a personal note. Perhaps this paper is an improvement over earlier ones, or, for the first time, the student has avoided a certain punctuation problem. The teacher also can fully explain the grade and suggest ways to improve the paper. The paper would have few marks on it, but the tape would be filled with valuable feedback.

• The student can submit a new blank tape for the next assignment, or he or she can recycle the first tape. Most grading sessions last about 10-15 minutes, depending on the assignment, so several can fit on a single tape.

Impact

Some students told me that they never listened to these tapes. The letter grade that I wrote on their papers was all they were concerned with. But many other students enjoyed the tapes. They listened to them as they would a recorded book, reading along with me. Like most beginning writers, they hungered for feedback, and the tape offered far more feedback than they would get with standard grading techniques. And it was a lot more personal. I addressed the students by name, as if they were seated beside me. I praised their strong passages and criticized their lapses. With the tapes, I reinforced the principles of good writing and communicated clearly my own standards.

Great Ideas For Teachers 2002

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Teaching Financial Management the Easy Way

How to use a computer simulation program in a media management class

Joseph M. Harper
Kent State University

Introduction

I have used a computer simulation game in teaching about newspaper finances in media management classes for more than 20 years. The Newspaper Simulation game—Newsim—was first introduced in media management classes at the University of Texas and used data from my doctoral dissertation.

Based on experiences from using the original model, I have developed a new game—MediaSim—which will allow students to "run" not only a newspaper but also a radio or television station. In this day of media convergence, students benefit from learning about other media.

Each student, or team, is given two years of historical data related to his/her/their media property. This data includes operational information such as the newspaper's circulation, advertising linage, budget information such as advertising revenue and expenses for major departments and market information such as population and spendable income data. After studying this information, the students makes operating decisions such as how much to charge for advertising, what level to set salaries and how much to budget for departmental expenses.

The students run their newspaper or broadcast station for three years, making decisions for Year 2, for example, based on their results from Year 1 and the one- and three-year goals they established.

Rationale

Most journalism students—and young professionals—have a very limited understanding of the financial operation of their company whether they work for newspapers, magazines, broadcast stations or Internet businesses. Yet graduates are being put into supervisory positions at earlier ages—positions that often require some knowledge of budgeting at minimum.

In addition, business reporting is an increasingly important beat, and this requires reporters to be able to understand basic financial documents. Participation in this exercise will give those persons some background to get started on the business beat.

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ment in many semester-long media management courses takes about two weeks, and this game is central to that module. The time spent on the game can be altered depending on the professor's class outline. (In fact, it could be used in a two- or three-day workshop.) A typical schedule for this section of the class might contain four 90-minute class sessions:

• **First Class**: Assign reading for this class to introduce basic financial reports such as the budget, profit/loss statement and balance sheet. Lecture/discussion on how to read these reports. Assign reading for second class on goals and objectives.

• **Second Class**: In class discuss setting goals and objectives and how managers make decisions to achieve goals. Also discuss how to interpret the two years of "historical" data, for example, the financial and operating reports about the media property the students will run. Assignment for third class: Set one-year and three-year goals for each student's newspaper or broadcast station.

• **Third Class**: If computers are available in class, have students make operating decisions for first simulated year and run the program (it takes only a mouse click; results are available in a second or two). If computers are not available, have students run program before class and bring results to class. Discuss first-year results and rerun program with new set of decisions for Year 1. Also discuss whether results were in line with goals and objectives.

• **Fourth Class**: Run Year 2 and Year 3. Discuss results for three-year period. Have students/teams analyze their results for the three-year period and report on changes they would make if they were playing the game again.

Grading is based on the goals that the students set, the rationale for the decisions they make (in relation to their goals) and their analyses of financial and operating results. Notably, and there is some argument on this point, I do not base the grade on how much money the student's newspaper or broadcast station makes. In fact, students are encouraged to set goals that relate, for example, to the quality of the newspaper's or TV station's news content.

Impact

Course surveys and anecdotal responses almost without exception indicate that students find the gaming experience interesting and educational. While most students in media management do not find financial management a particularly interesting topic, the simulation game and the almost instantaneous feedback the participants receive get students absorbed in the learning process. Some students have become so enmeshed in the game that they have become upset over mediocre or poor financial results.

Much of the learning takes place in the class discussions before and after each round ("Year") of play. Using two- and three-person teams works well because of the interaction required in making decisions before each "Year" and in discussing the results following each round.

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Journalism Jeopardy with Your Host (Your Name Goes Here)

How to thoroughly enjoy one class session that is focused on journalism trivia with topics like "U.S. Presidents and the press," "American newspapers," "Famous journalists" and "Journalism–NOT!!!"

Cheryl Heckler
Miami University (Ohio)

Introduction

You push them regarding deadlines, and leads and transitions. Especially transitions. You give them a midterm on the first amendment and a final on FOIA….

So you can just imagine their surprise when they walk in the door one day and see you in a suit or tux and the chalkboard looking like a Jeopardy board.

"I'll take U.S. Presidents for $200, Cheryl."

"One of the two U.S. presidents awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he entered office when McKinley was assassinated and was a darling of the press."

Or how about "Journalism–NOT!!!" for $300?

"Chevy Chase, Colin Quinn, Dennis Miller, Norm MacDonald."

Today's audio daily double, under the category of "Famous Journalists": An early CBS anchor "reporting from the rooftops of London."

This is simply a lovely way to enjoy a class, teach them something about journalism and history, and allow your students to see each other's skills in a different light.

Rationale

This exercise can be used in several ways: a break from the routine; a reinforcement for points you've already taught and especially a chance to build bridges. But it is not an easy class. You will end the day absolutely exhausted because students will get so into the game, they will argue over points–a great problem to have because of their enthusiasm.

Implementation

You can use Journalism Jeopardy for anything you teach. I use it as a break from the norm and as reinforcement for points I want them to hold well past the semester's end. For instance, imagine these categories:

Great Ideas For Teachers 2002

Journalism Jeopardy with Your Host (Your Name Goes Here)

How to thoroughly enjoy one class session that is focused on journalism trivia with topics like "U.S. Presidents and the press," "American newspapers," "Famous journalists" and "Journalism–NOT!!!"

Cheryl Heckler
Miami University (Ohio)

Introduction

You push them regarding deadlines, and leads and transitions. Especially transitions. You give them a midterm on the first amendment and a final on FOIA….

So you can just imagine their surprise when they walk in the door one day and see you in a suit or tux and the chalkboard looking like a Jeopardy board.

"I'll take U.S. Presidents for $200, Cheryl."

"One of the two U.S. presidents awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he entered office when McKinley was assassinated and was a darling of the press."

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• Leads (delayed-identification, feature, hard news...)

• The Bill of Rights (since we journalists spend so much time defending it in our newspapers, this is a great way to reinforce their memorizing it)

• International Journalism (Leaders and political parties throughout the world. Again, a wonderful reinforcement tool of materials already introduced.)

• Journalism and Cinema (From "Citizen Kane" to "Almost Famous" and "The Insider"). Especially popular with students who feel like they are on the outside

• Colonial Journalism

• Name That Literary Source: A great place to teach them about journalists who went on to become great literary figures. Hemmingway, Mitchell.

• Famous Women/Black/Break-Through Journalists

In my classes, students are placed in groups of four or five. Instead of buzzers, they must stand up to answer. For each five answers it gets right, a group receives candy. The group having the most correct answers gets special candy. The individual who gets a Daily Double gets special candy. An outstanding performance by any single student earns him/her an *Ohio Magazine* coffee mug.

Impact

In my experience, this ranks right up there with being able to speak intelligently to them about what was in the most recent issue of *Rolling Stone*. Students connect. And they leave the classroom saying things like, "Can you believe that about LBJ?" or "Geez, who knew Melanie knew so much about presidential history." They write with enthusiasm about it in the course-end evaluations.

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Writing the Statement of Personal Ethics in Communication

How to assess the integration and application of student learning in communication ethics

Gail Ritchie Henson
Bellarmine University

Introduction

The assignment to write a personal statement of communication ethics serves as a culminating experience for students. It provides students a valuable opportunity to reflect, synthesize, formulate and articulate a public document for their personal use and to use in interview situations.

Rationale

Students report this to be one of the most valuable experiences of their academic career. Prospective employers are impressed when a student includes this in a resume or portfolio. This assignment provides an important transition between classroom and what lies beyond.

If students never have the reason to formulate and articulate their own ethics, then they may not anticipate and plan their responses to life challenges. In life, there are no multiple choice tests or semester exams; rather there are continual challenges and opportunities to make decisions. Whenever an advertiser, an editor, a producer or any other communication professional or academic has to decide where to draw a line and if that line should be crossed, that person must draw on a set of personal ethics and professional ethics.

Implementation

Students are given the assignment as printed below:

Personal Statement of Ethics
Maximum length: 5 pages
Task: This is the culminating exercise of Communication Ethics. Students write their own code of communication ethics, one they could explain to another person, whether a prospective employer or a friend.

- **Part I: Foundation**

The statement should start with a reflection the foundation they bring to ethical decision making, synthesizing professional, philosophical, religious or other core beliefs.

- **Part II: The Code of Conduct**

Using other professional codes of conduct as guides for the format, and

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incorporating other relevant guides (for example, professional, religious, philosophical, experiential), the student writes a one- or two- page statement that clearly delineates the student's code as pertains to ethical communication, with provisions for addressing dilemmas that students might encounter in the future. Issues to cover would include such matters as dealing with truth, conflicts of interests, how one treats people, fair play, confidences, lines the student would draw, etc.

• **Part III: Application**

Students provide two case studies that might arise in which they would have to draw on their code of conduct for making a decision.

• **Part IV: Reflection**

Students write a one-paragraph summary reflecting on the experience of writing their code of ethics.

Students submit a copy of this to the professor and attach a copy of this for their portfolio and resume.

Impact

• Student Impact: The experience, according to student evaluations and personal reflections as required in part IV, profoundly affects the students. For many students, it is the first time they have articulated such a creed to act on in daily living. After a semester of case studies, writing responses and listening to professionals talk about times when they are asked to cross an ethical line, students now have to wrestle with their own ethical positions and justifications. It is a powerful learning experience.

• Assessment Value: Writing the personal statement of communication ethics provides authentic assessment of student learning, comprehension, synthesis and application of learning.

• Personal Impact: As a veteran of 28 years of college teaching, I continually find these statements of ethics to be a time of hope and renewal for me in this vocation of teaching. To witness, especially in Part IV, student reflections on the process of wrestling with their personal ethics and committing themselves in their statement, is a powerful experience.

• Internship and Prospective Employer Impact: Prospective internship sponsors and employers are very pleased, and often moved, by the depth of thought in these ethical statements.

This document provides something unique for our students and thus is immensely important for the Department of Communication and for our students.

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Music Video Creation as a Tool to Understand Videography and Video Editing

How to make students spend hours learning to shoot and edit video–and love it

Brian K. Johnson
University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign

Introduction

While college freshmen are consumers of video through broadcast journalism and movies, few of them understand the conventions of videography and video editing. Students are also avid consumers of music videos and some spend a great deal of time watching television stations like MTV. Learning to shoot effective video sequences and efficient, tight video editing can be confusing and tedious for students who have had no prior training in film or video. An exciting and unique way to motivate students to learn videography and video editing is to have them create a music video. The storytelling techniques of a music video are the same as the conventions used in broadcast news, so this project gives students a deep understanding of telling a story with video.

Rationale

Students love watching music videos. Music is an important part of their lives in college, so it follows that they might be motivated to throw themselves into a project that would produce a music video as its final product. Along the way the students will learn a thing or two about shooting video sequences and editing video so that it tells a story and matching images to the audio. While using a non–journalistic genre of storytelling might seem to be of little value to news video, the truth is that many music videos have excellent, tight editing and and interesting videography. These characteristics can make any news story better. Due to student excitement about the project, they spend far more hours perfecting their music video than they might if the assignment were to just to shoot and edit a typical news story.

These skills transfer to the journalistic stories they complete for the semester project. By making this a group project, the students' anxiety about learning a new skill in a major assignment is reduced. As newspapers also move to web–based delivery of news many newspaper photojournalists are expected to learn to produce video stories. As the line blurs between print and broadcast news, these video skills become important to all journalists.

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Implementation

• Music Video—This is a group project. Each group will have four members and you will grade each other on level of participation in the project. Choose a piece of music mutually acceptable to the group, then decide how you will illustrate that piece with video you shoot and edit into a package. Compress the package for web delivery. Total package length: Maximum 4 minutes.

• By the point in the semester where students will produce their music video they have had assignments where they have learned to shoot and edit simple video sequences:

Action/Reaction—The basic building–block of a sequence is showing action and reaction. For example, if you show someone in a seat at a Krannert Center theater watching something, then you need to have another shot showing what the person was watching. You are to videotape and edit three Action/Reaction groups. The three groups do not need to be related. Total package length: Maximum 30 seconds.

•They also have produced a simple story for an assignment called Beginning to End.

Beginning to End—To tell a story a video package needs a beginning, middle and end. You will shoot and edit a story using Action/Reaction; Overall/Medium/Close–up shots; Beginning/Middle/End to tell the story of a process.

Maybe you will show your roommate making chocolate chip cookies, for example (and then bring in the cookies for the class!) Total package length: Maximum 30 seconds.

• Students are assigned to a group and have several meetings to decide on which song to use, story board the story, scout locations and check out the light at various times of day when they may shoot.

• Once they have shot their video, the editing process starts. Over the course of several lab periods, some in class and many outside of class, the students edit their video into a finished music video. Along the way the professor critiques the project and gives suggestions for improvement. Once the project is complete the students are required to evaluate their group members' involvement and performance.

Impact

Students were so excited about this project that they wanted to do another music video rather than the assigned final project. What I allowed them to do was produce another music video as an extra credit assignment. Even though the extra credit came at the end of the semester when they had many other tests and projects to complete in other classes, more than one-third of the class chose to do this extra credit assignment.

I've never seen students more motivated to spend long hours in the lab working on a project. I was so energized by their excitement that I even spent some long hours in the lab helping them perfect their music videos.

The results were well worth the effort. These projects were some of the best I have ever received. This was from a group of freshmen where most (90 percent) had never picked up a video camera

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Great Ideas For Teachers 2002

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The Chocolate Chip Cookie Taste Test

How to recognize the relevance of brand names in the world of advertising

Cathy Johnson
Angelo State University

Introduction

By taste testing a variety of brands of chocolate chip cookies in class and rating them, students recognize the importance of brand names with respect to advertising.

Rationale

This activity is a fun way to make a big impact relative to an important component of an introductory advertising course. It demonstrates much more forcefully than lecture the relevance of brand names in relation to consumer behavior/buying. There is a little cost involved, but you may find the payoff worth it.

Implementation

Early in the semester, in a single class session (can be done in 50 minutes, although a little more time would work well), students are asked to taste test a variety of brands of chocolate chip cookies and rate each brand on a scale of one to five according to five criteria.

• Select five brands of chocolate chip cookies for the experiment. This works best to choose a combination of easily recognized brands and some local store brands. These should also all be the standard hard cookies, not a combination of hard and soft/chewy cookies.

• Break class into groups of four. Acknowledge that for various reasons not everyone will be able to taste the cookies, but those individuals can still participate in some aspects of rating the cookies.

• Prior to class, prepare sandwich bags of four cookies each for all five brands. Label them Brand 1, Brand 2, etc. You will need one bag per brand per student group. For example, if you have 20 students in the class, you would need a total of 25 bags of four cookies each, five each of five brands.

• Give each group one rating sheet. Each cookie brand will be rated on a scale of 1-5 least preferred to most preferred on the following criteria:

Size
Appearance
Number of chocolate chips
Taste
Texture

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• Give each group one rating sheet. Each cookie brand will be rated on a scale of 1-5 least preferred to most preferred on the following criteria:

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• Distribute the first brand of cookie and ask each group to reach a consensus and rate the cookie on the criteria sheet. Everyone in the class is taste testing and rating the same brand at the same time. You may want to provide paper plates, so students may reserve part of a cookie and label its placement on the plate in order to go back later for more comparison. After all the groups have had a few minutes to rate Brand 1, distribute Brand 2. Continue this procedure through Brand 5.

You will also want to provide something to "wash it down." I offer cups of milk or water. So while they are tasting and rating, I am playing flight attendant and serving beverages.

• Collect the rating sheets.

• Depending on the length of the class, you may not have time to correlate the scores in all five categories. In that case, ask which category is most important to them in their purchase decisions. They will always say taste, so you may declare a winner (brand name) simply based on taste, which conserves time.

• Also, save the original packaging the cookies came in and make some observations about the packages, which you have carefully hidden from view up to this point. Many store brands will use packaging similar in look and color to a well-recognized brand. The blue packaging of Chips Ahoy is often imitated, for example. And some store brands use the upright packaging used by more upscale cookies such as Pepperidge Farm.

Impact

While a few students are already fairly astute regarding the qualities of various chocolate chip cookies, most seem quite surprised by the outcome. Some have even accused me of making a mistake and mixing up the brands. During the taste testing process, not knowing which brand they were tasting, they once called Chips Ahoy the ghetto cookies. So one of the best-known brand names is far from the best-tasting cookie. Wal-Mart's Sam's Choice brand almost always wins the taste test. This is quite surprising to students. Most had never even heard of or tasted Sam's Choice chocolate chip cookies.

We talk about the role advertising of brand names plays in our decision to make purchases, and the fact that Sam's Choice cookies are never advertised.

This is an activity that sticks in the minds of students, because it's rare they have ever spent a whole class session eating cookies. So when I make reference to it throughout the semester when talking about brand names, they DO remember the activity.

I do this early in the semester, so the group activity component does help students meet others in the class they might not otherwise meet. I have them number off to create the groups to facilitate this.

And of course I'm a favorite teacher at least for the day, because "all we did in class today was cookies!"

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"This Really Happened..."

How to show students the difference between a topic and a story

Lee Jolliffe
Drake University

Introduction

Students in introductory writing classes struggle to tell whether they have a "story" or merely a topic. Meshing concepts from literary study and Jon Franklin's book *Writing for Story*, a preparatory lecture shows students how to build a fictional short story from elements like characters, place and actions. Next session, students each have to tell a story, something that happened to them. And presto! They begin to see the narrative elements in real life and how to weave these into their feature articles.

Rationale

The innovation is encouraging students to tell funny stories in class and using this as an object lesson in nonfiction storytelling and narrative theory. (A fun "subtext" is that students in the class build enormous camaraderie from the exercise and remember it for years.)

Implementation

• Develop a lecture/discussion of fictional elements and how they are built into short story form. Franklin's *Writing for Story* is very helpful here. Students readily contribute such elements as characters, setting, time, mood and conflict. Help them see potential in "consensus" plots, too. Show on the board how action evolves to form plot through a chart showing Story Development #1, #2, etc., until Resolution, for instance.

• Assign students to think of something funny, important or even horrifying that happened to them personally. They are to plan to tell it in the next class session.

• Tell a story of your own, as an example. My favorite involves my college roommate's husband (topping 300 pounds), a visiting cat named The Dread Pirate Roberts (who loved to catch bats) and a tennis racket (fairly effective in bringing down bats). Yes, he did knock it out of the air and scoop it out of the house.

• Spend a session, or possibly two, having students tell their stories. Let them build up a self-sustaining amount of momentum (three or four stories at least) before you begin to teach your way into the storytelling. As students finish particular sto-

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• Spend a session, or possibly two, having students tell their stories. Let them build up a self-sustaining amount of momentum (three or four stories at least) before you begin to teach your way into the storytelling. As students finish particular sto-

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ries, then, help everyone see the character development, the stock characters, the importance of build-up, the humor in simple occurrences, where the plot development occurred in the story.

• Now give students topic-type information about a subject (varying from semester to semester). I've used everything from a promo piece on a book about banana slugs as pets to short pieces about collegiate life, stripped of their "color". Have the students seek out the anecdotes (the short stories) that can make or break a feature article. Once they've practiced a time or two, they're ready to a) add a range of anecdotes to their own work and b) tackle article forms that require extended story-telling through the length of the piece.

Impact

Students love this assignment. They refer to it among themselves at J-school parties—I overhear "Oh, yeah, I remember you saying that at storytelling day" or "You haven't had storytelling yet? Just wait." Telling personal stories builds the sense of knowing one another and helps create a more friendly, open atmosphere in the classroom and among our majors.

For the teacher, it helps break down some barriers students bring to class and makes for easier relations with students later in the semester, when they have to take criticism from you or meet with you one-on-one to go over their work.

It also achieves its educational goal. Students who start out thinking they are writing articles if they turn in paraphrased web sites or articles cobbled together from other, published articles finally begin to see how they can build their own, using their own ideas. The lesson fits into a series on article forms and our "standard" narratives in feature-writing. By the end of the semester, students begin to write suspended stories interwoven with exposition—a far more complex form than they started the semester with.

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Beyond Schindler's List

How to understand the importance of government in the sunshine by keeping public records/meetings open to all

Kenneth C. Killebrew
University of South Florida

Introduction

Government has taken advantage of the volatility in today's world, undermining the right of the people to know what their government is doing. Couched in terms like "privacy concerns" and a need to "protect innocent citizens" a number of state and the federal government is chipping away at many well-established legal rights of individuals (though it is portrayed as the media). They are essentially taking government out of the sunshine and moving away from 50 years of well-established legal precedents.

Rationale

The rationale is to challenge students to understand that everything their governments do for (to) them is not necessarily good for them. It is designed to allow them to put away the emotional baggage that many have been operating under since Sept. 11 and to provide a provocative discussion on the merits of an open society and government. The examples are drawn from cases in Great Britain where they incarcerated a number of IRA members. The U.S. government has done the same thing with foreign nationals since Sept. 11 and has a history of incarceration without charging people in World War II. The point is to show students that where rules exist requiring information in the Sunshine, these arrests seldom occur.

Implementation

• First, the students are divided into equal groups (four to five groups generally). Each group should be ethnically and racially diverse.

• Next, one student is called out from among all groups. The student called out is then placed in "detention." (This is prearranged with the student.) Each group is given a set of information about the detention. What the groups don't know is that each group has been given different information. None of it is wrong, but several are riddled with omissions.

• Each group is then assigned to "hold court" about the student based on the infor-

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mation they have received about the student. They are given several options from which to make their decisions, including releasing the student, holding them without charge (though this may violate their rights) or actually filing charges. Their ballots on whether the student should be charged are secret.

• Once the ballots are tallied, the group announces its decision. There is no discussion at this point…it is saved until all groups have announced their votes.

• Only one group has the complete information about the "detention." This group is asked to present its vote last. There is enough information given to this group to easily tell the others to let the student go free without charges. The other groups are at a severe disadvantage and generally make judgments that lead to the filing of "charges."

• The last group is then asked to read the information they have been given. This allows the other groups, which have debated the issue hotly to this point, to see that information must be complete before informed decisions can be made.

Impact

Some students are absolutely befuddled by the exercise. Others become a bit angry at being tricked. Why would we choose to withhold information that could set someone free? It slowly starts to dawn on them that the purpose may be to not set people free. This leads to a discussion about all information and how it is important to be as completely informed as possible and that the public can not be informed if government designs to keep issues in the dark.

As a teaching assignment, it becomes absolutely fascinating to watch those who have strongly believed that government must be allowed to work in secret discover that government may not always work to the best interests of all.

Billy Bates Arrested by Federal Officials

Federal officials have arrested Billy (John Adams) Bates and are holding him in custody. The information included in this packet may or may not implicate Bates in crimes against the public, the State of Florida and the people of the United States. Review the packet of information carefully and decide what must be done. You are all members of a federal grand jury probing a series of terrorist incidents that have plagued the southeast the past six months. Is Bates one of those who should be charged? Take a look at the information in the report. Let us know.

Example: Police Report

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Example: Police Report

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Incident/Arrest Report
Bureau County Police Department

Description of Offender

Height: _____
Weight: _____
Gender: _____
Eyes: _____
Hair: _____
Race/Ethnicity:
_____
Identifying Marks:
_____

Description of Offense/Incident

Criminal Violation: _____
_____
Location of Crime: _____
Date & Time of Occurrence:
_____
If injury, suspected cause:
_____
Investigative Unit/Officers Assigned: _____

Code: Reporting _____
Victim Name (if applicable): _____
Address: _____
Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Description of Incident: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Report Prepared by (print): _____
Signature of Officer: _____

Example (continued)

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Report Prepared by (print): _____
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Example (continued)

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The Morning Meeting

How to teach current events and news judgment and make the classroom "real"

Richard Landesberg
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill

Introduction

Getting students to read the newspaper and stay current with world events can be a daunting task. Trying to teach the instinct needed for good news judgment can be equally difficult. This exercise takes both those pedagogical problems and presents them in a palatable way that is both intellectually stimulating and fun.

Rationale

The morning editorial meeting is a traditional practice in most media outlets. This "real world" exercise takes that practice from the newsroom into the classroom. Based on the model of give-and-take editorial discussion common at CNN, this exercise allows the instructor to gauge how well a student is keeping up with the news and to prod students into reading more about current events. It also stimulates thinking beyond the theoretical on the issue of what constitutes "news." Students develop and discuss how to cover a news story and how the coverage may differ depending on what kind of news outlet one represents (for example, local television news versus network television news).

Implementation

• At the start of class, students are asked to leave their seats and stand in a semi-circle around the instructor. This breaks the pattern of sitting down, raising hands and answering questions, allowing this to be the interactive session it is designed to be.

• A hypothetical newscast is suggested (for example, we are producing the 6 p.m. local news).

• Students are encouraged to shout out ideas about what they think should be the lead story and what other stories should be in the newscast.

• The instructor acts as a conductor of this student orchestra of story ideas, often acting like a latter-day Phil Donahue, going from student to student encouraging, cajoling, dragging ideas from everyone.

• All ideas are written on the board:
1) Students are being observed for their knowledge of current events.
2) Students are being observed for whether they spend pre-class time "read-

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ing-in" on one of the news web sites instead of reading their e-mail.
3) Current events knowledge is tested in this non-threatening environment rather than in the traditional method of a written test

• Students are asked "why"?
1) Why is this news?
2) Why should we cover this?
3) Why is this important

• Students learn to defend their story ideas in much the same manner they will have to defend those ideas in a newsroom.

• No idea is too silly to at least be talked about in terms of where it might fit, in what type of program it would work and how it could be approached.

• Students are asked to put the stories in a logical order.

• Students are asked how they would cover the story.

• Students are asked what elements should be included:
1) Who should be interviewed?
2) What information must be included?

• Students are then asked how they would approach the story if this was a different type of newscast (for example, "NBC Nightly News" instead of the local news)

• Assignment ends with a news show rundown having been created.
1) Even those students who started the class without being aware of the events of the day are now knowledgeable about stories, issues and ideas.
2) Peer pressure, and knowing that everyone gets called on for ideas in this exercise, makes students more likely to keep abreast of current events.

Impact

Students describe this as one of the most important exercises in their beginning broadcast journalism course. The senior associate dean, who reviews instructors, rates this as a unique and highly effective teaching tool.

No where else do students get the opportunity to apply the theory of "what makes something news" to the practical newsroom. They get the added benefit of having to think on their feet and answer quickly—great experience for anyone hoping to become a broadcaster in a world where the ability to "go live" is coveted by news directors. They also interact with classmates; interact with the instructor; have a chance to think about news, news coverage and its impact; debate the ethical nuance of news coverage as applied to current events; and students have fun. It can also be a bonding experience for the class, never more profoundly so than on Sept. 11 and the days after.

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Student Bios as Teaching Tools

How to personalize a large class

Phyllis V. Larsen
University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Introduction

The anonymity students often feel in large classes inhibits participation. Use of individual profile forms filled out by students gives teachers insight to psychographics that help them get to know students and tailor class discussions and examples to individual interests.

Rationale

Engagement and learning in a class increases as a teacher connects individually with a student, yet the larger the class, the more difficult this is to do. By working to make the class feel more personal to each individual, students are less likely to doze through a lecture or assume they won't be missed if absent. A teacher who uses specific examples relevant to the students' life makes them sit up and take notice. If students can relate a class concept to their own job, for example, a deeper understanding and appreciation of the concept is possible.

Implementation

• By week two of class, enrollment should have stabilized. Ask students to fill out a profile form and attach a photo of themselves or a photocopy of their student ID.

• Review all completed profiles and make note of those with special considerations (accommodations for disabilities, for example).

• Prior to each class meeting, select two or more profiles as resources for examples of class concepts. Example: Rather than stating examples in general terms, you now have the ability to personalize the concept. For example you might say "Corporations such as Best Buys, where Lindsey works…" and so on. If a seating chart is also used in large classes, you'll be able to make eye contact with Lindsey signaling that you know who she is and acknowledging her attendance. You can then ask for her input on the concept example.

• Information gathered from the profiles also help illustrate an introductory discussion of research methods and audience analysis since the profile is essentially a survey gathering both demographic and psychographic data. Example: "73% of this class said they worked part time," etc.

Impact

• The teacher develops a cache of relevant

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Impact

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examples rather than relying on those with no significance to the current group of students.

• Profiles used in conjunction with a seating chart allow the teacher to learn many names and faces by semester's end. Mentioning students by name gives an opportunity for positive feedback and enhances rapport. Many of my students say they're impressed that I've gotten to know so many of them on what seems like a fairly personal level.

• Students are more likely to attend class and engage in discussion in an atmosphere where they are known and appreciated. On mid-term course evaluations, many students in my 112-person class mentioned that the course feels like a smaller seminar because of our class discussions.

• Use of the profile form also helps with record keeping since one of the questions confirms that student meets course prerequisites. Those who don't typically drop the course on their own, eliminating one more administrative step for the instructor. Profiles also provide information helpful in contacting students outside of class if needed.

Last, First Name Course ID #/Title

What name do you prefer to be called in class?

Phone #

E-mail address

Major

Year in school

Place your ID or a photo here and photocopy.

Why are you taking this course?

What career plans are you considering?

What do you like to do when you aren't in class or studying?

If you have a job, what is it and where do you work?

Tell me something about yourself to help me remember you.

What other considerations should I understand to help you be successful in this course?

I have met the prerequisites for this class: (sophomore/junior/senior with 2.0 GPA).

Your signature

Example: Profile Form

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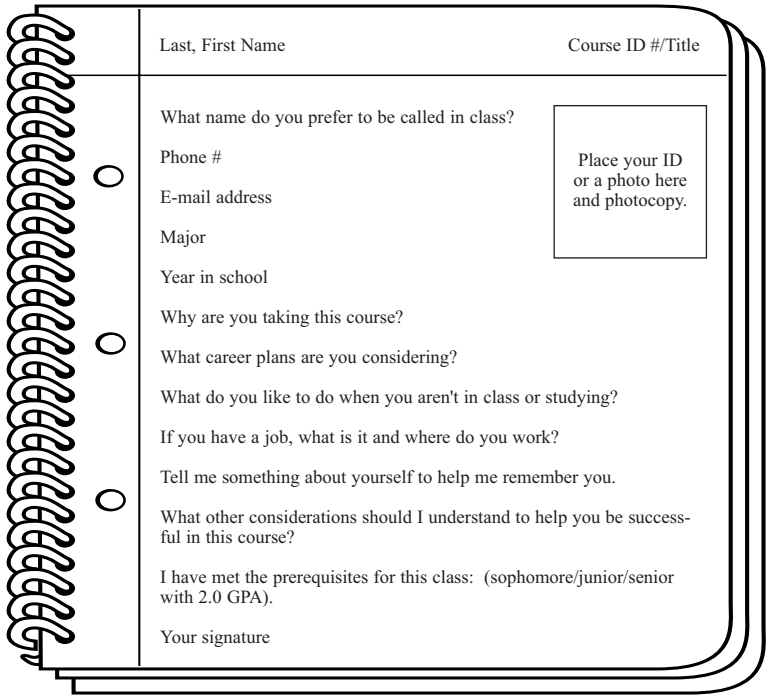

Example: Profile Form

The Carolina Community Media Project

How to put journalism theory into practice from day one

Jock Lauterer
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill

Introduction

How do we get students excited about writing for the news business if we keep them chained to computers, working from stale exercises?

Typically, beginning newswriting classes rely on in-class writing exercises that utilize hypothetical news story scenarios. After scanning a random assortment of facts, the student assigns priorities and attempts to write a meaningful news story. Pretty boring stuff.

But isn't there some way to get students out of their chairs, out of the classroom, to get them into the community and then to bring the community back inside? Yes, and we call it the Carolina Community Media Project (with a nod of appreciation to Ernest Boyer for his "theory into practice" teaching concept).

Rationale

What if a beginning newswriting class could find its own beat and make a significant contribution to the community, the university and the industry?

Enter public service, stage right.

College students across the nation are performing many hours of public service. But these "hometown heroes" don't get much "good ink" in their newspapers back home. Starting last spring semester, the Project begin targeting those Carolina students working with public service initiatives such as Habitat for Humanity, the Big Buddies program, Latino tutoring projects and an annual campus 24-hour Dance Marathon that raised more than $122,000 this spring for the state's children's hospital.

Since its inception last year, the Project has generated 79 separate story/photo packages for N.C. community newspapers. Why community papers? Because such papers care about local news to the degree that if we feed them a good local story/photo package about a local college student, we know we stand a good chance of getting into print (roughly 70 percent so far).

Only by covering real people in a live event on deadline—and then seeing one's work in print—can a beginning student journalist get that thrilling taste of the best that journalism offers.

Implementation

• **Line up community partners:** Using the UNC Dance Marathon as an example:

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Implementation

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I contact the student leaders and get their blessing, floor passes for the students and a list of the dance participants with contact information including hometowns.

• **Line up newspaper partners:** After highlighting all the dancers from hometowns with community newspapers, I assign my students potential subjects. I try to connect a student-reporter from, say, Forest City, N.C., with a dancer from that same town. Also, I contact local editors, to get them excited about the project.

• **Teach relevant skills:** Now, when it comes to teaching effective lead writing, interviewing skills, handling a basic point-and-shoot camera or previsualizing and organizing a good story—things in class begin to get extremely relevant. When students realize they are stakeholders in the process, they pay very good attention. As Rossini said, "Nothing inspires quite like necessity."

• **Set a time line for the student/reporters**: Time management 101:

The week before: Students contact their dancers, get their cooperation and conduct an interview.

During the Marathon: Go to the Marathon and get the photograph and a sense of the scene.

The Sunday after: Do a follow-up interview. Write the story.

The package is due at the class period following the Marathon. But we spend the three-hour period in one-on-one story/photo editing sessions. A caption-writing session is included.

• **Send story/photo packages to newspapers**: I copy the stories to my computer, scan the photos and e-mail the packages to the appropriate papers, requesting only a clip in return. Along with the story I enclose an editor's note explaining the Project.

• **Reflect on the experience**: Hold a class discussion of challenges faced and overcome. Send thank-you notes.

Impact

Student journalists get real-world experience, a good grade and a clip (while performing a public service of their own). The "hometown hero" feels affirmed. The local newspaper prints another interesting local story. The University looks good and your journalism program gets a boost. Editors, students and administrators love it.

• Editors:

"Free copy? Is this a great country or what?"

"Keep the stories coming—especially kids from Andrews."

• Students:

"I didn't really want to do this assignment at first, but then when I saw my story in print, and my byline, I was thrilled. I never would have had this experience if you hadn't made us do it."

"Thank you for this assignment."

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I contact the student leaders and get their blessing, floor passes for the students and a list of the dance participants with contact information including hometowns.

• **Line up newspaper partners:** After highlighting all the dancers from hometowns with community newspapers, I assign my students potential subjects. I try to connect a student-reporter from, say, Forest City, N.C., with a dancer from that same town. Also, I contact local editors, to get them excited about the project.

• **Teach relevant skills:** Now, when it comes to teaching effective lead writing, interviewing skills, handling a basic point-and-shoot camera or previsualizing and organizing a good story—things in class begin to get extremely relevant. When students realize they are stakeholders in the process, they pay very good attention. As Rossini said, "Nothing inspires quite like necessity."

• **Set a time line for the student/reporters**: Time management 101:

The week before: Students contact their dancers, get their cooperation and conduct an interview.

During the Marathon: Go to the Marathon and get the photograph and a sense of the scene.

The Sunday after: Do a follow-up interview. Write the story.

The package is due at the class period following the Marathon. But we spend the three-hour period in one-on-one story/photo editing sessions. A caption-writing session is included.

• **Send story/photo packages to newspapers**: I copy the stories to my computer, scan the photos and e-mail the packages to the appropriate papers, requesting only a clip in return. Along with the story I enclose an editor's note explaining the Project.

• **Reflect on the experience**: Hold a class discussion of challenges faced and overcome. Send thank-you notes.

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Enliven history and public record research — in the cemetery

How to use the local cemetery to teach public record research and history in a reporting class

Carol S. Lomicky
University of Nebraska—Kearney

Introduction

While much has been written about using the cemetery as a teaching resource for history lessons, its usefulness in journalism courses has been overlooked.

This project uses the cemetery and its inhabitants to pique interest in history and public documents. In fact, when students investigate a person—whose life has essentially been reduced to the elliptic enscription on a gravestone—they find humanity among dusty documents and history comes to life.

Rationale

Computers have journalism students more reluctant than ever to pursue the traditional paper chase in public documents. Add an historical component to an assignment and resistance increases markedly. Thus, the challenge for teachers is to spark an interest in the paper version of document research—still an important tool of journalism. Likewise, if better journalism is fostered through an understanding of history, teachers should attempt to stimulate student interest in looking at the past.

Literally buried in cemeteries everywhere are stories that can enliven the history and/or public documents units in journalism courses. Some 15,125 people inhabited the cemetery used in this project, which involved students selecting a person to investigate through document research. This assignment also reinforces such skills as accurate notetaking, observation and dealing with sources. Students also wrote a narrative news story about their subject's life and times.

Implementation

• **Week 1**

Assignment: Research a person buried in the local cemetery by examining public documents and related sources and write a story.

Cemetery Trip: Students find an area in the cemetery to walk among the graves, read the markers and select a person. It's a good idea to check how far back local records exist. Given the resources in this locale, students were limited to people

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whose deaths were not before 1880.

• **Week 2**

Historical Research Documents: Suggested order of research, locations of documents and information in the record follows.

Obituary (newspapers, public or university libraries, historical society). Check for additional story about person's death.

Other printed sources (newspapers, magazines, almanacs) for political, social, cultural context of subject's life.

Cemetery records (cemetery office, historical society). Date of death and burial, cause of death, burial plot ownership.

City directories (public or university libraries). Names, address, sometimes spouse and children, employer or profession.

Census (government repository library). Recorded by family name, lists children, other residents in the home, and address, age and citizenship of household head. Sometimes lists married children.

School census (county superintendent of schools, county clerk, historical society). Lists children, ages 5-20, in households by names and ages.

Probate (county court, historical society). Hand-written wills (in older records). Lists heirs and addresses, executor, inventory of personal property, newspaper notices and bills. Adoption and guardianship records often included.

Delayed birth records (county clerk, historical society). Legal document for people born before 1905, to obtain Social Security.

Marriage records (county clerk). Indexed by year, then by name of either party. Couple's names, hometowns, ages, places of birth, parents, marriage date, witnesses, who performed ceremony, etc.

Military records (county veterans office). Records become public when veteran dies. Includes military discharge information, lists of veterans buries in the county, newspaper clippings, photographs, letters.

Naturalization (historical society holds older records).

Other record-holders: register of deeds to trace property ownership, election commisioner, the courts. The location of records will vary from state to state. Mortuaries and churches, although non-public, also may provide information.

• **Week 3**

Progress Reports: Students report progress. Other students are particularly helpful at this point because the research of the entire class encompasses a variety of resources.

• **Week 4**

Class Presentations/Stories Due: Students introduce the subject. Students are encouraged to show sample documents, photos, newspaper clippings and/or other relevant information. Allow "debriefing" time—be prepared as students may want to share thoughts about life—and death.

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This assignment helped students connect information from documents typically mined by journalists with a person whose grave they had visited. Students were excited about their subjects' lives, not to mention the historical context: prices of food, gasoline and clothing, descriptions of local landmarks and businesses, movies and music, the weather and war. But there also was failure and tragedy: of the nine subjects, two committed suicide, one died at age 37 shortly after release from a mental hospital and a 33-year-old tuberculosis victim lived and died in apparent isolation.

Six of the students' stories were published in the local historical association newsletter. Their work also was featured in the organization's annual yearbook.

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The Silly-Dilly Style Quiz

How to help students learn and love the AP stylebook

Miles Maguire
University of Wsiconsin—Oshkosh

Introduction

Many beginning journalism students think they need a style guide about as much as—to borrow a feminist slogan—a fish needs a bicycle. The Silly-Dilly Style Quiz helps students overcome their natural resistance to what many of them perceive as an irrelevant rulebook and open their eyes to some of the nuances of usage and logic of language that are described in the *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*.

Rationale

The Silly-Dilly Style Quiz puts the responsibility for teaching AP style in the hands of students and asks them to turn a serious subject into nonsense (age-appropriate behavior for most undergraduates). As a result, they stop seeing AP style as an alien and arcane set of strictures, and their initial hostility is replaced by humor—and even affection.

Implementation

• Introduce students to AP style by presenting them with a quiz disguised as a game. The quiz is a nonsense story chockfull of AP style mistakes—all taken from one chapter of the stylebook. It becomes a game when students are asked to circle all of the errors they can find. Tell them how many errors to look for, and to make their task manageable remind them to look for words that begin with a given letter (the letter of that particular chapter). The quiz should be open book and timed so it doesn't go on for too long.

• Correct the quiz in class, but don't grade it. On their first time through, students will usually find only a small percentage of the mistakes and will be surprised to see how many style issues can arise in even a short passage.

• Tell students that it's their turn. Students are then assigned to take a chapter of the stylebook and teach its highlights to the class. Their presentations, which are worth 5 percent of their final grade, are in two parts—an explanation of about five tricky or surprising entries in their chapter and then a quiz that contains 10 to 15 style mistakes. As with the original example that you give them, the student quiz should be farcical. The class takes the quiz on an open-book basis and then corrects it together, with the student-teacher

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leading discussion and calling on fellow students to cite style mistakes they've found. The quizzes are not graded or collected but rather kept as study guides.

• Spread the style quizzes out over the semester. Schedule the style presentations and quizzes so that you have one for each class meeting until each student has had a turn. They're a good way of alleviating the tedium of routine lectures.

• Meet with students beforehand to ensure quality control. Some students can do a great job with this assignment with minimal guidance, but others will try to blow it off. I strongly encourage them to meet with me (partly through my grading scheme) once they have developed a presentation outline and a style quiz. The meetings only take a couple of minutes and allow the teacher to clarify points of confusion and head off the possibility of incorrect interpretations of AP style.

• Reuse material from the style presentations and quizzes in graded exams. This approach gives students a sense of ownership in the contents of the stylebook and encourages them to take reasonable care in making their presentations and taking the quizzes—since what they do or don't do will come back to haunt them.

Impact

At a minimum, this exercise will ensure that every student in your class has closely read at least one chapter of the stylebook. In addition, the series of quizzes reinforces the idea of the stylebook as an essential tool.

The dynamics of the class are changed once students are given responsibility for teaching this material. They become less resistant to the notion of AP style because it is something that they discover on their own and in a way that makes them style king- or queen-for-a-day.

Over the course of the semester, students stop viewing the AP stylebook as something that is imposed upon them and instead see it as a helpful reference source. As they become more familiar with its contents, they get in the habit of consulting it whenever they write.

The quizzes add a touch of levity to every class session, and students will try to outdo each other in coming up with tangled story lines and twisted tales.

Example

Silly-Dilly Style Quiz

Using the A chapter of the AP stylebook, review the following the passage and circle all style errors that you find. You should be able to find approximately two dozen errors.

A eight-year-old walking home from school along Seventh Ave. was mauled yesterday by a stray animal.

The boy was identified as John Jones, who lives with his grandfather at 600 Seventh Ave. "These strays are just running amuck in this town," said the grandfather, Steven Jones, senior. "I just hope little Johnny will be alright. We won't know for sure for awhile."

One witness described the animal that allegedly bit the boy as small and white, looking "almost like an Arctic fox." The animal quickly ran away after the incident, and he hasn't been seen since.

An average of 25 dog bites is reported in this area annually, officials said yesterday. But the most recent canine assault

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The stray animal issue has moved into politics, with some arguing that not enough is being done in expectation of a growing problem. "The affect of not doing more is a threat to our children," said Dr. Tom Thomson, who plans to challenge the current county dogcatcher in the next election. "The Administration isn't doing enough to solve this problem. Those people are so adverse to change that it's as if they all have altzheimers disease over there."

Dr. Thomson, who has a Ph.D. in food marketing and works for the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. Inc., predicted that the number of animal bites would reach an all time record this year and that the issue would be the most significant in debates among himself and the two other announced candidates in the upcoming election campaign.

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Mining for Gold: Expanding Your PR Resources

How to encourage students to identify PR literature and pioneers

Kimberly Williams Moore
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill
North Carolina State University

Introduction

There is a shortage of accessible literature available to instructors on the importance of placing public relations in a historical context. Some texts are good at certain timelines, however, the vast majority of them fall short in recognizing the accomplishments of people of color and women. In addition, the language of some texts is far too distant for undergraduates to enjoy and find interesting.

Rationale

The idea of "mining" the library for pioneers and additional public relations texts provides students with an easy way to get into the library and find some use in the activity for themselves. They are encouraged, from the first day of class, not to be satisfied with what the textbook says about history, women and people of color. Students are told to find the truth through research and inquiry in the library halls on campus, in the community or using on-line library resources.

Implementation

• List the types of treasures available in the library on the syllabus.

• Use the language of archaeology. Describe "digs, artifacts, curators, valuable minerals and deposits, preservation and tools for digging."

• Provide opportunities for sharing the diamonds and gold with the class.

• Give class prizes for the most rare artifacts—particularly things the instructor was not aware of and things the class considers to be the most significant to ongoing dialogue about history, women and people of color in the PR field.

• Use the list of literature treasures to create an extended bibliography for students to take with them.

• Make a list of the most innovative pioneers to include in subsequent syllabi.

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The students are amazed at their ability to find the PR section in the library. Many students are unaware of the published professional and academic work in the field and when they get to the floor in the library on PR history and other important topics they are very impressed and many for the first time are able to move beyond the text and find a book that speaks to their individual passion in the field of PR; for example, those interested in nonprofit, business and music are drawn to pioneers and historical accounts in that area.

Examples

• The work of Ivy Lee as it related to WWII: The text we use in class briefly describes this period. As a result of the mining assignment, students found texts written about and authored by Ivy Lee.

• African American illustrator Charles Alston is not documented in PR history, however his work was integral to the Office of War Information. Students found information on him and presented it to class.

• The groundbreaking work of women in large PR agencies and firms has been discussed by students who were interested in the glass ceiling.

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Current Events Quiz Bowl

How to turn ordinary, apathetic students into "news junkies"

Jackie S. Nirenberg
University of Texas—Pan American

Introduction

I began implementing the "current events quiz bowl" a few semesters ago, when I realized that current events pop quizzes just weren't motivating students in my Survey of the Media course to take an interest in news. This new approach was more interactive and definitely more fun. The idea was to involve students in local, regional, national and world events by introducing a healthy dose of friendly competition into the classroom. The incentive? Bonus points added to an upcoming exam grade for the winners.

Rationale

There are several good reasons why this idea works so well. For one thing, it provides a welcome departure from the traditional lecture format. Secondly, it allows students to get to know one another, which leads to more lively subsequent classroom discussions. In terms of instructor-student relations, it empowers students to have greater control over their grades, thus instilling a greater respect for both the instructor and the course. The quiz bowl also manages to improve both class attendance and participation because of its high entertainment value. Finally, and more importantly, it hooks students into becoming regular, if not voracious, consumers of news. This consumption will facilitate student success not only in such obvious fields as print and broadcast journalism, but in any other mass communication field, as well. Even if students decide not to pursue a career in mass communication, their knowledge of current events will certainly command them more respect in both their professional and social arenas.

Implementation

• Inform students on your course syllabus that they are required to read a daily newspaper and keep current on local, regional and world events.

• Encourage that responsibility by opening every class period with a discussion on a breaking news story. The news item may be of any nature, including sports and entertainment. After all, even pop culture has important applications.

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events quiz bowls into your course syllabus, or surprise students in class. The former makes students feel more empowered. The latter, of course, encourages better class attendance. I usually hold three quiz bowls per semester.

• On the day before the quiz bowl, make a list of 25+ (depending on the duration of the class period) questions, including a wide variety of news topics (for example, science, business, foreign affairs, local politics, sports and entertainment).

• On the day of the quiz bowl, assign students to teams. Each time there is a quiz bowl, make sure that students are assigned a different team. In other words, give students a chance to meet and participate with new students each time.

• Ask each team to assign a spokesperson to answer, after team discussion, the questions on behalf of his/her team.

• Beginning with team number 1, ask the first question. If the team answers incorrectly, the same question is posed to team 2, and so on. If a question is answered correctly, a hash mark should be made on a chalkboard or whiteboard for that team. The team with the most points when all questions have been asked (or when the class period ends), receives bonus points added to their next exam grade. This incentive can and should be modified to fit the particular needs of your course.

• By holding several current events quiz bowls throughout the semester, you give students more than one chance to win bonus points.

• Be sure to keep good records of team assignments, names of students who were present each time to participate and names of students on the winning teams.

Impact

Each semester students take the time to extol the virtues of the current events quiz bowl on their course evaluations. But even without their written comments, the benefits of this classroom activity are apparent. In addition to bettering class attendance, encouraging more lively participation and creating a lifelong news addiction for some, if not many of my students, this activity has also allowed me to get to know my students better and, yes, even have some fun!

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events quiz bowls into your course syllabus, or surprise students in class. The former makes students feel more empowered. The latter, of course, encourages better class attendance. I usually hold three quiz bowls per semester.

• On the day before the quiz bowl, make a list of 25+ (depending on the duration of the class period) questions, including a wide variety of news topics (for example, science, business, foreign affairs, local politics, sports and entertainment).

• On the day of the quiz bowl, assign students to teams. Each time there is a quiz bowl, make sure that students are assigned a different team. In other words, give students a chance to meet and participate with new students each time.

• Ask each team to assign a spokesperson to answer, after team discussion, the questions on behalf of his/her team.

• Beginning with team number 1, ask the first question. If the team answers incorrectly, the same question is posed to team 2, and so on. If a question is answered correctly, a hash mark should be made on a chalkboard or whiteboard for that team. The team with the most points when all questions have been asked (or when the class period ends), receives bonus points added to their next exam grade. This incentive can and should be modified to fit the particular needs of your course.

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Bringing "Real" Deadline Pressure to the Classroom

How to give students a taste of a real newsroom

Paula I. Otto
Virginia Commonwealth University

Introduction

Limited equipment, packed student schedules and the reality of weekly or biweekly class meetings have forced many of us to give students as long as several weeks to research, write, shoot and edit television news packages. Does this really prepare them for the daily pressures and deadlines they'll face in the newsroom? Probably not.

After spending four weeks in a newsroom this summer through the RTNDF Excellence in Journalism Education Project, I was reminded of the need for reporters to be organized, efficient and tenacious in order to meet the daily deadline pressures of producing television news stories.

I have taught our Advanced Television Reporting course for four years. (Students come to the class with the general news writing course and one electronic media writing course that includes hands-on radio and television labs as prerequisites.) The format for the television reporting course hasn't changed much in those four years–students spend the first part of the semester practicing interviewing, sound bite selection and story writing. In groups of three, they produce three news packages, generally in a two-week time frame. In fall 2001 I added a fourth package that must be researched, produced and edited in one day.

Rationale

Few classroom experiences truly give students a feel for the daily deadline pressures and challenges in newsrooms. Although doing writing exercises on deadline in class can help simulate this, the facts of the story and quotes from news sources are often already done in order to facilitate that type of lesson. This lesson plan forces students to literally start with nothing in the morning and–no matter what–to have a story to turn in by the end of the day.

Implementation

• Students are informed at the beginning of the semester that in addition to the three "regular" packages, they will also produce a one-day package with a partner.

• Students choose the day that they are able to devote their full attention to the package.

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• Students check in with me no later than 9 a.m. I have a story idea for them, or they can pitch an idea for me. Most prefer to do their own stories, especially if they have done some research in advance in order to make a solid pitch. If a story does not work out, students may ask for another idea from me, or may develop another story with my approval.

• All interviews are set up and shot that day; all video must be shot on that day.

• I am available in the afternoon to review scripts before they are voiced and edited.

• Scripts and the finished edited piece are due by 5:30 p.m. Even if the story is not complete, everything must be in by 5:30 p.m.

Impact

Students were generally apprehensive about the feasibility of turning around a story so quickly. By making this the last assignment of the semester, they had greater confidence in their reporting, writing and editing skills.

As is often the case, students appreciated the learning experience once it was over.

Some of the subjects from the fall 2001 semester included:

• Opening Day of Harry Potter:

The students ran up against a reluctant theater manager and were forced to travel to another movie theater. At 1 p.m. they had nothing, but by the 5:30 deadline they had put together a respectable package. In their evaluation they wrote "Now I understand what it means to come back to the station with a story and not an excuse."

• Governor's Debate:

Students got a chance to cover a debate between the two candidates for Virginia's governor seat and turn the package around very quickly in one evening. One wrote, "This gave me a chance to work alongside journalists from across Virginia and see them in action. I couldn't believe how quickly they write!"

It also gave them insight into the PR machines on each side of the campaign as more than 10 statements/news releases were issued by both sides during the actual debate. It was a good lesson in news judgment.

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Let's Get Creative: Representing Myself!

How to establish a framework for learning creative advertising strategy

Donnalyn Pompper
Florida State University

Introduction

This in-class activity sets the tone for an interactive learning environment. I created it for my ADV 3001 Creative Advertising Strategies I—the second class meeting during Week 1 to prepare students for working with clients, dealing with different personalities, building teamwork skills, accepting and offering constructive criticism and "selling" one's creative concepts before small groups and clients. However, the activity should prove beneficial in any mass media course. Timeframe: One class period.

Rationale

Learning outcomes for this innovative teaching tool (. . . in addition to helping the instructor to learn students' names!):

1) To represent a subject students already know well—themselves—creatively, through an art project. This is a precursor to later projects requiring in/formal research.

2) To get to know classmates early in the semester—the activity concludes with students presenting their project to the rest of the class at the end of the period. Thus, students easily identify whom they want to work with and can begin the final team campaign early in the semester.

3) To practice speaking before a group. Even junior and senior students can feel uncomfortable with public speaking—and most are unaccustomed to selling their ideas.

Implementation

• Distribute an "Art Supplies" list on the first class meeting so students will be prepared for the second class (see list below). Encourage students to wear comfortable clothing since many may want to sit on the floor. Ask students to bring in three or more of the following—many items are available around the house (nothing toxic). Avoid alerting students to the purpose of the project—yet. It will be more fun and challenging that way.

Colored construction paper
Cardboard
Tassels
Glue, scissors, tape
Ribbon
Wrapping paper

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Glitter
Confetti
Lace doilies
Calendar pictures
Shoe laces
Pon-pons
Water-based paint and brush
Envelopes
Crayons
Cover stock paper
Stickers
Small wood pieces
Color markers
Tissue paper
Stretch wrap
Buttons, lace, trim
Aluminum foil
Paper plates
Magazine or Newspaper
Pipe cleaners
Sequins
Photographs
Straws
Cupcake papers
Flowers/leaves
Fabric
Clay

• On the day of the activity, ask students to deposit all art materials on a large table, so all can share. Then spread out desks to make room for floor workspace—or in the hallway if permissible.

• Ask students to jot down a short list of their personality characteristics/attributes.

• Invite students to take three (or more) items from the art materials table. Based on their list, ask each student to create something with the art supplies that represents her/himself—something s/he feels comfortable sharing with the class. Allot at least 30 minutes for creating projects.

• Ask students to present their work to the class, using the remainder of the class period—explaining in three minutes or less what their representation means and/or why they selected this aspect of their personality to discuss.

Impact

Consistently, students report that this activity established the framework for learning creative advertising strategy. I love it because students laugh while learning! Here is what students have to say about "Let's Get Creative: Representing Myself!"

"I could creatively express something I felt inside me and communicate that to a group of people...I still have the project and it is a constant reminder that I can communicate my feelings to others and that a creative spark exists in me."

"From the get-go, forced us to feel more comfortable presenting in front of an audience."

"By not having the second class be a lecture, doing a creative project emphasized that this class is based on creativity and that the atmosphere was going to be relaxed and open to ideas. Following this assignment, the class remained open—expressive. Students do not feel they have to hold back their ideas."

"It made the class friendly... relaxing...different than ordinary classes."

"I thought the creative assignment was very helpful because I am terrified of giving presentations and it was like an introduction to the class. It made the first presentation less intimidating. I also found

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that it was a nice ice-breaker. Instead of just talking about yourself you were able to represent yourself which was nice."

"The best part of the activity was that it was effective in personalizing the class members and making them into real people—not just warm bodies occupying the seats around you. Everyone had a great chance to get acquainted."

"I enjoyed the project because it gave me a chance to express stuff about myself. It was fun to do and it let me tap into my creative side."

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Community Journalism: Expanding the Classroom

How to utilize local resources in photojournalism education

Regene Radniecki
Minnesota State University—Moorhead

Introduction

Introducing photojournalism students to community journalism through an intense (for credit) week-long workshop on a small daily or weekly newspaper is a creative and effective approach to furthering students' knowledge and understanding of the field of photojournalism and preparing them for internships.

Rationale

Students in photojournalism sequences or concentrations in small mass communication programs have few opportunities to have their work published. As a result, the images in their portfolios tend to be classroom assignments. The student newspaper, a source for generating portfolio "clips" at larger schools, is often a small weekly with few photographs. The reality is that graduates will not be considered for staff photographer positions at newspapers without a strong portfolio and at least one internship. The internships available often receive upwards of 50 applications from students in photojournalism programs throughout the country. In the past 10 years, the competition for internships has become so rigorous that more and more newspapers are requiring at least one previous internship to be considered.

The fact is that students at small programs are often at a disadvantage. However, providing students with newspaper experience is possible. A workshop designed in collaboration with a small daily or weekly newspaper (one without an internship program) can provide "on-the-job" experience. Eighty two percent of the 1,257 small dailies in the U.S. have circulations under 25,000, and there are over 7,600 weekly newspapers published. Few offer internships. To identify the small papers that are most likely to participate, instructors can work through their state newspaper associations.

This intense community newspaper experience can help prepare students for a formal internship. During the workshop, students are staff photographers shooting daily assignments, and generating and executing picture story ideas. They work closely with reporters and editors and receive immediate feedback. In the process, they further develop their report-

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ing and people skills. In addition, the workshop coordinator (instructor) is on site to help students focus picture stories ideas, problem solve difficult assignments, provide feedback, conduct daily critiques and help students become stronger picture editors.

Implementation

• The workshop is conducted during spring break. Five to seven students are selected (the group must be kept small). The participating students subscribe to the newspaper, conduct research on the town and surrounding community, create a list of potential story ideas and meet with the newspaper's publisher/editor on campus (once or twice) to plan coverage and to make arrangements for the groups' stay in the community. (They meet three times prior to workshop).

• Students travel to the town the day before the workshop to tour the area and meet the staff. The following day they receive their first assignments and begin photographic coverage for the next edition. Each day, students complete both self-assigned stories and those from writers and editors. Each evening, the faculty member conducts a debriefing session where students talk about their experiences and discuss the day's work. The sessions are followed by a critique, a picture editing session and scanning.

• Towards the end of the week, evening sessions will also involve designing picture page layouts.

• Students scan their work onto CD-ROMS to bring back to campus to prepare a formal presentation of their workshop photographs. They also create a slide show or multi-media presentation to share with the community later in the semester/quarter. (They meet twice following the workshop).

Impact

Students work alongside the newsroom staff. They spend part of each day photographing pictures stories and the rest searching for feature pictures or covering editor-assigned stories. They gather information and write captions for their pictures; are responsible for meeting deadlines; are involved in the editing and layout process; and learn to digitally prepare images for the press. In this week-long immersion, students learn time management as they complete multiple assignments each day. They become stronger photojournalists and picture editors, and learn how small newspapers handle ethical issues. Their work gets published, providing "clips" for portfolios. The experience and enhanced portfolio should increase the chances of securing an internship. In the process, they provide a service to the community.

Faculty members, in effect, are editors during the workshop. They have the opportunity to work in a newsroom, increase their understanding of community journalism, learn more about digital pre-press work, build relationships with newspapers and, most importantly, prepare students for internships. For instructors who have had newspaper experience, it is a chance to be back in a newsroom, one that may be quite different (in terms of size) than the paper they worked on.

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Using PDAs to Check Your Knowledge of AP Style

How to use and write quizzes for PDAs (Portable Digital Assistants)

Judy L. Robinson
University of Florida

Introduction

One of the more recent fields to be explored in technology applications in teaching and learning is m-learning (mobile learning). Several universities are encouraging the use of PDAs for academic work—in the classroom and outside the classroom—by giving their students PDAs when they enter programs.

For many college students, a PDA is an affordable alternative to buying a laptop or desktop computer. Increasingly mobile learning and wireless learning will become a part of education at institutions of higher learning.

One of the ways to encourage students and faculty to become familiar with the new technologies is to provide useful and affordable materials to try.

While there is a wide array of software programs available for PDAs in 2002, there are a but a few that may be considered "educational." The software program Quizzler is available at no cost and can be used for drill and repetition on materials that need to become second-nature for students. Quizzler provides an easy-to-use approach to developing, taking, scoring and recording quizzes – and an easy way to create and then encode quizzes for sharing with others.

Rationale

• In the age of e-learning and m-learning there is a need for students to know more and become comfortable with various forms of digital communication. Using Quizzler encourages students to access the Web for learning activities.

• Because students may design their own quizzes with the program when it is installed on their PDA, this leads them to think about what information they need to review in order to become more proficient journalists.

• Students may easily share the quizzes they have created through beaming. Students receive immediate feedback on their quiz performance.

• There is no limit to how often the AP

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Style Quiz may be repeated. Students who want to practice more will be able to without others necessarily knowing.

Implementation

• Download the free Quizzler software from http://plaza.ufl.edu/kayaker/pda or from http://www.quizzler.com.

• Download the free AP Style Quiz from http://plaza.ufl.edu/kayaker/pda.

•Hot sync your PDA to your computer (Macintosh or Windows) and upload Quizzler and AP Style Quiz to your PDA.

• If someone else already has Quizzler and the AP Style Quiz on a PDA, both programs may be "beamed" via the infrared port to your PDA.

• Several options allow you to adjust how you may take the quiz: for example, by repeating questions you answered incorrectly or by trying to beat the clock.

• When you download the Quizzler program, instructions on how to develop your own quiz material are included.

Impact

Using Quizzler on the PDA increases the mobility of learning. Because PDAs are so portable, users can tune their skills by completing a quick quiz while waiting for the bus or for class to start.

The ease with which a quiz can be created either on the PDA or on a word processor allows an instructor or student to create content that is readily shareable through beaming or making it available on through the Internet.

Teachers and students who become comfortable using the Quizzler on the PDA increase their resourcefulness and understanding about using the Web as a conduit for learning and in using PDA technology for improving AP style skills.

The inevitable result becomes a better understanding through participation of m-learning as part of e-learning and media literacy.

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Impact

Using Quizzler on the PDA increases the mobility of learning. Because PDAs are so portable, users can tune their skills by completing a quick quiz while waiting for the bus or for class to start.

The ease with which a quiz can be created either on the PDA or on a word processor allows an instructor or student to create content that is readily shareable through beaming or making it available on through the Internet.

Teachers and students who become comfortable using the Quizzler on the PDA increase their resourcefulness and understanding about using the Web as a conduit for learning and in using PDA technology for improving AP style skills.

The inevitable result becomes a better understanding through participation of m-learning as part of e-learning and media literacy.

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"Now I Get It..."

How to use reflective memos in news writing

James Simon
Fairfield University

Introduction

Many journalism professors stress real-life experiences in the classroom. Attention to accuracy, deadlines and journalistic style are all important elements of the news writing process, whether on the job and in the classroom. But professors may want to think twice about introducing one real-life consideration into the classroom: the tendency of reporters to knock out a story, then move on to the next one without much introspection, without much thought on how the story was done. A classroom alternative is the use of a reflective memo which students attach to their final version of a story to be graded.

Rationale

Instead of allowing students to immediately move on to their next assignment, the memo forces them to pause, take a step backwards and reflect on their work. Many students rarely write about the process of writing and/or reporting, and this GIFT forces them to do so. By using reflective memos, teachers gain an inside look into a student's thought processes. Rarely will you think, "What the heck was the student trying to do here?" Instead, you are more likely to think, "Now I get it" because you will better understand a student's intent.

Implementation

In the 250 word memos, students select several of the following questions to address:

• What went right with the assignment? What sources were especially valuable? Why did they pick a certain lead?

• What went wrong? What sources did they miss? Did they start the assignment too late? How could they have used Internet research better? What mistakes did they make this time that might be improved upon in the next story? If they were to do this story over again, what would they do differently?

• How does this story compare to other work done for this class and to models discussed in class? What lessons from class did they use in the assignment? Did the experience contradict anything covered in the readings or in classroom discussion?

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• How does this story compare to other work done for this class and to models discussed in class? What lessons from class did they use in the assignment? Did the experience contradict anything covered in the readings or in classroom discussion?

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You also can have students collect the reflective memos and stories in a portfolio and, at the end of the semester, look across their work. They can write a final reflective essay that evaluates their growth during the semester, what problems they successfully addressed and what areas continue to need work.

Impact

In using this system, teachers tend to write less on the story itself and more on the memo, commending or challenging a student's comments. Your comments are often broader and center more on the conceptualization and implementation of the story, rather than narrower concerns like sentence structure. This process aids students who are reluctant to engage in conventional class participation, but relish the opportunity to communicate with the professor about their work in an alternative manner. This GIFT forces students to think about the process of writing, to become introspective and, hopefully, to realize how much they have learned and how far they have to go.

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Getting Beyond the News Quiz

Stacy Spaulding
Columbia Union College

Introduction and Rationale

The news quiz: Students hate them. We hate them. But we also hate that they're journalism majors and, despite advance warning, still make dismal scores.

Most students, however, want to know more about what's going on in the world. But when told that there will be a weekly quiz over the newspaper, most students feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable. What stories should they read? How should they decide what is important and what's not? Instead of reading for enjoyment and awareness, many students cram minutes before class and withdraw during class discussion after they inevitably fail. The rationale behind this teaching tip is simple: increase student interaction and awareness while turning the news quiz into a rewarding exercise and springboard for class discussions.

Implementation

Here are several ideas for encouraging students to be more well-informed. Some focus on the teacher's attitude, others on giving students manageable assignments. All of these are interactive, can be used to spark class discussion and can be adapted to fit individual teaching styles:

• **Talk about your own worldview:** If we don't talk about the reading, students won't do it. The same holds for the news. Talk about the issues you're passionate about. Talk about what you think is important in the news, both the stories getting coverage and the stories that aren't. Make sure students know why you think it's important to know what's going on in the world.

• **Vary the medium:** Instead of asking students to read/see everything, assign a different news outlet every week—a website one week, a newspaper the next week, a local or cable newscast the next week. This not only helps students to focus their efforts, but also generates better discussions about differences in news selection, judgment and play.

• **Do daily critiques:** Don't get caught without a newspaper in class (or a tape of a newscast). Refer to it often. Make it a daily habit to talk about what's on the front page and what's not, what is being done right and what needs to be improved.

• **Localize:** Ask students to pick the three most important stories of the week, and come to class with an idea of how to localize each one. Ask why they thought each story was important. Encourage discussion about how these issues affect each of us.

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• **Be the ombudsman:** Ask students to come to class with a list of three things the local television station or newspaper covered well this week, and three things that could have been covered better. Ask why.

• **Hold a scavenger hunt:** Ask students to read the newspaper and bring in three examples of something you are talking about in class this week: great leads, good sourcing, etc. They should be prepared to explain to the class what makes their selections special. (If you like, impose additional requirements: The items shouldn't be from the same newspaper or the same date, for example.)

• **Use the bulletin board:** Keep push pins and index cards handy. Pin up the clips students bring in. Have students write an explanation of why this is a good example, along with their name, to be pinned up next to the story. (And, if you like, give a quiz on just these items.)

• **Ask who's who?** Instead of getting upset with students because they don't know who the secretary of state is, give them a chance to find out. Give students a list of important government positions that they should know, and using the newspaper, ask students to find out who is in that position and what news they've made over the past week, and be prepared to talk about the official's views, background and influence. Give them a week to study after the class discussion and then quiz them.

• **Issue surveys:** Give students a news topic ahead of time to study. For example, ask students to read a particular newspaper's (or television broadcast's) stories about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and come prepared to talk about three important developments that happened over the week. This removes the negative punishment of missing items on a quiz, and encourages positive interaction by giving students something to discuss in class.

• **Monitor media news:** Don't forget great media commentary and news websites, such as Romenesko (http://www.poynter.org/medianews/index.cfm). Items on this site are often great springboards into discussions about ethics, management, judgment and news trends. An example of one assignment: Have students monitor daily posts to the website, gathering three examples of ethical issues news outlets faced that week.

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Forging Partnerships Through Promotion

How to make service learning an integral part of the public relations writing course

Andi Stein
California State University—Fullerton

Introduction

Using service learning as part of the public relations writing course enables students to partner with local nonprofit organizations as a means of helping them promote their causes through the use of student-produced written promotional materials.

Rationale

Both students and local nonprofit organizations benefit from this approach to the public relations writing course. Students have the opportunity to work with actual organizations to develop and produce written promotional materials that make use of the skills they learn in the classroom.

They work closely with a contact at the organization to develop and produce three different public relations pieces—press release, brochure and feature story—and ultimately see their work used by the organization. As a result, they come out of the course with clips to add to their writing portfolios.

The nonprofit organizations benefit because they are able to provide information to their publics through these written materials, which might not be possible or affordable without the assistance of the students.

Implementation

• **Step 1:** Each student is assigned to find a local nonprofit organization in need of public relations assistance. The students are instructed to offer to produce three written public relations materials for their selected organizations—a press release, brochure and feature story for the organization's newsletter or magazine. Once they have found organizations willing to work with them, the students then meet with the public relations director to discuss specific projects they can work on during the four months of the semester.

• **Step 2:** Once the organization has agreed to work with the student, both parties sign a letter of agreement outlining the tasks the student has agreed to complete and the assistance and resources the organization has agreed to provide to help the student complete the project.

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course, students learn the fundamentals of writing press releases, brochures and feature stories in preparation for their service learning projects through an assortment of in-class and take-home writing assignments. The skills they develop in the classroom can then be directly applied to their service learning projects.

• **Step 4:** Students spend the bulk of the semester working closely with their contacts at the organization to produce the three written public relations pieces. As part of their grade for the course, students are instructed that to be eligible for an "A" on the project, they need to have two of the three pieces published by the end of the semester. This can include having the press release sent out to and used by the media, the brochure published and distributed to the organization's publics and the feature story used in an organizational publication.

• **Step 5:** Students turn in a rough draft of their project about two-thirds of the way through the semester. Their work is critiqued, and they are given suggestions for improvement to help increase their chances of publication.

• **Step 6:** At the end of the semester, students turn in the final versions of the three written public relations pieces. They also give brief presentations to their classmates, explaining what they did for their organizations and evaluating the overall experience of working in a service learning capacity.

Impact

Through this approach to public relations writing, students have the opportunity to see a direct connection between their classroom activity and real world public relations work. They are able to use the skills they learn in the classroom and apply them to the actual needs of the nonprofit organizations with which they are working. They also finish the course with three professionally-produced writing samples they can add to their portfolios.

In addition, as a result of this project, the students often develop a sense of what it is like to do public relations work for a nonprofit organization. By working with contacts from the organization, they see how strapped for funding and personnel some of these organizations are and get a first-hand glimpse of how important volunteers are to the nonprofit world.

In my experience in using this approach to public relations writing, I have seen the development of partnerships between the university and the nonprofit organizations that participate in this project. I have had students decide to continue to volunteer for their selected nonprofits once the course was over. I have also had several students be offered internships by the nonprofits they worked with during the semester.

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Democracy in Action

How to connect students with the communication reconnection process

Kristie Alley Swain
Texas A&M University

Introduction

This three-part project is designed to challenge students to experience and examine how journalists can interact with the community and hold policymakers accountable to citizen concerns. Students use listening skills to explore broad community issues, select one particular problem to examine, then convene a focus group of stakeholders to uncover how they frame the issue, conflicting concerns and problem-solving ideas. The students transcribe the focus group session to identify themes in the dialogue that might serve as a framework for a citizen's agenda. The students use this framework to interview community leaders and policymakers as well as expert sources that illuminate the larger societal issues at play.

By tapping multiple stakeholders, the students develop informed questions for holding community leaders accountable to citizen concerns. The students develop in-depth story packages from the focus group and follow-up interviews, then provide critical analysis of their own and others' projects through a web-based forum. Finally, each project team brings the citizens' agenda and leaders' response back to the community through a live, call-in radio talk show. This show, named Common Ground, seeks to help the community achieve common ground on hot-button issues and to help students understand the strategies that journalists can use to facilitate these connections.

Rationale

Through planning and carrying out a hands-on community experiment in connecting citizens with public life, students experience democracy in action. They simultaneously and learn to apply and critically examine theories of citizen-based journalism as well as convergence skills needed in today's interactive media environment.

The basic idea behind this three-part project is a theory-based process model representing how journalists help reconnect citizens with public life (Figure 1). This process consists of agenda building (identifying issues), analysis (of the citizens' agenda), accountability (of leaders) and agenda setting (identifying community priorities). The innovativeness of the project is that students are given the tools and strategies to experience this reconnection process firsthand.

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Implementation (Figure 2)

• **Step 1—Focus group:** The class is divided into 8-10 teams each consisting of 4-6 members. Each team identifies critical concerns in the community, then organizes, facilitates, records and analyzes a two-hour focus group of citizen stakeholders about their chosen issue. The team develops a comprehensive protocol of open-ended questions that explore many topics and perspectives related to the issue. Through facilitating a citizen forum, students learn arts of democracy such as active listening, mediation, political imagination and public dialogue. They witness how ordinary citizens work through challenging problems to find solutions and each team develops an in-depth news feature that reflects the multiple voices and creative ideas for community progress.

• **Step 2—Community leader follow-up:** Students critically examine focus group transcripts using qualitative theme analysis and interviews. They triangulate their interpretations with those of experts who can help them make sense of the complexities in the citizens' agenda as well as with community-level statistics and other background information. The students use the citizens' agenda as a framework for in-depth interviews with community leaders, policymakers and others with access to community resources for a follow-up news feature package. In doing so, they learn to hold these leaders accountable to the citizens' ideas and concerns.

• **Step 3—Radio talk show:** Each week, one team presents the views of all stakeholders, leaders and experts to the community through a live, one-hour call-in talk show at a volunteer-run community radio station. A student from another team serves as a show host, while the team presents their work in an objective, organized and conversational manner and fields questions and comments from listeners. As a follow-up assignment, each student writes a critical evaluation essay about the learning outcomes of the project and radio show experiences.

Impact

The students cover topics that are real and important to the community and the students, such as discrimination against Muslims, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and city growing pains. Many say that "breaking out of the bubble" of traditional coursework challenges them to cultivate self-confidence, leadership, teamwork and citizenship values. Many students who complete this three-part project seem to emerge from the community trenches as more seasoned, compassionate and perceptive journalists with a sense of mission and a vision for their field. Each student takes away a unique toolkit of concepts, moral reasoning skills and reporting techniques. These outcomes as well as the continuous outpouring of feedback from the community, are greatly enriching and energizing from a teacher's perspective.

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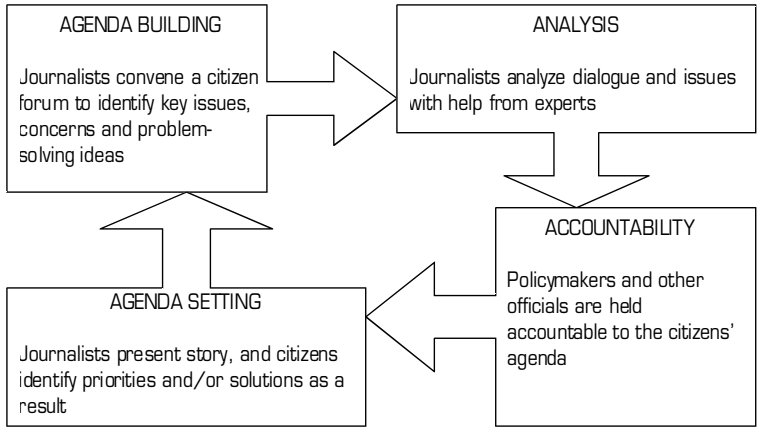

Figure 1: The 4 A's of a Community Reconnection Project

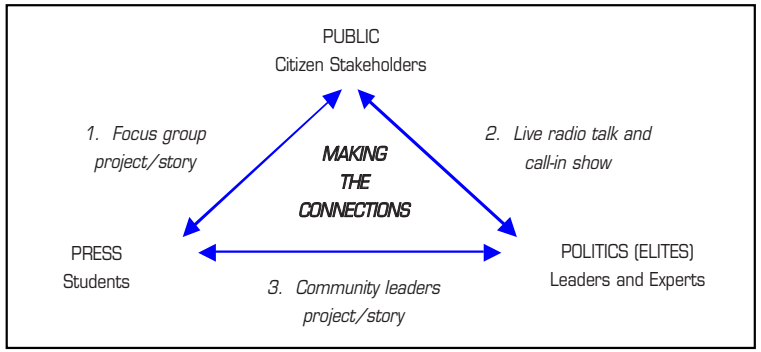

Figure 2: The Press-Public-Politics Connections

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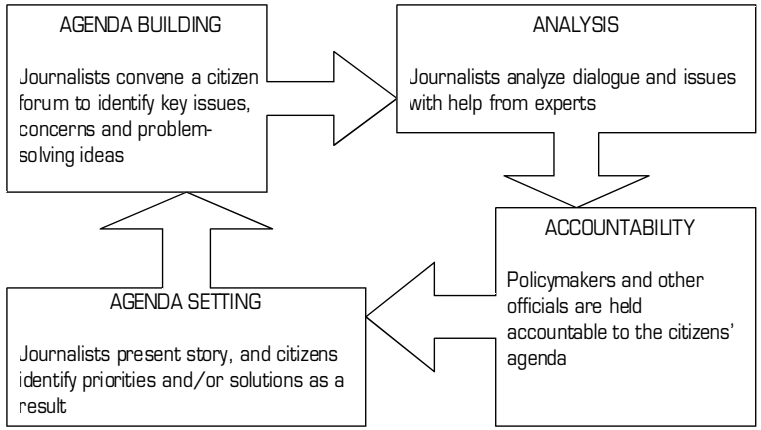

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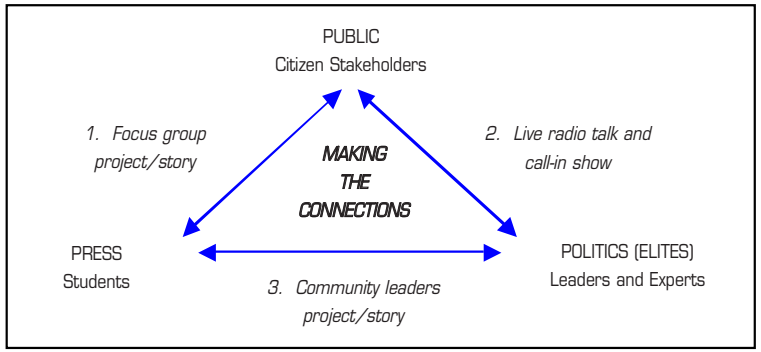

Figure 2: The Press-Public-Politics Connections

Using Daily 'Quick' Quizzes to Motivate Students

How to increase regular class attendance and participation

Brad Thompson
Pennsylvania State University

Introduction

By using very brief daily quizzes on assigned readings, students are motivated to come to class better prepared to discuss the materials. The quizzes are intended to be so easy that the penalty for missing them is greater than the cost of doing a minimal level of pre-class study. In addition, the "quick" quiz, when used on a daily basis, correlates very strongly with grades on major exams, irrespective of the grades earned on the daily quiz. In other words, the quiz is a proxy for taking roll and shows students that class attendance is strongly related to class grades.

Rationale

This idea reflects the belief that students respond better to rewards than to punishment for failure to attend class.

Implementation

• Consistently administer—beginning Day 1—a quiz on material students are supposed to be studying. (The Day 1 quiz is on the syllabus and is the only one that is open book-open note.) An allowance is made for class absences by counting only 80 percent (for example) of the quizzes toward the final grade. Quizzes beyond the 80 percent mark count as extra credit.

• Each quiz is one to three items, usually true-false statements and given in the first five minutes of class (to reduce student tardiness). Grading a two-point T/F quiz for a class of 50 takes no more than 15 minutes.

• The quizzes are meant to be easy, not difficult. Usually the quiz is on the most important material or concept. But even asking a question such as: "The reading for today contained a diagram. What shape was the diagram: circle, square, triangle or diamond?" can determine if students are even cracking the book. As soon as students turn in the quizzes and before they have forgotten what they put on the quiz, announce the correct answers to reinforce the key concept.

•Allow students to submit their own questions for the quizzes.

Great Ideas For Teachers 2002

Using Daily 'Quick' Quizzes to Motivate Students

How to increase regular class attendance and participation

Brad Thompson
Pennsylvania State University

Introduction

By using very brief daily quizzes on assigned readings, students are motivated to come to class better prepared to discuss the materials. The quizzes are intended to be so easy that the penalty for missing them is greater than the cost of doing a minimal level of pre-class study. In addition, the "quick" quiz, when used on a daily basis, correlates very strongly with grades on major exams, irrespective of the grades earned on the daily quiz. In other words, the quiz is a proxy for taking roll and shows students that class attendance is strongly related to class grades.

Rationale

This idea reflects the belief that students respond better to rewards than to punishment for failure to attend class.

Implementation

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•Allow students to submit their own questions for the quizzes.

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• The total value of the quizzes is relatively low, about 20 percent of the final grade.

• Grades are recorded on the instructor's Excel spreadsheet for the class.

• Students not taking the quiz have no grade recorded.

• The "countblank" function in Excel is used to sum the number of blank cells in each student's row. (A quiz grade of zero does not register as a blank cell; only students who are absent or late will have a blank cell.) This "countblank" column is placed adjacent to a column in which each student's points earned in major exams (not including quiz totals) in the class are totaled.

• The spreadsheet is then sorted based on the total number of points each student has. (This is key; do not sort by student number. Make students scan the list to visually find their relative rank in the class.) The relationship between exam performance and attendance becomes readily apparent to students when the columns for each are displayed side by side. (Students at the top of the class almost invariably have few class misses; students at the bottom of the class sometimes miss 10 or more of the 30 classes in the semester.)

• A correlation is run on the relationship between the points earned to date and the total exam grade to confirm the link between attendance (not quiz performance, just attendance!) and major exam grades.

• The master spreadsheet copy is updated (names deleted, of course) and distributed to students via e-mail attachment, posted and displayed on the overhead projector in class at appropriate times throughout the semester, each time pointing out the relationship between class attendance and exam performance.

• By sorting the spreadsheet by grade in descending order and looking at the "countblank" column, it is easy to identify as students deserving of special attention—from among even a very large class. Those who have low scores but are otherwise dedicated to the class readily stand out.

Impact

Contrary to what might be expected, students respond very well to the daily "quick" quiz. I have used it in 10 classes over five years involving about 750 students. The correlation between attendance and exam grades has ranged from about 0.40 to more than 0.70. (It's actually shown as a negative correlation because as the number of class misses goes up the exam grade goes down.) Showing the spreadsheet to the students also gives me the opportunity to briefly discuss the use of spreadsheets and some elementary statistical methods, such as correlations. I do this to try to reduce some of the math-phobia that afflicts many journalism students. A recent mid-semester course evaluation generated this selection of student comments regarding the "quick" quiz.:

"The fact that the daily quizzes require me to keep up with the readings is good because I understand the lecture better."

"I like how you keep us updated with our performance in class and (as hard as this is to say) the daily quizzes."

"As much as I dislike taking daily quizzes,

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"The spreadsheet updates are very nice—and the counted absences are encouraging to come to class."

"I really like the quizzes because of the chance to get more points."

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Creating Individual Codes of Ethics

How to integrate theory and practice

Kathleen Woodruff Wickham
University of Mississippi

Introduction

Students enrolled in Media Ethics were challenged to examine their own values and beliefs within the practice of journalism by developing a personal code of ethics that could be submitted to employers along with their resumes.

Rationale

In order to develop a personal journalistic value system, thought and reflection are required. As such, students enrolled in Media Ethics were challenged to spend the semester in self-examination, to consider not only the outcomes of the case studies in their text book but to also examine their thoughts, feelings and emotions regarding the cases.

The approach was rooted in a quote from Fydor Dostoyevsky, who noted: "Without a firm idea of himself and the purpose of his life, man cannot live."

It was felt that fledging journalists needed the time consider their role as journalists and the values of journalism before they enter the field. And while these questions are discussed during classes, in the hallways and in late night student discussions, it was felt that a formalized approach, focused on ethics, would be beneficial.

The goal of the semester-long exercise was to assist the students in identifying and clarifying their own beliefs and attitudes regarding ethical issues in journalism. Socratic discussions, journal writing and critical writing were part of the process.

The intent was for the students to develop a personal value system and to give the students the tools for identifying, analyzing and resolving ethical issues in their professional careers.

Implementation

Case study learning is a cooperative approach based on shared learning, Socratic discussion and respect for the viewpoints of all participants. Case study learning also calls for focused listening, thinking intelligently and coming to class prepared for discussions.

The approach enabled students to become familiar with the philosophical underpinnings of ethical issues; and to examine their own personal values and how these values are seen in the profession. In addition the students practiced critical thinking, learned to tolerate disagreements in formal discussions, developed respect for ethnic and gender diversity and gained a moral guidepost for their

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professional careers.

Each week students were assigned to one of five or six ethical case studies to analyze using specific criteria. In class, small group discussions were held with students assigned to the same case assigned to the same group, again with structured questions to answer. One person from each group then presented the issues and views to the class as a whole. Weekly, the students wrote about their reactions to the cases and to the discussions as well as their personal reflections on the issues in journals seen only by the instructor.

The semester was broken down into weekly topics. The topics included diversity, disaster coverage, reporters and their sources, accuracy, fairness and balance, sensationalism, crisis stories and privacy.

As a final project the students were asked to write a personal code of ethics no longer than 250-500 words. The code was to include:

• A very short introduction on ethics and the importance of a personal ethical statement

• A general but short policy or philosophical statement about the topic

• A list of procedures, possibly including, when important decisions should be made, who should be involved in the decision-making and what values should be considered

Students were given the option of dealing with topics of particular interest to them, or of writing a statement using broader strokes. Other requirements included focusing the code on their career path—print or broadcast—as appropriate.

Impact

I wanted to know what the students believed in, their values, their standards, and to have some sense how they would resolves ethical problems in journalism. The result was extraordinary.

The personal codes of ethics handed in were thoughtful, complete and reflected depth, breadth and maturity. This was my first time to teach ethics and thus the first time to try this approach. I know that I will be using the technique in future classes.

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Project Access

How to provide students hands-on experience with the Freedom of Information Act

Terry L. Wimmer
West Virginia University

Introduction

Freedom of Information Acts, both state and federal, were created to guarantee citizens access to the process of government. Journalists, in their roles as citizen watchdogs, use the power of the law to track where tax dollars are spent and to contextualize the inner workings of government on the federal, state and local levels. Learning how to find information is an essential skill for young reporters and researchers to develop.

Understanding what documents that public officials are required by law to release, and what they can withhold legally, will help young reporters and researchers expand decision-making skills. In this project, students move out of the classroom and into the practical arena of conducting face-to-face public records audits, analyzing results and writing narrative summaries of their experiences.

This project is designed to be part of an undergraduate-level research methods class, but the project is applicable in general news reporting and media law classes.

Rationale

One objective behind the project is to teach students about responsibilities and duties of public officials and citizens under FOIA. Another objective is to guide students in how to make a specific public records request and how to follow through the FOIA process to obtain records. The concept is to adapt a pedagogic paradigm common in medical schools: see one, do one, teach one. Once students learn the process of public-records requests, and once they apply that process by making their own requests, they will be more familiar with the process and able to share the "how" with others.

Implementation

The model presented here is for a five-week process pursuing requests under a state Freedom of Information Act. The federal act is similar and differences can be addressed in lecture. The state act was chosen to allow for a better sampling frame for students to make face-to-face requests. The professor should research the state act, exemptions specified under

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the act, and case law to explain how those exemptions have been interpreted by the courts.

Examples of state FOIA audits can be found at http://foi.missouri.edu/openrecseries.html.

This model is designed with a two-class a week schedule. Student assessment can be measured at four stages:
1) examination on the law and its exemptions
2) writing a specific FOIA letter
3) narrative summaries of audit experience
4) executive summaries of audit results.

• Week One, Class One

1) Distribute copies of the state FOIA for students to read.
2) Lecture notes should help students interpret the act by exploring what is open and what is not. The lecture should focus on the act's exemptions and how the courts have interpreted those exemptions. Examples of the types of documents that are open (for example, inspection reports, written policies and bids) and the documents that are closed (for example, medical information, adoption reports and student test scores) serve as illustrative points. Court cases serve as salient examples for understanding exemptions and for learning how to construct a FOIA request with the required specificity. Breaking down the types of FOIA requests into two categories—financial and non-financial—provides a strong frame of reference for students.

• Week One, Class Two

1) Quiz students on FOIA exemptions.
2) Brainstorm audit options within the class. The requests should represent obviously open public records, e.g. employment contracts of public officials, inspection reports for cafeterias and dormitories, etc. Requests that fall under the gray area of exemptions – ones that might reveal trade secrets, for example – should be avoided. A university directory is a good tool for students to use to make audit choices.
3) Match students with audit assignments.

• Week Two, Class One

1) Provide a sample of a FOIA request letter.
2) Discuss key points to writing an effective letter: Is it directed to the correct person? Is the request specific enough? How can it be made more specific? Is the legal citation included in the letter?
3) Assign students to write a FOIA request letter for their audit assignment.

• Week Two, Class Two

1) Write an audit response guide, including the coding forms students will return after completing the audit. Present a primer to students on how the FOIA audit will be conducted. A Frequently Asked Questions list can serve to focus the discussion.
2) Explain why the auditors represent themselves as citizens, and not as student journalists. FOIA laws are intended to guarantee equal access for all citizens, not just access for student journalists acting as watchdogs. Ethical concerns about misrepresentation should be assuaged by accepting the premise that the goal of an audit is to learn whether citizen requests are accepted or denied.
3) Collect student FOIA letters.
4) Hand out audit response guide and code sheets.

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5) Break students into two-person groups to practice making requests. Students will alternate between role-playing the official and the requestor.

• Week Three, Class One

1) Return FOIA letters graded for specificity of request, grammar and spelling.
2) Invite to class a guest speaker who uses FOIA—a local investigative reporter —to help with training. Break students into two groups. Have them approach the trainer(s) and state their specific request. Give immediate feedback and if necessary have them repeat the procedure.
3) Students can begin the audit immediately after correcting FOIA letters.
4) Assign a 500-word narrative on their audit experience.
5) Distribute clean coding and response sheets.

• Week Three, Class Two

1) Students use class time for the audit work.

• Week Four, Class One

1) Introduce descriptive statistical analysis techniques.
2) Discuss how to write executive summaries of research projects.

• Week Four, Class Two

1) Audit code sheets due.
2) Narrative summaries due.
3) Lecture on the federal Freedom of Information Act and its provisions.

• Week Five, Class One

1) Distribute summary descriptive statistics for the audit.
2) Discuss significance of the results.
3) Assign executive summaries.

• Week Five, Class Two

1) Student executive summaries due.
2) Wrap-up and final lecture on how FOIA requests are used in the business world. The majority of most FOIA requests come from businesses seeking a competitive edge. Explore why and how.

Impact

This GIFT idea was implemented in a class of 48 undergraduate students.

"The experience was a great way to learn because we had the chance to use the law ourselves," one student wrote.

Another commented: "I would rate this project as one of the most informative projects I have done throughout my college career. I never realized, until this class, that FOIA existed, and now I know exactly what I need to do when I want to be a 'fully informed citizen.'"

A university-promoted FOIA discussion panel held after the class ended built greater awareness of public records and the obligations of public officials to provide those records.

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The Live Remote

How to bring professionals to students

Bradford L. Yates
State University of West Georgia

Introduction

The Live Remote is an opportunity to overcome the obstacles of distance and scheduling conflicts and expose students to professionals in mass communication using the Internet. Professionals can "visit" class via web phone technology or videoconferencing and interact with students almost as if they were present in the classroom.

Rationale

This innovative teaching technique is a superb way to expose students to industry professionals and their wealth of knowledge while utilizing the latest technology to illustrate to students the fascinating applications of the Internet. Students reap the benefits of hearing what the latest trends are from successful professionals and see how the Internet is fast becoming the new mass medium.

Implementation

• It is necessary to have web phone software or videoconferencing capabilities to implement this GIFT. Contact your campus learning resources department to help you identify what technology/software is available and how it can be set up in your classroom or loaded onto your classroom computer or laptop.

• Contact an industry professional to determine if he/she has access to web phone software or videoconferencing equipment. (Your institution might want to invest in web phone software that can be sent to industry professionals for a one-time use).

• Schedule an industry professional to be a "guest speaker" in your class.

• Ask the industry professional to prepare opening remarks. It is even possible to develop PowerPoint slides that can reinforce the points the professional makes and display them as he speaks. Other audiovisual aids may be incorporated to help students get a better grasp of the concepts the professional discusses. For example, a videotape of selected resumes for news reporter jobs could be played while a TV news director describes what he/she looks for in a tape.

• Students can ask questions of the guest speaker, just as if he/she was there, and receive an immediate response.

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Impact

The Live Remote is an excellent way for students to interact with industry professionals they might not otherwise meet. The interactive capabilities of web phone technology and/or videoconferencing provide a unique opportunity for students to glean valuable information from industry professionals and experience technology in use.

This GIFT is also a unique opportunity for faculty to realize the classroom is not limited to the traditional four walls. If industry professionals cannot physically be on campus, technology allows for them to virtually be there. Too often faculty limit themselves to the traditional resources available, but an inquiry to the learning resources department might open up a wealth of learning opportunities never imagined.

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Impact

The Live Remote is an excellent way for students to interact with industry professionals they might not otherwise meet. The interactive capabilities of web phone technology and/or videoconferencing provide a unique opportunity for students to glean valuable information from industry professionals and experience technology in use.

This GIFT is also a unique opportunity for faculty to realize the classroom is not limited to the traditional four walls. If industry professionals cannot physically be on campus, technology allows for them to virtually be there. Too often faculty limit themselves to the traditional resources available, but an inquiry to the learning resources department might open up a wealth of learning opportunities never imagined.