Community College
The Journalist

Spring/Summer 2004

The Official Publication of the Community College Journalism Association

GIFT

Great Ideas For Teachers
Special 2004 Edition

Inside: CCJA News

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A 5th birthday GIFT

The Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) program is celebrating its fifth year in 2004!

What started out as a panel of six speakers on a late Saturday afternoon but surprisingly well-attended session at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) summer convention in Phoenix, Ariz., in 2000, has grown into a prestigious, competitive program and poster session which recognizes excellent standards in teaching journalism and mass communication courses.

CCJA and its co-founding sponsor, Small Programs Interest Group (SPIG), joined by the Scholastic Journalism Division in 2002, continue to present the GIFT program to provide colleagues with fresh ideas for creating or updating their lessons--just in time for the new academic year!

There were 57 GIFT submissions this year from instructors teaching at community colleges, small programs and large research universities. Only 25 (44% acceptance rate) were selected to be featured at the AEJMC summer convention in Toronto, Canada, in August 2004, and in this special edition of *The Community College Journalist* (the annual summer GIFT issue).

Check out the official GIFT Web site at *www.geocities.com/aejmcgift* for winners' and scholars' GIFTs, photos and more information about the program throughout the past five years.

May these birthday GIFTs inspire you with innovative instructional techniques as you prepare for a new academic year! Thank you for your continued support.

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The Community College Journalist

The Official Publication of the Community College Journalism Association

CONTENTS

GIFT

Cheryl M. Bacon, Ed.D., APR, is professor and chair of the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at Abilene Christian University. She teaches freshman media writing and senior feature writing courses and has earned numerous feature writing awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Before returning to the classroom in 1990 she served in university public relations and development roles and consulted primarily in non-profit and political public relations.

War Story

How to teach converging media writing and liberal arts through learning communities

By Dr. Cheryl M. Bacon
Abilene Christian

Introduction

The Words, Images and Power Learning Community has become an important link between the Journalism and Mass Communication, Political Science, and Art and Design departments. Annually, 15 freshmen, mostly JMC majors, enroll in Creating Media Messages, National Government and Introduction to Art. Using standard course syllabi, faculty collaborate to identify intersections in the curricula. Out-of-class learning activities reinforce key concepts that bring the three together. In September 2003, the Vietnam Wall replica was exhibited locally, presenting an opportunity for students to apply their varied media skills and to demonstrate understanding of the inherent intersections between art, media and politics.

Rationale

The Learning Community fosters innovative teaching opportunities. Integrating disciplines enhances students' understanding of the context in which media function. This convergence was greatly enriched by the wall experience. Discussions in art and government classes helped students acquire insight into the aesthetic and political controversies that preceded the wall's construction. In the JMC class, the wall was the subject of an online research exercise during a unit on the pre-writing process, and subsequent writing and publication

Armed with these parallel but unique perspectives, students came to understand more clearly the role of media in covering the political conflicts and aesthetic development of the wall and how society's view of the wall has changed.

Implementation

Collaborating professors provided their own descriptions of how they implemented the wall experience in their courses.

- *Art*

"In preparing the students for viewing the replica of the Vietnam Wall, we studied the process of selection by committee of the initial designs for the wall and the ensuing controversies. We also read an interview of Maya Lin, in which she describes some of the influences on her design, such as studying funerary architecture and prehistoric stone tombs.

"The Vietnam Memorial, is covered well in our Introduction to Art textbook as an example of the change in an audience's reaction to an art piece. The Memorial was very unpopular with its audience early on and was called a 'degrading ditch,' but it has evolved into a well known and respected site.

"The students were asked to write a short response piece to their visit to the replica and they were uniformly impressed by the vets and family members who attended the installation of the replica."

- *Political Science*

"...I could not completely separate the 'objective, critical distance' standard of teaching from the personal. However, in talking about the wall, I wanted the students to:

1) "Understand the significance of the wall from a sociopolitical perspective. Recommended reading: *The Homecoming* (1990) by Bob Greene.

2) "Understand the controversy of the wall and the adding of a statue to the D.C. site.

3) "Understand the compelling nature of the wall to Nam vets and families.

"The classroom visit to the wall was overwhelming.... Besides the replica of the wall, there was a quilt exhibit commemorating the lives of soldiers lost in the cancer wards as a result of Agent Orange. Their names do not appear on the wall, but they were casualties of the war, too. I required the students to visit the quilt exhibition. I told the students of my father, stationed at Nha Trang, where he came into daily contact with Agent Orange. He was one of the victims of Agent Orange."

- *Creating Media Messages*

1) The lesson was introduced at the first class meeting.

2) In-class, online research about the wall was assigned during a unit on the pre-writing process.

3) Students organized themselves as writers, photographers, a project editor and designer. Two students with high school reporting experience were assigned an advance and event stories; others wrote reflection pieces.

4) The project editor reviewed submissions and assisted the newspaper copy editor in selecting several for publication on a feature page in the university newspaper.

Impact

- Faculty illustrated critical aesthetic, historical and media principles.

- Students successfully demonstrated their understanding of the principles by using their still modest media skills and were challenged and rewarded by seeing their effort in print in the university newspaper.

- In class critiques of the written submissions provided feedback to students regarding content and context, and basic grammar, punctuation and spelling.

- Student comments were extremely positive regarding the experience and the learning that occurred.

Lisa M. Burns is an assistant professor of media studies at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Conn., where she teaches courses including Media History, Media Theory, and Introduction to Media Communications. She is currently finishing her dissertation, "Presidential Wives and the Press: News Framing and the Construction of the First Lady Institution, 1900-2001," at the University of Maryland. Before pursuing graduate work, she worked as a radio reporter and producer in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Remembering Through the Media, Then...and Now

How to use collective memory to teach media history

By Lisa M. Burns
Quinnipiac

Introduction

Most students will tell you that history is their least favorite subject. This presents a challenge for those of us who teach history to find ways to engage and excite our students. One unique approach is using collective memory as a framework for teaching media history. John Bodnar (1992) defines collective memory as a "body of beliefs about the past that help a public or society understand both its past and its present, and, by implication, its future" (p. 76). Collective memory helps students make connections between the past and the present, while highlighting the important role media play in a culture.

Rationale

Collective memory provides a course structure that creates connections between the past and present, making media history more than a lineage of names, dates and events. Students identify with collective memory because their knowledge of history is based largely on mediated images. For example, if you ask students what they know about the Kennedy assassination, they will mention the limousine, Jackie's pink dress and John-John saluting the casket, images they have seen in documentaries, on news shows and in movies like *JFK*. All of these media sources have constructed the collective memory of the assassination. Collective memory is an innovative way of prompting a discussion of the events of a historical era, the role of media and ways in which history has been remembered through the media over the years.

Implementation

- Structure the course topics and readings around collective memory, looking at a historical person, place or event "then" and the way we

remember the topic "now." Topics I have covered include the role of the press in the American Revolution and Civil Wars, yellow journalism, the battle over Citizen Kane, WWII, Murrow vs. McCarthy, 1950s American families, the Kennedy assassination, the space race, Vietnam and Watergate. I use a traditional media history text supplemented with readings on collective memory.

- Introduce the concept of collective memory at the beginning of the semester. Zelizer's introduction in *Covering the Body* provides a nice overview of the role media play in shaping collective memory.

- Create assignments that draw upon collective memory. Throughout the semester, students look at a variety of historical media artifacts. For example, when talking about the Civil War, students compare stories from a Northern and Southern newspaper and talk about conflicting collective memories. Another assignment has students compare radio broadcasts and popular songs from World War II to coverage of 9/11. Students also do a group project, in which they teach the class about a particular era and its influence on today's culture, and an archival research paper which requires them to trace the mediated collective memory of a person, place or event by looking at historical media sources.

Impact

Collective memory builds bridges between the past, present and future. In the classroom, the concept serves as a bridge to engage students in the past in a way that informs their present understanding of the media and prepares them for their future careers as media professionals.

When I first taught a media history class, I took a very traditional approach, proceeding chronologically and touching on the major figures and events. I noticed my students were not connecting with the material, so I introduced the idea of collective memory and immediately saw a heightened level of interest. When I asked for their input on changing the course, my students encouraged me to introduce collective memory at the beginning of the semester, which I did with outstanding results. Students are immediately drawn to the idea of looking at media "then" and "now." I have been consistently impressed with the level of classroom engagement and the quality of their projects.

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Sue Ellen Christian, M.A., is an assistant professor of journalism at Western Michigan University. She teaches news writing and reporting, journalism research and public affairs reporting in the Department of Communication. Prior to entering academia, she was a reporter for the **Los Angeles Times** *and the* **Detroit News** *and was a staff writer for 10 years at the* **Chicago Tribune**, *where she covered government, child welfare, national politics and public health.*

Using a Local Community Events Guide to Teach News Writing Basics

How to give beginning journalism students their first shot at a byline

By Sue Ellen Christian
Western Michigan

Introduction

Most college and university towns are large enough to have a regularly published free community guide to events and happenings. This curriculum idea capitalizes on that community resource to provide beginning journalism students in a news writing class with what is for many their first byline by partnering with that publication. The collaboration results in a single edition of the guide written solely by a 100-level class.

Rationale

Beginning journalism students typically spend months doing static textbook exercises on how to write basic news stories. This curriculum addition enlivens the beginning newswriting course with a simple but real-life publication experience. It teaches students to recognize the difference between news writing and public relations writing, and introduces basic interviewing and reporting skills. It reinforces semester-long goals of story focus, story organization, AP style and revising.

Implementation

Week 1

- Contact your local community guide--typically such guides cover local events, entertainment, arts and recreation--and propose a one-time collaboration. These guides are often looking for decent, inexpensive writers.

- Familiarize students with the publication. Teach about writing for a specific audience.

- Students must develop three story ideas that they brainstorm in small groups. For each story idea, students discuss the news peg, possible sources, essential story content and feasibility.

Week 2

- Students write up their ideas as story budgets. Some successful ideas include the county's only violin maker, the second-oldest art fair in the United States and the rise in popularity of vacation bible schools.

- Discuss how to identify and locate sources and the importance of diversifying sources for balance. Students hand in a list of specific sources.

- In small groups, students brainstorm about questions to ask their sources. Students hand in a list of questions for each source. Emphasize the value of the follow-up question that seeks examples, proof, support and elaboration.

Week 3

- As a class, troubleshoot problems that students are facing. Tailor class to address these specific concerns.

- Discuss using the Internet to support a story focus with statistics, history and trends.

- By the end of this week, students must have conducted at least two interviews.

Week 4

- Discuss the difference between public relations and news reporting.

- Show students how to report information in a press release to make a story more balanced. Provide students with examples of stories with a heavy public relations influence, such as single sourcing or overly positive language.

- Discuss the importance of fairness and neutrality in news stories, even news feature stories.

- Students submit a draft of their stories. Edited stories are returned.

Week 5

- Final stories are due. A second round of edits is provided. After responding to additional edits, students submit their stories to the community guide editor.

- The guide editor works directly with students on further edits. Students share their editing experiences with the class.

- Discuss the role of the editor in a news operation.

- Share successes and challenges as a class.

Impact

On course goals: This experience teaches valuable communication lessons about the difference between public relations and news writing. The exercise introduces skills in identifying appropriate sources and interviewing. It reinforces semester-long work on story focus and story organization, AP style and revisions.

On students: Students enjoy this real-life experience because it comes halfway through a semester of intensive lab writing. They are eager to put their basic skills to the test and learn a great deal about how much they don't know by jumping into a full-fledged attempt at writing what is for most their first published story. The fact that most community guides publish lighter fare is a benefit, since news features tend to be more accessible to beginning writers.

On teaching: This is a welcome break from the tedium of textbook exercises and lab work. It provides fresh and relevant examples for teaching basic concepts. It also provides a visible example of student work for university administrators as well as the local community. It can be a helpful recruiting tool to introduce the program to local residents. It can be easily adapted to a public relations course.

David Cuillier, M.A., is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Idaho. He teaches media writing and news reporting at the School of Journalism and Mass Media. He is also a doctoral student in communication at Washington State University and has worked for 15 years as a newspaper reporter, editor and college newspaper adviser.

The Jayson Blair Witch Project

How to teach effective interviewing skills through a student-produced interactive video

By David Cuillier
Idaho

Introduction

"I'm ssoooo scared," he said into the flashlight, sweat dripping off his nose. "It's my first day on the job as a news reporter and I'm afraid to interview anyone. I'm so, so scared...."

"Jayson," portrayed in this instructional video by a journalism student, ended up finishing his interview without a hitch and in the meantime taught beginning journalism students that interviewing doesn't have to be a nightmare.

"The Jayson Blair Witch Project" is an interactive video that demonstrates the do's and don'ts of good interviews. The 20-minute video took less than 20 hours to produce from conception to wrap.

The video follows "Jayson" on his first day at a daily newspaper when he is assigned to interview the new university president. He makes 20 gaffs but corrects them to finish with a Page One story. When the video is shown in a news reporting class, it is paused after each mistake so the class can discuss Jayson's error. This video exercise, first used in a news reporting class in February 2004, got 34 thumbs up.

Rationale

Many videos about news reporting provide good advice from professionals or lecturers, but often do not provide opportunities for interactivity. This homemade video, in true "Blair Witch Project" fashion, tailors the subject matter to the students, making it fun, memorable and educational.

The video is something that can be used for years, and other similar types of instructional videos can be made for other mass media areas. Also, because this was done with digital video cameras, the footage can be converted into computer exercises.

When incorporated with other teaching methods, this video reaches students who have a variety of different learning styles: digital (reading from a textbook), auditory (lecture), visual (video) and kinesthetic (active involvement and practice).

Implementation

This project doesn't require knowledge about video making (I have a newspaper background). Here's how to make it happen:

- *Write the script.* The script took a few hours to put together and was about five pages single-spaced for 20 minutes of video.

The plot: A reporter at the local paper starts his first day of work (we used the campus newspaper newsroom). The city editor assigns "Jayson" to a story about the new university president's first day on the job. As Jayson makes a mistake the scene fades to the words "What's wrong?" to allow the instructor to pause the video for class discussion. When the video resumes Jayson acknowledge his error and moves to the next issue. Some of the lessons include avoiding e-mail for interviews, being prepared, showing up on time, dressing appropriately, asking open-ended questions, using silence and getting details.

- *Cast the actors.* Find an upper-level journalism student who has a flair for drama. I also incorporated a dozen faculty, staff members and students in other roles and cameos.

- *Film it.* Most universities check out digital video gear for free. Filming took six hours for the interview segments and a few hours for miscellaneous cameos.

- *Edit it.* The broadcast student volunteer edited the video in about 10 hours. I made copies to VHS and DVD formats at the university media lab.

- *Show it to the class.* First assign textbook readings for interviewing. Then in the first class session show the video, pausing for discussion after Jayson's errors. The video exercise takes about 35 minutes. After the video, use lecture to discuss in more detail good and bad interviewing practices. Finally, in a second class session have the students break into groups of three for practice. While one student interviews another, the third student critiques the interviewing. Then they rotate through each role.

Impact

The students loved this video. In an anonymous feedback survey following the exercise, students rated the video high for teaching them something and making it fun. Their written comments included:

- "It changed things up--a different way to lecture students."

- "The exercise included almost everything a new reporter could do wrong and gave us time to discuss the problems while also being funny and entertaining."

- "It was interactive and fun to see people in the journalism school that (sic) I know."

- "The video made it better than just reading about it."

John Freeman, M.A., is an associate professor at the University of Florida, where he has directed the photojournalism program for 12 years. Before that he worked 10 years at Wichita State University and six years as a staff photographer at **The Wichita Eagle.**

Practice What You Preach in Photojournalism

How to maintain credibility and inspire creativity

By John Freeman
Florida

Introduction

While many of us in academia come from professional backgrounds, it's easy for examples of our own work to become outdated. Twenty years out of the profession, how could I assemble new material for an advanced photojournalism class that would maintain my credibility as being current with industry standards? At the same time, how could I design an exercise to inspire creativity? The answer was to shoot new material digitally and to assign students Quark XPress picture-page layouts using my pictures.

Rationale

Not all professors are willing to put themselves before their students --attempting the same work they are assigning in class. But I knew that fresh shooting would help solidify my reputation as an instructor who could "do" as well as "teach." After all, pica poles and scaling wheels are relics of the way it used to be. Black-and-white photographs and darkrooms are largely a thing of the past. Even with computer page layout, there's really no need to count headlines anymore. I wanted to develop an original, in-class project that would emphasize photo editing, page design and creativity.

Implementation

- *Gathering the Material*. While on vacation in southern California, I visited a large pumpkin patch with my digital point-and-shoot camera. The farm had hay wagon rides, tractors on display and pumpkins everywhere. Practicing my own rules, I photographed for strong centers of interest and simple backgrounds. I made sure every frame was full, so that the 2.0 mega pixel images would enlarge properly in Quark XPress.

• *Preparing the Assignment*. From the original take of nearly 40 photographs, I edited the selection down to nine images that conveyed different aspects of the Pumpkin Patch. There were two versions of a girl selecting a pumpkin in the field, a close-up of a youngster's face framed through a tractor's steering wheel, a shot of a large red barn, a close-up of dried corn cobs, etc.

• *Instructing the Class*. Students were to access a network folder called "Pumpkin Patch" where I'd placed the nine digital photos. Working independently, each student was to select 5-6 photos for an 11x17-inch vertical page in Quark Xpress. Photos could be cropped and placed in any manner, although I had given the class fairly strict guidelines to follow:

1) have a dominant photo

2) design so that movement flows toward the middle of the page

3) cluster elements so that white space falls to the outside of the layout

4) keep internal gutters the same width

5) leave room for dummy text, captions a headline and byline.

Impact

Using a computer projector, we were able to do a group critique of the 20 picture pages and determined that the exercise accomplished its goals. First, it inspired creativity. Students took several approaches and their layouts all looked right. The only photo that seemed ill-served as a lead picture was of the big, red, static barn. The students also seemed impressed to learn that the photos were mine and were taken with a simple non-adjustable Olympus digital point-and-shoot camera. That fact reiterated the point I often make about how seeing moments and composition is more important than equipment. I maintained credibility as a professor who could shoot photos, and their approaches to computer layout developed creativity in their class work.

Kim Golombisky, Ph.D., is assistant professor in the School of Mass Communications at the University of South Florida, where she teaches media writing and design courses.

The Media Diversity PSA Poster Campaign

How to teach students about media diversity issues through researching, collaborating, writing, designing, revising and displaying poster PSAs

By Dr. Kim Golombisky
South Florida

Introduction

A PSA poster campaign utilizes a range of student skills in the service of learning and teaching others about diversity issues important to mass communications education and the media professions.

Although developed for journalism and public relations design courses, the assignment is easily adaptable to other courses, such as mass communication and society, advertising design or copywriting, visual communication, photojournalism and Web writing.

Rationale

Diversity issues remain relevant for our students in four areas: 1) media content and representation; 2) the media professions' hiring and promotion practices; 3) the diversity of audiences, publics and communities that media institutions both target and serve and 4) the multicultural student body in our own classrooms. But even sympathetic instructors can feel uninformed and ill equipped to deal with diversity. Others cite time constraints and worry about crowding out course content.

This assignment works on a number of levels to accomplish a variety of goals. It requires students to combine a range of skills we teach in mass communications curricula, from researching facts to tight writing. It also allows each student to become something of an expert on one diversity issue while becoming sensitized to a spectrum of other diversity issues.

Additionally, the assignment is an easy way for instructors to send a message about diversity and incorporate it into existing curricula. This project is especially good for instructors who have felt unqualified to teach diversity because this assignment does not require expertise, and over several semesters instructors will become more knowledgeable.

Implementation

- Ask each student to do a little research and rank three diversity issues in mass communications that interest her or him. Remind your students that this assignment is, in part, a research project requiring them to explore possible topics, track down resources and read background material.

- On the due date, solicit students' topics and write them on the blackboard. Similar and overlapping issues will become apparent. To avoid duplication, put students into small groups based on similar interests. Ask each group to help its members refine their ideas. Then ask each student to commit to one topic. Encourage the broadest possible coverage across media content, media employment, media audiences and mass communications education.

- Students are now ready to research their topics in depth and come up with "sound bite" poster copy, along with poster concepts and rough layouts or thumbnails of their designs. Encourage students to include facts and data to support their claims and to cite credible sources as small-type footnotes. Also encourage students to write brief but compelling copy. Reinforce the goal of the assignment, which is to teach their professors and peers something important about a mass communications diversity issue. Tell each student to focus on teaching one thing. On the due date, have students present their work to their groups for peer feedback and adjustments. Walk the groups to give additional suggestions. Send the work home for final executions.

- On the due date for final executions, hold a class gallery session so students can see each other's work and provide further feedback. Collect the work for grading.

- This stage is for the revisions you will find necessary before you feel comfortable "posting" the campaign in public. Return students' graded posters and tell them to revise for a second grade. Have each student turn in at least two copies of the revised poster--one for grading and one (or more) for displaying.

- Display the revised posters in a prominent location visible to other faculty members and students. Or equip your students with tape, thumbtacks, staplers, etc., and let them loose to plaster their own work in halls, classrooms, elevators, stairwells, lobbies, restrooms and announcement boards.

Impact

In addition to learning and teaching others about media diversity issues and practicing their research, collaboration, writing, design, desktop and revision skills, students end up with portfolio pieces. In my experience, they also take satisfaction in seeing their work displayed publicly.

Bradley W. Gorham, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the communications department at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. He teaches courses on media and society, mass communication theory and race, gender and the media. He studies the effects of stereotypes and representations on audiences.

A Diamond is Forever, and Other Myths

How to teach students to appreciate advertising's ability to invent tradition

By Dr. Bradley W. Gorham
Syracuse

Introduction

The tradition of giving a diamond engagement ring is ingrained in the minds of young people well before they ever have to contemplate engagement, and our popular media are replete with images of newly betrothed stars and their massive diamond rings. But contrary to popular belief, this tradition--and it certainly seems like a tradition now--does not go back hundreds of years, nor was it a global phenomenon. The modern tradition of the diamond engagement ring is the work of N.W. Ayers, the advertising agency De Beers hired in the 1940s to create a campaign that would manage both the supply and the demand for diamonds. Nothing highlights this invented history than the "commonly accepted spending guidelines" available on De Beers Web sites. If these guidelines are so commonly accepted, how come they change from two months' salary in the United States to one month's salary when you cross the Atlantic?

Rationale

By using a cultural tradition that college-aged students are well aware of, and perhaps may be confronting in the next few years, this exercise helps students become more literate about the ways in which advertisers and other strategic communicators try to work their products or clients into the cultural fabric. By utilizing Web sources, it also shows the possibilities, and pitfalls, of transparency in an online world.

Implementation

- Choose three men from the class and bring them to the front of the classroom.

• After they arrive, explain that you want them to act out how they would react if one of them (choose one) announced to his buddies that he was going to ask his girlfriend to marry him. Ask the men to act out what they would say to each other.

• If none of them says anything about a ring, prompt them with "and what are you going to give her?" (A fun variation: collude with the man and secretly tell him to say that he will get her an opal engagement ring.)

• Choose three women from the class to act out the role of the receiver and her friends and bring them to the front.

• Ask the students up front to act out how the engagement might take place.

• If they don't do it on their own, prompt them about the ring. Ask if the woman would show the ring to her friends.

• Ask about why he would get a diamond ring, and why she would expect it.

• Ask the male student how much he should have paid for the ring. Ask the female student the same thing.

• At this point, go to, or if they are sitting at their own computer terminals direct students to go to, the De Beers Web site for the United States at *www.adiamondisforever.com* and look at the "spending guidelines." Highlight that "two months' salary" is the commonly accepted guideline (the Web site even has a calculator to help you).

• After discussing the value of having a flexible spending guideline that can accommodate anyone's salary, go the De Beers international Web site, at *www.forevermark.com* and click on the United Kingdom.

• The Web site looks exactly the same as the U.S. counterpart, except that under spending guidelines, the magic figure is now listed as one month's salary.

• This is a good time to talk about the invention of the tradition, especially as De Beers attempts to do the same with the diamond anniversary band. It is also a good opportunity to discuss how the value and pitfalls of transparency.

Impact

If learning takes place when we take the familiar and look at it in a new light, so that we never quite see it the old way again, then the myth of the diamond engagement ring can help us learn about advertising and culture. They won't look at a ring quite the same way again. Students are reminded of this lesson every time they see the distinctive commercials or look at the rock on someone's finger. This activity is applicable to any introductory media studies course as well as advertising and public relations classes.

Steve Hallock is in the second year of the three-year Ohio University Scripps fellowship Ph.D. program designed to encourage working professionals to study to become professors, which Hallock intends to be. He is a veteran of more than 25 years in newspapering. His experience includes supervising two small daily newsrooms as the editor, and working as an editorial page editor, features editor, sports editor and a reporter on beats that included government, education, health, general assignment and jazz criticism.

Before and After

How to measure journalism students' progress through the written word

By Steve Hallock
Ohio

Introduction

My idea, which I tried twice for the first time this year and plan to repeat in future courses, is to provide a tool for the instructor and the student, through comparison of an identical assignment performed by the students at the beginning and end of the quarter or semester, to measure progress and learning.

Rationale

The concept is simple but useful and effective as a teaching tool and as a measure of learning. This exercise has several purposes and applications. One purpose is to ascertain the students' level of ability at the front end of the course. Another is to help the professor gauge not only if any learning has taken place, but in what areas, and if not, where the instructor might need to place more emphasis in future classes or what the instructor might want to do differently. Most importantly, the exercise lets the students see, in a positive way, their progress, to realize that they have learned some of the basic elements--and it forces them to think critically, in comparative essays, about these elements and how they work together to create a news story.

Implementation

- The instructor, on the first day of class in a basic news writing course, gave students--primarily sophomores (most of them non-news/editorial sequence majors in this case)--a set of facts with instructions to write a news story for that day's newspaper.

- The instructor told the students that the assignment, to be done in class that day, would not be graded but was a tool to help assess their

level of news writing ability and understanding. These assignments were then stored by the instructor until the end of the quarter.

• Unlike the information presented for most assignments in the class, the facts for this assignment were arranged in chronological order, as the purpose was to ascertain students' ability coming into the course to identify major news elements, to create leads, to use transition and organization, to arrange the facts according to importance rather than chronology and to look at other elements such as attribution and use of quotes--simply, to see what they would do with a set of facts.

• The instructor gave the students the identical assignment in the second-to-last week of the quarter--again, to be done in class that day, on deadline. This one was graded.

• After the students finished the end-of-quarter writing assignment, the instructor handed out to them their original, ungraded papers done at the beginning of the quarter and asked them to study and compare them with their latest efforts and then to write an essay explaining how the two finished papers differed.

• Students were told to argue in this essay for the grade they felt they deserved for the second paper and to base their arguments on the basic news elements they had learned during the quarter--including news judgment, leads, organization, attribution, use of quotes and style.

This exercise can also be used in other writing courses or in a basic copy editing course, in which a copy editing exercise would be substituted for the news writing assignment.

Impact

While the second news stories still contained some errors, they all showed improvement and learning in various areas, including the vital ones of news judgment, lead, organization, attribution and use of quotes. In their essays, students demonstrated an ability to discuss news writing in terms of its important elements, and they showed an understanding of the use and importance of these elements--often to their surprise.

Volker R. Henning, PhD., is a professor of journalism and communication at Southern Adventist University in Tennessee. He teaches courses in advertising, communication research and mass communication in the School of Journalism and Communication. Before coming to academia, he worked for five years as communication director in Florida.

An Applied Approach to the Undergraduate Communication Research Class

How to get students excited about communication research

By Dr. Volker R. Henning
Southern Adventist

Introduction

In my experience I have discovered that students are easily bored by courses they perceive to be "irrelevant" to their future. One such "boring" course is communication research.

I took this disinterest as a challenge and designed a research class to include a significant hands-on research experience to help make the class relevant and more interesting. I have taught research for three years and have fine-tuned the course and made it quite effective.

Rationale

A grounding in the methods of communication research is important for students entering into the job market or moving on to graduate school. Guiding them through the stages of a research project with the camaraderie of doing the project in groups gives them a good understanding of the research process and a sense of accomplishment.

Implementation

- Students turn in a research proposal during the third week of class. This gets them thinking about the subject they will research and allows me to give feedback to appropriately limit the scope of their inquiry.

- Students individually conduct a literature review based on their proposal. For this phase of the project, I give them strict guidelines pertaining to the number and type of sources as well as the length of the literature review. Each student's literature review must end with two or three research questions indicating directions for further inquiry. My experience shows that students typically do not understand what a literature review is. During the six weeks allotted to this phase of the project, I dis-

cuss the textbook explanation of a literature review and hand out several literature reviews from academic journals.

• Within a week of receiving the literature reviews, I evaluate them and choose several whose research questions suggest a doable primary research project. I also look for potential student groupings based on similar subject matter. If "natural" groups don't surface, I somewhat arbitrarily divide students into groups of four. Each group is given one of the selected literature reviews with enough copies for each student. This helps group members understand the basis for the research they will conduct. The author of the selected literature review is identified as the principal researcher. For each selected literature review, I suggest a methodology from either the quantitative or qualitative traditions.

• When returning the literature reviews I give each group a revised set of research questions and a suggested methodology for conducting research. They may revise the suggested methodology and research questions, though the changes they make are usually minor.

• Students conduct research as small groups. I have had students conduct surveys, textual analysis, experiments, in-depth qualitative interviews, content analyses and focus groups. While they are conducting the research, I give them a class period or two to plan the project. In my experience, students have a hard time scheduling sufficient time to work as a group. Giving them some class time facilitates completion of the project. It also affords me opportunity to talk with each group and help them with particular challenges. When planning is complete, the groups conduct their primary research.

• Once the research has been conducted, each group writes up the research study as a complete journal style article. Time restrictions limit analysis to descriptive statistics. The final paper includes all the typical and methodology appropriate sections.

• The final step is an oral presentation to the entire class about each group's project. The presentations include a discussion of the various problems and challenges they encountered along the way. Through these presentations, the class as a whole becomes aware of the peculiar challenges of various research methodologies.

Impact

Students' fear of conducting research dissipates as together with classmates they conduct a simple research project. One student wrote in his/her evaluation that "the research project was a very valuable experience. Since I plan to go to grad school one day, I think this knowledge will get me a bit ahead of the game." Another student indicated that the project helped clarify both the terms and process of research. In general the project was seen as one of the most useful learning experiences of the semester.

Jon Hyde, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at St. Michael's College in Vermont. He teaches courses in international communication, digital film and television and global studies.

Kimberly Sultze, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at St. Michael's where she teaches courses in new media, digital photography and global media.

'Mapping' a Nation's Media Environment in a Reasearch Web Site

How to merge research, analysis and multimedia storytelling in an international communication course within a converged curriculum

By Dr. Jon Hyde and Dr. Kimberly Sultze
St. Michael's

Introduction

One of the challenges of teaching an international communication course is getting students to step outside of the American media environment which they are surrounded by--to get them to encounter, envision and confront other cultures and media systems.

One of the ongoing challenges within a converged curriculum is how to reconfigure upper level courses so that they reinforce and strengthen multimedia storytelling skills that students develop in foundational new media and writing for media classes.

These two goals are accomplished through a six-week long comparative media systems research project that is presented as a Web site. The collection of student Web sites becomes a text for the course.

Rationale

In the international communication course, each student is given a country other than the United States and is asked to 'map' that country's national media environments. In other words, the students collect information in order to describe and analyze the extent of media and communications development, the dominant media forms and knowledge monopolies, the influence of governments, religions and/or companies on that nation's media and how culture and communication forms interact in that nation. In addition, students conduct interviews with people from that country and also with people who have an expertise connected to that nation's media.

Their analysis is presented in a multimedia Web site. The project combines research, writing, interviewing, analysis and digital multimedia design skills. It also asks students to apply the ideas of theorists discussed in class (Rogers, Boorstin, DeFleur, Katz and Dayan, Innis, etc.) to a nation's current media situation.

Implementation

Week 1: The Assignment

A very detailed assignment sheet is handed out to students. On each sheet is handwritten the name of a different country: Papua New Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Azerbaijan, Iran, Portugal, etc. Students are assigned nations to investigate so that they will be taken out of their comfort zone and will encounter difference.

We spend a good deal of time discussing the expectations for this project and the types of analysis that will be required--qualitative and quantitative.

Week 2: Refresher and Resources

Schedule several Web authoring refresher sessions outside of class for those students who want a review or may be new to Web design.

In class, hand out and discuss a list of possible resources: human, print publications and online.

Week 3: Project Part I Due

Students turn in an annotated bibliography presented as a series of Web pages. In completing this part of the project, students are prompted to identify the resources they will be using, to get in contact with potential interviewees and to review their Web design skills.

Weeks 4 and 5

Work on projects outside of class.

Week 6: Class Text and Project Critiques

Students turn in their Web site projects, and professors take their digital files and link them to the course Web site. This becomes a new text for the class. Every student is responsible for reading and viewing every other student's site. Each student performs three Web site critiques of content and design. We orchestrate the critiques so that every student receives at least three student critiques of their site in addition to the professors' critique.

Impact

This project has led to increased student interest in international issues and cross-cultural experiences. This has translated into more of our students studying abroad, and also while abroad, connecting their cultural explorations with issues that were raised in their international communication class. Over the past year, we have had a student in Geneva involved in a research project about the digital divide, a student in Bolivia working with a maker of political documentary films and a student in Ecuador investigating information literacy and social literacy programs.

We have seen a marked improvement in students' understanding of and skill in Web design and multimedia storytelling. Interestingly, this impact is not solely from the "practice" of research, writing, interviewing, analysis and Web design. It is also a result of the sense of competition that is fostered because every student sees and reads everyone else's work.

This structured multimedia project can easily be adapted to fit other course content in a converged curriculum. In fact, we have created similar projects for courses such as visual communication, media criticism and digital film.

Lisa M. Irby, M.B.A., is an instructor in the public relations sequence at the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University. She teaches courses in PR Media Writing and Techniques, PR Campaigns Management and PR Crisis Management Seminar, and will be introducing an advanced editing course this fall with emphasis on media convergence and design. Her professional experience includes working in the oil and newspaper industries prior to starting a local public relations company.

One Professor's Junk... A Treasure Box of Learning

A hands-on approach to analyzing direct mail effectiveness

By Lisa M. Irby
Washington State

Introduction

You open the mailbox and a general sense of disappointment sets in as you leaf through the daily mail and find all of the pieces are junk...magazine renewal notices, sweepstakes announcements, travel brochures, life insurance offerings, Internet trial disks, etc. Direct mail is often perceived as "junk" mail because it is usually unsolicited. But is this really junk?

By giving students a chance to dig through a box of my personal mail, we explore the positive and negative characteristics of direct mail pieces. Students do not anticipate this hands-on lesson giving them a tangible experience of dissecting and critiquing a direct mailer and also a feeling of knowing their instructor a bit better.

Rationale

We've all seen and been exposed to direct mail, so much so we do not always see the value of this message vehicle. The goals: to get students excited about direct mail, to understand the parts, to see how audiences might be targeted and persuaded and to be able to effectively identify the strengths and weaknesses of using direct mail as part of a campaign.

Students are often myopic and focused on their own demographic--and why not? They are surrounded by thousands of young people their own age in the microcosm of the university setting--not always the real world when they graduate and put theories into practice. By looking at someone else's "junk" mail, students see pieces of another individual--and the instructor connects with the students at another level.

Implementation

• Set up a box or file drawer in which to store your unopened, discarded direct mail for at least the month prior to the exercise. Note: I remove any credit card offerings and/or other items that may include personal information that could lead to identity theft--just to be safe.

• Invite students to grab two pieces of mail from the box. Usually students are amazed at the quantity (this leads to the introduction of direct mail statistics and efficiency rates) and then pick over the pile to get the "best" pieces--unique packaging, colorful, odd, etc.

• Ask students to open their mail. As they do, some will be excited over the various incentives, others will laugh at the unusual offerings (remember this professor's junk could be a treasure to someone else) and some will compare with their neighbors.

• Discuss the components: envelope, package (what's included, how it is presented) and message:

What visual appeals were used to gain attention?

What appeals to self-interest are used?

What incentives are present to create desire?

Why would this piece stand out among others?

• Then discuss the targeting. Question various decisions made in putting together this mailing:

Why did this individual get this piece of mail?

What is the target audience?

Was this piece personalized or individualized in any way?

What action is being requested of the reader?

• Finally, the discussion focuses around the message tactics and appeals.

What tools of persuasion are used?

What persuasion theory applies to the key message?

Will this message have appeal and create a desire given the target audience?

• Assign a short written assignment for students to analyze a direct mail piece for its components, targeting and messages. Students should also include the strengths and weaknesses of their piece.

• Upon completion of the assignment, discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of direct mail as part of a campaign. Also look at costs versus benefits.

Impact

Most students raise their hands affirming they believe direct mail is "junk" at the beginning of this lesson. When asking the same question after the assignment, there is a dramatic shift in the number who agrees there are benefits to using strategically implemented direct mail. The lesson of critical thinking is achieved in addition to the properties of direct mail.

The students' tangible involvement with the direct mail piece reinforces textbook knowledge. When this exercise is used, students are better at recalling this information when it is presented on a test than if the material is presented in a straight-lecture format. In addition to the enthusiasm generated, the overall student-teacher relationship is enhanced as students begin to see the instructor as an individual and not just a knowledge dispensing unit.

This idea could be adapted to other media courses to illustrate target audience analysis, effective persuasion messages and methods.

Leslie-Jean Thornton Jessee, M.A., will join the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University as a visiting lecturer in fall 2004. From 2001 to 2004, she taught newspaper management, editing, reporting, feature writing, press history and Internet effects at the State University of New York at New Paltz. A 25-year veteran of newspapers in New York, Connecticut and Virginia before becoming a Freedom Forum Ph.D. fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1999, she is particularly interested in incorporating new technology in the classroom and researching the effects of technology and management on journalism.

The Versatile Featuresgram

How to put students in touch with role models and each other through e-mail "blogs"

By Leslie-Jean Thornton Jessee
Arizona State

Introduction

The Featuresgram is a blog-style collection of summaries and links to five or more feature stories appearing that day in any U.S. publication available online. Rather than post the "blog" online, however, members of the class send group e-mails. After I prepare at least a week's worth of featuresgrams to show how they work (warning: it's addictive), each student signs up for a day (weekends included) until everyone has had at least one turn. In a concurrent assignment, each student chooses a working feature writer whose articles he or she follows, as they're published, through much of the semester. The students contact the writers and in most cases are able to follow up with a series of e-mails and an interview. The writers are generally found through reading or researching the Featuresgrams. Toward the end of the semester, each student "blogs" 10 of the chosen writer's stories and, in a presentation to the class, shares the writer's advice to aspiring journalists.

Rationale

Using the Internet to expose students to the wealth of newspapers and other publications available online helps them understand the breadth of the profession and the work produced. They are exposed to many writing styles and story forms, and start to know what kind of work they like and dislike. Since for the second part of the assignment they must choose journalists working in a daily medium, they sense what's required of a professional in terms of filed stories--something that can't be conveyed as well in textbooks.

JESSEE
Continued on page 29

CCJA News

SPECIAL SECTION SPRING/SUMMER 2004

CCJA "taking it to Toronto," Canada, for summer AEJMC conference

The Community College Journalism Association will hold its regular business meeting and sponsor several programs at this summer's Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in Toronto, Canada, during Aug. 3-7.

At the meeting on Thursday, Aug. 5, CCJA President Dr. Arlene Scadron will preside, then CCJA President-Elect Dr. John Neal will succeed her as CCJA president. Nominations are being sought now for 2004-2006 president-elect and vice president and other officer positions (see article on the next page).

CCJA acknowledges Dr. Beverly Bailey, CCJA vice president and program chair, for coordinating the following sessions for the AEJMC conference this year:

Wednesday, Aug. 4

10-11:30 a.m.
Internationalizing International Communication Courses

1:30-3 p.m.
Journalism and Liberal Arts: Can't We Just Get Along?

3:15-4:45 p.m.
Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT)
This issue of *The Community College Journalist* focuses on the top 25 GIFT submissions.

Thursday, Aug. 5

3:15-4:45 p.m.
Calming the Storm: Resolving Student Behavioral Issues

6:30-8:15 p.m.
CCJA Business Meeting
An off-site social will follow.

Friday, Aug. 6

8:15-9:45 a.m.
Faculty and Administration: An Adversarial Relationship?

1:30-3 p.m.
Media Convergence and Journalism Education:
Imaging for Converging Media

Saturday, Aug. 7

8:15-9:45 a.m.
The Offense on Ad Offensiveness: Incorporating Cultural Values, Ethics and Norms in Strategic Communication

Logo designed by
Thanita Pakjamsai
Hawaii Pacific University

10-11:30 a.m.
Coping Skills for Journalism Educators

3:15-4:45 p.m.
Funding, Oversight and Autonomy: The Inherent Tension Between Administration, Student Government and Student Press

For more information about the AEJMC conference, go to *www.aejmc.org*.

PULL-OUT INSERT!

CCJA seeking nominations now for president-elect, vice president and other officer positions

Regular CCJA members are encouraged to submit nominations for 2004-2006 president-elect and vice president to Dr. Arlene Scadron by Sept. 3. Each office has a two-year term, and the president-elect automatically becomes president for two years when the term as president-elect is completed. The president automatically becomes immediate past president when the term as president is completed.

Job Descriptions

The following officer job descriptions are excerpted from the CCJA constitution:

ARTICLE X: DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Section 1. The President-Elect will be the Chief Administrative Assistant to the President and will preside at CCJA meetings and assume all other duties of the President in the absence of the President.
Section 2. The President-Elect shall attend the AEJMC mid-winter Council of Divisions planning meeting and shall assist the Program Chair with AEJMC National Convention program planning and, if needed, CMA National Convention program planning.
Section 3. The President-Elect will represent the President and, if designated, cast the CCJA vote in the absence of the President.
Section 4. The President-Elect will also perform other duties as assigned by the President.

ARTICLE XI: DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Section 1. The primary duty of the Vice President will be to solicit, serve, and retain the Association's membership and to coordinate the membership-service activities of the Regional Representatives. The Vice President will also perform other duties as requested by the President. The Vice President will assume the position of President-Elect if the President-Elect currently in office vacates that office.

Other Vacant Positions

CCJA is also seeking members to volunteer as Web master, advertising manager and listserv coordinator. If interested in these positions, or for more information, please contact Scadron at *ascadron@aol.com*.

NOMINATION FORM FOR CCJA PRESIDENT-ELECT AND VP

Nomination for President-Elect _____ **E-mail:** _____

Nomination for Vice President _____ **E-mail:** _____

Your Name _____ **E-mail:** _____

Please cut and send the above information to: Dr. Arlene Scadron, 220 N. Stewart Ave., Tucson, AZ 85716-5225. Or e-mail your nominations to *ascadron@aol.com* by Sept. 3, 2004.

A farewell message from the 2002-2004 CCJA President Dr. Arlene Scadron

To write my penultimate presidential message for the fall/winter 2003 issue of *The Communty College Journalist*, I used a friend's computer just before departing Bangkok, Thailand, for a three-week tour of Myanmar (Burma). As an aside, I jokingly referred to the possibility of not returning at all because one of the stops during the visit took us to a remote mountainous region in the northwest of the country adjacent to India to watch a ceremony of the Naga peoples, who practiced head-hunting until a few decades ago.

A fearsome group of tribes, who populate eastern India in greater numbers than their counterparts in Myanmar, the Naga resisted British colonial authority but also sent 17,000 men to fight in Europe during World War I. Their ceremonial costumes, which we were privileged to see, include exotic headdress, adorned by rattan baskets covered with black or dyed monkey fur, festooned with long, colorful bird feathers, attached by a chin strap of animal teeth and complemented with gorgeous coral necklaces from which tigers' teeth and boars' tusks hang. The animal dentures connote prowess as hunters, according to Richard K. Diran, a student and photographer of Myanmar tribal groups. The dress of men and women varied some, depending on the villages from which they came on their trek to Leshi, where the 2004 festival was held.

The Naga were without doubt the most colorful people we saw during our tour, but other tribal groups, such as the Chin, and specifically the women of Aye Sakan village, who tattooed their entire faces and necks in a variety of patterns, kept our camera shutters busy as we tried to assimilate what we were seeing with the mini-anthropological lectures delivered by our local guide, himself a native of the Shan state and devout Buddhist.

Although I returned from Myanmar at the end of January with my head still attached to my body, I anticipate learning a great deal more about this diverse, fascinating country as I tackle the organization of my digital images and transparencies--that is, if I can recall--at this late date--what any of them depict.

Having gone on so long about this trip, yet barely skimming the surface of all we saw and did, it's now June--time to write this, my last presidential message.

At the Toronto convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Aug. 3-7, I will participate in a panel on teaching and international communication with scholars from Carleton, Bradley and Marquette universities, as well as from The American University in Cairo and Shanghai International Studies University. My topic is: "Personal Travel and the Classroom: Enriching the Traveler and the Curricula," where I will discuss integrating an international perspective into the journalism/mass communication curricula--to lift the level of discourse from the personal to the classroom.

This is only one example of panels where CCJA members will enrich the AEJMC offerings, bringing with them the critical perspective of faculty whose primary mission is classroom teaching. The AEJMC is the major academic organization of university faculty and professionals in journalism and mass communication, with which the CCJA has been affiliated since its own founding in 1968. CCJA began its association with AEJMC as an Affiliate organization and since 1996, it has attained full division status with a vote on the Advisory Board.

On the first page of this *CCJA News* Special Section, you will find a complete list of CCJA-sponsored sessions on the AEJMC program. The variety and number of panels are due to the inspired dedication of Dr. Beverly S. Bailey, Tulsa Community College, CCJA vice president and AEJMC program chair, and Dr. John Neal, Brookhaven College, Dallas, Texas, CCJA president-elect, who represented our organization in Atlanta, Ga., last winter where they negotiated

topics and time slots with other divisions and interest groups. While some CCJA members may not recognize the importance of the AEJMC connection or are unable to participate in their conventions, those who have usually feel energized, inspired and educated about the latest research in our fields and ways to turn some of those ideas into practical classroom applications. For the best example of the latter, we can thank our own Dr. Edna Bautista's creation of the GIFT (Great Ideas for Teachers) program, which has consistently drawn among the highest attendance at the AEJMC conventions. At the Toronto meeting, on Thursday, Aug. 5, from 6:30 to 8:15 p.m., we will hold our bi-annual business meeting,* to which all members and prospective members are welcome.

Equally important is the active association of CCJA with the College Media Advisers/Associated College Press (CMA/ACP), where CCJA members are more plentifully represented because so many of us are or have been media advisers. Nils Rosdahl, of North Idaho Community College in Cour d'Alene, is CCJA's northwest regional representative and the CMA program chair for two-year colleges. He is always actively seeking presenters for the fall and spring CMA conventions.

Dr. Arlene Scadron
CCJA President
2002-2004

He has scheduled our fall CCJA business meeting* in Nashville, Tenn., for noon to 2 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 6, at Merchants Restaurant, across from the convention center. In conjunction with our business meeting, we are also holding a Hall of Fame induction ceremony (please see the article on the next page) in which we strongly encourage your participation.

And so my friends, as I end my two-year term, a period that ironically coincided with my own departure from Pima Community College, where I taught and ran the journalism program for almost 16 years, I wish I could claim great success in attaining important organizational goals. The list of objectives that will undoubtedly strengthen this organization so it can serve as a true asset to community college faculty nationwide is very similar to the one I drew up upon taking office. I think we have moved a few points to the positive side by recruiting new regional representatives, whom we hope will help us find new members. And I pray that we will find a "technowizard" who is willing to share his/her talent by reviving our moribund Web site and developing an active listserv. These two acts alone will enable us to talk with each other much more easily, sharing our problems and lending our expertise.

Having worked with the incoming president, John Neal, the vice-president, Bev Bailey, the magazine/newsletter editor, Edna Bautista, the executive secretary-treasurer, Steve Ames, all of whom volunteer their time and energy, I am confident that the extra spurt of inspiration to move us to a higher level of effectiveness is embodied in these people.

Let me end by borrowing from the eloquent Edward R. Murrow, who used to say, "Goodbye and good luck."

*Please e-mail suggestions for agenda items to: *ascadron@aol.com*.

Nominations for CCJA Hall of Fame due Sept. 10

Nominations are being sought now for CCJA's Hall of Fame. The 2004 Hall of Fame honorees will be announced at a luncheon at the College Media Advisers Conference/Associated Collegiate Press Convention, Nov. 4-7, 2004, at the Renaissance Hotel in Nashville, Tenn.

Eligibility of Nominees. Any past or present CCJA member who has contributed to college journalism for 10 or more years and also has contributed to CCJA and journalism education is eligible for nomination. Contributions include being a member or chair of committees, producing published work, chairing workshops or panels, helping at journalism conferences or being a local, regional and national leader in community college journalism. Deceased or retired persons, as well as active CCJA members, may be nominated.

Nomination Process/Due Date. Anyone may submit a nomination. The nomination letter and at least two other letters of recommendation are sent to the Past President, who is in charge of selecting a committee of past Hall of Fame honorees who help select the new inductee(s).

Nomination packages should be sent to: Dr. Arlene Scadron, 220 N. Stewart Ave., Tucson, AZ 85716-5225.

To insure that we can complete the process by the time of the CMA convention, we need the nomination packets no later than Sept. 10.

Installation of Hall of Famers. The honorees will be installed during the CCJA business meeting on Saturday, Nov. 6, 2004, noon to 2 p.m., in conjunction with the annual CMA/ACP conference in Nashville, Tenn. A luncheon for all CCJA members and new Hall of Fame inductees will take place at Merchants Restaurant, "Board Room," 401 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn., opposite the convention center.

The Hall of Fame inaugurated its original 12 members in 1994 at the AEJMC conference in Atlanta, Ga., and added two members in 1995 in Washington, D.C. In 1996, Orlando, Fla., and in 1997, Chicago, Ill., CCJA also presented six Distinguished Service Awards. Four new members were inducted in 1999 at the CMA conference in Atlanta, and one new member was honored at the AEJMC-Phoenix, Ariz., conference in 2000. The most recent awards have been in 2001 at the CMA Conference in New Orleans, La., and the last honoree was feted in November 2003 at the Dallas , Texas, convention.

Following the Nashville Hall of Fame event, the next award will be given in conjunction with an AEJMC convention.

For more information about the CCJA Hall of Fame, please e-mail Scadron at *ascadron@aol.com*.

College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press to hold convention in Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 4-7

Officers and members of the Community College Journalism Association will meet at the College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press convention this year in Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 4-7, at the Rennaisance Hotel.

The convention features more than 250 educational sessions, panel discussions, keynote speakers, media tours, on-site competitions and critiques and special events designed to assist advisers and student journalists, according to the CMA Web site at *www.cma.org*.

Tentative sessions in the two-year college category include the following:

- Go Figure: Figurative Language and Powerful Style
- Literary Journalism: Theory, Preparation and Practice
- Undesign: 10 Design Tips for Nondesigners

- CRISP Style for the Journalist: A Proven Method for Stylistic Revision, Flair and Powerful Copy
- Family Ties: The Newsroom as Home
- The Eyes Have It
- Recruiting and Retaining Staff
- The Successful Sports Section
- CCJA Hall of Fame Luncheon
- Advisers' Roundtable: I Can Make More Money at McDonald's
- Wringing the Bad Writing Habits Out of Your Eager But Inexperienced Staff
- Layout: The Basics and Beyond
- Two-Year Advisers Roundtable
- Two-Year Editors Roundtable/Student Leadership
- Creating Culture in a Revolving Door Newsroom
- Late Train to Nashville
- Writing Better Editorials
- Being an Under-30 Adviser (A Roundtable Discussion)
- Finding Features on the Two-Year Campus
- Writing Good Headlines and Cutlines

Other sessions are listed on the CMA Web site. For more information about CCJA's sessions at the convention, contact Program Chair Nils Rosdahl at *nhrosdah@nic.edu*.

The Community College Journalist seeks one movie reviewer for upcoming ethics issue

The Community College Journalist magazine is seeking one CCJA member to review the movie "Shattered Glass" by Lions Gate Films and write an article for the fall/winter 2004 issue, the themes of which will be journalism ethics and creative communications.

The movie centers on Stephen Glass, the young journalist at *The New Republic* who was caught fabricating his articles. Its theatrical release was last November but the home video was released this spring. Billy Ray wrote and directed the film which stars Hayden Christensen (Anakin Skywalker from the *Star Wars* prequels) as Glass. Peter Sarsgaard co-stars; he garnered a Golden Globe nomination for best supporting actor in this movie.

A free teacher's guide from Learning Works, which provides ideas on leading class discussions about journalism ethics, is downloadble at the movie's official Web site at *www.shatteredglass-movie.com*.

The movie review is due Dec. 15. It should be between 500-750 words and submitted via e-mail to Editor Dr. Edna Bautista at *aejmcgift@yahoo.com*. If interested in writing the article, please contact her immediately. First come, first served.

Submit news to your CCJA regional representatives

CCJA members are encouraged to share news about their journalism programs, advising awards, promotions and tenure and other academic activities with their regional representatives so that a regular column from each region can be included in every issue of *The Community College Journalist* magazine. Your regional representatives are:

- Northeast--Amy Callahan
Northern Essex Community College
acallahan@necc.mass.edu
- Northwest--Nils Rosdahl
North Idaho College
nhrosdah@nic.edu
- Southeast--Nancy White
North Florida Community College
whiten@nfcc.cc
- Southwest--Nequoia Elsey
Blinn College
nelsey@acmail.blinncol.edu
- Midwest--Linda Boles
Richland Community College
lboles@richland.cc.il.us

JESSEE
Continued from page 28

They work in real time and cover a lot of ground. If there are 20 students, there will be at least 100 stories, and some 35 from the professor. There are 10 stories from each student's selected writer, which brings the number of current stories they see to at least 335. Even if they don't read them all, they are exposed to all of the headlines, summaries, bylines and publication names. Meanwhile, they improve their Internet, research, networking, interviewing and computer skills.

Implementation

- Using a computer and a projector, go online and show students how to locate papers throughout the country. I favor *www.newslink.org*, where they are categorized by state and type.

- Call up several papers and show how to navigate in search of features. Discuss the qualities of features. Suggest likely papers.

- Tell them you are going to choose five well-done stories every morning for a week. You'll e-mail everyone an enticing lead-in and link to each story. They call up the stories and read them.

- In a few days, after you've built enthusiasm, send around a sign-up sheet for them to do one. Try to fill days in sequence, including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. If there are "blanks," it's a good idea for you to do that day's Featuresgram to keep the momentum going.

- Refer to stories in class. Praise particularly good choices. If you know something about one of the writers or publications, share it to personalize the experience. Call some stories up on a projection screen, if you have that option.

- By month's end, make sure each student has chosen a writer to study and contact. Demonstrate how to "background" the writer using search engines (such as Google), databases (such as Lexis-Nexis) and newspaper archives. Instruct them in professional ways to make contact. Assure them that they will rarely be dismissed as beneath the writer's notice--and that if a writer is less than friendly, it's not the end of the world.

- Brainstorm interview questions with the class. Tell them writers generally love to talk about their favorite interviews, best stories and most challenging times.

- Encourage them to keep collecting their writer's work and to make contact.

- At the end of the semester, plan classes in which students can share experiences. They e-mail their final blogs and hand in a portfolio and overview.

Impact

Students have fun. Some were invited to apply for internships, to stay in touch and to visit papers. Some students continue surfing in search of features on their own. Students become more confident during the process and can visualize themselves as professionals. I've adapted this for reporting classes and use it in topical ways for my Internet Effects class.

Brian K. Johnson, M.S., associate professor, has taught photojournalism at the University of Illinois since the fall semester of 1988. Before joining the faculty at the UIUC he worked for seven years as a staff photographer for the **News-Gazette** *in Champaign, Ill., where he won national, regional and state awards for his work. His interests include the convergence of media in photojournalism, especially video and multimedia.*

The Men's Tie Theory of Color Harmony

How to teach students about color harmony and introduce them to the basics of Adobe Photoshop in one easy lesson

By Brian K. Johnson
Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

Introduction

Color harmony, as a concept, is important and applicable to photojournalism, page design, editing and illustration. Students many times have a difficult time understanding color harmonies and how they are used and selected from the 16.7 million colors available to them on a personal computer. They also are either new to image editing programs like Adobe Photoshop, or don't know how to use them to create backgrounds and other assets for multimedia projects and page designs. Photojournalists can capture more sophisticated images with an understanding of color harmony. By using a common piece of clothing, a necktie, the students see and learn about color harmonies in a tangible, easy to understand manner. They then can use the necktie as a starting point to create an abstract design as a hands-on exercise in an image editing program.

Rationale

While it is customary and beneficial to introduce students to static educational materials, like a color wheel, when teaching about color harmony, it is a rather sterile tool. Color is dynamic and can evoke a range of emotions. Students enjoy hands-on, active learning exercises, and their grasp of material is enhanced when they can touch and feel and see examples of different color harmonies. Using neckties, students' eyes are opened to the idea that color harmonies are all around them, even in the most pedestrian items. Since the neckties also belong to their professor, they smile and laugh and seem to enjoy the personal connection the neckties connote. This exercise makes color harmonies a visceral experience for the students--one they do not forget. They learn about the different types of color harmonies and remember them because they remember the neckties.

Implementation

- Gather a collection of neckties, one for every student in the lab (scarves, sweaters, socks or any clothing item with a variety of color and color harmonies can be used).

- Create a handout or find a Web site which explains the color wheel with examples and explanations of the different types of color harmonies: triadic, complementary, analogous, etc.

- Present the information on color and color harmony in a computer lab setting, keeping the neckties out of sight.

- Next, present the neckties and display them to the students. Announce that you are now about to introduce them to the "Necktie Theory of Color Harmony."

- Go around the room, one student at a time, and request that they select their favorite necktie.

- Ask each student to stand up, as they are able, display the necktie and describe the type of color harmony present in the tie.

- Next, give a short demonstration in an image editing program, such as Adobe Photoshop, on how to create a new document, and how to select and match colors.

- Instruct the students to create an abstract illustration using the colors present in the necktie they selected. This is a good opportunity for the students to experiment with different tools, brushes and filters. Experimentation is the key.

- If the lab has a color printer, print out each student's creation. If possible, use the printouts as an introduction to a short discussion on the differences in appearance between the computer display of their creation and the printout.

- Have each student present his or her creation and necktie to the group for critique. If no color printer is available, go from computer to computer for the presentations. Encourage the students to critically analyze the color match between the necktie and the print and also the effectiveness of the color harmony.

Impact

Semester after semester the students have enjoyed yet taken seriously this exercise in color harmony. Students now understand that color harmonies are all around them and that there is a reason that certain colors in our culture "go together." This has been a wonderful exercise for me because of the joy and fun it brings to an important topic. Students can use their understanding of color harmonies in photojournalism, design, editing and graphics arts classes. Color is used so commonly now, even in newspapers, but is so often not used well. This simple exercise teaches the students how to recognize and understand color harmonies and their importance in visual communication. As an important side benefit, the students also learn details about image editing programs that they may not have known before the exercise.

Kim E. Karloff, Ph.D., has been an assistant professor of journalism at California State University-Northridge and currently is working as a writer and editor in Los Gatos, Calif. Her six-plus years in the daily newspaper field include feature editing and writing, news reporting, wire editing and page design at the **Omaha World-Herald** *and the* **Lincoln Journal** *in Nebraska, as well as an award-winning stint as news editor at the* **Abilene Reporter-News** *in Texas. A former Freedom Forum teaching fellow, Karloff was also a recipient of the CSUN University Ambassadors' Polished Apple Award for inspiring teaching in 2000, as well as the AEJMC Small Programs Interest Group's 2001 Teacher of the Year Award.*

Putting the Moon in the Right Part of the Sky

How to get student-journalists to pay attention to the world around them--in six easy exercises!

By Dr. Kim E. Karloff
California State-Northridge

Introduction

"Though I'd been taught at our dining room table about the solar system and knew the earth revolved around the sun, and our moon around us, I never found out the moon didn't come up in the west until I was a writer and Herschel Brickell, the literary critic, told me after I misplaced it in a story. He said valuable words to me about my new profession: 'Always be sure you get your moon in the right part of the sky.'"

Writer Eudora Welty's words ring true for student-journalists. It's important to pay attention to the details. While most students probably can't describe the guy who sold them coffee at Starbucks this morning, or name the secretary in the registrar's office who just saved them a $75 late-registration fee, it behooves our student-journalists to learn how to better "see" the details in the world around them so that they might better report on the world around them.

These six easy-to-do exercises--employed in beginning and advanced newswriting courses--allow students to sharpen their general awareness as well as their reporting senses.

Rationale

Used throughout the course of the semester, these exercises prompt students to come up with original story ideas, pique student interest in their communities and foster a greater sense of the importance of awareness in the reporting and writing processes.

Implementation

- *Exercise 1*
  Amy's eyes are green.
  Amir's shoes are blue.

Without looking, write a complete descriptionof the person sitting to the left of you.

This exercise teaches students general awareness as well as descriptive writing skills.

- *Exercise 2*
  Who Stole the Stapler?

Ever notice the taped yardstick-like measurements by the entry and exit doors at any 7-Eleven or Gas-n-Go? As most police officers and crime beat reporters know, these "yardsticks" help store clerks identify how tall a perpetrator is once he/she has robbed the shop. We do the same in our news writing lab. In the lab setting, however, it is a stapler that is stolen and students are asked to describe the suspected "perpetrator(s)."

This exercise helps students pay attention to the goings-on around them, and further tightens their descriptive writing.

- *Exercise 3*
  Geography Jeopardy!

Sample questions include:
1) Thousands of U.S. soldiers have been deployed to Iraq. Name at least three nations that border Iraq. (Answer: Turkey, Iran, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia)
2) The Baltic States recently joined NATO. Name two of the three Baltic States. (Answer: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)

This exercise is a fabulous alternative to a weekly in-the-news quiz.

- *Exercise 4*
  How Do I Get Home?

Students are encouraged to take varying routes back to their homes. For example, those living on campus are instructed to tour the engineering building instead of cutting through the student union. Off-campus students might stop at the mosque they often drive by.

This exercise enables students to meet new people, see new places and discover possible story ideas.

- *Exercise 5*
  All the Pretty Pictures

Students attempt to match names of campus leaders, the university president, the women's volleyball coach, the school's dean, university football coach, state's governor, student senate leader and others, with their photos. The student with the most correct matches wins a one-on-one interview with the university president.

- *Exercise 6*
  A Day in the Life of...

Names, occupations and contact information are printed on slips of paper that students draw out of a hat. Students then schedule time to shadow and interview this person. "Day in the Life" stories are due the following week. Examples from recent classes include stories on the county coroner, an emergency room doctor, the dean of students, a preschool principal, an illegal farm worker, a botanist and a juvenile court judge.

This exercise opens students' eyes to the community and its inter-workings.

Impact

Students react to these exercises with enthusiasm and often comment quite glowingly about them in their evaluations. Exercises also foster stronger story ideas, encourage greater accuracy in stories and notably improve students' question-asking skills.

Ann Peru Knabe, M.A., APR, is an Academic Staff Lecturer at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater where she teaches public relations and communications full time. She is working on an interdisciplinary Ph.D. at Marquette University in Milwaukee, and serves as the Wing Chief of Public Affairs for the 440th Airlift Wing at General Mitchell Air Reserve Station. She currently holds the rank of "major" and has completed more than 18 years of service in the Air Force Reserve.

Teaching Public Relations Tactics in the Digital Age

How to use CD technology as a digital supplement in PR writing courses

By Ann Peru Knabe
Wisconsin-Whitewater

Introduction

The "PR Tactics I CD" is a digital version of more than 75 examples of different public relations tactics, including news releases, fact sheets, backgrounders, brochures and related communications material. The different tactics are organized in 14 categories, with hyperlinks connecting the tactics to resulting media coverage and related campaign material. Each category includes tutorial text introducing the tactics and their typical use in a public relations campaign.

Rationale

This innovative course supplement rests on a classic pedagogical approach to teaching public relations writing courses, but moves it into the digital age, meeting the needs of today's tech-savvy students. Most public relations writing textbooks provide examples of different tactics for students' reference. The "PR Tactics I CD" provides this and more in a digital context, complete with the ease of hyperlinks to related media coverage and related campaigns, in a compact format. Students have the convenience of carrying one CD that contains more than 200 "pages" of examples in HTML format and several video clips. In addition to appealing to computer-savvy students, the CD also saves on printing and video duplication costs. All of the examples were used in "real-life" scenarios, and represent a variety of communicating public relations messages.

Implementation

- Ten students tested the CD prototype in spring 2002. More than 30 undergraduate public relations students used the CD as a course supplement in fall 2003 and spring 2004.

- Survey research and student demographic research indicates a correlation between CD use and course performance.

- Students who used the CD reported enjoying it, and used it to refer to and model their work throughout the semester.

- Instructor interviews indicated the CD is a terrific tool for students to use in the classroom, lab and at home. The instructor also used the CD examples for discussion during lectures throughout the semester. The instructor lauded the CD, and asked for a follow-up CD for an upper level writing PR course.

- Three student focus groups indicated great enthusiasm and interest for the CD as a course supplement. Students are already asking for similar CDs to accompany other PR courses.

- The researchers also sought to account for other variables which could influence classroom performance such as student consultation with the teacher, college entrance writing examination scores, a student's access to technology outside of the classroom and the student's level of comfort with technology.

Impact

In focus groups, students were enthusiastic about the CD, and repeatedly asked for the creation of another CD to complement the upper-level writing course. Students also reported the CD was helpful in understanding how PR tactics are used by the media, since the tactics hyper-linked to newspaper and TV coverage. Students said the CD was a great way to get ideas in formatting.

The survey found a number of correlations between CD use and the students' learning experience. Students who referred to the CD during the course reported enjoying it ($r = .736$, $p < .01$). Likewise, students who referred to the CD also said it enhanced their learning experience ($r = .706$, $p < .01$). Students who referred to the CD also modeled their work from the CD ($r = .639$, $p < .01$).

"Word of mouth" also can not be ignored. Students who had taken the entry-level public relations writing course (the semester prior to implementation) frequently asked if they could get a copy of the CD that was now in use.

The CD mirrors the experience of generations of public relations practitioners who learned their craft by "looking in the file" to see how a particular problem or opportunity was addressed in the past, and then seeking to improve on the public relations response.

Because of the small sample size, it is unknown how much students' individual writing skills and personal study habits affected their use of the CD. However, it was noted the higher students' ACT English Writing Score, the more likely they were to refer to the CD for formatting ideas ($r = .712$, $p < .01$). In addition, the higher students' ACT, the higher their grades were on the writing assignments ($r = .549$, $p < .05$).

Diana L. Knott, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Ohio University where she teaches undergraduate and graduate public relations courses. Prior to joining the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio, she worked for nearly 14 years in various public relations capacities.

You Want Me To Do What?

Teaching public relations students to pitch story ideas

By Dr. Diana L. Knott
Ohio

Introduction

Pitching story ideas is often one of the tasks assigned to public relations interns and entry-level employees. However, students often have little or no experience practicing this particular work task. This teaching exercise incorporates existing faculty expertise and/or that of visiting professionals to expose students to the act of pitching story ideas to different media outlets, including newspaper, magazine and broadcast. Such in-class practice provides a frame of reference for students that should help decrease their anxiety about performing this task on the job.

Rationale

This idea is innovative in that it incorporates a number of learning approaches to expose students to a task they usually have had little to no experience performing. It includes reading pitch tips from professional public relations publications; listening to faculty and guests discuss the particular information needs of specific media and to their respective professional experiences--both good and bad--with public relations practitioners; conferring with a classmate to apply what they have learned to the "real-world" scenario each team has been given; and practicing the pitch to the current and former media professionals, who role-play, incorporating typical media representative questions and responses.

Implementation

- Colleagues with professional experience in broadcasting, newspapers and magazines are approached about participating in the class session on pitching. Visiting professionals from the field also have been approached and have participated in this exercise. In-class pitching scenarios are shared with them for their review and suggestions prior to the class.

- Students are given a handout about pitching tips from professional public relations publications to read prior to attending class.

- Each participating faculty member and/or visiting professional presents a brief overview of their experiences, positive and negative, with public relations practitioners and offers tips for pitching stories to their particular medium.

- Students are then asked to pair up into teams of two and are randomly given a scenario that involves their boss asking them to pitch a particular story to a particular medium.

- Students are given 10 minutes to formulate their "pitch" and to select which member of the team will "make the call."

- The participating colleagues and professionals represent the media and role-play with the students, as they would were it a real pitch to them.

- After the exercise, students are asked to name specific things they have learned about the process.

Impact

The primary benefit of this exercise for students is anxiety reduction. When students or new professionals are given a pitching assignment, they might still get nervous, but it is not a totally unknown experience.

Students have read pitching tips from professional publications and have heard first-hand from and interacted with experienced media professionals. Therefore, the act of reading, hearing, pairing and sharing with a classmate, actually making a "call" and interacting with the professional, then reflecting on the experience at the end of the class reinforces the key points of the task in their minds. Such multiple ways of learning and the act of reflection have been shown to be key in students' retention of information. It also provides a form of active learning that's instructive but that's also, in the end, fun.

Students have to take initiative and speak up in front of their professor, the media professionals and, perhaps most stressful for them, their own peers. However, everyone benefits from the different performances, and it's all conducted in a "safe" environment.

Hearing from previous and current newspaper, magazine and broadcast professionals also broadens these public relations students' perspectives about those media in general and helps them understand the importance of building positive relationships and distinct ways that help them do it.

Miles Maguire, M.B.A., is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He teaches writing, reporting, editing, magazine production and online journalism. He has worked on newspapers, magazines and newsletters in a variety of cities, including Milwaukee, Baltimore, Washington and New York.

The Shadow (Editor) Knows

How to use the Internet to turn students into thoughtful, critical readers of the campus newspaper

By Miles Maguire
Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Introduction

In this GIFT students in an introductory editing class take turns serving as a shadow editorial board for the campus newspaper. Each week all the students in the class use an interactive form linked to the instructor's Web site to critique the campus newspaper. At the end of the week their comments are downloaded and then posted verbatim (with names removed to protect the guilty). At the next class meeting, the shadow editors for the week lead a class discussion evaluating the most recent issue of the paper and the students' reaction to it.

Rationale

This GIFT accomplishes several goals simultaneously: It encourages students to follow campus news, to analyze newspaper quality in a systematic way and to get ready to deal with the kind of conflicting input and reactions that editors must sort through in deciding how best to serve their audience. Because it uses an online form with dropdown menus and allows survey participants to express their opinions freely, it engages students in a fun and easy way outside of class while ensuring that they will be prepared to take part in discussions when class convenes.

Implementation

- Create a basic Web form, which you can do by hand, with some word processing programs or, more easily, with a Web editor, such as Dreamweaver, or a course management program, such as Desire2Learn. You also need to make arrangements with your campus Web master to capture and access the student comments. (There is also specialized survey software that you can use for this purpose.)

- You can use the same Web form and same questions all semester, or you can develop variations that ask students to evaluate specific aspects of the student newspaper, such as news judgment, photographs, layout and writing style.

- Questions can be as general, such as "What was your favorite item in this week's issue?" Or they can be specific: "Identify a photograph in this week's sports section and comment on its visual appeal."

- You can also include scale questions that asked students to assign numerical ratings to various aspects of the paper.

- Give students a deadline (for example, Friday at noon) for when they have to complete their evaluation.

- Download their comments and repost them verbatim with names removed.

- Require names to be provided so that you can track participation, which counts toward the semester grade.

- All students have access to the comments, but each week two or three students serve as shadow editors. Their task is to summarize the reader comments and decide which ones are valid and which ones should be ignored.

- The shadow editors are expected to lead a 10- to 15-minute discussion about the issue they have reviewed.

- Each student must be a "shadow" editor at least twice during the semester and can earn extra credit for participating additional times.

Impact

Perhaps surprisingly some of the most positive reaction to this exercise comes from student journalists on the campus paper. In the normal course of things, they get very little feedback about their work and are very grateful to receive these peer critiques, even when they are full of blunt criticism. The critiques are freely available to anyone since they are on the Web.

In the class itself, the exercise creates many positive outcomes. It facilitates discussion since students always arrive with something to contribute, and it reinforces points made in lectures and readings. Students become more thoughtful and careful in all phases of editing, from using AP style to thinking about how to deal with ethical issues. Because the feedback from students is often contradictory, students get a taste of what it's like to be a professional editor, having to deal with diametrically opposed reactions from readers.

After spending a semester closely reading and analyzing the campus paper, students frequently comment that they are much more sophisticated in their approach to news coverage, and a common remark is: "I'll never read a newspaper the same way again."

This GIFT empowers students and often motivates them to join the newspaper staff, with the confidence that they could do an as good or better job. They also recall the critiques and know that students in future editing classes will be scrutinizing their work.

Leigh Nelson, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at James Madison University. She teaches basic human communication, introduction to communication research methods and survey research methods for communication majors. Prior to academia, she worked as a statistician and a survey researcher.

Using *Hotornot.com* to Assess Attractiveness: An Intercoder Reliability Exercise

How to get students to think critically about how intercoder reliability works in communication research methods

Dr. C. Leigh Nelson
James Madison

Introduction

Intercoder reliability or interobserver reliability is often described as the percentage of agreement between the observations of independent coders (Frey, Bota, & Kreps, 2000, p. 422). Singleton, Singleton and Straits (1993) describe it as "an 'equivalence' method for assessing reliability that examines the extent to which different interviewers, observers, or coders get equivalent results using the same instrument or measure" (p. 517). Although these definitions seem straightforward, students have difficulty understanding how complicated it is to achieve.

Rationale

This exercise allows students in your communication research methods course to understand how problematic it can be to: 1) achieve conceptual fit between your conceptual definition and your operational definition(s); 2) get agreement among coders of what it is you are looking for; and 3) retrain coders to look for the same criteria when evaluating a target observation.

Implementation

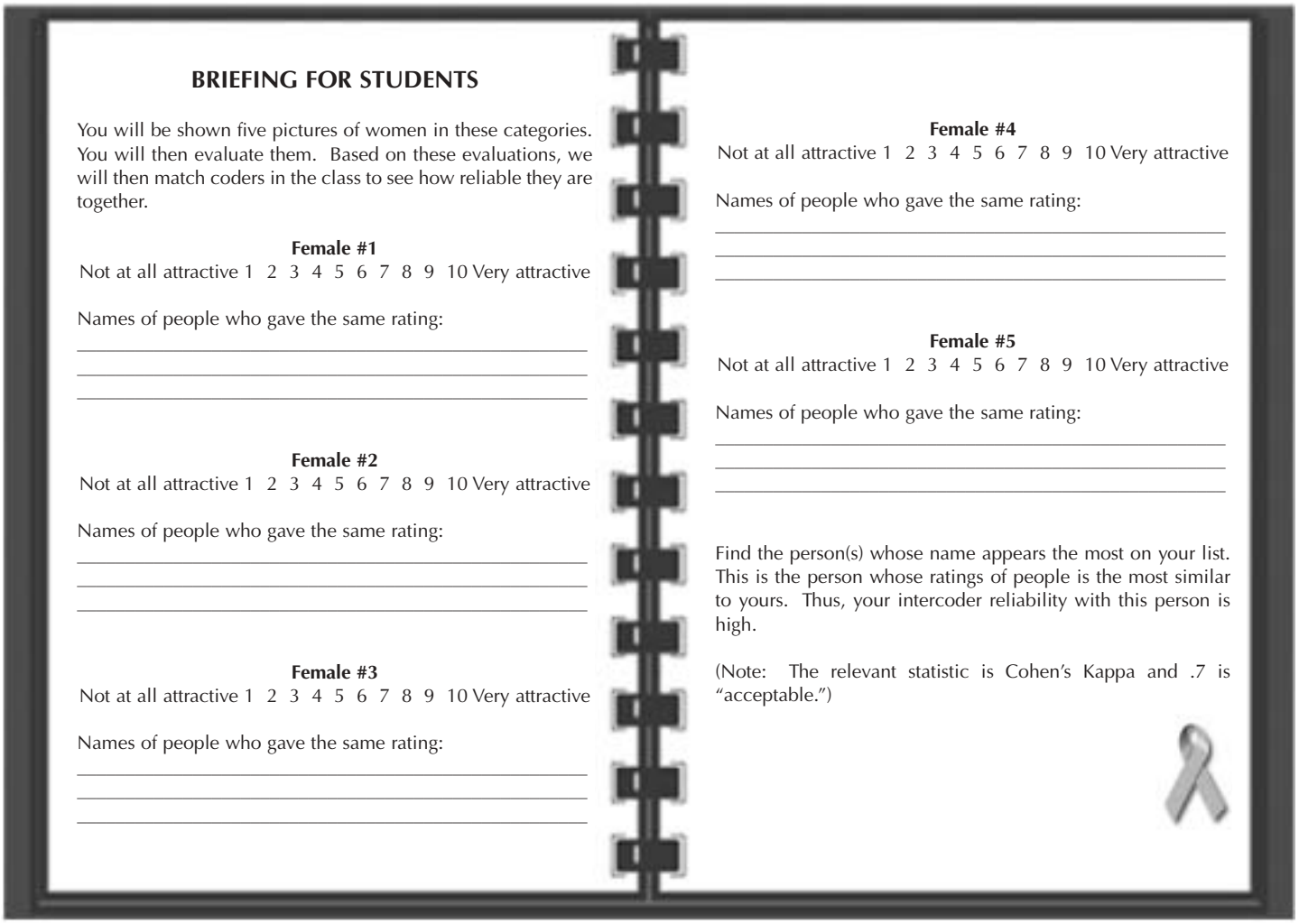
- *Materials*

  In-class: Access to the Internet Web site: *www.hotornot.com*.

  Alternately, the professor could utilize pictures of various women between the ages of 33 and 40 who have agreed to have their attractiveness rated.

- *Briefing For Students*

  You have been assigned the task of choosing an attractive female spokesperson for your public relations campaign on breast cancer aware-



ness. You have been asked to rate five individuals between the ages of 33-40 for attractiveness. Research indicates that attractiveness of spokesperson is especially important when the audience is not highly involved in the message. Conceptually attractiveness has been defined as:

Attractiveness (from dictionary.com *definition accessed 3/1/04):*

Attractive

1. Having the power or quality of attracting or drawing; as, the attractive force of bodies. --Sir I. Newton.

2. Attracting or drawing by moral influence or pleasurable emotion; alluring; inviting; pleasing. 1: the quality of arousing interest; being attractive or something that attracts.

We will be operationalizing attractiveness on a 1 to 10 scale with 1 being "not at all" attractive and 10 being "very attractive."

You will be shown 5 pictures of women in these categories. You will then evaluate them. Based on these evaluations, we will then match coders in the class to see how reliable they are together.

(See graphic above for example.)

Find the person(s) whose name appears the most on your list. This is the person whose ratings of people is the most similar to yours. Thus, your intercoder

NELSON
Continued on page 42

NELSON
Continued from page 41

reliability with this person is high. (Note: The relevant statistic is Cohen's Kappa and .7 is "acceptable.")

Impact

This assignment helped students understand how difficult it is to find people who view people the way they do. It also helped them understand how a researcher can continually conceptualize and operationalize "attractive" to improve intercoder reliability. Students reported that this exercise was a unique and fun way to understand this important concept.

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Rosanne V. Pagano, M.J., a writer and editor, joined the University of Alaska-Anchorage faculty in 1999 after a 14-year career in Alaska journalism that has taken her to the Aleutian Islands, the north slope of the Brooks Range and Siberia. She is a graduate of the University of California-Berkeley graduate school of journalism and a member of the 2000 class of Freedom Forum teaching fellows. Research interests include assessment of JMC internships and journalism's contribution to efforts to improve student writing across the curriculum.

Unlocking the Lead

How to demystify lead writing by reinforcing the connection between a strong opening and strong reporting

By Rosanne V. Pagano
Alaska-Anchorage

Introduction

This exercise demystifies lead writing for beginning journalism students who often fall for the notion that only great stylists produce great leads.

In a warm-up discussion, students examine exemplary leads and work backward to suggest interview questions that would have elicited memorable detail, scenes or anecdotes. In a writing lab immediately following discussion, students are interrupted after they've completed a short interview and before they begin drafting a lead. Students use this interim to complete a self-inventory that helps them critically examine their reporting before launching into lead writing. This teaching idea departs from standard approaches that catalog types of openings but fail to clearly link lead writing to the reporting that precedes it.

Rationale

This exercise underscores the dual role of journalists: They're information gatherers as well as writers. By pausing before writing to evaluate their own reporting, students learn to critically analyze their notes at a moment when they're still able to repair shortcomings. Strugglers are heartened by this exercise because reporting tools such as observation, listening, note taking and the ability to research documents can be learned and refined with practice. (Curiosity is hard to teach, but it can be emphasized and rewarded.)

Students with good interview skills see for themselves that effective reporting generates multiple good leads. For these students, this exercise

PAGANO
Continued on page 44

PAGANO
Continued from page 43

offers assurance that a textbook strategy, such as the *Wall Street Journal* technique of specific to general, is only one valid approach among many if reporting is abundant.

As noted writing coach and professor Donald M. Murray has observed, thorough reporting is a key predictor of successful writing. By reviewing a student's notes before writing begins, instructors gain insight into reporting ability and can pinpoint weak spots to repair in follow-up interviews. It is far less draining to suggest ways to improve student reporting first than to mark line edits later.

Implementation

- Choose three engaging leads whose success can be traced to reporting skills such as observation, curiosity, listening, note taking, or library or document searches; photocopy the leads. A warm-up discussion asks students to think about their own lead-writing strengths and weaknesses. Students then read exemplary leads, highlight compelling scenes, dialog, anecdotes or details and then draft a few interview questions that might have elicited this information.

- Close the warm up and begin the writing lab. Students pair off to interview each other about a memorable event such as a wedding, birth or vacation. Students collect as many telling details, anecdotes, quotes and scenes as possible in interviews of only eight to 10 minutes.

- Students next settle at computers to write, but the instructor interrupts to pose three questions, adapted from Christopher Scanlan's text, *Writing and Reporting: Basics for the 21st Century*. This self-inventory helps students see if they've done enough reporting to draft an effective lead:

What information was unexpected? (Reveals curiosity and observation skill.)

What did you learn about your peer, his or her background, and how he or she responds to setbacks or success? (Reveals ability to listen, take effective notes and ask follow-up questions.)

What is the most effective way to order your information? (Reveals ability to use storytelling techniques to engage a reader.)

- After typing brief answers, virtually all students will find they have too little information; the interview time was too short! Permit students to re-interview briefly, complete leads and trade with their interview partners to verify accuracy. Leave time for students to read leads aloud and critique the self-inventory technique.

Impact

Students learn by doing to critically review their reporting before launching into lead writing, a frustrating and fruitless effort if information gathering is scant.

By introducing a pause between reporting and writing, instructors buy time to assess a student's readiness to draft a lead based on answers to the self-inventory questions. Instructors use this time to suggest ways to improve reporting, increasing the chance that student writing will be right the first time.

Unlocking the lead by requiring students to first see if they've gathered enough information is best suited to beginners because they're least likely to regain focus if a lead goes astray. This exercise may be adapted for specialized or advanced courses because it emphasizes the overlooked link between thorough reporting and successful leads.

Alison Plessinger, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Communications at Slippery Rock University (beginning August 2004). She will be teaching print journalism and public speaking courses.

Everybody Has a Story

How to teach students to conduct interviews with strangers

By Dr. Alison Plessinger
Slippery Rock

Introduction

This is an ideal assignment to get students out of the relatively safe world of interviewing people they already know. As I taught reporting, I began to realize that students always interviewed the same people and often interviewed roommates, friends or faculty in their majors. They were uncomfortable going to strangers, an odd quirk for journalism students whose careers will depend on doing just that.

Rationale

The idea for this assignment came from the CBS *Morning Show*'s series, "Everybody Has a Story," in which a reporter goes to a town selected by the throw of a dart at a map, picks a name from a phone book and interviews that person. This assignment is based on that concept, although the purpose is a bit different. This assignment not only gets students out into the community, but also provides them with an opportunity to interview someone without a purpose at the outset and learn to come up with a good story angle. It allows them to test their ability to handle questions and think on their feet.

Implementation

To use this method, you need to take the following steps:

- Assign students to write a profile of someone they have never met. Show clips from CBS interviews if possible.

PLESSINGER
Continued on page 46

PLESSINGER
Continued from page 45

• Pre-assignment discussion needs to include how to approach someone for an interview, how to interview for profile stories, how to write questions when you don't yet know the subject of the story, how to do follow-up questions and how to work with a subject who is nervous about being interviewed.

• Have students randomly select a person--this can be done in a variety of ways.

Students can use the dart and map method to select an area of the town or campus and then select from that pool. They can go to the room they lived in as a freshman and interview the current occupant. They can simply use the campus or local phone directory and select a name at random. It doesn't have to be scientific--just someone they do not already know.

• Students should select at least one or two back-ups for their interview. Often, the first person is either unavailable or not interested in being interviewed. They may tell the student they don't have a story to tell, and the student should try to convince them that everybody does, indeed, have a story.

• Students should complete a profile of this person, using their interview(s) to come up with a reason why this person has an interesting story to tell.

Impact

This assignment is one of the most challenging my students have completed. It is appropriate for advanced reporting students who are learning interviewing skills. It is best used as a first assignment, since the result is so positive and impacts every other assignment they will complete. Most students approach this assignment with great trepidation, but ultimately come to realize that, if they are prepared as a reporter and understand how to ask questions, it is not that daunting of a task. They come away from it much more confident in their ability to conduct interviews with anyone they encounter, and in their ability to find a story in any situation. My students have said that this is the single most valuable assignment in the course, and that without it, they would not feel comfortable completing the other story assignments, in which they have to interview both on and off-campus sources.

Donnalyn Pompper, Ph.D., APR, is a Florida State University associate professor. She teaches mass media and society, public relations, communication theory and integrated marketing communication. Prior to academia, she worked for 12 years in corporate public relations and as a daily newspaper reporter.

One-Page Wonders Save the Day

How to get students to read for class

By Dr. Donnalyn Pompper
Florida State

Introduction

Formal studies and classroom experiences suggest that increasingly, students resist reading assigned chapters and articles for homework. Consequently, they are unprepared to engage in discussion and are challenged to assimilate new information. My One-Page-Wonder (OPW) teaching technique applies a "benefits" approach to motivate students to read before class.

Rationale

Students have many demands on their time--classes, activities, work, friends, family, etc. Often reading terse, scholarly articles for homework (or even book chapters, for that matter) is low on their agenda. Instead, they choose to cram come exam time. Overall, the purpose of this weekly assignment is to get students to read homework before class and to engage with the material in such a way that they can experience immediate benefits for doing so. This teaching technique works among undergraduates and graduate students.

First, students read the material. Then they write up to one page about each article or chapter, identifying key themes, arguments, and points and hand it in for credit. Next, they share each OPW with classmates. Finally, they use the OPWs as "refreshers" when studying for exams. So, what's in it for them? They are rewarded with "easy, free" points that constitute up to one-third of their semester grade, create their own study guides for exams and get "free copies" of their classmates' study guides.

POMPPER
Continued on page 48

POMPPER
Continued from page 47

Implementation

- At the semester's beginning, I total the number of chapter and handout readings and divide by the number of students in the class. Then I formally ask each student to volunteer, signing up to lead class discussions on each reading.

- For each reading, students write up to one page identifying and summarizing key themes, arguments and points. This activity constitutes 30-40% of a student's grade for the semester. Students earn about three points each week for 13 weeks.

- Earning points is an "all or nothing" opportunity. Summaries of all weekly readings must be handed in to earn points. For example, if there are four readings in a given week, summaries of all four readings must be submitted to earn the three points.

- Student discussion leaders distribute copies of their OPWs to classmates. Thus, each student has 15-25 copies of other students' OPWs to compare and contrast with their own.

Impact

Over the years, I have discovered that students traditionally fall behind in class readings at various points throughout the semester. Also, some find reading diverse theoretical constructs from communication and other disciplines to be cumbersome and confusing. I have used this technique in theory classes as well as practical skills classes. It works!

- Students become engaged with the material.

- Students ask insightful questions.

- Students are properly informed to debate their peers.

- Students gain practice in articulately presenting to the class.

- Last, but not least, I can be a more effective teacher when students come to class prepared.

Here's what students have to say about OPWs:

"Since OPWs are worth points, it makes me read them and by reading them I am learning what the articles are about. The articles relate to what we discuss in class. Therefore, we are prepared for the next discussion--which is also a bonus."

"I think it makes the discussions more fulfilling in the sense that they are to the point and not redundant because everyone is familiar with the material."

"I am staying on top and pacing myself weekly because of OPWs."

"The one-page-wonder assignments are helpful in facilitating the reading as well as providing an easy opportunity to get a good grade."

"After class passes, I can go back and review OPWs to refresh my mind."

"They introduce me to the subjects assigned and make me think about relevant points and ideas. They help me organize the material in my head and on paper."

"It does make you read material that may go unread otherwise, such as when time is short and there are many other obligations to meet."

"I am able to break down some of the more lengthy readings and also grasp the main ideas through all the jargon, compare notes with other students and study for quizzes."

Jack Rosenberry, M.B.A., is an assistant professor of communication/journalism responsible for print journalism courses at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, N.Y. He worked in newspapers for 20 years before joining Fisher in 2002, and was a GIFT scholar in 2003.

Ken Burns is Coming to Campus

How to get students to use the Internet for effective background research

By Jack Rosenberry
St. John Fisher

Introduction

This exercise helps students learn to use the Internet to gather background information about a well-known person, under the (hypothetical) rationale that the person will be coming to campus for a talk and they need to complete some advance research to prepare for covering it. The assignment is the capstone to a short (about three classes) segment on Internet research that's part of our Introductory Newswriting course.

Rationale

Today's students have been using the Internet for research practically from the time they were in middle school. But effective journalistic research means taking the skill to a new level; this challenging, yet directed, experience in practical application of the Internet for researching story background does just that. For the past several semesters the "subject" has been documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, who is well-known enough to have had a good amount of information published about him but not so well known that every student is very familiar with his work. Usually about a quarter of the class or less has heard of Burns, so it can be a very "real world" exercise in quickly getting up to speed on an unfamiliar topic.

Also, the construction of the assignment matches the way many such events are covered by professional publications. Reporters who must cover something on deadline frequently write the background portion of the story in advance as time saver, then add a "top" with key details from the event afterward. They also do preliminary research to prepare them-

ROSENBERRY
Continued on page 50

ROSENBERRY
Continued from page 49

selves for what the speaker may address and to develop questions they might ask at an interview or news conference.

Implementation

• A short unit on computer-assisted research leads up to the assignment. This unit includes topics such as keyword vs. hierarchical searching and evaluation of Internet sites for authority, objectivity, timeliness (whether information is up-to-date), etc.

• The assignment itself consists of four related tasks:

1) Search for information about filmmaker Ken Burns's personal and professional lives. Students are told they can do this on line and/or in "hard copy," for example, a reference such as *Current Biography*--but most of them do all of the research online.

2) Use the information from the research to write a 250-word "shirt-tail"--the background portion of a story that would be written before the speaking event so that the writer would have a head start at completing the story on deadline.

3) Also use the information to formulate five good, open-ended questions that could be asked of Burns in an interview. This reviews and reinforces skills taught in an earlier class unit on interviewing and question development.

4) Document all sources properly.

Impact

This assignment emphasizes a concept that many students have a hard time grasping: namely, that effective Internet research is more than just going to Google, typing in a couple of keywords and looking at the first few sites that are returned in the search. Inevitably, some students do that, and they are the ones who perform the poorest on the assignment.

One of the valuable things about using Burns as a subject is that he has a lengthy filmography extending more than 20 years. Some students inevitably find older information or resources that don't report any of his accomplishments later than, say, baseball (1994); this can become a teachable moment about making sure you're not getting out-of-date information. Others write the shirt-tail with the most mundane of details (such as his birthdate), which provides a good jumping-off point to discuss what information is important and relevant as background for a story such as this. The students who do the best job are those who use the most diverse set of resources in collecting the information and then apply the best critical thinking to create the shirt-tail and questions from the information they've discovered.

Carol Schwalbe, M.A., is an assistant professor at Arizona State University. She teaches editing, magazine writing and online media courses at the Cronkite School of Journalism. Before that, she was a writer and editor at the National Geographic Society for 31 years.

GIFT 2004 Grand Prize Winner

The Language of the Senses

How to use your five senses to add color and detail to feature stories

By Carol Schwalbe
Arizona State

Introduction

Writers spend a lifetime sharpening their powers of observation. To hone these skills in my feature writing class, I've devised a series of exercises focused on the five senses to help students notice the details that add color and texture to a story. These exercises also enable students to take a close look at the trees instead of the forest, where too often beginning writers get lost.

Rationale

These exercises, which can be spread over several classes, help students become better observers and better writers. They learn how to look at a scene in more than one way. By painting pictures with words, they re-create reality so readers can stand in their shoes. These exercises aren't graded, so students feel free to stretch themselves.

Implementation

- *The language of listening: Hone your eavesdropping skills.* We've all been told not to eavesdrop, but it's one of the best ways to improve students' skills with dialogue. By focusing on the speech patterns and rhythms of everyday conversations, students gain a better understanding of how real people speak. Students go someplace on or near campus for half an hour and listen in on as many conversations as possible. Back in the classroom, they write a short piece describing the scene and including some dialogue.

SCHWALBE
Continued on page 52

SCHWALBE
Continued from page 51

• *The language of seeing: The many shades of red.* I give students several paint chips from a paint store and ask them to come up with names for the different shades. This exercise helps them realize there are many shades of any one color.

• *The language of seeing: The color of food.* First, students list five occasions where people regularly get together over food, such as a tailgate picnic or a farmers market. They then choose one occasion from their list and describe it based on color. Perhaps all the food is one color: Scandinavian meals tend to be all white. Or maybe the food is of boundless variety, and they describe the exact shade of the tomatoes and the pale sheen of the soufflé.

• *The language of scent: Sniff bags.* I bring in small paper bags fragrant with familiar scents, such as a sliced lemon, a cloth soaked in Old Spice and another in bleach. After I pass the bags around, each student writes about one scent. Some of the associations are magical, such as the taste of grandma's chocolate chip cookies conjuring up memories of happy times together.

• *The language of taste: The power of description.* I list words associated with the sense of taste, such as hot soup, barbecue sauce, fresh coffee and warm bread. Without spending time in preparation, the students free-write, letting their creative juices flow, not worrying about grammar, spelling, punctuation and AP style. This is simply to enhance their power of description--a very helpful asset for any writer.

• *The language of touch: Writing with precision.* Students write a paragraph describing an object by its parts and dimensions. They then read these aloud and see if their description is precise enough so their classmates can guess what the object is.

• *The language of the senses: Putting it all together.* As a capstone exercise for learning to write visually, students have 45 minutes to go somewhere on or near campus and use all their senses to observe the smallest details. Back in the classroom, they write a descriptive scene incorporating as many of those sensory experiences as possible without going overboard. I encourage them to give their writing a push with a simile or metaphor.

Impact

• I'm often astonished by the color and detail in the descriptive passages written while the imagery is still fresh, which helps students appreciate the power of immediacy in writing (and not procrastinating!).

• These exercises make students use not just their eyes but all their senses. The more students are aware of, the richer their writing will be.

• On end-of-semester evaluations, many students mention these exercises as one of their favorite--and most valuable--parts of the class.

From one student: *"I felt that I'd lost my voice from writing so many news stories. Now I'm beginning to sing again--or at least chirp."*

From another: *"Wow! Now I notice things I never paid attention to before."*

Kimberly Wilmot Voss, M.A., is an assistant professor at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. She teaches media writing, public affairs reporting and media law in the Department of Mass Communication. She also writes for the **St. Louis Post-Dispatch** *and the* **St. Louis Business Journal.**

Empowering Students: Transitioning to Journalistic Writing

How to improve journalistic writing instruction by connecting to what is taught in freshman composition

By Kimberly Wilmot Voss
Southern Illinois-Edwardsville

Introduction

Freshman composition is the one class that almost every student has to take. It is a course that is designed to strengthen students' writing abilities and to develop students' critical thinking skills. When journalism writing professors connect their instruction to what was taught in composition, students are empowered.

Rationale

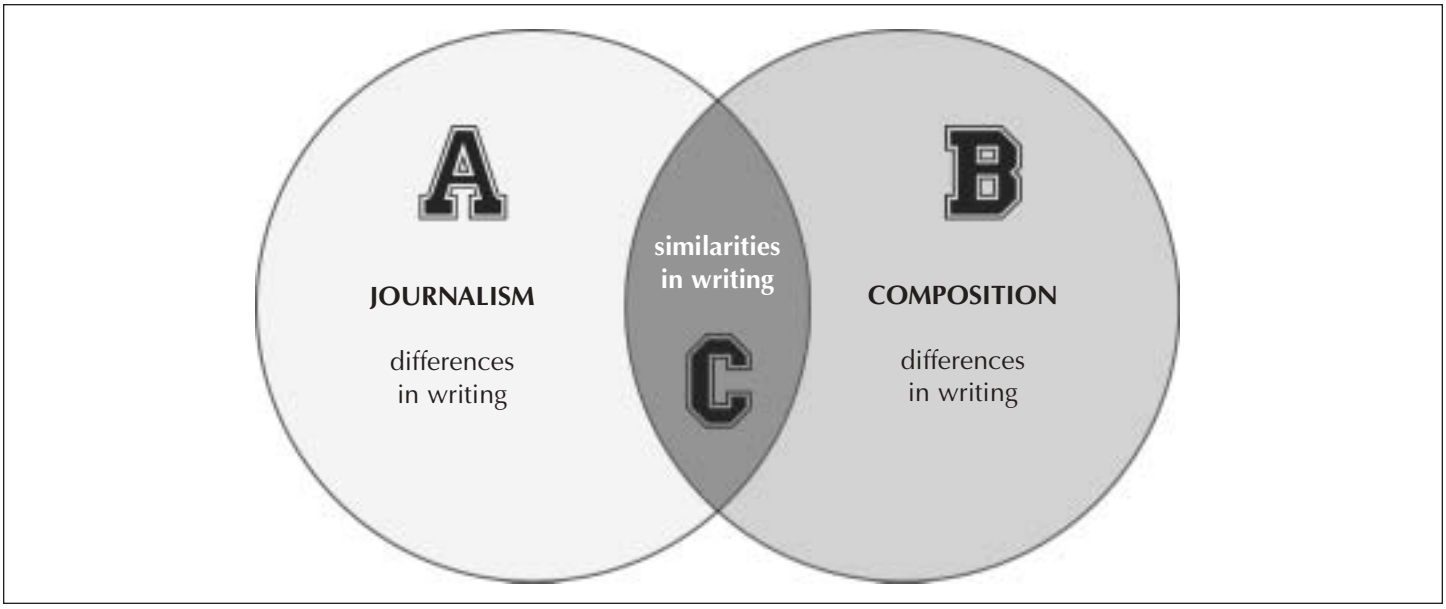
Many students in their first journalism writing classes are challenged by the new writing style. Several of the journalistic rules go against what they have been taught in past English classes and thus students are left confused or frustrated. Because almost all students must take freshman composition, a natural way to ease students' fears is to help students see the similarities and to clarify the differences between journalism and composition. This lesson serves to empower students by reminding them of the skills they already have and to spell out the different writing style they are being faced with in their journalism writing classes.

Implementation

- *Part I*

Prior to the first writing assignment, address students' concern about the journalistic writing style compared to composition writing. As examples, students are often confused about the differing paragraph lengths or the use of opinion. Begin by having students talk about essays

VOSS
Continued on page 54



VOSS
Continued from page 53

that they wrote for freshman composition; ask them how they might approach it differently if they were writing that essay as a news story.

- *Part II*

Create a Venn diagram for students (see graphic above). The Venn diagram is made up of two or more overlapping circles. It is often used in mathematics to show relationships between sets. In language arts instruction, Venn diagrams are useful for examining similarities and differences in characters, stories and poems. In this case, put journalism on one side (A) and composition on the other side (B). The overlapping section (C) will include writing similarities.

Help students brainstorm about the similarities and differences, such as:

1) Similarities--summary statement (a nut graph in journalism/a thesis in composition); a consistent style (AP style in journalism/MLA style in composition); attribution for sources; proper grammar; and development of points.

2) Differences--paragraph length; use of opinion; conclusions; audience; and adjectives.

List the similarities under the (C) category. List the differences under the appropriate category: journalism (A) or composition (B).

Discuss how much experience the students already have in the journalistic writing form by reviewing the (C) circle--students already have a foundation to build from; they just need to focus on making some adjustments.

- *Part III*

As students draft their first journalism writing assignment, review the Venn diagram exercise. Remind students of the differences that they will need to revise and proofread for by looking at the items listed in the journalism (A) circle.

Impact

Rather than focusing on the newness of the journalistic writing style, students become empowered through this lesson. It also gives students a list of items to revise or proofread for before handing in their stories. In an assessment of assignments in the journalism writing class, students regularly respond that not only is this an entertaining lesson, it was one of the assignments that helped them the most.

Serving Seniors and Ourselves in Feature Writing

How to meld service learning and journalism principles

By Margo Wilson
California University of Pennsylvania

Margo Wilson, M.F.A., is an assistant professor of journalism and English at California University of Pennsylvania. She teaches a variety of journalism, creative writing and English courses. Prior to academia, she was a reporter, feature writer, and editor at newspapers in Canada, Indiana, Wisconsin, and California, including the **Los Angeles Times.**

Introduction

Feature writing students confront fears and misconceptions about journalism--and the elderly--when they write a profile about and use disposable cameras to photograph seniors living at a retirement complex. Students help assemble a newsletter--a collection of profiles--that's distributed to the apartment residents. Students also put together a poster about the project for the university's annual service learning poster session and write reflective essays. They learn a little about copy-editing and headline writing, as well. And the instructor receives a trial-by-fire crash course in Microsoft Publisher.

Rationale

Journalism students struggle with the idea of interviewing strangers. They have a hard time keeping opinion out of stories. Many don't have much experience with people from diverse backgrounds. They are unsure of their journalism and writing skills. They need help, too, finding a focus when they have a sea of facts.

One way to take the journalistic plunge is to interview someone not like you but whom, nevertheless, is supportive. The seniors at the apartments agreed to help my feature-writing class. Seeing one's work in print is an ego boost, so a newsletter seemed in order. Producing a newsletter also helps fledgling journalists understand the steps in getting words from their computer into print.

The project also was a spur for me to learn Microsoft Publisher, which I will use in a fall editing class. I wanted, as well, to see if service-

WILSON
Continued on page 56

WILSON
Continued from page 55

learning projects gibe with the goals of a journalism writing class.

In the fall 1999 *Journalism Educator*, J. Corbett and A. Kendall wrote that the American Association of Higher Education defines service learning, in part, as a method of learning and service conducted in and meeting the needs of a community. The method helps foster civic responsibility and provides time for students to reflect on the experience. These outcomes may be at odds with the journalistic value of maintaining objectivity. It seemed likely our newsletter would be a public relations piece for the seniors' complex--its need--not a straight journalistic endeavor. But I figured the project would produce class discussion about differences among news/feature writing, public relations and opinion.

Implementation

- The service coordinator at the seniors' complex rounded up residents interested in the project.

- I visited the seniors and asked for their help in putting my student interviewers at ease.

- Students got a list of the seniors' names and phone numbers and picked someone to interview and photograph. During class brainstorming, students produced a list of potential interview questions. We also discussed the history of the last 80 years so the students were prepared to ask about different periods in the residents' lives. The students had two weeks to interview the person and write the story.

- I critiqued the drafts and asked the students to rewrite them by the following class.

- I set up a page for each student in Microsoft Publisher and they wrote headlines for another person's story and cutlines for photos of the person whom they'd interviewed. I assigned a reflective essay, due at the next class, about the service learning project. This essay would be displayed on the poster.

- Since it wasn't a layout class, I layed out the newsletter and printed out copies. Students proofed the newsletter. They edited their reflective essays on another Microsoft Publisher page, wrote headlines and cutlines and transformed everything into a class poster.

- Students participated in the poster session.

- We debriefed. A couple of residents spotted minor errors. We printed a corrections sheet and sent it to the residents.

Impact

Students were surprised at what busy lives seniors lead. Since the seniors were gentle interviewees, the students gained confidence interviewing. My fears that the project would be a public relations boost for the seniors complex were somewhat validated, but the students said they felt they'd learned to write for different audiences and adjust their work accordingly. In their reflective essays, they mostly focused on interviewing and writing problems and how they'd met these challenges. I was happy when I pulled off using Microsoft Publisher. I feel the project would work in most beginning feature writing and news writing classes, as well as in a media and society class or public relations classes. We're planning to make the project an annual event.

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