Community College
The Journalist

Spring/Summer 2005

The Official Publication of the Community College Journalism Association

GIFT 2005

Great Ideas For Teachers program now in its 6th year!

*Plus...*CCJA News *inside this issue*

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GIFT is 6 years strong!

The Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) program is going strong in its 6th year in San Antonio, Texas!

The International Communication Division has joined CCJA, its co-founding sponsor, Small Programs Interest Group (SPIG), and the Scholastic Journalism Division this year to sponsor the annual, interactive mega-poster session at the convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).

The GIFT program was founded in 2000 to provide colleagues with fresh ideas for creating or updating their lessons--just in time for the new academic year!

Fifty-six GIFT submissions were submitted by AEJMC's uniform deadline of April 1 from instructors teaching at community colleges, small programs and large research universities. Only 25 (45% acceptance rate) were selected to be featured at the AEJMC summer convention in San Antonio on Aug. 10 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 six years.

May these GIFT articles inspire and challenge you to strengthen and constantly improve your teaching techniques. Thank you for supporting a worthwhile program!

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The Community College Journalist

The Official Publication of the Community College Journalism Association

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Sue Westcott Alessandri, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. She teaches courses in the departments of Advertising and Public Relations. Prior to joining academia, she worked in journalism, corporate communications and marketing.

The Ad Strategy Scavenger Hunt

How to help students find classroom concepts in the real world

By Dr. Sue Wetcott Alessandri
Syracuse

Introduction

In any advertising course, there is an overwhelming desire on the part of the students to see "real world" examples that pertain to the topic being studied. For most advertising topics, providing examples is not a problem, since there are countless ads available to complement the day's lecture. When it comes to message strategy, however, there are as many interpretations of the phrase itself as there are ads in the media. And while the concept and definition of message strategy may differ among professors and practitioners, there exists a plethora of examples of message strategies. After all, every single advertising execution ever created (even those that fail to penetrate our consciousness) was developed based on a message strategy. In this exercise, students work as part of a team to find--and then discuss--the most relevant examples of 10 advertising message strategies.

Rationale

Teaching a theory or abstract idea--like message strategy--without examples is certainly not impossible, but it is much more effective--and much more interesting--to use an exercise that gets students actively involved in the identification and discussion of strategies. By working as part of a team, students are actively engaged in analyzing and discussing magazine advertising content to find the relevant message strategies.

Implementation

- A few months in advance, start collecting magazines otherwise headed for the recycling bin (other faculty and staff are usually happy to

donate theirs, too) or, the week before you plan to do this exercise, remind students to bring their own magazines to the appropriate class.

• On class day, spend 20 minutes or so talking about the major message strategies (below) and talk about the methods most likely used to implement these strategies. I also provide hypothetical examples of each. This way, students form their own "mental pictures" of how the strategies come to life in magazines.

1) Promote brand recall
2) Link a key attribute to the brand
3) Instill brand preference
4) Scare the consumer into action
5) Induce anxiety
6) Change the consumption experience
7) Situate the brand socially
8) Define the brand image
9) Persuade the consumer
10) Invoke a direct response (O'Guinn, Allen and Semenik, 2000).

• After the brief discussion, advise students to find a partner (or small group) to work with.

• Explain the scavenger hunt concept.

Instruct the teams to comb through their pile of magazines and tear out the ads that best reflect each of the 10 message strategies. (Usually I give students about 25 or 30 minutes to complete the exercise).

• After students have been working for a few minutes, begin walking from team to team to answer student questions. This provides an additional teaching opportunity.

• Bring the class back together for the presentation of the ads and a debriefing.

• Taking it one strategy at a time, ask for volunteers to show the examples they found.

• While each of the students is showing his/her examples, I explain why an ad may or may not reflect a particular strategy. This leads to more class discussion based on the examples.

Impact

By the time the class gets back together to discuss each of the strategies found in the students' examples, I find that the students are energized and eager to volunteer to show their examples and talk about what they've found. As the class and I walk through each of the strategies and look at the examples, the students prove that they have a more concrete knowledge of what each of the advertising strategies encompasses. This becomes apparent as the students begin to question each other on their choices: this student-to-student inquiry adds a peer-learning dimension to class discussion. As a teacher, it is gratifying to help the students learn important abstract concepts, but it's exhilarating to see the students learning from each other.

This exercise is adaptable to any discipline: for public relations classes learning about different types of spokespersons, or journalism classes learning about types of headlines, or even mass communication and society courses studying race or gender issues.

Source

O'Guinn, T.C., Allen, C., & Semenik, R.J. (2000). *Advertising*. South-Western Educational Publishing.

Genelle Belmas, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of communications at California State University-Fullerton. She teaches media law, computer-assisted reporting, communications technologies, online journalism and media literacy courses. Her prior media experience includes public relations freelancing and graphic design.

Online Journalism On Campus

How to get students started doing online journalism using campus images

By Dr. Genelle Belmas
California State-Fullerton

Introduction

Rather than giving students free rein on their first story for the introductory online journalism class, when many of them may still be struggling with concepts like linking, chunking or scannability, I begin the online journalism writing experience with something close to home: campus locations and images. Although I have used this assignment primarily for online journalism, because of its additional focus on images and links, the assignment can be adapted for other journalism courses, including introductory writing courses.

Rationale

Students already believe they know something about their campus, and that confidence in the topic lets them focus on the different writing and organization styles required in writing for the online environment. As an added benefit, students establish contacts in the university community that they can use when they begin working for the campus newspaper, magazine, radio station or TV station.

Implementation

- Acquire campus images for student use. These images are often available from your university's public affairs or university relations office and are sometimes posted online for public use, or available on a CD-ROM. If they are not available online, post the images on your own webpage or online learning environment (for example, Blackboard).

Images may include campus buildings, landmarks, people, sports events or arenas, or similar scenes. Make sure that the university gives permission for use.

If the variety is not to your liking, or if your university does not pro-

vide stock images, take your camera around campus and shoot away! (You might learn something about your university, too!)

• Give the students an assignment to download a campus image from the URL you provide (whether an online learning environment, university or personal website) and write a story for online publication about it.

The theme of the story can be any element in the image, whether it is a building, a person, or a campus location. For example, one student used an image of a university building that had a lot of flowers around it and focused his story on campus floral plantings.

• Be clear on your requirements for the assignment. My handouts have a section on format that includes word count, number of working links required, number of interviews and any other formatting requirements for the story.

I also include a grading rubric that lets the students know exactly how I will assess their work. The rubric includes the percentage breakdown for writing style, organization, creativity and Web accessibility.

How you accept the story will depend on the course. I accept this first story as printed copy only. When students learn a web publishing application, this story is the first one they publish and link when they put up their own websites as part of the final project for the course.

Impact

Students report that they like this assignment for several reasons.

• It narrows down the field of writing topics to something manageable and comfortable for their first online writing assignment so that they can focus on learning the different methods of communicating to an online audience.

• Students are immediately confronted with the importance of graphic elements in the online environment. They must incorporate images in their Web publications right away.

• The contacts students establish while interviewing for this story are valuable for their campus media experience. For example, one student did a story on the campus administration building for this assignment and later on was able to interview the same sources in that building for tuition stories she wrote for the newspaper. They called her back quickly because she had already developed a non-threatening rapport with them.

• Students learn about their school and its history while doing this assignment. Many students will go out and take additional photographs of their subject to enhance their stories, although I require the incorporation of only the image I provide for the assignment.

• I have also had students publish the results of this assignment in campus media outlets, usually as part of the online publication of the newspaper or magazine.

Jason Chambers, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He teaches courses on the history of advertising as well as the use of race and ethnicity in advertising.

Using the Present to Teach the Past

How to get students excited about the history of advertising and teach them something at the same time

By Dr. Jason Chambers
Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

Introduction

Given the presentist nature of advertising education, it is not surprising that many programs in the past have not offered students courses specifically about the history of the profession. Instead many programs have the history of the profession in other courses. However, several programs have recently begun including courses examining the history and development of the advertising industry and advertisements within their curricula. Of course, that has led many new advertising students to raise the question: "Why do we have to take that?" With this project students get a much deeper knowledge of the development of advertising and the industry over time and will be excited about doing so. This project requires students to take an existing product and create an advertising and marketing plan for it in a prior year. For example, in the past, groups have created an advertising plan for Biore Pore Strips in 1952.

Rationale

Using the course project outlined below instructors can combine students' knowledge about advertising creation with information from the past. In the process students will get a significantly more nuanced appreciation of the development of the advertising profession and how it has been impacted by the social and cultural context in which it has existed.

Implementation

Step 1

- First, students are placed into groups of no more than five. Each

group then chooses a product from an instructor-selected list for which they will be developing an advertising plan.

• Past products have included: Biore Pore Strips, Crest Whitening Gel, Silk Soy Milk, Gillette Mach 3 Turbo and Propel Fitness Water.

Step 2

• Groups are required to select a single year between the boundaries of 1950 and 1970. This parameter is distant enough that their work will not mirror that currently in existence. At the same time it is also recent enough that they should have no difficulty finding relevant material.

Step 3

For research material students are required to use several sources:

• Advertising journals: They must review trade journal sources such as *Advertising Age*, *Printer's Ink* and *Tide* to ascertain the issues facing the industry at that time.

• Periodicals and television and radio programs from the time period: These sources give students grounding in the media options and choices available.

• Consumer research among older consumers: Students interview consumers who were alive during the period to understand how they felt about similar products and how they might have viewed the introduction of products like those the groups are marketing.

Step 4

• Students construct a 25-30 page advertising plan similar to that of a traditional advertising plan. Additional elements that are included are: A historical overview of the product and product category and an appendix that includes relevant historical research.

• Groups also give a 12-15 minute oral report detailing their plan, showcasing their print, radio, or television advertisements and their historical findings.

Impact

The greatest impact is that students tangibly see the continuity of advertising. Through their own efforts they prove the axiom that advertising is new in its methods but old in its ideas and tenets. Moreover, by immersing themselves in the history of the period they get a clear picture of the close linkage between the social and cultural events of the time and their impact upon the advertising that was created or on the changes the industry experienced.

Students also learn considerably more about consumers than they might have otherwise through the reading of a historical text. Because they are required to review magazines during their year in question, instead of looking at individual advertising examples via the Internet, they invariably wind up reviewing more than just the advertisements. For example, they begin by looking at the *Saturday Evening Post* just for advertising examples but they wind up reading the entire magazine. In the process they learn about not only the state of advertising but, also, reader concerns, popular products and popular literature, music or programs.

Additionally, by allowing them to use their existing knowledge about creating advertising plans or developing a brand identity within a history course they are much more excited and involved in the course material.

Dale Cressman, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Brigham Young University. He teaches broadcast journalism producing and reporting, journalism history and introduction to mass communications. Prior to academia, he worked as a television news executive.

The Power of Team

How to use team-based learning in communication classes

By Dr. Dale Cressman
Brigham Young

Introduction

Small group learning strategies are not new to the academy. However, while widely used, they have considerable weaknesses. For example, students often complain that all members of the group do not contribute and they worry that their grades will suffer as a result of such lackluster contributions. These ad-hoc groups fail to reach their potential, as students are only dependent upon one another for specific assignments. On the other hand, Team-Based Learning (TBL) is based on the assumption that students are dependent on one another's contributions and that the sum of the group's efforts is greater than its parts. TBL, as described by Michaelsen, Bauman Knight and Fink, is an innovative and efficient approach that promotes active learning strategies in the classroom.

Rationale

The centerpiece of TBL is the readiness assurance process, in which student are tested on assigned readings before the content of the readings is addressed in class. Students take short quizzes--first individually, then as a team. Such quizzes are formative in nature, providing students with instant feedback and the opportunity to discuss the material in a way that promotes deeper learning. (Students are also given individual summative evaluations in the form of a midterm and final exam.) Because teams are assigned for the duration of the semester, team members are mutually dependent upon one another and held accountable for their contributions.

Lecturing on topics which students have already been assigned readings has several drawbacks: students may or may not complete the reading assignment; students who have completed the assignment typically complain that the instructor has repeated the material they've already

read, thus eliminating their need to attend; and when instructors lecture on material not covered in the text, students may complain that the lecture had little to do with the readings.

While lecturing is an efficient manner for distributing content, it does not provide students the best environment for deeper learning. Active learning strategies make for a more effective learning-centered pedagogy. However, even instructors who believe in a learning-centered approach often find it difficult to find class time in which to deploy such activities. By testing students before covering the material in class, instructors can assess what material must be covered in class, leaving more time for learning activities. Meanwhile, students are given the primary responsibility of learning from assigned readings outside of class.

Implementation

- On the first day of class students are assigned to a team of five to six students. They should be encouraged to sit together with their team members in subsequent classes.

- Course material should be divided into units. Students are told they will be tested on the assigned readings for an entire unit before that material is addressed in class.

- Students are individually given a short quiz (10 to 20 questions). It is suggested that large classes use optically scanned answer sheets for quick grading.

- After all students have submitted their answers for their individual quiz, the same quiz is given to each team. Students are to work together to arrive at agreed-upon answers. For instant feedback, students are given the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique (IF-AT) form, which instructors can obtain online at *www.epsteineducation.com.*

- Instructors can give particular attention in class to those concepts that students and teams have not mastered on their own. The balance of class time can be used to engage teams in active learning exercises.

- This method can be used in classes small and large.

Impact

- Students in a large section (100 students) of Introduction to Mass Communication responded favorably to working in teams. They found the discussions and activities to be more meaningful and stimulating that listening to the instructor lecture.

- Students learn to work well in a team environment. Even students who struggle to get along at first learned to work through difficulties.

- Students noted that they enjoyed the quizzes and found them useful.

- Students' performance on summative evaluations appears to be higher than classes not taught in the TBL environment.

Source

Michaelsen, L. K., Bauman Knight, A., & Fink, L. D., (Eds.). (2004). *Team-based learning: A transformative use of small groups in college teaching*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Glen Feighery, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Utah, where he teaches reporting, writing, editing and ethics. A journalist for 16 years, he also has taught at the University of Nevada-Reno and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Snowboards and Slippery Slopes

Practicing ethical problem-solving under pressure

By Dr. Glen Feighery
Utah

Introduction

In this exercise, students role-play through a multi-layered ethical problem to practice making and defending hard choices in a limited time and amid changing circumstances.

Rationale

Can mass communicators act ethically and keep their jobs--especially when they're new? Ethics students don't get many chances to apply what they learn. This exercise helps them practice articulating their values and thinking on their feet.

Implementation

• You (the instructor) are the moderator.

• List six ethical agents: a PR account representative, a PR manager, the owner of a PR firm, a TV reporter, a news director and a station manager.

• Ask the class to divide into six roughly equal groups, one for each ethical agent. (They can divide by interest or by counting off 1-2-3-4-5-6.)

• Give the groups about 20 minutes to discuss the scenario and questions below. Each group will decide how its ethical agent will respond. Each group will choose a spokesperson, but everybody can contribute. Circulate among all groups. Do they have spokespeople? Are they systematically analyzing the scenario? Can they articulate responses based on formal ethical principles?

• With students still in groups, begin role-playing through the scenario in "real time." Each group in turn answers the questions and interacts with other groups.

• Prompt, hector, cajole and add complications. State, for example, "Your boss says she's going to fire you. Why shouldn't she?" Make players explain their principles. Ask others to comment. Do the players stand their ground? Can they address new factors?

• At the end, ask students to summarize what they learned. What principles did they apply? Did students connect specific situations with broader ideas?

Scenario

The Sissela Snowboard Company has an explicit, legally binding non-disclosure policy. Rand Public Relations just won the Sissela account, and all personnel have signed Sissela's non-disclosure form. The Rand team is briefed about Sissela's new snowboard, which is half the price of conventional boards and goes twice as fast. After months working on a campaign to help Sissela dominate the market, Rand staffers attend a reception where food and wine flow freely. A junior Rand account rep lets the wine flow too freely and discloses everything about the Sissela snowboard to a reporter from KANT-TV, the top-rated local station.

Scenario Questions

1) Account representative. You immediately feel sober. *What specifically do you do? Talk to someone? Take some action? Describe exactly what you'll do, when and why.*
2) PR manager. You hear your account representative divulge the final piece of secret information to a TV reporter known to be aggressive. *Describe exactly what you'll do regarding your staffer, the reporter and your client.*
3) Owner of the PR firm. You notice activity around one of your young account reps. You typically let managers handle personnel situations, and you see that the rep's boss is nearby. But something tells you to ask what's going on. *What do you do?*
4) KANT-TV reporter. What a scoop! This story fits your outdoor-oriented audience. You know snowboards, and this represents a real breakthrough. Also, your contract is up for renewal, and this could help you negotiate a raise. *What do you do? Why?*
5) News director. Winter recreation stories are the hottest feature of your newscasts and contribute substantially to your ratings. You notice that your reporter appears to have a good story and might want to speak with you. *What do you do?*
6) Station manager. You got the latest ratings report today, and they're slipping. Your audience loves recreation stories. Your news director just returned from a reception for Sissela Snowboards. Sissela also advertises with you. *What do you do? When? Why?*

Impact

Thinking systematically about duty, loyalties and principles is central to ethics education. Students in this exercise apply those concepts to a professional situation they might encounter in news or public relations. It works in large and small classes and adapts to subjects such as communication history, where students can role-play through scenarios and compare their decisions to those of historical figures like Ben Day, Edward Bernays or Edward R. Murrow.

Jennifer Fleming, M.A., is an assistant professor at California State University-Long Beach. She teaches mass communication and broadcast news courses in the Department of Journalism. Prior to academia, she worked in the broadcast news industry in Canada.

Student "Newscasts" Without Breaking the Bank

How to put the team back in broadcast reporting and production courses

By Jennifer Fleming
California State-Long Beach

Introduction

With this GIFT, you can teach the same basic principles behind newscast production--teamwork, news judgment, continuity and presentation--without having to spend millions of dollars on new studio equipment or overhaul your curriculum.

This GIFT is ideal for journalism programs wishing to offer students newscast production experience but unable or unwilling to invest in an expensive studio. Relatively inexpensive shooting (mini-DV) and editing technology (AVID) are all you need--no matter the size of your class, department or college.

With this collaborative learning GIFT, students develop critical thinking skills as they work together and apply newscast production concepts.

Rationale

With the price of basic broadcast production technology dropping and the interest in converged curricula rising, students, it seems, are expected to become lone reporting rangers across the journalism spectrum. In this stampede to transform young journalists into convergence conquistadors, I found that the core of broadcast journalism was being overlooked--teamwork. Students were so focused, apparently so accustomed to doing it all--print, online and broadcast--on their own, that opportunities for collaborative learning were being lost.

So I designed a collaborative learning assignment to bring the team back into broadcast journalism courses. Students use the same mini-DV cameras and digital editing equipment they use producing individual news or feature packages and then work together to produce a "mini-newscast" using their packages as the newscast content.

Implementation

- Students pitch, develop, write, shoot and edit news/feature packages (individually or in pairs, depending on resources).

- Divide students into production teams (five to seven students per team is ideal so each has a constructive role).

- Students divide group members into production jobs [anchor(s), producer(s), videographer(s), editor(s)].

- Groups put together production plan (line-up, script/continuity/open/close, shooting schedule and editing schedule).

- Implement plan by deadline (shoot continuity on location & edit continuity together between packages).

- Views mini-newscasts in class.

- Students provide feedback on outcome and discuss their experiences.

- Instructor provides feedback on outcome and experiences.

Bonus/Advanced Implementation

Production teams allocate a pair of students to shoot and edit a Man-on-the-Street/Streeter segment to be integrated into their newscast.

Impact

The importance of the communications lessons learned with the mini-newscast exercise is that it provides an opportunity for students to work together in small groups toward a common goal. By doing this, students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own.

This assignment also enhances critical thinking skills. As broadcast journalism instructors know, putting a newscast together is like putting together a puzzle--and students experience this first-hand with this exercise. Students must rank stories available to their group in order of importance, impact and continuity as well as find and select appropriate locations to serve as their field studio while working with and respecting the opinions and schedules of other teammates.

With this assignment, students also increase and enhance their exposure to basic broadcast production technology and storytelling techniques. They can apply and adapt this knowledge in other mass media courses.

And finally, the greatest impact of the mini-newscast exercise on the students, in my experience, has been the opportunity for them to work together. Both the group as a whole and individual members are held accountable for completing the activity. After the class views each mini-newscast, there are often interesting discussions on the placement of stories in the newscast, field location selections and other choices and challenges each group faced in the production process.

One student from fall 2004 commented on the value of the exercise in a course evaluation: "I liked the news show assignments. I think they taught us a lot more about broadcast production than if we had to do just stories instead. It also allowed us to get additional experience in our areas of interest or strength, i.e. producing, editing, anchoring, etc."

Kim Golombisky, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the School of Mass Communications at the University of South Florida. She teaches media writing and design courses. Before earning her graduate degrees, she worked more than a decade as an advertising professional.

The First Amendment Campaign

How to get students to think more deeply about free speech

By Dr. Kim Golombisky
South Florida

Introduction

When a colleague e-mailed me the Knight Foundation's First Amendment survey of high schools, I was disturbed but not surprised. The two-year study found that nearly 75 percent of high school students either don't know how they feel about the First Amendment or take it for granted. I've seen similar apathy among college students, even upper-level mass communications majors.

The Knight study also reported, "Students are less likely than adults to think that people should be allowed to express unpopular opinions or newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of stories." The good news is that exposure to courses that cover the First Amendment seems to ameliorate these attitudes.

The following assignment asks students to research First Amendment issues and then produce campaigns targeting their peers. Developed in a design course for 50 journalism, public relations and advertising seniors, the project easily adapts to other small and large upper- and lower-level courses.

Rationale

Media educators may assume their students both value the First Amendment and have studied it in other classes. My experience suggests that students in mass communications sequences other than print journalism do not always get the focused First Amendment studies that their diplomas will suggest. Even journalism students may not have connected personally to First Amendment theory.

This assignment asks students to form small teams and then research, write and design a campaign that teaches other students to value the First Amendment. The issues students adopt and the formats of their projects vary, from a brochure titled "What public relations practitioners need to

know about the First Amendment" to a Web site on the free speech implications of the Patriot Act.

I have found that students are more likely to produce quality work if they know it will be publicly displayed. So I ask students to mount their finished work on art boards, which I hang in the halls of the building that mass communications shares with information systems, speech communication and library science.

Student objectives for the assignment are multiple: learning by teaching, practicing research and media writing skills, managing teamwork and giving and taking constructive criticism. The assignment also employs Mario Garcia's notion of "WED," integrated storytelling that weds writing, editing and design. Mostly, however, the assignment asks students to think more deeply about the First Amendment. In the syllabus, I detail the objectives and break down the process into steps with deadlines listed on the course calendar.

Implementation

- First, students read the First Amendment.

- Second, students form two- or three-person teams, and teammembers together research First Amendment issues to find a topic that interests them, whether a controversy, a court decision or a plea on behalf of free speech. Teams then get instructor approval on their topics.

- Third, teams do the further research necessary to support reasoned stances, and each team proposes its concept and campaign format: A print PSA and a brochure? A tabloid special section? A magazine feature? A press kit? A Web site? A poster, button, T-shirt and bumper sticker?

- Fourth, after getting format approval, teams write and turn in full copy for instructor feedback. While opinion may be appropriate, students must cite facts and attribute credible sources. At this stage, teams also turn in thumbnails and rough layouts.

- Fifth, students revise their copy and generate computer comprehensives. During an in-class gallery, student teams critique and edit their classmates' designs and content.

- Last, teams produce their final campaigns for grading. Each team turns in one set of hard copies for grading and another set mounted on art board for posting.

Impact

Even though I sometimes don't agree with students' viewpoints, it is gratifying to watch a class become passionate--and informed--about the First Amendment. Students not only learn from their own research and writing but also get exposure to a range of issues by peer reviewing their classmates' work. These campaigns then become excellent portfolio pieces. Last January, one team won a district Advertising Federation Addy award for its campaign. The student work lining the hall is also impressive. It makes a strong statement about our department, and I get a kick out of watching students and professors shuffle from board to board.

Reference

Knight Foundation (2005, January 1). *The future of the First Amendment: What America's high school students think about their freedoms.* (*www.mindfully.org/Reform/2005/Future-First-Amendment 31jan05.htm).*

Bradley W. Gorham, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. He teaches courses on media and society, mass communication theory and media and diversity. His research focuses on the effects of media images of social groups on audiences.

News from Whose Perspective?

How to introduce students to new framing, agenda-setting and diversity

By Dr. Bradley W. Gorham
Syracuse

Introduction

In this time of intense partisanship, discussion in class about news framing often becomes debates about political bias. Yet framing--the idea that media, especially news media, may highlight some themes and perspectives of a story and not others--is an important concept for all students of communication to be familiar with. Framing has been shown to influence the interpretations people make of news stories, but often these effects can be dismissed by students as the result of partisan bias. However, there are other ways in which news framing can be highlighted for students. Comparing a network news program to the Nightly News on BET offers instructors a way to talk about news framing in a way that cannot easily be dismissed by students as partisan bias while also affording an opportunity to introduce diversity issues into the class. This activity also allows for discussion of another important theory concerning news coverage: agenda-setting. If the common-sense understanding of news is that the most important issues get covered first, then differences between when stories air in a broadcast--as well as which stories are broadcast and which are not--highlight differences in the value news producers attach to those stories.

Rationale

By using two news shows from the same day, students can see how two different sources can present the world in different ways. The newscasts often present different stories, which highlights agenda-setting, and present the same stories in different ways, which allows for a good discussion of framing. For students unfamiliar with BET News, it can also offer some insight, and some surprises, to how news can be framed for a predominantly African American audience.

Implementation

- On the night before the lesson, videotape a national network news program (like ABC World News Tonight) and the Nightly News on BET (11 p.m. Eastern).

- Take notes on which stories get substantial coverage and how they are framed. Also note which products are advertised during the programs.

- Make up handouts to distribute to the class with questions like:

Did anything surprise you in this newscast? Why?

What was the main idea of each story? What aspects of the story were highlighted?

How was this newscast different from the other one?

How was this newscast similar to the other one you saw?

- In class, divide the students into groups of five or six and give each group one of the handouts.

- Assign each group to focus on either the first newscast or the second.

- Show the first 10 minutes or so of each of the newscasts. Including the commercials will also produce fruitful discussions about how the audiences for the two shows differ.

- After the newscasts have been shown, let the student groups meet for about 10 minutes to discuss their reactions.

- Reconvene the entire group and contrast the reactions of the mainstream newscast groups to the groups that focused on BET. How do the frames differ? Which stories get the most attention, and which ones don't show up at all? Why?

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 news will not quite look the same again. White students are often surprised at how explicitly focused on the African American community the BET program is and how it often defines news differently. Students of color have appreciated the opportunity to highlight how mainstream news programs often don't include their perspectives. This activity is applicable to any introductory media studies course as well as media and diversity courses.

John Irby is associate professor and journalism degree program coordinator in the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University. The primary courses he teaches are news reporting and writing, news editing and public affairs reporting. Prior to entering academia in 1999, he worked for more than 25 years as a newspaper reporter, editor and publisher.

The Power of Words

How to stop painting stereotypical pictures by avoiding racial identifiers

By John R. Irby
Washington State

Introduction

Writers often perpetuate, or allow stereotyping, when they allow a mental picture to form that is an oversimplified opinion, emotion or attitude, or write something that is an overly critical judgment of a person, group, race or event, that can result in the demeaning or ridiculing of the subject. All of us stereotype from time to time, because we live and/or write about things from our personal perspectives. Further complicating our approach to stereotyping is that the English language, by its very nature, has evolved primarily in a white, male-oriented society. The specific words we use can say a lot about us as people.

Rationale

This is a hands-on exercise that includes group dynamics and enhanced learning. It takes students out of comfort zones and challenges them to consider their own stereotypes and realize how unfair they can be in reporting and writing. It provides multicultural understanding. It shows the incredible power of words and the absolute necessity of being responsible in selection and usage.

Implementation

- Students are assigned to the text chapter on "Multicultural Sensitivity" and selected readings.

- Discussion centers on selected comments from the introduction and rationale (above), general comments on stereotypes (all professors are absent-minded, women are weak, older people are senile, etc.), and the fact all people have biases. Stereotypical racism is addressed. For instance, a young man is arrested on a charge of burglary. He is white. Is

that fact included in a story? Not usually. If the young man happens to be Hispanic, or African American, or Asian, the fact is usually included. We discuss unconscious reflections of what we have been taught in a white society concerning other races. Student newspaper examples are used.

• Students are asked to consider if using race as an identifier is relevant, important or necessary information. For instance, would a race descriptor be necessary if campus officials were looking for a rape suspect? Most say "yes."

• They are told the only time race is relevant in a news story is when the story is about race and that identifying a suspect by race is imprecise journalism, often bordering on inaccuracy, and descriptions should be accurate and precise; using race as a descriptor is not fair–and usually implicates and harms many innocent people. They usually want to argue.

• Students are divided into four or five groups to brainstorm for five minutes to compile a list of descriptive physical characteristics of African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics/Latinos and Caucasians.

• Each group's list is written on the whiteboard. Most students focus on eye/ear/nose/mouth/skin color/body shape combinations. It is a bit tense, and some students start to understand the message.

• A pre-selected representative of each group is then asked to come forward and draw the person they have described. It is now very uncomfortable, but more students start to understand. It isn't important to have the students complete the drawings.

• We immediately discuss the impact of words and the pictures that are stereotypically painted when using race as a descriptor. Example: "What does a black man look like? Is his skin dark black, reddish, brown or pale? Is his hair curly, straight or fine? Does he have a large, wide or thin nose? Is it flat, curved, arrow or straight? Telling the public a suspect is 5-foot-8, 180 pounds, with a blue shirt and jeans, with certain identifying tattoos, with glasses, with blue eyes, with light chocolate skin tone, with dread-locked hair, etc., says much more about the person than using race as an identifier.

• We then move to other areas of blatant and subtle forms of discrimination in writing in the areas of sexism, ageism, labeling, etc., and use some newspaper examples to illustrate insensitivities.

Impact

Race as a descriptor lumps people into social groupings. Using race as a descriptor can make a suspect of far too many people. It perpetuates profiling of people by assuming if we know a person's race, we can somehow see them in our mind. The strength--and weakness--of writing lies in the words we use. The focus of the session is to help students think about word choices.

Elena Jarvis, M.A., is an associate professor at Daytona Beach Community College. She teaches broadcast/print journalism, mass media and popular culture and advises the campus newspaper, **In Motion.** *She is former adviser of the University of California-Los Angeles student media and has 30 years experience as a feature writer for a variety of dailies and magazines.*

Where Do YOU Draw the Line? Where Do WE Draw the Line?

How to reinforce news judgment, ethics and media law in one easy lesson

By Elena S. Jarvis
Daytona Beach Community

Introduction

New writing students become part of the gatekeeping process by putting themselves in the shoes of editors. Analyzing a series of controversial photographs, students hold a budget meeting to decide what photos will run and the reasons why or why not.

This exercise covers fundamentals of news judgment and community standards of decency as well as libel and invasion of privacy. It instills confidence in students as well as teamwork and the importance of discussion and debate among gatekeepers. It also introduces the language of the newsroom such as "gatekeeping," "budgets," "cutlines" and "zoned editions."

Rationale

Beginning journalism students often have difficulty traversing the murky waters of what makes something newsworthy, of media law and ethical behavior. As William Hurt's character in "Broadcast News" put it, the problem with lines of professional propriety is, "The little sucker keeps moving, doesn't it?"

Yet much of what constitutes ethical behavior is innate. If we don't know right from wrong by the time we reach college, we probably never will. It is our personal moral compass that puts teeth into codes of ethics. Journalists answer a higher calling. Ethical decisions are made case-by-case.

It is equally true that the most challenging media issues come out of left field. Ultimately, nothing prepares us for these deadline-driven dilemmas.

Students need to understand that codes of ethics are roadmaps, not black-and-white answers to the big question of where do you draw the line? In regards to news judgment, novice reporters typically err on the

side of caution. While that can be a good thing, more often than not they shy away from tough, legitimate news stories.

In a profession that needs courage now more than ever to cover unpopular speech, secretive government and painful social issues, this tool helps students find their way.

Implementation

• I gather a series of five to six photographs to represent stories that are being considered for the next "day's" newspaper. For this exercise, I enlisted the help of a friend who is a photo editor at the *Los Angeles Times*. Any photo editor in your hometown would probably be happy to help as well, as long as it is for educational uses only. You can also peruse your local newspaper for examples that are often available online. The point is, they should be real-life pictures and stories. You should also know how and if the photo ran and what the decision-making process was.

• As an example, I use:

1) A photo of a 10-year-old girl standing in front of the casket of her mother, who was slain in a bank robbery. (You could not see the woman's face, but could see her hands folded in front of her in the casket.)

2) A young man being tended to by paramedics, after being shot by in a tenant-landlord dispute.

3) A 400-pound woman being wrapped in cellophane as part of the Jim Rose Circus sideshow during the Lollapalooza Rock Tour.

4) For a story on teaching ethics, a little girl and her mother sitting in the principal's office, where the girl is being reprimanded for forging her report card.

5) Boys, ages 3 and 5, sitting on a curb as they are questioned by a police officer. The boys were playing with matches and accidentally set their toddler sister on fire.

Provide groups with color copies of the photos or project them using an ELMO. Students get a cutline/abstract of what the photo is illustrating, just as editors would in a budget meeting.

• Before this lesson, students study media law and ethics. Then, they are directed to Codes of Ethics found on the Web site for the American Society of Newspaper Editors at *www.asne.org*. They are also told to thoroughly read and understand the four precepts of the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics: Seek Truth and Report It; Minimize Harm; Act Independently; and Be Accountable.

I note differences in codes found at *www.asne.org*. The *Arizona Republic*'s policy is brief compared to the *Virginian-Pilot*'s. The Web site is also valuable in that it has an interactive ASNE Decisions on Deadline device for students to check out.

• Students are told that these are all the photo/story packages to be run in the news section. Although they are only given the option of choosing two photos, they are asked to categorize the photos in ascending order, from those they would absolutely run to ones they would not.

Impact

The exercise is more effective in groups, since students love to compete. As student editors announce their choices, I write them on the board. For fun, you can label groups after newspapers such as the *New York Times* vs. the *Los Angeles Times*.

Students argue over why they think one photo is more newsworthy, acceptable or within the boundaries of community decency. We talk about the "Wheatie's Test" and other issues represented in the photos such as juveniles and right-to-privacy.

Accentuating the fact that news judgment is partly subjective, I tell them how the *Los Angeles Times* played the stories.

JARVIS
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Brian K. Johnson, M.S., is an associate professor at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign. He teaches photojournalism, video and new media courses in the Department of Journalism. Prior to academia, he worked for nearly a decade as a staff photojournalist for a daily newspaper.

Compositional Patterns of Meaning in Photojournalism

How to teach students abstract concepts of composition in four easy steps

By Brian K. Johnson
Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

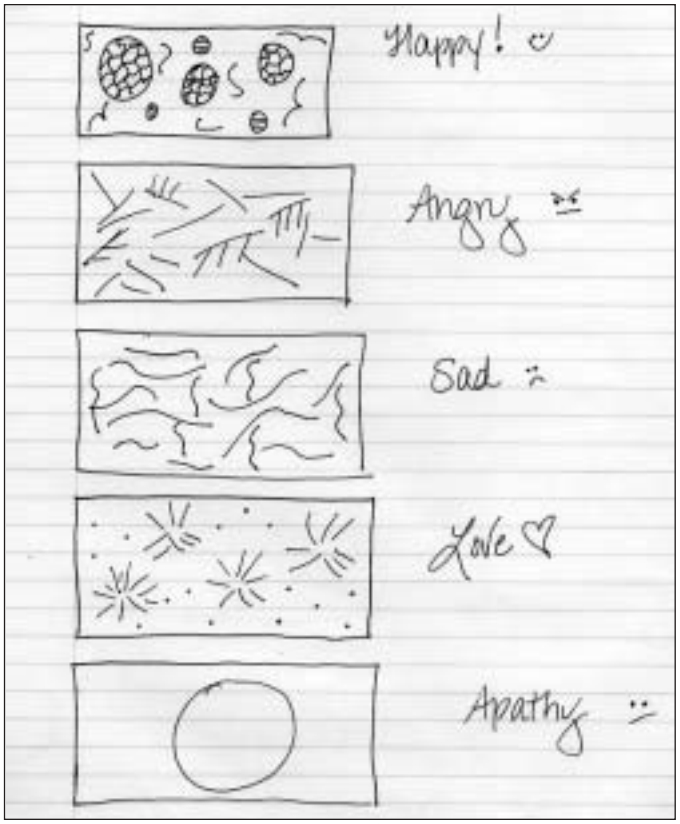
Introduction

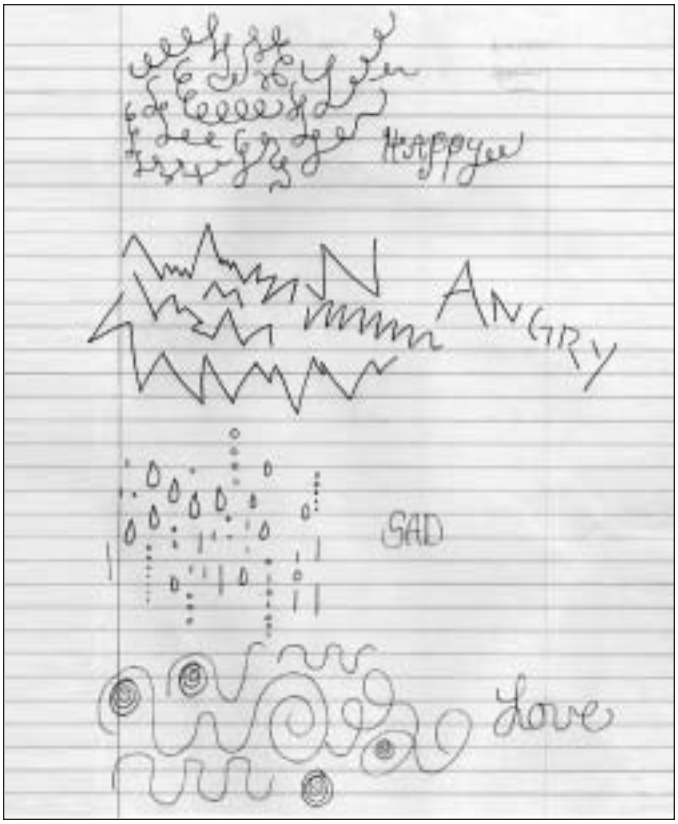
Students taking a photojournalism course are confronted with the task of learning the language of visual communication. Most students have not had an art class since junior high school. They are intimidated by what appears to be random arrangement of elements within their photographs. To ease them into this strange new language I've devised fun and thought-provoking in-class exercises to help them understand an advanced concept of composition, what I call "sub-composition." Sub-composition is where the pattern created by the arrangement of elements within an image conveys meaning above and beyond the meaning of the subject of interest itself.

I start the discussion with an exploded diagram of the Rule of Thirds. Then I present a task to them: illustrate words I give them on paper in a space the size of a business card using only abstract shapes and lines. The words name emotions: Angry, Happy, Sad, Love, etc. They have not had an art class in six years, but they know how to doodle (probably in my class!). I give them one word and a few minutes to draw. I select a row of students to go to the board and show the class what they drew. It is amazing how similar all of the abstract illustrations are of each word. We then discuss the common traits of all the drawings and they compare those traits to what they drew. At the end we discuss how the arrangements of objects in a composition can convey meaning above and beyond the content of the photo. This is revelatory for them. This teaches an advanced concept of composition easily using visual aids they have created.

Rationale

Students forget that journalism is an act of creativity. Many times it is only in a photojournalism class that they see that journalists can be cre-





ative. Doodling to learn these concepts raises the comfort level--their minds are opened. There is real anticipation as they wait for the words, to see what they draw and compare with classmates. This active learning technique helps them see concepts that would cause eyes to glaze over otherwise. The tactile response of drawing builds a connection from concept to brain and keeps them engaged.

Implementation

- Give a short lecture on the "Rule of Thirds." Draw two rectangles: one shows horizontal third lines, one the vertical third lines. Draw a landscape "scene" in the horizontal box that follows the third lines and a head and shoulders portrait in the vertical box that follows the third lines. Then, on the vertical lines drawing, add the horizontal lines. Then add the head and shoulders figure. Show how the intersecting lines are the "prime" locations for subjects of interest.

- Have each student take out a sheet of paper. Tell them to draw a business card size rectangle.

- Tell them that you will give them a word to illustrate with abstract shapes and lines. No hearts, moons or suns.

- Give them the first word. I use words like: Anger, Happy, Sad, Love. Ask them to illustrate the word in the box. (They don't need to draw in boxes if they don't want to. Just keep the drawings the size of a business card.) Give only a few minutes per drawing.

- Ask about six students to go

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to the board and draw their illustrations.

• Ask them to describe the similarities between all the drawings. Next, have them look at their own drawings to see the similarities. Point out similarities to stimulate their confidence in the discussion.

• Repeat the sequence until they have done four, five or six drawings. Have the discussion after each word is illustrated on the board. I always let them choose a word or two, usually the last word we illustrate.

• Discuss how something that seems random, like the arrangement of elements in compositions, can convey meaning in images. This "sub-composition" concept can either help give their photographs more meaning, or work against its ability to communicate its intended message.

Impact

Students have reported to me that they have thought about the exercise outside of class, sometimes while looking at photos, but sometimes just the "illustrating the word" exercise by itself. One student actually found a book on how to be a comic illustrator, which showed the same concepts we covered in class. He thought that was awesome. They report back that while they were doing the exercise they were only beginning to grasp the concept, but later as they thought about it they really understood what I was showing them.

JARVIS
Continued from page 25

Most students will eliminate the photo of the little girl at her mother's funeral and many passionate debates have been waged over whether to run it or not. Those students in the minority of that argument, who discover real-life editors picked it as the lead image, are encouraged. Those who chose against it learn that news judgment is not for the faintheart-ed. After I point out the symbolism of it--it represents the loss of innocence not only of the girl, but of a community frequently dubbed "Safest City in America"--the lights go on.

I offer this exercise early in the semester. While many texts leave ethics and law chapters for the end of the book, I move them up to the first few weeks so classes understand responsibilities and limits on the media before conducting their first interviews. It's amazing how many students, have an ingrained sense of news judgment.

This exercise can be used in beginning broadcast writing and print media classes, as well as mass communication survey courses.

CCJA News

SPECIAL SECTION SPRING/SUMMER 2005

Cutting Budgets, Silencing Students

By Doug Lederman
Editor, *Inside Higher Ed*

(Reprinted by permission; first appeared in the May 12, 2005, issue of *Insider Higher Ed* at *http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/05/12/ventura)*

For 80 years, the *Ventura College Press* has been the student voice of the community college whose name it bears. But Monday, the weekly newspaper published its last issue, becoming a victim of budget shortfalls that led the Ventura County Community College District to slash the journalism departments (and the student papers attached to them) at Ventura and Oxnard Colleges.

Administrators at the Ventura district say the decision was based entirely on the relative cost and comparatively low enrollments of the two journalism programs. They reject suggestions made by some students and faculty members that the presidents of the two campuses were seeking to silence the student papers because of critical coverage, and argue that they have crafted a plan to keep a working student press by having the existing student paper at the Ventura district's third campus, Moorpark College, cover all three institutions.

"The last thing I wanted to do as a new chancellor was step into the politics of cutting journalism--talk about the Nightmare From Elm Street," says James Meznek, who became chancellor of the Ventura district last fall. "I know the students think we're chewing away at their First Amendment rights. But we maintain that this joint paper might be a good thing, because it pulls us together rather than apart."

Ventura and Oxnard are the second and third California community colleges to lose their student newspapers this year, joining Evergreen Valley College. Community college journalism officials in California and nationally say they don't necessarily believe the closures mark a trend. They are concerned, though, that two-year college administrators may both underestimate the importance the papers play on their campuses and exaggerate the likelihood that consolidation of papers within a community college district can work.

"The Board of Trustees has eliminated a student voice, and it may have lulled itself into a false sense that they've handled the issue by shifting the programs around," says Rich Cameron, chair of the department of mass communication at Cerritos College and online communica-

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Cutting Budgets, Silencing Students (continued)

tions director of the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, which represents two-year college programs in California. "There are plenty of other colleges going through budget situations, and it's not inconceivable that this could give other boards the same idea."

The Ventura district's budget problems are severe. It has been on and off a state watchlist of programs that appear headed for financial failure, Meznek says, and faces declining enrollments that threaten its state-mandated base level of funding. Meznek says that when he took over nine months ago, the district first put in place a new program to boost enrollment, but when that failed, he asked the presidents of the three campuses for suggested budget cuts.

The journalism programs at both Ventura and Oxnard were on their presidents' lists. Two reasons were cited at Ventura: since 1999, the journalism program has averaged no more than nine full-time students a semester, and the college's journalism instructor had announced her retirement a few months earlier. At Oxnard, enrollments were at about the same level, but the college had just hired a well-regarded new instructor this year, whose hours have been cut back by two-thirds.

When student journalists at the two colleges found out about the proposed cuts, just days before the district's board was to vote on them, they held sit-ins at the colleges and at the chancellor's office (which Meznek, in probable contrast to a lot of college chief executives, describes as "pretty cool.") They contended, among other things, that the campus presidents had proposed cutting the journalism programs--and with them the student newspapers--because they didn't like the publications' critical coverage of their administrations.

"They're just silencing the press," says Nathan Murillo, editor of the *Ventura College Press*. "We are the voice of Ventura College, and we let everybody know about anything that goes wrong at the college."

Meznek says he looked into the motivation of the campus presidents, especially at Oxnard, where a vice president had proposed not too long ago that administrators review the content of Oxnard's *Campus Observer* before it was published.

Meznek says he had discussed the issue with Oxnard's president "and pointed out informally the ABC's of life" as a college administrator--that "the student press is the student press, and if they're going to do a caricature of you or they're just going to rag on you, you suck it up." Meznek says he would not have approved of cutting the student papers at either campus if he thought the recommendations were driven by any desire to rid the campuses of critical voices.

But for better or worse, that's exactly what colleges do--among other unfortunate things--when they eliminate student papers, says John Neal, journalism program director at Brookhaven College in

Cutting Budgets, Silencing Students (continued)

Texas and president of the Community College Journalism Association, a national group. "A sense of community is lost, and a college becomes just a place to take classes, instead of one where we're sharing in a collegial environment."

Campus papers give students a chance to express themselves, and "they can also be one of the few checks on administrators, holding them accountable if there's a problem that isn't being solved," Neal says.

And at community colleges, especially, where the usually transient students often have few ties to the campus, being on the staff of a student newspaper can provide a "sense of belonging that you don't get if you're not involved in an activity." Such considerations should factor in to any decision alongside enrollment counts and dollar totals, he suggests.

Meznek, the chancellor, says he understands all the reasons why eliminating the Oxnard and Ventura papers was painful and unpleasant for all involved. The district has tried to mitigate the impact, he notes, through its plan--crafted with the help of the journalism instructor and newspaper adviser at Moorpark--to have the student newspaper there cover all three campuses.

Journalism courses will rotate among the three campuses, and students who cannot travel among the campuses (which are 30 miles away from one another) will participate in the classes via compressed video. An editorial board of students, Meznek says, will decide how the newspaper should cover the three campuses.

Trying to cover three campuses that have decidedly different cultures with a newspaper based at one of them is "doomed," says Murillo, the *Ventura College Press* editor. "Ventura College will get 10 percent of its normal coverage. All the sports games, all the arts exhibits are hardly going to get covered."

Dr. John Neal
CCJA President

A message from the CCJA President Dr. John Neal

It's easy these days for journalism educators to get discouraged.

The closing of the newspapers at Oxnard and Ventura colleges in California earlier this year and the struggles to keep our own journalism programs and campus media going can wear us down.

I was the adviser of the newspaper at Brookhaven College for more than 20 years, and I still supervise the journalism program and teach some of the journalism courses here. Most people on campus have no inkling of the amount of work journalism educators face.

In addition to the problems we encounter on campus, we hear constant complaints about the "mainstream media" in general, and we read about polls showing that only a small percentage of Americans know the First Amendment protects free expression.

Brooding about all this doesn't help, so what can we do?

We can try a different approach--looking for the "silver linings" instead of the clouds. So I decided to make a list of the positive aspects of being a journalism educator.

- **Students.** I continue to be amazed at their willingness to work long, late hours to get the paper done and done well. As they learn to work as a team, they come to appreciate each other. When we show our willingness to work with them, they appreciate us, too. Larie Engles, the current adviser for our campus newspaper, recently told me about a former student who said, tearfully, that Larie was the only person who had ever believed in her, and knowing that helped her get through school and graduate. "Teaching is tough, but when students come back at the end of the semester and bring me a card or say, 'You've helped change my life,' it's a wonderful feeling," Larie said.

- **The First Amendment.** It's still there, regardless of how few people may know about it. And we have the opportunity to educate our students about the freedoms it guarantees. Larie requires students in her beginning reporting class to memorize it.

- **The Student Press Law Center.** When there are legal questions, this is the place to call. SPLC also has a Web site and magazine to keep us updated about situations faced by other campus publications.

- **Campus media.** Though they can take up our time and energy, campus media are excellent tools for training journalists because they require students to do the work of gathering information and organizing it. When students run into problems, they are learning.

President's Message (continued)

And they are checking the textbook and asking us questions because they really want and need to know how to handle the situations they encounter.

• **Outstanding journalists.** Though the history of journalism is not entirely pristine, there have been plenty of courageous, distinguished journalists who can serve as role models. With Watergate back in the news recently, recognition was again given to the dedication shown by Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein, Ben Bradlee and Katharine Graham. We have the privilege of telling students their stories.

• **Journalism organizations and conventions.** Attending conventions can give us new ideas for teaching and give students the opportunity to learn and meet other student journalists. If you are not a member of a journalism education organization, please consider joining one or more.

• **An interesting subject.** Journalism is endlessly fascinating because it constantly provides us with something new to discuss in class and relate to the topics we cover. When we show our interest in journalism, students notice.

So, after giving it some thought, I can see that plenty of "silver linings" are there for us. Try making your own list, and read it often.

CCJA president also serves as new Web master

The Community College Journalism Association has a new Web master--our very own president, Dr. John Neal! In addition to leading CCJA, he has taken on the responsibility of updating the site with information regarding convention meetings, Hall of Fame, the Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) program, student media advising and CCJA's organizational structure. For all of his work and commitment, CCJA is indebted to him!

The Web site is at *www.ccjaonline.org*. If you would like to contribute news, please contact Dr. Neal at Brookhaven College at *jxn2420@dcccd.edu*.

Dr. Beverly Bailey
CCJA President-Elect

Dr. Manuel Flores
CCJA Vice President

Dr. Beverly Bailey and Dr. Manuel Flores voted as CCJA's president-elect and vice president

Congratulations to two members of the Community College Journalism Association who have unanimously been voted as president-elect and vice president recently. Dr. Beverly S. Bailey from Tulsa Community College (TCC) in Oklahoma and Dr. Manuel Flores from Del Mar College in Texas will assume office as president and vice president, respectively, effective at the next convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in 2006.

President-elect Dr. Bailey is the program coordinator/assistant professor of journalism and mass communication at TCC, where she joined the faculty in 2000. In her position as program coordinator, she has significantly expanded and developed the school's JMC program. She serves as faculty adviser to the JMC internship program and to *TCC Metro News* magazine and Metro News TV. Previous to her tenure at TCC, Dr. Bailey served as faculty and as the public relations program coordinator at Arkansas State University. She also has years of industry experience in journalism and public relations.

Dr. Bailey has been an active member of CCJA since 2000. She current serves as interim president-elect. She served as CCJA vice president for two years and as program coordinator, responsible for AEJMC/CCJA conference planning, for three years. She has served as a judge and committee member for CCJA's Great Ideas for Teachers (GIFT) sessions and has been a contributor to CCJA's magazine, *The Journalist*.

In addition to her involvement in CCJA, Dr. Bailey is an active member in AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group, in the Tulsa Press Club and the Association for Women in Communications. She serves on TCC's Honors Advisory Council, in addition to her work on various TCC committees. She is also a member of the College Media Advisers.

Newly-elected vice president Dr. Flores is the student publications adviser and associate professor of journalism at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas. Flores brings much real-world experience to the classroom, having worked with the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* and *Irving Daily News* as a sport reporter, columnist and beat reporter. He also worked in public relations with Central Power and Light Co., has produced and written several television shows and has been co-anchor for several radio sports program.

Dr. Flores has won numerous professional awards for his layout, writing and design and tries to convey his expertise to his students. His grandfather, Pedro G. Chapa, was a longtime South Texas jour-

President-Elect and VP (continued)

nalist and was editor and publisher of the *Jim Hogg County Enterprise* for many years. Dr. Flores has devoted his career to this grandfather's memory.

He has written several scholarly articles in the fields of journalism and education. He holds master's degrees in journalism and political science and a doctorate in educational leadership. He is also a member of the Corpus Christi Independent School District Board of Trustees, having been elected to the post four times.

He has been active with the Texas Community College Journalism Association, the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association, CCJA and CMA since he started at DMC in 1991. He has served as president of TCCJA and host of the state convention. He has also served as host of the TIPA state convention three times during the past 10 years. Dr. Flores also has presented twice at the ACP-CMA convention and has made numerous presentations throughout Texas on a variety of subjects.

Nominations sought for CCJA Hall of Fame honor; deadline is Sept. 9

Nominations are being sought now for CCJA's Hall of Fame. The

The 2005 inductee will be honored at the CCJA Hall of Fame luncheon at noon on Saturday, Oct. 29, at the Olde Nawlins Cookery in New Orleans, La., during the fall convention of the College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press (see the following related article for convention information).

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).

Hall of Fame (continued)

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 Friday, Sept. 9.

In addition to inducting Hall of Famers at the convention, CCJA also presents awards for Distinguished Service.

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

College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press convention to be held in New Orleans, La., Oct. 26-30

"Ease on down to New Orleans" in Louisiana for "big media and big fun" as you join your CCJA colleagues at the 84th annual College Media Advisers/Associated Collegiate Press convention during Oct. 26-30, at the Hyatt Regency hotel.

Lagniappe ("something extra") is what you'll get in the Big Easy this year! At the largest college student journalism convention anywhere in the world, you'll get:

- 400 learning sessions
- Keynote speakers
- Best of Show on-site contest
- On-site critiques
- Newspaper career fair
- Society for News Design Quick Course and other preconvention workshops
- Vendor exhibits
- Display of student media
- Online registration
- Minority journalist roundtables
- ACP Pacemaker and other awards
- CMA adviser awards and Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc. awards
- Networking opportunities
- Textbook exhibits
- Beads, beads, beads

CCJA Sessions

In addition, CCJA will hold its business meeting on Friday, Oct. 28, and honor its 2005 Hall of Fame inductee at a special noon luncheon on Saturday, Oct. 29, at the Olde Nawlins Cookery.

CMA/ACP Convention (continued)

Tentatively, CCJA also has planned several sessions (actual dates, times and locations will be printed in a program booklet available at the CMA/ACP convention), such as:

"The Eyes Have It"
How to use non-verbal communication to make your writing more enjoyable and your interviews more successful. Previous attendees have labeled this their "most useful" session.
Nils Rosdahl, North Idaho College

"Recruiting and Retaining Staff"
Tips for recruiting newspaper staff members from the high school ranks and from within your own college. Other suggestions include how to make your newsroom a place where they want to be and how to keep them there.
Nils Rosdahl, North Idaho College

"The Successful Sports Section"
Your paper needs more than dead game stories to make it worth reading. This comprehensive session includes tips of all types of sports reporting and writing, sports photos and design.
Nils Rosdahl, North Idaho College

"Finding Features on the Two-Year Campus"
This session shares more than 100 ideas for digging up stories from light and fluffy to hard-edged news features and in-depth pieces.
Tom Pierce, University of South Florida

"Layout: The Basics and Beyond"
Helping the reader with good page design and typography is applicable to all print publications, newspapers in tab or broadsheet, magazines and even online pages.
Gina Bowden-Pierce, Copy Editor and Designer, *St. Petersburg Times*

"Wringing the Bad Writing Habits Out of Your Eager but Inexperienced Staff"
From editorializing to wrong style to mangled attribution to sloppy grammar, the sins of newswriters are many. It's time you let an experienced adviser and professional copy editor share some ways to shake up and shape up your staff!
Tom Pierce, University of South Florida

"Writing Good Headlines and Cutlines"
Yes, readers will look first at the art on a page, but the first thing they read will be the headlines and cutlines. If you want them to keep on

CMA/ACP Convention (continued)

reading (of course you do!), you must work as hard on creating good heads and cutlines as you do on the writing of those stories and the designing of those pages. Don't settle for something that merely gives an idea of what it's about and, *voila!* it fits! An editor who has written tens of thousands of good (mostly) heads for dailies has some tips.
Tom Pierce, University of South Florida

"Smooth Sailing Near The Shore of Lake Michigan"
This seasoned adviser and his college president discuss how each prepared to start a journalism program and student newspaper from scratch. Wright College President Charles Guengerich, the only CMA Presidential Citation recipient for supporting a free and vigorous student-run newspaper, will also share tips on how you can work well with your two-year college administrators. A great primer before attending today's administrator/adviser special session. Advisers only.
Ira David Levy, Wright College

"'What's Your Problem, Buddy?'"
"Find the News in the Lamest of So-called Stories"
Tired of lame stories about lame events? Hope you've written your last snoozer about an art show opening, a club meeting or some dull college policy? So are your readers! Truth is: Those stories won't go away, but we can radically change how we approach our subjects so that we find the interesting news--the tension, the conflict, the problem--in everything we cover. Your readers--your ever-increasing number of readers--will thank you.
Chris Evans, Valencia Community College

"Family Ties: The Newsroom as Home"
Students and advisers can make the newsroom a "family" environment where teamwork and mutual respect are the norm. This session will include a discussion for the sharing of ideas.
Larie Engles, Dr. John Neal and **Angela Shoultz**, Brookhaven College

"Creating Culture in a Revolving Door Newsroom"
Every newsroom has its own identity, for better or worse. Establishing a productive and consistent working environment is a particular challenge at two-year colleges, where the newsroom staff can change significantly each semester. This session will provide some practical suggestions on how to create and maintain your newsroom's culture. Ideas on promoting productivity, diversity, professionalism and camaraderie will be discussed.
Amy Callahan, Northern Essex Community College
Lori Soderlind, Norwalk Community College

CMA/ACP Convention (continued)

"Ten Steps in Using Volunteers to Produce Quality Student Publications"
Many community colleges do not have the budget to have a paid staff for their student publications. The staff is usually composed of volunteers interested in honing their skills and in enhancing their resume and clips.
Dr. Manuel Flores, Del Mar College

"Literary Journalism: Theory, Preparation and Practice"
What is LJ? Why write it? Where is its place in the newspaper? When is it appropriate? Who can/should attempt it? Beyond theory (and well beyond the Inverted Pyramid), a dozen principles on "the how" are included for preparation and effective practice. Several examples from writers who have practiced both Literature and Journalism are included.
Frank Coffman, Rock Valley College

"Go Figure! Figurative Language and Powerful Style"
This session is a quick introduction to the wonderful stylistic flair and persuasive power of rhetorical figures. These "turns of phrase," recognized and developed to precision by the great classical communicators of Greece and Rome and supplemented over the millennia have not lost their usefulness in modern times. Knowing a few of them can give the literary journalist, feature writer, columnist or editorialist distinctive and powerful ways with words.
Frank Coffman, Rock Valley College

"C.R.I.S.P. Style for the Journalist: A Proven Method for Stylistic Revision, Flair and Powerful Copy"
Learn a useful method for stylistic revision (called C.R.I.S.P.) to help you along the path to clarity, brevity, simplicity and power with words. We spend too much time coming up with material to write about and not enough about how to write well. Get acquainted with some tried and true tricks of the trade for powerful and effective style.
Frank Coffman, Rock Valley College

"The Art and Craft of Interviewing"
How to prepare for, get and conduct effective interviews. Tips and practical applications to persuade reluctant sources to talk with you, to research background and pertinent issues, to develop effective questions and elicit good quotes and to follow-up if necessary.
Dr. Arlene Scadron, University of Arizona

CMA/ACP Convention (continued)

"Ethics in the College Newsroom: First, Last, Always."
Examination of professional ethics codes, practical application of principles and guidelines and role-playing to recognize and solve ethical problems that confront student journalists.
Dr. Arlene Scadron, University of Arizona, Tucson

For more information about CCJA's sessions at the convention, contact Program Chair Nils Rosdahl at *nhrosdah@nic.edu.*

Or for details about the CMA/ACP convention, registration, hotel reservations and travel discounts, check the Web site at: *http://www.studentpress.org/acp/conventions.html*.

CCJA magazine needs articles, book reviews

Journalism and mass communication education-related stories, summaries of convention paper presentations, teaching and college media advising tips and regional profiles of journalism and mass communication programs/departments at community colleges are welcome for publication in future issues of *The Community College Journalist*. Length is typically between 750-1,500 words. If selected for inclusion in a particular issue, the author's mugshot and brief bio are requested.

Writers also are needed to review various books for upcoming issues of this magazine. Articles will be used as "evergreens," pending layout space. Books will be mailed to you--you can keep them for FREE! Reviews typically run between 500-700 words. Please submit your mugshot and a brief bio with the book review by the deadline specified by the editor.

If interested in writing an article or reviewing selected books, please contact *The Community College Journalist* Editor Dr. Edna R. Bautista at *ebautist@chaminade.edu*. First come, first served (author priority is given to CCJA members).

Jean P. Kelly, Ph.D., teaches media writing, publication and Web design, public relations techniques and magazine writing. Her research interests include social construction of computer technology and computer literacy and magazine history.

Extreme Makeover

How to use a popular television format to teach both process and professionalism in publication redesign

By Dr. Jean P. Kelly
Otterbein

Introduction

In order to introduce a systematic approach to evaluating, researching, creating, testing and promoting a graphic redesign of a journalistic publication, students apply the approach by "redesigning" the instructor or other prominent campus individual following the makeover format now popular on several television programs. Students follow a 5-step protocol adapted from Harrower (2002) and physical materials (a type of paper doll) to analyze and change the makeover candidate's wardrobe, lifestyle and physical appearance. In the process, they learn how to be both honest and diplomatic in delivering constructive criticism.

Rationale

Though it is quite possible to teach the theory and process of redesign in a classroom setting, it is often difficult to convey to students the human element of managing change, particularly how ego involvement in creative work complicates both self-critique and critique by a third party. This exercise effectively simulates that phenomenon by giving literal expression to an analogy common in graphic design textbooks --redesign is to a publication as a facelift is to an individual. It uses a redesign process that is utilized throughout the rest of the term as students redesign a newsletter or magazine produced by a community nonprofit.

The exercise grew out of my frustration with how novice visual communication students typically analyze and critique publication designs without considering limitations on the designer, such as budget and

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deadlines. A guided strategy to these critiques is necessary so students learn to navigate the middle ground of constructive criticism.

The makeover assignment is innovative in that it requires students use instead intentionally low-tech, physical materials instead of computers. By returning to an activity they knew as children, students learn that playfulness is often a route to creativity. The playful nature of the assignment also seems to ameliorate some of the students' discomfort about critiquing the appearance of an authority figure.

Implementation

- A worksheet introduces the exercise, establishes ground rules and provides explanations of each step of the process, with prompts as necessary, and space for notes. The five steps are evaluation (noting strengths and weaknesses of such features as "hair style," "facial features," etc.), gathering examples, making a shopping list of elements to change, building a prototype, testing and promotion.

- Students are provided with a selection of fashion and lifestyle publications (magazines, Internet sites) from which illustrations may be cut out during the "gathering examples" step.

- Each student group (of 3-4) is given one "paper" doll with a variety of clothing or material that can be made into clothing using scissors and glue. There are a variety of toys on the market that work for this purpose. Because they offer the most creative flexibility, I use "Woodkins." These are bas-relief doll figures whose clothing is created from fabric scraps and fibers placed under a hinged flap. For enhanced realism, a photo of the makeover candidate can be pasted over the doll's face.

- When the exercise begins, students are told that "Change is never easy. But every once in awhile, both people and publications need to be reinvented in order to stay current." They are given the worksheets and the ground rules are discussed.

- Students then progress through the 5-step process guided by the worksheet. They end with a presentation of the group's prototype to the professor and larger class in which they must discuss both strengths and weaknesses of the makeover candidate's look, justify their choices for change and present strategies for how to implement these changes.

Impact

This makes for a lively and memorable classroom experience, especially on a first day meeting. It would work in any visual communication or journalism design class where the process of design analysis and revision is considered. It might also find application in writing classes where peer-editing takes place.

In learning journals completed after the exercise, students wrote that they liked working with an instructor who is willing to poke fun at herself in order to teach important lessons. This is one of those assignments that generates "good buzz" about a class among students and faculty.

Students also see it as a valuable revelation that individuals have personal attachments to publications they've designed. Wrote one: "I could see how if our choices were presented in a harsh way, it would be easy to hurt Dr. Kelly's feelings....If I offend a [designer] by tearing apart her publication, she won't let me continue on the job."

Source

Harrower, T. (2002) Redesigning. *The newspaper designer's handbook*, Boston: McGraw Hill. pp. 210-226.

Jane Marcellus, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the School of Journalism at Middle Tennessee State University. She teaches "Understanding Media" (introductory lecture course), media history, reporting and, at the graduate level, qualitative research methods. She is a former newspaper feature writer and reporter.

Ubiquitous Media/Media Fast

How to make beginning mass communication students understand how much media impacts their lives

By Dr. Jane Marcellus
Middle Tennessee State

Introduction

This simple, fun two-part assignment is designed for students in freshman and sophomore level introduction to mass media courses. By understanding more about how media function in their own lives, they gain basic knowledge that lays the groundwork for further study of mass media.

Rationale

Students who barely remember the world before the Internet often have a difficult time understanding how much the mass media impact their lives. Some don't know specifically what the mass media are. Because media messages are everywhere, students often "can't see the forest for the trees" and are unable to distinguish between promotional and informational media. To begin to address these issues, students must start to pay attention to how much media they come in contact with and how it affects them personally.

Implementation

This simple two-part project asks students first to pay attention to how many media messages they come in contact with during the course of a day. Then, on a subsequent day, they're asked to go on a "media fast" and avoid media altogether. By writing a short paper on their experiences and answering a series of questions, they begin to gain awareness of how ubiquitous media messages are in their lives and to take the first steps toward media literacy.

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- Give students an overview of the assignment and its purpose, either orally or (preferably) in writing.

- *Part One*

For the first part, students are to pick one day (a regular work or school day is best) when they keep a list of how much media they come in contact with from the time they open their eyes until they go to sleep. Do they wake up to an alarm clock radio? What station is it set to and why? How much media do they see before they leave the house? How much (including billboards) do they see on their way to campus? What about in their classrooms?

Two very important aspects of media they must take note of are purpose and choice. Of the media messages they come in contact with, how many are trying to give them information (such as legitimate news)? How many are trying to entertain them? How many are trying to sell them something? Are there examples where information, entertainment and advertising seem to blend? How exactly do they determine the differences? Also, of the media messages they see or hear, how many did they choose? Which types (news, entertainment or ads) did they choose or not choose? If they did not choose to see them, could they avoid them? How?

- *Part Two*

After learning that media messages are everywhere, students pick a day and go on a "media fast." The rule here is no media. Point-to-point communication (phone and e-mail) is okay, but media sent out to the masses is not. That means no alarm-clock radio, no television, no newspaper, no movies, no DVDs, no downloaded music, no Web surfing, etc.

For this part of the paper, they write about what they did instead of interacting with media. How did they communicate? How did they entertain themselves? Sometimes students tell me they completed a song or poem they wanted to write or another type of creative project. Others talk about noticing nature and having more conversations with people.

- *The Paper*

The written assignment is a two-page paper summarizing experiences with both days. It contains three sections--one for the first part, one for the media fast, and a third for summarizing the impact on them and what they learned. Using a rubric, this is easy to grade for thoroughness and thoughtfulness, making it a good short writing assignment for a mass lecture class.

Impact

Students initially resist this assignment, especially Part Two. But they come to class eager to talk about their experiences. Some sheepishly "confess" that they couldn't keep track of so many images (and I do always tell them not to let counting billboards get in the way of paying attention to safety while driving a car!) Others "confess" that they couldn't avoid media. (In those cases, I ask them to write about why it was they could not complete the assignment, which is instructive, too.) Almost all gain a greater awareness of how much media impacts them. Some are grateful to live in an age of mass media, while others vow to choose media messages more carefully.

Andrea Miller, Ph.D., has a split appointment at Louisiana State University, serving as an assistant professor in the Manship School of Mass Communication and as adviser for the student-run campus cable station, **Tiger Television.** *Dr. Miller's research interests mirror her teaching interests--television news, crisis coverage, ethics and information processing. Before receiving her doctorate from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2003, she worked for 10 years in television news, including six years in the Dallas-Forth Worth market.*

TV News Coverage of Tragedy: Live, Breaking and Ethics

How to merge practical training in live, breaking and ethical coverage of tragic news events

By Dr. Andrea Miller
Louisiana State

Introduction

"This just in...." These words are magic in the world of television news. To the audience the words suggest immediacy, importance and a sense of witnessing the news as it unfolds. For a novice journalist whose job it is now to report that story--it can be a scary exclamation. These exercises have been created to give students practical experience in reporting live, breaking and tragic news--and the ethically tenuous situations that often surround crisis events.

Rationale

A disconnect exists between story presentation in the classroom and the real world. Training areas truly lacking in most practical undergraduate broadcast training programs include live presentation and breaking and crisis coverage. This GIFT is innovative because it merges three areas of television news that often come together in unique situations. These exercises will demand ethical grounding and critical thinking skills--poise of mind and presentation--taking students to another level in their broadcast journalism education.

The exercises combine two of the teaching areas suggested by GIFT: broadcast journalism and ethics--with a bit of how technology will affect how and what they report. The exercises focus on what to report and not to report in breaking news situations, how to handle ethical trying situations and gaining live "think on your feet" reporting skills.

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Implementation

• Preparation: Expecting the Unexpected

Real world breaking news events will be viewed to help the students understand what to expect and how to handle themselves professionally when they come on the scene of a tragedy. Graphic video, emotional victims and dangerous police situations are some examples of what will be shown and discussed.

• Role-playing: Approaching the Stakeholders

This exercise allows students to practice how to appropriately and sensitively approach victims for the interview. We will conduct mock interviews with students role-playing as "hostile" or "overcome" victims, as well as disagreeable law enforcement officials. The Potter Box will be worked through to give students an appreciation for all the stakeholders.

• Live and Breaking: Cutting In

This exercise includes the first "mock" breaking news cut-ins. Each student will be given a scenario with limited and questionable information. The students will have 15 minutes to write a 1-minute breaking news cut-in before they go "live." Using a news camera, the cut-ins will be taped and played back for critiques of content and presentation.

• Ethically Sensitive Scenarios: Creation and Execution

In this exercise, students will form two teams. Each team will create an ethically sensitive breaking news scenario that includes the facts, video choices and any "wrenches" they choose to throw in. The scenario should be written in stages, to represent a developing story. The teams will take turns executing each other stories --writing and presenting a series of cut-ins. The exercise ends with a critique/evaluation of both groups.

• The Future: Creating a Disaster Plan

Each student chooses a major disaster, such as a passenger plane crash, to create a newsroom disaster plan. The comprehensive plan should incorporate everything from a station's policies on unedited video and interviewing children, to possible disaster sources. When news breaks, there is often no time for ethical dialogue. This exercise will show students the importance of having that "infrastructure" in place for when it does.

Impact

• Understanding of what breaking news is and how to cover it

• Exposure to and understanding of what it means to cover a story live

• Reinforcement of a firm ethical grounding for making split second decisions in often tenuous and stressed situations

• Ability to write breaking news story scripts quickly and accurately

want students to take away a sense of accomplishment and a sense of preparedness. After completing these exercises, hopefully fear will not take over the first time they are thrust into a live, breaking news situation. These exercises incorporate specific, industry practicality with a theoretical twist - marrying ethics with critical thinking and application. To students, I hope it is a thought-provoking, insightful and exciting combination.

Emma Daugherty Phillingane, M.A., is a professor in the journalism department at California State University-Long Beach. For 20 years, she has taught public relations, journalism and advertising courses. Accredited by the Public Relations Society of America, Phillingane worked in public relations and advertising for 10 years before entering the academy full time.

The Challenge of Improving Student Writing

How to use peer review to give students feedback to ensure continuous skill development

By Emma Daugherty Phillingane
California State-Long Beach

Introduction

Most teachers in journalism and mass communication agree that improving student writing is their greatest challenge. By using proven techniques, such as peer review, in innovative ways, we can get better writing from our students, sharpen their skill level and lighten our workload.

Rationale

Getting our students to write better is a struggle for us all. Across all disciplines, some students are coming into our classrooms ill-equipped to handle our assignments. Most of you assign written work for your students to submit as requirements in your courses. How many times have you agonized over those assignments? Wondered how to even grade the work from certain students? In journalism and mass communication, you would think that students come prepared with some level of writing skill. You would think that journalism students know proper sentence structure and how to punctuate a sentence correctly. Well, many of them don't.

Implementation

- Peer review is a method of offering immediate feedback on students' work. Handled creatively, peer review can reinforce learning points, illustrate writing errors and engage students much more than marks or comments on a paper. To ensure an effective peer review session, give

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students a writing assignment and review the rubric or a checklist of grading criteria with them. Papers might be from two to five pages, depending on the assignment. On the due date, break them into groups of two and explain that they are being given a chance to improve their grade. Most are relieved because some assignments were rushed and not properly revised or some students were unsure about what actually was expected.

• In a class of 30 to 50, devote an entire class period to peer review and try to pair a weaker student with a stronger student and later a stronger student with a stronger student. Students get their papers reviewed by at least two other students. Each student editor must place her or his name on the assignment in the upper-right hand corner. Each must use a different pen or pencil color so bring a variety of writing instruments to class that day. Tell the class that you will review each editor's comments. Knowing comments will be reviewed, students usually take the assignment more seriously. Make a point to divide classroom pals and assign them to someone on the other side of the room.

• Remember to begin a peer review session by placing the rubric or checklist on the board or overhead. Although students already received it, many won't have it in class. In fact, you'd be surprised to find how many students don't even remember to refer to it as they developed their papers. Tell them to discuss their written comments with their classmate. Give them a time limit and tell them to keep the noise level down so that they can hear each other and you as you walk around the room, checking their progress. They, amazingly enough, observe and respect the rules. Tell them that this is a chance to help their classmates improve their work and get a better grade so their classmates deserve honest feedback. Tell them the assignment is due in one week, allowing them time to revise their papers. Students must submit both the original and revised version so you can compare the work.

• For smaller classes of 30 or less, "read arounds" are effective and fun. Students are divided into groups of about five, formed in a circle. They quickly read one another's papers and pass the paper to the classmate on their right after they've read it. Read with them and tell them when to pass. After the circle reads their own papers, they switch with another circle. After all papers are read by everyone in the class, discuss the ones that were written well and why. Interestingly, the most effective papers surface and are remembered by the students.

Impact

Simply put, students learn from peer review and enjoy it. The benefits of the use of peer review and rubrics are numerous:

1) Students produce better work.

2) Grading is lessened.

3) Students learn about other topics and ideas.

4) They get a better understanding of the expectations of the assignment.

5) Students are influenced by one another. They tend to listen to one another more than they listen to us.

6) Students receive criticism from someone other than you.

Jan Quarles, Ph.D., is a professor in the Department of Electronic Media Communication at Middle Tennessee State University. She teaches international communication and digital media courses and has worked as associate/assistant dean. She taught journalism and public relations in Australia for six years and has been a journalist and practitioner.

You Choose the World News

How to create a weekly lab focusing on news and news values in world media regions

By Dr. Jan Quarles
Middle Tennessee State

Introduction

In my "Global News and World Media " classroom, I look for ways to actively engage students in seeking out and thinking about news from around the world. This GIFT describes an exercise I use in my honors sections to help students focus on a world region, choose news from that region to bring to a class story conference and argue for inclusion of news from their region in a "top five" story schedule chosen by discussion.

Rationale

This teaching idea is innovative because it engages students in seeking out stories from a region of the world they probably don't know. They are required to seek out not just any story, but a story they believe is important enough to stand up in class discussions, and they must think about the values in the story as they present it. The story conference focusing on the "top news" allows discussion of what is usually covered and why and what is ignored in world news and why. It allows me to insert observations about other stories that were not brought to class and to touch on other topics. Discussion of the final "top five" allows full class participation and ownership.

Implementation

- On the first day, I discuss how the lab exercise works.

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• During the first week, students discuss and choose a region for their focus. Depending on the number of students, we use different regional breakdowns but we begin with:
Western Europe
Eastern Europe
Russia and the Newly Independent States
Middle East and North Africa
The rest of Africa (often divided into East and West)
Asia (divided different ways depending on numbers of students, but always including China, Southeast Asia, India in regional combinations)
Australasia
Latin America (Mexico, Central and South America)
North America

• I use the exercise in Honors sections (12 students) of my class. The size of my regular class sections usually dictates the use of another exercise or a modification of this one.

• We watch BBC news to obtain a different perspective on covering world news (other news shows and even newspapers/Web sites could be used here)

• Weekly, we hold a lab session during the first part of the class.

• Students bring their stories, describe them for the class and discuss their news values.

• We discuss the stories as a class as we endeavor to put a story schedule together. What stories lead and why? What's left out and why? What values do we use in making these decisions and how might they color the way we decide?

• Any other aspects of the stories or regions we discuss are brought in at this point.

• We develop our top five stories for the week.

Impact

This exercise helps students think about news from the rest of the world and consider a viewpoint other than their own. They learn to think about the importance of a story in a new region of the world as they introduce their story and argue for its inclusion on the news schedule. Because everyone is actively involved in speaking about stories, discussing them and choosing them for a schedule, students bond as class members and take an active interest in how international news is (and isn't) covered. Students later comment on how this exercise and the class have "changed their views of the world and news."

Ed Russell, M.A., has been an assistant professor at Syracuse University since fall 2003. Russell teaches Advertising Campaigns, Creative Strategy and Execution and Portfolio. Prior to teaching, Russell spent 21 years at Saatchi & Saatchi, Leo Burnett and J. Walter Thompson working in the United States and around the world.

Advertising Campaigns: Keeping Them Real

How to make your advertising campaigns course a "real-world" exercise

By Edward W. Russell
Syracuse

Introduction

I model my Advertising Campaigns course after the four stages of a real new business pitch: Request for Proposals (RFP), Credentials, Fee Proposals and Final Creative/Media Pitch. By the time students have completed this course, they have 1) created an advertising agency, 2) learned to pitch in a competitive environment, 3) learned the financial workings of an advertising agency and 4) completed a real pitch for a real client.

Rationale

My one overriding rule: keep everything real. This is our last chance to prepare our students for their chosen career. I strive to make it their first professional experience.

Implementation

- Choose a *real* new business target. Ask to participate in a real pitch (not win, just participate). In choosing clients, I have two rules: 1) We pitch brands the students can get passionate about (they will use their pitch books to help them get jobs) and 2) we pitch brands our students can proudly show in the top agencies (for example, local college-town companies are not relevant).

- Only one agency will win. My students form into 5-6 person advertising agencies in their first week of classes. They choose their own agen-

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cies. After all, that is what we do in real life. The groups aren't always equal in talent; neither are real agencies. In the end, only one will win.

• Follow the four stages of a real new business pitch:

1) RFP: Students form their agencies and answer 15-20 real RFP questions. This helps them form their team, agency philosophy, learn the strengths and weaknesses of their agency and figure out how to present themselves in the best light possible. They can't make up answers.

2) Agency Credentials Presentation: By this time they understand the need to position and market their agency. All presentations are confidential (real world). So far, 20% of the student agency's Credential Presentations have been better than any national or regional agency.

About 10% of agencies are "not up to professional standards." So, I fire them. They now have two opportunities: a) fire their managing director, rename, and ask to re-enter the pitch as a different agency, or b) do the entire project as individuals. They restructure. Thus far two agencies that have been "fired" have come back to win the final pitch.

3) Agency Fee Presentation: Whether you are an Assistant Account Executive or Creative Director you have budget responsibilities. Students learn how an advertising agency works financially and are taught to develop a "fee pitch."

4) Creative/Media Presentation: Their job is to solve their client's marketing problem. All tools are fair game. I've had agencies "win" because they reinvented the client's product. I've seen world-class advertising campaigns. I've seen media plans that got the brand so close to the consumer that this is what ultimately solved the client's problem best. Everything is fair game. I love having clients in at this point, and they love the fresh thinking they see. They produce a book that is ideal for interviewing.

A Few Rules

• Class time is for teaching: I model my lectures around what they should be thinking about at the different times of the semester.

• Students can be fired!: If they aren't performing in their group, their group can fire them (thanks to Jim Avery for that idea). If their group isn't performing, I fire them.

• You don't win a new business pitch in three meetings: I'll make comments along the way if they ask. That's real world and the way a smart agency works with a perspective client.

• The winners win. One agency will be "awarded the business." The winner gets a perfect score for the semester project. In real life, the agency that wins actually gets the business. That's the real carrot sticking out in front of them in the real world.

• It's your business; manage it as you see fit. They see the best new business pitches in the industry and try to beat them with smarter tactics.

Impact

Students get confidence, a real pitch book for interviewing and exposure to top clients. The university gets exposure (we've presented ideas to Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, Kaplan-Thaler Group and more), amazing guest speakers and successful students. Finally, our clients get access to some of the best and brightest fresh thinking, they gain visibility as involved corporate citizens and students passionate about their brands.

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Student Self-Evaluation: Know Thy Writing Strengths and Weaknesses

How to help students assess improvement in their writing skills

By Carol Schwalbe
Arizona State

Introduction

Writing, like learning to swim, requires the coordination of many different but related skills. To help my feature writing students internalize the hallmarks of a good story and understand my grading goals, I devised a rubric based on Gerald Grow's Criteria Checklist.

Rationale

By outlining the traits of a successful story, the rubric encapsulates the course content and summarizes the skills students need to master. The rubric helps students evaluate their progress and take ownership of their grades as they assess what they did well and where they need to improve.

Implementation

• At the beginning of the semester, students analyze outstanding examples of feature writing, discuss their strengths and develop a checklist identifying the hallmarks of good writing.

• Next, students internalize the checklist by using it to analyze a piece of professional writing. "My Favorite Teacher" by Robert Kurson, a National Magazine Award finalist (2001), provokes lively discussion.

• Students then use the checklist to evaluate the final version and revi-

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sion of their stories. After they incorporate my comments on their final version, they turn in the checklist below with their revision. The emphasis changes as the semester progresses and we work on different items on the checklist.

Impact

• This checklist can be modified to suit the goals and criteria of other mass media classes. It also reveals areas that need attention in class.

• I'm astonished by the honesty with which the students grade their stories, the insights they gain and the progress they make. Involving them in the process makes grading much easier for me.

• Students learn a useful workplace skill: self-evaluation.

• On end-of-semester evaluations, many mention this as one of the most valuable parts of the class.

From one student: "Magazine writing is much harder than newspaper writing. The checklist helped me improve tremendously over the semester."

From another: "I worked hard, and the checklist let me see my progress."

Student Self-Evaluation

Please rate each item below from 1 (ouch!) to 10 (wow!). Don't expect perfection in every category, especially early in the semester. We'll work together to develop your writing skills.

	FINAL VERSION	REVISION
1. The story has a catchy title, an informative deck (optional), an engaging lead and a solid nut graph.		
2. The topic is focused, balanced, thorough and original. Surprises scattered throughout keep readers reading.		
3. The story has a coherent middle and an effective ending.		
4. The sources are diverse. Most were interviewed in person. Pithy quotes and/or dialogue enliven the story. Attribution is handled skillfully.		
5. Accurate facts and details show that the writer has done enough research.		
6. The story is logical and well organized, with smooth transitions. The tone is consistent and suits the subject matter and audience.		
7. Sentences and paragraphs vary in length and structure. Paragraphs are well developed.		
8. The story effectively uses narrative techniques, such as compelling anecdotes, character development, literary devices, color and description, sensory details, humor and/or emotion.		
9. The story is well written, with carefully chosen words, strong nouns and active verbs. It is clear, concise, tightly edited and grammatically correct. Passive voice is used sparingly and skillfully. Punctuation and spelling are correct.		
10. The story follows the assignment guidelines, such as content, formatting, number of words and sources.		
TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS (100 maximum)		

Number of hours I worked on each version	____ hours	____ hours
I proofread the story and read it out loud.	Yes _ No _	Yes _ No _
I turned each version in on time.	Yes _ No _	Yes _ No _

- What I did best
- One thing I need to improve
- The most important thing I learned
- How I can apply what I learned to future assignments
- What I'd do differently knowing what I know now
- Anything else I'd like to add

What grade would I give myself?

I'd give myself _____ on the final version and _____ on the revision.

A Story is publishable. Top-notch research and reporting. Logic, organization and facts are in order. Writing is graceful, fresh and insightful. Documentation is thorough. No major errors.
B With editing and minor changes, story is publishable. Logic, organization and facts are in order. Writing is clear and competent. Documentation is solid. Errors are minimal.
C Story is thoughtful and written with care but still requires significant revision and/or more information to make it publishable.
D Fundamental reporting and/or writing problems.

Carol Schwalbe • Arizona State University • Great Ideas For Teachers 2005

James Simon, Ph.D., is an associate professor at Fairfield University in Connecticut. He directs the journalism concentration in the English Department and teaches such courses as News Writing, Political and Government Reporting and Environmental Reporting. Prior to academia, he worked as a reporter and editor with The Associated Press for 10 years and as Assistant Secretary of the Environment for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

As Easy As 1-2-3

How to build student confidence and experience in the basic news writing course

By Dr. James Simon
Fairfield

Introduction

One of the challenges of teaching the basic News Writing course is that by the time you cover all the basics needed to write a story (for example, newsworthiness, story design, information gathering, handling quotes, libel, ethics, etc.), the semester is over and the student has run out of time to write stories. This GIFT is designed to build student confidence and experience in news writing by having them use initial classroom skills to interview and write about prominent speakers who come to class, then venture outside of class and use supplemental skills to cover individual speakers, then use the final skills taught in class to generate and complete original stories.

Rationale

A student's success or failure on initial stories can set the tone for their success in the overall class. It is also important to match reporting assignments to what skills have been covered in class. By slowly moving students from stories in class, to stories out of class and finally to fully original stories, you allow them to gain confidence and experience needed to finish the course successfully.

Implementation

- *Step 1*

After a two-week orientation to elements of news and the summary lead, Step 1 calls for In-Class Press Conference stories. At each event, a campus newsmaker--the school president, police chief, director of the school public relations office, a professor in the news, a local politician, a reporter or editor for the local media outlet--come to class, speak for 20 minutes (providing a news peg), then take questions for 40 minutes.

Students do not have to seek out sources. Full, direct quotations are optional. Instead, they focus on listening, note-taking and finding a lead. Three such events are scheduled.

- *Step 2*

After the class has covered alternative leads and some basic interviewing tips, the students are ready for Step 2. They leave the classroom and try some Deadline Stories by covering speeches on campus. Many schools have a public lecture series, which work well for deadline stories. Students also can choose their own events--lectures, meetings, speeches, celebrity appearances. They must interview five members of the audience afterwards and include quotes from two named people at the end of the story. They write up a story (without additional reporting) and submit it (via e-mail) for a grade by 9 a.m. the next day. The students pick the events, allowing them to attend something of interest. They usually must complete three such stories on a deadline basis.

- *Step 3*

At this point, the students have written up to six stories; they are ready for Step 3: generating their own Original Stories. Students generate an idea, get class feedback, select sources, collect information, write it up, submit it to peer review from classmates and submit the story for a grade. Two such original stories are expected.

Impact

The 1-2-3 approach allows a student to move slowly through the elements of basic news gathering and writing, picking up confidence along the way. The early stories can count for less of the final course grade, allowing students to work toward more polished efforts that are worth more credit as the end of the semester nears.

The exact number of stories in each step can vary based on class needs. But as the semester concludes, the students have a bank of experiences that can then be tapped for the kind of discussions on ethics and libel that often round out the end of such a course.

You can deepen student understanding of the news writing process by having them attach a reflective essay to each story, stepping back from the story and describing how it evolved. At a portfolio session, they also can look across their collected stories and write about how their skills have increased and what challenges they still face.

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Turning Journalism Students Into Savvy News Perusers for Life

How to connect students to credible Internet news sources

By Cheryl Spainhour
North Carolina-Charlotte

Introduction

Students make better journalists and informed, active citizens if they are tuned into the news of the world. Yet, according to research, most college students merely skim the news, if even that, adversely affecting their journalistic writing skills (Bissell, 2001) and their ability to get a clear picture of events that shape our world. So, how do we, as their teachers, draw them into reading in-depth accounts of the news?

To address this challenge, I created a diverse news Web page for our department's advanced news reporting course. Assignments from the Web page expose students to an array of stories from various news organizations, provide a more complete picture of current news events and help students analyze good (and bad) reporting and writing.

Rationale

Although my students regularly surf the Internet for recreation and communication, many seem relatively unfamiliar with the sophisticated menu of available news sources. The class Web page, comprised of dozens of in-depth news sources (the majority being newspapers and news magazines), both American and beyond, in and out of the mainstream, was compiled (and is updated) by our university's library liaison and me. Students learn to navigate the sites and become more knowledgeable about current events. They also get a close look at the various ways news is reported and dispensed (i.e. convergence).

The weekly news assignments students are given from the class web page complement the theoretical lectures on good reporting and writing. They can be tailored to an introductory or advanced journalism class and used during one week, one section or an entire semester.

Implementation

Sample Week

- Perusing class Web page news sources

Students are assigned to read specific news articles from one or two online news sources; they are also assigned to view visual--such as photograph galleries, graphics and video (where available). One student is assigned to research the history of the news source and read and view additional news on the site.

In the following class, to ensure students complete the web page assignment, they:

1) Take a current events quiz drawn from the readings; or

2) Turn in a 1-2 page analysis paper (using a basic news checklist as a guideline) of a news article or two news articles on the same subject from different sources (for example, a news event in England covered by staff writers from *The Guardian* and *The Times of London*).

3) Engage in a discussion of the news source, led by the student who begins with a brief history of the source.

Additional Assignment

- Students also select a current events project, using various sources covering from the class web page. Each student writes a 2-3 page paper and gives a presentation, summarizing the event and evaluating the news sources that covered it.

Impact

Many students gain a more in-depth knowledge of the news and announce some time in the semester that they will adopt one or more of the news sources from the web page. As one student said at the end of the semester, "I have really learned a lot about the world around me...I now regularly read a diverse group of online sources instead of just my 'safety net' ones." Another student wrote that "weekly readings were required of major newspapers across the globe, which made me more in tune to world affairs! I also enjoyed the current events projects!"

Students learn there are many different perspectives of a news story by reading a broad range of sources both inside (such as *The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The New Republic, The Nation, National Review Online, Sports Illustrated* or *Mother Jones*) and outside of the United States (such as online publications from the Middle East, Asia, England and Australia).

Students also learn to evaluate reporting and writing, and develop a keener sense of recognizing good reporting that reflects balance and depth as well as poor reporting that contains news holes and biases. One student said the most beneficial aspect of the course was "gaining a more critical eye when looking at stories."

An added bonus for faculty: Vigorous reading assignments make me, their journalism instructor, more knowledgeable about current events and various news sources and trends in the journalism field.

Source

Bissell, K. (2001). *Early predictors of ability in a news writing course*.

Leslie-Jean Thornton, M.A., a visiting lecturer at the Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University, is a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She teaches advanced editing and online media and was a GIFT scholar last year for "The Versatile Featuresgram." She made the switch from newsroom to academe courtesy of a Freedom Forum fellowship for mid-career professionals.

The Web We Weave

How to use a class blog as a collaborative learning tool

By Leslie-Jean Thornton
Arizona State

Introduction

An online interview with a *New York Times* editor, a discussion about the workloads of professional copy editors, links to copy editors' blogs, information resources and a guest-posted summary of a professor's research were all part of "Rimrats," our Advanced Editing class blog. "Blogglob," the Online Media class blog, was where we reported sightings of multimedia projects, Web crazes and timely articles, and monitored the changing state of the journalistic blog (and blogger). Both classes responded to weekly topic assignments, but the blog was also the site for spontaneous postings that kept the conversation lively and the brain cells sharp--and often gave us a good laugh.

Rationale

The class blog is a way to know your students better while giving them a larger role in shaping the class dynamic. They learn by doing and sharing, and are reinforced by knowing they're heard and understood. The "real-time" nature of the blog keeps the class timely and vital; the 24/7 aspect guarantees access when it's convenient. Visibility means higher standards; students take care with their thoughts and words. Despite being public, the blog fosters an "intimacy" that rivals the best in-class discussions and often elicits the type of sensitive and thoughtful insights that few students would make in a classroom. Creating and maintaining a blog is easy and free; the payback for such a small investment is phenomenal. And it's fun.

Implementation

- Decide on a name that reflects the concept of your class. Try to make it interesting, fun and inviting.

- Register for Web space at a service such as *www.blogger.com*.

- Set up the basic blog (it'll take 15 minutes, perhaps less) by choosing a pre-made design and entering basic information, like the name of the blog.

- Plan about an hour of tinkering to customize it. List students as members in a prominent place. Other add-ins could include links to online resources, class-related articles, online syllabi and presentations (PowerPoint, for example) and interesting Web sites. For now, just set the tone to get it going; the site will develop as a collaborative representation.

- Through *www.blogger.com*, e-mail each student an invitation to join the blog (perhaps best done soon after the first class meeting so you can set the stage in person). They can post to the blog on their own completing the same short registration process you did.

- *Blogger.com* notifies you as students register. Send each one a welcome e-mail as soon as possible.

- Have a discussion topic waiting on the blog so there's something for them to do right away. Ask them to write about themselves, their views or their experience related to the class.

- Post a topic each week and give a week to respond. If you have something interesting to share between classes, post it to the blog. Encourage others to do the same.

- Refer to the blog in class. Solicit feedback. Ask what should be added and follow up on useful tips. Create a go-to site. Use the blog to archive e-mail or IM interviews with guests.

- Both classes were graded on a 1,000-point scale. Each blog entry for *Rimrats* was worth 10 points, more encouragement than assessment. *Blogglob* entries were 30 points each and graded discriminately since blogging was integral to the class. I planned 10 graded topics for each class. Next semester, I will do more.

Impact

Students gained familiarity with an evolving media format, one they're likely to use. As bloggers, they became interested in what bloggers were writing about and more aware of the world and its issues. They formed bonds with each other. Work posted online was noticeably "cleaner" and clearer than work handed in for only a professor to see. Technophobes confronted the tiger and won. Learning was enhanced by keeping us "in the moment" and connected by an always-open communication channel. As a professor, I had moments of glee when a student exceeded expectations; I was rewarded by several e-mail notes from students who said "I love this!" The blog gave shape to the class and, in some ways, a home.

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Recognizing and Revising

How to create more diversity-aware student journalists

By Dr. Kimberly Wilmot Voss
Southern Illinois-Edwardsville

Introduction

Many students are becoming more aware of diversity issues. More schools are requiring courses in women's studies or ethnic studies in order to raise consciousness. In addition, many reporting textbooks address the issue of avoiding stereotypes and writing non-biased content. Yet, not enough is being done beyond recognition of the problem. This lesson plan shows how to take action after a biased piece of writing or imagery is recognized. It can be easily adapted to media writing, media editing and photojournalism classes. It provides an easy to understand process for future journalists to adopt in their own reporting. It is an exercise that instructors can return to throughout the semester.

Rationale

Today's graduates need to be more than aware of diversity issues; they need to write and edit differently because of it.

As the Gannet Company policy states: "Coverage of the diversity in our communities begins with the understanding that people are not merely cogs in vast, monolithic groupings. Vital cultural and personal distinctions define the diverse members of any broad demographic category. Appreciating and often explaining these distinctions can be keys to providing the kind of balanced and accurate news coverage that our communities expect from us."

Professional reporters have run into problems when they do not understand that the way they tell stories can reinforce stereotypes. In a recent column, the *Washington Post* ombudsman addressed a story that appeared dismissive of a woman's sexual harassment complaint. In the column, the reporter responded that if had he to do it over again, he would "reconsider the tone of the story" and "provide more context." This exercise can help students get it right the first time.

Implementation

- *Part I*

Discuss problems of diversity coverage. There are many great resources available online including the Society of Professional Journalists' Diversity Toolbox (*www.spj.org/diversity_toolbox.asp*). In the discussion highlight the practical applications of diversity coverage in terms of how reporters frame stories and what those frames represent. For example, by focusing on a female athlete's appearance rather than her ability demeans her accomplishments and reinforces the objectification of women.

- *Part II*

Find recent newspaper articles or photos that contain questionable coverage in terms of diversity (such as disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation). Areas of concern include the reinforcing of stereotypes or a one-sided account of an issue. These articles are surprisingly easy to find in any major metropolitan newspaper.

- *Part III*

Come up with different ways to approach the story. List questions that could help change the tone of the story. Rewrite these stories in a way that eliminates the problems. The process can also be applied to photos, cutlines and headlines.

For example, this lead ran in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* last year:

"When Regina Hays was a youngster growing up in Troy, Ill., she had no problem wrestling or playing Wiffle ball with neighborhood boys.

Now, the 49-year-old Glen Carbon grandmother is an official of what had once been a male-dominated profession--law enforcement. On Sunday, Hays became the first woman police chief at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and the first female police chief of a major state university in Illinois."

In class, a news writing student rewrote the lead this way:

"*Regina Hays was named the first woman police chief at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville last week.*

She has been a first several times since her career began in 1972--first female officer in Glen Carbon, first female officer at SIUE and first female SIUE officer to be promoted to sergeant. Her career path is not typical for most women in law enforcement--only 11% of Illinois police officers are female."

This rewrite eliminates the bias of presenting professional women as mothers and focuses on the gender battles that women can face when entering male-dominated professions.

Impact

- Skills learned: This exercise increases students' critical thinking skills and strengthens students' writing and editing skills. It also creates an awareness of stereotypes and ways to make changes.

- Overall outcome: Diversity issues become practical issues that are easy to address. Rather than only recognizing non-existent, biased and offensive coverage, students learn to take action. They become better journalists.

Carol Wilcox, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Virginia State University. She teaches Journalism I and II, media history and copyediting. Before becoming a professor, she worked at newspapers for more than 20 years in the United States, Mexico, France and Canada and was the co-founder, editor and co-publisher of a newspaper in Colorado.

Taking the Anxiety Out of Basic Writing

How a question-and-answer campus profile eases students into reporting

By Dr. Carol Wilcox
Virginia State

Introduction

I have assigned my Journalism I class a profile of someone on campus in question-and-answer form.

Rationale

The assignment is designed to teach students how to write and how to question sources. The teacher also hopes they will become more aware of campus issues through this project.

Implementation

- Divide the class into three groups.

- Students in one group find and interview school administrators or staff members.

- Students in the second group identify students for their interviews. They cannot interview anyone in the same class.

- Students in the third group interview and write about professors.

- Students have one week to do the interviews and write their stories. For their profiles, the students are asking questions that seek answers to basic biographical facts, and they are soliciting opinions about campus issues.

• In class, we have discussed how the interviews are working out. Were the sources cooperative? Were there problems getting them to provide useful information? Were there some good quotes? Did anyone refuse to be interviewed?

• The weekend before the assignment is due, students are expected to find examples of Q & A articles in newspapers or magazines, such as *Newsweek*.

• The next step is to write the campus profile as a Q & A, starting in our computer laboratory and taking the disk home to finish the story.

Impact

The students seem less intimidated by the Q & A format than they are by starting out with a regular story. It is one way to slide into the habit of reporting and writing with less anxiety.

The staff of the student newspaper will consider the campus profiles for the next edition. Once some of students see their bylines in the newspaper, I think they will be inspired to keep writing and to tackle bigger stories. I hope I can convince those whose stories are not selected to try again.

I think this technique is adaptable to other print media courses because it gives students who lack confidence an easy point of departure--a way to dive into a story. Some more advanced students at my university still suffer from qualms about their writing ability. A teacher could capitalize on the same idea by expecting them to create more sophisticated question-and-answer stories in the beginning. After that, students at a more advanced writing level could transform the Q & A format into genuine feature stories.

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Blog, Blog, Blog

How to use Web logs effectively in journalism courses

By Dr. Eric M. Wiltse
Wyoming

Introduction

This GIFT will cover how Web logs ("blogs") can help students learn about journalism topics and how blogs can help instructors evaluate teaching and learning. In two college classes, blogs helped students learn about Web design and current events. Writing in blogs helped students focus on class presentations. The instructor received feedback on blog projects to improve future classes.

Rationale

Although Web logs may be the most controversial form of new journalism today, many newspapers have integrated blogs into their online editions. The challenge for journalism educators is to find effective ways for students to learn how to create content for this new medium. College-level instruction in blogs is important to bring journalistic standards to this growing medium.

Implementation

- Students produced two types of blogs--notebook and filter blogs--in online journalism courses.

- Students kept a notebook blog of the daily student presentation. Blog entries included summary of topic and students' reaction to it, such as whether they learned something new or surprising.

- Teams each created a Web critique filter blog that included links to four different types of Web sites. Then each student in the team evaluated the four types of sites, resulting in a conversation among them.

• A current events filter blog was on topic at the university, in the state or region. The blog began with a link to a news article on the topic. Then the blog writer posted an opinion on the topic and provided links to online sources to support that opinion. Other students discussed the topic.

• I set up a blog to gather student reaction to filter blog projects. I wanted to know about their general reaction to blogging, whether the project helped them learn about Web design or current events, and, if so, what they learned by doing the filter blog.

Impact

I will do several things differently in the future.

Instructors should provide detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to set up their blogs on the various blog hosting services.

To uphold journalistic writing standards, students should follow *Associated Press* style. To improve the quality of writing, hold collaborative blog sessions where classmates edit each other's blogs.

Instructors should evaluate student blog writing several times during the semester. Students also should be allowed to self-assess the weaknesses and strengths of their blog writing and to set goals to improve their blogs. Instructors could assign a grade for grammar and another grade for style to encourage students to develop their blog voices. A grading rubric could evaluate quality of the content in students' blogs, including use of evidence through hyperlinks to relevant Web sites and thoughtfulness of comments.

Instructors should provide models of good blogging, ranging from journalists' blogs to fiction writers' blogs. Emphasize that the common element in good blogs is good writing, and that audiences expect high-quality writing from professionals.

To make students aware they are writing for an audience, create blogs as public, not private, sites so anyone can read and participate in them.

Instructors should participate in the blogs and invite professionals, perhaps local reporters, to join. Working journalists could serve as editors of student blogs to encourage students to follow journalistic standards.

My course evaluation blog to gather feedback on the projects provided useful ideas to improve classes. Students generally seemed excited and motivated about the new medium. Students provided more constructive criticism in the feedback blog than they did in the traditional teaching evaluations at the end of the semester.

Blogs could be effective teaching media for any class dealing with current events. However, instruction should be provided in how to evaluate the credibility of Web sites so students think critically before linking to related news articles in their blogs.

In opinion writing classes, students could write background reports on issues of public concern. Then they could create blogs in which they editorialize on those issues, using links to articles that both support and rebut their opinions, weighing the strengths and weaknesses of those arguments.

For publication design classes, a filter blog could be designed. Students could link to online newsletters in portable document format (.pdf), advertisements and even logos they find on the Web. Then they could critique the strengths and weaknesses of those designs.

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Faces of Faith: Confronting Religious Diversity in the Bible Belt

How to use a multi-class group/multimedia project to expose students to the diversity within a conservative culture

By Dr. John B. (Jack) Zibluk
Arkansas State

Introduction

Students produced a print and online documentary project focusing on different faiths than their own to force them to confront religious diversity.

Each spring, photojournalism and design classes work on a collaborative project in which the photojournalism class supplies copy and pictures and the design class produces a magazine or newspaper from the ground up.

This year, students decided to explore religion in a conservative region. The teacher urged them to focus on religious diversity, illustrating that even within a majority population, there are pockets of different expressions of faith. In class, students discussed their own faiths and were required to document a different faith than their own. We documented Catholics, Muslims and even Wiccans.

The design students produced the magazine with the help of our printing department. This year, students were able to produce an online version.

Rationale

Students often see diversity as limited to race and or gender issues. By using faith as a focus, students confronted a different dimension of diversity. They also got to see the production of a print/multi-media project from the beginning through the end.

Implementation

- Conduct a brainstorming session with students on subject, scope and story ideas in the documentary photojournalism class in early February. Students provided story ideas with documentation, contact information,

etc. Similar stories were combined, and the students eventually came up with assignments to illustrate the variety of religious experiences available in the area.

• Hold a meeting with the design class and printers to set deadlines and production schedule by mid-February. Discuss costs, bidding and production procedures.

• Assign stories, editorial and production duties, by mid-February.

• Produce copy a week after spring break.

• Set aside two weeks to produce the Web page and magazine. Have students decide on cover art, story placement in at least one budget meeting. Students in this class acted as a publication board, and some discussion centered on more controversial subjects, such as whether a story on Wicca would be too provocative for the audience. The target audience included off-campus as well as on-campus religious organizations.

• Meet mid-April production deadline in order to have magazine done by finals.

Impact

Students confronted production and personality difficulties as well as deciding on value of disparate content. Many students from conservative backgrounds were confronted with different, non-Christian religions for the first time. The discussions led to an understanding that diversity goes beyond race and gender.

Mostly, the experiences were anecdotal. Yet many students were affected personally.

The inclusion of non-Christian faiths, particularly the Wiccans, raised the most discussion as the design class made decisions on content. As a group project, the teacher agreed to abide by the decisions of the design class, which acted as editorial board. When an ordained Church of Christ minister in the class spoke in favor of the idea that faith is not limited to one denomination, the class piece was included. He made the point that, as journalists, the class was not to pass judgment on a denomination, but rather to report on the issue from a perspective of reporting on faith.

Another Church of Christ member reported on the Catholic churches in the area and reported on the similarities between the faiths.

One student was unable to complete the article on the local mosque, but a member of the photojournalism class that provided the content felt it was important enough to take on an extra assignment in order to make the project complete. Members of the design class decided to hold space for the Islam story rather than find another way to fill the space graphically.

Since the project was primarily student-generated, and the students took responsibility for content, design and production, enthusiasm and participation was high.

The magazine is also used as a recruiting tool and an assessment tool for the journalism department and a diversity outreach project for the university.

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