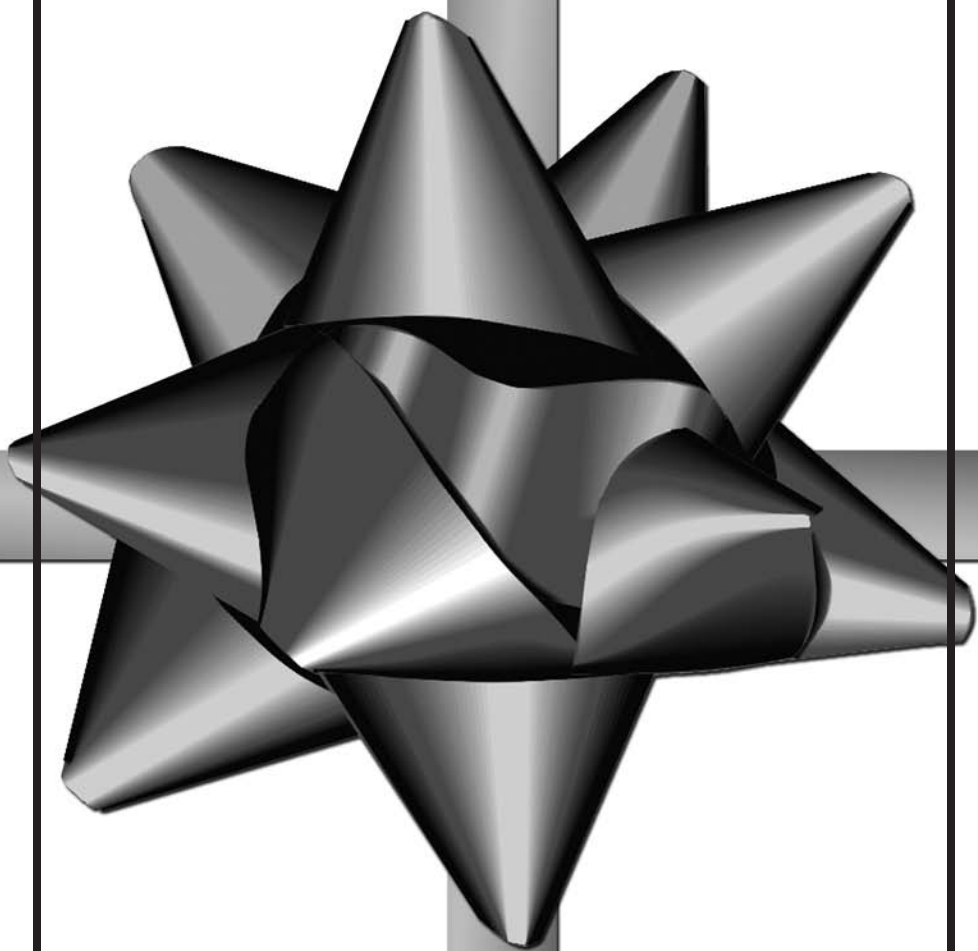


# *The* *Community College* Journalist

Summer 2006 Special Issue

The Official Publication of The Community College Journalism Association



# GIFT 2006

*Great Ideas For Teachers program celebrates its 7th year!*

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# *The* Journalist Community College

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# GIFT 2006 celebrates its 7th year!

The Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) program celebrates its 7th year “By the Bay” in San Francisco, Calif., at the annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication summer convention.

A record-breaking 85 GIFT articles were submitted by AEJMC’s uniform deadline on April 1 from journalism and mass communication professors teaching at community colleges, small programs and large research universities. Only 25 (29% acceptance rate) GIFTs were selected to be featured at the convention and published in this special edition of *The Community College Journalist*—now in a booklet/journal instead of a magazine format.

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. The competition culminates in an interactive mega-poster session at the annual AEJMC summer convention. Its main sponsors are the Community College Journalism Association and the Small Programs Interest Group. This year’s co-sponsors are the Scholastic Journalism and International Communication divisions.

Log on to the official GIFT Web site at [www.geocities.com/aejmcgift](http://www.geocities.com/aejmcgift) for winners’ and scholars’ GIFTs, photos and more information about the program throughout the past seven years.

We sometimes view teaching as a “load” but good teaching is truly a gift. 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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# Changing Your Local Newscast

## *How to work with a news station to conduct a content analysis on diversity of local news*

By Dr. Cristina L. Azocar  
San Francisco State

*Cristina L. Azocar, Ph.D., is a member of the Upper Mattaponi Tribe. She is the director of the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism (CIIJ) and an adjunct assistant professor of journalism at San Francisco State University where she teaches classes on diversity in journalism.*

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### Introduction

Required courses on diversity in the news media are often met with student resistance. Often the classes are taught in a vacuum, which does little to increase student understanding of the importance of diversity. In order to make the experience reflect the realities of a working newsroom, my class conducted a content analysis of news from the local CBS station, with assistance from the station, to analyze how diverse the content of its three main newscasts were. Students were broken up into groups and each group analyzed three hours worth of news using a simple coding scheme with three levels of analysis: program, story and character. Gender, race, age and type of story were the main variables. Students then made group presentations to the newsroom staff on their findings and they completed individual research papers about the findings and process.

### Rationale

By working directly with a news-

room including interaction from reporters and managers on a weekly basis, students learn how diversity plays out in real-life situations. Moreover, they are introduced to the importance of applied research. Additionally, speakers discuss how to ensure diversity in their stories, but also deal with the pressures of being on-air news reporters, managerial staff, producers and camera people. The station benefits directly from the presentations made by the students outlining their findings and receives more detailed feedback through the students' research papers (names are withheld). And the process gives departments access to professionals.

### Implementation

- Approximately two months before the semester the instructor pulls a random sample of the news stations programs for a given time period (in this case six months).
- The news station representative

(here, a member of the station's diversity committee) is responsible for providing each newscast on VHS tapes.

- The instructor works with the station representative to set up guest speakers in the classroom throughout the semester.

- The first or second class meeting, students are broken up into enough groups so that each codes three hours worth of tapes. Groups meet and discuss roles.

- The second or third class meeting students learn to code tapes. This is done with the instructor and with the representative.

- Guest speakers from the station periodically come in to talk to the class.

- A coding check is done about five weeks into the semester to make sure everyone is doing the work correctly.

- Approximately seven weeks into the semester students start working on their research papers with the information they have gathered to this point from coding.

- On the final day of class, group presentations are made to the news staff.

### Impact

Teaching diversity issues are often complicated and unnerving. Students all had a positive learning experience in this class because they saw directly how the class intersected with professional journalism as evidenced by high teaching evaluations. Many students asked for copies of the tape produced by the CBS team. Moreover, one of the students received an internship at the station because of her experience in the class. The CBS station also committed to following up with the analysis and is coming back to the class this semester for a comparison analysis.



# Exposing My Thin Skin

## *How to teach editing students to work with writers*

By Matthew Baker  
Utah

*Matthew Baker, M.A., is a graduate teaching fellow in the Department of Communication at the University of Utah where he is working on his Ph.D. He teaches newswriting and editing.*

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### Introduction

Every writer needs an editor. However, many feature writers believe that doesn't include them. Generally, feature writers have paid their dues and proven themselves worthy of time to work on long-format stories that will receive good play. They have proven skills, they know they have the skills and they can be defensive when an editor tells them how to make a story better. I've had a hard time teaching my editing students the skills necessary to fill the role of that feature editor.

I like to teach journalism skills courses by giving students the opportunity to practice their skills in as real-world situation as possible—a situation where they can get constructive feedback and ask questions along the way. However, it's hard to do this without the students feeling that they are in a contrived situation.

### Rationale

I wanted to create a "real-world" situation to teach my editing students the skill of making constructive editing sug-

gestions while respecting a writer's style and emotional sensibilities. So, with my thin skin and easily-damaged ego, I gave them an un-edited copy of a news-feature story I had written when I worked for a daily newspaper. It was a story I had worked hard for—traveling on a motorcycle through southern Madagascar to visit famine-relief clinics. It was also a story in need of major edits—cuts, structure, transitions and clarity. Putting my students in the role of editor allowed them to practice a new skill. At the same time, they learned from observing each other.

### Implementation

- First, I had led a short discussion, asking them how they feel when they get back the papers I grade. What kinds of suggestions are helpful? What suggestions do you want to hear? What suggestions do you need to hear? How can I give constructive feedback on your writing while respecting your writing style?
- Next, I gave a short lecture with other suggestions for working with writ-

ers: Read the entire story before making comments, praise the strengths, offer suggestions as questions, let the writer suggest ways to address your concerns, give concrete suggestions and so forth.

- Then, I turned them loose on my writing.
- I gave them plenty of time to read, write notes, make edits and prepare to talk to the reporter about how to improve the story.
- Next, I placed the story on the screen in front of the class, and let them give me an evaluation of my story, make suggestions, ask questions and negotiate changes.
- After agreeing on the revisions nec-

essary, we stepped back to discuss the quality of their interaction with me as the writer and the value of the exercise.

### Impact

During the activity, I was surprised what they had learned through the semester about story focus, pacing and structure. It was a good assessment of other skills they had learned, and a confidence builder for them to realize their ability to apply those skills. I was also impressed with how they presented their editing suggestions. For the most part they learned what I intended and gave constructive editing suggestions without creating conflict. I only got a little defensive about my writing.

# Technology as the Teacher

*How to use the car to teach communication, media and society*

By Dr. Gene Burd  
Texas-Austin

*Gene Burd, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin, has taught reporting, feature writing, media and society, journalism history, critical-qualitative research methods, urban communication and media specialties in sports, music and minorities. He was a reporter and/or editor for the Houston Chronicle, Kansas City Star, Albuquerque Journal and suburban newspapers in Chicago and Los Angeles, and has served in government policy and information capacities in Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis-St. Paul. He was educated at UCLA, Iowa and Northwestern, and has taught full-time for 41 years at Marquette, Minnesota and Texas.*

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## Introduction

This course on "The Car as Culture and Communication" for 15 undergraduate honors students examines the car as a personified and psychological communication technology and a social institution with mobility as an end in itself and a purpose beyond mere transportation. It surveys how journalists and historians report and record the impact of cars on the urban and natural environment in both mass and specialized print media (newspapers, magazines, books, novels, folklore and poetry); how the car is promoted and publicized through advertising (via gender, fashion, culture); how visual art, photography, film, movies, television and how sounds and music capture the car culture through radio, telephone, and electronic "smart car" systems; how interpersonal and non-verbal communication are involved in the car culture, "emotional geographies", and the

"language" of driving, and aggressive anti-social, violent public behavior of road rage and car crashes; and it explores the future of auto-mobility, and the anti-car and car-free cities movements by pedestrians, environmentalists, critics of technology, emerging globalization; and the engineering of the post-car and post-human society.

## Rationale

The course brought together students from five widely distinct and separate departments in an interdisciplinary College of Communication, with a special focus on a little acknowledged technology to help them connect topics that otherwise "fell through the cracks" in the university's curricula on the practice, study and teaching of communication in departments of journalism, advertising, radio-television-film, speech and communication disorders.

### Implementation

- The instructor connected the subjects in the students' individual departments to the course theme of the car as communication so as to stimulate class discussion across disciplines and to germinate class term projects and projects.

Thus, journalism students were familiar with news about car accidents (to train reporters), traffic, safety, engineering problems, transportation to deliver newspapers and move commuters, travel and tourism writing, the architecture of parking, highways, malls and suburbs; news on energy, economics, industry, pollution, car critics—and related daily news stories providing an agenda for discussion and dialogue by students from the non-print departments.

- Advertising students understood cars and marketing, commercials for sales and promotion, as they relate to status, economics, lifestyles, class and identities—in individual, cultural and national. This was woven by the instructor into the visual aspects of photography, graphics, fashion, style, “car-toons”, car and van art, license plates, bumper stickers (as individualized mass communications), car and highway banners and billboards.

- Film majors immediately identified with lectures and readings about the car in film and television, and the early co-incidental “marriage” of motion by both car companies and the “movies” in Detroit and Hollywood. The history of cars in film scenes, plots and characters was surveyed along with the culture of drive-in theaters and cars crashes in television, and in early radio sound effects.

- Radio majors are also reminded of the role of sound as communication in motors, horns, car radios, stereos, radio disk jockeys, songs of the road and cruising, the CB craze, cell phones in cars and “smart cars” with new electronic gadgetry of the Internet, computers, GIS, “car talk” and the auto as an “office”, communication center and workplace.

- Speech students were receptive to thinking of the car as a device for non-verbal and interpersonal communication, and the car as an extension of the human body, as a social being in a “suit of armor” often in conflict with wheels of other drivers, cyclists, skateboarders, pedicabs, and segways; and with pedestrians, walkers, joggers, and runners (without wheels)—all in contested public communication space. Also examined were the more positive use of cars, caravans, processions and demonstrations as political and social “statements”.

- Students from the communication disorders department more easily grasped the connection of cars to the road rage epidemic: tail-gating, obscene gestures, aggressive speeding, hit-and-runs, DWIs, vehicles as weapons, car bombs, suicide motorists, drive-by shootings, crash robberies, and the increasing use of guns, baseball bats, fists, etc. ending in injuries and murder.

- A variety of methods for the individual student project formats was adjusted to the different departments' professional training and curricula: newspaper and magazine articles; film and audio presentations and performances; use of surveys, historical archives and direct ethnograph-

ic, participant-observation and field work leading to personal experience and autobiographical essays.

### **Impact**

Students expressed great enthusiasm about the course in anonymous, written comments about its impact on them. A collage of typical reactions follows in their own words: "the only course through five years of college—that has caused me to look at an issue in an entirely different, original way".... "most courses are usually based on thought that has already been established"...."the only class I enjoy discussing outside of class... and it has made me look at communication in a completely new light....in a dark area of study that needed to be illuminated.

Thank You !" The "beauty of the class" was that it allowed freedom "without the indoctrination that exists in most classes" and "Class discussions and self-motivated projects allowed students to explore..... stretching the creative mind". "I like learning about communication in areas not usually considered...a whole new aspect for me in communication". "I never thought of a car as a communication device"..... The course provided "original views" on a "non-traditional topic" and "taught me how to think rather than what to think...taught me to think 'outside the box'"....a "fresh perspective" with a "cross-sectional and cross-disciplinary discourse one doesn't find in many other academic departments"..... It "planted a seed that I'll carry after I graduate".

# Get Involved!

*How to help students understand journalism ethics through community service*

By Dr. Lynn Schofield Clark  
Denver

*Lynn Schofield Clark, Ph.D., is assistant professor at the University of Denver, where she teaches courses in journalism, new media and media audiences. She is author of several books and articles on how media use shapes everyday practices in the lives of young people and their families, including the NCA award-winning From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural (Oxford University Press, 2003).*

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## Introduction

Teaching ethical thinking is important in all journalism programs. Students must learn the value of fair and accurate reporting, but they also need to learn about how their own assumptions can limit what they choose to report. To get at this latter issue, one group of students got to know about life experiences very different from their own through ongoing involvement with disadvantaged members of their community. This helped them to better understand what is at stake for those who are often misrepresented and whose stories often remain untold, thus enriching their understandings of journalism and the ethical decision-making it requires.

## Rationale

Journalism ethics courses often have a great deal of emphasis on the development of reasoned thinking, even though some students prefer to learn experientially and in ways of their own choosing. In

addition to reading and class discussions, this course, following Nick Trujillo's collaborative learning model, encourages students to get involved in service to disadvantaged communities. The class gives students a chance to reflect on their own service experiences in relation to their future aspirations in the media professions, and to investigate the needs and media coverage of a particular societal problem of their own choosing in depth.

## Implementation

- At the beginning of a 16-week semester, students are provided with a list of possible volunteer opportunities and are given three weeks to secure a site. They will volunteer there at least six times over the course of the semester.
- The semester's first paper is a reflection on their first three visits to their service site, due six weeks into the semester.

- Each student in the class is required to write a brief response to the service papers of at least two other students, thus ensuring that the students read about each others' experiences and are prepared to discuss them in class.
- Students then brainstorm in class to create a list of problems disadvantaged persons like those they've met encounter (racism, homelessness, un- or underemployment, English as a second language, etc.).
- Students are then given a list of international and national organizations that provide services similar to those in which they are volunteering that seek to address these problems. They choose one topic to investigate in depth, exploring the media coverage of the problem, a well-known organization or leader from the past who sought to address it (for example, why the organization was founded), and the disadvantaged group with which they are (or were) involved.
- Six weeks before the end of the semester, they turn in a bibliography on their topic.
- Three weeks before the end of the semester, they turn in an outline of their final paper.
- For the final week in class, students turn in a paper and make a class presentation that introduces the rest of the class to a problem and the organization or person that has attempted to address it. The student tells us what he or she has learned about the media coverage of this issue: Did it change over time? Was it always "fair"? Did it reflect certain perspectives? What would they have included in their coverage that was missing from what they found? In their paper and presentation, they also explain why they chose the topic they did and how it related to what they learned from their service experiences.

### **Impact**

- Throughout the semester, students became more sensitized to the life experiences of those they were serving. While a few had had extended service experiences in the past, most had had very little contact with disadvantaged persons prior to this experience. I was amazed to see their perspectives change as they started being critical of the news reports they read in light of the people they had come to know in their service sites.
- From one student: "I never thought that by helping someone else, I would learn so much about myself."

## *GIFT 2006 Grand Prize Winner*



### **Finding That Dream House Without FOI Nightmares**

*How to make access to public records relevant in reporting  
and law classes through a house and neighborhood document  
with background search*

**By Dr. David Cuillier**  
**Arizona**

*David Cuillier, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Arizona. He teaches news reporting, public affairs reporting and computer-assisted reporting. Prior to academia, he worked for 12 years as a journalist, and his current research focuses on public attitudes toward access to government information.*

---

#### **Introduction**

This assignment provides hands-on experience for reporting or media law students in learning how freedom of information laws work by digging through public documents about a house for sale. This assignment motivates students because of its practical relevancy to their careers and personal lives. By the end of the project, students demonstrate stronger support for open government.

#### **Rationale**

Access to public records is essential for democracy, yet many students do not understand how to request documents or its importance in society. This assign-

ment makes access real, relevant, and important to their lives.

Document projects have been found to improve reporting skills, such as through backgrounding individuals in a cemetery (Carol S. Lomicky 2002 GIFT grand prize winner), or conducting access audits of campus or local government agencies (see Terry Wimmer's 2002 "Project Access" GIFT, as well as the Society of Professional Journalists' FOI audit toolkit at [www.spj.org/foia\\_toolkit.asp](http://www.spj.org/foia_toolkit.asp)).

This project builds on the cemetery and government audit exercises by focusing on a subject that is relevant to students' personal lives, thereby increasing motivation, which Bandura's social



learning theory suggests is essential for attitude and behavioral change.

## Implementation

- *Week 1*

Teams of three to five students are each given the address of a house for sale in the community and told to find out as much about the house and neighborhood as they can from physically acquired public records—no Internet information or people sources. Ideally, assigned houses should be near proposed developments, airport flight paths, or a registered sex offender to better illustrate the value of records.

Students are encouraged to think of potentially useful public records on their own, but are provided a list of ideas to get them started:

- 1) Property tax records including assessed value, owner's name, taxes paid, and square footage
- 2) Police reports and sex offender registries
- 3) Development plans, including road plans, proposed commercial development, and zoning for future development
- 4) Parks plans
- 5) Airport flight pattern maps that show sound levels
- 6) School test scores to compare schools
- 7) EPA records regarding hazardous chemicals and polluted sites
- 8) Nuisance complaints reported to the city

- *Week 2*

Students research access laws, primarily state open records laws. They

identify the records they will need and what agencies have them, divvying up the responsibility by agency so every student requests records.

- *Week 3*

Students create and submit public records request letters (online generator for each state at [www.splc.org](http://www.splc.org)). They are instructed to take good notes through the process so they can describe what they did, how the government responded and the outcome. In class they learn strategies for accessing records.

- *Weeks 4-8*

Students work to get the records. A progress report is due at week 6.

- *Week 9*

Final reports are due that include a team paper describing the neighborhood and house based on what was found in public records, as well as individual papers from each student explaining the law, what they requested and how they handled the request. Also, students are asked to describe their attitudes toward open government and personal privacy. Teams present their findings to the class.

For a variation of this assignment, teams can access records on campus regarding topics relevant to their lives, such as crime, faculty salaries, class grade distributions, alcohol abuse and department budgets. Students at private universities, where records might be more difficult to acquire, can still do the house-buying exercise.

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**CUILIER GIFT**  
*Continued on page 61*

# Grist from the Rumor Mill

*How to use the interview as treasure hunt*

By Dr. Juanita Darling  
California State-Monterey Bay

*Juanita Darling, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and campus newspaper adviser at California State University, Monterey Bay. Before entering academe, she was a newspaper reporter for more than two decades, most recently as a foreign correspondent for the Los Angeles Times.*

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## Introduction

Tracking down a rumor is treasure-hunting at its best. One source provides clues that lead to another and to keys that will unlock information.

In this exercise, each source has only part of the story and not all are equally forthcoming. In fact, those most willing to talk know the least and much of what they think they know is wrong. With editors playing the roles of sources, student reporters interview administrators, students and a potential donor to find out if there is any truth to accusations posted on the campus email bulletin board.

The reporters compare the different versions they heard and decide what is true. Editors critique the reporters' interview techniques.

## Rationale

This team-building exercise reinforces the editors' roles as mentors for the reporters. Reporters are reminded that some sources are more reliable than others, that specific questions elicit useful answers and that following up on

interviews is often essential. They see a situation—and through it the university—from the perspectives of students, administrators and the community, helping them understand the need for contacting multiple sources to verify information, to accept the responsibility for finding out the truth rather than reporting various versions of rumors and to write their stories for a broad audience. They also learn the most efficient way to work in teams.

## Implementation

- Student editors and veteran reporters receive written scenarios explaining the role they will play and appropriate name tags. Some are instructed to speak only on background, some must limit their comments to confirming or denying information, not providing any details that they are not asked. Some have partial information and have drawn erroneous conclusions from that partial information.
- Reporters are told that a student has

posted bitter complaints to the campus e-mail bulletin board, accusing the administration and faculty of hijacking a donation for a classroom building. They want to use the money for luxury offices and the donor is so disgusted that he is threatening to withdraw the money.

- Editors are introduced by their roles. Reporters are paired up and told to investigate the story. A team should call out when the reporters think they know what has happened. Often, the first team to call out does not have the complete story.

- Once a team gets at the truth, the reporters talk about how they got the story first and right. They usually split up to interview more sources but kept in close touch with each other. Editors critique the interviews. The whole staff discusses how to write the story: what kind of lead and structure to use, which quotes stand out and how to identify sources.

- We recap what happened and how the lessons could be applied to future, rumor-based stories.

## Impact

The interview exercise has become a sort of initiation for new staff reporters. Editors and veteran reporters smile knowingly when I announce it. After the exercise, students are less likely to file under-sourced stories and stories with unidentified sources. They do not balk when assigned double byline stories or when editors tell them to interview administrators.

By providing concrete advice on how the reporters can improve their interview skills, the editors increase their credibility with new reporters who are inclined to resent the leadership of another student “just like me.”

Students also observe how other reporters take notes and come to understand why detailed notes are important.

One student, who has been on staff for four semesters, said, “This is my favorite exercise.”

In evaluations, a student commented, “Doing the role plays for reporting was good. It helped us see where we need to improve our reporting.”

# News Judgment Call to Action

*How to show students that with journalism,  
there are no “right” answers*

By Kate Roberts Edenborg  
Minnesota-Twin Cities

*Kate Roberts Edenborg, M.A., is a Ph.D. candidate and graduate instructor at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She teaches editing, layout, news writing and journalism history courses in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. She is also working as a copy editor at the St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press.*

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## Introduction

Editing and design classes do not usually lends themselves to multiple choice exams or Scantron testing, and this can frustrate some students who are mainly concerned with getting an “A”. So much of what we do in my course is based on news judgment and focuses on getting students to realize what factors feed in to the editorial decisions they make. Thus, I make a conscious effort to make certain students know that there is often not a “right” answer to most of what we talk about and practice in class. I have re-worked some of the typical journalism skills assignments, in order to make it clear to students that I am not seeking a answer.

One way that I’ve done this by changing the format of the basic news or current events quiz. While the quiz itself often seeks a specific answer, the process throughout the semester changes to reveal that each of us has a different perspective on what are the right questions to ask in the first place.

I start out the semester with a five-question news quiz—the normal quiz. Then right before midterm I change it. For the next weeks they write their own news quizzes. They send this to me before class to get full credit for that quiz. Then if they choose, they can take one of the quizzes written by a fellow classmate and their score on that can replace a lower score on an earlier quiz. Then two weeks before the end of the term I change it again. This time they follow a newsworthy issue or topic for the next two weeks, taking note of where and how the stories were/were not played. After the two weeks, they then write up an explanation of what they found.

Throughout the semester they realize that knowing the news does not mean knowing about five particular events, it is about an overall awareness. Thus, I am interested in their process instead of their answers. This is revealed in their responses to headlining exercises, page layout projects, story selection discussions and even news quizzes and AP style drills.

For example, I encourage students to discover (and sometimes challenge) the logic of the *Associated Press Stylebook*. Students seem to get a better grasp of AP style after they have engaged it in this manner. Regardless of the type of assignment, students learn that they not only have to complete the exercises, but they also have to learn how to discuss, and sometimes defend, their work. A good example of this is the group projects they work on. Students are placed into news teams for the class' final project and they create a fully planned, designed and edited newspaper front page. They are required to "apply" for the newspaper job that they would like to have for the project. One role is not a real newspaper job; this is the "explainer" position. The person who does this job provides me with a narrative of how the page was put together—discussions that took place, decisions made, problems in handling tasks, etc. It gives me insight into the teams' editing and design processes that would otherwise be inaccessible. Also the students present their pages at the end of the term and everyone sees how many different layouts, story selections result from the same content.

### **Rationale**

Most courses college students undertake in their college careers are ones that require exams and final papers. When

they step into some journalism skills courses their routines are shaken up and I think we should recognize and assist the students in the transition.

### **Implementation**

- Developing AP style exercises that engage students, encouraging them to challenge the text
- Administering a variety of news quiz formats to show students that not only is there often not a "right" answer, there may not even be a "right" question
- Providing the opportunity for students to discuss and share their decision-making processes and revealing how each process can arrive at a very valid outcome

### **Impact**

Many of the approaches I offer engage the students more effectively than my old methods. It gives them a sense of ownership to their work and pride in their decisions. It is especially motivating as an instructor as well. Going into each semester knowing that students will come up with responses and ideas that I have never seen or never even thought of before keeps things interesting. I believe the class new and refreshing for the students as well as myself.

## Click and Brick

*How to incorporate online Associated Press style instruction into a seated mass communications classroom*

By Linda Harvey and Dr. Joye C. Gordon  
Kansas State

*Linda Harvey, M.P.A., is an instructor of public relations at Kansas State University. She teaches public relations and special topics mass communications courses in the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Prior to academia, she worked for nearly a decade in the non-profit sector as a public relations practitioner and fundraiser.*

*Joye C. Gordon, Ph.D., is an associate professor at Kansas State University. She teaches both seated and online public relations and mass communications courses in the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications. She is also the sequence head for the school's public relations sequence.*

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### Introduction

Undergraduate education of mass communications students often focuses on skills training, including *Associated Press* style. Dynamic enrollment growth within mass communications curriculums is negatively impacting classroom space, instructional materials, department budgets and faculty workloads as today's academics are forced to 'do more with less.' Combining online *Associated Press* style instruction in addition to traditional seated instruction is a feasible route to providing efficacious training for mass communications students. This presentation will show educators how to supplement seated instruction with online *Associated Press* style instruction to present a facilitative and focused pedagogy toward mass communications learning. By sharing these experiences, educators will see

that mass communication skills education can be achieved faster, cheaper and more effectively through the use of the Internet, course management software and digital media.

### Rationale

There are a number of reasons why this approach is innovative and appropriate.

Numerous mass communication practitioners (for example, public relations, advertising, etc.) often express concern regarding the breadth and depth of training students are receiving. Mastery of written language, including elements of style, has been set forth by the industry's professional organizations as a skill set necessary for success in the mass communication professions.

A lack of satisfaction by these same

practitioners regarding the presence of these specific and desirable skills, compounded with dynamic enrollment growth impacting classroom space, availability of instructional materials, and faculty workloads, is forcing educators to be innovative. Use of the Internet as an educational technology, for the purpose of effectively training mass communications students, has successfully supplemented the traditional seated classroom format of instruction, as evidenced by numerous scholars.

Secondly, e-learning experts argue that the more instruction students are exposed to online, the more successful the students will be overall. The use of resources is low while learning has high impact. Nearly 80 percent of all college students (according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2002) also agree that the Internet has positively impact their academic experiences.

Most importantly, this “click and brick” concept utilizes simple-to-use Microsoft PowerPoint software and the Axio course management system to provide the AP style instruction to our future mass communicators. While leaving in-classroom time for focused instruction between educator and students, the AP style unit presentations can be viewed, and the quizzes can be proctored, online anytime, anywhere. The presentations and quizzes are provided thematically. Quiz pools are randomized to bely opportunities for cheating.

### Implementation

- Eight online thematic presentations created using Microsoft PowerPoint software

- Themes included capitalization, addresses, abbreviations, dates, times, datelines, numerals, people, punctuation and quotations

- Quiz pool of 50 multiple-choice questions match each presentation’s thematic material (total quiz pool of 400 questions over the eight themes)

- Multiple-choice questions asked students to determine which short passage used correct AP style

- Eight quizzes of 25 randomly selected questions from each pool

### Impact

Over the course of two semesters, students participating in these “click and brick” classes have evaluated the use of online *Associated Press* style instruction favorably, citing the units reinforced previous instruction, were useful, and often provided new information not learned in other classes.

Faculty creating this “e-learning” experience found an initial major increase in workload in comparison with traditional seated teaching formats. Longitudinally, however, the educators have realized the benefit of providing a learning environment that is student-centered, outcome-oriented, facilitative and focused on building writing skills and computer literacy. As Internet-based education is inherently cognitive, information transfer and successful cognitive learning is being achieved faster, cheaper and more effective.

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**HARVEY AND GORDON GIFT**

*Continued on page 61*

# Building a Brand Architecture

*How to construct a solid foundation for great advertising*

By Dr. Daniel M. Haygood  
Tennessee

*Daniel M. Haygood, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Tennessee, teaching Advertising Principles and Advertising Management. He worked for 13 years in account management with the D'Arcy Agency in the firm's New York City and Tokyo, Japan offices.*

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## Introduction

To create successful advertising that drives business and builds a brand over the long term, defining a brand clearly and accurately is critical.

The Brand Architecture tool is an efficient and effective instrument used by major advertisers and marketers for defining brands. In essence, the architecture serves as a distant target or goal for which all advertising and communications should aim.

The actual Brand Architecture has five key elements: 1) Attributes: Rational product features, 2) Benefits: Emotional and rational benefits, 3) Values: Basic human values, 4) Personality: Human characteristics and 5) Essence: Enduring "soul" of the brand.

The most crucial element is the Essence or the "soul of the brand." This essence succinctly captures what the brand stands for or represents.

For the actual class exercise, students are asked to examine and taste an international confection product called, "Pocky." Pocky, originally sold in Asia, is a stick-shaped biscuit product that comes partially covered in an assortment

of flavors, primarily chocolate. Approximately 30 sticks are contained in a single box of Pocky.

Working in teams, the students develop their own Brand Architecture for the product and present their work to the class.

## Rationale

The Brand Architecture is simply not covered in leading advertising textbooks, and to my knowledge, it is rarely introduced in advertising or marketing classes. Yet, working in the advertising industry on brands from Procter & Gamble, Mars, Coca-Cola and Anheuser-Busch, I can attest to its real world application and value. Thus, these students are getting early experience working on a fundamentally important branding tool that is used by major global marketers and advertisers.

This class exercise uses an international confection product in order to encourage students to think outside of their U.S. comfort zone and to think globally. With this exercise and others in my class, I challenge the students to cross national boundaries and think like international business people.



The ability to work in teams is absolutely critical to success in the marketing and advertising world.

### **Implementation**

- Preliminary lecture covers key brand-related definitions and a brief history of branding.
- Introduce concept of brand definition and the Brand Architecture tool; show examples of well-written Brand Architectures and brand advertising.
- Students are then informed that they will create a Brand Architecture for the international confection product, Pocky.
- Divide class into “brand/agency” teams; two students in each team are named “Brand Manager” and “Account Manager;” they lead their team of students in the Brand Architecture creation.
- Each team examines a box of Pocky; the team then opens the package, reviews the actual product and finally tastes the product.
- Working within the team, students imagine how this product might be defined based on their product examination and tasting.
- Students then identify the key elements for a Pocky Brand Architecture and fill out the architecture format document.
- Brand Manager and Account Manager present the elements of their architecture to the class and provide their

rationale of how they arrived at their decisions.

- Key Part! Discussion begins on how well all the architecture elements work together to present a coherent brand and how well the overall architecture fits with the actual Pocky product.
- Comparisons are made among teams’ architectures.
- Finally, the actual, original Pocky Brand Architecture is presented to students for comparison to their work.

### **Impact**

#### *Student Morale*

I think students appreciate learning something like the Brand Architecture that is so fundamentally useful and is not typically taught, if at all, in their other classes. I heighten this feeling as I position the tool as sort of their “secret weapon” to use in other classes or in their business careers. Plus, the students are quite taken with the actual Pocky product and are excited to taste a different kind of confection that is very tasty, exotic and international.

#### *Professor’s Morale*

I enjoy teaching the students something from my own direct experience in the advertising agency business—something my own clients used. Plus, I know that the Brand Architecture will separate my students from others who will not have been exposed to the instrument. I find this highly motivating and fulfilling.

## Six Steps to Burning Love

*How to use the Synectics instructional model to enhance student creativity in advertising*

By Dr. Myleea D. Hill  
Arkansas State

*Myleea Hill, Ed.D., is an assistant professor of journalism at Arkansas State University. She teaches journalism, advertising and public relations courses in the Department of Journalism and sponsors the college chapter of Advertising Federation of America. Her service areas emphasize consulting work with non-profit organizations.*

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### Introduction

The importance of creativity in effective communication, particularly advertising, has been well-documented, but what makes something creative has been less well-defined. Furthermore, teaching creativity can be even more elusive. The growing trend toward integrated communication strategies in both academic and professional settings places additional emphasis on creating a big idea to integrate communication strategies. Professionals also report that creativity and problem solving skills are needed across disciplines such as public relations, advertising, integrated communications, news and feature writing, editing, visual communications and the fine arts.

### Rationale

William Gordon, who developed Synectics to increase the creativity and problem solving ability of scientists, found that creative, new ideas are often expressed as analogies. His Synectics model, based on a Greek word meaning

joining together of different elements, provides a sequential process that leads students from their present thoughts through a series of analogies and oxymorons. Gordon's Synectics model can be adapted for educational purposes to help students develop their creativity and problem solving skills. By making comparisons and finding contradictions, students are able to build on past experiences and then make new, creative connections. The step-by-step approach of the Synectics model helps students free their thinking from the logical approach that is traditional in education. The model combines a sequential six-step approach for non-rational thinking: 1) description of the present situation, 2) direct analogy, 3) personal analogy, 4) compressed conflict, 5) direct analogy and 6) re-examination of the problem.

Through the use of the Synectics model, students are able to see common concepts in a new light, leading to creativity. The instructor plays the role of the guide, placing more responsibility and

control in the hands of students. Taking small but flexible steps leads students to develop fresh, innovative thinking that they often believed was outside of their range of intellectual capabilities. The model can be used in individual settings, but the benefits of group interaction make cooperative exercises most appropriate.

### **Implementation**

- Divide students into groups of 3-5.
- Ask students to share their most recent purchases.
- Assign students to develop a BIG IDEA to creatively advertise a recent purchase.
- Project the 6 steps of Synectics and guide students through them, allowing students to work at their own pace and being careful to offer clarification but not to stifle creativity.

For example, the table on page 28 shows how two groups of students used

the Synectics model to develop an advertising idea for coffee.

### **Impact**

Students in an advertising copywriting class who participated in the Synectics model exhibited more interaction and increased idea generation and integration. Rather than sitting passively, all students made contributions and gave feedback, building on the ideas presented. They also expressed more confidence in their own creativity.

For example, one student who had previously described herself as not creative reported that she could use the analogy model to develop creative concepts.

The creative benefit extended beyond the time allotted for class, with students from the two groups sharing thoughts on how to combine their ideas as they walked out of class. The sustained impact of the Synectics model is demonstrated in that students have asked to use the model in subsequent classes, and alumni have reported using the model to jump start creativity in professional positions.



# GETTING CREATIVE WITH COFFEE

Synectic Steps	Example with Coffee Group 1	Example with Coffee Group 2
Phase 1: Description of present situation Describe the product or service to be advertised in students' own words.	Hot, strong, smooth	Conversation, pep, grown up, hot
Phase 2: Direct analogy Come up with an analogy for what the product or service, based on student description, is like.	Iron	Fred Astaire
Phase 3: Personal analogy Make a personal analogy, describing what it would feel like if students were the object listed in Phase 2.	Pressed, hot, steamy, cool, metal	Sexy, persuasive, suave, exciting, sophisticated
Phase 4: Compressed conflict/oxymoron List a series of words that are in conflict but related to the personal analogy. The goal is to list as many oxymorons as possible and then select ONE as the best representative.	Cool heat	Perfectly flawed
Phase 5: Direct analogy Come up with a new situation or description based on ONE of the oxymorons listed in Phase 4.	Gambling	Love
Phase 6: Restatement of present situation Create a new description of the analogy in Phase 5. This becomes the BIG IDEA for integrated advertising.	Keeps You Up All Night	Burning Love

Table 1. Synectics Model Example  
Dr. Myleea D. Hill | Arkansas State | GIFT 2006

Reference:  
Gordon, W. (1961). *Synecitics: The development of creative capacity*. New York: Harper.

# Investigate Your Professor

*How to poke into your instructor's past, present and future—  
and get an A for curiosity*

By Dr. Christopher Karadjov  
California State-Long Beach

*Christopher Karadjov was a journalist in Bulgaria and the United States, until he went to study for his doctorate at the University of Florida. He taught at State University of New York-Oswego, and moved to California State University, Long Beach. His classes include reporting, including investigative, global news media, mass communication theory and research.*

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## Introduction

- Students have to gather as much information about their professor as possible, competing with each other in this task (it is best graded on a curve). They have to write a narrative about what they have found, which although not limited formally usually comes to anywhere between 1,200 and 2,000 words. The form of the narrative is free, with most students choosing to make it a profile, and some choosing to describe their process of information search.

- The grading of the assignments is based on the QUALITY of information about the instructor, which means that factual errors are very costly (for example, getting names, addresses, places or events incorrectly). Major omissions are also penalized (say, a former job that the professor has held for four years...or his/her spouse/children).

- Students have no limit on the type of information they collect (personal, professional), as long as it is obtained in ethical and legal ways, and they are able to incorporate it into the narrative. In other words, it has to be a logical part of their professor's portrait in some (relatively) important way and not bulleted trivia.

- Relying solely on online sources limits the grade to no more than C (79/100), and even that only in case that the information is well beyond the usual Google search (for instance, students were able to access online databases). A simple Google search leads to a failing grade automatically.

- Students are instructed to diversify their sourcing by including direct observations and a substantial number of interviews with colleagues, friends, other students, anyone who has to say something meaningful.

- They are rewarded seriously for showing enterprising skills, tenacity and ingenuity. The utmost example in this respect was a student who had learned that I am hired at my present job two hours before the department chair called to make me the offer.

- QUANTITY of information is also important, but comes second to quality. The narrative should be smoothly written, with an opening, logical transitions and a brief recapitulation at the end. Its purpose is to answer the question, "Who is this person?"

- Flattery is strongly discouraged, and any sort of editorializing brings the grade down as with any other news assignment.

- Students are instructed to identify themselves and the purpose of their assignment when interviewing all sources. As a privacy precaution, they are also required to disclose the source of any sensitive information (for example, professor's Social Security Number, if they are able to get that). Bank, credit, personnel information is not accepted as its search and disclosure would violate a number of laws, but criminal records and property searches are a must for a good grade.

### **Rationale**

The "Investigate Your Professor" assignment has an obvious drawback—not every instructor would feel comfortable about students poking into his/her professional and especially private life. Yet in my view anyone who teaches or practices journalism should be prepared for such scrutiny—after all, it is a useful exercise in

observing the ethics of information gathering when you are on the receiving end. The instructor should be able to provide abundant criticism for methods that students use if they seem questionable.

Apart from that, this assignment has immense benefits, which have been proven over the four years I have been using it in my reporting classes.

Allowing students to go in-depth in researching a person helps them learn the techniques required of journalists in the preparation of a variety of investigative stories, profiles, features, even obituaries. Students use standard approaches or improvise trying to come up with a coherent picture of a person's biography, qualities and habits, which is a challenge in itself. From the feedback I have received, they would spend about a week or so on this assignment alone.

Quite importantly, this exercise guarantees high level of accuracy in verifying the collected information, because the instructor is the utmost judge in that respect. All wrong names, dates, information omissions and other flops become apparent immediately. Students, therefore, have the incentive to do a truly thorough investigation and be very careful about the quality of facts they include in their report. This is not always possible in other information-gathering assignments.

It is also a relatively harmless way to do so, because any erroneous information, while lowering a student's grade, would not lead to any of the complications associated with publishing a mistake.

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### **KARADJOV GIFT**

*Continued on page 61*

# The Shoe Box Project

*How to foster unique student expressions about the media through an unexpected tactile assignment*

By Dr. Karen E. Kline  
Lock Haven

*Karen E. Kline, Ph.D., is a professor at Lock Haven University. She teaches broadcast journalism, advertising and public relations as well as media studies courses in the Communication Media Program. She also serves as chairperson of the Department of Communication and Philosophy.*

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## Introduction

The Shoe Box Project encourages students to express their personal interpretations of how mass media messages shape cultural identity through a hands-on, tactile exercise. I use this assignment in a course titled Gender and the Mass Media. However, it is applicable to any course in which students analyze and interrogate media messages, including the mass media survey course, advertising, international and intercultural communication, and other media studies courses.

Students are given an ordinary shoe box. For this assignment I ask them to change the box in any way to reflect what they think about mass media messages regarding gender. To encourage original thought I purposely do not give any further explanation or examples.

Students receive the assignment in the sixth week of a 15-week semester, following much of the introductory theoretical material about identity formation, socialization, stereotyping and the influence of the media on these processes. I distribute the assignment as the course

turns to the examination of media representations across a variety of topics, including parenting and family life, gender and work, beauty culture and sports culture.

I give students four weeks to complete the assignment, so they are thinking about this project while they are grappling in class with textual analysis of media messages around these topics.

## Rationale

The Shoe Box Project asks students to manipulate an ordinary object having utility value and turn it into a communication marker symbolically expressing their understanding and response to the mass media. This physical activity appeals to students as an alternative to more typical instructional methods of lecture, class discussion, and writing. Because the assignment is unexpected and unusual, the projects that result are varied in concept and execution.

### Implementation

- I gather a variety of empty shoe boxes from local volume department stores, such as Kmart and Wal-Mart. With advance notice, local retailers have been fully cooperative. I provide the shoe boxes because students at college may not have one readily available.
- On the day I distribute the assignment, students select their own shoe box from the pile I provide. I give the instructions orally and in written form.
- On the due date in class and before the project presentation, I distribute a ballot asking students to vote in the following categories: the most unusual shoe box project, the best content reflecting some message about gender and the mass media, the best design, and the best overall shoe box project.
- For the project presentation, I bring students in small groups of five or six to the front of the room and ask them to "show and tell." After all group members present their shoe box project, I ask them to state their names again, for the benefit of their peers completing the ballots.
- After the presentations I collect the ballots, tally the votes, and at the next class meeting give nominal awards to the winners in each category, consisting of a certificate and a small prize such as a coffee mug.
- Finally, I ask the students to allow us to display their projects in some visible location on campus, such as a display

window at the library. For this display, I ask the students to write a brief narrative explaining what they wanted to communicate through their shoe box project and sign their names. Their narratives are displayed along with representative shoe boxes for the campus community to see.

### Impact

In journal entries following this assignment and in course evaluations, many students identify the Shoe Box Project as an outstanding exercise because it allows them to be creative while also demonstrating their critical perspective. They enjoy seeing what others have produced and remark about the specific themes their classmates have addressed in their projects, which fosters greater appreciation of their peers as individuals. It also leads students to a greater understanding of the diversity of viewpoints surrounding mass media representations.

The awards given for outstanding projects are positive gestures of recognition from their peers. Furthermore, the public display of the shoe box projects invites wider peer scrutiny, opening up possible lines of communication around the course themes beyond the classroom.

I am continually delighted with the extent to which students invest themselves in this project, in many cases displaying elaborate executions revealing their complex and often conflicted interpretations of the media. This assignment helps me understand my students on a personal level and understand the ways in which they have incorporated the course content into their thinking about the mass media.



# No Need to Be so Tense! Or, Do I have to Draw You a Picture?

*How to get students to 'draw' from the right sides of their brains when learning grammar and syntax*

By Susan M. Knight  
Arizona

*Susan M. Knight, M.A., is an assistant professor of practice in the University of Arizona journalism department, where she also is faculty mentor and curriculum coordinator. She teaches public affairs reporting and runs a news service with student coverage of the Legislature for rural and suburban newspapers. Before teaching, Knight was a reporter and editor for 15 years.*

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## Introduction

Often we merely correct grammar mistakes on student papers and review for the class a litany of errors and rules. By senior year, all but the exceptionally grammar-motivated have a Pavlovian response to the word "grammar": glaze over and tune out.

I've been developing ways to make grammar fun while using a teaching method that takes into consideration learning stages and students' diverse learning styles. These lessons are experiential, interactive exercises. This GIFT focuses on one of those lessons, asking students to illustrate sentences with dangling modifiers, misplaced modifiers and orphan phrases.

## Rationale

I wanted to take grammar out of the realm of the detested and make oft-

repeated usage rules sink in once and for all. The aim is to approach grammar as a right-brain exercise, with spatial and non-verbal learning, though grammar is typically fixed in the rules-driven left brain.

This exercise utilizes the four learning stages identified by researcher D.A. Kolb. (*Tools for Teaching*, Davis, 185-192) The stages: 1) concrete experience, involving engagement with topic/subject; 2) reflective observation, seeing how others experience topic/subject; 3) abstract conceptualization, thinking and conceptualizing, while integrating experience and observation, developing cognitive concepts; and 4) active experimentation, using the experience and concepts to solve problems, act in the future.

Kolb says, "...(N)ew information is more meaningful and is retained longer when students work through all four phases of the learning cycle." I like

this model because the four stages serve the varied learning styles in any diverse group of learners.

### Implementation

#### *Concrete Experience*

Instructor: "Take out a piece of paper. Instead of a current events quiz, we are going to draw sentences and grammar for quiz points." Make sure you leave a dramatic pause, so groans and gasps are clearly audible.

"No, we're not diagramming sentences. We are drawing exactly what a sentence or phrase says. Today, you're illustrators."

Begin reading each sentence while displaying it on a slide or on the board.

1) Running down the road, my nose was dripping.

2) Appealing to the extreme sports enthusiast, I find ESPN to have the most complete sports coverage.

3) Her bikini fell off while swimming in the surf.

4) Being a kind master, my dog loves me.

5) Leaving town, the houses along Rural Road soon give way to forests of cactus.

6) Being a respected attorney, the dog lunged straight for Mr. Thwackett's personal region. (This is Dave Barry's favorite dangling modifier.)

I've pawed through dozens of books to find examples of different grammar problems that students can illustrate. Sometimes a quiz will cover one; other times I will mix items, including:

- Illustrate: Small businessman AND

small-business man

- Show: Difference between Knight thinks she has scabies AND Knight said she thinks she has scabies

- Draw: Powerful AND extremely powerful

- Draw: Her roommate was a huge partier

- Make: Bar graph showing the difference between interesting and very interesting

- Illustrate: The damage is due to the storm

#### *Reflective Observation*

Students volunteer to share their drawings on the board. My dry-erase board is large enough to have three students draw at once. This comparative approach brings interactive learning. Individual and group work merge. The silliness makes grammar memorable.

#### *Abstract Conceptualization*

I call on students to explain rules of grammar. Students formulate concepts, incorporating experience and observations. I share slides that clarify the grammar rule.

#### *Active Experimentation*

The final part stage is homework: students correct sentences with errors similar to those in class.

## **Impact**

- Students re-engage in learning grammar, thinking in new ways about logic and the essence of words, nuances and precise meaning.
- The exercises take grammar out of the rules-driven left brain and appeal to other side, namely the non-verbal and spatial-oriented right brain.
- The learning is active, not passive.
- Kolb's four-part learning steps reach different learning styles and seem to imprint grammar in meaningful and lasting ways. Students and alumni have said that while writing later they remembered drawing the judge and lunging dog and avoided a mistake.
- Another outcome I hadn't anticipated is group-work skills. The activity provokes leadership and teamwork behaviors: collaboration, praise and trust.

# Reading to Learn

*How to help students read, discuss and learn course concepts*

By Jan Larson  
Wisconsin-Eau Claire

*Jan Larson, M.S., is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She teaches journalism courses in the Department of Communication and Journalism. Prior to joining academia, she worked as a reporter and editor for newspapers from Alaska to New York.*

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## Introduction

Getting students to read their academic texts, much less consider them relevant, can be downright frustrating. To help students engage subject matter and apply it to their experiences, I developed a three-pronged approach to reading to learn that involves weekly small group reading and discussion in "Reading Circles."

## Rationale

By providing a specific structure for small group reading and discussion, students take responsibility for course content and identify connections between the subject matter, themselves and their role in society as future media practitioners. As part of the process, students also hone their critical thinking skills and ability to synthesize information.

## Implementation

- At the beginning of the semester, students form reading circles in groups of three or six.

- Reading circle members rotate serving as either a Discussion Director, Content Connector or Literary Luminary for each assigned reading.

- During the course of the semester each student fills each role a minimum of two times.

- Students have an assignment hand-out detailing the duties for each role and explaining how they will be evaluated.

- Students fill out a director, connector or luminary form, depending upon their assigned role for the week.

- Discussion directors lead the discussion and develop three open-ended questions related to the assigned reading.

- Content connectors take the assigned reading and develop two to three connections from the reading and relate them to their own life, current events, similar events at other times and places, other writings or media on the same topic.

- Literary luminaries select a minimum of three passages from the assigned reading to share with reading circle members and discuss their reasons for choosing the passages.

- I work the room during circle time and then ask for summaries of findings and ideas during an all-class debriefing period.

### **Impact**

- Students develop and demonstrate a deeper understanding of course concepts.

- Students are motivated to read and study the assigned text because they are accountable to peers in their reading circle.

- Students enjoy sharing “connections,” in class and evaluations reflect that students better see the connection between what they are learning and “real world” events because they make the connections themselves.

- Students learn to craft meaningful questions and lead discussion.

- Students who might not otherwise contribute are drawn into discussion and learn to share their ideas.

- It’s intriguing to see what passages resonate with students and why.

# Get Them Up and Moving

*How to bring active learning to a large lecture hall*

By Dr. Amy Mattson Lauters  
Wichita State

*Amy Mattson Lauters, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Elliott School of Communication at Wichita State University. A former print journalist and freelance Web designer, Lauters teaches visual technologies, writing and media studies courses for the Elliott School.*

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## Introduction

One of the challenges faced by instructors who must teach large sections of introductory courses in mass communication is keeping students awake, active and engaged with the learning materials. The approach outlined here involves students in their own learning by introducing them to each other and to active learning activities as part of total classroom experience. On the first day of class, an icebreaker activity randomly sorts students into small groups. These groups become the students' support network for the rest of the course as well as the site of in-class discussion and activity designed to stimulate learning and interest. This group work is incorporated directly into the syllabus weekly.

## Rationale

When larger numbers of students must receive uniform course content delivery, creating active learning experiences can be difficult, and it often seems that straightforward lecture is the only way to instill basic material. However, I have found that incorporating small group

work directly into learning activities, allowing students to move about the spaces to find each other in a structured fashion, has proven effective in classrooms containing more than 100 students. Students are sorted into groups randomly on the first day of class in an icebreaker that forces each to find the other four or five students who have the same title on prepared index card. (Cards are prepared before hand and shuffled before distribution on the first day.) Thereafter, in a Tuesday-Thursday lecture format, Tuesdays are devoted to lecture and explication of terms and concepts from the book. On Thursdays, students work in their groups on in-class discussion questions or applicable learning activities (such as strategizing over ad campaign creation or categorizing stories in terms of news value.) Activities and discussion should reflect lecture/text material for the week. The instructor moves from group to group, sitting in on discussions and answering questions as they arise. Fifteen minutes before the end of class, the instructor calls the class to attention and, as a whole, the class discusses what was learned through

the course of the activity. The instructor then clearly reinforces how the activities were relevant to the course material. In a M-W-F format, lecture and explication of concepts and terms occur on Mondays and Wednesdays, with small group work on Fridays. The small group experience, incorporating active learning activities, has demonstrably increased test scores and stimulated large-group discussion about weekly topics. Students who might not otherwise contribute to a large class discussion have the opportunity to make their voices heard in a smaller, more comfortable group, and that has led to those same students making contributions to the larger group as a semester winds down.

### Implementation

- **Prep:** On index cards, write specific titles such as those from TV shows, movies or news events. Each title is repeated onto five or six cards (depending on the size of the class.) Make enough index cards for all students.
- **First day:** As part of first day activities, shuffle and pass out the index cards. Allow 10 minutes for students to find the others with matching cards; each student then introduces him or herself and exchanges contact information with other group members.

- **Ongoing Coursework:** On days devoted to small group activities, choose discussion questions that draw on students' real-world connections to the course materials and incorporate terminology and concepts from the course. Choose learning activities that incorporate application of concepts and creativity as appropriate. One group member each week keeps notes that are turned in so that the instructor can monitor activity progress.

- **Exams:** Draw questions from text, lecture and discussion questions and exercises, introducing a practical and analytical element.

### Impact

Students who attend courses structured in this way have said they look forward to coming to class; they know they won't "fall asleep." Learning activities and discussion questions, drawn from real-world experiences, help them make the connections between what is being learned in class and what is applicable to their daily lives. For students considering careers in a media-related field, exposure to learning activities, early on, within their chosen fields has helped them to think through their career decisions. Finally, students better retain material for exams and future classes when they are actively working with that material on a regular basis.

# Critiquing Without Crying: Trading Places

*How to critique advertising assignments without bruising students' egos and killing their creative juices*

By Karen Mallia  
South Carolina

*Karen Mallia, M.A., is an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina. She teaches Creative Strategies and Advertising Campaigns. She was a copywriter and creative director at TBWA Chiat/Day, Ogilvy & Mather, Scali, McCabe Sloves and other national advertising agencies, prior to academia.*

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## Introduction

In teaching creative strategies and copywriting, it is standard practice to have students create ads, present them to the class, and to have the instructor and the class critique the work. There is no other way to truly understand the core principles that define “good” copy, except by seeing them appear (or not!) in real examples. Unfortunately, beginning students have a difficult time separating their egos from their ads, and often take insult from constructive criticism. In order to avoid that pain, and to encourage rather than crush creativity, I’ve devised a methodology to keep the evaluation objective, and to separate the student from his/her work.

## Rationale

Students invariably fall in love with their own ideas, and have a hard time accepting criticism of their creative work. Here is a plan to get them past that initial

difficulty, to be able to accept the necessity for creative criticism, and to transition toward being able to present their own work more confidently. It is blind presentation—literally separating the student from his/her own work and having students present each other’s ideas. After doing one or two assignments via this method, students are more comfortable with the critique process, are better prepared to present and defend their own work before the class, and are more accepting of the professor’s and student’s comments and suggestions for improvement.

## Implementation

- Assign a creative project to the entire class, ideally a print concept assignment for a product with which they are intimately familiar, but are unlikely to have seen any advertising—such as salt, sugar, dental floss, etc.



- Give explicit instructions for formatting, so that everyone's work will look identical physically—except for the content. I specify a single page, 8-1/2 by 11" plain white bond for layout and one page of the same for copy, not stapled. Students are asked to print two versions of their ad copy: a "nameless" one to hand in for presentation with their layouts, and a second one with their name and course information to be given to the professor at the close of class.

- On the due date, collect all the ads as the students enter the room. Shuffle lightly.

- Reiterate the basic principles of what makes "a good ad." I list them on the blackboard/whiteboard for review—and for immediate visual reference.

- Distribute the work randomly. Ask students to familiarize themselves with what they have in front of them.

- Each student presents the ad they've been given.

- The instructor takes a backseat, and functions as "moderator." The students comment in turn on each of the criteria as it is listed on the board: e.g. 1) Is it on strategy? 2) Does it get attention? 3) Is it clear? 4) Is it clever? 5) Is there synergy between the headline and visual? etc., etc.

- If the ad fails to meet any of the criteria, the student who has made that observation is asked to offer a suggestion to remedy the flaw.

- Ask the entire class to offer suggestions for improving the ad.

- After all have presented, ask students to hand in the ad (layout and copy) that they presented, as well as their own "named" body copy for grading. Professor shuffles paper to match the layout with identified body copy....

### **Impact**

Separating the "work" from the "author" takes hurt and ego out of the equation, and facilitates the creative critiquing process—especially among those who have above-average presentation anxiety. Being forced to use the criteria on the board as a springboard for their comments keeps students objective. Students learn the acceptable criteria for judging a "good" ad. As an added bonus, this kind of active learning underscores those points made previously—and helps students translate the principles of what makes "a good ad" from theory into practice. Creativity is encouraged—and enhanced. Since initiating this method, I've seen a marked improvement in the way students respond to constructive criticism—and a substantially better creative product as a result.

# Your Historical Self

*How to teach students to understand media history  
in terms of their own lives*

By Dr. Jane Marcellus  
Middle Tennessee State

*Jane Marcellus, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the School of Journalism at Middle Tennessee State University. Her current research focuses on magazine representation of employed women between the world wars. She teaches introduction to mass media, media history, feature writing and qualitative research methods.*

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## Introduction

"Your Historical Self" is a short paper assignment appropriate for an undergraduate introduction to mass media course or a course in media history. It asks students to imagine what their relationship to mass media would have been like if they had been born in another time. By doing so, history becomes more personal as they come close to "experiencing" life as a media consumer or professional of the past.

## Rationale

As James Carey said back in 1974, journalism history is too often "dull and unimaginative." When taught as the story of great editors or institutions, or as the story of technological "progress," it becomes separated from its impact on human beings.

This assignment personalizes media history by asking students to consider how their own lives would have been different if they had been born at a different time and, therefore, had access to

different media. By putting themselves in the past, they think about media history more closely than they would if they learned about it in a decontextualized way or even if asked to think hypothetically about how changing media affected people in general. A byproduct is that they gain insights into their relationship to media at the present time and a deeper understanding of their own place in history.

## Implementation

- To do this assignment, students need a textbook or other source of information that gives them an outline of media development. One good source is Minnesota's Media History Project at [www.mediahistory.umn.edu/time/century.html](http://www.mediahistory.umn.edu/time/century.html).
- Students are asked to pretend they were born in one of the following years: 1890, 1905, 1920, 1945 or 1955. In every way besides birth year, they are the same—same sex, race, class. They grew up

in the same hometown and, most important, have the same personality, interests, and talents. They are the same age they are now, so if an 18-year-old student chose to be “born” in 1890, she now finds herself living in 1908. (Note: It might work to simply ask students to pretend they’re 18 in 1908, but birth year is so closely linked to generational identity that this way helps them connect with the past more deeply. The years above were chosen because they put the average 18-22-year-old student in interesting places in terms of what was happening in media.)

- Now each student has to explore what media was available in, to continue the example above, 1908. Given what the student knows about his or her personality, talents and interests today, what would he or she have read, listened to, watched? What was available to someone of the same economic circumstances in the same hometown? Would she have subscribed to magazines? Which ones? Gone to movies? Where? Which ones? Was a media career possible to her back then? Why or why not? What opportunities and limitations were there? What would she have chosen to do with them?
- Students write a 500 to 750-word paper, exploring these ideas. Since it’s a subjective exploration, I encourage them to write in the first person.

- Papers are graded for historical accuracy, richness of detail, and insight. Sources for historical facts are cited.

### **Impact**

This paper brings media history to life more than any other assignment I’ve used. Students explore what shows or magazines they might have liked, and what careers they might have pursued. Journalism students have focused on what it would have been like to be a muckraker or write news on a typewriter. I have had particularly insightful papers from African American students who explored what it would have been like to go to a movie under Jim Crow. A student in a wheelchair wrote about the lack of access she would have experienced, and women have written about what they would have done in a time of more limiting career options. Most important, history is no longer abstract facts; it becomes real as they think about themselves in relation to it. At the same time, the assignment is a test of accurate knowledge; a student who writes about TV being invented in the 1970s does not get a good grade! The papers are great fun to read, and I feel like I get to know my students a little better by doing this paper, which is a challenge in a mass lecture class.

# Name That View

*How to use descriptive writing to help readers visualize a story's setting*

By Dr. Renee Martin-Kratzer  
Florida

*Renee Martin-Kratzer, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Florida. She teaches writing and magazine courses in the Department of Journalism. Her professional experience includes working as a managing editor of Missouri Life magazine and as design editor of the Columbia Daily Tribune. Her research interests include media effects and visual communication.*

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## Introduction

Beginning feature writers can become so focused on telling a story that they forget to add descriptive elements that can make their stories more compelling. In particular, beginners often glaze over a story's scene by simply naming a location or offering one or two generic sentences. This is an area worth improving because setting a scene through the use of vivid imagery can help readers make a stronger connection to the story.

## Rationale

One way to improve observation and descriptive writing skills is through practice. The following exercise offers a creative way to let students choose a particular location to describe. Because they are not allowed to reveal the location, students are forced to rely upon their ability to paint the scene in readers' minds.

## Implementation

- Following a brief lecture on descrip-

tive writing techniques, students are instructed to explore campus and find a favorite building, location, sign, room, statue, etc.

- Students have 30 minutes to observe their location and capture the setting in words. They are not allowed to name the setting, so they have to rely on using imagery instead of labeling the scene. They are instructed to use such vivid description that everyone in the class will be able to identify the scene.
- After the students return to the classroom, they take turns reading their descriptions aloud. The rest of the class then tries to guess what scene is being described.
- As the game progresses, the goal is to help students understand that the scenes with the best descriptions are easier to guess. Being able to correctly identify the scene means the writer was more successful in making us feel like we were at the

location. The students begin to see that a location is much more than simply a name.

- The discussion then broadens to how they can use these skills in their feature stories. A few examples from award-winning stories are shared to further make the point.

### **Impact**

Students say this is one of their favorite activities and that it is a more cre-

ative way to practice descriptive writing than just sitting at their desks. They truly enjoy the guessing game, and it livens up the classroom dynamic. Additional benefits are that it gives them practice at writing on deadline and lets them share their writing with their peers in a non-threatening situation.

# Calming the Seas

*How to focus and engage large lecture classes*

By Dr. Diana Knott Martinelli  
West Virginia

*Diana Knott Martinelli, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and the first Widmeyer Communications Professor in Public Relations at West Virginia University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses. She has 15 years' professional public relations experience.*

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## Introduction

Large lecture classes can be especially challenging for professors and students alike. Professors bemoan the sheer numbers of students—a sea of faces looking at them—while students can feel anonymous or “like a number.” In addition, it can be difficult to get large classes to focus, especially at the start of class. As students arrive and take their seats, the rustling of newspapers, books and notebooks; the idle and sometimes excited chatter and laughter; the use of iPods and the like all seem to foster disruption instead of focus. This teaching idea helps calm the sea of students and helps them hone in on the day's material before class even begins. At its simplest, it involves projecting a set of questions from the day's readings, and once class begins, randomly selecting students to answer them. At its best, it can serve as a discussion outline, reading review and student motivator.

## Rationale

It's been said that if you want students to do something, you should have them do it in class. This teaching idea draws on that notion, but it's innovative

in that it engages students and sets the stage for the day's classroom discussion, while students are still settling in to their seats. It helps project an air of seriousness toward the course, for as students enter, other students are already quietly leafing through their texts, reading, and making notes. It also incorporates the pressure of random selection and peer influence to spur participation. By encouraging students to look through the assigned reading to find answers, they engage in and review the material to be discussed.

## Implementation

- During the first or second class of the term, each student is asked to write his or her name on an index card. The cards are then collected.
- Students are told at the end of the second class that the next time they attend, they need to bring their textbooks. They're informed that when they enter the classroom, questions from the assigned reading will be projected, and names will be drawn at random to answer the questions. They are also told that they may

see these questions again on their exams.

- Five or six questions are selected from the assigned reading and projected approximately 10 minutes before the official start of class. Students enter the classroom, see the questions and begin looking up the answers in their texts.
- A student is approached and asked to draw a card from the professor's hand or from a small box. This adds an additional sense of participation from students and deflects any blame a student might feel toward a teacher who is perceived as picking on him or her. Either the student or the professor can call out the name drawn. Occasionally, a student will draw his or her own name, which adds some light-hearted fun to the process.
- The questions posed on the projector are not difficult, but students usually don't know them intuitively and must refer to the readings to find or confirm the answers. From there, follow-up questions related to the same topic are often asked of the student who answers or are posed to the entire class. If a student does not know the answer, another card can

be drawn or the question can be opened up to the class. In addition, related lecture material can be inserted after the discussion of each question.

### **Impact**

The primary benefit of this technique is that it grabs students' focus from the moment they step inside the classroom and helps keep them engaged in the material. It also serves to reinforce the readings and to force students who have not read the material to at least look through it for the answers in case they are called upon. Students also know that it's important to listen because the questions and related discussion are often included on exams. This technique also forces more students to participate and helps make a large class seem more personable through the use of students' names and the opportunity to connect with them individually. Because all of the students are in the same position and have an equal chance of being selected, students do not seem to mind this performance pressure. In fact, student evaluations actually praise the technique, for it is not viewed as punitive but rather as a group process to engage in, guide, and stimulate discussion.

# Breaking News Strategy Game

*How to prepare broadcast journalism students for the unpreparable—live ‘real time’ news coverage*

By Mary T. Rogus  
Ohio

*Mary T. Rogus, M.B.A., is an associate professor in the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University. She teaches broadcast journalism courses and just published a book on television news producing. Before coming to Ohio University, she worked 20 years in local television news as a reporter, producer and executive producer.*

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## Introduction

Television newsrooms do more live news coverage than ever before. But how do you prepare students for the moment when a major story breaks? This ‘real time’ television news exercise gives students a chance to practice the decision making and judgment calls that go on during breaking news.

## Rationale

This exercise is different from most breaking news exercises because it focuses on the entire coverage process, not just writing or reporting. They learn there are multiple logistic, editorial and ethical challenges during a breaking story in a competitive news environment.

## Implementation

- The exercise is designed for two hours.
- Students are divided into 5 person teams, drawing job cards:

## Job Descriptions

News Director: Final decision-maker for breaking news and ethical questions

Assignment Editor: Manages the logistics of crews

Executive Producer: Manages live coverage

Producer: Puts together line-up for 6 p.m. show

News Intern: Team record keeper

- Each team is given the following information sheets:

## Logistics (map included)

Your station is located in the Radio-TV building on OU’s campus.

Lancaster is 45 minutes from the station.

The Columbus airport is 1:15 drive time from the station and a half-hour from Lancaster.

## Resources

### Staffing:

- 1 Anchor/Reporter dayside



- 1 Anchor early/late news
- 3 Dayside reporters
- 4 Dayside photographers
- 1 Nightside reporter
- 2 Nightside photographers

Live:

- 2 ENG Live trucks
- 1 Satellite Live truck

### *The News Day*

It's 8:30 a.m.—the morning news meeting.

Develop your coverage plan of the day using these news items:

At 6 p.m. the governor, U.S. senators, Athens city leaders and a mystery guest will be at the Columbus airport for a big announcement.

At 2 p.m. the Athens school board meets to make a final decision on closing an elementary school. There will be a public hearing first, then the vote by 4 p.m.

On campus the student senate is planning a 4 p.m. protest of the new student ethics code that includes informing parents of a student's first violation.

In Lancaster there's a murder trial starting at 10 a.m. of a young couple accused in the death of their baby boy—possible shaken baby syndrome, but prosecutors don't know which one did it.

There are 3 other smaller items in Athens that could be vos/vosots.

- Each team draws one 'Chance Card' giving an advantage or disadvantage in the news day—for example, "Your day-side anchor has a speaking engagement in Columbus at noon."; "One of your ENG live trucks is in the repair shop for the

day."

Each team draws a second 'Chance Card' during the 'real time' part of the exercise—for example, "Your brother-in-law is president of the Lancaster bank" or "Your live truck has a flat tire on the way to Lancaster, delaying live coverage 20 minutes."

- After a half hour to plan their news day, the game changes to real time and the teams get the following series of breaking news sheets.

### *Breaking News*

Sheet#1 It's now 4:45 p.m.—the clock begins real time countdown toward the 6 p.m. news. You have a report of an armed robber at Chase Bank on First Street in Lancaster—there's an elementary school around the corner from the bank.

Sheet#2 It's 5 p.m.—you have confirmed there is someone inside the bank with a gun who claims to have a bomb—police surrounded the bank and evacuated the elementary school.

Sheet#3 It's 5:15 p.m.—someone claiming to be the robber calls the station and says he wants to go on TV over the phone to make his demands. First Street is now closed to traffic, if you don't have a crew inside police lines—you'll be far back from the scene.

Sheet#4 It's 5:25 p.m.—the caller was definitely a hoax—police tell you they've cut all the phone lines into the bank. Hope you didn't put him on TV!!!

Sheet#5 It's 5:30 p.m.—the suspect

broke off communication with the police and somehow got out of the bank—there's now a building-to-building search for the armed suspect.

Sheet#6 It's 5:45 p.m.—the robbery was a hoax—police caught a 15 year old kid in a field behind the bank with a ski mask on and a toy gun—the supposed 'bomb' was two flares with some wires wrapped around them. The kid's in custody, and no one was hurt.

Meanwhile at the Columbus airport a source from the Governor's office tells you that Microsoft has decided to build its East Coast headquarters in Athens,

bringing two thousand high tech jobs to the city.

### Impact

Students love this exercise—it's a fun way for them to learn all the factors that go into breaking news coverage. I can lecture and they can discuss breaking news, but there's nothing more effective than doing. They're surprised at how difficult it is considering everything at once, and making ethical decisions under time pressure. When we compare the live cut-ins and newscasts the teams produced on paper, they really get a feel for the competitive nature of news.

# The Media with 20/20 Hindsight

*How the media recorded the events that shaped the 20th century*

By Dr. Felecia Jones Ross  
Ohio State

*Felecia Jones Ross, Ph.D. is an associate professor at The Ohio State University. She teaches basic news writing, journalism history and gender and communication in the School of Communication. Her research interests include the African American press and diversity training for journalists.*

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## Introduction

In 1999 the Newseum surveyed 67 journalists and historians and compiled a list of 100 events that shifted history during the 20th century.

As the final essay for the term, journalism history students critiqued the selection of items and assessed how the news media covered these items at the time they occurred.

## Rationale

As journalism is considered to be “the first rough draft of history,” this assignment allowed students to see if the news media realized the events’ significance at the time they took place. The students’ ability to critique the list’s selections allowed them to strengthen their own interpretations of journalism history and realize scholars’ limitations. Furthermore, this assignment gave students a peek into the past as they learned the characteristics of the media at certain points during the 20th century.

## Implementation

- Critiquing the list

The entire essay was based on an event of each student’s choosing that occurred from 1900 through 2000. Because the Newseum list only included events through 1998, the students were given the annual top news events of 1999 and 2000 to complete the 20th century.

1) Using the list that was published in *USA Today*, students could justify either the existence or exclusion of an event on the list.

2) They can also justify the inclusion of an event that was not on the list (for example, the Kent State shootings, 1970).

3) Students could discuss the ranking of an event. For example, they could agree that the Beatles appearance on Ed Sullivan should be on the list, but argue that it should be at a ranking different from #58.

- Media treatment of the event

Students should first describe the details and/or background of the selected event. For example, if they selected the FDA approval of the birth control pill (#20), they must describe the reproductive options that existed before the pill, as well as what was involved in developing the pill.

As for assessing the media:

- 1) Describe the media (print and/or broadcast) coverage of this event. Did the coverage reflect that the event was important? This deals with number of stories, placement of stories, visuals with the stories, time spent on stories that were broadcasted

- 2) Describe the characteristics of the media at the time of the event.

- 3) Briefly mention if the event and/or its coverage affected the development of the media.

- 4) Students were encouraged to compare alternative media coverage with mainstream coverage. For example how did the Jewish media cover #93, Hitler's

night of violence against Jewish-owned businesses in 1938?

- 5) Draw conclusion(s) with respect to how well the media recognizes and records significant events in history.

### Impact

- This assignment was one of three categories students could choose for a final essay, and it has consistently been the one most students have chosen.

- Graduate-level students have used this essay as a basis for their non-thesis projects.

- Students learned that what we know about history is largely based on the ability to access records. Most of their primary data came from print sources. They had to rely on secondary sources to describe broadcasting coverage of the events.

- It has reinforced for me how eerily history can repeat itself.

# The “Big Idea” in Media Planning

*How to get students thinking strategically about selecting media classes*

By Dr. Janas Sinclair  
North Carolina-Chapel Hill

*Janas Sinclair, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She teaches Advertising Media Planning and Principles of Advertising in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.*

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## Introduction

Advertising media planners must select the best media classes to deliver the message, and media planning courses (and texts) generally survey media strengths and weaknesses. Although vital, reviewing these media “pros” and “cons” can be a passive learning exercise, and the ultimate goal is for students to actively apply this information in media decisions. Changes in advertising also call for a new approach. The latest industry movement is to base media choices on an overall “big idea”: the brand contact strategy. This assignment allows students to examine real-world media tactics, identify a brand contact strategy, and propose the use of a specific medium based on contact strategy and media quality.

## Rationale

Providing students with real-world examples is challenging in a media planning course. While the placement of ads in a particular vehicle can be analyzed, it is difficult to obtain examples of media strategy across a campaign. *Adweek* pro-

vides a solution to this problem with an annual series of articles featuring award-winning media plans using each of the major media classes. These plans demonstrate creative message delivery, which is increasingly necessary given today’s fragmented (and multi-tasking) audiences. A current creative approach is to ground the media plan in a big idea, just as development of the message itself is grounded in a big idea for the creative concept. In media, “brand contact strategy” focuses on the points at which consumers are most receptive to the message, and media are selected to reach consumers at these points. While brand contact strategy is emphasized in a growing number of ad agencies and is discussed in the trade press, it is not yet featured in media planning texts. This assignment is designed to give students practice in developing brand contact strategy by using award-winning plans as a springboard. The *Adweek* articles do not provide an explicit contact strategy statement, but they provide enough background for students to write one based on the case and their

own ideas for when consumers would be most receptive to the message. Students are asked to propose an additional media class for the campaign based on their brand contact strategy and the relevant strengths and weaknesses of the medium for delivering the message.

### Implementation

- Obtain the most recent *Adweek* articles detailing the *Mediaweek* Media Plans of the Year. (Last year they appeared in the June 20th issue; the PDF files are available on ABI/INFORM.) For this assignment, use the articles on best use of newspapers, magazines, out-of-home, national television and/or cable, radio, Internet and nontraditional media.
- Students work in groups, and each group is assigned the award-winning plan for one of the seven media classes. They also read Chapter 9, "Selecting Media Classes: Intermedia Comparisons," in *Advertising Media Planning* by Sissors and Baron. The groups prepare a short paper and presentation to answer the following questions:
  - 1) What was the advertising objective for the campaign? Who was the target audience? Discuss any particular challenges that had to be overcome in achieving the advertising objective or developing the campaign.
  - 2) What is the brand contact strategy for this media plan? Use the information from your article as well as your

own ideas about the point at which the target audience would be receptive to the message. Explain why this is the best point to communicate with the target.

- 3) Propose one or more additional media classes that should be used in the next wave of the campaign. Explain how these media would be used to achieve your brand contact strategy, indicating vehicles if appropriate. Address how the strengths and weaknesses of the medium fit with your advertising objectives and brand contact strategy. Would you continue to use the medium from the original plan? Explain why or why not, based on the medium's strengths and weaknesses and your brand contact strategy.

### Impact

This assignment replaces a passive lecture on media strengths and weaknesses with an opportunity for students to be creative and develop their own media strategy. My students have enjoyed the clients featured in the *Mediaweek* Media Plans of the Year (ranging from the non-profit Gill Foundation to Target and the Britney Spears perfume "Curious") and the cutting-edge tactics, such as cell phone marketing, TV product placement, and on-line branded entertainment. This assignment has helped students focus on the best opportunities to connect with consumers when they work on the final project. It has boosted my morale by increasing student involvement and providing students with recent media planning examples I can easily update each year.

# White Wedding

*How to audit diversity in nuptial announcements*

By Jeff South  
Virginia Commonwealth

*Jeff South is an associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he teaches media ethics, communications technology, legislative reporting and other courses. He also is a fellow with VCU's Center for Teaching Excellence and a newsroom trainer with the Society of Professional Journalists and Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. He was a newspaper reporter and editor for 20 years.*

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## Introduction

In all of my classes, students learn that it's important for newspapers to reflect their community demographics. In my media ethics class, we go a step further and examine whether racial and ethnic groups are fairly represented in a particular part of the local daily newspaper: the pictures that accompany the wedding and engagement announcements published each Sunday.

For the content analysis, we collect data on the nuptial pictures published over a period of at least six months. We calculate what percentage of the depicted brides or prospective brides were white, African American, Latino, Asian or other ethnic group. We then compare those percentages with the racial and ethnic breakdown of the area's population.

We have consistently found that racial and ethnic minorities, especially African Americans, have been underrepresented in the wedding and engagement photographs. (African Americans make up more than one-third of the population of the local newspaper's circulation area

but fewer than 9 percent of the brides depicted on Sunday.) Moreover, on average, the pictures of the white brides were a half-column bigger than the pictures of the African American brides.

After analyzing the data, we explore:

- *Possible reasons for the disparity.* We have talked to the editor in charge of the wedding and engagement announcements; she explained that the newspaper relies on couples to submit announcements and photos—and that African American couples apparently were less likely than white couples to send in material.
- *Possible effects on the public's perception of African Americans.* Because African Americans are significantly underrepresented in wedding and engagement photos, newspaper readers may think that African Americans are far less likely than whites to get married—fueling a negative stereotype about African American family life.

- *Possible solutions to achieve more diversity in the wedding and engagement pictures.* We discuss such options as soliciting pictures from African American brides by contacting churches, caterers and other parties involved in wedding planning in the African American community. We also have discussed whether the daily newspaper could partner with the area's African American-owned weekly newspaper.

### Rationale

The "White Wedding" exercise shows how quantitative research methods can help everyday readers crystallize a critical media issue: the lack of diversity in newspaper content. Students could easily relate to the nuptial photos used in the analysis, and they could see how the underrepresentation of minorities might shape readers' views. (In other journalism courses, I have done a similar exercise using the photos in the "People and Places" column of the Monday business section.)

### Implementation

- The class must agree on what information must be gathered on each photograph. (At minimum, we will need the date, page, column size of the photo and the bride's race or ethnicity.)
- Each student is responsible for coding the pictures in at least two Sunday editions. (We divide up the dates so that we cover at least six months.) Copies of the newspaper are available in the univer-

sity library. Each Sunday edition usually contains 20-30 wedding or engagement photographs.

- We combine the data from all students into an Excel spreadsheet.
- We calculate what percentage of the depicted brides or prospective brides were white, African American, Latino, Asian or other racial/ethnic group.
- We compare those percentages with census data showing the racial and ethnic breakdown of the area's population.
- We discuss the results—if possible, with a guest speaker, such as the editor in charge of the newspaper's nuptial announcements.

### Impact

Students, especially African American students, immediately grasp the impact of the skewed demographics of the brides in the nuptial announcements. Many of them spoke eloquently about how the underrepresentation of African American brides in the newspaper contributed to prejudice and misconceptions among white readers. Students could see that diversity (in the wedding announcements and elsewhere in the media) is crucial for several reasons: It is a key element of accuracy and media ethics; and it is a factor in the commercial success of newspapers as they seek new readers in an increasingly diverse society.



# On the Health Beat Coverage

*Multimedia stories on health-related issues facing  
University of XXX students*

By Dr. Andrea Tanner and Kim Smith  
South Carolina

*Andrea Tanner, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina. A former TV news reporter and anchor, she teaches courses in the electronic news sequence, focusing on television news reporting and producing. Her research interests include health communications, media convergence, local television news and journalism education.*

*Kim Smith, M.M.C., is a second-year Ph.D. student at the University of South Carolina, whose research interests include health communications and new media. He is a former TV assignment editor and freelance reporter for National Public Radio.*

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## Introduction

On college campuses across the United States, journalism administrators say their schools are teaching convergence and their commitment to media convergence will increase in the next three to five years (1). However, some educators are struggling with exactly how to implement this convergence training. A study of small market TV news workers suggest that students still need to specialize in the field of television news—while understanding the basic concepts of several mediums (2).

This teaching “GIFT” allows students to do just that. Each student produced a two-minute television news story, a 400 word Web article, still pictures related to the story and a personal bio to be placed, along with their picture, on a class Web site. The Web site, “Health

Matters,” can be seen at [www.jour.sc.edu/pages/jour434/index.html](http://www.jour.sc.edu/pages/jour434/index.html).

## Rationale

This project allowed broadcast journalism students to think “beyond TV” while still focusing on the broadcast news skills and training that will help them land their first job.

Additionally, focusing on health issues on college campuses served several purposes. It gave students a “theme” to direct their focus when “brainstorming” on a story topic.

The health theme also seemed to motivate the students, since they were reporting on issues that affect them or someone they know. The topics ranged from depression to Internet stalking to date rape.

### Implementation

- Students were assigned the project during the second week of the semester.
- Instructors collaborated with college health officials, who came to class and explained the top 10 health issues on campus. That presentation gave students a starting point for generating story ideas and making contact with sources.
- Instructors held weekly story idea meetings, allowing students to “brainstorm” in a group setting.
- As story ideas were approved, these sessions turned into weekly update sessions.
- Writing and production deadlines were staggered. For example, student bios and pictures were due before the “print” version of the health story. The television version of the story was due last.
- Instructors designed the Web template to accommodate the video packages and print stories. In subsequent semesters, instructors will only have to plug new stories into this template.

### Impact

We believe this project has already made an impact on students’ learning.

Students were motivated and determined to come up with enterprising story ideas. Weekly progress reports from students show lots of work toward completing their stories. Many have asked when their stories and bios will be available on the Web.

Pertaining to the students’ reporting skills, they have improved their research skills and have worked hard to “personalize” their stories—something that can be difficult when dealing with topics such as “porn addiction” or “sexual assault.” They have learned how to work in a team environment. Finally, they have been introduced to reporting for the Internet and emerging multimedia platforms.

### Sources

1) Tanner, A. and S. Duhe’ (2005). “Trends in mass media education in the age of convergence: Preparing students for careers in a converging news environment.” *Simile, studies in media and information literacy education* 5 (3).

2) Tanner, A. and L. Smith (2006). “Preparing students for convergence journalism: A nationwide survey of medium and small market TV news reporters and producers.” Unpublished manuscript, submitted for presentation at 2006 AE-JMC National Convention.

# Freewriting Fridays

*How to shift your students' creativity into high gear*

By Margo Wilson  
California-Pennsylvania

*Margo Wilson is an assistant professor at California University of Pennsylvania. She was a newspaper reporter and editor for 20 years before earning her M.F.A. in creative writing—fiction. She teaches journalism and English classes and until recently, drove a rusty Nova.*

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## Introduction

My students' writing sputtered like a 1988 Chevy in need of a tuneup until I primed their journalism engines with creative writing freewriting exercises.

## Rationale

Learning journalism's rules of the road, including how to handle leads, attributions, and AP style, while writing leanly and accurately, seems challenging enough to many students. Adding creativity and flair seems a trip they're unable to negotiate.

When students can abandon their journalism jaloopies for 15 minutes each Friday to leap into creative writing convertibles, they learn there's not only room, but, indeed, a need for creativity and play in journalism writing.

## Implementation

- I start my students with exercises emphasizing visual description: Describe in detail the shoe of the person sitting in front of you. Describe, in one paragraph, the face of the person sitting next to you. Describe, in 10 different ways, what the

day's weather looks like.

- We move on to the other senses. Describe every sound in the classroom when everyone is silent. Describe the smell of a Wintergreen LifeSaver. Then describe how it feels to touch it. Finally, describe how it tastes.

- Writing short poems makes students focus on each word. A haiku, with its five syllables in the first line, seven in the second and five in the third is ideal for a quick writing assignment. Ask students to write a haiku about cafeteria food, the campus parking situation or an upcoming holiday. Halloween and Valentine's Day work well.

- Bring a purse, briefcase or paper bag to class, filled with an odd variety of objects. Ask students to write a paragraph describing the objects, then write a sentence or two speculating on who might own this purse/briefcase/bag. Then ask students to write another paragraph reflecting on how a writer's choice of details influences a reader's perception.

- Have students read a Hemingway short story, then write their own obituary, mimicking Hemingway's style. Repeat the exercise but this time, use a short story by Faulkner.

- Ask students to write a review of their own writing.

- Bring an apple, a bowl, a photograph of a parrot, a stocking cap or ... to class. Ask students to describe the objects, using only metaphors or similes.

- Give students a newspaper photo of a person they don't know. Ask them to write two accurate descriptions of the person. Each description should be as different from the other as possible.

- Take crayons or colored pens to class and white typing paper. Ask students to draw a picture of how they see themselves as journalists, either now or in the future. Ask them to focus on the picture, then write one word that sums it up. Tell them this is their mantra and to meditate on it—unless they want to change it.

- Ask students to write a paragraph on what they value most in life. Ask them to write a second paragraph on what they value most in writing.

- *Writer's Digest* and such creative writing texts as: Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*; "Elizabeth Gilbert's *A Writer's Workbook: Daily Exercises for*

*the Writing Life*"; Anne Bernays' and Pamela Painter's *What If? Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers*; and Joan Bolker's *The Writer's Home Companion* have useful creative writing prompts.

### Impact

My students and I look forward to Freewriting Fridays as our play days. Creative writing exercises get students thinking about word choices and alternative ways to write. One student started out writing chunky, opaque leads like:

"The progression from shy freshmen to confident seniors is natural for college students. It is a transformation that is accomplished by the hard work of both them and their professors. Watching the growth of their students is, in many cases, the best aspect of a professor's job. Caryl Sheffield said she agrees with this. Her personal experiences with the evolution of college students have taken her on a journey from CUP freshman to professor and chair of its elementary/early childhood education department."

The following is the writer's latest effort: "The smell of burning fuel and chemicals. The glare of bright lights. The humming of the motors. The cheers of the crowd. It all adds up to the intense head rush known as drag racing.

"For Jessica Donato, 18, of Carmichaels, this is a familiar experience. It also is one filled with apprehension."

I give the exercises credit for helping this student write more vividly.

### CUILLIER GIFT *from page 16*

#### Impact

Students like this assignment because they become fluent in the law, learn strategies for accessing public records and feel confident in applying this knowledge to their jobs and personal lives.

Class presentations illustrate the successes and problems of access—a surly clerk who crumples a request and tosses it in the garbage, or a pleasant official who takes the afternoon to help find the information. They learn to be skeptical and are astounded at the amount of information that is available free to the public.

Also, this assignment increases support for access. Pretest-post-test surveys of a fall 2005 media law course found that students who did this project demonstrated greater support for open government than students who did projects on other topics, such as libel or copyright. It is uplifting to see students develop journalistic skills and principles from one assignment.

“I’m glad I got to do this because I think it is really helpful for my job and personal life in the future,” wrote one student in evaluations. Another wrote, “The thing I learned most was how much power I have in accessing information!”

### HARVEY AND GORDON GIFT *from page 25*

achieved faster, cheaper and more effectively.

Use of this “click and brick” pedagogy in mass communications education provides opportunities and benefits for both students and instructors. As *Associated Press* style is an extremely important part of all mass communications professional’s success, redundant instruction evaluation is key. Presentation of thematic *Associated Press* style information in a format this is somewhat controllable by the student allows for more consistent and student-centered successful learning.

### KARADJOV GIFT *from page 30*

#### Implementation

As described above, it is a regular assignment that reporting/investigative reporting classes receive in the second half of the semester. Based on experience, students have 10 days to complete it.

#### Impact

In addition to boosting students’ information-gathering skills as described above, I have found that this assignment breaks the wall between students and their professor in a very beneficial way. Most students view such a permit to “go after” their professor as a target of an investigation as an act of serious commitment to their education. In my experience, this has helped boost students’ involvement in reporting/investigative reporting classes.

# Final Acknowledgements

As my two-year term of office as CCJA president comes to a close, I want to say how much I have appreciated the contributions of the other CCJA officers and members to the success of the organization.

In the past I have stressed the importance of joining and becoming involved in CCJA. In this column I want to emphasize why this is so vital.

CCJA, along with other journalism organizations and the Student Press Law Center, has been a strong advocate of freedom of the student press. Even though some cases have not turned out as we might have wanted—the Supreme Court's refusal to hear *Hosty v. Carter*, for example—we have learned how best to protect press freedom by making sure campus newspapers are considered designated public forums.

CCJA, first called the Junior College Journalism Association, was formed at the 1968 convention of the Association for Education in Journalism (now the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication), and we should always continue to maintain the bond we have with AEJMC. Though not a division of AEJMC, CCJA has division status and CCJA's officers are listed on the AEJMC Web site. Through the GIFT program as well as participation in panel presentations, CCJA members have consistently maintained visibility and earned the respect of the AEJMC membership.

College Media Advisers is another journalism organization with which CCJA maintains strong ties. The focus of CMA is on the practical side of advising student media, and the CMA conventions and publications are invaluable to those who advise college media or work with those who do.

It is significant that CCJA holds two business meetings each year—one during the AEJMC convention and the other during the fall CMA convention. We need to maintain our ties to both AEJMC and CMA. We work together and stand together to seek the highest standards for the teaching and practice of journalism and to help make known the value of freedom of expression.

I once wrote a President's Message thanking CCJA members specifically for all they do to help keep this organization functioning effectively. I would now like to broaden that expression of appreciation to include those at AEJMC and CMA who have been so supportive of us. To list everyone's name would take a great deal of space, and I wouldn't want to leave anyone out, but thanks to you all just the same.

For me, being president has been a special privilege. I recall attending my first AEJ convention in 1980 in Boston, taking pictures for an article about the convention for publication in the CCJA magazine. I was impressed by the quality of leadership in CCJA then and have continued to be impressed during the years since that time.

As I leave office, I'm optimistic about the future of CCJA, and I'm eager to see what new ideas future leaders of the organization may have in order to ensure that it continues to serve a vital purpose for journalism education.

**2004-2006 CCJA President**  
Dr. John Neal, Brookhaven



# Meet us in St. Louis!

Join the Community College Journalism Association at the 85th annual ACP/CMA National College Media Convention during Oct. 25-29, 2006, at the Adam's Mark Hotel across from the famous Gateway Arch. New CCJA President Dr. Beverly Bailey will conduct the business meeting (time and location TBA).

For more information about the fall convention, go to [www.collegemedia.org](http://www.collegemedia.org) or [www.studentpress.org](http://www.studentpress.org). For more information about CCJA sessions and programs at the convention, contact CMA program chair Nils Rosdahl at [rhrosdah@nic.edu](mailto:rhrosdah@nic.edu).



COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISERS



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