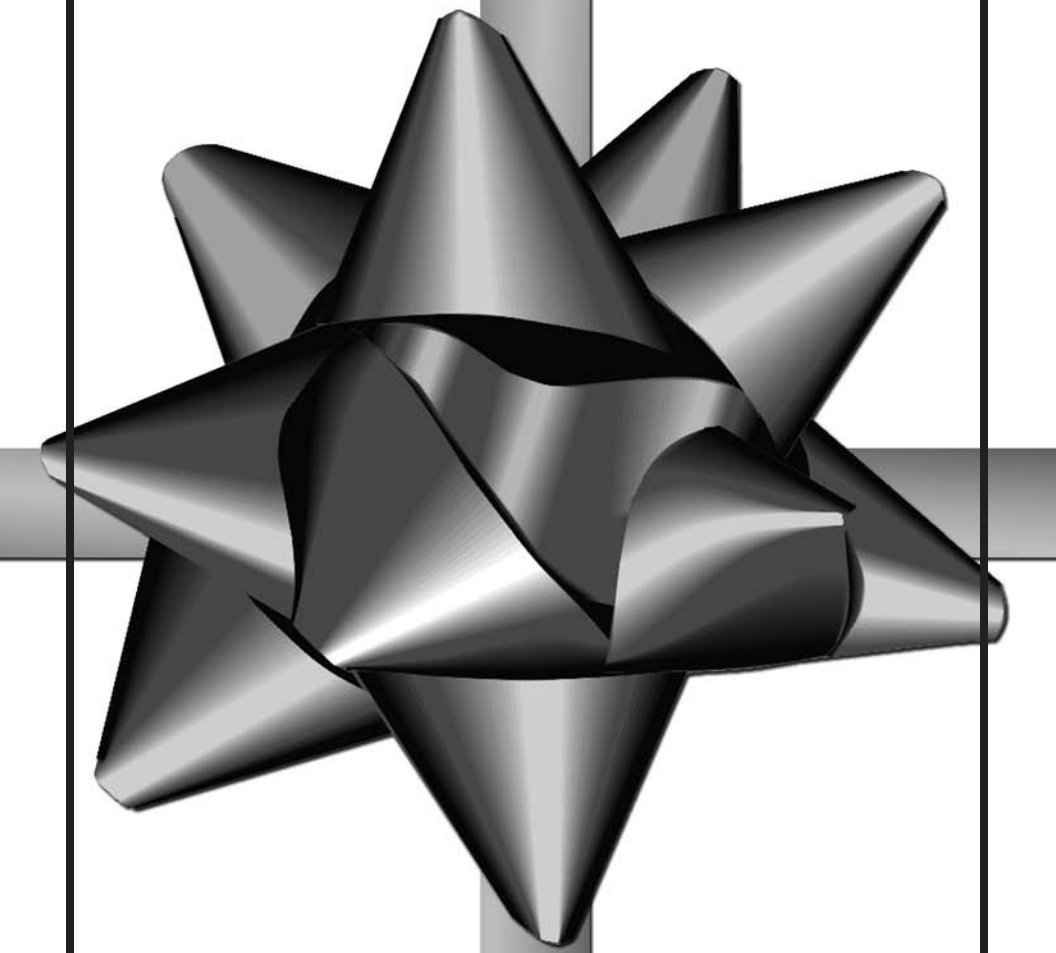
Community College
The Journalist
Summer 2007 Special Issue
The Official Publication of The Community College Journalism Association



GIFT 2007

Great Ideas For Teachers program now in its eighth year!

Community College *The* Journal*ist*

The Official Publication of the Community College Journalism Association

Summer 2007
Vol. 35 No. 2

The Community College Journalist is published quarterly by the Community College Journalism Association, a non-profit organization (Federal ID #954433853).

Membership is open to any journalism and mass communication educator or professional interested in teaching and advising student media at the collegiate level. Annual dues are $40.

Article queries, reprint permissions, advertising and other publication matters should be directed to Dr. Edna R. Bautista, CCJA news editor, at *ebautist@chaminade.edu* or *aejmcgift@yahoo.com.*

Correspondence regarding subscriptions and/or CCJA membership should be addressed to Dr. Steve Ames, CCJA executive secretary-treasurer, 3376 Hill Canyon Ave., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-1119. Or contact him at *docames@roadrunner.com*.

Hard copies of this publication, if issues are available, may be purchased pre-paid at $10 each for delivery within the United States or $15 each for international delivery. Please add $5 for postage and handling.

Excerpts from the current publication may also be featured on the CCJA Web site at *www.ccjaonline.org* or on the auxiliary CCJA News site at *www.geocities.com/ccjanews*.

The Community College Journalist is indexed and annotated by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges in Current Index to Journals in Education. Back issues are on microfilm from University Microfilms International.

GIFT poster session debuted in D.C. six years ago

The eighth annual Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) program has come full circle by returning to Washington, D.C., this year for "Another Capital Experience." This is where the program was expanded from a simple panel presentation to a popular poster session back in 2001 at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) convention.

The GIFT program was established the previous year to provide colleagues with fresh ideas for creating or updating their lessons—just in time for the new academic year. The competition has culminated 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.

Sixty 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 (42% acceptance rate) GIFTs were selected to be featured at the convention and published in this special edition of *The Community College Journalist*.

Log on to the official GIFT Web site at *www.geocities.com/aejmcgift* for winners' and scholars' GIFTs, photos and more information about the program throughout the past eight 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 your continued support of this worthwhile pedagogical program!

GIFT Program Coordinator/Founder
Dr. Edna R. Bautista, Benedictine

GIFT 2007 Committee
Dr. Dennis Bautista, St. Mary's
Joan Conners, Randolph-Macon
Dr. Steven J. Dick, Modern Media Barn
Dr. Richard P. Johns, Iowa
Dr. Jimmy McCollum, Lipscomb
Dr. Denny Wilkins, St. Bonaventure
Dr. Jin Yang, Memphis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Great Ideas For Teachers 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Single Syllable Shortcut

How to rewrite like a pro into (mostly) single syllables

By Dr. Patricia Baldwin
North Carolina-Asheville

Patricia Baldwin, Ph.D., joined the Department of Mass Communications at the University of North Carolina-Asheville as an assistant professor in July 2007. Over the past 15 years, she has served as an adjunct at five universities, most recently teaching Writing for Magazines and Specialized Publications at the University of Texas-Austin. She is a former editor-in-chief of two consumer magazines.

Introduction

Here's an exercise that is so simple in concept that it can be used in introductory media classes, newswriting and advanced writing classes. But its simplicity does not diminish its usefulness, which also is validated by its origin in the professional journalistic ranks. Here's how it works. Some good newspaper writers were asked to rewrite some of their own work—a paragraph or two—into words of one syllable. For example, "his left bicep" becomes "his left arm." Excepted were proper nouns or words that named something crucial to the story. The results? Stronger, more readable revisions. For this class, student teams are given the original versions to "rewrite like the pros." This becomes a very interactive class activity that focuses on clarity and takes some of the mystery and intimidation out of being a professional journalist.

Rationale

This innovative teaching idea brings the real world into the classroom and shows students that they can perform in a real-world situation. The exercise is easy to "get" and easy to undertake. The impact is lasting. The non-intimidating technique exposes students to professional writing and shows them how it can be improved. The lessons are clear: Everybody's writing can be taken to the next level; single syllable writing is shorter; shorter writing is more readable.

Implementation

- Read the original, published versions aloud in class (usually to laughter).

- In teams of two, students identify words to be replaced and then revise, using (mostly) single syllables.

- SURPRISE! Student teams do not have to read theirs--this brings a collective sigh of relief, and class gets better and better.

- Read the pros' rewrites aloud in class, with contributions from students about their individual variations.

- Each student takes away the "before/after" handout and is challenged to apply the editing technique to his or her next story.

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.

Set the Style

How to teach students how accuracy, fairness and word choice intersect

By Andy Bechtel
North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Andy Bechtel, M.A., teaches editing and writing at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He has about 12 years of experience in print journalism, most recently as wire editor at The News & Observer *in Raleigh, N.C. He writes about editing and writing at* editdesk.blogspot.com.

Introduction

Journalism students are all too familiar with quizzes on Associated Press style. Some of them accept the reasons for adhering to style: consistency and accuracy, among others. Some students, however, see style as a restriction on creativity. How can teachers of writing and editing reach these students, convey the purpose of stylebooks and demonstrate the ethical dimensions of stylebooks? Let the students set the style on a few issues.

Rationale

This exercise in my editing class helps students understand that style isn't stagnant and that they can have a role in shaping style choices in the classroom now and later in the newsroom. They also see the ethical implications of the word choices that journalists make.

Implementation

- In a presentation leading up to the assignment, I explain that many publications have stylebooks that supplement (and in some cases, supersede) the AP Stylebook.

- I open a discussion on the deep impact word choices can have beyond simply choosing the preferred spelling of a word. For example, how should we describe the parties in the abortion debate? What does it mean to call someone pro-life or pro-choice? In another example, what words do we use to describe the structure that Israel is building between itself and Palestinian areas in the West Bank? Is it a wall or security fence? These topics get the conversation going.

• I give the students a copy of a memo that I wrote when I was the wire editor at a regional newspaper. The paper's managing editor requested the memo after questioning why wire stories in the paper referred to "Myanmar" while the BBC called the same country "Burma."

• After discussing the memo and describing how the newspaper reached its style decision on this issue, I ask the students to break into groups to resolve three or four style quandaries. These change from semester to semester—depending on recent news event—and have included: Mumbai vs. Bombay and the renaming of Indian cities; refugee vs. evacuee; terrorist surveillance program, warrantless wiretapping or domestic spying; the conflict in Iraq: sectarian violence, civil war or something else?

• Each group of students conducts research on the meanings, uses and histories of terms, settling on a recommendation for each style question. I ask them to write a draft of an entry for each question as it would appear in a stylebook. The class as a whole discusses each group's recommendations until we come to an agreement. We then use the students' style guidelines on assignments for the rest of the semester as part of our in-house stylebook.

• Because my class meets for three hours at a time in a computer lab, students can complete this assignment in one class meeting. In other settings without access to the Web and wire services, it may work better as an assignment outside of class.

Impact

This assignment demonstrates to students how journalists make word choices as part of their efforts to be accurate and fair. They see firsthand how these decisions can affect the tone and tint of a story.

Students also get the opportunity to see the difference they can make in a newsroom by questioning word choices and suggesting changes. Engaging in the process of crafting a style rule usually wins over the style skeptics, who subsequently feel a sense of power, duty and responsibility.

Sources

CIA, "Burma," The World Factbook, *http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bm.html*. European Commission, "The EU's Relations with Burma/Myanmar," Europa (European Union Web site).

"Myanmar," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2005, Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service, *http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-214472*.

Banana Split 2.0

How to teach innovation in a sweet way

By Dr. Clyde Bentley
Missouri-Columbia

Clyde Bentley, Ph.D., is an associate professor at the Missouri School of Journalism. A two-decade veteran of many aspects of newspaper journalism, he now focuses on media convergence, citizen journalism and problem-solving process for undergraduates.

Introduction

Adapted from a training technique in the high-tech industry, this classroom exercise demonstrates the challenges and pitfalls of innovation by having them redesign one of America's most cherished desserts.

Rationale

The journalism industry—especially news managers—have a negative reputation for making minor adjustments in what they have always done rather than creating innovative new products. This exercise both shows students how difficult it is to give up an old paradigm and allows them to dream "outside the box" in a no-fault environment.

Implementation

- Students are presented with a brief history and description of the traditional sliced-fruit, three-scoop and toppings dessert served in an oblong glass dish. This is Banana Split 1.0

- They are told an International Banana Split Research Council study correlated the banana split and the daily newspaper. New forms of information delivery threaten the newspaper much the same as the Blizzard and other frozen desserts threaten the banana split market share.

- They receive two detailed exiting—product overviews—one for consumers and one for "technicians."

- The specifications for Version 2.0 include serving it in a round paper dish, allowing for a sorbet option, increasing the number of options available, addressing dietary restrictions and making the product portable. They are Internet corollaries.

- Successful completion of the project requires an analysis of design, brand, targeting, usability, cost and marketing.

Impact

When I tried this with advertising students, they were very experimental—banana popsicles, addition of tofu and other health foods, smoothies, etc. The only innovations of five teams in a recent pure-editorial class were to slice the bananas into chips to fit the bowl and replace the three scoops with a scoop of Neapolitan ice cream. It became a powerful lesson on how the newsroom has reacted to digital challenges by focusing on the medium rather than the content and values.

Once Upon A Times

How to use fairytales to teach beat reporting and review lead writing

By Dr. S. Camille Broadway
Texas-Arlington

S. Camille Broadway, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Texas-Arlington. She teaches writing, editing and reporting in the undergraduate journalism sequence as well as qualitative research and health communication courses in the master's program. Prior to getting her doctorate, she was a reporter, assistant city editor, copy editor and assistant news editor at newspapers in North Georgia and East Tennessee.

Introduction

Writing for different beats requires an ability to see issues from several different angles and understand how to adjust writing styles to meet the needs of the beats and the audiences. The best reporters are able to consider and choose between multiple perspectives and angles. In addition, beginning reporting students need refreshers on basic hard news lead elements. Inspired by copy desk exercises where we polished headline writing skills by coming up with headlines for Bible stories, fairytales, myths etc. and by the fake news pages that each departing journalist got as a going away present, I developed an active-learning exercise to help students learn how to develop story angles specific to different beats. In the process, it also gave me another opportunity to review basic hard news lead elements.

Rationale

The fairytale lead-writing exercise pushes students to re-imagine familiar stories as news stories and to think critically about what types of angles are needed for standard newspaper beats. Also fairytales are chronological narratives—similar in many ways to stories that sources may tell students. Beginning reporting students sometimes have difficulty converting chronological accounts of events into inverted pyramid stories. This exercise walks students through pulling the important journalistic elements out of a narrative form of communication.

Implementation

- Tell students they are general assignment reporters for the land of Far, Far Away, writing for its famous daily newspaper--*Once Upon A Times*.

- Walk the class through how to turn a classic fairytale into a newspaper lead

1) review the facts of a common fairytale;
2) have students identify 5Ws and 1H from the fairytale;
3) collaboratively write an example of a hard news lead based on a fairytale;
4) collaboratively write a different hard news lead based on another news beat. ("Jack and the Beanstalk" as a crime story and then as a business story works well for this).

- Assign students to timed-writing exercise to write three to five leads. Each lead should be from a different beat perspective. Provide links to online fairytale Websites for students who need a refresher. (for example, *http://www.childrenstory.com/tales/*)

- During the next class, review best examples and any common errors.

Impact

The next in-class exercise I often do after the fairytale leads exercise is have students come up with a story budget (for example, idea budget) for several on-campus beats, and I have noticed the variety and creativity of the story budgets improve when I use the fairytale lead exercise.

I enjoy reading the leads that get written during this exercise--it's not the same story 15 or 20 times over. It helps me to diagnose common problems and individual lead writing problems so that I can tailor other lead and story writing lectures and exercises to address those problems.

Students in my reporting classes are asked to write journal entries each week. They invariably write how much they enjoy this exercise. They like it because they can be "creative."

An example entry from one of my students: "I thought the fairytale lead activity that I did out of class was fun and good practice. It was fun being creative, yet working on lead skills at the same time. I was able to apply Tortoise and the Hare, Jack and the Beanstalk and Cinderella to other type of story beats. Little activities like these make practicing leads a little more interesting. I tend to write leads too long, so the more I practice the easier it should be."

Another entry from a student about the exercise: "It was interesting looking at stories I grew up with and trying to see them from a totally different angle and writing about them as news stories. It was good practice I think for getting into the habit of thinking like a journalist even before you start writing. It may seem obvious, but how many people really think about Cinderella as a government story? I certainly did not."

Get Out and "Glocalize"

How to seek out–and connect with–diverse sources

By Dr. Susan Brockus
California State-Chico

Susan Brockus, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at California State University-Chico. She teaches writing for mass media, public affairs reporting, news editing and copy reading and new media courses in the Department of Journalism. Prior to academia, she worked for 12 years as a reporter, editor and publisher at newspapers in Montana, Nevada and Indiana.

Introduction

It can be fairly easy for student writers to slip into a comfort zone, particularly when they are allowed to pick their own story topics and sources. The result sometimes is a lack of diversity in sources and even less perspective on how the local story might have significant connections elsewhere. This two-class lesson and assignment encourages students to "glocalize" stories by bringing global perspectives to local readers by emphasizing the interconnected nature of the world. It also requires them to hone their skills of interviewing, observation and description.

Rationale

Americans often are criticized for how little they know about their own governments and how ignorant they are about other parts of the world. Part of the problem is that the use of international news by mainstream U.S. media has declined markedly in the last two decades. The situation cries out for better ideas, information and explanations that help readers figure out how international forces are affecting and changing their local communities and their lives. This assignment encourages students to connect with new sources within their community who have links to people, places and cultures across the globe.

Implementation

- Interview five random people. Five strangers. People you don't know. People who seem very different from you. In person. Neither phone nor e-mail interviews are acceptable for this assignment. Focus on a connection each person has to somewhere outside the United States.

- Possible starter question and follow ups: Other than the United States, what country do you know the most about?
  - How did you get this knowledge?
  - Why does that country interest you?
  - Have you been there? Would you like to

go there? Do you know others who live there or have traveled there?
- What stands out most to you about this country? Can you describe it to me?
- What is your strongest memory of your time spent in that country?
- What is your impression of the country's people?
- What about that country would you like to see incorporated into American culture?
- What about that country would you change if you could?

- Write at least two paragraphs about four of the people. Include concrete details, such as a vivid description of the person; what you observed the person doing before and during the interview; and a description of the surroundings where the interview took place.

- Write a profile story on one of the five people you interviewed. Must include quotes, concrete details and background. Must be a news feature and include a compelling narrative lead and strong ending.

Impact

This is a fairly straightforward reporting assignment, but student papers indicated that they clearly understood the underlying issues relating to glocalization. Even on a campus with a very small international student population and limited diversity, students found a wide variety of sources with global connections.

Perhaps the most significant outcome relates not to glocalization, but to the seemingly secondary part of the assignment that asks students to describe sources and settings in some detail. The far majority of our students have grown up in a climate where political correctness is tantamount. Many of the students thus approach this assignment with some trepidation—and even discomfort—as they clearly have internalized the "all-people-are-the-same norm." Nonetheless, students handed in rich descriptions of the people they met and we were able to discuss why collection of such details makes them uncomfortable, when inclusion of such details would be relevant in a story and how best to integrate concrete details.

This assignment allows the instructor to address a variety of issues relating to journalism and writing skills. The students learn the lessons on their own and in the classroom and enjoy the interactive process.

What's on YOUR iPod?

How to integrate vodcasting into existing courses to enhance the college experience for all

By Dr. Patrice Clemson and Dr. John Chapin
Penn State

Pat Clemson, Ph.D., is an instructor of information science and technology (IST) at Penn State University. She teaches lower level to advanced IST courses. She has published her work on Google and is involved with numerous community projects.

John Chapin, Ph.D., is an associate professor of communications at Penn State University. He teaches radio, television, film and advanced journalism. He was recognized in 2006 by the National Office of Victim Assistance (NOVA) for his research in victim services.

Introduction

The first year college student population has the greatest need for information about their new situation. First Year Seminar students at the Penn State Beaver Campus comprise the target audience of the proposed project. The vodcasts and podcasts will cover topics of interest to students at other levels, too, so we anticipate vodcast use by faculty, staff and students who want to refresh their knowledge about topics in the collection.

Students in the second and third year of college are often best suited and most interested in providing information that is useful for the incoming students. Communications students and Information Sciences and Technology students will be given the opportunity to develop content for this project through video production class (Comm 283) and IST introductory (IST 110) and new media (IST 250) courses. We expect that students in Comm 203 (Interpersonal Communications) and CAS 100 will assist in the development of ideas and content.

Rationale

The first year of college is a significant experience for any student. Success in the first five weeks of college and the rest of that year can impact the quality of the student's experience through his/her post-secondary academic career. University administration, faculty, staff and upper division students have an ongoing interest in developing quality information for the new student cohort.

For a number of years, University personnel have developed information resources for freshmen using the tools and technologies available to them. These approaches have included seminars, lectures, Web sites, etc. Podcasting and vodcasting (video podcasting) are adding

additional means for delivery that the student can take with him/her and use whenever needed or desired. The information content is also usable on the student's personal computer. Our goal is to add this new media to the arsenal of resources available during orientation.

Implementation

Communications, library and IST faculty at Penn State Beaver campus plan to work with students in their classes on the development and dissemination of short high-quality video recordings on a variety of topics of potential interest to students.

Communications students have the interest and talent to film and produce the content. IST students will be involved with the post-production, conversion and management of the information resources.

Post production of the video recordings will involve conversion into MP4 format, transferring copies to the *iTunes@psu.edu* facility and also storing another copy in a digital collection on a Beaver Campus server.

We also plan to make the collection searchable by creating a database for the collection and adding keywords and other metadata for each recording to aid in their location and retrieval.

We are most interested in producing recordings with the following themes:

1) Orientation materials that will be useful to incoming first year students. These materials may also be of value for students before they arrive on campus. Some ideas for content include:

- Virtual Lion Ambassador—providing a walking tour of the campus and useful information for first-time visitors.
- Trading Spaces (Dorm style)—to present a typical dorm room and how to decorate the campus living space.

2) First days on campus—Beginning with FTCAP there are a lot of services that the student needs to set up for the first time. These recordings would step through the processes of:

- Obtaining ID cards
- Using the signature station to obtain an Access ID
- eLion registration
- eLion bill payment
- Setting up your computer in the dorms
- Who's who on campus--the locations, people and services associated with the bursar, advising, registrar, Center for Academic Achievement, housing, library, student affairs, financial aid, etc.

3) Remembering the New Student Day experience—We would like to tape and archive the events of the day.

4) Core college skills—These are the types of skills that upperclassmen (and women) should also find useful.

- Library Skills
- MLA and APA citations
- Effective speeches

5) For the seasoned veteran

- The internship experience—students talking about their experiences on the job and describing the organizational culture of local companies and agencies where they worked.

CLEMSON & CHAPIN GIFT

Continued on page 58

Bleachers of Fury

How to teach freedom of information through an interactive role-playing slideshow

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 interactive role-playing exercise for reporting, law or ethics courses uses group discussions and photos on PowerPoint slides to walk through a scenario—chaos at a campus football game—to grapple with access to government records, meetings, and places. Students learn to view access through different lenses and apply legal and ethical principles in balancing the right to know with competing interests. Based on the American Society of Newspaper Editors' FOI Interactive community modules ***(http://www.asne.org/files/2004foiinteractive.pdf)***, this exercise informs, engages and instills a healthy respect for open government.

Rationale

Freedom of information is essential for democracy and journalism, yet many students fail to see the application of access principles and ethics. This exercise builds upon traditional forms of teaching (for example, lecture, assigned readings and tests) by incorporating interactive group learning to make access real, relevant and fun.

Sometimes access is taught through semester-long projects, such as backgrounding individuals in a cemetery (Carol S. Lomicky, 2002 GIFT grand prize winner), researching homes for sale (David Cuillier, 2006 GIFT grand prize winner) and conducting access audits of campus or local government agencies (see Terry Wimmer's 2002 "Project Access" GIFT and the Society of Professional Journalists' FOI audit toolkit, *http://www.spj.org/foia_toolkit.asp*).

"Bleachers of Fury," which runs about an hour, complements those projects by providing a single program that pulls together concepts from law, reporting and ethics.

Implementation

- **Lay the groundwork**

First, provide foundational knowledge about access law, reporting

and ethics in previous classes through lecture and readings.

- **Prepare slideshow**

Using the scenarios below and adding some of your own, prepare the presentation by requesting permission to use stock photos from a local or campus newspaper, often searchable from the newspaper Web sites. Paste each electronic photo into a PowerPoint slideshow narrative. The plot: Today is the big football game against the rival university and officials say it's going to be a great event. Or will it? ...

Security guards stop a student blogger from entering the coliseum because they say only pre-approved journalists are allowed in with cameras. The blogger sneaks in a back gate. What rights do bloggers have? Was it OK to sneak in?

The star quarterback is missing. Rumors suggest he was suspended for molesting a woman student, but the team spokesperson says the information is secret because of FERPA. Should it be public? Should the media report the incident anyway? Name the woman?

In the first quarter, a receiver is knocked out and rushed off the field on a stretcher. The announcer tells the crowd the player's condition is secret because of HIPAA. Fans boo. Is that correct?

An inebriated woman exposes her torso and a campus newspaper photographer takes a photo. Does the paper have a legal right to publish the photo? Should it?

By the second quarter people start vomiting in the aisles because of a bad batch of nacho cheese. Livid fans demand to know the name of the concession company and see its inspection records, but officials say it's private.

A streaker who looks a lot like a student government senator darts across the field in full view of the 30,000 fans. Police cuff him, take him to jail, and refuse to release the man's identity, saying the case is under investigation and it would violate his privacy. Are police right?

In the last minutes of the game the end-zone bleachers collapse! Dozens of fans are seriously hurt and an understaffed ambulance staff takes 30 minutes to respond. Later, victims learn the city council had met in executive session the prior week and voted to cut ambulance service. Was the decision legal?

Add more elements relevant to your university.

- **Break into groups**

Divide the class into four groups, each representing a different constituency: the media, government, public and victims. Put journalism majors into the government group and PR majors in the media group to force them to think from different perspectives. After each issue give them a few minutes to reach a decision from the perspective of their respective group, addressing the legal and ethical implications. Then groups report their decisions and everyone discusses it together.

CUILLIER GIFT

Continued on page 58

Lead Poker

How to teach the value of words

By Dr. Juanita Darling
California State-Monterey Bay

Juanita Darling, Ph.D., has coordinated the California State University-Monterey Bay Concentration in Journalism and Media Studies and advised The Otter Realm, *the campus newspaper, since 2004. Before joining the CSUMB faculty, she was a journalist with the* Los Angeles Times *for 10 years—five years as San Salvador Bureau Chief in El Salvador, and five years as a Mexico City correspondent—before returning to graduate school for her Ph.D. in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.*

Introduction

Learning to write tight requires students to value every word as they would value chips in a poker game. Lead poker makes that analogy palpable through a game that is familiar to most students thanks to the poker craze. Players bet on their words as they would bet on their hands in a card game. Safeguarding their chips forces them to be concise.

Rationale

Culling unneeded words and phrases from their writing can be tedious for students. Lead poker makes the challenge of writing tight a game. Students see how their classmates use strong verbs and precise nouns to convey more information with fewer words. They also see the relationship between carefully chosen words and the quality of writing.

Implementation

- Students gather around tables or move their desks to form circles of five to 10 players.

- Instructor distributes poker chips and assigns them values. Color A = one word; color B = two words; color C = five words; color D = 10 words.

- Students ante up a two-word chip.

- Instructor distributes scenario containing the information students would need to write a summary lead.

- Students have 10 minutes to individually write leads from the scenario.

- Students count up the words in their leads and place their bets, based on the number of words in the lead. For example, a 28-word lead would mean a bet of two color D chips and one chip each of the other colors.

- Each player reads his/her lead aloud and other players decide whether it contains all the elements needed for a summary lead. The player then announces the number of words.

- All players at the table vote on which lead is best.

- The players with the shortest lead and the lead voted best split the pot.

- Students ante up again and instructor distributes another scenario.

Impact

The first time they play, students will bet more than half their chips on the first hand. With more experience, their bets become smaller and their leads, shorter. As students start to count up the words in their leads, they cross out words and re-write. They are surprised that often the best lead and the shortest lead are the same. Most important, they apply the techniques that they learned in lead poker to their stories. Their leads get shorter and punchier and their stories become more concise. They also have fun. As soon as they see the poker chips, they start teasing each other about the last game. When lead poker is the last activity of the class, they stay until the hand is finished rather than starting to pack up their gear as the end of class approaches.

All Together Now

How to use "speed dating" to increase learning and minimize conflict

By Douglas Fisher
South Carolina

Doug Fisher, M.A., is an instructor at the University of South Carolina where he teaches editing, reporting, management and new media. He also helps run the school's senior semester newsroom. Prior to academia, he was a professional journalist for 30 years, 18 of those with the Associated Press where he was a correspondent and news editor.

Introduction

The journalism profession is calling for educational institutions to instill the practices and values of teamwork as teams increasingly become how newsrooms operate (Breckenridge, 2000; Gade, 2004). Faced with a wide variety of personalities, the inherently competitive nature of academia and relatively little time to establish such teams in a semester, the challenge for teachers is to find ways to produce the best pairings and minimize conflict. By using a variation of "speed dating," the teaching newsroom at a Southern university has minimized conflict, which has increased learning and has improved students' interviewing skills.

Rationale

Faculty in the teaching newsroom of a Southern journalism school had run into severe problems in trying to implement teamwork. Faculty-assigned pairings based on initial observations in some cases produced unhealthy conflict. Weaker learners paired together floundered, while highly competent students paired together sometimes became unhealthily competitive. Pairing weak students with stronger ones, in hopes of a mentoring relationship, produced sometimes worse results, as the weaker students often expressed feelings of intimidation while the stronger ones expressed an exaggerated fear their grades would suffer. The faculty needed a way to measure potential conflicts, but in a fun way, and in a way that increased learning at the same time. A round of "speed dating" was implemented to not only force all students to get to know and evaluate one another, but also to increase their interviewing skills.

Implementation

- Students are told that on an upcoming afternoon, they will be "speed dating." Depending on the class size,

from 90 minutes to three hours may be needed.

- Details are purposely kept vague to heighten anticipation, but they are told to brush up on their interviewing skills because they will have only three minutes per interview.

- At the appointed time, each student is given a card with everyone else's number. Students are left to pair with each other as the rounds progress. One faculty member runs the dating and sorts out any minor problems.

- Students are told the simple rules—they pair up and have three minutes in total to question each other. The importance of the questioning is stressed by noting that they could be paired with any one of these people, so it's vital to find out who they do and don't like.

- The faculty member keeps "an ear" on the interviews to make sure they are being done earnestly, keeps conspicuous time with an hourglass egg timer, and calls rounds. To keep up the excitement and speed, students have 30 seconds to find a new partner between rounds.

- When the "dating" is done, students must complete a form listing the three people they most want to work with and the two they absolutely do not want to. They must provide specific choices and reasons; no "I like to work with everyone," or the form is sent back. By forcing detailed responses directly after the interviews, defenses are down and many "truths" come out, which provide insight for the faculty to guide the entire class throughout the semester.

- A color-coded spreadsheet prepared for the faculty's use instantly highlights problem pairings and makes it easier to find those that will work out. Students are not guaranteed their first choice, and by making students choose three, the faculty gets flexibility to break up cliques while still maintaining workable pairings.

Impact

The conflicts have largely disappeared, providing a healthier and richer learning environment. Faculty have greater confidence in the pairings and gain a level of insight into interpersonal interactions that can head off potential problems even later in the semester. Since even the shiest of students must participate, the process helps to overcome that barrier. Students, initially apprehensive, quickly warm to the process as evidenced by the energy of the interviews. Incoming seniors are starting to ask when speed dating will be, and a few have been seen practicing interview questions.

Sources

Breckenridge, Patti. "Wanted: a 21st Century Journalist." *Nieman Reports* 54:4 (Winter 2000): 25.

Gade, Peter J. "Newspapers and Organizational Development: Management and Journalist Perceptions of Newsroom Cultural Change." *Journalism & Communication Monographs*. 6:1 (Spring 2004).

Hearing Voices

How to help students learn the elements of voice and find their own

By Ellen J. Gerl
Ohio

Ellen J. Gerl, M.S.J., is an assistant professor in the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. She teaches magazine courses and advises the student magazine, Southeast Ohio. *Prior to joining the faculty, she worked in public relations and as a freelance writer and editor.*

Introduction

Teaching magazine writing students about voice requires a little noise: the sound of loud words, mellow mutterings and perhaps an expletive or two. The activities described here help students understand that voice is the writer's natural way of speaking to a reader. Students hear how people sound when they are angry, resigned or sympathetic. They hear passages written by authors with distinctive voices, and they write descriptive paragraphs employing a variety of voices. An activity near the end of the term shows students, to their surprise, that they do have a natural writing voice, one their classmates recognize.

Rationale

Magazine writing students, particularly those whose prior courses focused on newswriting, find the transition to writing with voice difficult. They try too hard to be clever. Or they rely on quotes from sources to tell their story; the result is a feature sans voice.

These teaching activities accomplish several objectives. Students learn the importance of voice in non-fiction writing and practice using writing elements that help create a voice. Students gain critical thinking skills as they describe other writers' voices and consider their own. How do they like to tell stories? And, perhaps most importantly, they begin to think of themselves as writers.

Implementation

- At the start of class, I approach a student and ask in a loud tone: "What? You didn't bring your textbook to class? Again? This is the final straw. I mean it. You're done. I've had it." With this tirade comes large body language: arms flying outward, a slammed fist, erect posture. After the students' initial surprise and my confession that this is an act, I ask students to identify my mood. They get it: angry. I repeat a similar monologue with a tone of defeat (sighs, long sentences, slumped shoulders and no questions) and a third one acting as a student's confidante (think

slang, contractions, a conspiratorial tone and sentences starting with "like, you know"). We discuss the speech and body clues I used. Then I ask them to consider what tools writers have to let readers know they are angry, sad or otherwise. Here are some items they typically list: word choice (sometimes described in terms such as connotations, imagery, alliteration, shape, context); length of sentences; rhythm; pacing; grammatical devices; nonsense words and dialogue. Seeing this concrete list on the board seems to demystify the abstract concept of voice.

- Next, I read aloud three passages by authors whose voices are very different from one another's. A favorite is from John McPhee's "A Textbook Place for Bears" in which he describes inebriated bears "full of hard cider." For good contrast, pair this with something from *Seventeen* magazine and *The New Yorker*. Have students describe each author's voice. Then, I play a recording (one I have digitally recorded earlier or accessed on an author's Web site) of one of these authors reading his or her work; I ask students to identify which author they think it is. This can lead into a discussion of how beginning writers develop their own voices.

- Next, I have students draw out of a hat an adjective that describes a particular voice. I ask them to write—in this voice—a paragraph describing the uptown weekend "scene" in their college town. Here are just a few examples of words lurking in the hat: intelligent, very hip, friendly, furious, confident, sophisticated, priggish, frank, scientific, sarcastic, promotional, disapproving. A student reads his passage and his classmates guess what the word was.

- Near the end of the course—after students have read and critiqued their classmates' various writing assignments for some eight weeks, I ask them to write a few sentences that describe their writing voice. They should not give obvious clues as to their identities. Then teams of four students face each other. Within each team, members exchange their descriptions. They read them aloud. The other team tries to connect the description with the correct writer on the other team. They are always surprised how well they know their classmates' way of speaking through words.

Impact

- Games increase students' interest in subject matter and make abstract concepts seem less so. Class participation is high.

- Students use the skills and terms they learn in this class during later discussions of assigned readings and classmates' writing.

- Students' confidence in their writing increases, and manuscripts show a greater sophistication in the use of voice.

Q Q Q

How to generate discussion in a seminar course

By Dr. Joel Geske
Iowa State

Joel Geske, Ph.D., is an associate professor at Iowa State University. He teaches advertising and visual communication in the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication and directs the PhysioMedia Lab. Prior to academia, he worked for nearly a decade in advertising as a writer and creative director.

Introduction

The task was daunting. First semester freshmen in an experimental seminar class. Goal: teach them to read objectively, think critically and discuss intelligently. These would be skills they could then use in their remaining college years.

Implementation

Students were given a series of readings dealing with the seminar topic at hand. Readings were chosen that offered several points of view, pro and con.

For each reading students were asked to write down the three Q's

- Quote: what is one quote that you feel sums up the author's main points?

- Question: what is one question you would have for the author if you could visit with her or him? Something you disagree with or question OR something you didn't understand?

- Quiz: If you were the instructor what is a test question you would write covering this material to probe your understanding of the material?

Rationale

Constructivist learning theory indicates that conscious learning emerges from activity (performance), not as a precursor to it. The classroom environment should attempt to replicate the activity structures, tools and sign systems, socio-cultural rules and community expectations that performers must accommodate while acting on some object of learning (Jonassen and Rohrer-Murphy, 1999). This means that an appropriate framework and modeling of critical reading and thinking skills is required to "show" students how to

participate effectively in discussion and seminar courses.

The 3 Qs provides a model. Many students don't like being put "on the spot" and don't feel comfortable talking in class. This is especially true of younger students. By having a format to launch the discussion and the answers written down in advance, it builds student confidence to contribute.

The first Q [QUOTE] asks the student to evaluate the reading and think what the main topics are and then to find a quote to summarize the main idea. It requires thinking about the reading and doing something interactive by searching for a quote which also requires reviewing material. In reverse, it teaches students to have a summary statement from which to build ideas and arguments.

The second Q [QUESTION] helps the student to read and think critically. What could be challenged or questioned in the reading. What is the author's point of view or a point from another perspective? Again, this requires both thinking and doing by asking questions and clarifying ideas.

The third Q [QUIZ] helps the student analyze the reading and identify the most important aspects of the reading. One must understand the material to be able to write a test question about it.

Evaluation, critical thinking and analysis. Three important elements for learning in the classroom and in life. In learning how to think in this manner, students are learning how to construct knowledge and think independently. This method does not rely on memorization of "factoids" which is quite low level learning, but helps students think and develop higher order learning skills needed for constructivist learning.

Outside the class, it can also be an effective method to evaluate news stories. Effective Quotes. What Question remains. What will readers take away from the news...if they were Quizzed... would they understand the situation or issue?

3Qs. Quote. Question. Quiz.

Impact

Like many good techniques, this one is deceptively simple. The students found it simple to understand and to use. However, this technique led to very lively discussion. Students found a variety of quotes that when brought together as a whole in the class generally summed up the articles' main topics quite comprehensively. Questions led to lively discussions and if one student didn't understand something, others could explain it (making participants both learners and teachers).

The instructor in this type of social constructionist setting becomes the facilitator of the discussion, making sure all students have an opportunity to participate (drawing out reluctant students and "corralling" the more outspoken.) Learners bring a diversity of skills, prior knowledge and cultural backgrounds into the discussion and help construct a shared understanding from multiple viewpoints (as opposed to a single viewpoint presented by an instructor lecturing.)

An added bonus: getting quiz questions creates a test bank that makes

GESKE GIFT

Continued on page 58

Sources of Diversity

How to broaden students' understanding of diversity using standard interview techniques

By Dr. Steve Hallock
Point Park

Steve Hallock, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Point Park University in Pittsburg, Pa. Prior to academia, he worked for nearly 30 years as a newspaper editor, editorial writer and beat reporter at various newspapers across the United States, including newsrooms in Albuquerque, N.M.; El Paso, Texas; Phoenix, Ariz.; and in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Introduction

To help students understand diverse, ethnic or racial minority cultures and media coverage of these cultures, basic reporting students are assigned to interview a university or community official of a minority (non-Anglo) community on the topic of the adequacy and fairness of the U.S. media's coverage of the particular community. The purpose is to teach basic interview skills while encouraging students to think critically about public perceptions and attitudes regarding the media plus about such media principles as thoroughness, fairness and the importance of diverse ideas and cultures to the American democracy. I also intend for the assignment to help them gain greater understanding of the various cultures that comprise the United States. The assignment gives the students an opportunity to get an idea of what it is like to be a member of a minority culture in terms of media coverage and attitudes.

The results of students' samples were a rather substantive indictment of media coverage of these communities. Forty-five of the 48 sources interviewed by one class responded in the negative regarding media treatment of their particular communities; that is a 15-to-1 ratio. Comments of the interview subjects ranged from complaints about stereotyping to failure to include successful minority representatives as spokespeople and a lack of understanding of different cultures. Suggestions for improvement ranged from requiring reporters to develop sources in these communities to spending time in these communities and to even send reporters abroad to understand diverse cultures.

This sort of instruction and coverage is vital in this day of increasing diversity in the United States: a substantial African-American population, a growing Hispanic community that now is the largest minority community in the United States, fear of and misunderstanding of the Muslim and Arab communities,

plus the increasing attention being given to immigration policy reform and terrorism.

Rationale

This idea is innovative in that it combines the elements of a standard interview story with a requirement for research into recent current events and one-on-one contact with members of cultures unfamiliar to the students. The key ingredient of the assignment is the focus on news principles such as fairness and thoroughness as they affect minority cultures through interview questions that concentrate of these two components.

Implementation

- Assign students to select an authority figure (for example, professor, community business, social or political leader) interview subject from among any cultural or racial minority community.

- The assignment includes specific questions about the interview subjects' attitudes regarding accuracy, fairness and overall adequacy of media coverage of issues or events of importance or interest to that particular culture.

- The assignment requires that the students ask their subjects for specific recent examples of media treatment they like or don't like.

- The assignment requires that the students ask their subjects for suggestions and ideas on how the media can improve their coverage of these and other minority cultures.

- Students who themselves belong to a minority culture are required to interview members of a separate, different culture.

- The assignment requires students to include names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of interview subjects for verification or call-back purposes.

- The assignment is treated as a trends or news-feature story.

Impact

The impact on students was to increase their knowledge of unfamiliar culture groups and thus their understanding of the human condition; to encourage them to think critically of the importance of such basic journalistic elements as fairness, thoroughness, avoiding stereotyping and to force students to research current events; and to instruct students in the basic techniques of interviewing subjects using actual news events and issues as subject material.

Painting a Target Audience Portrait

How to bring a target audience to life for advertising agency creatives

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 13years in account management with the D'Arcy Agency in the firm's New York City and Tokyo, Japan offices.

Introduction

Successful advertising is built on being able to connect with consumers using a persuasive message that is meaningful and relevant to their lives. Fundamental to this is defining or bringing to life a brand's target audience so that agency creative teams can then develop sharp and imaginative advertising that speaks directly to a target audience.

This "Target Audience Portrait" exercise is based on my belief that defining a target audience is more than just identifying the standard demographic and psychographic elements. For successful advertising, we must paint a vivid portrait of the consumer for agency creatives. And this involves delving deep into the target and getting to know them on a more intimate and personal basis.

Thus, our "Target Audience Portrait" exercise asks the class to describe a target audience using the following elements:

"Standard Demographic & Psychographic Elements"

Age, gender, race, marital status, education, income, occupation, attitudes, interests and opinions

"Lifestyle Descriptors"

Favorite music, bands, clothes, books, television shows, Web sites, sports teams, etc.

Activities during free time with friends, favorite malls or shops, restaurants, etc.

Preferred clothing, shoes, favorite brand names, cell phone, software, etc.

What really makes this exercise different is the "Lifestyle Descriptors." Essentially, this makes up the audience "portrait" that I ask students to develop in class, using an international product. In actual practice, the "portrait" allows real creatives to envision the targeted individual to whom they are writing copy. Writing to a single person is always the best method for writing advertising.

Rationale

This "portrait approach" goes beyond the typical demographic and psychographic profiling and teaches a unique, "real world" tool for getting better creative work from creative teams. Thus, students get early experience working on a fundamentally important tool that is used by major global marketers and advertisers. To my knowledge, this is an experience they will not get in any other academic setting.

This class exercise uses an international product in order to encourage students to think outside of their U.S. comfort zone. It challenges students to cross national boundaries and think like international business people.

Finally, this exercise encourages teamwork in a large lecture class. The ability to work in teams is absolutely critical to success in the marketing and advertising world.

Implementation

- Review basic demographic and psychographic elements. Explain the "Lifestyle Descriptors" and how they can vividly portray an individual. Show examples of well-developed target audience "portraits."

- Students are informed that they will create a "Target Audience Portrait" for the international, canned coffee product, Mr. Brown Iced Coffee, originally from Korea.

- Break up class into "agency teams" with one student serving as "account manager," responsible for leading the discussion and development of the "Target Audience Portrait."

- Each agency team examines a can of Mr. Brown and tastes the product.

- Teams imagine who the target audience might be based on the product/package examination and tasting.

- Students identify the target audience for Mr. Brown coffee using demographic/psychographic elements and the "Lifestyle Descriptors." Teams write information on the "portrait form" provided and have the option of drawing a picture of their target.

- The designated account managers present their "Target Audience Portraits" to the class and provide rationale of their decisions.

- Class discussion begins on how well all the target elements work together to present a coherent targeted individual and how well the target fits with the actual product. Students project themselves as creatives, envisioning how much easier it would be to write advertising to their portrait versus just a list of the basic demographic/psychographic elements.

- Comparisons are made among teams' "Portraits." Discussion.

Impact

Student Morale

I think students appreciate learning something like "Target Audience Portrait" because it is not typically taught in other

classes, and it is a unique tool employed by major marketers and ad agencies.

Students enjoy seeing and experiencing a different kind of product that is tasty, exotic and international.

I also think students enjoy the "team experience" in such a large lecture class.

Professor's Morale

I enjoy teaching students something from my own direct experience in the advertising agency business. I know that the exercise will distinguish my students from others who will not have been exposed to this tool. I find this highly motivating and fulfilling.

Using Blogs for Community Learning

The intersection of Web 2.0 and convergence education

By Dr. Susan Jacobson
Temple

Susan Jacobson, Ph.D., is a lecturer at Temple University. She teaches courses in new media, audio-visual newsgathering and the introductory Journalism and Society class. Her research interests include examining the development of "new" journalism brought about by technology.

Introduction

This article discusses the use of community blogs in the classroom as a way to:

1) Foster community learning among students by providing a multimedia platform for sharing experiences and posting their work for comments by their peers;

2) Integrate multimedia elements from diverse Internet sources (YouTube, blogs, Web sites) into classroom materials and classroom discussions;

3) Invite individuals who are not in the class but who are involved in the course subject matter to contribute to course content; and

4) Use mobile communication devices, such as voice posts, cameraphones and text messaging, to facilitate contributions to the blog discussions from specific locations.

Rationale

Traditionally, journalism educators have used blogs in the classroom as objects of study (Powerline, DailyKOS, Drudge Report), or have asked students to create individual blogs as a way to practice creating blog content. Journalism educators have not yet explored the use of community blogs, which invite students and others to contribute to an ongoing multimedia discussion of class topics, allow students to peer review each other's work and link the multimedia resources of the Web to the class discussion. While Blackboard and other course management systems support some of these features, Blackboard is a closed system, not open to the Web. Students and instructors may post links in the Blackboard system, but the ability to embed images, videos and other multimedia elements is non-existent. Blackboard content is also limited to the universe of students and instructors enrolled in a particular course, while community blogs let educators and students control whether content is open to the Web at large, or viewed by select groups.

Implementation

- In my classrooms, I use LiveJournal to create a community blog, but other blogging software offers some of the same functionality.

- In a large lecture course, like Journalism and Society, I use the blog to post detailed lecture notes, including links to multimedia Web resources. This lets me select focused material to cover during class time. In a large lecture, it is often difficult to cover all of the material during class. Cramming material into a lecture is not conducive to student learning. The blog supports the lecture content.

- In a large lecture course, both the students and the teaching assistants may post relevant material to the community blog. For example, after the class viewed the documentary "Soldiers Without Swords," a TA posted a link to the photos of Teenie "One Shot" Harris, one of the photographers featured in the film. For example, after discussing the role of blogs in political campaigns, a student posted links to a story that he was involved in while he was a volunteer on a senate campaign. The opposing campaign found images of alleged underage drinking on his MySpace page, and got the word out to other political bloggers that campaign workers for candidate X were underage drinkers. The story was featured on Wonkette and other blogs. His story sparked a lot of discussion in class. The students and the TAs have continued to post material to the blog, an action that really enhances the sense of community in a large lecture class of 200 students.

- In an introductory audio-visual production class of 70 students, I use the blog to post detailed lecture notes and detailed technical information, such as audio editing tutorials and links to video camera manuals.

- Students in the introductory audio-visual class upload their video projects to YouTube, and embed them in the community blog. We have a formal peer-review of the projects during class time, but making the videos available on the blog lets the students view each other's work on demand. Having students post their videos to YouTube helps them understand the notion of "syndication" in Web 2.0. A standard format for the videos makes it easier for the instructors to play the videos during class time—fewer technical problems!

- In advanced classes all students post their projects for peer review. On Election Day 2006 we used the mobile phone capabilities of the community blog to invite people outside the class to contribute voice and camera phone posts about their voting experience. We had more than 50 contributors and are planning to expand this project for the next election.

Impact

Students in large lecture classes both interrogate class material and contribute to class discussions outside of the limited meeting time of class. Students in introductory production classes post their work for on-demand peer review. Several students have submitted their URLs for journalism awards. Students in advanced classes post their work for peer-review, and engage in "citizen journalism" projects that invite contributions from non-students. All students come away with a better understanding of syndication and other features of "Web 2.0," citizen journalism and the evolving role of blogs in journalism.

Fostering Visual Creativity with Cre848

How to instill a life-long desire to be visually creative and have confidence in individual visual creativity in just eight minutes a day while simultaneously exposing students to blogging and content management systems

By Brian K. Johnson
Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

Associate Professor Brian K. Johnson, M.S., teaches photojournalism and multimedia at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and worked for seven years as a staff photographer at a daily newspaper. He has won national, regional and state awards for his photojournalism, teaching, multimedia projects, videos, books and creative projects. He earned a B.S. degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois.

Introduction

Society has focused on teaching writing for centuries but viewed visual creativity as an elective sideshow. In the 21st century the world has become hyper-visual in the media of everyday life. Visual creativity is an important skill that needs to be developed yet there are very few resources devoted to it. Enter "Cre848" (create for eight minutes a day). This program asks people to be visually creative for just eight minutes a day as a way to develop visual skills. Further, they are encouraged to post their creative works to a web log (blog) so they have an on-going diary of their work. Just eight minutes a day seems an attainable goal for anyone, especially when Cre848 shows people that there are many ways to be visually creative. Once visual creativity becomes a habit, it will be incorporated in increasingly sophisticated ways in projects and elevate the visual awareness of participants.

Rationale

There are many organized programs in America to foster a love for and habit of reading. What does not exist is any organized program to instill passion for visual creativity, a way to reinforce the individual's creative abilities through regular activity. What is needed is an innovative project—"Cre848"—to awaken visual creativity within everyone and hone those abilities. Visual creativity is like a muscle that needs to be exercised to remain strong or to become strong. Cre848 is an organized way to encourage people to spend just a few minutes a day "exercising." This novel program lowers the time and effort threshold for creating visual projects. In this way it is hoped that people will create and recognize the

many ways they can be visually creative. Being creative is fun. This awareness and exercise of their visual creativity will make their projects in work and school better and more sophisticated. It will give them tools to use when they construct the Web sites, newspapers, magazines, broadcasts and as yet unknown communication media of the future.

Implementation

- Give students this assignment: Cre848 Diary—You will spend eight minutes (or so) each day creating something visual. This can be a doodle, drawing, painting, photograph, cake decoration, collage or anything at all that strikes your fancy. Save your work. If you cannot save your work (like a cake that will get eaten) then take a photo with your digital camera to preserve it. Upload your photo to the account you will create for this class at photo sharing site *flickr.com* and tag it. From there post your work each day to your individual blog that you will create for this class at *blogger.com* along with your comments.

- In lecture show creative visual projects illustrating many ways to be creative. Emphasize that anything—folk art to high art—has value.

- Describe/explain blogs, content management systems/photo sharing sites. Show how they are created and used by individuals and are increasingly used by news organizations to reach readers. Show examples of blogs and photoblogs to illustrate possibilities.

- Browse to Web sites *flickr.com* and *blogger.com*. These are free and easy-to-use sites. Help students create accounts. Next, have them upload a photo to *flickr.com*, then post the photo to their blog. Using a photo-sharing site gives them exposure to simple content management systems in addition to blogs.

- Students e-mail their blog addresses to you. Bookmark them for easy access later.

- Visit the students' Cre848 blogs and comment on their work. Send addresses to class so they can comment. Show examples from the blogs in class.

- Encourage students to keep Cre848 blogs going. Reinforce that creativity is like a muscle that needs to be exercised regularly to stay strong. Be visually creative: Cre848 every day.

Impact

Cre848 has been a tremendous success inspiring my students to realize that:

1) They ARE creative.
2) They CAN BE creative.
3) They can IMPROVE their creativity by spending a few minutes a day creating something.

Giving them a reason to create regularly helps minds become active. They realize visual creativity is a process that they need to exercise. Cre848 gives them confidence in their innate visual creativity and becomes the spark that lit the fires of their creative passions. My own creativity and passion to create is rejuvenated.

Style Stars

How to help students collaboratively learn and demonstrate the essence of Associated Press style

By Dr. Rick Kenney
Central Florida

Rick Kenney, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Central Florida. He teaches editing, news reporting and ethics. He directs the Southeast Center for Editing Excellence for the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund.

Introduction

Students in my basic newspaper editing course learn to play "Style Stars," an interactive exercise requiring that they:

1) learn 10 style rules well enough to teach their classmates;
2) create a quiz that becomes part of a take-home study guide for the final exam in style; and
3) present one of those style rules in a classroom performance that includes some audio and/or visual aid or mnemonic.

Rationale

Style Stars forces students to "crack open" and investigate just a part of the stylebook by reducing their fear that they must memorize all of it. It also gives them choices and makes them take ownership of their learning by creating a study guide for their final exam. The partnering and presentation require them to come out of their shell at least a little. And the performances remind them that even copy editors, who are often disparaged as dull, can—and must!—be creative.

Implementation

- To alleviate stage fright, students are partnered with a classmate. Both are assigned a small section of the stylebook.

- From their assigned sections, the students choose 10 entries they think are most important to know. Each of these points becomes a "style star" for all students to watch. For each style star, the team must create an original "problem statement" that requires a quiz-taker to circle the correct choice; 10 problem statements in all. For example: "The boy [convinced, persuaded] his friend to switch lunches with him."

- Enrollment ensures at least eight teams create 80 statements for a hypothetical quiz. This series of quizzes, in fact, becomes a study guide for all of the students.

- I collect their work in a standard format, copy and print all of it double-sided and distribute it two weeks before

their final exam.

- Choosing one "style star" from their 10 problem statements, team members collaborate to script a demonstration of it for the rest of the class. This challenges them to justify the rule's significance while explaining its subtleties. At the same time, they get to have fun devising a creative lesson. Mime, music, interpretive dance—all and more are encouraged.

Impact

One team took on the task of explaining the confusion among "gibe," jibe" and "jive" by incorporating an audio clip of the BeeGees' 1970s tune "Jive Talkin'" and an audio/video clip of Gene Hackman's titular character from The Royal Tenenbaums challenging Danny Glover's Henry Sherman, "You wanna talk some jive? I'll talk some jive. I'll talk some jive like you've never heard!" By learning an AP rule and getting up in front of their classmates in a performance, the students themselves become the ultimate "style stars." The presentations tend to stick in a student's mind—both performer and learner—which leads to learning the style rules. The quizzes, compiled as a study guide, help students take ownership of their learning and prepare them for their final exam. And me? I always learn something about AP style I hadn't considered, and the presentations provide me with mnemonics, too.

T-shirt Ethics

How to engage students in learning ethical approaches

By Dr. Susan Lewis
Abilene Christian

Susan L. Lewis, Ed.D., is an assistant professor at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas. She teaches courses in writing, electronic media and public relations. Her research interests include social networking and media ownership.

Introduction

As part of a larger unit on ethics in an online writing course, this assignment is designed in a seminar style to help students understand the tenets of an ethical approach and share their findings with other members of the course. Through a series of steps of cognition within learning groups including researching, reading, synthesizing, writing and teaching, students come to an understanding of their assigned ethical approach. The students engage more deeply with the ideas during this exercise than they do in a series lectures and readings on the various ethical approaches. After close consultation with the professor, student groups present the ethical approaches to each other using PowerPoint and T-shirts. The T-shirts are obviously limited by size, so students are required to synthesize and reduce the information they have learned about their assigned approach and present it in a creative way. Students are mildly entertained by their peers' creativity in producing T-shirts displaying words and images, but they eventually see the mnemonic value of a crafty and accurate T-shirt.

Rationale

This active learning exercise compels students to work within a group to deeply understand their assigned ethical approach and requires them to concisely and creatively use words and images to convey the message of that approach.

Implementation

- Students are placed into groups of three and assigned an ethical approach to research. Approaches may include consequentialism, non-consequentialism, virtue, moral rights of man, distributive justice and relativism.

- Groups prepare a PowerPoint presentation designed to inform the class about their theory. Included in the PowerPoint is a historical perspective, the big ideas of the approach, the people who shaped the ideas, application of the approach to a situation and a T-shirt

design that encapsulates the tenets of the approach.

- The professor mentors each group closely to ensure accuracy of the presentation and to ensure that the brief words and images on the T-shirt portray the approach completely.

- Students present their work to the class at large.

Impact

Many students approach the study of ethics with dread. By engaging them in conversations with each other and the professor about the framework of ethical approaches, and by allowing them to use the creative sides of their brains to produce a T-shirt design based on their understanding of the theory, this assignment marries pedagogy and pop culture. After this assignment students know the ethical approaches and can quote and explain the T-shirt phrases.

The students' natural competitiveness comes to the surface during this assignment. They want to have the most clever and most accurate T-shirt, and the quest for precision leads to a remarkable thirst for understanding. My mentoring of the student groups as they seek to better understand the theories and produce accurate presentations energizes me as a professor.

Don't Rely on Chicken Scratch

How to take notes quickly and accurately

By Dr. Renee Martin-Kratzer
Florida

Renee Martin-Kratzer, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Missouri. She teaches writing, magazine and design courses in the journalism department.

Introduction

Beginning writing students worry about interviewing subjects. They do the research, write good questions and try to take good notes, but sometimes all they come away with is messy, out of order scribbles that they stare at for hours in desperation. If professors devoted part of a class period to note taking, then students could learn a necessary but often ignored skill.

Rationale

Note taking can be a dry topic, but this idea shows you how to turn a standard lecture into a hands-on activity that gets students engaged. Plus, this exercise clearly shows them if note taking is an area where they need to improve.

Implementation

- First, students are asked to share with the class some of their frustrations with interviewing people in terms of the note taking. Typically, the students will immediately express frustration that their interview subjects often talk much faster than the students are able to write.

- After this brief discussion, the activity begins. The teacher shows an online video of a person talking. I prefer to show a clip of Michael J. Fox discussing stem cell research at *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMliHkTDHaE*.

  The students are instructed to take accurate notes during the entire clip.

- After viewing, the students are asked to look at their notes. Were they able to write down every word that he said? This sparks a discussion about the difficulty of the task. Then the students are paired up to compare their notes with each other to see if they have written the same quotes.

- After comparing, the students are asked to share with the class some of the dissimilarities that emerged. This shows the students how difficult it can be to write verbatim. Most students have started developing their own shorthand notation. They are all asked to go to the board to write down one word or phrase that they commonly abbreviate. The

class should discuss the list until all ideas are shared. This results in some strategies that the students are able to take with them.

- Then the video clip is shown again. This time, the closed caption option is turned on so that the students can see the words as he talks. This allows them to fill in all the blanks in their notes. They are to circle how many words they had missed the first time around. How would they handle missing words in a real interview situation? Strategies for this (asking the question again, calling back later, etc.) are discussed. The peril of relying only on a tape recorder is also covered.

- Conclude by sharing news clippings of the same event that were published in different newspapers. Frequently, reporters who attend the same news conference will nonetheless come away with quotations that are not exactly alike. This provides a real-life example so they can see the importance of improving their note taking skills. Neater and more accurate notes lead to better stories.

- One reason to use the Michael J. Fox clip is that he has a hard time sitting still because of his Parkinson's disease. Once the class has discussed the challenges of note taking, then a brief discussion about being sensitive in an interview to people who have disabilities or medical conditions can follow.

- Right before class is dismissed, the students are challenged to be on the lookout all semester to spot incidents where two reporters come away with different quotes. Extra credit will be given to those who find examples.

Impact

This activity challenges students to take good notes. Even though they are trying their best, most are still unable to capture everything that Michael J. Fox says. They are then able to share ideas and their best practices with their peers, which they enjoy. They also like finding out that they are not the only ones who struggle to read their notes after an interview is over. Students say that they have tried out some of the new abbreviations that they learn in class, and they found the practice helpful.

Caution: Media Convergence Zone Ahead

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

By Jennifer Mullins and Dr. Teresa Lamsam
Nebraska-Omaha

Jennifer Mullins, M.A., is a graduate teaching assistant for the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Her graduate specialization is in technical communication and military family communication.

Teresa Trumbly Lamsam, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Her journalism classes include public affairs reporting and news editing. Prior to academia, Teresa worked for a decade as an editor for metropolitan and community newspapers.

Introduction

From biker bars to community centers, our one-night, event–based news blogs have taken students on community news tours that rarely make the roadmap of local news coverage. Students helped develop an issue-driven project and used election nights as the reporting platform. Equipped with cell phones or digital cameras, students traveled throughout the metro connecting with community members as they engaged in the democratic process, whether that engagement was knocking back beer and nachos at a VFW post or handing out campaign buttons outside a diner.

With real-time reporting, readers traveled along in the news blog as students wrote and photographed their first-hand experience of the roles of media and community in democracy. Back in the convergence newsroom (classroom), students and faculty members linked with field reporters and edited copy for the news blog.

Rationale

The Internet is on its way to becoming the top choice for news and information. The traditional mass media no longer dominate the information business. Blogging is just one new media form that offers anyone the chance to be published. Twenty-three weblogs were in existence in 1999. Now, more than 60 million blogs exist (Blood, 2005). Blogs are a prominent source of news and entertainment. Journalists often use blogs as cover to report issues that would ordinarily be avoided to keep the peace

with important people. The collaborative news blog assignment gives students an opportunity to experience hands-on media convergence and a mix of citizen and traditional journalism practices.

Implementation

- <lane merge ahead> Decide what class will be responsible for the blog, then which classes and individuals will help with the content and design.

1) Public affairs reporting students as field reporters
2) Related journalism courses, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students as editors
3) Technical communication classes as designers and technical support

- <construction ahead> Brainstorm and discuss blog topic, appropriate design and content. Students complete content analysis worksheets for three blog sites similar to the blog they wish to create. Analysis includes topics such as:

1) Purpose, audience, graphic design elements
2) Choose event (for example, election night) as platform for reporting

- <loading zone> Gather equipment needed for the event.

1) Blog service—photo and multi-editor capable
2) Cell phones for editors and writers—with cameras
3) Computer lab—blog night news room

Impact

This assignment can bring together faculty members and students in a collaborative environment for a one-night activity. Faculty members volunteer to be frontline editors in the convergence newsroom while news editing students field calls from reporting students who phone in stories during the evening. The assignment puts students and faculty in a fast-paced news environment with real-time reporting and editing. But the assignment also has enough flexibility to adjust to numbers and resources available—you don't need a lot of either to pull off an exciting night of journalism. The impact of this assignment cascades throughout our medium-sized program. Foremost is the immediate impact on current students. Even though some may work in student media, many never have the adrenaline-rush reality of interviewing and reporting on tight deadlines. Two news editing students excitedly remarked on one news blog night, "Can we get a job doing this sort of thing?" to which the teacher answered: "Certainly. It is called copyediting, and it's what you have been studying all semester!"

A second important impact is on faculty. The news blog nights give faculty the opportunity to work together for the first time in a newsroom environment. Faculty members see one another in a new light, and students see a side of faculty not often visible in the classroom. The experience energizes and renews both faculty and students.

A third potential impact is in the area of resources. We use the news blog assignment as a vehicle for writing mini-grants to purchase new equipment. We have written American Democracy and Civic Participation grants for the purchase of digital cameras. The campus provides camera cells phones for the night or students volunteer to use their own phones.

Snowballing Sourcebook

How to introduce students to an ethnic neighborhood and help them build a common sourcebook for reporting

By Paul Niwa, M.S.
Emerson

Paul Niwa, M.S., is an assistant professor of journalism at Emerson College. He teaches broadcast, online and business journalism in the Department of Journalism. Prior to academia, he launched and produced newscasts for NBC News, CNBC, NBC Asia, Paramount Pictures, Gannett and a Canadian Web site.

Introduction

By combining the snowball method of sampling and civic mapping, this writing and reporting exercise helps students create a common sourcebook for further reporting in an ethnic neighborhood. Students start by identifying, interviewing and writing biographical profiles of newsmakers in an ethnic community. After their interview, they ask their newsmaker with whom do they discuss neighborhood news. The student then repeats the biographical profile process with the people they have been referred. After each student has completed eight profiles, the relationships of the sources are plotted on a map. The sources are now an interconnected web, and the students can now see how a neighborhood is tightly stitched together through interpersonal relationships.

Rationale

Journalism students are often apprehensive about covering ethnic neighborhoods whose population is different from their race. Helping students get over this unfamiliarity will help them become journalists who are more sensitive, responsible and responsive to diverse communities.

This exercise gives journalism students a highly structured method to gather sources in an unfamiliar neighborhood. It helps students get started in their reporting by identifying non-official sources of information.

Implementation

- Community Orientation—It's important that students get oriented so that they will report with sensitivity.

-Neighborhood tour
-Lunch with neighborhood newspaper editor
-Cover a community meeting
-Students identify community newsmakers and select which one they would like to profile.

- Each student interviews and photographs their newsmaker, collects contact information, writes a biography and asks the newsmaker to whom they talk when they discuss community news.

- The student writes the biography into a database by using a blogging tool like Movable Type or Word Press.

- Each student repeats the interview process with the person they have been referred to by the newsmaker.

- Students edit each other's work.

- The connections of each person interviewed are plotted on a map, and the data is placed on the Web.

- Students discuss the organization of the neighborhood and reporting strategies based on the model in Tapping Civic Life from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism. (*http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/pubs/tcl/*)

- Students can now use the database of sources for other reporting.

Impact

The source map and profiles are now available on the web as a reporting resource for students and the community (*http://www.bostonchinatown.org*). It has become the launching point for several other Web projects, feature articles, a video documentary and a newscast vlog.

Several hundred unique users search the source map every month. The reporting quality of class assignments involving the neighborhood has improved because the sources in the stories are more personal and use fewer official sources.

The source map has also introduced the community to the students. Residents are more likely the give interviews because they have seen the biographies on the Web site.

Do Students at Your College Follow the News?

How to foster youths' understanding of current events, survey methods and their own media consumption

By Dr. Jennifer Rauch
Long Island

Jennifer Rauch (M.J., Temple University; Ph.D. Indiana University-Bloomington) is an assistant professor of journalism at Long Island University, where she teaches courses in news writing, magazine editing, mass communication and new media and society. Prior to academia, Rauch was a professional journalist and publication editor for seven years. Her articles examining U.N.-sponsored reporting, civic journalism, protest coverage and independent 'zines' have been published in the Journal of Communication Inquiry, Journalism & Mass Communication Educator, Social Movement Studies *and* Popular Communication.

Introduction

I developed this GIFT for an innovative course I taught called "Not Necessarily the News: Young Audiences, Political Humor & Civic Culture" that considered whether young people consume less news than adults or whether they perhaps follow news in different ways, such as by watching "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart."

That course addressed the unique role of traditional journalism in our media-saturated environment by asking questions such as: What's the difference between news and entertainment, anyway? Does old-fashioned journalism do anything that hybrid or liminal forms can't? From what sources do today's college students learn what's happening in the world?

This project focuses on a student survey of classmates to examine what range of media sources they use for "hard" and "soft" news, how knowledgeable they are about "hard and soft news, how much they participate in the civic life of their communities and why they think young people follow or don't follow the news.

The assignment has such great impact on students, as well as my own teaching morale, that I'm using it again this year in my Introduction to Mass Communication class. It could also be easily adapted to courses in media and society, communication research or methods and others.

Rationale

This GIFT engages students in an important contemporary debate

about declining audiences for news, a phenomenon to which they personally contribute in their everyday lives as media consumers and which has serious consequences for their careers as journalists.

In the multi-step assignment, I briefly sensitize students to the issue by testing their news knowledge, using questions derived from David Mindich's survey in his landmark book, *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News*. I ask students to identify events or public figures that are widely reported in hard versus soft news. Most students are dismayed by their relative ignorance of the former (for example, they can identify Allen Iverson and Alicia Keys but not Nancy Pelosi or Alberto Gonzalez).

Next, I assign students to read *Tuned Out*, in which Mindich discusses the generational shift in news habits. We discuss his arguments about how people consume "news they want" more than "news they need," how the Internet eclipses local news and how democracy suffers when fewer people follow current events.

Finally, course participants learn about Mindich's basic survey procedures and replicate his survey with local college students. This involves a great deal of critical thinking, as students personalize and update his questions for their survey population.

Implementation

- STEP 1—Sensitizing Quiz: "Test Your News Knowledge." Replicates questions from the survey, for example, Who is Alicia Keys? Who is Tom Daschle and what is his importance? Name your own state's U.S. senators. Who is the U.S. attorney general, and what does he do? Which countries did President Bush say represented "an axis of evil"? What is Roe v. Wade?

- STEP 2—Reading Assignment & Discussion: Mindich, *Tuned Out* (2005), 137 pages. Presents evidence of a decline in youth news consumption, discusses industry efforts to lure young readers and viewers, makes a strong case for the unique mission of journalism in media, and reports findings from Mindich's surveys of and conversations with young people.

- STEP 3—Class Survey Project: Students collaborate to design a survey exploring

1) what range of media sources students use for hard vs. soft news
2) how knowledgeable students are about hard vs. soft news,
3) how much they participate in their communities, and
4) why they think young people follow or don't follow the news.

Impact

Beginning the assignment with the sensitizing quiz has the tremendous effect on engaging students in what may seem an abstract issue, by making it relevant to their lived experience. They're usually quite embarrassed when they can't answer basic questions about current events!

Our discussions about how and why

RAUCH GIFT
Continued on page 58

Breaking the College News Bubble

How to excite reporting and editing students about current events

By Daniel Reimold
Ohio

Daniel Reimold, M.J., is a mass communication doctoral candidate and Scripps Howard Teaching Fellow in the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, where he teaches news editing, information gathering and introduction to mass communication. He is also enrolled in the school's Contemporary History Institute and serves as an adviser for Speakeasy Magazine*, a daily-updated news and culture Webzine run by Scripps students. He previously served as a special projects reporter at* The Philadelphia Inquirer *and a general assignments and police reporter at a pair of daily newspapers in suburban Philadelphia.*

Introduction

This regular, student-led class activity aims to excite student journalists to step beyond the legendary college news bubble and learn what's going on in the outside world. It aspires to provide a sense of how the first draft of history is made and teaches students about the significance of current events knowledge in the drafting process, calling on a different pair of undergraduates each session to inform classmates about issues, events and individuals making news the week before and subsequently act as head editors by leading a "staff meeting" during which classmates put on their reporters' caps (literally, students are encouraged to bring specially-designed headwear) and offer ideas for follow-up stories and critiques of related photos and page layouts.

Rationale

It is absolutely essential that journalism students stay up on current events because the news media does not publish in a bubble. Journalists need to be aware of outside world happenings because they will be referenced in their writings, mentioned during their interviews with sources and make great fodder for the leads or headlines they will one day compose. Once students make the leap to professional journalism, they are no longer the wide-eyed, believe-everything-they-see-read-and-hear members of the general public. They are stepping behind the curtain. They are entering into the looking glass. They are going to the other side of the fence. Their role as a reporter or editor is deciding what news the public sees. And so they need to know about that news ten times, a hundred times, more in-depth than the public, because if they don't, they cannot adequately educate and inform them and they would be like a professor teaching a course in a subject he knows less about than his students.

Implementation

- Two "head editors" begin each class with a five-minute summation of major news occurring in their chosen area (politics, sports, entertainment, etc.) since the last class session.

- On a front screen, the editors display two news photographs and two front page layouts (the latter obtained at times via Newseum.org) related to their current events area and lead a discussion on why they were chosen, what they illustrate, and their journalistic and aesthetic strengths and weaknesses.

- The editors then oversee a brief all-class "staff meeting," as classmates brainstorm ideas for follow-ups or side-stories related to the major current events news presented.

- At times, a particularly innovative idea can be followed by a brief instructor-led discussion on how it could be reported upon, in respect to what sources might be relevant, what angles to take, what information should be included in the lede, etc.

- In a more general sense, students are encouraged to be creative, designing hats and various accoutrements with journalism themes (such as the group who wore tiaras and went by the moniker "Miss Grammar-icas") and the "head editors" have received past permission to hold their presentations and "staff meetings" outside or bring in a guest speaker-expert (normally a university professor or area journalist) to discuss the media's coverage of a particularly significant breaking news event.

Impact

The assignment positively impacts each class session in a number of ways: the selected "head editors" often seem ecstatic by the transfer of power in which they get to play "educator;" students gain confidence through their contributions and general interaction with peers during the "staff meetings" and photo/layout critiques; students learn the art of story selection and trimming, cutting and boiling by being forced to adhere to the presentation's time requirement; students see real-world examples of reporting techniques and editing skills discussed in class; and by starting class with this practicum, each session is infused with a bolt of energy that always translates into higher student involvement and more interest in the general lecture and discussion that follows. In a larger sense, I'll always remember the excited smile on the face of a student who ran into class at the start of one session to show me a print-out of a story that had been run in *The New York Times* that dealt with the same idea she had brainstormed and suggested during a "staff meeting" in the previous class. Through this simple activity of self-directed learning and peer-initiated back-and-forth, she had gained invaluable insight into the news production process, obtained a ton of confidence about her potential to succeed in journalism and discovered firsthand the significance of current events knowledge in the journalistic process.

Diversity Snapshot

How to ease students into writing about diversity with skill and sensibility

By Carol Schwalbe
Arizona State

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

Introduction

One hallmark of good journalism in multicultural America is giving voice to the voiceless. To expose my feature writing students to a culture or community they wouldn't normally encounter, they write a short Diversity Snapshot that captures one person's authentic voice and a universal theme. This assignment helps them understand the common bonds we all share—of aspiration and struggle, triumph and loss, love and hate.

Rationale

During my first semester of teaching, I assigned a story on a Mexican–Native American community near campus. I thought the students would be eager to explore a place so close yet so different. To my surprise, they were apprehensive. "You want us to go where?" "You want us to talk to those people?" I hadn't done a good job prepping the students.

When I tried the Diversity Snapshot, however, the results were infinitely better. This assignment eases students into writing about diversity with a balance of skill and sensibility. It opens students' eyes to stories beyond the world they know. They see people as characters rather than sources. It encourages them to view diversity in terms of multiple perspectives—economic, cultural and religious as well as ethnic.

Implementation

- **Weeks 1-2**

First, we discuss stories that deal with diversity. A wonderful resource is *The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity*, a 2006 compendium of print and broadcast stories edited by Arlene Notoro Morgan, Alice Irene Pifer and Keith Woods. A DVD includes interviews with the authors and producers.

The students scout for underreported communities. They take a different route to school or work, hang out at unfamiliar places and talk to people they don't know. I give them a local map showing where they can find people not like themselves, such as Latinos, Muslims, refugees and migrant workers.

- **Week 3**

After picking a community, students read Ruth Seymour's "Eight Steps Toward Cultural Competence" <*http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=9530*>. They identify the intercultural skills that work best in their particular community. In class they share tips about saying hello, showing respect, accepting gifts and so forth.

Students hone their eavesdropping skills to improve their facility with dialogue. By focusing on the speech patterns and rhythms of everyday conversations, they hear how real people actually speak. Students go someplace on or near campus for half an hour and listen in on as many conversations as possible. Back in class, they write a short scene that incorporates dialogue.

- **Week 4**

With a photographer's eye (description) and their subject's authentic voice (dialogue), students write a 500- to 750-word Diversity Snapshot. The short length forces them to focus on one manageable slice-of-life, yet the assignment also requires them to look for a broader theme that touches the heart or speaks to the spirit. The students are encouraged to take pictures and pick the one that best illustrates their story.

Impact

- The Diversity Snapshot is short and focused, so it's not overwhelming for students traveling into unknown territory. It can, however, be adapted for longer stories.

- This assignment can also be used in photo classes. Instead of writing a story, students turn in one picture that best captures their theme or character.

- The Diversity Snapshots resonated with insight, cultural nuances and authentic voice. In glimpsing a community or culture new to them, students found sameness rather than difference. They saw their story in someone else's story.

One student described a first-generation Indian mother caught in a tug of war between a son who leads an all-American lifestyle and grandparents who embrace traditional values.

Another wrote about a Latina girl's coming-of-age quinceanera, which was really a story about the price her father paid for the American dream.

Another focused on an undocumented worker who yearned to study English and go to our university, which is within sight of the fast-food joint where he grilled burgers.

- On evaluations, most students mentioned this assignment as their favorite—and one of the most valuable parts of the class. It created positive buzz about the course.

From one student: "It made me a stronger reporter and writer. It taught me to think in a way I don't normally have to."

From another: "I was really scared at first, but I learned so much by pushing beyond my comfort zone."

- Almost all the Diversity Snapshots were published—some in campus media, others in the major city daily.

The Windup and the Pitch

How to motivate students to develop better story ideas and budget lines

By Jeff South
Virginia Commonwealth

Jeff South is an associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University where he teaches reporting, media ethics and other courses. He recently served a six-month Knight International Journalism Fellowship training journalists in Ukraine. Before becoming a teacher, he was a newspaper reporter and editor for 20 years.

Introduction

In my reporting classes, students learn that the most important thing they write isn't the engaging lead, the seamless transition or the evocative kicker. It's the eye-catching budget line—the one-paragraph description that editors consider during their planning meetings. After all, if reporters can't sell the idea to the editors, readers will never see the story.

That's why I work with students on how to write effective budget lines, and I have them present their proposals in simulated budget meetings. The process begins with a good story idea – something fresh and timely that affects or interests a lot of people. I have students distill their ideas into a focus sentence that explains what the story is about and why people should care. If the focus sentence seems dry, students can precede it with a creative device, such as a play on words, a scene-setter or a quick anecdote. In writing the budget line, of course, students have produced the story's lead and nut graph. So it isn't extra work; it's really the story's foundation. A budget line also contains the story's slug, projected length and estimated time of arrival, as well as notes about possible photos, graphics and online elements.

To push students to develop better budget lines, I conduct a weekly exercise that combines technology, role play and competition.

First, each student must come up with a story idea and craft a budget line (about 50 words). Students post their budget lines in "This Week's Budget," a discussion forum I have created on our class Web site using the Blackboard course management system.

During class, I convene a budget meeting for our make-believe community newspaper. We pretend each student is an editor who also writes stories. Using an LCD projector, I display on the screen in the front of the classroom the budget lines students have filed on Blackboard. One by one, students present their budget lines: Each student stands and has one minute to sell the room on why his or her story deserves Page One in our next

issue. Other students ask questions and try to poke holes in the story idea.

After all the students have presented, they vote on which five stories should be on our front page. In small classes, I do this with a show of hands. In computer labs with 15 or more students, I use Blackboard's survey tool: I create a survey that lists the slugs of the 15 or so stories proposed and allows each student to choose five. Blackboard immediately tallies which five stories received the most votes.

Finally, we look at the five top vote-getters and discuss whether those stories would make a good Page One lineup. I give extra points (a checkmark for that day's attendance) to the students who wrote and presented the winning budget lines.

Rationale

This is an innovative teaching idea for four reasons: It emphasizes an overlooked aspect of journalistic writing—budget lines. It requires students to file budget lines electronically, as modern newsrooms do. The role-play exercise sharpens students' oral presentation skills, an area frequently ignored in print journalism. And it uses competition in a simulated but real-world setting to motivate students.

Implementation

- I create a Blackboard discussion forum called "This Week's Budget."
- I assign students to find a story idea, craft a budget line and post it on Blackboard.
- During class, we hold a mock budget meeting.
- One by one, students present their budget lines, arguing for A1 play.
- Students vote on which five stories deserve to be on Page One. (They can vote for their own stories.)
- We discuss our front-page lineup, and I critique the budget lines.
- During the semester, I take students on a field trip to sit in on a real budget meeting at the local daily newspaper.

Impact

In this exercise, students gain confidence pitching story ideas to a group. They improve their public speaking skills and learn to project enthusiasm. Students also improve their writing skills: They compete fiercely to write compelling budget lines that their classmates will select for Page One. Students like the democratic aspect of this exercise: The students themselves decide which stories are worthy of A1. I like the exercise because the students' choices almost always reflect the five budget lines that I would have picked. Moreover, Blackboard eliminates the need for printing and photocopying budgets and using cumbersome paper ballots for selecting the top story ideas.

We All Have to Eat and Sleep

How to incorporate math into a reporting assignment

By Dr. Kathleen W. Wickham
Mississippi

Kathleen W. Wickham, Ed.D., is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Mississippi. She teaches ethics, advanced reporting, media writing and graduate research methods. Wickham worked as a reporter for 10 years in New Jersey prior to academia.

Introduction

Students enrolled in Media Writing, a lower-division skills class, formed three-person teams to explore issues of food and housing costs in Oxford, Miss., a town named as a top retirement mecca because of its close relationship to the University of Mississippi and Southern climate. Oxford is located in a rural area, 90 minutes from the nearest large town. As a result, shopping and housing options are limited. Students noted in a discussion related to this assignment that an influx of high-priced condo complexes is driving up real estate prices and changing the character of the town from charming to crowded. At greatest risk are low to moderate-income housing areas. The main focus of this assignment was to take a look at what it costs to live in a college town—especially if you are not a student.

Rationale

The project called on students to leave the classroom, obtain original data, interview students and non-students and use critical thinking skills to organize data into cohesive stories, accompanied by graphs. The students also had to adjust to working in teams, learn how to mine census data and identify and interview sources needed to put a human face on the data.

Implementation

Students formed their own teams and selected one of four topics to explore. One team per topic. The topics were:

- What does it cost to survive as a family in Oxford/Lafayette County? How many Oxford/Lafayette County families are unable to afford sufficient food, shelter, clothing and transportation for a healthy existence? What is the average family income? What is the number of families below the poverty level?

- Explore the availability and cost of healthier food items in Oxford/Lafayette County such as soy milk, organic fruit, free-range chicken, etc. Compare and contrast the cost at the two chain grocery stores in Oxford and the one health food store. Explore how vegans and those who eat only organic foods are able to secure the foods they eat.

- Identify the cost of buying a week's groceries for a family of four in Oxford/ Lafayette County and compare the sum to five years ago using old newspaper food ads. Use the Consumer Price Index to adjust the older sums for today's dollars.

- Compare the prices of 20-items in the dorm-based grocery store with the two chain grocery stores and the one locally owned stores. Identify reasons for variations in the cost.

Students were given one week to develop sources, create research rubrics and identify the documents needed to conduct the field research.

A second week was devoted to research. Initial stories were written in class and once rewrites completed the stories were submitted to the independent student newspaper for possible publication.

Impact

The students were enthusiastic about being able to practice journalism after weeks of working on canned workbook stories and AP drills. Media Writing is the first-level skills class and the curriculum mandates workbook exercises to control for accuracy. But there is some flexibility toward the second half of the semester, depending on each section and instructor interest.

In working on this project, the students were able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles of media writing, especially the concepts of accuracy, objectivity, fairness and readability in a 10-paragraph news story. The students also learned how to package data into informative graphs. The students also demonstrated the civic responsibility of the news media through critical analysis of data and by relating the results of their research to the role of the media in society.

CONTINUATION

CLEMSON & CHAPIN GIFT *from page 18*

- Service learning opportunities in the area
- How to dress for the interview
- Tips for job interviews

Impact

Students in participating courses get practical client-based experience in the production of podcasts/vodcasts. The student body in general benefits from the materials created.

CUILLIER GIFT *from page 20*

Impact

Students apply what they learn about the law and ethics of information gathering, and are challenged to think from different perspectives. The interactive role playing engages students so they remember the key principles and value the importance of freedom of information, not only for journalists but for the public.

GESKE GIFT *from page 28*

writing exams a snap and students have already "reviewed" in class if the quiz questions were discussed.

Source

DH Jonassen and L Rohrer-Murphy. (1999). "Activity theory as a framework for designing constructivist learning environments." *Educational Technology Research and Development*, Springer.

RAUCH GIFT *from page 49*

young audiences "tune out" from the news, and why this could be a problem, are some of the most lively that I've ever had in a classroom. Students show that they understand important concepts that the readings have introduced—such as imagined communities, audience fragmentation and social capital—by applying them in discourse.

The most surprising aspect of this project for me, as an instructor, is the level of enthusiasm that students bring to designing questionnaires, as they debate what current events we should expect other students to be knowledgeable about, and why young people need to know such things.

86TH ANNUAL ACP/CMA NATIONAL COLLEGE MEDIA CONVENTION

OCT. 24-28, 2007 • HILTON WASHINGTON

SPONSORED BY ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS & COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISERS WITH COLLEGE BROADCASTERS INC. cbi

ACP, CMA and CBI offer a comprehensive convention program for college and university journalists—print, online and broadcast—and their advisers from public and private, four-year and two-year colleges and universities and professional, technical and graduate schools in the United States, Canada and other countries. It is the largest convention of its kind in the world. Those who should attend include: editors, reporters, columnists, other writers, designers, artists, photographers, webmasters, broadcast news reporters, editors, producers, station managers and support staff, advisers, publishers, directors, coaches and all others who work with or are interested in learning more about student media. Both members and nonmembers of ACP, CMA, CBI and members of Community College Journalists Association, the Black College Communications Association and other student media groups are invited to attend.

For more information about the convention, download the promo at www.studentpress.org.

CCJA has more gifts for members

Members eligible for Hall of Fame, Teacher of the Year and student media contests

By Dr. Beverly S. Bailey
Tulsa Community

I look forward to this issue of *The Community College Journalist* each year, as do many of my fellow AEJMC members. The inspiration and ingenuity of each GIFT presentation renews my spirit for teaching just when I need it the most. I purchase extra copies for each of my school's adjunct faculty members and give them as "gifts" at our annual orientation mentoring session. Newer adjuncts are grateful for every idea. The magazine sets the tone for the semester with teaching methods that are innovative and effective. More seasoned adjuncts simply ask, "Where's my GIFT?" The benefits are worth every penny spent.

Heartfelt thanks go out once again to Edna Bautista, creator and director of the GIFT program, and editor of *The Journalist*. I'm also very appreciative of the GIFT's co-sponsoring divisions and interest groups, of the GIFT committee and participants, and of AEJMC's continued support of this program through the years. I appreciate everyone who purchases this publication. CCJA funds the GIFT issue's printing, as well as much of the cost of the mini-plenary. It is not a profit-making venture. Cost of the publication covers GIFT expenses. We sponsor GIFT in contribution to AEJMC and to journalism and mass communication education. We are proud of our continuing contributions to AEJMC's annual conventions.

If you are impressed with this issue, consider that CCJA members receive the GIFT issue, plus access to our other online issues of *The Journalist*, published quarterly, as a membership benefit. Membership is only $40 a year. We have many members who are not community college educators, but find the focus of CCJA sessions and publications of benefit to all mass communication educators. You'll find information on how to join CCJA in this issue, or, you can simply include CCJA membership information and dues when you renew your AEJMC membership.

This year, we are discussing the possibility of adding to our membership benefits the opportunity for community college journalism professors to receive the honor of "Community College Mass Communication Teacher of the Year." We will continue to honor long-term contributions through our Hall of Fame award.

As I've said in earlier columns, I believe community college professors are some of the most competent, yet least

appreciated members of our profession. We hold advanced degrees, including Ph.D.'s, have solid industry experience and are committed to teaching. We contribute to writing, participate in academic presentations and research and keep abreast of the latest developments in our fields. We also accomplish the somewhat unique task of teaching classes comprised of students from all walks of life, a wide range of SAT scores and varied educational experience. We are valuable, yet sometimes undervalued, members of the higher education community. It is time to recognize those whose accomplishments are so important to the future of journalism and mass communications.

We also are considering ways in which to award the accomplishments of community college mass communication students. Many CCJA-member schools participate in College Media Adviser's two-year division competition. We'd like to discuss additional ways we can award our membership schools' student work. If you have ideas for additional recognition or benefits we can provide our membership, please attend our annual business meeting, or contact me at *beverly.bailey@mail.tulsacc.edu*.

Finally, I'd like to thank CCJA's officers for their contributions this year. Thanks to Program Chair Robert Mercer for all his work on organizing our conference sessions. Thanks to Treasurer Steve Ames for organizing not only finances, but membership rosters, as well. I appreciate everyone who submitted session proposals, all our presenters and moderators. I'd like to thank AEJMC for its continued support of CCJA.

Again, I hope you enjoy and are inspired by this year's GIFT issue!

Join or renew your membership in the

Community College Journalism Association

Only $40 annual dues

Includes subscription to *The Community College Journalist* quarterly publication, which contains great teaching tips, awesome advice for college media advisers, book reviews and more!

Eligibility to win various professional and student media competitions (Hall of Fame, Teacher of the Year and student publications contests)

Opportunity to network with like-minded journalism and mass communication educators and professionals

Yes, I'd like to JOIN or RENEW my membership to

Community College Journalism Association

Please send your name, title, school or professional affiliation, mailing address, phone number and e-mail, along with $40 to Dr. Steve Ames, CCJA Executive Secretary-Treasurer at 3376 Hill Canyon Ave., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-1119. Or for more information, contact him at *docames@roadrunner.com*. Please see our Web site at *www.ccjaonline.org* or *www.geocities.com/ccjanews*.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOURNALIST