Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication
http://www.aejmc.net/spig/journal
Volume 1, Issue 1
Fall 2011

I SHOT A PRESCRIPTIVIST IN MY PAJAMAS LAST NIGHT: A GRAMMATICAL DISARMAMENT PROPOSAL FOR EDITORS AND EDUCATORS

FRED VULTEE

In an economic atmosphere in which “do more with less” means “fewer and fewer people are available, but they’ll still do more with less,” would a new look at how journalism schools teach grammar help editors—and instructors—do their jobs more effectively? This paper seeks to find out whether the profession and the academy can agree on what sorts of language “basics” new editors need to know—and, by extension, which old ones we can discard.

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper editors have traditionally prided themselves on their grammar skills, even if the definition of the “grammar” they pride themselves on has traditionally been vague. For all that lack of definition, there is little doubt about the details that constitute expertise. Whatever the editors’ relation to grammar—whether those details represent an accurate, generalizable set of observations about how a language works or a set of peeves passed down like so many secret handshakes from generation to generation—the editors’ grammar expertise is recognized and rewarded.

Educators and language scholars have long recognized that many of the secret handshakes are myths—or, at least, that they bear little resemblance to a grammar that explains how words go together to make meaning. Luminaries from the ranks of copy editing (Bernstein, 1971; Freeman, 2009; Walsh, 2000, 2004; McIntyre, 2010) have acknowledged as much. Yet editing textbooks and editing courses persist in teaching those myths, in part because of the fear of unilateral disarmament. As long as editors are still testing for the split-verb superstition, I can hardly tell my students to ignore it while the editing instructor at Big State University proclaims it as gospel—especially if word gets around that Big State “really teaches the basics.”

Neither journalists nor educators need reminding of the stark decline in newspaper employment, and senior editors acknowledge that when those cuts reach deep into the copy desk, errors follow (Alexander, 2009). Should hiring turn upward again, employers will expect a lot—“the basics” and more—of applicants, whether they are new graduates or hopeful returnees. But it is also fair to ask: Which basics?

This paper proposes that we start negotiating those basics. Journalism teachers have a great deal to teach and a limited amount of time. Editors need journalists who work efficiently—who, among other skills, can address real grammar

Keywords: editing, employment, grammar, journalism, teaching

Correspondence: Fred Vultee, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Wayne State University; email: vulteef@wayne.edu

© Fred Vultee 2011. Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

flaws (and the pragmatic, ethical, legal, and space-related concerns they imply) without wasting their bosses' time and their colleagues' patience. I am writing less as an academic than as an instructor who practiced editing for 25 years, has taught it for another 10, and knows exactly where to find the *AP Stylebook's* unfounded ban[1] on using "another" to mean "an additional": Tell us what you are willing to stop testing for, and we will start putting that time to better use.

The paper proceeds in three stages. First, it offers a working definition of grammar to help all camps understand what their putative foes are talking about. Second, it reviews grammar as described and taught in journalistic textbooks and the hiring tests that draw on and reflect those presumptions. Third, it presents results of a nonrandom survey meant to address the question above: Which features do the academy and the profession agree we can stop teaching?

To begin, it's useful to take a brief look at different ways of teaching and understanding grammar: prescriptive and descriptive.

Literature review: Whose grammar is it anyway?

The grammar that represents such a point of pride to its journalistic users is, in many respects, not "grammar" at all but a blend of mandates and assumptions about what words to use, what order to put them in, which ones to use different ones in front of, which structure to follow, and which spelling camp to adhere to. Those are the elements of a classically prescriptive approach; grammar tells writers what to do, rather than observing and describing what writers do when they set pen to paper (for concise explanations, see Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, pp. 5-11, and Radford, 1988, pp. 7-9). These are large differences in goals and purpose. Descriptive grammars might talk about what is or is not "grammatical," but the question of what is "correct" is left to prescriptivists (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Radford (1988, p. 8) likens prescriptivism to demanding that the earth orbit the moon because, well, it should: "In any other field of enquiry, it would be seen as patently absurd." More kindly, Huddleston and Pullum classify prescriptive grammars as, essentially, usage manuals: guides to matters like inflection, formality and meaning on which experts can, and often do, disagree. This approach acknowledges that a well-turned usage manual by a talented writer is a useful instrument, but it insists on distinguishing matters of aesthetic judgment or personal taste, however good either may be, from "grammar."

Grammar in the journalism classroom is nearly always prescriptive. That is not to suggest that its prescriptions are either bad or unusual, but to note that the grammar of journalism is more about preferences than about how things work. Under the "sentence problems" section of its grammar guide, one textbook (Brooks, Pinson & Sissors, 2005) defines a "run-on sentence" as "not just any long sentence, but one that rambles on forever, not knowing when to quit" (p. 134). The same section contains proscriptions against "reader stoppers," a category that emphasizes confusion created by ambiguous word order but includes several issues of elision or vocabulary, proscriptions against "suggesting false connections" by "combining unrelated ideas" (in one case, cured by placing a participial phrase between subject and predicate, rather than before the subject), and still more proscriptions against mixed metaphors. Valuable as those tips might be, and effectively as they fix the individual faults they cite, they do not address grammar.

Descriptive grammars do not contain rules against sentences that ramble on forever; their goal is to understand and describe the rules that allow a rambling sentence to proceed legitimately from one checkpoint to the next. Nor do they concern themselves with the deftness of the writing; as Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 6) point out, a sentence can string cliches together to the point of being "arrant nonsense" and remain completely grammatical. Prescriptive grammars, for their part, concentrate on a limited number of rules. They might explain why "attorney general" is an exception to the general rule about modifier-noun order, but they would not begin by noting that "the blue house" is correct and "house blue the" is not (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 6); their province is mistakes (or supposed mistakes) that people make, rather than mistakes no one makes.

---

[1] Page 17 of the 2009 edition, if you're scoring along at home.

These two broad approaches are not at odds on every point. Descriptive grammars do not generally provide pointers on graceful writing, but descriptive grammarians value clarity as much as their prescriptive counterparts. They are likely to approach the goal of "good writing" from a different starting point, as in this challenge to one of the stylistic guidelines from William Strunk and E.B. White's *The Elements of Style*:

> Look, you don't get good at writing by deleting adjectives. Writing is difficult and demanding; you can learn to get moderately good at it through decades of practice writing millions of words and critiquing what you've written or having others critique it. About 6% of those words will be adjectives, whether you write novels or news stories, whether they're good or bad. (Liberman & Pullum, 2006, p. 68)

Fans of Strunk and White might cringe at this full-on attack on "that vile little work with its absurd advice" (Liberman & Pullum, p. 69), but there is no denying its grounding in an aesthetic position.

Equally, though the two camps might disagree heartily over the source and validation of rules, they agree that rules are substantial and important. Prescriptivists might stand firm on marking restrictive relative clauses with "that," while descriptivists point to a wealth of evidence that many good writers use "which" and "that" interchangeably on restrictive clauses, but neither side is suggesting that language users cannot reliably distinguish the two clause types.

The which-hunt is a grammatical illustration of a broader phenomenon more consistently seen in spelling, typography, socially inclusive language, and other matters of style. A language can contain more than one—sometimes quite a few more than one—"correct" way of spelling words (canceled vs. cancelled), and there can be more than one choice of how to abbreviate state names or professional titles. These decisions are the ones that stylebooks need to make in order to keep news staffs from reinventing the wheel every night, but their sometimes arbitrary nature, and the ways in which they invoke authority, reflect a long tradition of pulling rules from the air or from the need to make English seem more like Latin. Editors and instructors can appreciate the need to regulate a number of usages while still wondering whether every bit of language variation needs to be brought into line.

THE SECRET HANDSHAKE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Lexicographers and linguists have made a small cottage industry of tracing the origins of mandates like the bans on split infinitives or sentence-final prepositions, whether for formal use (*Merriam-Webster's*, 2002, pp. 704-705) or informal use (Liberman & Pullum, 2006, pp. 31-33). Journalism has held up its end of the prescriptive bargain enthusiastically. Bernstein (1971, p. 195; pp. 199-207) cites such examples as William Cullen Bryant's "Index expurgatorius," which barred the verb "decrease" from the 19th-century *New York Evening Post* and James Gordon Bennett's "Don't List," made "for the guidance of reporters and copyreaders" at his *New York Herald* of about the same era. Editors who saw a March 2010 memo from the *Chicago Tribune's* chief executive seeking to bar "newsspeak" phrases like "area residents" or "at this point in time" ("Tribune's forbidden words," 2010) could be forgiven for recalling Bennett's ban on writing "fire breaks out" or on calling a theatrical performance a "show" (cited in Bernstein, 171, p. 202; p. 200).

Other journalists, though, have joined in the assault on the edifices of high prescriptivism. Walsh (2000, 2004) has tried to break prescriptions down into plausible (or implausible) components while providing his own lists of —sometimes admittedly idiosyncratic—peeves. Freeman (2009) provides an affectionate but unsparing dissection of Ambrose Bierce's century-old list of stylistic complaints that doubles as a journey of discovery into the land of peevology. Bernstein (1971) was decades ahead in this acknowledgement:

> Sometimes, however, editors issue rules for what they think are good and sufficient reasons, but the rules turn out to be personal prejudices lacking a sound basis in usage or linguistic history. I should know because I did it myself some years back. (p. 6)

For all this, the *AP Stylebook's* editors continue to address questions like "has never been proven (or is it proved?)" with answers like "proved is the verb, proven the adjective" ("Ask the Editor," 2009). The answer is not certifiably wrong—"proved" is a verb, and "proven" is an adjective—but since "proven" is a verb with as good a pedigree as "proved," it is hard to imagine why editors reject the *Merriam-Webster* usage guide's conclusion: "You can use whichever form you like" (2002, p. 627).

The world of grammar as seen through the editors' lens is less Bernstein's air of faint regret for prescriptive sins past than the *AP Stylebook's* insistence on a rule for every possible choice. One consequence is that many of the resulting prescriptions are poorly grounded; they draw their authority from authority itself. Bernstein (1971, p. 5) notes a pragmatic benefit to this approach: "It is probably more effective to tell a class never to split an infinitive than to say that sometimes it is all right to split an infinitive but normally it is not," and unsatisfying as the result is for a few, it is uncomplicated and effective for the majority.

The constructions held up as errors in textbooks—the "reader stoppers" in Brooks', Pinson's and Sissors' *The Art of Editing*, for example—are often less incorrect than they are ambiguous; not wrong but right about several things at once. And even ambiguity is less clear-cut than it seems. Zwicky (2008) cites a case of "purely structural" ambiguity exemplified by the phrase "old men and women" and its distributed ("old men and old women") or narrow ("women and old men") readings:

> "Young children and linguists" will probably get the narrow reading, even out of context (why would we treat young children and young linguists together as a set?), but the classic "old men and women" seems to get the distributed reading almost all the time.

Sometimes, constructions that are unexceptional or obvious, particularly in speech or in broadcast writing, are held to be illogical or opaque, as in the case of sentence adverbs like "hopefully"; critics "purport not to understand who is expressing the attitude, though it is perfectly plain that it is the writer or speaker" (*Merriam-Webster's* 2002, p. 667). In other cases, constructions are simply declared to have a particular contrary meaning, regardless of evidence from grammar or usage. The Missouri Group gives this illustration under "correct grammar" (Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, & Ranly, 2008, p. 183):

> *They spent the afternoon at the mall, buying more clothes than could fit in the trunk.*
>
> Because the participial phrase is misplaced, it sounds as if the mall bought the clothes. Write the sentence this way:

> *Buying more clothes than they needed, they spent the afternoon at the mall.*[2]

This rendering of the "dangling participle" rule shows up in other textbooks as well, notwithstanding the appearance of the same perfectly grammatical construction in modern English from the King James Bible through Winston Churchill to the present day. Mencher (2000, p. 195) remarks that "few journalists realize how much they owe to the King James Bible"; if puncturing a myth of grammar is one of those things, we should be grateful indeed.

This is not meant to suggest that there is no such thing as a "dangling participle," though the term more commonly refers to a participial phrase somewhere in the sentence—Shakespeare placed one midsentence in *Hamlet* (*Merriam Webster's*, 2002, p. 233)—that modifies something other than the subject (if it modifies anything at all; a standard example would be "Running down the street, his hat flew off"). But the dangling modifier also is more or less "wrong." Some cause little if any confusion; others are what Liberman and Pullum (2006, p. 184) call "discourteous," in that they cause some temporary confusion but no real damage in meaning. In rare cases, they take meaning in exactly the opposite direction from what was intended: "Without Washington's support, however, Saddam Hussein quickly crushed the rebels" (Pullum, 2005, March 1).

The Missouri rule about the placing of participial phrases is an extreme example of prescriptivism gone postal, but by relying on mandate rather than analysis, it also misses a chance to do genuine analytic good. This Associated Press sentence presents the same grammatical construction, a postposed participial phrase modifying the subject of the main clause, but it creates a real grammatical problem for a different reason: "One of the heaviest rainfalls since Haiti's Jan. 12 earthquake swamped homeless camps Friday, sweeping screaming residents into eddies of water, overflowing latrines and panicking thousands" (Melia, 2010). The issue is not what "sweeping screaming residents into ..." is modifying but whether "overflowing latrines," like "eddies of water," is an object of "into." Putting an AP sentence on the dissecting table takes work; from the instructor's perspective, it is certainly easy to see how a class in editing or news writing moves more smoothly with more declaiming and less diagramming.

Textbooks and style guides abound with similar advice meant to take gray areas out of writing. "*Over* is a spatial relation" (Friend, Challenger & McAdams, 2005, p. 447), for example, so relationships of numbers should be expressed as "more than" and "less than." Granted, the suggestion can produce nicer sentences in a number of cases, but as a description of how "over" is used in written and spoken language, it is both inadequate and wrong.

Frequently, mandates are couched—for want of evidence—in the language of clarity or precision. The Missouri Group even casts inclusive language as a matter of avoiding "imprecise" references (Brooks, Kennedy, Moen & Ranly, p. 182). Why "black," rather than "African American," is recommended as precise (or what it is "precise" compared to) is anyone's guess. To be fair, this confusion of preference with precision extends beyond the news world. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001, p. 56) bars using the subordinating conjunction "while" to mean "although," on grounds that scientific writing demands precision and "while" should be restricted to temporal uses. That ruling invests "scientific writing" with a brand of precision that scientific observation does not support.

In some cases, grammatical terms are invoked in direct contradiction to grammatical reality. The Missouri Group warns against "nouns masquerading as verbs," giving as examples "prioritize" and "maximize" (Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, & Ranly, 2008, p. 381). As masquerades go, the "-ize" ending is highly effective; the results are indistinguishable from verbs because they are verbs ("maximize" was a verb almost a century before Missouri was a journalism school). Authors and editors might dislike those formations, but they cannot simply decree that verbs are not verbs.[3]

---

[2] The suggested improvement also introduces a radical change in meaning; "more clothes than could fit in the trunk" is measurable, but "more clothes than they needed" is overtly a value judgment.

Such preferences remain aesthetic judgments rather than grammatical ones. If your Seven Deadly Sins are my silly prescriptivist whims, which "basics" should we teach?

Drawing on examples like the ones above, taken from style guides, textbooks and editing tests, this project casts that concern as one broad research question: What elements of the canon of news grammar can we agree to stop teaching—and testing for? To address that, editors, other journalists, and interested non-editors were invited to complete an online grammar survey.

METHODS: SURVEY DESIGN AND DISTRIBUTION

The survey was developed through several iterations. News texts and test items suggesting precepts or principles that are taught in textbooks or stylebooks were collected and modified. I used my website to ask editors, teachers, and other readers for their judgments on different types of questions and on what sorts of questions should and should not be included on editing tests. Survey questions were further refined based on those replies. The final version contained a set of demographic questions and 38 items covering traditional grammar points, distinctive elements of Associated Press style, and familiar prescriptive elements of word choice. Respondents were asked to rate sentences as "fine," "OK but not preferred," or "wrong."

The survey was posted at SurveyArtisan.com for three months, July 24 to October 24, 2009. Responses were solicited on the author's website (headsuptheblog.blogspot.com) and at testycopyeditors.org, a discussion board for editing issues. I also wrote to friends and former colleagues at newspapers, asking them to share the survey with colleagues. The survey received 141 responses, 139 of which were usable or partly usable. (See Appendix for questions and responses.)

RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

About half of respondents (47.5%, n = 66) described themselves as editors at print news organizations, and more than 71% (n = 99) described themselves as some kind of editor or journalist. Seventeen described themselves as educators: seven (5%) as journalism or mass communication educators and 10 (7.1%) as educators of some other kind.

Almost half the sample (46.7%, n = 64) were age 39 or younger; the largest age cohorts were 25-29 (18.2%, n = 25), 30-34 and 50-54 (13.9%, n = 19), 40-44 (13.1%, n = 18) and 45-49 (12.4%, n = 17). Of those who described themselves as print news editors, the largest cohort was 25-29 (24.2%, n = 16), followed by 30-34 and 50-54 (13.6%, n = 9) and 40-44 and 45-49 (12.1%, n = 8). Print news editors reported an average of 6.64 years (SD = 6.586) in their current job and 14.11 years (SD = 9.885) in their current profession.

Respondents were heavy users of news. Overall, about 80% reported reading the news several times a day (53.7%, n = 73) or every day (28.7%, n = 39). Among print news editors, 59.4% (n = 38) reported reading the news several times a day and 31.3% (n = 20) every day.

Among all respondents, 64% (n = 87) had achieved a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education; 15.4% (n = 21) had a master's degree and 11.8% (n = 16) a doctorate or similar terminal degree. Among print news editors, 71.9% (n = 46) had a bachelor's degree, 10.9% (n = 7) a master's and 3.1% (n = 2) a doctorate. Overall, 41.2% (n = 56) of the sample had a journalism degree of some kind. Among print news editors, 46.9% (n = 30) had a bachelor-level degree in journalism, 3.1% (n = 2) a master's in journalism and 1.6% (n = 1) both a bachelor's and a master's in journalism. Respondents generally rated their grammar skills as above average (41.4%, n = 53) or well above average (50%, n = 64); those percentages were effectively identical (41.7% and 50%) for print news editors.

---

[3] Adding "-ation" would turn the offenders back into nouns, though it seems unlikely that people who dislike "-ize" words would like "-ization" words any better.

Most of the print news editors (61.9%, n = 39) said their main job was copy editing; 14.3% (n = 9) said their main job was reading behind other copy editors' work ("slotting"), and 11.1% (n = 7) said their main job was content editing.

The largest group of print news editors worked at newspapers with circulation greater than 250,000 (24.2%, n = 15). Other circulation categories were fairly even: less than 25,000, 11.3% (7); 25,000-49,999, 14.5% (9); 50,000-99,999, 14.5% (9); 100,000-149,999, 12.9% (8); 150,000-199,999, 3.2% (2); and 200,000-249,999, 9.7% (6). Most reported that the staffs of their news organizations had gotten smaller (43.5%, n = 27) or much smaller (also 43.5%) over the past three years. Similar proportions reported that their editing staffs had gotten smaller (45.2%, n = 28) or much smaller (37.1%, n = 23). Most reported that their organizations had seen buyouts (62.9%, n = 39) or layoffs (78.7%, n = 48) in the past two years.

Because it relies on a convenience sample, the project does not draw conclusions about the general populations of editors, journalists or educators. But comparisons between groups do allow inferences about responses to grammatical stimuli. The project's purpose is to examine print editors' understanding of language rules, so most comparisons that follow were made between print news editors (n = 66) and other respondents (n =73). For cross tabulations of those groups' responses to the sample questions, see Appendix.

RESULTS: VIEWS ON GRAMMAR AND STYLE QUESTIONS

A reasonable first step is to ask whether respondents know any grammar. The short answer is "yes." More than 90% of all respondents reject a prepositional phrase that uses a subject pronoun as an object ("disagreement remained between he and the president"), and nearly 85% of all respondents reject a hypercorrect object pronoun ("whom did they think would watch the game with them?"). Nearly 90% of respondents answered "fine" or "OK" to subjunctive "were" in "if we were given another week, we could distribute more surveys." Respondents also reject parallel-structure faults ("the engine noise stopped, the plane shuddered and then simply fell out of the sky") and errors in adjective degree ("the oldest of the two"), both considered wrong by about 60%. In none of these cases are differences between print news editors and other responses significant at the p<.05 level, though they approach significance on hypercorrect "whom" (p = .11, with editors more likely to call it wrong).

Some points of grammar remain confusing. Most respondents (55.4%) saw no problem with "She is one of those people who are never too busy to help," in which the pronoun subject of the relative clause refers to a plural noun, though 36.4% called the sentence wrong. Print editors were slightly more likely to read the number agreement incorrectly than other respondents (41.4% to 31.7%), but the difference is not significant.

Respondents made clear distinctions within forms. Overall, respondents were more likely to reject "quicker" as an adverb ("produced quicker and with less effort") than "slower" ("moving slower than expected") 59.5% to 36.7%, and that difference is significant. At least one textbook (Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, 2006) gives "quick" as the adjective and "quickly" as the adverb, though the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2011) gives adverbial uses for both "quick" and "slow."

More importantly,[4] print news editors in particular readily distinguish clearer and less clear forms of the dangling participle. The survey provided three postposed participles: one clearly modifying the main-clause subject, one acting as a sort of sentence modifier, and one without a clear referent; the first received a "fine" vote from 77.8% of editors, the second from 63.8%, and the third from 31%. Those differences are significant.

---

[4] If I ever marked your quiz down because you didn't change this to "more important," I apologize.

Similarly, print editors have little trouble figuring out what restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses are trying to do, no matter how they are marked. Editors strongly rejected (74.6% "wrong") a restrictive clause using "which" alone and a restrictive clause posing as a nonrestrictive clause, marked with "which" and commas (98.2% "wrong"); they were more forgiving toward a clause that sounds supplemental but was marked as restrictive (58.6% "wrong"). Other respondents do not differ significantly from print editors on the last two points, but they are significantly more likely to approve of restrictive "which" than print editors.

Several traditional rules do poorly with both camps. Only 12.2% overall consider a sentence-final preposition simply wrong; editors are more likely to call it "not preferred" and other respondents "fine," but those differences are not significant. A split verb ("have frequently complained") fared similarly, with 65% overall considering it fine and editors slightly but not significantly less approving. Interestingly, a nonsplit verb ("the students really have put a lot of effort into their project"), found only 55.4% approving overall and almost no differences between editors and other respondents. A similar proportion, 59.8% overall, called a split infinitive "fine"; here, editors were significantly more likely to disagree.

Print editors are firm on their understanding of number agreement between nouns and pronouns. They are significantly more likely than other respondents to reject "everybody/their" and "anybody/their" combinations, though slightly but not significantly more tolerant of "everybody." A gender-specific pronoun with a singular antecedent—"A reporter tries to protect his sources," which follows AP style—was predominantly deemed fine or OK by both groups.

Many familiar dicta from the border between grammar and lexicon—the sort that journalists are likely to recall hearing over and over from their instructors or early editors—are also recognized. The passive "comprised of" is rejected by about 75% of all respondents (82.8% of print editors, though that difference, too, is not significant). Editors also seem more likely than others to have learned the sort of distinctly lexical mandates found in journalism texts but not in dictionaries. *Working with Words* (Brooks, Pinson & Wilson, 2006, p. 152), for example, distinguishes "nauseous" ("what something is if it makes your stomach turn") from "nauseated" ("how you feel when your stomach turns"). *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2011, June) says "nauseous" means both those things, with citations in each case dating to the early 17th century; *Merriam-Webster's* usage dictionary (2002, pp. 514-515) suggests that the prescription for "nauseous" dates only to the mid-20th century. Print editors were much more likely to rate "the gas fumes made her nauseous" as wrong (63.8%) than other respondents (40.3%), and this difference was significant.

Opinions are mixed on some other traditional prescriptions. Respondents overall were more likely to rate sentence-adverb "hopefully"—the usage that *Merriam-Webster's* (2002, p. 393) says has been particularly "vilified"—as "fine" (41.1%) or "OK but not preferred" (41.1%) than to reject it outright. Editors were slightly but not significantly more likely to reject it (22% wrong to 13.8%). "More importantly" as a sentence adverb—the prescriptive alternative is "more important," often explained as a truncation of "what is more important"—is deemed wrong by 29.3% of editors; 44.8% consider it fine, compared with 66.7% of other respondents. That difference is significant.

On strictly stylistic matters, print editors are pickier than other respondents. Editors are significantly more likely to reject the nonduplication of "percent" in a construction like "30 to 40 percent" (19% to 3.1%), with others overwhelmingly considering that usage to be fine. Editors strongly reject the similar but potentially more ambiguous "the new bus service will add $2 to $3 million a year to the budget," with 84% calling it wrong. Other respondents were divided, with 50% calling the usage wrong. Those differences, too, are significant. Print editors were also significantly more likely to insist on capitalizing trademarks, though 24% said "The body was found in a dumpster" was fine.

Number distinctions—"over" vs. "more than," or "fewer" vs. "less"—still create some confusion, but a few patterns emerge. "Over 100 people" has few supporters, with most responses (42.3%) in the "OK but not preferred" category; print editors were less likely to approve it, but the difference is not significant. The colloquial "just under half" was also not preferred by 43.9% of editors, but nearly a third (31.6%) deemed it fine, compared with more than half (54%) of other respondents. This difference is significant; editors like the phrase "just under" better than they like "over," but they are less willing to let go of the prescription in the latter case than other respondents. "Less than 40 percent" tests the AP style rule about "*fewer* for individual items, *less* for bulk or quantity"(Christian, Jacobsen & Minthorn, 2010, p 111); nearly half (45.8%) of all respondents thought the example sentence was fine, but more than a third (37.5%) called it wrong. Differences between editors and others were not significant.

The *AP Stylebook* (Christian, Jacobsen, & Minthorn, 2010, p. 66) follows what *Merriam-Webster's* (2010, p. 192-193) calls the "basic rule" of usage guides in distinguishing "compared to" and "compared with": the first is to assert similarity, the second, a juxtaposition "to illustrate similarities or differences." *Merriam-Webster's* finds that the rule is more firmly observed with the active, with the prepositions used interchangeably with the past participle. The test sentence on the survey was "Compared to last year, bonuses this year were small." Most print editors (55.2%) called that usage wrong, and the bulk of other respondents (40.3%) called it fine; that difference was significant.

The "like/such as" distinction produces an interesting pattern of disagreement, partly because it is fairly hard to find direct proscriptions of it in news writing guides; "like" is more often a concern as a conjunction, which this survey did not measure. Bernstein (1971, p. 164) says the "like/such as" distinction is at best "slight" and that concerns about "composers like Beethoven" are "specious." The survey sentence, "The tradition remains widespread in states like Georgia and Alabama," found equal proportions (31.1%) calling it right and wrong, with editors slightly but not significantly less favorable.

This is a quick—and admittedly nonrepresentative—look at how editors view some of the most frequently taught, shared, and prescribed mandates of their craft. Some conclusions aimed at the profession and the academy suggest themselves.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: APPLIED MARXISM

Editing is in many ways a zero-sum game. Time spent removing an adverb from between an auxiliary and a main verb and suturing the clause back together may or may not be time well spent, but it is by definition time that cannot be spent on something else. Time in the newsroom is already pressured by the decline in staff sizes reported by the overwhelming majority of respondents. Time in the classroom is under pressure too. The technological changes that have helped drive staff cuts have brought in yet another set of skills—online editing—that have to be taught somewhere. This paper's goal is to ask how and where editors and instructors can agree on which of "the basics" we need to teach and which ones we can discard.

The idea is not to throw rules overboard at random or to imagine that written language is or should be the same as spoken language—much less that language is free of rules. Rather, it is to make sure that the most relevant rules get the right emphasis and that they are explained in a structured way, rather than proclaimed as lightning bolts from on high. On the evidence presented here, editors remember rules, irrelevant ones as well as good ones. Our task is to increase good rules at the expense of bad rules. Before talking about what we should not teach, perhaps we can look for a moment at what we should teach.

"Reader blocker" is overstretched as a term to include phrases that are genuinely misleading, ambiguous, or unmistakably clear. When the term is used indiscriminately for lexical and syntactic faults, its shortcomings are even clearer. But a student who can diagram Groucho Marx's "I shot an elephant in my pajamas last night" so that the prepositional phrase modifies either the shooting or the elephant can distinguish what is "reader-blocking" about a misplaced modifier. That student is better equipped to follow broad mandates like "say what you mean" and "be precise" than students leafing through their lists of examples in search of one that corresponds to the text in front of them.

One place to start, then, is with an implicit plea from Mencher (2000, p. 176): "In our grandparents' day, students stood at the blackboard and diagrammed sentences. ... In most schools today, the only grammar students learn is taught in foreign language classes. For a journalist, this is inadequate training." Why not begin the editing semester with phrase-structure diagramming? Students who can attach phrases together to form a sentence can see antecedent faults, parallel-structure issues and ambiguities. Weeks later, when the class turns to the study of libel, a diagram can make bluntly clear which parts of a defamatory sentence are covered by privileged attribution and which are not. As a way of bringing together the parts of "grammar" that this study measures, and of paving the way for the more complicated concepts that follow, diagramming could be an important first step.

Several more specific points suggest themselves. The split-verb and split-infinitive prohibitions are irrelevant and should be discarded. They have no support in grammar or usage, and on the evidence gathered here, print editors and other respondents can make distinctions based on whether a sentence sounds good, rather than on some mystic prescription from the past. There is no standard by which editors' decisions in these cases are ungrammatical.

Conveniently, this observation requires much less than wholesale revision to texts that teach grammar. Mencher's *News Reporting and Writing* (2000, p. 739). for example, demonstrates that split verbs are awkward by providing a particularly awkward example:

> *AWKWARD: The governor said she had last year seen the document.*
>
> *BETTER: The governor said she had seen the document last year.*

That space can be put to better use illustrating cases in which modifier placement makes a sequence more or less ambiguous. *Merriam-Webster's* (2002, p. 704) provides an example from a British banking guide: "The authorities would be required correctly to anticipate their requirements for at least ten days ahead," in which either verb, "required" or "anticipate," could be the target of the adverb "correctly." If the target is "anticipate," the split infinitive is far and away the better choice; there is no ambiguity in "required to correctly anticipate." The survey suggests that editors are ready to abandon split-verb superstitions and capable of making the right decisions when they do.

Several style points suggest the importance of recasting "rules" as matters of preference or aesthetics, and these cases, too, could benefit from a grounding in descriptive grammar. Editors see that "$2 to $3 million" is potentially ambiguous in a way that "30 to 40 percent" is not. Editors should be encouraged to follow their instincts. The percent rule can go; the million rule stays.

What about "whom"? Editors are not ready to take descriptive linguists' advice and "kiss 'whom' goodbye" (Liberman & Pullum, 2006, p. 26), but they can tell a difference, at p<.001, between a hypercorrected "whom" and the idiomatically fine, if technically incorrect, "how they want health care fixed and who they want to do it." If we tell editors to do what sounds right, we are likely to get good results—certainly compared with the sort of whom-hash ("the victim, whom police said was ...") that regularly decorates the news columns.

Editors seem wary of relaxing their bans on spurious distinctions like "nauseous/nauseated." Here, negotiations might be in order. If editors will yield on that point, perhaps the descriptivists will hold back on realizing some of their best-founded points. Despite real-life evidence contradicting such mandates, editors appear ready to hold firm on the which/that distinction and on strict readings of noun-pronoun agreement. But the purpose of this paper is to propose disarmament talks, not to rewrite every textbook in the field from scratch. Some changes might well have to wait until confidence-building measures have had their effect. Both sides will have to agree on decisions that can be postponed, even as they agree on surrendering a few of their favorites.

LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This paper surveyed a nonrepresentative sample of people who are interested in editing and in talking about it. Participants were recruited at sites where editing is discussed and criticized. It might be safe to assume that they hold strong opinions about language and editing, but it is hardly safe to assume that this strength of opinion is shared among editors and readers of news—much less that this survey offers a valid representation of either editors or readers. With those cautions in mind, several conclusions about editors, their craft, and the role of editing instruction seem appropriate.

Editors remember rules, they look for rules, and they want to ensure that rules are being played by. If those traits seem annoying to writers, they are valuable, if not irreplaceable, from the other side of the desk. These results do not suggest that editors surrender their rules outright; rather, they suggest that editors be equipped differently for a different kind of war. Their intuition is better than intuition is given credit for, but their training has not kept pace with their intuition. In an argument with the star writer about what "sounds best" or "just feels right," editors are likely to lose. They need the sort of references, and the technical and persuasive skills, that will help them make a case not just for when a rule is right but for the 5, or 10, or 100, percent of the time when the canonical rule is simply wrong.

Journalism education is the right place to start providing editors with the sort of rules that match their ability to make judgments. Journalism educators could use a signal from the profession: What would you want the hiring test of the future to look like, and how can we start training students for that?

We should neither expect nor want an end to rules as an outcome of these negotiations. But it is entirely fair to expect, and want, a reduction in time-wasting rules. Time not wasted on unsplitting verbs is time that can be spent on actual editing.

REFERENCES

Alexander, A. (2009, July 5). Fewer copy editors, more errors. *The Washington Post*, p. 17A.

Ask the editor (2009, August 21). *AP stylebook online*. Retrieved August 25, 2009, from http://www.apstylebook.com/?do=view_recent_ask

Bernstein, T. (1971). *Miss Thistlebottom's hobgoblins: The careful writer's guide to the taboos, bugbears and outmoded rules of English usage*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Brooks, B.S., Kennedy, G., Moen, D.R., and Ranly, D. (The Missouri Group). (2008). *News reporting and writing* (9th ed.). Boston: Bedord/St. Martin's.

Brooks, B. S., Pinson, J. L., & Sissors, J. Z. (2005). *The art of editing in the age of convergence* (8th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brooks, B. S., Pinson, J. L., & Wilson, J. G. (2006). *Working with words* (6th ed.). Boston: Bedford St. Martin's.

Christian, D., Jacobsen, S., and Minthorn, D. (2010). *The Associated Press stylebook and briefing on media law*. New York: The Associated Press.

Freeman, J. (2009). *Ambrose Bierce's* Write it right*: The celebrated cynic's language peeves deciphered, appraised and annotated for 21st-century readers*. New York: Walker & Co.

Friend, C., Challenger, D., & McAdams, K. (2005). *Contemporary editing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Huddleston, R. & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Liberman, M. & Pullum, G. K. (2006). *Far from the madding gerund and other dispatches from Language Log*. Wilsonville, OR: William, James Co.

McIntyre, J. E. (2010, March 9). Those who can't, teach. Web log post. Retrieved from johnemcintyre.blogspot.com/2010/03/those-who-cant-teach.html

Mencher, M. (2000). *News reporting and writing.* (8th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Melia, M. (2010, March 19). Haiti's quake victims terrorized by rains. *The Detroit Free Press*, p. 2A.

Merriam-Webster's concise dictionary of English usage (2002). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Oxford English dictionary. (2011, June). Retrieved from http://www.oed.com/

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, (5th ed.) (2001). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Pullum, G. K. (2005, March 1). Without Washington's support ... who? Posted at Language Log. Retrieved from http://158.130.17.5/~myl/languagelog/archives/001938.html

Radford, A. (1988). *Transformational grammar: A first course*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tribune's forbidden words (2010, March 10). *LA Observed*. Retrieved from http://www.laobserved.com/archive/2010/03/tribunes_forbidden_words.php

Walsh, B. (2000). *Lapsing into a comma: A curmudgeon's guide to the many things that can go wrong in print—and how to avoid them*. Lincolnwood, IL: Contemporary Books.

Walsh, B. (2004). *The elephants of style: A trunkload of tips on the big issues and gray areas of contemporary American English*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Zwicky, A. (2008, April 4). Textbook ambiguities. Posted at Language Log. Retrieved from http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/005528.html

APPENDIX
ANSWERS TO SURVEY QUESTIONS

After everybody took their seats, the concert began.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	33 (26.2%)	55 (43.7%)	38 (30.2%)
Print editors	13 (21.7%)	23 (38.3%)	24 (40.0%)
Others	20 (30.3%)	32 (48.5%)	14 (21.2%)

Print editors were more likely to reject the usage, χ2 (2df) 5.315, p = .070, and the difference approaches significance at traditionally accepted levels.

Two of the bullets which struck the car were found in the upholstery.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	16 (12.8%)	36 (28.8%)	73 (58.4%)
Print editors	1 (1.7%)	14 (23.7%)	44 (74.6%)
Others	15 (22.7%)	22 (33.3%)	29 (43.8%)

Print editors were significantly more likely to reject the usage, χ2 (2df) 16.771, p <.001

If we were given another week, we could distribute more surveys.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	91 (73,4%)	20 (16.1%)	13 (10.5%)
Print editors	45 (76.3%)	10 (16.9%)	4 (6.8%)
Others	46 (70.8%)	10 (15.4%)	9 (13.8%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.648, p = .439

Hopefully, we can do well again this year.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	51 (41.1%)	51 (41.1%)	22 (17.7%)
Print editors	19 (32.2%)	27 (45.8%)	13 (22.0%)
Others	32 (49.2%)	24 (36.9%)	9 (13.8%)

Print editors were less likely to accept the usage, but the difference is not significant, χ2 (2df) 3.936, p = .140

The oldest of the two won a scholarship to Harvard.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	31 (25.2%)	19 (15.4%)	73 (59.3%)
Print editors	16 (27.1%)	7 (11.9%)	36 (61.0%)
Others	15 (23.4%)	12 (18.8%)	37 (57.8%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.160, p = .560

Survey experts estimate that 30 to 40 percent of interviews are not completed.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	83 (67.5%)	27 (22.0%)	13 (10.6%)
Print editors	32 (55.2%)	15 (25.9%)	11 (19.0%)
Others	51 (78.5%)	12 (18.5%)	2 (3.1%)

Print editors were significantly more likely to reject the usage, χ2 (2df) 10.549, p = .005

There are statues on either side of the library steps.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	41 (33.3%)	38 (30.9%)	44 (35.8%)
Print editors	19 (32.8%)	16 (27.6%)	23 (39.7%)
Others	22 (33.8%)	22 (33.8%)	21 (32.2%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .862, p = .650

The first part of the book tries to show what kind of world Osama bin Laden emerged from.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	58 (47.2%)	50 (40.7%)	15 (12.2%)
Print editors	22 (37.9%)	29 (50.0%)	7 (12.1%)
Others	36 (55.4%)	21 (32.3%)	8 (12.3%)

Print editors were less likely to accept the usage but the difference is not significant, χ2 (2df) 4.342, p = .114

The tradition remains widespread in states like Georgia and Alabama.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	38 (31.1%)	46 (37.7%)	38 (31.1%)
Print editors	16 (27.6%)	22 (37.9%)	20 (34.5%)
Others	22 (34.4%)	24 (37.5%)	18 (28.1%)

Print editors were less likely to accept the usage but the difference is not significant, χ2 (2df) 4.342, p = .114

Over 100 people were arrested after the concert.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	34 (27.6%)	52 (42.3%)	37 (30.1%)
Print editors	12 (20.7%)	27 (46.6%)	19 (32.8%)
Others	22 (33.8%)	25 (38.5%)	18 (27.7%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 2.655, p = .265

Disagreement remained between he and the president.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	5 (4.1%)	5 (4.1%)	113 (91.9%)
Print editors	3 (5.2%)	1 (1.7%)	54 (93.1%)
Others	2 (3.1%)	4 (6.2%)	59 (90.8%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.829, p = .401

Whom did they think would watch the game with them?

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	9 (7.4%)	10 (8.2%)	103 (84.4%)
Print editors	3 (5.2%)	2 (3.4%)	53 (91.4%)
Others	6 (9.4%)	8 (12.5%)	50 (78.1%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 4.403, p = .111

The army and the guerrillas have agreed in principle to a truce, officials said, capping months of indirect talks brokered by Canada.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	73 (59.3%)	30 (24.4%)	20 (16.3%)
Print editors	37 (63.8%)	11 (19.0%)	10 (17.2%)
Others	36 (55.4%)	19 (29.2%)	10 (15.4%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.754, p = .416

He said it was impossible to really understand the scale of the damage without seeing it.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	73 (59.8%)	40 (32.8%)	9 (7.4%)
Print editors	30 (52.6%)	19 (33.3%)	8 (14.0%)
Others	43 (66.2%)	21 (32.3%)	1 (1.5%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 7.367, p = .025

The family moved from Los Angeles, Calif., to New York City.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	27 (22.1%)	52 (46.2%)	43 (35.2%)
Print editors	12 (20.7%)	25 (43.1%)	21 (36.2%)
Others	15 (23.4%)	27 (42.2%)	22 (34.4%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .139, p = .933

He resigned as chairman, but will continue to draw his salary through May.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	42 (35.3%)	33 (27.7%)	44 (37.0%)
Print editors	21 (37.5%)	15 (26.8%)	20 (35.7%)
Others	21 (33.3%)	18 (28.6%)	24 (38.1%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .225, p = .893

Lawyers have frequently complained about the atmosphere in the courtroom.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	78 (65.0%)	22 (18.3%)	20 (16.7%)
Print editors	33 (57.9%)	12 (21.1%)	12 (21.1%)
Others	45 (71.4%)	10 (15.9%)	8 (12.7%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 2.534, p = .282

The survey found that Americans are divided over how they want health care fixed and who they trust to do it.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	28 (23.3%)	27 (22.5%)	65 (54.2%)
Print editors	11 (19.0%)	12 (20.7%)	35 (60.3%)
Others	17 (27.4%)	15 (24.2%)	30 (48.4%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.872, p = .392

In all, the new bus service will add $2 to $3 million a year to the budget.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	14 (11.7%)	26 (21.7%)	80 (66.7%)
Print editors	3 (5.2%)	6 (10.3%)	49 (84.5%)
Others	11 (17.7%)	20 (32.3%)	31 (50.0%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 16.044, p < .001

The company was searching for designs that could be produced quicker and with less effort.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	24 (19.8%)	25 (20.7%)	72 (59.5%)
Print editors	13 (22.4%)	10 (17.2%)	35 (60.3%)
Others	11 (17.5%)	15 (23.8%)	37 (58.7%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.017, p = .601

The class is comprised of juniors and seniors.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	18 (14.9%)	11 (9.1%)	92 (76.0%)
Print editors	5 (8.6%)	5 (8.6%)	48 (82.8%)
Others	13 (20.6%)	6 (9.5%)	44 (69.8%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 3.620, p = .164

More importantly, the program is expected to have an immediate effect on college costs.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	68 (56.2%)	28 (23.1%)	25 (20.7%)
Print editors	26 (44.8%)	15 (25.9%)	17 (29.3%)
Others	42 (66.7%)	13 (20.6%)	8 (12.7%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 6.953, p = .031

Witnesses said the engine noise stopped, the plane shuddered and then simply fell out of the sky.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	15 (12.6%)	29 (24.4%)	75 (63.0%)
Print editors	6 (10.7%)	14 (25.0%)	36 (64.3%)
Others	9 (14.3%)	15 (23.8%)	39 (61.9%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .344, p = .842

A cold front is moving slower than expected, and that is good news for tailgaters.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	45 (37.5%)	31 (25.8%)	44 (36.7%)
Print editors	20 (34.5%)	14 (24.1%)	24 (41.4%)
Others	25 (40.3%)	17 (27.4%)	20 (32.2%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.077, p = .584

She is one of those people who are never too busy to help.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	67 (55.4%)	10 (8.3%)	44 (36.4%)
Print editors	31 (53.4%)	3 (5.2%)	24 (41.4%)
Others	36 (57.1%)	7 (11.1%)	20 (31.7%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 2.134, p = .344

Tax bills reflecting the increase will be mailed at a later date.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	68 (56.7%)	49 (40.8%)	3 (2.5%)
Print editors	27 (47.4%)	29 (50.9%)	1 (1.8%)
Others	41 (65.1%)	20 (31.7%)	2 (3.2%)

Print editors were less likely to accept the usage but the difference is not significant, χ2 (2df) 4.580, p = .101

The gas fumes made her nauseous.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	25 (20.8%)	33 (27.5%)	62 (51.7%)
Print editors	11 (19.0%)	10 (17.2%)	37 (63.8%)
Others	14 (22.6%)	23 (37.1%)	25 (40.3%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 7.679, p = .022

Did anybody leave their notebook in the conference room?

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	29 (24.0%)	43 (35.5%)	49 (40.5%)
Print editors	9 (15.5%)	18 (31.0%)	31 (53.4%)
Others	20 (31.7%)	25 (37.9%)	18 (28.6%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 8.569, p = .014

The tornado struck late Wednesday, killing two people.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	92 (76.0%)	24 (19.8%)	5 (4.1%)
Print editors	45 (77.8%)	9 (15.5%)	4 (6.9%)
Others	47 (74.6%)	15 (23.8%)	1 (1.6%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 3.142, p = .208

Applications, which have not been received by May 1, will not be considered.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	118 (98.3%)
Print editors	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	56 (98.2%)
Others	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.6%)	62 (98.4%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 2.010, p = .366

A reporter tries to protect his sources.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	55 (45.5%)	51 (42.1%)	15 (12.4%)
Print editors	28 (48.3%)	25 (43.1%)	5 (8.6%)
Others	27 (42.9%)	26 (41.3%)	10 (15.9%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 1.500, p = .472

The county is home to the famed Pinehurst resort that regularly hosts the U.S. Open.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	30 (24.8%)	25 (20.7%)	66 (54.5%)
Print editors	13 (22.4%)	11 (19.0%)	34 (58.6%)
Others	17 (27.0%)	14 (22.2%)	32 (50.8%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .749, p = .688

It was the first attack since Gen. David Petraeus took over as head of Central Command, giving him overall command of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	29 (24%)	36 (29.8%)	56 (46.3%)
Print editors	18 (31%)	18 (31%)	22 (37.9%)
Others	11 (17.5%)	18 (28.6%)	34 (54%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) 4.061, p = .131

Less than 40 percent of the surveys were returned.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	55 (45.8%)	20 (16.7%)	45 (37.5%)
Print editors	27 (46.6%)	11 (19.0%)	20 (34.5%)
Others	28 (45.2%)	9 (14.5%)	25 (40.3%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .641, p = .726

The body was found in a dumpster behind the store.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	50 (41.7%)	19 (15.8%)	51 (42.5%)
Print editors	14 (24.1%)	13 (22.4%)	31 (53.4%)
Others	36 (58.1%)	6 (9.7%)	20 (32.3%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 14.514, p = .001

Just under halfofthe applicants completed the test.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	52 (43.3%)	45 (37.5%)	32 (19.2%)
Print editors	18 (31.6%)	25 (43.9%)	14 (24.6%)
Others	34 (54.0%)	20 (31.7%)	9 (14.3%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 6.281, p = .043

The students really have put a lot ofeffort into their project.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	67 (55.4%)	39 (32.2%)	15 (12.4%)
Print editors	32 (55.2%)	18 (31.0%)	8 (13.8%)
Others	35 (55.6%)	21 (33.3%)	7 (11.1%)

No significant difference between print editors and others, χ2 (2df) .226, p = .893

Compared to last year, bonuses this year were small.

	Fine	OK/ not preferred	Wrong
All respondents	35 (29.2%)	34 (28.3%)	51 (42.5%)
Print editors	10 (17.2%)	16 (27.6%)	32 (55.2%)
Others	25 (40.3%)	18 (29%)	19 (30.6%)

Print editors were significantly less likely to accept the usage, χ2 (2df) 9.737, p = .008