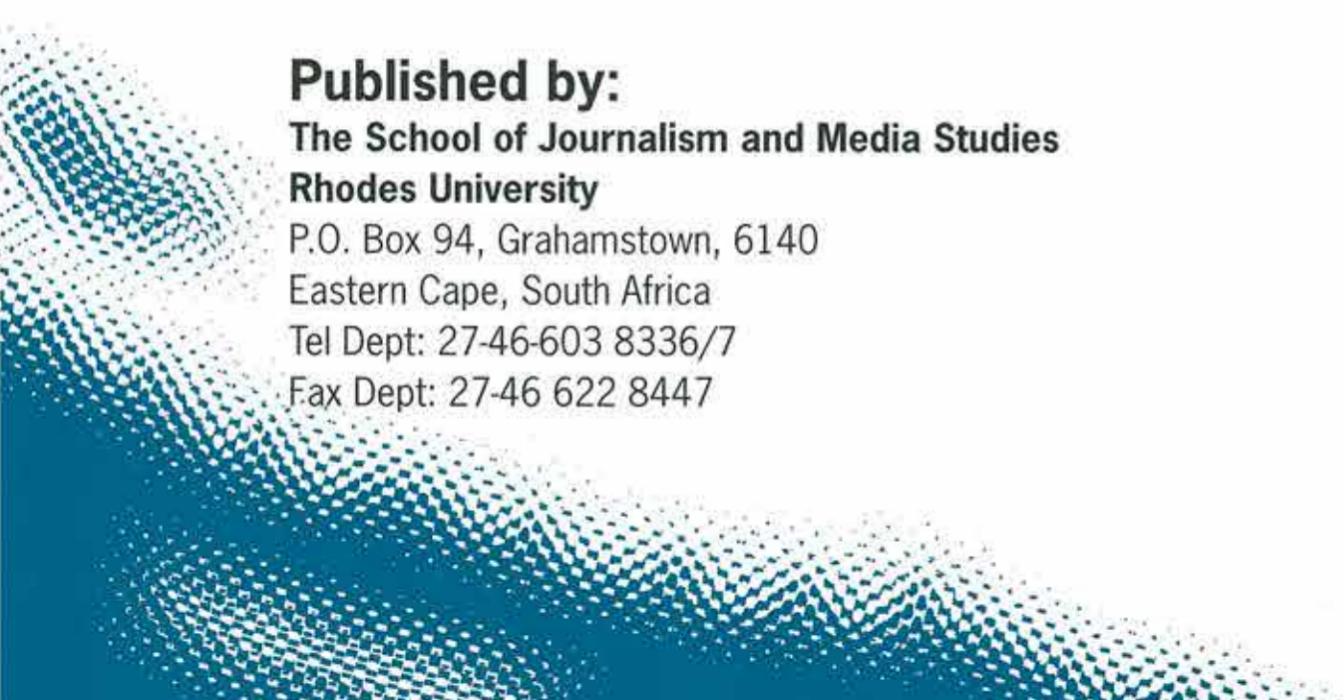


Teaching South African journalists

1994 – 2014



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ten years back

Marking the 10th anniversary of South African democracy, the Ford Foundation gave support to two meetings of journalism educators to reflect on their specific trajectory. Rhodes' track record in launching this initiative included:

- 1997: "Learning about the learning sector". Conference with the SA National Editors Forum – Sanef.
- 1998: Workshop to launch the "Print Educational Association of South Africa" and the "Broadcast Educators and Trainers Association".
- 2001: "Training for media transformation and democracy", colloquium by Chair of Media Transformation at Rhodes and Sanef.
- 2001: "Cooking up a community of media trainers". Founding conference of Southern African Media Trainers Association (Samtran).

These events have helped to build a loose community of media teachers in South and Southern Africa. They also linked participants in Sanef, the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and the Media, Advertising, Printing, Publishing and Packaging Sector Education and Training Authority (MAPPP-SETA).

At the time of the Ford-funded colloquia, the media industry was characterised by:

- A continuing challenge of demographic transformation.
- A trend towards trivia and tripe, rather than stories giving a sense of the real changes in the country.
- Ethical scandals.
- Democratic role reduced to being an either/or choice between being an independent voice or supporting governmental reconstruction.
- Developmental role in regard to HIV-Aids, housing, joblessness and poverty under-explored.
- Media diversity and indigenous language provision limited.

As always, the teaching of journalism remained caught between the demands of the industry for ready-made cogs to fit into the existing system (despite its problems), and the need to reinvent much of the craft in the interests of effective impact.

The context was also one in which many journalism teachers were stretched in terms of resources and workloads, and most remained white and/or unable to speak an indigenous African language.

The Sanef Stellenbosch conference on training (2002) had identified enormous problems among junior reporters in the newsrooms. That event put the focus strongly on the question of the how of training journalists. With the Ford colloquia, it was also necessary to widen focus and also ask 'why' questions – journalism education to what end?

In terms of this broad background, the colloquia attempted to unpack the multifaceted features of where South Africa's journalism teachers had "washed up" after ten years of democracy. Helping to address this subject were industry people such as Joe Thlolo (then etv), Tobie Wiese (Media24) Paddi Clay (Johncom), Liz Barratt (Independent), and Margie Masipa (MAPPP-SETA).

FIRST COLLOQUIUM (17 TO 19 OCTOBER 2004)

Some 30 people attended the colloquium, convened by Rhodes lecturer Carol Christie, representing 11 tertiary facilities that teach journalism to students. They responded to the following questions:

- "What have been the challenges in journalism education that you have faced within the last ten years? What challenges do you foresee in the future?"
- "What do you believe is the value, for journalists, of a tertiary qualification in journalism?"

THE RESPONSES HAD A GREAT DEAL IN COMMON:

- Under-preparedness of students: poor secondary schooling, lack of literacy, innumeracy, lack of knowledge of, and concern for, social context and the significance of South Africa being in Africa.
- An apparent student culture of entitlement, aspiration and consumerism that relates to the commodification of culture and education, with journalism seen as a job rather than a passion.
- The relationship between tertiary education and the person-power needs of the media industry: Should the academy measure itself in terms of workplace criteria; Can the large number of graduates be absorbed by the industry?
- What makes a "good journalist" – and who defines this? What is journalism and its role in contemporary society?
- Changes in media consumption: 'dumbing down' and 'tabloidisation'. Audience tastes are changing, and journalists need to learn different kinds of journalism.

SECOND COLLOQUIUM (10 TO 11 JUNE 2005)

Rhodes lecturer Eitan Prince convened this event, which also included non-journalism university colleagues in order to view journalism teaching within the broader humanities.

Attendees included 21 representatives from the 10 South African tertiary institutions, including two who had not had sent people to the first colloquium. Five teachers from other journalism schools in Southern Africa were able to observe, thanks to support from Dutch funder, NiZa.

PRESENTERS RESPONDED TO THESE QUESTIONS:

- Why do we teach journalism? (The place of journalism, which is generally not considered an academic discipline, at a university should not be taken for granted; the complexities of journalism's position in academia impact on the curriculum.)
- How do we teach journalism? (The pedagogical and curricular practices within South Africa's journalism schools, including developing graduates who are critically minded and sensitive to socio-historical contexts.)

A total of 16 papers were presented, revealing:

- Trends in South African universities that complicate the implementation of Higher Education policy.
- The commodification of university education and university degrees.
- Journalism teaching understood as a social intervention in which social conscience and professional practice is integrated.
- The importance of industry exposure in journalism curricula, and using authentic environments (e.g. campus or community media) as teaching vehicles.
- Redefining values (e.g. Afro-humanist approaches) in curricula – and redefining South African journalism.
- Understanding journalists not as professionals but as members of an interpretive community.
- Redressing race and encouraging critically minded, self-reflexive meaning makers.

Many of the papers were chosen for an accredited journal, *Ecquid Novi*.

OUTCOMES AND THE FUTURE:

The outcomes of the two colloquia were broadly to:

- Foster timely dialogue among teachers, and between them and industry, at a significant moment in South African history;
- Renew and deepen the community of journalism educators at tertiary level.

Rhodes has asked Ford to support a third colloquium, which could cover:

- How university students acquire the abilities that are required of them to become journalists.
- Identifying areas of post-graduate excellence of each institution, joint courses, supervision and external examining.
- Blurred boundaries between information and entertainment, and tabloid media. This covers production, content, forms of address, audiences, and implications for identity and citizenship.

Talkshops? No. The colloquia show that South African journalism educators take their jobs seriously.

ten years forward

Taking stock of ten years of media training and education at tertiary institutions:

Addressing an agenda for the next decade

Colloquium 1



As I recall, the clarion call of media activists was that the role of their media was to mobilise, organise, and educate.

Media education in South Africa?

Context, context, context

“As journalism educators, we should reflect upon the extent to which the curriculum is a product of [such] larger social and political conditions.” (Skinner, Gasher, Compton 2001: 357)

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps my title needs some explanation! In thinking about this presentation, my thoughts turned to the increased commodification of education in the 1990s. The consumer metaphor is most commonly applied: we are service providers; we have to give our clients what they want; provide value for money etc. My thoughts turned to shopping for houses, where the watchwords are: location, location, location.

That, I felt, was equally important in our quest for journalism education – past, present and future. Location. We need to locate our practice. So for us, context is all. Context. Context. Context.

My focus in this paper is on two contexts: first, the 1980s and this department – which is my geographical and historical context; and second, the two most recent colloquia on media education, which form part of the context for this colloquia. I end by offering some pointers for considering our future context for our deliberations about journalism education.

CONTEXT 1: PRE-HISTORY

I joined the Department of Journalism and Media Studies in 1985. The mid-80s are significant in South Africa's history. It was a time of renewed political activity against the apartheid state. The major 'liberation organisations' (ANC, PAC) had been banned in the 1960s. The 1970s were dominated by a new kind of politics, articulated by the Black Consciousness Movement, which focused on the importance of culture and identity in promoting social change. The 1980s was the decade of renewed mass mobilization and mass struggle. The United Democratic Front (UDF) and National Forum (NF) were formed (in 1983); 'civics' was a key word of the times, used to describe a new form of political organisation; COSATU was formed – and with them, there was renewed media activity. Most significant was the development of what was known as the 'alternative press' (*New Nation*, *Grass Roots*, *Saamstaan*, the *M&G* etc.) (Louw & Tomaselli 1991).

As I recall, the clarion call of media activists was that the role of their media was to mobilise, organise, and educate. In the field of visual media, new production organisations such as CVRA (Community Video Resource Association) (later to become CVET (Community Video Education Trust)), Dynamic Images, Free Filmmakers, Centre for Direct Cinema were formed, some of whose members organised politically under the banner of the Film and Allied Workers Association (FAWO) (Steenveld 1990). In the field of education, educators and students were also active. The 1976 Soweto Students Uprising had placed educational struggles on the map. Just as 'alternative media' was the response of media activists, so education activists designed alternative education programmes as a response to the state education system which was seen as one of the 'ideological state apparatuses' (Kallaway 1984, Muller). Within the bastions of the

liberal establishment – the English language universities such as UCT, Wits, Natal University, Rhodes, there was also ferment. The 1970s had been a time of renewed Marxist theorising in Europe, with the publication in English of both Althusser's work and Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* (1978). In South Africa, this work was taken up by social and political theorists, and used in the analysis of the South African situation.

In the Rhodes Dept. of Journalism & Media Studies these understandings were applied to the media. A staff reading group was formed to make sense of 'cultural studies' – a new approach to media theory articulated by Stuart Hall (of the Birmingham University's – Contemporary Cultural Studies Unit) – with its initial emphasis on Althusser and Gramsci and the ideological and cultural role of the media. These approaches were applied to the study of the media in South Africa, and their role in the constitution and consolidation of the apartheid state.

Politically engaged members of staff, most of whom taught from within a Marxist or neo-Marxist framework posed two questions:

1. what was/is the role of the media in helping to sustain the apartheid state, and
2. how can we use media for our own political purposes, namely to challenge apartheid.

The first question necessitated looking at the history of the South African media (press, broadcasting and film) in relation to the state. In particular the question begged further questions about the ownership of the media, whose interests they served, and how they served those interests in the kinds of texts they produced. Along with this examination of the media, was a rejection of both the existing institutions and the kinds of texts that they produced. The second question led to a quest for alternatives. One approach was to look to societies similar to South Africa. The first port of call was to look to the 'third world' – the world that had been colonised as we had, and had engaged, and was engaging, in anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles such as we were. Armand Mattelart & Seth Siegelau's *Communication and Class Struggle* Vol. 1 and 2 became key resources. Volume 1 (Capitalism, Imperialism) offered an analysis of the role of the media in capitalist countries. Volume 2, subtitled *Liberation, Socialism*, looked at the ways people in different countries, at different historical moments and contexts, had used media in their struggles.

What did this mean for media educator/activists? First, we had identified a theory of media, which looked at the relationship between media texts, the institutions that produced them,

and the apartheid state. And second, having made this connection, and because we rejected the apartheid state, on the basis of both its racism and its capitalist foundations, we necessarily rejected the media texts and the institutions that produced them. Politically and pedagogically this left us with no option but to look for, and teach, alternative ways of producing texts which could be used by different kinds of institutions. Thus what we taught as 'media practice' were not the conventions and norms of the industry which we had rejected, but 'other ways' of doing things (see Tomaselli 1991: 169). In other words, 'form' was not reified, but was linked to considerations about the context of production, the audience for whom, and the purposes for which, the media were being made. Key debates for those who taught television/video theory and production were about 'realism' – how the impression of 'reality' was created in particular kinds of texts. This posed questions in particular for news and documentary production, which was popularly (and within liberal pluralist theory) believed to 'mirror' reality, are often read, not as representa-

tions or interpretations, but as 'the real'. In support of this, semiotics was taught as a means of analysing texts. Questions about the text and form also raised issues of purpose and technology. Raymond Williams's (1974) book, *Television. Technology and Cultural Form* was a key reading. Nothing was 'given'; everything was questioned. Experimentation was not only possible, but deemed necessary.

Given the times we lived in, and our anti-capitalist and anti-apartheid political position, it was easy to make connections between media texts (forms), media institutions, and the politics of the state that they were part of. This was our 'common sense' position. This was the 'only' position from which we could teach, and drawing these connections, it 'made sense' to our students. We had, for the most part, an 'integrated curriculum': the theoretical courses we taught were used to make sense of the media's role in the apartheid state and to give insights into producing different kinds of media that could be used by people in their opposition to the state. Of course this (theoretical) approach was applied unevenly. It informed the teaching of the visual media – super 8 film and video production – but not all the print production courses. The aims of video, super-8 film and the third year media theory course, for example, were, to quote Keyan Tomaselli and Graham Hayman:

"To decolonise our curricula, to deconstruct what we take for granted, to question previous unquestioned practices, to rethink conventional wisdom and, most important, to understand how educational and productive structures have conformed behaviour, expectations and goals in terms of the exclusive needs of capital." (From *Orality to Visuality in Perspectives on the Teaching of Film and Television Production*. n.d. p83).

Comparing their approach to teaching video production with that of Pretoria Technikon, they noted the key elements of the Pretorial Technikon approach that was different from theirs:

1. the function of tertiary education in capitalist society;
2. a perceived overconcern with technical expertise in
3. isolation from the relationships which pertain between technique, technology, content and structure; and
4. how these are permeated by ideology (First National Student Film and Video Festival: Two Views – View Two: Conflicting Paradigms and Ideologies. *Critical Arts* 2.2 p81).

This is an extract.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

**Politically and pedagogically
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but to look for, and teach,
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producing texts...**



We need to find a way to encourage our young people to read and, in that way, help to develop their writing ability.

Is tertiary education relevant to journalists?

This paper discusses the relevance of tertiary education to journalists. The challenges discussed include the need to develop a reading and writing culture in this country, students' lack of time management, and the need for technikons to have larger budgets for technology. The paper ends by asking first, how do educators develop a political consciousness in students; and second, is it possible that too many journalism students are being produced every year, to the detriment of the media industry?

There is a famous saying by Gary Player: "The more I practise, the luckier I get." Player was of course talking about golf, but he could just as well have been talking about journalism.

Journalism, and journalism education in particular, is, I believe, all about practice, practice and more practice. You more you practise the better you will inevitably become.

I am speaking as someone who is very new to academia, but who has something like 25 years of practical experience in the media. And in those 25 years, I spent a lot of my time nurturing and training young journalists coming into the profession.

I have also, in the time when I was editor of the *Cape Times* and even when I worked at papers such as *South* newspaper in the mid-1980s, had a close relationship with Peninsula Technikon and used several Pentech students as interns and eventually employed them to the fulltime staffs of both *South* and the *Cape Times*.

I also spent a year and a half at Rhodes University many, many years ago, working towards a degree in journalism. Leaving Rhodes without completing my degree on the one hand allowed me to enter the real world of journalism sooner and enabled me to make a reasonably successful career in the industry. On the other hand, it was one of the worst decisions I've made, because ultimately the lack of a piece of paper comes back to haunt you every day.

THAT PIECE OF PAPER

I mention this because one of the questions that you are trying to answer here is: "What do you believe is the value, for journalists, of a tertiary qualification in journalism?"

I believe that in the world today it is important to get a piece of paper, not necessarily as a sign that you are a qualified journalist, if there is such a thing, but also as something that could be used as a springboard to further your education along the line.

The debate should be about whether this qualification should necessarily be in journalism.

Many of the most prominent journalists in South Africa today have not had the benefit of a tertiary education. But these are the exceptions to the rule, and journalists need to have some form of tertiary qualification. It makes sense, for instance, for a science writer (something we have very little of in this country), to have a degree in science or even for a business writer to have a degree in business. In my dealings with students over the past nine or ten months, I

have seen the need for students, especially, to be taught the art of writing.

Yes, they need the theoretical stuff too. They need to understand a bit about theories of communication, political science and social sciences; they need to understand media law and contemporary history. They need to understand media ethics. But mainly, they need to understand how to write. And the best way to teach students to write is to do it the practical way. They need to write for student or community newspapers and/or for websites.

If their interest is radio or television, then they need to get practical experience in these areas, either by working at student or community radio stations, or by being involved in producing television documentaries. But writing remains the key to everything in journalism. If you cannot write, you are likely to fail as a journalist.

There are some exceptions. For instance, I believe that one of the best journalists in South Africa is Benny Gool, who has hardly ever written a word in his life. However, it is not Benny's ability with the camera, but his ability to spot a good news story that sets him apart from ordinary photographers and makes him a bloody good journalist. But again, this is the exception to the rule.

LACK OF WRITING SKILLS

One of my frustrations over the years with journalism students who came to do their inservice at papers where I worked was their inability to write. And before you jump to conclusions and think that I am only talking about black students here and want to blame apartheid and gutter education, halt. I have seen this phenomenon also with white students who come from Rhodes University and other former white universities. This inability to write could be linked to a lack of a reading culture among young people, including young people who are studying journalism.

This, in my opinion, is one of the biggest challenges for journalism educators going into the next decade of our democracy. We need to find a way to encourage our young people to read and, in that way, help to develop their writing ability.

At campuses such as Pentech, where 99 per cent of our students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, secondary education or the lack thereof does play a role. There is also the problem of teaching predominantly second-language English speakers exclusively in English, but that is almost a necessary evil in South Africa today. If English is effectively becoming the lingua franca in South Africa today, then we need to educate our young journalists to communicate in this language. This is, of course, important for the transformation of an industry that was essentially a white industry not too long ago.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

One of the other things that have struck me about journalism students is their lack of time management abilities. Students always complain about not having enough time to do their assignments and always want to have extensions. This lack of time management ability indicates to me a need for prop-

er time management training as part of journalism courses.

There are other challenges faced, particularly by the still-disadvantaged technikons or universities or technology, as they are all soon going to be called. One of these, ironically, relates to the lack of access to technology. For instance, at Pentech, most of our students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and many of them have never been exposed to basic tools such as a personal computer. So we end up having to teach an introductory course to computers at the beginning of our first year.

The other problem related to technology is that it will always be difficult for disadvantaged technikons to keep up with technology. Keeping up with the changes in technology will only be possible if there are significant investments in the technikons.

ATTITUDES AND STUDENT NUMBERS

Let me make two more points in conclusion.

The first point relates to the mindset of the new breed of journalists that we are training. How does one develop a political consciousness among student journalists, a consciousness which, I believe, is necessary if they are to become critical, independent-minded thinkers? Journalism is about having the skills necessary to practise your profession. But journalism is also about attitude and mindset. Having the right mindset means that you will always be able to ask the right questions. Is this something that can be taught or developed in journalism students? This is, I believe, probably the most fundamental question facing journalism educators in the next decade.

My final point is a question to which I don't expect an honest answer at this colloquium. The question is: Are we training too many journalism students collectively at all our institutions? I have not done the research, but I suspect that between all our institutions we are probably putting a few hundred new journalists into industry every year. I am not even including the so-called journalists who are produced every year by private colleges. Can industry absorb all these young people, or are we creating a situation where, more and more, out of desperation to gain experience and to earn some money, young journalists are forced to work for almost nothing?

This, of course, has a ripple effect on the entire media industry. The more we send young journalists into industry without much hope of work, the more it means that the media owners can have cheap labour. This in turn could mean getting rid of people with experience who are obviously much more expensive than a desperate rookie.

Of course, there is a demand for journalism education. Once again this year, we have something like 400 applications for only 40 first-year places. But whose interests are we serving by accepting so many students? Are we serving the interests of industry or are we merely serving the narrow interests of our technikons, universities or universities of technology? This is something for us all to think about.



The generally low level of basic skills (especially in writing and reading) remains a challenge right through our teaching.

The 'demands of industry'

In our department, we deal with these challenges at different points; for example, in the recruitment and selection of students, as well as in the process of working with the students who are within our walls.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING STUDENTS

Many of those people who apply (and are accepted) to study in our department do not meet the requirements that we, as educators, look for in students that we would like to prioritise in our teaching.

- The large majority of applicants are white, urban and middle class, and few are from the Eastern Cape.
- Most students arrive on our doorstep, understandably, because tertiary education is viewed as a ticket to a job. By the time they reach us they already have a strong investment in the notion that we are there only to make them "industry ready".
- Many students enrol in our courses not because of any desire to become journalists, but rather because we are seen as a gateway to other kinds of media production: marketing, advertising, public relations.
- Many students have poorly developed writing and reading skills. From year to year, we try to address these difficulties, such as through our marketing strategies and through the development of bursary programmes, but the problem remains extreme.

ENGAGING WITH OUR STUDENTS

Partly because of the above, but also because of other factors, the process of working with students is a complex one:

- The generally low level of basic skills (especially in writing and reading) remains a challenge right through our teaching, from the first year to postgraduate courses. We end up having to balance the need to address this problem with other equally important aspects of students' education, and find ourselves running out of time and capacity.
- The unevenness in skill makes it very difficult to set coherent standards in our teaching, because different students have such different needs.
- The lack of interest in journalism as a career among many of the students who enter our doors includes a very passive attitude to the consumption of journalism. Because students do not read/view/listen to journalism as a daily

The challenges begin at the point of recruitment, where many students expect that the job of a journalism and media studies department is to prepare them for industry. Aside from the complexities and pressures involved in teaching journalism, the notion of "the demands of industry" is a problematic one. Educational institutions should not be held solely responsible for the education of journalists.

habit, their understanding of both news content and journalistic format is very underdeveloped. When demands are made on students to monitor the media as part of their coursework, this is often seen as one more arduous task rather than something they do anyway, as part of their daily lives.

- Many students enter our department with a very strong resistance to values such as responsibility to community, to development, to the empowerment of others, etc. This becomes an extension of the belief that they have paid to be here and, as educators, our only responsibility is to provide them with a ticket for a job.
- Because students' expectations and motivations for being with us do not always match our own aims as educators, the decisions we make about our teaching are constantly interrogated from within our walls. It is often difficult to know when we should compromise our principles to meet the requirements of such students, and when we should hold firmly to our beliefs.
- At the same time, my experience had been that, when we do challenge students, by offering them new ways of thinking about what they are doing in our department, they respond very positively.
- Despite (and in some ways because of) the lack of diversity mentioned above, the differences between students still run deep, and tend to polarise the classroom. Many of my colleagues comment, for example, that white students are very quick to speak up and define the terms of a discussion, while black students tend to retreat and communicate individually with their teachers. This complicates the task of engaging with students as a group, and encouraging them to develop their identities as students of journalism.

It seems to me that the way we address these challenges in the next ten years is necessarily de-

fined by our approach to two stakeholders within South African journalism education: tertiary education, and journalism itself as a profession.

THE "REQUIREMENTS OF INDUSTRY"

Often, within debates about journalism education in our department, references are made to the need to respond to the "requirements of industry". This is seldom accompanied by a detailed exploration of what such requirements might be, or even more importantly, who is making such demands. Reference to "industry" tends to operate, rather, as a card that is played internally amongst educators to legitimise decisions that they make about their curricula. Furthermore, this reference often has the status of a kind of "bogeyman" – implying that, if we don't wake up and face the realities of survival in the marketplace, our teaching will become irrelevant.

Although the importance of such relevance cannot be denied, it remains problematic to invoke this principle by describing journalism as if it is a cohesive 'industry', and to speak of its requirements as if they are self-evident. The practices of journalism are diverse, and constantly changing. These differences have important social implications – and this is particularly important to remember in South Africa today, where many practitioners within journalism itself are grappling with the need for transformation. Because of this, in developing our graduates, we cannot simply reproduce a set of skills and knowledge about journalism that we assume is "demanded" by a supposedly cohesive marketplace.

THE ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

There can be no doubt that we need to continue to take seriously the responsibility of tertiary institutions to contribute to the transformation of South African society. This has to inform the way we teach journalism. Of course our teaching has to produce graduates with a thorough grounding in the conventions and skills of journalism, but they

should also be taught to interrogate, evaluate, and re-invent such journalism, and to contribute to public debate about the way in which journalism impacts on the way we, as South Africans, wish to live our lives. To claim the right to teach in this way is not easy. As tertiary institutions we survive financially under difficult economic conditions, and there is pressure from many sides to make compromises. As I will show below, these pressures have powerful implications for the way in which we, at Rhodes University, negotiate the role we play as journalism educators.

THE ROLE WE PLAY AS A TERTIARY INSTITUTION

It seems to me that it is a fallacy to assume that educational institutions are solely responsible for the education of journalists, who are then offered to media organisations so that they can get on with the "practice" of journalism. Any journalism graduate, no matter how well trained, is necessarily only at the beginning of a process of development that has to be taken further within the work place. One cannot expect graduates to be fully skilled when they begin to work. Their development as journalists needs to be seen as ongoing, launched in institutions such as our department, but continued within media organisations. The "good journalist" only emerges over time, after much work experience and maturation.

The question, then, is: what stage of the development of such a journalist should an educational institution take responsibility for? One could argue, given what has been pointed out so far, that it is more important for a department such as ours to develop graduates' ability to reflect, to teach them about the history of media, to raise their awareness of social context, etc. The 'harder' skills that they need as journalists need only be a small part of what they do and can then be fully developed within media organisations.

My own answer is that this would be a mistake. Exposure to practical and theoretical knowledge needs to go hand in hand, in order to inform each other. The same is true for the continuation of journalists' development within the work place; here, too, there is a need to combine exposure to practical experience with reflection, theory and debate. One of the central challenges of teaching therefore remains: where does our work as educators begin and end?

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

The crisis in journalism needs to be addressed at grassroots level, in the classroom where young journalists are moulded, but journalism education should not stop with undergraduate study. Ongoing training is vital to ensure that those working in the field grow and develop. The question becomes: what should we be teaching them?

THEORY AND PRACTICE

The fact that journalism education in South Africa needs to change (and is, in many cases, already changing) is clear in the context of the overall changing higher education framework in which we find ourselves. The traditional divide between the "theory pushers" and the "vocational trainers", often exemplified in the difference between university and technikon courses, has become increasingly blurred.

Within the context of education policies that signal a shift "from the academic to the applied knowledge domain" (Jordaan 2004), journalism educators at tertiary institutions need to critically evaluate both the "what" and the "how" of their teaching.

The infamous Sanef skills audit report reveals that journalists in the field are falling short in eleven critical areas, namely:

- Poor reporting skills
- Lack of concern with accuracy
- Poor writing skills
- Lack of life skills
- Low level of commitment
- Weak interviewing skills
- Weak legal knowledge
- Lack of sensitivity
- Weak knowledge of ethics
- Poor general, historical and contextual knowledge
- Low level of trainer knowledge.

These are the same issues facing journalism educators at tertiary institutions. It is clear from these results that a balance between the vocational-practical aspects of journalism and the rich academic-theoretical component is vital. Reducing the debate to a which-one-is-better theory-versus-practice contest, as Jordaan says, is futile and will prove fruitless. The issue is far broader.

It is not enough to merely teach students how to write; one also needs to teach them how to reflect critically, analyse, interpret and move beyond basic reportage to the heart of journalism as watchdog. It is thus vital that journalism and media courses broaden their focus and force their students to take subjects which, while not explicitly journalism-related, are critical in forging the kinds of journalists we need in industry today.

THE UPE PROGRAMME

At the University of Port Elizabeth, the BA Media, Communication and Culture, while not strictly a journalism course, allows students to specialise in print media and thus produces graduates who will become journalists.

The programme has taken a radical approach to curriculum design, aiming to equip students with more than just skills in one discipline, but rather to produce graduates who are critically reflective, multiskilled, technically proficient and possessing of a broad theoretical and contextual framework.

The programme is still developing, but it is also an interesting example of how higher education is striving to balance the two poles of skills versus theory. In brief, the programme consists of a core language component (English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, French or German) and a core media component with elective modules from various disciplines including sociology, anthropology, politics, philosophy and music technology.

The language component has two purposes: first, we recognise that language skills are important to the tasks of media

Journalism education in South Africa

This paper addresses the question of what journalism students should be taught. It is argued that a balance is required between the vocational-practical aspects of journalism and the academic-theoretical component. The example of UPE's BA Media, Communication and Culture programme, with its radical approach to curriculum design, is discussed. The paper concludes that innovative programmes and interventions at all levels of the journalism training chain are needed to move towards media transformation.

professionals; and secondly because language study equips students with skills beyond pure linguistic ability, skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and cultural awareness. The core media component does not only focus on journalism (print and broadcast), but also on cultural studies, film studies, media theory, public relations, advertising, scriptwriting and video production. In this way, the students engage with critical issues and are taught analytical skills.

This is not to say there are not challenges involved in teaching these students, even within a programme designed to teach them both critical reflection and practical skills.

Do our students really understand what journalism is and what it requires of them? In many cases, the answer is "no". Is this because of poor quality teaching at tertiary institutions, or does the problem go deeper than that?

In my experience, the students attracted to journalism are often not the ideal candidates. They are drawn to journalism by many different things, chief among them the "glamour" of journalism, the perception that "anyone can write" and the idea that being a journalist brings with it special rights and privileges. They lack basic grammar and writing skills, have poor conceptual ability and often do not read.

Reading programmes need to start from an early age and the onus is on teachers, industry professionals and bodies, and government to ensure that our nation has a strong reading foundation, resulting in a pool of readers from which journalism students can be drawn.

I believe that media awareness/ literacy at primary and secondary school level is equally important, so that students who choose journalism and media studies truly understand what the media is all about and can make informed decisions about their careers.

Many of the students in UPE's BA Media, Communication and Culture programme, for example, are also often steered towards media courses by counsellors who do not understand what media is all about. The perception is that media courses are easier than Commerce, Law or Science subjects, making them an attractive option to students lacking direction.

The result is a student body partially comprised of those without the vocation for journalism. Pass rates for journalism subjects bear this out.

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

There are other challenges, too. The move towards the transformation of the media, which must take place to ensure that South African journalism truly represents South Africa, faces a number of stumbling blocks.

Even when equity candidates do make it to tertiary institutions they are often hampered by the language barrier. Students who might be excellent writers in their home language often struggle to come to grips with the English language requirement in journalism courses.

Intensive language training during tertiary study can assist in improving English language skills, but ideally this training should start earlier with foundational language courses of high quality reaching all learners from their first school day. Beyond that, more should be done to encourage journalistic endeavours in local languages, but of course that is a larger issue, beyond the scope of this paper.

Journalism trainers need to be sensitive to the barrier that language creates, while ensuring that graduates possess the skills and competencies needed to be good journalists.

So in essence the challenges are twofold. Journalism training needs to balance critical skills with practical skills, while making journalism training accessible so that true transformation of the industry can take place.

There are no quick fixes.

FACING THE CHALLENGES

Most journalism educators are aware of the responsibility they bear and the challenges they face, and most understand that change will take time. It means re-examining what we are doing in our programmes, consulting with industry, finding a balance between theory and practice, broadening what we expose our students to and finding innovative ways to overcome the language barriers we face.

What should we be teaching them? We know the answer to that: sound research, reporting and writing skills balanced with cultural knowledge and sensitivity, gender awareness, ethics, legal knowledge and critical thinking. This, together, with a strong historical, geographical and social contextual foundation, will result in journalists who can truly meet the challenges of reporting on the complexities of South African and African society.

We should also work more closely with those who mould our students before we get them: teachers at secondary school level, and school and student counsellors.

Innovative programmes to assist in media literacy and awareness, input in career guidance and visibly assisting school newspapers are potential ways in which both tertiary education professionals and industry professionals can develop candidates who are ready for journalism and media programmes.

Beyond that, more should be done within media and journalism programmes to assist students with potential who struggle due to various factors including language issues. For example, at UPE/ NMMU, supplemental instruction will for the first time be offered to first year journalism students in an attempt to raise pass rates. This voluntary tutoring aims to help students understand the core concepts and issues of a particular course and assist students in better understanding what is expected of them in assessments. The impact of this intervention will become clear only in years to come, but already its voluntary nature might make it ineffective.

Only in intervening at all levels of the journalism training chain can we hope to address the challenges facing journalism in South Africa.

The challenges are real and should not be taken lightly, but they are also an opportunity to radically change the way journalism training in South Africa is approached as well as how it is practised, so that true transformation and a return to the ethical foundation of journalism can take place.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



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One needs to teach students how to reflect critically, analyse, interpret and move beyond basic reportage...

Revisiting the basics in journalism: facts and fairness

In this paper the author asserts that journalism is moving away from one of its basic commitment: giving facts to media consumers in a fair way so as to enable them to make informed judgments. I am going to critically examine a number of journalistic authors' works to show that there is developing a tendency, especially when dealing with Africa, of allowing personal prejudices and preferences to detrimentally affect our work.

In his book, *The Shackled Continent – Africa's Past, Present and Future*, Robert Guest notes that on re-reading his book "it occurs to me that I've missed out a lot of the good things about Africa. The kindness of its people, the passion for life; the extraordinary hospitality of the poorest of the poor; the joy of Congolese rumba music...the list goes on". Elsewhere, Guest notes that even though he has been to a number of African countries and worked as a journalist in this continent, he would always be an outsider.

Not writing about those is missing out on what makes us what and who we are: Africans. It is understandable on Guest's part when he expresses the view that "there are few places besides Africa where intellectuals are so consumed by the past" whose tendency is "to believe that Africa's problems are someone else's fault. I hear this argument often, at least from the educated middle class: civil servants, politicians, academics, journalists and so forth. African newspapers are full of it..." I say it is understandable on Guest's part because Guest is a non-African, and particularly a Western journalist. What has being a Western journalist got to do with it, you ask?

For an answer I suggest that we turn to a white South African journalist, Allister Sparks' book, *Beyond The Miracle – Inside The New South Africa*: "Too often for comfort I find when I travel abroad that people address me with words like: 'You poor fellow, after all you have done it must be terrible to see what is happening to your country.' Or as our Nobel laureate for literature, Nadine Gordimer,

notes: "Again and again, when I am interviewed by European or US journalists or find myself in encounters with other people from their countries, the burning question is: What is happening to whites?" There are two obvious assumptions, Gordimer says, to be made of this approach to South Africa by Europeans and North Americans. "The majority of them being white, they identify only with whites whether consciously or unconsciously. Because I am white they assume I do the same. It's the Old Boys/Old Girls Club producing its dog-eared membership card. The projection is of the priorities of their lives, along with the old colonial conditioning that these belong with whiteness and are incontrovertibly, forever, threatened by the Otherness – blacks." I have chosen to quote a white journalist because had I chosen a black one, it would have been said that his/her observations were predictable, or they would have confirmed Guest's assertions.

Instead of confronting issues soberly and empathetically, when Africans raise these issues they suffer the accusation of playing the race card, in the South African president Thabo Mbeki's case, of re-racialising politics, or being overly preoccupied with the past. Yet the past is very much with us.

I admire the former South African journalist, Max du Preez. Having gone through his book, *Pale Native – Memories of A Renegade Reporter*, I felt deep respect for this Afrikaner journalist who bravely moved against the tide by confronting white racism in South Africa. I admired him more when he taught me things I did not know about my African history, especially where he deals with African Philosophy, repeat African Philosophy – these being his own words. This he wrote about in the year 2004, at a time when there are academics (professors) who question or dismiss the existence of African Philosophy! Some do so motivated by racism and others out of genuine ignorance. I have the same respect for Allister Sparks. I cannot, without feeling guilty, accuse these two white journalists of not caring for blacks' feelings. But I think that much as they have tried, they could not, in their two books cited above, get to the bottom of the Africans' hearts, especially Mbeki's in as far as his attitude to Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe is concerned.

Both du Preez and Sparks in their books express how they were once fascinated by Mbeki who both referred to him as a "star" and a man sure to occupy a major position in South African politics. Later, both were to be disappointed by

Mbeki. "There's just one big unanswered question: What on earth happened to the charming, smiling, warm, straightforward Thabo Mbeki we got to know in Dakar? The man who is today the president of South Africa does not possess one of these attributes," writes du Preez in his *Pale Native*. In wondering about Mugabe in his *Beyond the Miracle*, Sparks writes: "What has driven this intelligent and articulate man to such levels of brutal power-hunger remains unclear." Sparks further notes that some observers think that Mugabe's "remarkable policy of compromise and racial reconciliation" was "simply a façade Mugabe put on until he felt strong enough to embark on the Africanist revolution of his dreams".

I guess the American journalist, Andrew Meldrum, who was kicked out of Zimbabwe by the government, is one of those observers. In his book *Where We Have Hope – A Memoir Of Zimbabwe*, Meldrum observes that "Robert Mugabe paid lip service to national reconciliation in the early 1980s but when his power was challenged in 2000 he had no compunction in unleashing violence in order to maintain his grip." It is the same Meldrum who wrote earlier in his book that he "was impressed by the new leader, Robert Mugabe, who had transformed himself from a hard-line Marxist guerrilla leader into a statesman who called for racial reconciliation". It was this Mugabe, Meldrum tells us, who was shortlisted for the Nobel Peace Prize which "shows how, at that moment, he was the world's darling, the hero who brought peace and reconciliation to the nation that a year ago was one of the world's festering sores". I do not believe that Mugabe pretended for full ten years. Never mind that Meldrum later demonises Mugabe as well, but to his credit, he had the decency to tell us in his book that while Mugabe, then the world's darling, was trying his reconciliation exercise, "Almost all the whites were still living in Rhodesia and carried an angry chip on their shoulders". "Many continued," wrote Meldrum, "to treat blacks rudely and arrogantly and I cringed at ugly scenes where whites shouted at black waiters in restaurants, at black clerks in bank queues and in government offices." This is one vital element of the Zimbabwean story that is missing in many journalists' accounts. It is vital because it serves to explain why Mugabe turned out bitter later. He felt betrayed that after trying to reach out to whites, many messed up with

him! He felt humiliated and stupid! To be told that Mugabe was not genuine about reconciliation is very misleading!

In their book, *Carlos Cardoso – Telling The Truth In Mozambique*, Paul Fauvet and Marcello Mosse write: "Cardoso's last signed article as a *Tempo* reporter in the issue of 11 February 1979, also dealt with Zimbabwe. He spoke with four white prisoners who Zanla had captured inside Rhodesia, marched over the border, and released into the hands of Amnesty International at a press conference in a Maputo hotel. The four – Johannes Martins, Thomas Wigglesworth, John Kennerley and James Black – said they had been well treated throughout. Wigglesworth, who was a retired major in the British army, told Cardoso, "I was isolated for about a month, but I was always treated courteously. The guerillas have a tough life, but what little they had, they shared with me." Asked to comment on Zanla's behaviours, he replied, "As a professional soldier, I was surprised at their efficiency on the ground, their discipline, and particularly their high morale." Johannes Martins had a heart condition, so the Zanla guards always let him rest. "President Mugabe came to see me twice in the bush," he said. "He asked me if I was well, and if the guerillas were treating me decently. So I'd like to express publicly my thanks for the fact that they never treated me badly." So, Mugabe's kindness was not a façade.

I think that one of the causes of Mugabe's fed up attitude was due to Sparks' observers' cynicism towards Mugabe, the fact that no matter how hard the African tried to show his humane side, the world did not appreciate. For instance in the above quoted book, Sparks writes that for "the first decade and a half of his presidency Mugabe made no effort to establish an egalitarian people's state. He may have mouthed the rhetoric in his early years, but once in power he neglected the rural power notoriously..." Oh, no, Sparks, Mugabe wasn't that bad!

This is an extract
For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

To be told that Mugabe was not genuine about reconciliation is very misleading.

08
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The good news about journalism training in SA is that it has come under the spotlight like never before.

In June 2001 an indaba at Sun City between the media and the senior politicians in the country was held. It was agreed that both sides would make an effort to put their communication houses in order and the need for a skills audit among SA journalists became a priority. Thus far we have experienced the media looking at itself, but the same cannot be said of the authorities.

One of the undertakings at these talks was the exchange of employees for periods of time to get exposure to each other's worlds, but I could not find examples of this after three years.

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) initiated a skills audit, completed in 2002. The audit showed clearly that all was not well in the profession.

It is against this background that I will highlight some of the key factors concerning our professional training of journalists.

ACADEMIC AND INDUSTRY TRAINING STRUCTURES

One can identify three levels of training in the field: tertiary; in-house and private colleges. Through the skills audit it became clear that the most acceptable programmes are seen to be in the tertiary and in-house areas. Diplomas and degrees in Journalism are issued at three universities and six technikons (from 2004 "universities of technology"), while industry has seriously started a process of self-training at the bigger media houses.

This last form of training became very popular over the last two years after the implementation of training skills levies imposed by the government on bigger companies. Industry could claim money back when spent on training, and own training departments suddenly bloomed again.

Less than five years ago, most of the cadet schools at companies were seen to be redundant and closed down. Did I hear anyone mutter "bottom line"? Together with colleges and other universities that offer journalism as a selection in mass communication programmes, it is estimated that the potential job market is glutted with more than 600 interns or graduates every year. The biggest companies employ hardly more than five to ten interns or fresh graduates annually.

CHALLENGES FACING INDUSTRY AND TRAINERS

The SA media lost heavily in the journalism skills field before and after the dawning of the new South Africa, first because of the apartheid regime (before 1994), and then because of the implementation of affirmative action policies that were put in place to redress the wrongs of the past.

Those who did not leave the country changed profession or took early retirement packages. As there were not enough professional, previously disadvantaged people to fully occupy these vacancies, the problem of juniorisation became critical and it was certainly one of the reasons for doing "stock taking". This is what was found in the news rooms:

On the basis of the stories submitted by the reporters, the news editors evaluated the following three skills categories:

- Reporting skills
- Writing skills
- Accuracy of news stories/copy

Interventions into journalism education and training related to the following could then be considered:

- The news gathering process. All of the following aspects were found to be lacking: gathering of information, insight into the depth/context of news, a sensitivity to South African news issues, and an understanding of legal and ethical issues, especially as they relate to fairness and gender/race sensitivity; and being able to

Lessons from Pretoria

This paper looks at the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) skills audit of 2002 and the commitment made at the 2003 Stellenbosch skills indaba to address the problems highlighted by the audit. The example of TUT's curriculum is briefly examined with reference to practical training and addressing the needs of second-language speakers. Before concluding with a look to the future, the author considers some ways in which local media treat particular news themes.

identify elements contributing to a news story.

- Writing the final product. It was found that junior reporters need more guidance in organising facts and writing stories. This problem was addressed in some cases by more senior staff members guiding and coaching (mentoring) junior reporters, while it was indicated that some senior staff members had to rewrite stories in full in order to bring the final product up to the required standard.
- Accuracy (e.g. spelling, typing, accurate presentation of facts, and attributing information to sources). The 2002 Skills Audit found that the way in which this specific issue was tackled varied between different media and needs further investigation.

At Stellenbosch a skills indaba among all the role-players concluded in 2003 that a special programme should be implemented. It was called Back to Basics – the Stellenbosch commitment. Here are some of the undertakings.

- A. Reporting skills, accuracy, writing and interviewing skills:
 - Qualified coaches to be put in the news-rooms;
 - Industry and educators to put punitive measures in place to combat inaccuracy;
 - Industry to commit to take part in the consultation process on journalism unit standards (role of SETA and SAQA); and
 - Educators to intervene to improve skills gap related to secondary education.
- B. Legal knowledge, sensitivity, ethics:
 - Develop in-depth knowledge about legal issues among mid-level editorial staff;
 - Simplify information on legal issues related to media;
 - Companies to make their codes of ethics/conduct publicly available; and
 - Develop resources for reporters on sensi-

tive and ethical issues.

- C. Life skills, recruitment/commitment, historical and contextual knowledge:
 - Educators develop cultural and historical knowledge of students;
 - Editors visit tertiary institutions as guest lecturers; and
 - Promote a reading and lifelong learning culture.
- D. Other undertakings were given as in special partnerships between industry and educators. A significant commitment was made by media executives to training investments, dialogue, issue-based training and to "accept there is no contradiction between the pursuit of the bottom line and the pursuit of excellence". On issue-based training we are looking at Aids, gender, ethics and subbing skills as an add-on focal area.

As for the above, in Pretoria we have found that doing teaches better than telling and focused on co-operative education. We have gone into partnership with a local newspaper publishing company and produce a weekly community newspaper. We also started our live radio station this year to support our training in radio journalism even further.

We are involved with producing once-off conference publications, special broadcasts at big events and various other practical implementations. We have introduced a community service in the form of student assistance to people who want to produce newsletters, for instance. All third year students must adopt a project like this and become actively involved in the production of a publication. This also goes for community radio stations. Truly an exciting step away from "them" and "us".

LANGUAGE MEDIUM

The media is dominated by English titles in print, in

TV material and of course online publications. Yet the South African population of 44 million speaks mostly Zulu, then Xhosa and then Afrikaans.

Special bridging and supplementary courses in English are the rule rather than the exception. At TUT our second language speakers all have to complete a reading program where they train to read, on average, 250 wpm with 75% comprehension. The potential of media products in all languages is enormous and in our training we should take cognisance of the fact. I refer you to the success of a newspaper like *Isolezwe*.

SPECIAL NEWS THEMES

Because of South Africa's unique evolution towards the so-called "Rainbow Nation", my conclusion is that the media has in general accepted the concept of being accountable for the well-being of the community as a whole (although many newspaper editors are very cautious about the concept). I would say that South Africa's media have deliberately decided to give special treatment to certain news themes where HIV/Aids, gender, race, ethics and in some cases crime is concerned.

This surely is blatant agenda setting, but sensitivity towards these themes is emphasised in all training programmes and I have heard nobody complaining about this "special treatment". These approaches are not that strange to supporters of the concept of civic journalism and links to the debate about the role of the African journalist as opposed to a journalist in Africa.

THE FUTURE?

In summary:

1. Academics and practitioners must work harder toward closer effective partnerships – co-operative education.
2. Back to basics – for me, this incorporates passion and accuracy.
3. Find and stick to the balance between accountable journalism and the freedom of speech.
4. Academic excellence and synergy through peer interaction and training the trainers.
5. Identify and recruit quality students.

For full text and references, see <http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

It is estimated that the potential job market is glutted with more than 600 interns or graduates every year.



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We know that academic marks are no predictor of whether the person will make a good journalist... but... we look at what else they got out of being in a tertiary institution.

The value of a tertiary qualification in journalism

The value of tertiary education to journalists is examined with reference to the Independent Newspapers' training programme, whose selection and training processes are described. The author concludes that tertiary education is valuable, but that trainees struggle to apply theory to practice, while trainees feel that they lack writing skills.

A qualification has no value in terms of getting into the industry. It's a piece of paper. When we look at CVs, we are interested in why the person chose to study at a certain place, if they did, and whether they had to battle to stay there, but not at the marks. We know that academic marks are no predictor of whether the person will make a good journalist – different skills are involved. But – and this is important – we look at what else they got out of being in a tertiary institution. What else did they do, what opportunities or access did they take advantage of? What behaviours have they shown that can predict their future behaviour? Or are they so stupid that they submit CVs with spelling mistakes?

For Independent Newspapers started training junior subeditors in 1999. We trained nine in Joburg and then five in Cape Town.

In the belief that a person who had trained as a journalist probably wanted to be a reporter, not a sub, we took on people with English or teaching qualifications. Just over half of these are still working for us.

Last year the shortage of subs became critical and Independent decided to really pump resources into this. I was given the fulltime job of running a year's course in three regions. We had realised just how many tertiary institutions were training people who wanted to be journalists, so we aimed our adverts at them this time. We decided we would run a bridging course, a learnership, building on what they had already learnt and their possible early passion to be journalists. We got 900 applications from around the country. We put about 90 through a computer-based assessment tool called Newshound. Developed initially for the Argus Cadet School by psychologist Brian Dyke, it has also been used for selection for other media houses.

As we were primarily looking for subeditors for

English papers, we built in some tests of English skills. Basic computer literacy was taken for granted, but the assessment had simple instructions. There was some general knowledge and a test of being able to spot the basic news value of a story. The critical part of the assessment is that it tests thinking skills: the ability to think convergently and divergently; to apply logic. Over the years this has been the best predictor of whether a person will succeed as a journalist – though we know it does not work in isolation.

We were stunned at the result: the top 70% were women. We took 43 people through a report-writing exercise and an in-depth interview, and chose 22. Only four were men. The trainee subeditors course started in March – 10 people in Joburg, six in Durban and six in Cape Town. We took them through a one-week induction course and one week of practical reporting training, and threw them into the newsrooms as juniors. They had all had some sort of journalism or media tertiary education or training – three- or four-year degrees. Three or four of them swam; the others needed their hands held and got very basic stories to do, which is what we had expected.

LEARNING THE ROPES

I thought they were doing quite well. We worked fast and they responded fantastically to every challenge. We gave them about 30% practical classroom training. Things like: how a newspaper works, readership and circulation, typing, reporting, interviewing, general knowledge tests, writing, ethics, media law, research, accuracy, court reporting, writing a story from a speech, crime reporting, personal finance and budgeting, HIV/Aids knowledge and sensitivity. Their trainers were all experienced, working journalists.

The rest of the time they were reporting in newsrooms. They had a bit of coaching with their live stories. This is the bridging exercise: teaching them how to work at our newspapers.

Then the visiting foreign students arrived. Second or third years, they should have been junior to our trainees, but there was no avoiding the truth: they were better prepared. They could report and they could write coherently, even in a new country.

But with time, mentoring and coaching, most of our 22 produced good portfolios of basic stories over their five months of reporting. The ease with which they fit in, their productivity, their reporting skills, their story ideas and their writing skills showed no direct relationship to the tertiary institution they attended, though there was a relationship to how much practical experience they had had, especially if they used their own initiative to get it. The problems they all have in common were predicted by the Sanef Skills Audit (phase one), so I won't go into that.

The lack of basic geography was particularly shocking, as was the fact that only one out of 22 had ever drawn up a personal budget before. They have recently moved on to basic subediting. They are doing a political and media history course, numeracy, business subbing and a variety of aspects of editing and computer skills. And in between they are doing what I call simulated subbing: copy-editing in parallel to live production. Their early problems in subbing are generally a lack of attention to detail and news sense: what's important, what's the latest news, what's context. They find it difficult to explain the logic of a story or to see what's missing or know what to cut. Some find it difficult to concentrate on one thing at a time.

The other side of the coin is that our newspapers see this batch of trainees as wonderful. They are bright and hardworking and are starting to develop confidence. They question and challenge everything. They learn fast. One managing editor told me with passion: "This group has changed my attitude to the future of journalism in South Africa."

WHAT'S THE VALUE FOR BEGINNERS?

A discussion with the Joburg trainees quickly led to a simple agreement: "We wish they had taught us to write!" Almost all of them felt they should not have passed because they did not learn to write – but they added that often their lecturers did not care, so they had not realised it was important. I didn't tell them that they got on the course because their writing skills were relatively okay. I know how they have battled.

Secondly, all of them except one agreed that they needed to have some sort of tertiary education – that they could not have tackled this course straight out of matric. These views are valuable. The trainees have got over the shock of being in a work environment and are looking back to see what they can apply from their education. Perhaps as they go along, they will be able to apply more and more? I hope so.

In the US a recent study has shown that journalists feel their training has influenced their concept of what is newsworthy more than their supervisors do. I put this to the trainees – and got blank looks.

From the trainees' comments I see two large bridges they have to cross. Firstly, those who have had a largely theoretical education need to learn to apply it in practice. Then they have to learn to apply the practice to a particular work environment. Then the question is: does a journalism qualification give journalists enough of what they need to build both those bridges into a work environment? Or is that the sole responsibility of the media industry? Or perhaps a joint responsibility? The course that these trainees are doing is trying to build both those bridges and they value this. But such a course can never be the norm – this will never be what people can expect when they start work as a reporter.

CONCLUSION

Dave Hazelhurst, who has more than four decades of experience working with journalists of differing backgrounds, says: "A qualification in journalism is not a necessity. But it should be an advantage."

And that's what I believe: that it should be an advantage. For some, it is. It should give those who have it a head start over those who have not got it, and its value should grow over the years as they gain experience and make the connections that were not obvious at the beginning.

So we'll see where this batch of trainees is – and what they have to say – in 10 years' time.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



We are still far, far from the great journalism that we were hoping to get.

Desperately searching for staff

E-tv has a thoroughly formulated news philosophy and values that use the power of television to tell meaningful stories. Yet these values are not always met: partly because of the shrinking pool of senior staff and partly because of the growing popularity of tabloid journalism.

So, we employ the people who have been trained by the tertiary institutions.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM?

We talk to them about our news philosophy. This is to inspire them to believe that they need to be driven by something bigger than their pay cheques or the possibilities of BMWs along the way. We talk about it. It is printed on the Press cards we give them. And it is in their style guides. Their assignments sheets start with it.

E-TV NEWS PHILOSOPHY

We subscribe fully to the preamble of the Constitution that all South Africans adopted in 1996, which describes the transformation currently underway in our land as a process to help build a united and democratic South Africa.

Our news and current affairs programmes:

- Hold up this vision to remind South Africans of their commitments;
- Hold the people and institutions with power – in government and outside government – accountable for turning this vision into reality;
- Record the nation's daily tribulations and triumphs on this exodus of transformation; and
- Link South Africa and Africa to the rest of the world.

"We do not report about institutions and events, we report on the people who are affected by institutions and events." – e-News submission to the Human Rights Commission, 10 March 2000.

This is the philosophy that guides us when we decide on stories to tell and the way we tell them.

"This e-News philosophy is clear.... We use the power of television, in the best way possible, to tell stories that are meaningful to our viewers. It is a philosophy we adhere to as e-News continues to evolve, not as an alternative to the public broadcaster, but as an authoritative, credible and informative television news service in its own right.

"Our viewers must be able to connect with our stories. We are unequivocal on this point. The way we present, write and narrate a report must strike a chord. Facts by themselves mean little. For them to be understood and appreciated, viewers need to be able to relate them to their own experience.

"We are committed to covering stories that reflect the great diversity of the South African people. The interests, beliefs, perspectives and all other things that are hot buttons to our audience will be covered without fear or favour.

"We are not content with the tried and tested formula of television news programming. Nor do we seek to emulate other broadcasters, whether on style or content. Instead, we will continue to nurture a uniquely South African television news service through informal and innovative presentation and reportage.

"But this is never at the expense of responsibility and accuracy – the cornerstones of ethical journalism.

"We require all our journalists to show openmindedness, fairness and respect for the truth. e-News is not and will not be a mouthpiece for any political, special interest or any other specific point of view. We report all sides whenever we can and are as balanced as we can be, recognising that one hundred percent objectivity will never be possible."

But damn – something happens between intention and execution.

We are still far, far from the great journalism that we were hoping to get. We still get spellings of people's names wrong. We still miss the points of many stories. We are still shallow and thus perpetuate the myth that television journalism is shallow. We still miss important stories.

JUNIORISATION OF THE NEWSROOMS

There are several reasons for this.

Since 1990 there's been a flood of senior journalists getting into government and public relations and the media are left with a small pool of seniors. We are left with many juniors and the efforts of the seniors are concentrated on fixing the work of the juniors. They have very little time to do their own original work. For us at e-tv, we haemorrhaged badly when the SABC grabbed many of our better journalists in recent raids.

We have advertised for middle level staff. And the responses? Badly written CVs that we throw out at the first filtering point. The better ones reach the interview stage. For crying out loud, many will tell us during the interviews that they didn't see the previous day's e-News.

"Okay, give us a critique of the last e-News bulletin you watched."

"Sorry, I have been travelling and haven't been watching tv recently."

"Who owns e-tv?"

There's an embarrassing scratching of the head.

We had the first round of interviews earlier this year. We reaped shockingly few journalists. We are now in the

We continue to carry the burden of "fix-it journalism" in our newsrooms.

second round of interviews this year and it doesn't look more promising.

I should mention that we are desperately searching for indigenous African staff and this is where the scarcity is alarming.

We continue to carry the burden of "fix-it journalism" in our newsrooms. The experienced journalists slave for long hours and this affects the quality of their work.

To try and understand this better, the South African National Editors' Forum is doing its second skills audit, looking at middle management. To what extent are our problems related to lack of coaching and management skills at this level?

POPULARITY OF TABLOIDS

This is just one side of the problem. On the other side, something serious is happening to the tastes of people who consume the media. If I take e-tv as an example: the programmes that enjoy the biggest viewership are wrestling, Lotto and the skiet-en-donder films. If we screen what I would consider the better movies, the viewership plummets.

And this is true not only for the lower LSMs (Living Standards Measures) but for the higher ones – 8, 9 and 10.

Are South Africans tired of the serious and the worthy and now want to relax and be entertained?

Does this explain why the tabloids like *Daily Sun* and *Die Son* are doing so well while the more earnest publications are struggling to sell?

The Sun is a patronising throwback to the *Bantu World* of the 1950s, but it is moving off the shelves and the hands of the vendors in a way that other publications envy.

What do readers, viewers, listeners really want?

The battle with this question has driven editors to lighten their contents to compete with the tabloids. Newspapers like *ThisDay* struggle to survive because they still insist on giving the readers what we journalists consider good journalism.

Liz Barratt reminded me that this is not just a South African phenomenon. Media around the world are grappling with the same issues. The challenge we face, as media organisations and training institutions, is to find ways of telling important stories in a compelling way, making the readers, listeners and viewers want to stay with them.

I hope this colloquium contributes to finding those ways.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

**Assessing 'whys' and 'hows'
for teaching journalism in
South Africa's second
decade of democracy**

For many institutions, the only way to widen participation and increase access has been to enrol under-prepared students into the academic programmes.



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The flaw in the ceiling: antinomies of higher education transformation and implications for the curriculum

The media are the primary carriers of a deluge of information and as a consequence they have a special social responsibility, because it is through the media that raw information is selected, shaped, given meaning and imbued with values. So how do you train prospective journalists to do this?

What we need is a general improvement in schooling, but as that is unlikely to be achieved in the short term, what we need in the interim is a more fine-tuned selector that can alert us to the potential of learners who are inadequately prepared academically, but should be brought into higher education if social and economic imbalances are to be corrected.

The new FETC that will replace the Senior Certificate will not provide a solution. As Joe Muller (2003) has cogently argued, the FETC will be not a more, but a less discriminating instrument and instead of addressing poor schooling, its de-differentiating tendency will simply make the problem of schooling less visible. For higher education, it will exacerbate the problem by making it even more difficult to select students on the basis of ability.

KNOWLEDGE REPRODUCTION – THE CURRICULUM

Most universities still consider it part of their mission to educate the "whole person", to provide a foundation for "life" and for the exercise of democratic, critical citizenship, as opposed to providing a mere foundation for work.

While higher education has been subject to significant external pressures, it has also had to deal with internal changes and divisions.

In South Africa, the humanities and social sciences are viewed as bloated with too many students who emerge with knowledge that has little application, and skills that have a limited value in this economy. Policy therefore articulates the need to "correct" the skewed distribution of students away from these areas and into fields of higher "value", and it is set on applying funding instruments to achieve this correction.

For many institutions, the only way to widen participation and increase access has been to enrol under-prepared students into the academic programmes with the lowest entry requirements – mostly in the humanities and social sciences – because poor school-leaving results exclude many students from access into programmes with higher admission and selection criteria, and limited places.

The consequence of the dominance of discourses of social utility in education together with the state's concern for efficiency is leading to an undermining of fundamental disciplinary training. There is enormous market pressure from students and their families for qualifications that will lead directly to employment opportunities. There is enormous pressure from the state to produce graduates in the "right" areas for the labour market and development. Neither of these is unreasonable or a bad thing in itself. My concern, however, is with the unintended consequences.

Academically under-prepared students often take longer to complete their qualifications than the minimum specified time, and this extended time has made the general formative degree a luxury that few students can now afford. Faculties in turn now offer direct access to school leavers to professional or career-focused qualifications that can be completed in three or four years.

For the current OBE curriculum to be taught effectively in schools, it requires teachers to have high content mastery of subjects, but this is precisely what many lack. We graduate teachers into the system with limited disciplinary training and perpetuate the cycle of under-prepared school leavers.

KNOWLEDGE TYPES

At this point it may be helpful to think about different types of knowledge and their different orientations. We may think of knowledge as stretching across a continuum from the highly technical and vocationally oriented at one end to the highly theoretical and general formative (discipline-based) at the other. We may say, then, that the demand for externally responsive curricula runs with the grain of more vocationally oriented training but against the grain of much disciplinary training.

Professional and career-focused programmes fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum of knowledge types. They tend to draw on both ends of the spectrum, on some aspects of the "pure" disciplines, and on technical knowledge appropriate to the field. Their mixed character also means that they perform some of the functions of general formative education and some of vocational education. They are necessarily therefore both inward and outward looking.

The side of responsiveness, career-orientation and job training is strongly supported by current tendencies in policy, student markets and external demands, and so I am going to put in a brief plug for the other side of the debate that seems less popular at the moment. The account I have given so far shows how the burgeoning of programmes in this middle area of professional and career-focused education may have contributed to diminishing enrolments in the disciplines. Is this something that should concern us, or, if the disciplines cannot survive competition from more interdisciplinary, regionalised knowledge, should we not just let them quietly fade away?

Here we face another paradox. While it may

This paper sets out to explore some of the antinomies of recent developments in higher education policy and implementation. It goes on to examine a few of the critical dilemmas currently confronting the system and the sort of responses that may be anticipated from the new ministry. Finally, it looks at the implications for the curriculum. How should journalism and media studies position themselves in relation to these pressures? What are the possibilities for different kinds of curricula?

appear that the dominant, winning side of this debate is the side that is development friendly, there are other perspectives that complicate the issue. Manuel Castells (2000) makes a distinction between what he calls generic labour and "self-programmable" labour. It is the latter category that is critical to innovation and development because self-programmable labour is high in the conceptual skills that can make new informational technology productive in the knowledge society.

Joe Muller (2005) helps to clarify the point when he argues that there is a particular skewing of the national discourse of development that emphasises skills training, relevance and responsiveness. This could be characterised as the dominance of an instrumental, skills-based development discourse that runs the risk of shouldering out what may be called a knowledge-based development discourse, a discourse which does not merely seek to solve immediate problems, but to provide knowledge workers with a broad-based analytical expertise that prepares them for future challenges. It is this, he argues, on which development and innovation really depend.

DEVELOPING EXPERTISE IN DISCIPLINES

My final point, then, is that it is largely, though not exclusively, in the disciplines that this broad-based analytical expertise is developed. The disciplines have had some bad press in the context of positions that strongly promote inter- or multi-disciplinary, problem-solving approaches to teaching and learning. But some of the most progressive thinkers in this arena have acknowledged that the best interdisciplinary work is dependent on the disciplines and people who are trained in the disciplines.

Why should this be so? The disciplines are ways of dividing, organising and categorising knowledge. They have developed historically, and generated within their own discourses and

boundaries the methodologies and procedures appropriate to their objects of study. None of this is fixed in fundamentalist cement, but nor can it be overturned on the basis of mere whim, fancy or fashion. New knowledge may be advanced at the boundaries and old knowledge refuted, but only on rigorously defended grounds that require evidence, demonstration and argumentation. Disciplines, in other words, give us some of the most powerful ways of thinking, of thinking the world.

The Janus-faced nature of professional and career-focused programmes means that they constantly have to negotiate the tension created by their dual orientation. As teachers of journalism and media studies, you will always need to debate what is the appropriate mix and balance of skills-for-the-job (meeting industry needs and demands) and conceptual training, and the nature of this colloquium shows that you have a healthy sensitivity to these issues. It may also be important to stop thinking of these components as oppositional. If, as I suggested at the start of this paper, it is journalism's special duty to offer ways of swimming through seas of information, then conceptual skills can be thought of as central skills for the job.

At least one approach to the problem is to suggest that you should not all attempt to do the same thing. This is not to say that you cannot learn from one another, or that there will be no commonalities, but different institutional settings allow for the development of quite strongly differentiated curricula that answer to different sets of needs and interests and build on particular strengths and specialties. This is an important way of resisting some of the homogenising dynamics in higher education that I have attempted to show and of crafting curricula that offer students real choices.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



Higher education has become a commodity to be branded, advertised, and sold.

Journalism and the university: the marketplace and the academy

Some papers at this colloquium suggest that discussions about whether journalism should be taught at a university are passé. Such discussions relate, however, to a number of questions I have felt the need to ask myself. In this paper I attempt to unpack these questions, referring to the work of others.

WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY FOR?

Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University* (1852) is the traditional place to start when considering what the role of the university in society is. Newman, of course, was thinking about the education of young Catholic men as well as the relation between the university and the church, but the religious origins of the university should not be forgotten in our attempt to understand its 'essence' (to use Newman's term).

Said (1996: 215-216) refers to Newman in an article on academic freedom and the role of the university and writes: "There is something hallowed and consecrated about the academy; there is a sense of violated sanctity experienced by us when the university or school is subject to crude political pressures."

Said (1996: 225) quotes from Newman: "Not to know the relative disposition of things is the state of slaves or children". He also quotes Newman's expectation that the academy teach us "[t]he power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual independence".

What I take from this is that universities are about universal knowledge, and that to think about the world and attempt to make sense of it requires (at least some of the time) a retreat, or separation, from the world. Journalism is, however, very much of the world, which is what makes its position in the academy an uneasy one.

Another arguably old-fashioned source on the idea of the university is Abraham Flexner who was the first head of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. He is, in particular, dismissive of journalism teaching at universities (1930: 160).

Before we return to the arguments for and against the teaching of journalism at the university, what are contemporary arguments about the role of the university in society? Concerns about skills-based learning continue.

Higher education curricula in South Africa have gone through considerable change in the

The teaching of journalism is a useful example with which to think about a number of questions that are important in (higher) education today and related concerns of: the vocationally oriented nature of journalism teaching, the marketisation of higher education, and the old question of what it is that universities do or should do.

last ten years. Much use has been made of the work of Michael Gibbons and his colleagues (1994) on "Mode Two" versus traditional, disciplinary "Mode One" knowledge production. Mode Two involves application, trans-disciplinarity, accountability, "trans-institutional production sites", and socially useful knowledge as opposed to the "insular knowledge" of Mode One knowledge production as encapsulated in the ideals of such as Newman and Flexner.

This curriculum reform, however, has not only been in response to a new democracy, but to the demands of the market. Universities are marketing themselves, and higher education has become a commodity to be branded, advertised, and sold. Universities brand themselves in the same way that other 'labels' do.

My concern here is that one of the ways in which universities are marketing themselves is by selling the idea that a university education will give you the ability to find a job upon graduating. The other is that many universities have, in recent years, created vocationally oriented and/or 'trendy' degree programmes that will appeal to a vocationally oriented market.

One argument about new interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary programmes in South Africa is that they are responding to the needs of a new democracy and a changing world. Rethinking curricula has been conflated with the marketisation and commodification of education.

Until the late 1990s, Rhodes was the only place in South Africa to study journalism as part of an undergraduate degree. It continues to draw many students – at least 250 at first year level – most of whom tell one that they came to Rhodes to do journalism and that they expect to be taught how to be journalists. When asked to submit anonymous answers to the question "Why am I doing Journalism and Media Studies?", common responses from first years were: "Because I want a career in me-

dia", "Because it will get me a job" and "Because I want to make money". Another common response involves "passion"; students say that journalism is their "passion". In their defence, the popular media are full of the cliché of "passion" for all sorts of things lately.

When one suggests that the primary role of universities is not to prepare one for a specific career, and that they should consider replacing 'passion' with inquiry, thoughtfulness and informed scepticism, many are disillusioned or even angry.

I am still unconvinced that a good BA in disciplines such as economics, sociology, politics and the study of literature might not prepare one as well to be a good journalist as a degree in journalism. As Betty Medsger (2002) writes: "Consider this possibility: Journalism education gets in the way ... of creating good journalism and ... of getting a good education."

Some of my colleagues suggest that the reason students are increasingly resentful when we do not "give" them the skills they believe they have paid for and will get them a job is because twenty years ago a significant number of our students saw journalism as a space in which to oppose apartheid, while students today are consumerist and aspire to be 'names' in the media industry.

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

An interrogation of the concept of academic disciplines is important here.

One could argue, as Piet Naudé (2003: 17) does, that academic disciplines are social constructs and historically contingent. They developed in the particular political and social contexts of nineteenth century Europe. Their existence and their relationship to university departments have a great deal to do with the careers of individuals and the division of labour in organisational structures. André du Toit (2000:1) says that "[p]art of the explanation for this special longevity of disciplines is no doubt to be found in their institutional and organisational base".

But what of the epistemological basis of disciplines? Disciplines are not merely fields of inquiry; they are based on ideas about what knowledge is and how it can and should be gathered and what methods should be used to do so. As Du Toit (2000: 2) continues, after acknowledging that university disciplines partly owe their existence to historical contingency, "the identity and character of any particular discipline will be closely tied up with its specific conceptual frameworks and paradigms, dominant theoretical approaches and appropriate methodologies".

Back to journalism and media studies. Media Studies does not have a particular epistemological position but uses, in an interdisciplinary fashion, the frameworks and methodologies of traditional disciplines. Such theoretical and methodological approaches are not, as Du Toit (2000: 2) points out, "the exclusive intellectual property of particular disciplines only, nor are specific disciplines conversely related to particular theoretical perspectives and methodologies". But is it possible to use various theoretical and methodological approaches in an interdisciplinary manner if one does not have a foundation in core disciplines? One has to do one's "disciplinary homework" (Pretorius 2003: 31).

When teaching journalism, I argue, the position is even more difficult. Journalism is a vocation and students, rightly or wrongly, expect to be prepared for that vocation. University marketing, again, is relevant here. If the primary focus of a university programme involving journalism is the study of the phenomenon of journalism, then that has to be made clear to prospective students. If the programme includes preparing students to be journalists, then the obvious pitfall for teachers is preparing students for the demands of the media industry in an uncritical and/or entrepreneurial fashion.

I see three obvious alternatives here. The first is not to teach journalism at a university. The second is to teach the analysis of journalism and other media, in other words to teach media studies, but within a degree programme that includes core disciplines. The third is to accept vocationalism by concentrating on teaching students how to produce journalism but, again, within a degree that includes core disciplines that teach critical skills. This could also be done in a postgraduate year after a discipline-based first degree.

Another, perhaps cop-out, position, with which I shall conclude, is that the value of attempting to teach journalism at a university is that it forces us to juggle with questions of interdisciplinarity, vocationalism, and the market every day.

Distrustful as I am of Gibbons et al's Mode Two knowledge production, the teaching of journalism does provide a space for the university to be 'socially engaged' in a manner that goes beyond welfare community service.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

Journalism is a vocation and students, rightly or wrongly, expect to be prepared for that vocation.

The problem can be formulated as follows: it seems as if journalism is losing its legitimacy and integrity, and Journalism and Media Studies, it is argued, has failed to raise the quality of journalism because it focuses too much on skills training and too little on the general education of its students.

The point of departure in this paper is that if one wants to get to the bottom of the problem, one needs to, first of all, penetrate the criticism and reasons for the negative perceptions. An understanding of the criticism should begin with a phenomenological probing of what journalism is and move on to why it is criticised and how education can benefit journalism.

RESPONDING TO THE CRITICISM

The question is: What do journalism educators do with this criticism? It is apparent that journalism schools and journalists themselves are acutely aware of the criticism and are trying to address it.

For example, some of the measures being taken are spelled out in the manifesto published in 2000 by NYU's Mitchell Stephens (2005) in the *Columbia Journalism Review*. According to him, this manifesto has caused a revolution in thinking about journalism education in the USA and has led to the introduction of, among other things:

- A portfolio approach at NYU;
- Global initiatives at the University of South Carolina, and NYU;
- A partnership between the journalism school and a professional news organisation at Berkeley;
- Experimentation with methods of expanding the focus and stylistic range of journalism;
- In-depth study by students of subjects upon which they report;
- Research towards internal peer review and measurement such as done by the University of Illinois, Chicago; and
- Creating and turning to the alternative media and genres such as "civic journalism".

Although these and other practices and research are commendable, the question is whether they go far enough to address the bottom line of the criticism and so raise the standard of journalism.

This argument is then carried over to journalism studies where it is said that the challenge to journalism and media studies is to turn its focus on the thinking of journalists – to train and educate the journalistic mind to try to understand the world and humanity.

The argument is that intellectual thinking should precede the actual reporting or representation of a subject. Of this, there are too few examples in the media.

TOWARDS A LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR JOURNALISTS

Some point to a list of possible liberal arts subjects that could be included in a journalism curriculum, such as philosophy, rhetoric, history, and economics, and others fall back on the argument that journalism studies should only be offered as a post-graduate qualification after a student has acquired intellectual skills. However, it could be argued that the challenge for journalism studies is to develop intellectual skills through the focused teaching of journalism subjects such as the following:

- The philosophy and ethics of journalism based on an understanding of philosophical matters such as the nature of reality, truth, knowledge and meaning;
- Journalistic logic, with the emphasis on reasoning, argumentation and validity of inference;
- Journalist discourse, with an emphasis on an understanding of the power of language, language as a symbolic form, language as metaphor, language and ideology;
- Journalistic rhetoric, with an emphasis on

Thinking about journalists' thinking

How should journalism be taught?

This paper addresses this question against the background of the almost universal criticism against the quality of journalism and the media as a public sphere.

This paper then asks whether a more liberal approach to journalism university education could be the way to address the criticism and to raise the standard of journalism.

rhetorical skills and journalism's power to persuade;

- The history of journalism, with an emphasis on the intellectual skills of contextualisation and historical thinking;
- The psychology of journalism, including a study of the behaviour of the journalist and focusing on the mental processes that underlie behaviour, perception, memory, attention, knowledge representation, reasoning, creativity, and problem solving;
- Critical practice, using the hermeneutical skills of description, interpretation and evaluation for the reading and analysis of seminal examples of good journalism and the work of renowned journalists; and
- Institutional analysis, using the critical methods of media and cultural studies.

Thereafter could follow professional skills such as writing, interviewing, editing skills, and so on.

JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

It can be argued that the changed media environment necessitates new thinking about journalism studies and education.

The challenge is even bigger in South Africa. Apart from trying to address the educational needs and the industry's expectations, academics are also faced with the challenge to "Africanise" their teaching and research.

What is meant by this?

On the one hand, it means an increased focus on the history, symbolic forms, culture(s), achievements, and needs of Africa. On the other hand, it involves a "decolonising of the mind" (cf. Maluleke 2005; Mangu 2005). The latter means a break with and questioning of Western epistemology(ies) as the foundation of thinking about reality or an aspect thereof. How are South African schools of

journalism dealing with this?

As far as research is concerned, South African communication, journalism and media studies are firmly grounded in a Western epistemology influenced by the Enlightenment and thus with an emphasis on observable and measurable facts, and on individualism. Such thinking and theories, it could be argued, do not provide for an understanding of the deep-rooted spirituality of African culture. In short, South African communication, journalism and media studies need to be rethought in terms of an African-based epistemology. In this regard *ubuntuism* as a unique African world- and life-view is often mentioned.

Ubuntuism, with its emphasis on collectivism, sharing, community, participation in a collective life, and on collective morality, may therefore be investigated as a foundation of an African conceptualisation of key topics and concepts in normative media theory and ethics. Key questions that could be addressed are:

1. How can concepts such as "freedom of expression", "public", "publicity", "representation", "objectivity", "news values", "newsworthiness" and "ethics" be reinterpreted in terms of *ubuntuism*?
2. How can such interpretations be further researched to form, if at all possible, the foundation of African-conceptualised media and journalistic practices and media policy?

Whereas the South African media is often criticised by politicians for still being steered by Western news values and professional practices, a third question is how, if at all possible, can the factors in determining newsworthiness, such as threshold, frequency, negativity, unambiguity, personalisation, meaningfulness, consonance, continuity, composition and timeliness be interpreted against the background of *ubuntuism*, and what could the possible implications of such an interpretation be for professional practices?

These and related questions need to be researched by South African journalism departments and their students and could be incorporated as a core module in South African journalism curricula.

CONCLUSION

In this paper it was argued that an investigation of the deep-rooted mistrust of the media and journalism should form the backbone of the revision of journalism curricula. Criticism against journalism over centuries was summarised, after which three main streams of contemporary criticism were briefly discussed, namely critical political economy, phenomenological criticism and professional criticism.

As far as the second is concerned, it was argued that present criticism of the media as a public sphere is phenomenologically grounded in associations of the media with, among other characteristics and traits, secularity, mundaneness, triviality, and the ephemeral nature of journalism and the media. Phenomenologically, the criticism of journalism and journalism studies is grounded in journalism's lack of intellectual depth and therefore the intellectual mistrust of and disdain for journalism and journalists.

Against the background of the preceding, it was then argued that in order to raise the quality of journalism, journalism studies, instead of focusing on professional skills, should focus on intellectual skills such as reasoning, argumentation, rhetoric, contextualisation, historical thinking, description, interpretation and evaluation. Such skills should precede professional skills training.

Apart from this, South African journalism studies should also focus on the development of an African-based epistemology for the practice and measurement of journalism in South Africa.

For full text and references, see <http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

The argument is that intellectual thinking should precede the actual reporting or representation of a subject.



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Journalism for transformation could be defined as journalism that has social change as its goal.

Journalism education as transformative praxis

In this article I want to outline some of the main positions in the debates about journalism education, specifically within the context of the South African JMC (Journalism and Mass Communication) tertiary landscape. I want to argue that one's position on journalism education is closely tied to one's view of the role journalism should play in society. From this position I suggest that the concept of praxis is a suitable approach to journalism education in South Africa today.

PRAXIS

The concept of praxis may be described as "a conception of practice that sees intellectual work as a form of social intervention" (Mosco, 1996:9). In its contemporary definition, largely associated with the Marxist tradition, it forms part of a political economic approach to the analysis of social forms (Mosco, 1996:37). Theory and practice, intellectual life and social intervention, academic endeavour and political action, are seen to be integrated.

The false separation of the triad theory, research and practice (see also Krabill, 2004:356) has had a detrimental effect on the way that journalism and media studies were taught in South Africa in the past. Jordaan (2004:81) notes a shift to "instrumental definitions of knowledge" and proposes finding a balance between "academic" and "vocational" perspectives on knowledge and education. This balance is articulated by Krabill (2004:356) in terms of a reclamation of praxis by reintegrating theory, research and practice.

Viewing South African journalism education in this way corresponds with what Deuze (2002:90) has indicated as an international trend, namely the balance of best practices of skills courses, while including "cultural and critical reflective didactics".

It is important to note that the approach of praxis means something different than merely balancing theoretical subjects, practical training and a research component in the journalism curriculum, as if they were separate entities that need to be present in the right quantities as in a recipe. Instead, what the approach of praxis presupposes

is that these three aspects become intertwined and that they are set up to influence one another.

In other words, teaching should be informed by research, the research agenda should be influenced by practical problems, practical skills should be based in sound theoretical knowledge, and so forth. Praxis implies a pluralistic approach to journalism education, instead of setting theory up against skills, or balancing the two without allowing them to cross-pollinate.

If South African journalism is to contribute to the larger transformation of society, it could be done through what Alia (2004:40) refers to as the cultivation of moral sensitivity by creating "ontological shock". This means that journalists would not passively accept human misery but will be committed to change, replacing the idea of unalterable fate with an awareness of the possibilities of human agency. In this regard, journalism education also has a role to play. From Mosco's perspective of praxis, the intellectual work done in journalism education should be a form of social intervention.

For the purposes of this discussion, journalism for transformation could be defined as journalism that has social change as its goal. In the South African context, this progressive agenda would include the redress of inequalities inherited from the past, both symbolic (for example regarding representation in the media) and material (effecting the more equitable spread of resources). Transforming the media pertains to the continued restructuring of the industry to reflect the demographics of the country, but also broadening the media's perspective so that it would champion the causes of the marginalised and the poor. This might mean adopting different methodologies to those that usually form part of journalistic routines, for instance ethnography.

This should not be misunderstood as a high culture versus low culture debate. Tabloid media may aspire towards effecting social change as much as mainstream broadsheets could. Central to the understanding of journalism for transformation is the commitment that journalism should in the first place be a form of social engagement, rather than a dispassionate register of events. It implies an openness and honesty about the fact that journalism is infused with ideology, even if ideology is hid-

Journalism education has an important role to play in the process of transformation by educating journalists to contribute to positive social change. In order to serve the broader goal of transformation, journalism education should assume a normative and interventionist role. This should not be done by pitting concepts such as research, theory and practice against each other, but rather by exploring ways in which they can be combined.

den behind a smokescreen of 'objectivity'.

Transformation of journalism and the media should also not be seen as one-dimensional or linear. It could occur on a number of levels, e.g. the political economic level, the cultural/experiential level or the symbolic level.

A transformative view of journalism presupposes an attitude that journalism "does not mean reporting about the world, but rather engaging actively with it" (Hocheimer, 1992), and the same goes for journalism education. As Hocheimer (1992) puts it:

"Teaching is the process of mutual transformation, of acting in the world to change it as one changes. Learning must involve a degree of personal change, since to know more, to think more about what one has learned, is to see the world through 'wider eyes'."

PRACTICE

Approaching journalism education from the perspective of praxis would mean integrating research, theory and practice. Each one of these areas are discussed in more detail in the full paper, but due to lack of space, let us here just consider the latter aspect of these three, namely practice.

Practising journalists teaching journalism courses can provide students with valuable skills. But care should be taken by these journalists-turned-teachers that their teaching also becomes a critical moment in which they reflect on their own practice. Instead of mechanically transferring their skills to students so that they too can do journalism the way it is currently being done (and probably has been done before the current generation of journalists received their training by "osmosis and fiat", as Garman [2004] puts it), journalists involved in training should combine lessons learnt through experience with research and theory, in order to also improve their own skills and revisit their perspective on the profession. This might mean enrolling for an advanced degree or diploma in a specialised field themselves, or undertaking a research project with students, or at least engaging in dialogue with their students in order to re-assess the value and success of their own journalism.

Journalism practice can itself also be analytical and critical (Strelitz and Steenveld, 1998), and journalistic work could also unearth structural and ideological relationships in a similar way that critical theory does. When the insights gained through theory and research form the underpinnings of jour-

nalistic practice, practice itself becomes a critical epistemology in which new knowledge is explored that can work towards transformation.

Practice in the university context may also entail what is often referred to as "service learning" or "community service", where students and staff engage in community work (e.g. training of community journalists, editing community publications). These opportunities may, from a praxis point of view, not only be used for the important functions of community-building and social involvement, but can also provide insights that may be used to tailor teaching curricula and methods to community needs. Community members may also be involved in research, either as research partners or for ethnographic work.

Krabill (2004:358) provides further very useful suggestions on how the three components of praxis – research, theory and practice – may be integrated in the classroom context:

- Relationships between students, media professionals, researchers, theorists and teachers must be "built on all levels" instead of relegated into different moments of the educational process. This also pertains to the isolation of 'theory' into a separate course and not integrating it with practice.
- Universities and media institutions should be involved in a synergistic relationship that moves beyond patronage to partnership in the educational process. This would mean that universities are not only seen as training grounds for future employees (providing "commodified credentials"), but also as sources of information and critique that could help media institutions revisit their existing practices. Conversely, media institutions would provide more than job opportunities for graduates, but also participate in the training of future journalists. Krabill also, importantly, remarks that the relationship between universities and industry should extend beyond mainstream commercial media to community and alternative media, as well as social movement and civil society organisations.

- Research and theory should move beyond the dichotomy of communication studies-type 'number crunching' on the one hand and textualised, solipsistic media studies on the other. Instead, Krabill argues for an integration of ethnographic and cultural studies with analyses of larger processes and systems, so as to integrate studies of agency with those of structure (which one can take as referring to approaches such as political economy).

CONCLUSION

Journalism education should not be about the transmission of knowledge or skills from one generation to another, in order to create a new generation of journalists to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before. Following in someone else's footsteps is a fundamentally uncritical action – and journalism is supposed to be a critical endeavour. For transformation to occur, journalism educators should rather walk beside their students and their colleagues in industry, so that in a process of jostling, shoving and argument (see Tomaselli, 2004), they may eventually together find a new direction to take.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

Praxis implies a pluralistic approach to journalism education.

“Fit for purpose”

— towards tracking the quality of university education of entry-level journalists

A quality “audit” process of SA universities is currently underway thanks to the Department of Education’s Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), a body founded to promote quality assurance at universities in South Africa.

For the HEQC, quality is defined largely as being “fit for purpose”. Each institution, and its sub-parts, is directed to take stock of its performance in relation to a (partially) self-defined purpose.

A particular challenge here is the nature of this purpose. There are calls by various academics that South African universities should (re-) define their missions to be relevant to post-apartheid reconstruction and the African renaissance. Quality assessments of institutions would then be measured against such a reference point.

This approach contrasts with another that leans towards an autonomy as regards assessment of quality and worth. This emphasis was evident in the Quality Promotion Unit set up by university vice-chancellors in 1995. It focused on evaluating institutions against their own mission statements, rather than uniform standards. Thus, for the universities, “fitness for purpose” was understood in a narrow, self-referential way.

Clearly, the notion of “fit for purpose”, therefore, lends itself to different emphases. To explore this, it is helpful to compare it to various senses of “quality”.

DEFINING QUALITY

Writers like Botha (2000) and Smout (2002) have identified three different conceptions of quality.

1. Quality as meeting particular standards

The International Standards Organisation defines quality as “a complete set of features and characteristics of a product or service”. In this sense, quality is “the ‘absence of defects,’ not the ‘surpassing of high standards’” (Botha 2000). Quality in this sense can “be attained by all”, and there is no need for it to be higher than the designated specification. This approach seems more suited to technical manufacturing than to university education or its graduates (Smout, 2002).

In regard to journalism education and industry, there is a question about the disjunctures (which are not necessarily undesirable) between the standards preached and practised within and between each sphere.

2. Quality as excellence (surpassing standards)

This view deems “quality” as a state of achievement that amounts to excelling. As Botha (2000) points out, it leans on connotations of superiority and exclusiveness. Here quality is attainable by

Debate about the extent to which university education should serve industry is an important one for those who teach prospective journalists. This issue can be re-interpreted within the framework of the SA education authorities, who argue that the quality of higher education institutions should be measured in terms of whether it is “fit for purpose” to their missions and thence to the needs of the country. This in turn raises the question of how these needs are defined, and more importantly the challenge of measuring journalism education’s actual results in terms of these needs. In other words, a case can be made for assessing the role and value of journalism education through using impact assessment. To assess quality, therefore, we need a methodology to establish the extent to which South African journalism graduates go into the media industry, what they do there, and with what effect.

only a few, and so is clearly elitist. Journalism education in this context has no clear connection to industry excellence, except perhaps inasmuch as (the former) technikons have been regarded in relation to universities, and how historically advantaged institutions compare to the disadvantaged.

3. Quality as value for money

In this view, quality refers to the way that output goods or services are related to economic investment. However, as Smout (2002) points out, “good” value for money is relative to the level of quality. A poor quality, but cheap service can still be considered good value for money. The view therefore does not give insight into comparative quality in relation to absolute standards. Some media houses believe it is more effective to invest in their own training schemes than rely on the graduates from publicly funded institutions.

Another question is “value for whom”? This in turn raises the question of “fit for whose purpose?”, indicating that the quality question is ultimately a political one. It relates to value as defined by various stakeholders, including the state as representative of the taxpayers. It is precisely in this context that the HEQC has been adamant that quality has to be coupled with equity and redress issues.

What emerges therefore is that “customer” satisfaction as a criterion of quality should be a component of “value for money” for stakeholders, whose needs should be part of the purpose of the

university.

However, as noted above, there is also the view raised by the Quality Promotion Unit, which suggests that stakeholder accountability should not be at the expense of a university’s autonomy and capacity to experiment or to be critical.

At the same time, the notion of quality as excellence (not necessarily industry-defined) can be a valuable benchmark and aspiration. The value-for-money view, and the relative autonomy view, do not on their own necessarily include this aspect.

In sum, a comprehensive notion of quality as “fit-for-purpose” invokes a journalism education that would relate to a South African transformation-informed mission statement, with value for money and stakeholder involvement, plus an eye to critical autonomy, and finally including a relation to standards and excellence.

GOING FURTHER: FROM FIT-FOR-PURPOSE TO ACHIEVEMENT-OF-PURPOSE

Some elements of this kind of comprehensive perspective are evident in the way quality assurance has been broken down into various components. The University of Cape Town for instance requires of its departments that they report on fitness-for-purpose in terms of:

- Access (including the profiles of cohorts in terms of race, gender, preparedness, etc.);
- Curriculum design and coherence;
- Validity and reliability of assessment;
- Attainment profiles;
- Educational management and self-review procedures.

Much of this is similar to the way quality measurement of journalism education is done in the UK. But lacking in such a list of criteria is a focus on what is actually achieved by journalism education.

In this regard, the HEQC goes somewhat further by recommending that quality assurance exercises should include both impact studies and surveys to provide feedback on performance – including feedback from students, graduates and employers. This is the tradition of technikon quality assessment (known as SERTEC) in South Africa, and US journalism education also includes this.

Indeed, if the worth of journalism education is to be properly gauged, then impact assessment

must become an integral part of quality assessment. In short, it needs to take account of the actual impact it has on graduates and that they have on the industry. But we need to go even further, and here the concept of critical education comes in.

Thus, part of the reference points for evaluating the “quality” of a university journalism school involves assessing the condition of the media industry itself. This entails critically assessing what the industry should be doing in this era of South African history, and thence establishing what contribution, if any, journalism graduates are making to this project, rather than to industry as an end in itself. Fit for purpose would then include being fit for achieving a critically defined purpose.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Following this line of thinking, “impact studies” should be elevated as a vital part of quality assessment. Does journalism education, in brief, contribute to a journalism of value to the country?

Impact studies, however, are complex projects, as well outlined by Angheli-Zaicenco (2003). Among other things, a key issue is who the stakeholders for doing an impact assessment are, and why such would be of value for them.

In addition, impact can be assessed at the level of (a) knowledge and intellectual skills; (b) practice and behavioural skills; and (c) attitudes, and should cover:

- Reaction – attitudes of the graduates to their earlier education;
- Learning – an index of what they really learnt;
- Application – whether they are using the learning; and
- Pay-off – what difference they make.

Duration is an issue in impact assessment. The highest quality benchmark here would be, presumably, a lifetime of working in the media industry, (and a sister indicator would be the level of influence and authority to which the graduate rises). A complication is that impact ought to be evaluated in terms of baseline data – i.e. what existed before the graduate joined the media, and indeed what was the prior quality of media output.

For full text and references, see

<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



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The notion of quality as excellence (not necessarily industry-defined) can be a valuable benchmark and aspiration.

The Media Studies curriculum: is industrial attachment necessary?

The key challenge for media educators is not only to compile what these practitioners should teach, but how and when students should learn. Critical issues seem to include: the nature of knowledge, the social context of the curriculum; an appreciation of the ways in which students learn and develop; underpinning ideologies, political and moral factors.

As David Morley (1992) notes:

Cultural studies is not a fixed body of thought that can be transplanted from one place to another... but rather, the place and relevance of cultural studies varies from context to context and has to be related to the specific character of local forms of political and intellectual discourse.

The above statement is relevant to universities in Africa in general today, as they chart fresh waters of transformation and mergers.

DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES DEPARTMENTS

Europe has had the most influence on the development of Media Studies departments in Africa. Francophone regions in Africa, which are concentrated in the North, have been influenced by developments in France. Anglophone Africa has been influenced by the British cultural studies tradition; and the Sahel regions have remained close to the Islamic traditions with a heavy influence of American and French cultural studies, especially in the oil-producing regions.

Lusophone Africa has really remained in limbo due to the long periods of conflict after independence. They have also not escaped the American media imperialism inertia. Brazil is influencing Media Studies developments in a very limited way, at the Augustino Neto University in particular.

EUROPEAN CULTURAL STUDIES

In Africa, the universities of Ibadan, Cairo, Kenya, Rhodes and several others have been teaching journalism since the early seventies. But Media Studies is a recent development. In Southern Africa, Rhodes University has been in the forefront of teaching Journalism courses, while the university of Natal has pioneered what can be called Media Studies. South African universities cannot deny the impact of apartheid on media courses in particular.

The University of Zambia was one of the pioneers in Southern Africa to introduce a formal degree in media studies.

Many media studies programmes have an industrial attachment component. But what should be the length of this industrial attachment period, if indeed it is a necessary part of educating Media Studies Students? This paper attempts to throw some light on what is happening in some institutions and to give a tentative outlook on future developments.

In Zimbabwe, journalists were always imported from the UK via South Africa due to ownership structures. Rhodesian papers were subsidiaries of the Argus group and had similar editorial policies. Journalism courses began in Zimbabwe after independence in 1982, with a Diploma in Mass Communication at the Harare Polytechnic. Plans to introduce courses for senior journalists began at the University of Zimbabwe in the early 1990s. This led to the introduction of a postgraduate degree in Communication and Media Studies in 1992, followed by a taught MA degree. However, no steps have been taken to introduce a media degree at the undergraduate level.

The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, is offering a more technically oriented journalism and media degree. This is because of the availability of expertise to teach subjects like broadcasting, computing and telecommunications theory and practice in other departments.

The University of Botswana has also introduced Journalism and Media Studies degrees in the past five years.

Many other universities in Africa have media courses as majors in conjunction with languages, especially English, and are facing problems on how to move forward due to shortages in staff.

Not all endeavours to develop media studies in Southern Africa have been successful. The University of Swaziland tried to introduce Media Studies in the early nineties. The course has not developed due to lack of staff and the one or two communication courses on offer are at the general level and still in the English department.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

The advent of a new dispensation since 1994 has brought with it new challenges to South African tertiary institutions in general: global economics, global media; cultural diversity; cutting edge competition; democratisation; HIV/Aids and new global conflicts. These new challenges, coupled with new developments in technology, the media and post-modernism, demand new ways of thinking as well as new skills.

The South African government recognises these challenges and has put in place mechanisms to keep abreast with new developments. The white paper on higher education (1997) was an important springboard. As a result of the unfolding debate, the Minister of Education commissioned a task team for the council of higher education to coincide with the new Education Act in 2000.

What is most pertinent to us is chapter 3, which unpacks the concept of "reconfiguring higher education". It highlights that:

The country requires institutions with particular social mandates and a diversity of institutions with different and distinct missions. (p.32) ... Reform and innovation are continuous processes.

It is in this climate of new hope that the University of Limpopo introduced the Department of Media Studies in 1999. The Department has already taken steps to revamp its inaugural curriculum, but a lot more needs to be done.

ILLUMINATIVE EVALUATION

The research into how to revamp the curriculum used the illuminative evaluation strategy, which entails the use of a variety of methods for analysis and synthesis: structured interviews, discussions, teaching, postgraduate student supervision, questionnaires, attendance of conferences and workshops, site visits and participatory observation.

More than 20 professional media people, academics and administrators were interviewed, plus all members of staff in the Media Studies discipline. Several meetings were also held with the Director of the School of Languages and Communication and the Dean of Humanities.

Two questionnaires were also used for students and the general university community. The first questionnaire focused on pertinent curriculum issues. The second questionnaire was a readership survey, to evaluate the need for a dedicated reading room.

Many media workshops and conferences were attended, and site visits were also made to media institutions and universities.

A lot of information was gathered which is beyond the scope of the current paper. But the following issues were pinpointed for debate:

- What is the current Media Studies Curriculum?
- How long should industrial attachment (internship) take?
- How relevant is this curriculum to industry requirements?

- What needs to be undone?
- Quality of students.
- Quality of staff
- Resources available/ required
- The curriculum gap
- Proposed curriculum
- Staff requirements

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BA (MEDIA STUDIES) AT UL AND NUST

There are 96 Media Studies credits out of a total of 360 credits needed for graduation. In general, for a Media Studies degree, more than half of the course credits should be Media Studies courses. One way of doing this is to allow students to do the general courses at the first levels and to concentrate as they move to the third level. There does not appear to be cohesion and progression in the courses offer. Efforts to improve the curriculum are at an advanced stage.

This tentative insight comes from ongoing research from NUST in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and UL. They were chosen because of their very different emphases and approach on industrial attachment.

The research on the relevance of industrial attachment in media studies is ongoing. The critical factors are:

- Purpose of practicum;
- Length of practicum;
- Supervision during practicum; and
- Assessment of practicum and integrating it to the whole learning strategy.

Tentative results indicate that universities and industry have differing perceptions of the purpose of attachment. At NUST for example, the degree in journalism and Media Studies takes four years. The third year is dedicated to industrial attachment.

All NUST degrees have the industrial attachment component. A catalogue of interested organisations has been developed, and planning for placement takes place during the middle of the second year.

Initial results of our research show that the first crop of 20 students was placed in a variety of organisations. The point is that only four were placed directly in broadcasting and print media organisations. The rest were in organisations that utilised the media. Even though results are still coming in, it is vital to note that media students need a very broad-based education.

At the University of Limpopo, on the other hand, first degree students have not been going on attachment. Attachment has been reserved for Honours students. Students have been going to one electronic broadcaster for a period of between three and eight weeks at the end of their course.

Research on other SADC institutions shows a cloudy picture. A visit to the *Sunday Times* on this research revealed that they have a structured internship programme of about six months. Several universities in South Africa are using this model.

What model of attachment should be followed? My research is ongoing.

For full text and references, see <http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



...learning should be concept-driven and set out to integrate different journalistic and media paradigms with media practice.



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A regional teaching and learning programme for media coverage of the SADC region?

A recent initiative by SADC Information 21 Project, part of the communication wing of SADC, undertakes to develop a curriculum (or programme of learning and teaching) to introduce at journalism education and training institutions in the SADC region that focuses on coverage of regional development and integration. That it is important to enable informed, probing and in-depth coverage of the region makes this an opportunity to make a useful intervention in journalism education. That SADC is a regional body pioneering a curricular process to encourage coverage of itself and its processes might introduce a concern about the critical potential of such an initiative.

Working from a position that the media potentially can further concern for and awareness of issues of social justice, this paper sets out to discuss and reflect on the extent to which this provides an opportunity to nurture journalistic and media practices that promote democratic thinking. It does this by first contextualising SADC, its objectives and concerns, and the issue of regionalisation on the African context. Then, with this background in mind it moves to an overview of SADC's media and the media coverage of SADC in order to consider the possibilities for such a curriculum within the context of the media and media education and training institutions in SADC, before discussing the form of curriculum that is envisaged as appropriate to this challenging context.

THE DRAFT CURRICULUM

...The general aim of the programme is identified as fostering an approach to media coverage of SADC which serves the development of the region while promoting critical and democratic journalism.

Broadly speaking, the approach calls for the learning to be concept-driven and deliberately sets out to integrate different journalistic and media paradigms with media practice. This curriculum programme does not foreground isolated skills, nor is it tightly prescriptive about a single method and set of technical skills. Rather, it sees the challenge as one of developing broad understandings to inform the work of journalists and media practitioners in relation to civic or 'development' journalism and to SADC. It therefore sets out to identify aspects of the history of journalism that relate to the fostering of citizenship. This aims to enable media practitioners to assess the appropriateness of particular approaches under particular circumstances. A practice that is informed and contextualised and that incorporates a sense of responsibility to civil society is proposed.

The pedagogy assumes an outcomes-based approach that is explicit for learners and teachers and assumes active learning. It needs to be flexible enough to be useful for diverse learning situations, to work as a discrete module as well as to be

suitable to incorporate and enrich other teaching modules. An action-research cycle whereby students engage in directed activities, which are reflected on critically with lecturer/peer guidance, and then reworked in the light of the feedback and the task-based approach focus call for engagement with broad knowledge bases and includes both individual as well as team work. Practical work is envisaged as both topical and investigative.

STRUCTURE

As the programme seeks to provide appropriate knowledge for journalists to cover the SADC sub-region from a citizen-centred paradigm, two sets of knowledge are identified as important to this project and one section is devoted to practical production, resulting in a three-pronged structure which media educators can use according to their perceived needs.

1. Informed understandings of SADC as a sub-region, the countries that constitute it, and a greater understanding of their political, economic and developmental needs.

This section seeks to introduce regionalism as a global phenomenon and to explore it in relation to SADC, to explore the institution of SADC and its political agenda, develop a broad knowledge base about SADC as a region, as well as to construct a convincing rationale for media practitioners to motivate them to cover SADC more thoroughly, more regularly and in line with the concerns of citizenship in the region.

2. The development of different forms of journalism – media frames and perspectives

This section provides an overview of the ways in which public and 'development' journalism has been practised, the forms it has taken under particular circumstances, and the implications of these. The aim of this section is to develop an understanding of how concerns with citizenship have been articulated in different forms of journalism since its inception. The purpose of this section is not to provide a prescriptive model to guide media coverage of SADC. Instead, it provides a set of perspectives that talk to the underlying issues of citizenship in media coverage, which can then be drawn on thoughtfully by media practitioners in different locations, working in different forms of media, and talking to a range of different audiences.

This section first focuses on the normative view of journalism and its role in relation to citizens (Curran 1991). As this is the naturalised approach, the practices and their implications for citizenship are explored in relation to democratic issues. Then, in contrast to this normative view other approaches are covered. Importantly in relation to African

media production, the NWICO debates of the 1970s and 1980s foregrounded issues of global capitalism and economic imperialism and gave rise to two approaches to media production in non-industrialised countries that have been described as 'development' or 'developmental' (sunshine) journalism (Ogan 1982), and participatory communication (Servaes 2001). Similar concerns about the role of the media were subsequently taken up two decades later under the rubric of public/civic journalism in urban America (Rosen 1999, Merritt 2002). This section seeks to point out the significance of the key concerns of these forms of journalism in order to inform shifts in media practice and thereby to the broad SADC project.

3. Media strategies for media coverage of SADC:

- a. dealing with 'development' issues
- b. journalism as a means of development

The aim of this section is to establish an explicit strategy for media coverage on the SADC region that draws on the knowledge and understandings developed in the previous sections. It is directed to producing media that covers SADC in relation to those developmental processes pertinent to the sub-region and to reflect on the journalistic practices used. It foregrounds the principles of civic or 'development' journalism and from a citizen-centred approach focuses on intensive media production. Intrinsic to this is a problematised view on news values, the role of the journalist and corresponding ethics or a sense of responsibility to civil society.

Accordingly, it advocates that citizen-centred journalism not be construed as politically correct media nor prescriptive of a particular line, that it does not lapse into sunshine journalism (ministers opening schools, etc), nor be about conflict alone. It proposes that it can cover any topic but foregrounds conceptualising the story to include citizen-based news; it can also be disseminated through any medium. It acknowledges, however, that it is not necessarily straightforward and calls for media practitioners to eschew formula in order to think outside of the box.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper began as a reflection on the initiative taken by SADC to enable a focussed learning

programme on SADC media coverage on regional integration and development. It has attempted to be mindful both of the opportunities it presents for media education and training and civic-minded journalism and media practice. Clearly, my position has been that it offers possibilities for impacting positively on media education and training. The envisaged programme can be perceived as relating to journalism education more generally as it is concept based and can be adjusted for other modules as well as contributing to the existing body of learning materials which are relevant to local contexts.

In anticipation of particular responses, I hasten to add that I acknowledge that there is an idealistic element to such work. But then the same must be said of the larger enterprises of education and democracy. For media educators and practitioners in SADC countries with highly repressive media environments it might be seriously challenging to manage the envisaged programme. Sovereignty-boosting and shadow forms of governance described at the beginning of the paper foreclose the opportunities for critical engagement in numerous ways. If the concern of such leaders is with their own rather than the public good, civic-minded media has to be an anathema to them. This programme does not take this into account or propose strategies explicitly to address this, but such a programme is arguably important precisely in those spaces.

Finally, however, the success of the programme will also depend on the quality of the materials and while a fair amount of thinking and work has taken place to this point, they are not yet produced. This is really the crux of the whole enterprise and as these are yet in process, for the moment then the jury must remain out.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

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A commitment to critique may help students to push the envelope in terms of journalistic method, style, form, and structure.

Educating for a democratic media system in South Africa

This paper explores one of a number of courses being designed in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University in response to a perceived lack of congruence between the 'academic' and 'vocational' streams of the curriculum. The course – Journalism, Democracy and Development and Critical Media Production – aims to encompass and bridge media studies theory and media production outcomes. In particular, the paper will argue that it is only through the mainstreaming of some 'reformist', 'alternative' and 'oppositional' approaches to the production of journalistic texts that the complex set of requirements for a democratic media system may be met.

INTRODUCTION: REVISITING THE 'THEORY' VERSUS 'PRACTICE' PROBLEM

This paper flows from one of a number of attempts being made by the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University to straddle a perceived lack of congruence between the 'academic' and 'vocational' streams of the curriculum. While I usually teach writing and editing on the 'vocational' end of the curriculum, I have been assigned responsibility for integrating the Journalism, Democracy and Development and Critical Media Production dimensions of this semester-long, third year level course. Over 100 students from six specialisation areas (writing, design, photojournalism, new media, radio and TV) together with eight Media Studies and Media Production lecturers will collaborate on the project in the second half of 2005, so a lot is riding on its success.

I hope that the experience of doing this course will destabilise the notion that when I teach writing I should have in my head an 'ideal type' of journalism practised in a mainstream newsroom. I have always been somewhat uncomfortable with the assumption that there is a canon of generally accepted and unproblematic routines, procedures, skills, ethics, organisational arrangements, research

methods and production techniques that must be covered. Nevertheless I have continued to teach this set of professional standards and practices on the vaguely received wisdom that students must be prepared for their future careers in a competitive industry.

Some of this goes against my better judgement since, as someone with a general education in Media Studies, I am aware of how mainstream Western journalistic practice and content has been subjected to sustained and profound critique from multiple vantage points.

As a 'production lecturer' I felt I did not have sufficient time and space in the writing and editing courses to encourage students to produce practical work framed and informed by 'critical theory'.

Despite taking a host of Media Studies courses throughout their degree, I am concerned that – along with their lecturer – my students leave at the door of the practical classroom some of the understandings cultivated by these theoretical courses. One of the main reasons for this oversight remains the continued physical and conceptual separation of most media studies theory (with its emphasis on critique) and media production practice (with its emphasis on technique) – the parallel 'academic' and

'vocational' streams in the curriculum are taught by different academics and the relationship between them has historically been under-developed and sometimes even openly hostile. Of course, we are not alone in this.

Thus, one unfortunate result of the separation is that the theory and practice of a long list of non-mainstream journalisms – which are usually categorized in the literature as either 'reformist', 'interventionist', 'alternative' or 'oppositional' (see for example, Atton 2002 and Glasser 1999) – are either ignored or fleetingly presented as 'extreme' case studies in courses, because they are assumed to be minority pursuits of a radical fringe. This paper asserts that it could legitimately be part of my academic mission to theorise and test journalistic approaches and techniques appropriate to South African conditions – while I am a 'writing and editing' lecturer, I could also surely aspire to add the label or identity 'journalism scholar'.

CRITICISM VERSUS CRITIQUE

For me, the principal 'faults' of my students' work lie not in the many correctable mistakes of accuracy, grammar, syntax, story form, attribution, general knowledge and so on (although it is undeniably important that these mistakes be pointed out and corrected), but in the fact that this work is seldom informed by a challenge to 'the form of society as a whole'. This is because students do not realise that they are operating in a particular paradigm, which makes the very possibility of mounting this challenge impossible. They cannot adequately articulate what the various approaches to journalism are for, or what they as journalists could or should be for or against. Some might say it is not our job to engender or mount a political challenge. But to act as if what is given is what is normal, is itself an unacknowledged yet highly 'political' position to take.

One has a limited amount of time within which to teach. Should one use that time to run endless hard news writing assignments, clean up sloppy grammar, or run news awareness tests? Or could one use this time to help students discover a sense of the possibilities and purposes of journalism?

It is my contention that some of the weaknesses identified in the Sanef skills audit – a lack of reporting, writing and accuracy skills among reporters – might be ameliorated by an education that builds commitment through rigorous thinking about the nature of journalism.

A commitment to critique may help students to push the envelope on in terms of journalistic method, style, form, and structure.

Is this setting the bar too high? On the other hand, if Media Studies lecturers expect critique to be at the centre of their work, why should I have to settle for anything less?

JOURNALISM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

The new course in Journalism, Democracy and Development at the third year level is premised on the idea that differing conceptions of democracy and development have implications for the way journalism is conceived, organised and produced, which in turn shapes journalistic form and content. By exploring this relationship between ideas about journalism's role and the alternative assumptions and practices of various 'journalisms', this course aims to bring together – through critique – the Media Studies and Media Production components of the third year curriculum into something described as 'critical media production'.

The course will require students to research and evaluate a number of different approaches to and definitions of democracy and development. In groups, students will have to forge a common understanding of democracy and development and the kind of journalism they propose doing in pursuit of these ideals.

In Module 1 of the course (Term 3 of 2005), the two weekly double period lecture slots will be used to map out the theoretical and conceptual context for the course and to set up a production plan for a themed 'critical media production' project, which will be run for the duration of Term 4. The focus in this term is on the vocabulary of analytical terms to describe the complex ways that different approaches to journalism enrich a composite democratic media system.

In the final term, students from all specialisations will collaborate on a multi-media project themed 'Rhodes in Africa, Africa at Rhodes' using a range of non-mainstream journalistic approaches.

WHO'S AFRAID OF ADVOCACY? THE ORGANISED PUBLIC SPHERE

Since the closure of the ANC newspaper, *Mayibuye*, we have endured a curious situation in political life where the largest political party in the country does not have its own general interest medium.

Why doesn't Cosatu, one of the largest trade union federations in the world, have its own radio station or regular, engagingly written print titles?

And, even if they did, would any Rhodes journalism graduates want to associate themselves with this sort of title, this sort of advocacy? The class- and race-based distortions of the journalism intake at Rhodes are cause for concern here. Add to this the lack of financial incentives, which is another reason our students don't see themselves working for the TAC or community radio stations. But, perhaps the most compelling reason they are scared off is the stigma some journalism educators attach to these jobs.

Is there such a thing as an advocacy journalist and, if so, should we educate some? To what extent are we responsible for the crisis in the organised public sphere in South Africa (the woeful paucity of media produced by subaltern counter-publics)? If advocacy is a legitimate part of a democratic media system, why are we as journalism educators so scared of it? Why are we unwilling to give our support to a more radical conception of the democratic role of media to balance the playing field of journalistic practice in our country? What do we lose by locating ourselves in this place of advocacy, at least for part of our curriculum? And, can we come up with some really innovative thinking about how to best support this organised public sphere in the South African context?

For full text and reference, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

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Socialisation into the relatively idealistic journalistic work at Vuvuzela may also set students up for conflict.

Blowing our own Vuvuzela: Lessons for journalism education from a campus publication

Students producing a newspaper under near-professional conditions are forced to deal with a number of tough newsroom issues. These are all a part of the reality of journalism practice and usually the most difficult things for students to learn, as they require confidence, assertiveness and skills that are not easily conveyed in conventional classroom situations. Formal learning artificially separates out particular skills from each other and teaches them to students as individual outcomes. Working on a student publication requires them to draw on all these skills in an environment in which there is still some support. It thus takes them to an advanced level of journalistic practice.

It is for these reasons that the Wits Journalism and Media Studies programme established a weekly campus newspaper, called *Vuvuzela*. Staffed by students, the production of the paper is fully integrated into the curriculum – working on *Vuvuzela* is an assessed component of the Honours degree. Faculty and professional journalists mentor students in producing the paper, in order to maintain professional standards.

The first function of *Vuvuzela* is to serve as a learning tool, which sets two priorities: that students first and foremost learn and practise the craft of journalism, emphasising professional values and conduct; and that students are aware of their readers and ensure the paper serves them. Because mentors supervise this process, it means that *Vuvuzela* is not a radical, experimental student publication. However, it is important that they develop a certain level of autonomy, so the mentors need to step back gradually over the annual cycle and allow them more space to make decisions.

The importance of coaching in newsrooms is already well recognised; and has been advocated by such training centres as the Poynter Institute. Orville Schell, Dean of Journalism at Berkeley, argues that young journalists used to benefit from intensive feedback from senior journalists and editors at news publications. "What has changed within our lifetimes is the ability of 'media outlets' (as they have come to be known) to mentor and cultivate young journalists in the best traditions of the craft at the lower reaches of the professional ladder," he argues. This places the onus on journalism educators to provide that step.

Assessing the students' reporting and writing is relatively straightforward, as they submit a portfolio of their work, including copies of both their first draft and their subbed copy as it appeared in the paper. More difficult is the assessment of their roles in the production process, particularly those which involve team work. This is recorded on a grid that is filled in weekly by mentors, assessing each student on his or her organisational function.

A distinctive feature of the newspaper is that it is a partnership with Media 24, who print the paper, handle advertising sales, and sponsor mentors and internships. Once costs have been covered, further proceeds will go first to develop the product, and thereafter be shared equally by the partners. This structure allows students to experience all the advantages and disadvantages of working in a semi-commercial environment, forcing them from time to time to grapple with ethical questions. They must be aware of the need for the paper to be sustainable and viable. However, the publication is not profit-motivated and is therefore free from some of the worst ravages of rampant commercialism.

It is axiomatic in journalism education in many countries that working on campus media provides students with invaluable experience and develops their professional skills. It

also makes students more marketable to industry, where a publication record may be considered more important than a journalism degree. Research into journalism education in the United States in the 1990s found that 78% of new journalists had worked on campus publications. The research also found that newsroom recruiters considered working on campus news media more important than having a journalism degree.

However, the benefit to students of the *Vuvuzela* project is not limited to the development of professional skills. The issues facing journalism education have been characterised in a number of countries as a choice between investing in teaching practice (through projects such as *Vuvuzela*) or in adding more academic courses. In the United States, the decision in 2002 of the new president of Columbia University, Lee Bollinger, to suspend the search for a new dean of Journalism provoked a stormy debate around this perceived divide. (See the article at <http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/debate/forum.1.essay.html>.)

Bollinger had expressed concern that the postgraduate journalism programme in a university known for research excellence appeared to be narrowly focused on professional practice. "To teach the craft of journalism is a worthy goal but clearly insufficient in this new world and within the setting of a great university," Bollinger wrote to his faculty.

Much of the criticism of Bollinger's position fell into the "journalism is thinkology" camp, which argued that a focus on writing and reporting stories develops conceptual skills. Others argued that journalists need to understand their context. However, some commentators have pointed to the theory vs practice debate as an artificial distinction. "The idea that a department or school should be one or the other, a so-called boot camp versus a place for thinking people, is, it seems to me, silly," writes editor and journalism teacher Les Gura. In South Africa, too, journalism educators have seen the issues confronting journalism education as more complex. John Williams argued in *Ecquid Novi* that "problems in the real world do not emerge within specific disciplinary boundaries". But the question remains: what do we teach, and how?

Theory and practice are still generally sorted into different streams in academic institutions, usually for pragmatic reasons relating to the teaching needs of programmes or, in certain institutions, for historical reasons. Teachers, too, often come either from academic backgrounds or from journalistic lives. So how do we implement the recommendation to "integrate courses across disciplines ... break down artificial boundaries"? Although it is often necessary, for pragmatic reasons, to maintain separate theory and practice courses, they can be taught in a way that allows students to integrate their professional practice with their understanding of media theory. This is easier to achieve with working journalists, as courses can be designed to use their own experience to help them see the relevance of research and theory to their understanding of the media they work in. However, with students who have no newsroom experience, it is harder to achieve that integration.

It quickly became apparent to us that the *Vuvuzela* experience allowed our student reporters to confront on a day-to-day basis many of the issues we were studying on a theoretical level: from ethics to issues of representation. The most obvious connection is, broadly, to theory about the factors that influence the production of content. These would include questions of who selects the news, what are news values, the impact of organisational culture and working routines on journalists, and issues of how sources influence the news.

Furthermore, the university community adapting to the arrival for the first time of a medium such as *Vuvuzela* has provided a fascinating case study of the role a news publication can play in a community, providing a link to debates around the role of the media in society. The question of whether the media should be a watchdog of government becomes more tangible when student reporters are reflecting on how to relate to student government or the university administration. The impact of particular news stories on their institutional environment helps them consider certain media effects theories, like agenda-setting.

Finally, another aspect of learning from the production that is difficult to quantify is the extent of professional socialisation that occurs in the *Vuvuzela* newsroom. Some research has shown that experiences in news organisations "have an important impact on journalists' perceptions of their occupation" and that they generalise about the profession from their specific workplace experiences. Socialisation also helps journalists develop commitment to the profession, an adherence to certain kinds of ethical conduct and a general agreement about news values. Organizational experience also plays a role in whether new journalists develop a commitment to the profession. However, it is clear that newsroom socialisation can also work against the reflective and critical approaches required for media studies, as it can encourage young journalists to commit to a particular professional ideology that is resistant to critiques of it. Socialisation into the relatively idealistic journalistic work at *Vuvuzela* may also set students up for conflict when they are required to function in more commercialised environments. To avoid this pitfall, which we would argue lies at the heart of the practice vs theory debate, requires that the *Vuvuzela* experience needs to contain that dimension of critical reflection that is usually the domain of media theory.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

Teaching critical journalism: towards a paradigm for South African media education

Today, because of the inevitable cost-cutting exercises, as well as the exodus of more experienced journalists from newsrooms, universities and journalism schools have to take the place of mentorship of junior reporters by seasoned journalists.

THE "GIMLEKOLLEN MODEL" AT ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

The first intake of students at the Addis Ababa University (AAU) Graduate School of Journalism and Communication began in 2004 and consisted of just 27 students. Prior to the intake, a long planning process had been undertaken in a joint venture between AAU and the Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication in Kristiansand, Norway. Through its owner organisation, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Gimlekollen has more than 50 years' presence in Ethiopia.

The aim of the Graduate School's programme is to train critical journalists for the Ethiopian media environment and also to equip students with academic competence, in order to pursue media research and PhD studies, content thus being partly practical and partly theoretical. The programme has a particular focus on news and investigative journalism, as well as issues related to media, democracy and human rights.

The educational model deployed in the programme is referred to as the "Gimlekollen Model", where three legs make up the foundation: the interrelation between theory and practice, an emphasis on issues of democracy and human rights, and the importance of ethical consciousness. Consequently, teaching and training is undertaken by expatriate instructors from all over the world. The programme also offers short-term training courses for Ethiopian journalists.

Teaching at AAU's Graduate School has been a remarkable learning curve. Apart from the underlying "Gimlekollen model" philosophy, there is a substantial amount of flexibility in the course from the lecturer's perspective. Using my one course – print and web journalism – as an example, the students enrolled in the course co-determined, after some discussion, a civic journalism approach; they wanted their stories to bring about what Ettema and Glasser (1998: 189) would consider the three accomplishments of investigative journalism:

- Publicising serious instances of systematic breakdown and institutional disorder;
- Accountability – demanding an account of the situation from those who are responsible; and
- Solidarity – establishing an empathetic link between those who have suffered in the situation, and the rest of us.

The students at AAU at this stage choose

This extract discusses the example of the educational model offered by Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Journalism and Communication. Its benefits are enumerated, as are the challenges of applying the model to a larger class.

It concludes with a brief discussion of the role that postgraduate education can play for journalists.

between broadcast journalism and print and web journalism, so it is relatively easy to connect with a group of 15 print and web journalism students. It allows a lecturer to mark pedantically, picking out every mistake, from the concept through to spelling and grammar (an enormous advantage – indeed vital – when teaching English second-language students).

The Gimlekollen approach works partly because of the small classes. Also, the students are carefully chosen through stringent selection procedures, so there are none of the literacy problems endemic in South African universities. And being an MA programme, many of them come from a media background with working experience, or an academic background, or some other position of employment – they tend to be mature students, wanting to achieve and willing to work hard. The School itself is small enough, and for the time being, independent enough, to move quickly and creatively to respond to what is going on in the world.

Students in my group wanted to focus on specific problems, both in the student community and the larger communities of Addis. Given the short time frame, this couldn't be too detailed or in-depth, but it was a starting point. Having class discussions similar to those that would take place in a newsroom, stories (both hard news and features) were identified and I followed them through the process, on occasion even accompanying some as they pursued stories.

In the classroom we could then discuss the context of each story, the culture of the community affected (if relevant) and the sensitivities involved,

and the group could follow each story through the writing and editing process. The students themselves were very aware of the need to attract readers from the wider university community, and came up with a number of innovative ways of attracting this predominantly young audience, with suggestions often involving the Internet and e-mail.

Where writing was concerned, we began with the core concepts, but quickly moved on from there. I encourage the use of good, provocative writing. I also encouraged the group to write opinion, partly because today many young people do it all the time, in blogs, on chat pages and in forums.

The result of this approach has been that students learned a variety of important aspects of journalism, including:

- The importance of ethics;
- The need for critical thinking;
- The importance of computer-assisted reporting, especially use of the Internet and email;
- Collaboration and teamwork;
- The ability to cope in a fast and ever-changing environment;
- Adoption of a global perspective;
- Leadership on a variety of levels; and
- The importance of tenacity and in-depth research when investigating a story.

There were many other interesting features of the AAU Graduate School's course contents. For example, the way graphics are being presented is in the context of "a new graphic sensibility to the presentation of information, not just colour pictures with white space around them", to quote a colleague.

What I have learned from teaching at the Graduate school – and have brought back with me – is a pedagogy that allows, in a sense, for the co-creation of a course based on shared goals between students and lecturers. I think the students found this empowering. It necessitates a more flexible syllabus, but most importantly it requires the students to get out of the classroom environment and into the community at large.

Also, they learn from the beginning the distance necessary to produce a fair and balanced story (on more than one occasion, students recused themselves from stories on the grounds that they were too personally involved).

There are other pedagogical goals I could mention here: primarily that I wanted the students to think deeply about what the role of being a journalist entails. I wanted them to learn to work with each other, but also with strangers. It was also important to me that they gained some insight into the

complex challenges faced by different groups of people – the ability, if you like, to empathise with people who were completely different from them.

And lastly, I like to think the course stretched their writing abilities and challenged their research skills.

I realise that these pedagogical goals are extremely difficult to attain when teaching a large class. My current undergraduate class at Unizul, for example, has 127 students – and it becomes an impossible task to give individual detailed attention to each student, although I do attempt to do so. What would alleviate my situation is a sponsored system of tutors (graduate or senior), each tutor taking close pedagogical responsibility for a small group of around 15 students. This arrangement should be taken seriously and institutionalised. Some universities already allow for a similar system: perhaps those who cannot afford the extra cost could apply to outside organisations for funding.

However, my Honours and MA students have taken to the concepts with tenacity and enthusiasm. Over and above the previously mentioned pedagogical insights, the Honours group now freelance and regularly publish in KZN newspapers.

IMPORTANCE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY

For some types of journalism – community newspapers, for example – undergraduate training could be sufficient. But for a journalist wanting immediate employment at a major national daily newspaper, or international magazine, or wanting to specialise in some area, I believe they need training at postgraduate level. The best journalists are curious, independent, critical thinkers. You aren't going to teach a student how to think by teaching him or her how to write hard news in an inverted pyramid style.

Quinn (1999) argues that postgraduate programmes are starting to flourish internationally, and many journalism schools no longer offer undergraduate programmes at all, as undereducated journalists realise they need more specialised knowledge. "The future in education belongs to universities that can offer these courses – even online, in some cases" (ibid).

For full text and references, see <http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



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The best journalists are curious, independent, critical thinkers.

**After eleven years of democracy,
diversity is not reflected in
front of our classrooms.**



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Reflections on mapping the curriculum – towards Afro-humanist values in identifying ‘new basics’ in South African journalism

A new location for journalism education and training is argued to be within the spheres of an Afro-humanist philosophy and culture. In this philosophy and culture, the concern for human welfare, dignity and values from within an Afro-centric paradigm are paramount. This exploration will hopefully lead to a new set of “basics” of what journalism education and training should be, and could lead to answers of how it should be taught.

QUALIFICATIONS

J-E&T: For the purposes of this paper, the question only concerns itself with journalism, and not with other manifestations of mass communication. Education and training, E&T, thus relate to journalism only, and not to the popular Journalism Mass Communication (JMC) configuration. “J-E&T” therefore refers to entry level journalism education and training at tertiary institutions only.

Afro-humanist/Afro-humanism, *ubuntu* journalism: A theoretical framework that takes its basis from the liberatory theory, with elements of developmental journalism, as it expanded from the Western libertarian model; also defined as an Africanised journalism based on the principles of *ubuntu* (Blankenberg, 1999:1) as “an egalitarian, humanist philosophy”.

There are caveats around the term *ubuntu*, because it is described as an “ideal” concept, one which therefore promotes “an ideal of liberatory” journalism.

Ubuntu usually translates to read as a shared humanity, an aspect of communitarianism, to behave humanely toward others. It has also been described as African humanism, which includes “sympathy, care, sensitivity to the needs of others, respect, consideration, patience and kindness” (Chikanda, as cited in Prinsloo, 1998:42).

To summarise, African liberatory journalism should be located within an Afro-centric, Afro-humanistic, *ubuntu* paradigm, with its object human welfare, dignity and values, and which should be embraced in J-E&T programmes. It raises the question how *ubuntu* and “objectivity” can be aligned.

HOW DOES ONE TEACH THIS NEW JOURNALISTIC PARADIGM?

If one assumes that the outcome is a vocational journalism qualification, students should be equipped with the basic skills and knowledge of entry-level journalism as identified according to Audit 1, and it should go beyond that: these skills should be practised within an Afro-humanist *ubuntu* journalistic model.

WHAT A JOURNALISM PROGRAMME SHOULD BE

The students

There should be a focused selection programme. Students should go through a selection process that can assess whether they have the potential to comply with the basic requirements of journalism. This means prospective students should have, relative to an undergrad or post-grad course, a certain proficiency in reading and writing, as well as an awareness of news.

Selecting suitable students mean smaller classes – to ensure individual, quality E&T. Mass communication might possibly be taught in mass classes. Journalism can only be taught in small groups on an individual basis.

The teachers

Journalism can only be taught by experienced, accomplished journalists from a journalism practice point of view. There is also reason to suspect that those who teach certain journalism related courses and who never have been journalists, do so with a somewhat derogatory reference to journalism and its practice. What impact will this have on the minds of beginners on the eve of entering their chosen careers?

Another concern is that after eleven years of democracy, diversity is not reflected in front of our classrooms.

Journalism teachers should constantly challenge current thinking, and question existing paradigms through research, even if it means the industry feels the “boat should not be rocked”.

Journalism has a unique mode of teaching – therefore the student/lecturer ratio simply cannot be replicated from other disciplines and be applied to the “academic newsroom”.

Curriculum

Afro-humanistic, *ubuntu* liberatory journalism should be researched as a way of seeking to address and redress existing libertarian, Western style concepts and practices in the newsroom, and translated and mainstreamed into a new curriculum for J-E&T. An example of how such “new thinking” was incorporated into J-E&T is the Polytechnic of Namibia where gender was mainstreamed into their curriculum (Morna and Shilongo, 2004).

- A re-thinking of existing programmes should result in a new curriculum together with new materials. Textbooks and other material should support and reflect the envisaged new paradigm.

- Higher (conceptual) and lower (practical) order skills should be combined to ensure critical, analytical, independent minds whose “bullshit detector” is constantly switched on.

- Even at post-graduate level, languages must be compulsory modules.

- Curriculum content that will provide the prospective journalist with enough writing practice – “you learn to write by writing” (Cillie, 1979:4).

Writing is one of the skills in which practical and conceptual skills converge and is the basic skill expected of a beginner-journalist. It encapsulates other skills: information gathering (the skill to conduct interviews and to do research), skills to identify news values to ensure a news report, skills to package the report in a way that reflects the fact that the student knows what legal and ethical stumbling blocks are, and where the student is also cognisant of the liberatory, Afro-humanist, *ubuntu* paradigm in which it should be done, as well as technical skills to package the information for print, broadcast or news media/ICT.

- Curriculum content should form a bridge between the various media platforms to make the prospective journalist multi-skilled for a career in a converging multi-media world.

- A curriculum that includes a knowledge of diversity issues, an awareness of stereotyping and representation, and the know-how to apply this in practice.

- It means real issues of the “here and now” should be included in curricula – such as gender, other diversity issues, HIV/aids, poverty, globalisation, xenophobia, as well as aspects of ICT and how it impacts on the dissemination of information.

- It includes interaction with J-E&T on the rest of the continent.

- This curriculum content should provide the news industry with sound generalist reporters for the newsroom.

- The beginner-journalists should not only replicate existing news practices, but should also be confident in their education that the practice could be broadened each year with skilled journalists who question their own profession in everything they do.

- By adding seminars as part of the curriculum that will support success and which will redress one finding in Audit 1, namely a lack of life skills. Such seminars and workshops could be on time management (or rather, more accurately, self-management), intercultural/multicultural communication skills, conflict management, and an understanding of what a holistic health lifestyle means.

- The student-newsroom – the laboratory – should have equipment representing all media platforms so that they can get hands-on training as part of their daily curriculum, which should also include a daily news conference.

- But most importantly, the curriculum should contribute to providing the SA citizenry with robust, but responsible journalism.

Collaboration

- There should be close co-operation between industry and J-E&T, not only in terms of sponsorships and bursary schemes. Interaction and an almost revolving door of role-model journalists visiting as guest lecturers, bringing the newsroom – and

the real world – into the lecture room, should be a characteristic.

- Industry should also help ensure that the latest technology is available for J-E&T.

- Industry should always be transforming itself, and answer to an Afro-humanist paradigm, so as to be recipients of these “transformed” journalists.

- Provision of media products (newspapers, magazines) as small investments by industry to J-E&T. How can beginner-journalists otherwise study unless they are exposed to daily/weekly news products? These are the real textbooks in a J-E&T programme.

Community involvement

There should be community involvement in the form of experiential training at a community news product. This will not only teach students journalistic principles, but will also make them aware of the primary task of journalism – to give a voice to the voiceless, and to embed responsibility towards communities within individuals, in accordance with an Afro-humanist, *ubuntu* paradigm.

IN SUMMARY

The “how” in the curriculum should be taught in an inter-paradigmatic, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary way – incorporating those basic doing and thinking skills that the news media expects from the beginner-journalist – and of which the requirements of *ubuntu*-journalism form the basis.

CONCLUSION

How should one teach journalism at an academic institution?

With a new paradigm of journalism which answers to an Afro-humanist set of values, and which would follow:

- a complete re-thinking, re-imagining and re-execution of the basics of the profession of journalism by

- a triumvirate of role-players, namely the industry, the teachers and media publics,

- which should result in a re-thought, re-imagined and re-executed curriculum,

- together with a transformed faculty to teach this,

- together with own, indigenous teaching material that would support this new paradigm

- to answer the question of understanding of what humankind has done to discover what humankind is, and to prepare a new generation for a future that cannot yet be envisaged and to provide prospective beginner-journalists with the head, the hands and the heart to become “servants of the people”.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

Beyond simulated journalism training

ISSUES THAT NEWS DEPARTMENTS GRAPPLE WITH

According to Burns (2002:7) the challenge for modern journalists is to find a way to negotiate the often-competing professional, commercial and ethical considerations involved in finding and presenting news, while adhering to a perception of journalism as playing an important role in society. (I will refer to broadcast media, since that is the field I am currently teaching.)

I concur with Barnard (2000:139) when he says that news is part of the very fabric of broadcasting, often a measure of a station's credibility.

"Nowhere is the pressure for fresh content more keenly felt than by those involved in gathering, selecting, writing and presenting news," (Barnard, 2000:139).

a. Tradition?

Some editors might not allow fresh ideas from reporters about new ways of doing stories because they don't want to be seen to be disturbing tradition or fiddling with a winning combination.

Coupled with the pressures of deadlines, such prevailing traditions could put constraints on those responsible for news selection.

b. Hard news versus backgrounders

Faced with pressures of deadlines and the rigidity of editors, journalists could take the line of least resistance and select those news items that are easier to find and edit, e.g. press releases.

c. Lack of story ideas

Some reporters could be relying more on press releases or regular calls from police and emergency services simply because they lack story ideas – they cannot generate their own stories.

Surely anyone who is always rushing behind hard news could be found wanting the day he/she is requested to produce contextualised, analytical background reports.

d. Others

Other mistakes that I hear on radio or on television are what seems to be "lack of double-checking stories, not only for content, but for grammar and language".

Some mistakes do slip the eyes of other gatekeepers.

PRACTICAL TRAINING SHOULD NEVER STOP

The debate about former technikons providing practice and traditional universities teaching theory

This paper argues that journalism trainers and teachers should look beyond traditional teaching methods. First, the paper looks at some issues that news departments grapple with. Then the paper focuses on the importance of continuing with practical training and related challenges, with specific reference to the Tshwane University of Technology. The author touches on teaching methods before suggesting solutions.

is not a big issue any more, since some universities have established news laboratories for practical training of students. They are producing newspapers; some have radio stations, etc.

Practice should always be part and parcel of journalism training. 'Practice' does not refer to a simulated training only. It also means the real thing. If an institution is given other opportunities beyond simulation, it should go for such opportunities.

Let me make a specific example of our situation at the Tshwane University of Technology.

As in other educational institutions across the country, campus radio stations are not run by journalism schools/departments. They are either run by the student services departments or the student representative councils. The same thing is happening with campus newspapers targeting students.

It often leads to friction, with journalism departments questioning certain issues about campus newspapers or radio stations, e.g.

- shoddy writing;
- too much opinionated writing and less about news; and
- violation of ethics.

On the other hand, campus media establishments might see journalism as wanting to take over or interfering or imposing its values on such media. This could lead to friction or animosity.

Instead of trying to take over the entire stations or the campus newspapers, the two journalism departments found opportunities that could add meaning to practical training for students.

a. We entered into partnership with Capital media, which publish community newspapers for various parts of Pretoria. In the case of the western side of Pretoria, our journalism students produce content for the newspaper (*Record West News*). They gather, write, edit and do the layout of the paper, while Capital media is in charge of advertising and printing.

b. We have two radio stations at two campuses, the Soshanguve campus and the Pretoria campus.

The journalism departments at the two campuses requested one hour per week to have news and current affairs programme on the stations. This was aimed at giving journalism students a platform to apply knowledge to practice by generating and producing stories for the program.

Many stations have music programmes. Some songs are played on almost all stations. Starting current affairs was the only serious way to make our station distinctive from others. Not many campus radio stations have dedicated current affairs programs.

One mistake committed by some radio stations is thinking that topical news means hard news only. As a result, they neglect background reports. As a community radio station, to neglect background reports is tantamount to accepting that there are not enough socially relevant events/issues/activities taking place in our communities.

Yes, bulletins are important, but for us at the journalism department, that's small fish. Anyway the stations have been handling the bulletins on their own; hence we decided something different, i.e. current affairs.

In our current affairs programmes, we encourage more local news in line with our license conditions. We believe that broadcasting news on a local radio station indicates a sense of being truly local.

Again, our students are in charge of the program (from story idea, to presentation and production of the programme).

CHALLENGES

The main problems we are faced with are similar to those facing other stations or institutions, namely:

- Getting our students to be creative;
- News judgement;
- Lack of story ideas; and
- Division of loyalty. Since students are obliged to contribute to both radio and community newspapers, some are so passionate about radio that they don't give much effort to the newspaper. On the other hand, some love newspapers and so don't show real commitment to radio.

TEACHING METHODS

There is no single teaching method that can achieve a 100% result on its own. Journalism teachers and trainers should try a combination of various methods to achieve desired results.

Our students are individuals and all differ. Engelbrecht (1999:4) suggests that lecturers ask themselves following questions:

- To what extent do our style and teaching methods and assessment system encourage and sustain different types of students?
- Do we promote, encourage or discourage radically minded students in discussion groups, or do we think such students could mislead others?

He says (1999:8-11) students have one of two learning styles: a surface level process or a deep level process.

A surface level process student is concerned with covering content; learning and quoting information verbatim; and wanting to know what is in the exam paper (scope).

A deep level process student is concerned with what lies behind argument and the logic of the argument; thinks about the whole picture; questions the parts that are not clear; and always questions the conclusion and what something boils down to.

For a lecturer, it could be difficult to deal with such a diverse group of students (not only ethnic, racial, religious or cultural diversity, but differing in the way they process information).

WAY FORWARD

Surely we cannot keep on moaning. Instead, we should try to adapt and modify our approaches to suit the current set-up while trying out other teaching methods.

To borrow from Burns's (2002:31) statement, journalists habitually modify and adapt their strategies.

Even though educational institutions cannot match industry on the purchase of technology, most are trying to install facilities that try to reflect the real situation. However, I think there are more important challenges than technology. Journalists need editorial judgement, an ability to make decisions, and news sense.

There are so many socially related stories there that our reporters could explore which the audience could identify with.

But none of these stories are being told, because we are running after celebrities and other public figures every day. There is nothing wrong with covering hard news. One possible solution is to combine hard news and features.

A radio reporter should make sure his/her story has the ability to stimulate listeners to go outside themselves and imagine things, to be a story teller.

- There should be extra modules or lessons with practical exercises and case studies focusing on news judgment. The ability to identify news, to gather and evaluate information, is crucial.
- We should introduce extra modules on the coverage of issues that are crucial to the needs of the country.
- Some editors need to be sent to refresher courses on using alternative methods of sourcing information or story treatment. It is difficult to teach people new things, but when they enter the market, they are told only traditional methods of doing things work.
- Lecturers should be encouraged to attend workshops and courses dealing with student diversity.
- The sharing of part-time specialist trainers among institutions close to one another should also be explored.

For full text and references, see <http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



On (not) teaching journalism: the experience of UCT

CURRENT POSITION

The University of Cape Town established a major in Media and Writing in 2002 and a Centre for Film and Media Studies in 2003. Currently the Centre takes responsibility for two majors (Film Studies and Media & Writing) and five streams within an undergraduate Film and Media Production Programme: in Print Production; Film and Television Production; Multi-Media production; Scriptwriting; and Radio (from 2005).

The two majors have attracted large numbers of students and both rank among the six largest majors in the Humanities Faculty: we have about 240 students in the third year Media courses and 150 in the third year film courses. In addition, the Centre has a growing number of Honours programme students and research postgraduates registered for MAs and PhDs.

PROGRAMME OR MAJOR? THEORY OR PRACTICE? MEDIA STUDIES OR JOURNALISM?

Many students who come to UCT to do Film and Media come with the intention of getting into the Production programme, particularly the Screen programme. As production only starts mid-way through the second year of study and has stiff academic and portfolio requirements, many students eventually don't apply for the roughly 80 places in Production or, if they apply, don't get in.

The fall-back position for students who don't get into Production is that they, like most Humanities students, do a general degree with a double major. In the regular Media and Film courses, students get opportunities to do creative and project based work. We designed a major in Media & Writing that combines the strengths of both Journalism and Media Studies. Critical analysis and theory without practical application are as pointless as practice without theoretical reflection and analytical rigour.

STRATEGIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

When we started thinking about teaching media courses, I took advice. Ken Owen told me most editors preferred students who had a strong basis in the disciplines; Harvey Tyson advised me to skip print journalism and use UCT's strengths in drama to push broadcast media. Stan Katz told me not to send students with any fixed ideas; Viv Gordon told me that students need portfolios and media products to get media jobs.

Around us, in Cape Town, traditional print journalists looked like an endangered species as the *Cape Times* went from 70 editorial staff to 10 with breathtaking cynicism and speed. What we saw during this process was also a revelation: usually it was the most competent journalists with the greatest skills who moved on to other areas as the process of juniorisation and the destruction of the culture of the newsroom went merrily ahead. (The

This paper focuses on UCT's Centre for Film and Media Studies: what it does and why. First, the course model for the Centre's Media & Writing course is discussed. Then, the struggle to establish the Centre and the reasons for its success are outlined. Lastly, it asks what the Centre did that worked, and might be applicable elsewhere.

SANEF forum on newsroom skills, set up after this bloodletting, was in large part reacting to the monster media owners had created.)

Given this background, training traditional print journalists in the age of convergence and the rise of the bean-counting publisher-manager seemed like raising turkeys for Thanksgiving. So, we said that our role would be to educate versatile media workers-entrepreneurs, able to work as freelancers, to find new ways of producing and distributing content.

Most students studying journalism don't work as journalists, or certainly not as print journalists on newspapers, so we accepted that our students might end up with a variety of careers and that they needed analytical ability and skills that would enable them to change careers and flourish – in advertising, HIV-AIDS education, television production, magazines, scriptwriting, editing, sub-editing. We hired staff whose background was in novel-writing and narrative journalists, so we probably give more emphasis to good stories and the mechanics of story than most traditional journalism schools.

We also used Cape Town's strategic advantages of lots of ambient media expertise – in desperation but, as it turned out, alluringly. If we have survived and grown, it has to a large extent been thanks to the generosity and expertise of local media.

We had to make the case, within departments and in the university more generally, that Media and Film could not be contained profitably within four or five other departments. It took time, student pressure, threats and a sympathetic Dean in the form of Robin Cohen to get Film and Media into a position of near-autonomy.

What were our strategic advantages in media? We had the best students in the country location,

local expertise, industry links, staff who had media expertise. We had strong departments around us with strengths that complemented ours. We also had the advantage of the Humanities Television Unit, formerly part of the Teaching Methods Unit, but since integrated into the Centre.

Against us were a conservative faculty, naturally intent on preserving what privileges they had accumulated over the fat years. We were told, regularly, even, it seemed, in Coetzee's *Disgrace*, that we were reducing the university to a technikon, there was a dystopian and myopic vision of what we were doing, even as departments used the students we brought in to get resources for their traditional business.

But the reality was that we had released a huge energy, we were getting the students, as Peter Anderson says, to the point of combustion. They grumbled, they said they were guinea pigs, that they expected more equipment and expertise, but they came. And, as Lionel Trilling says somewhere, a university administration can resist everything except student demands. Suddenly we were, under Lesley Marx's inspired leadership, a Centre, one of the nine strategic thrusts of UCT, offering majors and getting new staff and a hefty injection of funding for equipment.

While old departments seemed to spend their time fretting about plagiarism and carrying the same colleagues and tired old family feuds they'd been burdened with for twenty years, we had – and still have, I hope – a kind of zest at new creative energy unleashed.

POST-GRADUATE DEVELOPMENTS

This year we started an Honours/MA in Media Theory and Practice, designing a course aimed not at students straight out of third year but at those with

experience of the media. We're aiming at something more like a mix between a Master Class in journalism and a media MBA and we particularly want part-time students.

Our aim is to produce the next generation of editors and media entrepreneurs and we offer two ferocious writing courses, taught by Andre Wiesner and Justin Fox, a course in media theory and research, and a course on media markets and strategies. The first batch of graduates will be unleashed next year.

In addition, we have attracted some very high-powered MA and PhD students. Most of our own staff are still finishing their PhDs, something at once a source of concern, but also of energy and the optimistic sense that we are going to be giving all other media and journalism enterprises a run for their money in the years ahead.

CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT

What worked for us and might be applicable elsewhere?

1. Accept that media work is much wider than print journalism.
2. Don't compromise on expression and writing skills.
3. We accepted that media people often knew more about media than we did. Following that, we've found the South African industry very open to working with us.
4. Instead of fretting about plagiarism, accept that the Internet is a fact of life and try to use it creatively.
5. Students wanting to work in the media need portfolios and show reels and applicable skills, not only certificates and essays.
6. We hired staff who have a mix of academic and industry expertise. Almost all mix creative and academic interests. There is no class struggle between the peasant-producers and the artisto-theorists, or prince-producers and worker-critics.
7. The clichés about diversity being a source of strength become true when you want to study and produce South African media.
8. Group work between students doesn't always make for tidy projects or easy marking, but it creates a much more dynamic and sophisticated level of work.

We face new challenges: of developing research profiles and research ratings; of finding time in punishing teaching schedules for thinking and reading; of trying to maintain collegiality and the sense of having a wonderful time, of growing up disgracefully.

For full text and references, see

<http://jour.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



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Many of our assignments involve projects where plagiarism is simply not possible and we make students reflect critically on their own habits.



How did we come to believe that the best metaphor to describe journalistic practice in the world was as a "profession" and to

teach within this framework as practical teachers?

Teaching to produce 'interpretive communities' rather than just 'professionals'

Debates about whether journalism is a "trade" and can only be learnt "on the job", or whether journalism should even be taught at universities, are no longer fruitful or even interesting. The far more important discussion should be on why we have come to believe that "professionalism" is the best description of journalism and to focus our teaching energies on ethics, media law and the inculcation of professional norms and skills (believing that these alone will lead to excellent practice). The professional approach does not easily lend itself to integration with media studies and doesn't take into account journalistic practices that are better understood as coming from an "interpretive community".

A number of recent situations – expounded in other contributions to this colloquium – have provoked us all into thinking again about why South African journalism seems to be in such deep trouble, and why all the energy and money poured into education, training and retraining seems to have so little effect on the situation. All of this introspection leads me to believe that in fact we have framed our teaching of journalism practice incorrectly, that we have – like many working journalists – allowed ourselves to think that the definition of journalism as a "profession" is the label that confers status and credibility and gives news media practitioners their rationale in the world. We teachers have therefore allowed ourselves to be convinced that the transfer of a certain parcel of knowledge plus a certain set of skills together with a dose of ethics and accuracy mixed up in the ether of a critical humanities environment will contribute to "professionalism" and that this will actually cure journalism in the long run.

How did we come to believe that the best metaphor to describe journalistic practice in the world was as a "profession" and to teach within this framework as practical teachers? There are some insights from various theorists who show us how

over several hundred years this form and definition of journalism has become dominant in the western world.

Jurgen Habermas gives us an understanding of the development of the press as the "fourth estate"; Nerone and Barnhurst show us how through the late 18th and early 19th centuries newspapers changed over time to develop a particular voice and style – and consequently a particular notion of journalists as a profession in order to address mass publics authoritatively; and Jay Rosen shows us how the powerful notion of 'objectivity' came to be not only an ideal, but also a method for gathering information and presenting it and thus a guiding framework for journalists.

So professionalism has been a means, developed over a long time, for journalists to secure a recognised working space and status for themselves in response to the dramatic changes over the centuries in media conditions brought about by commercialisation, industrialisation, changing patterns of ownership and senses of audience.

But, increasing media power and this definition of professionalism have also narrowed the channels through which a multiplicity of voices can place issues into the public domain and then speak about

them. Given the commercialisation of globalised, corporatised media of the last few decades and their consequent influence on private media houses in South Africa, professionalism has worked not to secure a safe space within which journalists can act as citizen advocates, but has narrowed the definition so that any democratic pretensions become mere overlay to doing the job, which is increasingly constrained by commercialism.

In teaching environments the epistemology of "professional" journalism makes it difficult if not impossible to have a productive dialogue with media theorists and therefore makes the teaching of these two streams of academia very difficult to lay alongside each other. It also makes invisible the practices of induction into a particular community of meaning-making, pretending that journalists are simply stenographers of a passing reality rather than producers of a cultural product called journalism. And it makes invisible the subtle practices of power that journalists engage in by projecting the use of coercive power onto the corporate owners of media or the state in its regulatory capacity.

A BETTER FRAME

Barbie Zelizer suggests that in order to understand media power and control in the public domain, notions of performance, narrative, ritual and interpretive community should be investigated. She places these perspectives within the context of journalism operating as an inner-authenticating practice, or a "community" and sets these out as follows:

The notion of performance allows for understandings to be built up of how journalists negotiate power and "internal group authentication" when asserting control over events in the world which become news events. The idea of narrative does not just concern the finding and crafting of information into certain kinds of news texts, but also of offering narrators ways of reconfiguring their authority for events. Using the Rotenbuhler definition of ritual as "communication without information", Zelizer says ritual is used for reporters to "flex their muscles" and gives the example of a debate over appropriate journalistic behaviour that doesn't impart real information to the audience but upholds the ritual of self-reflexivity for the profession. And finally the idea of interpretive community offers the insight that journalism is a community of those who not only produce texts, but also "determine the shape of what is read" (quoting Fish).

Zelizer is making explicit the practices of power, authority-building and control over autonomy that are implicit in the ways in which journalists have come to operate in the world and which are being promoted – invisibly – through the teaching that goes on in tertiary institutions. Unless these uses of power are made overt within curricula, students will continue to assume that it is natural

to emulate certain practices and that the moral discourse aligned with such practices is not to be questioned. They will also continue to deal with questions of power and abuses of power within journalistic practice by resorting to ethical codes and behavioural norms.

They are also unaware that they are being socialised into acting within the norms of a community. I wonder if some of the disappointment that newsroom managers express about the behaviour of students in their workplaces is often around their uncertain or incomplete community behaviour, rather than their skills.

Also, picking up on Zelizer's insight about the sham of much journalistic "self-reflexivity" and how this charade can operate through public breast-beating, name-calling and shaming when a particular practice is considered "unprofessional", teaching must inculcate a genuine self-reflexivity, which can only come through acquiring the intellectual skills imbedded in the thinking work required by engagement with critical media theory.

I also don't think it will do any harm to the teaching of journalism to introduce the dimension of performance. The anxiety about the narrow line journalists tread between fact and fiction, reality and construction of reality must be faced in teaching and discussed. To understand themselves as creating and being part of a community of creation might introduce some well-needed modesty, as well as loosening some of the format constraints of journalism, which students often chafe at, and which could do with modification in my view.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The pedagogical change that I am advocating is best described by David Skinner, Mike J Gasher and James Compton, who say that journalism education should view journalism as an institutional practice of representation, with a curriculum that includes not only a skill set, but also how journalism participates in producing and circulating meaning.

This is much more than simply teaching the glorious history of the development of journalism. It involves unpacking the changes over time with the power dimensions and the assumptions that this is the way the practice is and will always be.

What I am advocating is that we revisit whether the frame within which we unquestioningly teach journalism practice is serving the long-term ability of this profession to withstand the pressures of commercialisation and to enable the bolstering of our public channels of democratic talk, as well as to innovate new formats within which to create journalistic texts that are more transparent about their processes of construction.

We should build into our teaching discussions about power and uses of power, its connection with constructions of knowledge and information, its manifestations in narratives and news formats. We also need to give our students the knowledge base to practise self-reflexivity while they are in teaching environments so that this becomes a habit. This will entail much closer working with media theory colleagues and finding ways in which these two knowledge systems can more effectively inform each other for the purpose of creating citizen-journalists. It will entail modelling self-reflexivity by practising it ourselves.

It will also involve an ongoing discussion with editors and media managers. And while we allow them to provoke us on the quality and efficacy of our skills and knowledge programmes, perhaps we too can provoke them on the definitions and assumptions of journalistic practice they apply in their workplaces.

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

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The media landscape in South Africa is pockmarked by dismal mediocrity.

Teaching, transgressing, transforming:

missionary positions, colonial gazes, and the racialisation of white hegemony in media education in contemporary South Africa

In this paper I wish to open up for discussion concerns with 'race', identity, and media education.

It is important to clarify what is meant by 'race', how we distinguish it from race, and then how whiteness is constituted as a raced position, an instance of the construction of 'race'. In the first section of this paper I outline the problematics of attempting to read 'race' beyond phenotype, emphasising how 'race', while not real, has real effects, and how in the project of attempting to move beyond the contestations of 'race', we have to engage the use of 'race' rather than 'race' itself in order to think "against race" as Paul Gilroy (2002) would have it. The use of 'race' is most pernicious when it is done least visibly, and this use of 'race' can be marked as the discursive figuration of whiteness. In the second section of the paper I engage with the ways in which whiteness can itself be marked in order to divest it of its current position as the merely human, the normative and unmarked position from which the world is viewed, interpreted and acted upon. Implicit throughout both of these sections is an understanding that media production discourse has integral relations with media education discourse, and both of these with the discourse of 'race'. In the concluding section I begin contemplating the ways in which the project of whiteness in its ubiquity echoes some of the inevitability which neo-liberal and global capital constructs as the *fait accompli* to which we must all capitulate and subject ourselves.

Media practitioners, academics, and teachers often make assumptions about the worth, competence, politics, ability and intelligence of human beings based on how they look, even as we acknowledge that 'race' is constructed in social interaction, and is not a socially determining biological reality, such that someone's skin colour is not necessarily a reliable indicator of their 'race'.

'Race', therefore, is not synonymous with skin colour. The discussion about the transformation of the media landscape in South(ern) Africa in the late 1990s, part of a more widespread re-evaluation and reconstitution of the social fabric and the distribution of power within the polity which is South Africa, invested itself far too heavily in what can be considered a personnel change based on phenotype, with some superficial value changes, while the discourse of journalism itself, that Gramscian morbid symptom of modernity, remains unquestionably entrenched as essential to the larger democratic project.

MISSIONARIES, CITIZENS AND SUBJECTS

I question to what extent we have really interrogated (with an aim to abolish) the values of whiteness, which include spirit and enterprise (Dyer 1997: 45), in this landscape of media practitioners. In our complex and multiple relationships with the industrial components of that landscape, are we able, as tertiary educators with a complex and highly contested *raison d'être* (to critique, to respond to social need, to educate, to contribute to the transformation and simultaneous reproduction of social and political relations), to reconcile the demands of that industry with our own work?

It remains unclear how and for how much longer, in an increasingly monopolistic media landscape, given the domination of media organisations by the commercial interests

of internationalised, globalised finance capital such that the commodification of symbolic forms which Thompson (1995:155-217) posits as one of the symptoms of modernity and the rise of the mass media has become ubiquitous, the tensions between universities as spaces of retreat from the crude contestations of the social fabric in which to reflect upon and then return to those inequities the better to engage with them, can be creatively and productively sustained in vocational disciplines.

When more of our work is funded by commercial and industrial corporations which may have values and goals at odds with and in violation of our own – here one thinks of funded teaching posts, branded equipment, sponsored colloquia, scholarship funding from corporate entities, or even the provision of equipment which serve as sites upon which to promote the brand of the corporation whose gift one accepted – one has to question whether it is still possible to engender change in a landscape where one has become subsumed by the hegemony. This does not imply a position of hopelessness and despair, or capitulation into a discourse of victimhood. However, the power of the neo-liberal multinational, global corporate agenda (in its recognised complexities) to turn citizens into subjects, to transform human beings into consumers, is not a project easily resisted in an academy with close ties to and relations of dependence upon that corporate environment. And, to return to matters of 'race' and representation, the very racedness of that environment, the very masking of that environment as raced such that "[r]acism can, in short, be conceived as something external to us rather than as a system that shapes our daily experiences and sense of self" (Frankenberg 1993: 6), has immense implications for the education of media practitioners who are not only successful within that landscape, but are able to transform it. As long as both media practitioners and media educators rely on their individualised good intentions and disavow the role of their constitution as raced subjects in social contestation in which 'race' matters, the inequities and iniquities of 'race' and race will dog the media landscape.

Here some brief remarks about that landscape would be apposite. The media landscape in South Africa is pockmarked by dismal mediocrity: the quality of reportage, the values which underpin it and which are promulgated in its texts, hold as primary the economic valorisation of symbolic forms. The primary concern in the media is not whether something is good, but whether it will sell. This is a truth that may be hard to swallow, but it is one that we are force-fed in the public domain everyday. Tabloidisation of the national press landscape is justified as necessary for commercial viability; if people are buying it, it must be a good thing. The preponderance of the commercial in broadcast media, the ubiquity of advertising in news and actuality programmes is such that we no longer even remark upon it. In recent debates within my own academic department, the placing of

screens which would carry advertising in the public spaces which connect our teaching and working spaces was justified on the grounds that it would offer an opportunity for us to engage the corporate world, as if we are not already always engaging with the corporate world on terms not our own. And it must be stated that the operation of whiteness as a discourse is inextricable from discourses of imperialism, consumerism, individualism, patriarchy, nationalism and its partner, xenophobia, and racism.

Thus, I would argue that it is absolutely imperative that whiteness be made strange, that it be remarked upon, that it is marked within the educational institutions in which media producers are educated, and that in this process, the very whiteness of the institutional cultures of both education and media production in South Africa be made visible, such that they can no longer mask themselves as the merely, unquestionably human, unremarkable and unmarked. Educational institutions should not be the missionaries of the new imperial project, the neo-liberal global capital desire to turn citizens into consumers; universities should remain part of the vanguard which resists the Juggernaut of empire which, as intellectual critics like Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies (2004), and Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1984) have demonstrated, is deeply interested in inducing hopelessness and despair in those who wish to oppose its construction of itself as inevitable. As Edward W. Said (2002: 150) warned, an imprecise, not very concrete hold on language and reality produces a more easily governable, accepting citizen, who has become not a participant in the society but an always hungry consumer. Literate, critical education has an extraordinarily important role to play in providing the instruments of resistance to this and, it must be said plainly, in providing a means of self-defense.

Whiteness, similarly, is not inevitable, nor is it ineluctable: we have agency, and we must use it to resist that which posits itself as manifest destiny. Otherwise, as Coetzee forewarned in his "Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech" (1987), we may be moving towards a space where the 'truth' of the inevitability of whiteness will become "truth by the bucketful, truth that overwhelms and swamps every act of the imagination" (1991: 99).

For full text and references, see
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>



The result we seek is candidates able to use the basic tools of the trade and with the capacity to build on to these behaviours to work as competent journalists.

Understanding thinking styles: selecting candidates for training/further education as journalists

Who is most likely to succeed as a journalist after training/further education? What are the thinking skills associated with competence as a journalist? Over the past ten years the Independent Newspaper group in South Africa has been working toward a better understanding of competency profiles in order to flag candidates most likely to be able to work as competent journalists in print media. Starting with focus groups of editors in the company's major titles, an hypothesis of thinking styles expected in competent journalists was put forward, developed in a computer-based format and used to select candidates for training/further education.

This brief paper reports on research findings using this computer-based competency evaluation and explores the cognitive dimensions included in this format. The feasibility of further developing and refining a trainability co-efficient is discussed, supported by a critical review of dimensions currently in the evaluation platform which may prove to be reliable selection criteria. Relationships between the evaluation platform's dimensions are examined. Based on research data, thinking styles most likely to identify excellent candidates for training/further education are described along with factors of acquired learning that appear to impact significantly on selection or recruitment.

Selection efficacy is discussed in the second part of the paper, outlining competency identification issues that may not be adequately covered by the evaluation process and which give rise to problems during and after training/further education.

Central to any debate around behaviour associated with learning, the effective application of associated skills in the workplace and measuring these behaviours are persistent epistemological issues. A.J. Ayer states the challenge simply: "There are facts which we can be said to know intuitively, but these intuitions cannot be infallible ... from the fact that someone is convinced that something is true, however firm his conviction may be, it never follows logically that it is true."

For professional journalists involved in recruiting bright young people wanting to be trained in the

profession, Ayer's perspective must have a ring of familiarity. The intention of this brief paper is not to explore epistemology that may or may not be useful in defining criteria to select the best candidates for training/further education or education as journalists. Rather, it is offered as a platform from which to seek consensus on measures that can legitimately be included when evaluating candidates for training/further education/education.

Ayer presents a compelling argument, pointing out that in getting to grips with information and tasks we may include in assessment programmes, "the first requirement is that what is known should be true ... but this is not sufficient; not even if we add to it the further condition that one must be completely sure of what one knows. For it is possible to be completely sure of something which is in fact true, but yet not to know it."

Attempts to measure the knowledge, skills and competencies job seekers bring to potential employers are entrenched in the world of work. With over-supply in so many areas of our lives – including knowledge workers seeking employment – media owners should be in the driving seat. In some contexts of work – airline pilots and computer programmers may be good examples – knowledge and skills required to do the work are reasonably well defined and understood, lending themselves to evaluation and valid, reliable assessment programmes. In journalism, we seem less sure of the knowledge base and competencies to look for when recruiting for the profession at entry level.

There are many perspectives. By way of example, Sir Gordon Newton, the very successful editor

of the *Financial Times*, believed the most important part of a news editor's job was the recruitment, nurturing and protection of his or her staff. In short, leadership of the editorial team. Sir Gordon felt the key question in his own recruitment policy was: "Do I like the candidate?" If he liked the person, the chances were that the rest of the staff, recruited on the same basis, would also like that person. And so he set out to recruit teams of journalists who worked well together. "It is not simply a matter of getting people in and giving them an office and a large salary. Recruiting people entails being clear about what you want them to do and supporting and encouraging them in doing it. They need to be given their head, yet also have access to you for advice."

DEFINING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The question is: Are we clear about the most appropriate and relevant skills and competencies candidates should present when applying for training/further education or further education as journalists? More specifically, what is it that we need to assess and are there constructs that we can all agree on for inclusion? As Ayer points out, simple, but relevant questions like this may give rise to further issues that quickly muddy the water if we are not careful in the hypotheses we build and test. Despite being journalists' 'tools of the trade,' words, and the contexts in which we use them at work, emerge as one of the villains in developing assessment programmes we can rely on to identify excellent candidates for training/further education and further education. Just as psychological constructs such as 'intelligence' and 'personality' have not easily lent themselves to agreed definitions, work-related terminology such as 'competence,' 'skill,' 'talent' and 'ability,' among others, have also proved slippery. The fly in the ointment is stimulus synonymy, or agreement on the extent to which we share meaning on the words we use to describe efficacy at work.

In assessing candidates for training/further education/education as journalists, we face much the same problem. Any process we adopt to better appreciate what candidates bring to the evaluation process, must satisfy basic empirical criteria. At the very least, we must meet validity requirements, measuring what we purport to measure. For now, it cannot be stated with the desired certainty that we know what to look for in assessing these candidates.

Today's professional journalist is challenged to possess a multitude of competencies, from traditional performance characteristics such as strong writing and oral skills, diligent work habits and a broad knowledge base, to combined cross-disciplinary applications in print, broadcast, interactive and multimedia formats. To measure these competencies we need to exercise discretion and some

common sense and not become bogged down in irrelevant debate. At the end of the day the result we seek is candidates able to use the basic tools of the trade and with the capacity to build on to these behaviours to work as competent journalists. And while a lot of work has gone into identifying and describing the competencies and outputs required in journalism, there is a disproportionate amount of information on effective assessment approaches in journalism. The colloquium workshop therefore presents an opportunity to further explore what we could, or should be doing in assessing candidates for training/further education and what these assessment programmes should comprise.

Where should we begin?

The nature/nurture dichotomy may be useful, suggesting we think about including:

1. what the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) refers to as 'Embedded Knowledge,' (which we here take to mean previous learning and skills acquisition), or
2. innate, more 'a priori' cognitive ability to deal with complexity, process information, analyse data and generally 'think' and make sense of the world, or
3. both.

Common sense suggests that people who enjoy their work and who cope, very probably employ a combination of life experience, learnt behaviour and acquired skills in tandem with their talent to think, analyse and process information at different levels of complexity. Elliott Jacques (1975) has a useful view of work, describing it as the exercise of discretion and the application of knowledge within prescribed limits to achieve a goal within a stated completion time. Broadly, this would seem a logical and no-nonsense view of what goes on at the office and almost certainly holds true for journalism across all media. When we start evaluating our understanding of context-specific requirements (competencies) across all genres of work – including why journalists succeed – we need a better appreciation of these behaviours. More so in developing assessment programmes, irrespective of the field of work. Some industries now have refined and reliable processes. The selection of airline pilots, for example, which has become standardised across the world. We need to do the same in journalism.

The journey to valid and reliable assessment has a definite departure point. Without an accurate understanding of the behaviours/competencies/outputs required in excellent journalism, no assessment programme will meet scientific requirements. A resulting worst-case scenario is motivated, 'bright' and enthusiastic young people unable to deliver in a news environment because they have neither the requisite learning and skills, nor the specific cognitive ability to meet journalism's output demands.

This is an extract.

For full text and references, see

<http://journ.ru.ac.za/colloquium/papers.html>

In journalism, we seem unsure of the knowledge base and competencies to look for when recruiting for the profession at entry level.



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