

Journalism
education
in an **AGE**
of radical
CHANGE



radical

1. arising from or going to a root or source, basic
2. departing markedly from the usual or customary; extreme
3. favouring or effecting fundamental or revolutionary changes in current practices, conditions, or institutions

This 30th edition of *Rhodes Journalism Review* is timed and themed for the 2nd World Journalism Education Congress which the School of Journalism and Media Studies is hosting at Rhodes University in Grahamstown from 5 to 7 July.

"Journalism Education in an Age of Radical Change" as a theme forces us to deal with three time frames – the past, the present and the future. When pressed to admit that the future is uncertain, complex and demanding a change of thinking or direction, an exploration of the past at this juncture helps us figure out not only how we got here, but also what dominant ideas guided our choices which brought us to this point. That then gives the present a little clarity. But what will the future look like? What is it asking of us? Despite the confident predictions of the most technologically-savvy among us, I'm not sure that Marshall McLuhan wasn't right when he said: "When faced with a totally new situation, we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavour of the most recent past. We look at the present through a rear view mirror. We march backwards into the future" (in the *Medium is the Message* 1967: 74, written with Quentin Fiore).

Predictions about the future are based on the upheavals we experience now in the present. Our technological and financial uncertainty is driving us to make certain attachments. Consequently these attachments will determine that future we're striving so hard to figure out. In other words, will the future demand ever-increasing facility with new media technologies and a jettisoning of old media because we've decided today that it will?

When we started commissioning articles for this *Review* I had in my mind a working definition of "radical" which assumed a drastic break with the past and a need for entirely new thinking. But as the articles poured in, and particularly those which came from working journalists and editors who we had asked how they would strengthen journalism education, we started to see two divergent positions emerging:

- Return to basics: lay down a strong liberal arts education, encourage curiosity, teach students language skills and story-crafting skills, don't worry too much about technology, they'll learn that on the job, wherever and however that might be.
- Forget old media, abandon the idea of working for a boss, pack their heads full of new media technological skills, teach them self-sufficiency, how to run their own businesses and work out the finances. (And this came from African journalists as much as those based in the countries facing deep financial crises and the closure of newspapers.)

How to make sense of this? Well of course, the conference which has attracted hundreds of educators from all over the world will delve deeply into these issues and no doubt the tea-time and lunch-time conversations will be fascinating and enlightening as we pool our knowledge and experiences. But for the purposes of this editorial I decided to take a closer look at the word "radical". And guess what? The same bifurcation appears in the meaning of the word. Feeling tectonic shifts under our feet we don't quite understand, we're tempted to get *radical* – "to go back to basics" OR "to get extreme, change everything".

It's a complicated conversation, but an absolutely necessary one.

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Guy Berger

Hard to define globalisation, but if you concentrate a tick, you soon realise you tasted some yesterday, read some last night, heard a melodious chunk this morning. You're probably wearing some of it right now, etc. Think about a call centre enquiry, a flu virus, a carbon emission.

Global integration and impact is also present in journalism education – and similarly embedded in a way that we're often only half aware of.

At least in the Western-influenced world, probably every journalism teacher knows of the inverted pyramid style of writing. The same applies to ethics that favour journalistic source confidentiality. These conventions are not "just there". They arose in particular societies, and spread from there across the world.

Likewise the basic outlook, codified in 1956 in the "Four theories of the press" – libertarian, authoritarian, social responsibility and totalitarian. It's a simplistic way to think about journalism roles, and yet it still powerfully shadows journalism teaching across countless countries.

All this is about what Peter Golding in 1977 already discerned as "the transfer of an ideology" in regard to "media professionalism in the Third World". In 2010, the globalisation of journalism education has intensified. Probably every j-teacher on the planet today has now made use of ICT, at least email. And, in the process, probably drawn from Anglophone (often American) traditions.

These observations are not a prelude to whining about "Western imperialism":

Without dispersal from centre to periphery, the world wouldn't have a lot of things today. Like a lot of media

HARD TO DEFINE GLOBALISATION

GLOBAL INTEGRATION AND IMPACT IS ALSO PRESENT IN JOURNALISM

DISPERSAL FROM CENTRE TO PERIPHERY

TRY TO GLEAN AND GATHER WHAT INFORMATION COULD BE OF USE

THE PRIMARY OBSTACLE TO CHANGE

EXAMINE THE INTERNATIONAL SECTOR AS A WHOLE

J-TEACHERS GETTING THEIR INTERNATIONAL ACT TOGETHER

technology. And, hey, the ethic of source confidentiality isn't such a bad idea either.

Furthermore, no one forces journalism teachers to visit the Poynter Institute website for a tip sheet on coaching. You try to glean and gather what information could be of use, and Poynter is a great resource which you mould and adapt.

It is frustrating that many j-education resources are in English, and/or cost too much for j-teachers in developing countries. Still, that doesn't stop anyone from setting up alternatives online, and in other languages. Like the *Global Media Journal*, for instance.

In short, there's no call for moaning, let alone for responding to globalisation in j-ed through resorting to isolationism and/or erection of barriers. Dominant perspectives in the field have this status by default, rather than deliberate design.

It follows that the primary obstacle to change is not an entrenched elite refusing to relinquish hegemony. Instead, the only enemy to identify is a subservient, colonial-style mentality. It's the false idea that unrecorded, or little known, experiences have nothing of value to contribute to the cause of better journalism education.

It's a mindset that needs to be un-set. It's a victim-outlook that needs to be upset. And it's a vantage point that needs to move from that of purely consuming of knowledge resources, to one that includes being a producer.

MANY J-EDUCATION RESOURCES ARE IN ENGLISH
IN SHORT, THERE'S NO CALL FOR MOANING

A SUBSERVIENT, COLONIAL-STYLE MENTALITY

IT'S A MINDSET THAT NEEDS TO BE UN-SET

CONTRIBUTE TO THE CAUSE OF BETTER JOURNALISM EDUCATION

ONE THAT INCLUDES BEING A PRODUCER

JOURNALISM EDUCATORS HAVE NO GLOBAL VOICE

THE EMPOWERMENT OF JOURNALISTS IS CRITICAL

AN EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION MAY YET EMERGE

IT'S A CONSCIOUS, PURPOSEFUL AND EQUALISING GLOBALISATION

ENORMOUSLY PRODUCTIVE POTENTIAL GETTING J-TEACHERS TO LEAVE COMFORT ZONES MAKING SUCH COMPLEX CONNECTIONS HAPPEN

Thus, the trick is not to assess the global from the perspective of the receiving-end local. It is to examine the international sector as a whole.

The point is that everyone loses from globalisation that is uneven, and from knowledge flows that are one-directional. Yet, not only is knowledge within global journalism education less richly reflective than it could be. Directly related to this is the feeble international standing of the sector.

It is a fact that journalism educators have no global voice. The press, by contrast, has had a representative organ since 1948 in the shape of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN). Print tech and publisher interests created IFRA in 1961, merging with WAN last year to form an even more impactful association.

Nothing shows up for journalism education. Meanwhile, print editors formed the World Editors Forum back in 1994. And the International Federation of Journalists dates back to 1926. There's also the World Association of Community Radio (AMARC) with roots in 1983, and the World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) since 1992.

We can acknowledge that the International Communications Association has a journalism studies section, and that IAMCR – the International Association for Media and Communication Research – has a journalism research and education section. But each sub-group still spans a range of concerns, rather than concentrates energies especially on journalism education.

Of course, journalism, both its practice and its study, is the very *raison d'être* of journalism education. But a person can do journalism and/or study it, without necessarily dealing with the education question. That's why there's a need for a dedicated focus on teaching journalism.

The bottom line is that the empowerment of journalists is a critical part of the wider media value-chain, and it needs to become a specialised sector in its own right.

Back in 1999, some j-teachers worked with Unesco to set up Journet as a global network of j-schools. But their last major event was in 2003.

In 2007, a separate initiative brought together journalism teachers from around the world to deliberate specifically about the activities that define them. This was the first World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC), held in Singapore in 2007. The follow-up in South Africa 2010, took inspiration from that.

The result today is that there is a stake in the ground: WJEC 3 needs to happen. And then WJEC 4, 5, etc. From such regular conferences, an effective international organisation may yet emerge.

The character of WJEC global gatherings constitutes these events as uniquely useful for knowledge sharing. They enrich practice whether it is the teaching of theoretical or practical programmes, or hybridised. Whether the teaching is to would-be journalists in colleges, or to already working employees in-house, it's still part of the same common enriched project. Further, no matter whether the providers are universities, NGOs, commercial providers or media companies themselves – they share fundamentals as j-educators, and can all benefit from a WJEC.

It's exactly this kind of international buzz between focused practitioners in journalism education that elevates the level of globalisation within the sector. It's a conscious, purposeful and equalising globalisation. More, it's an opportunity to valorise diverse knowledges way beyond the boundaries of that which is formally published.

In this way, a WJEC event traverses language and other boundaries, while still remaining within the parameters of journalism education concerns. It's a focused and object-oriented occasion, with enormously

productive potential.

Another part of a WJEC is building a social community with ties that go deeper than the wholly intellectual dimension. Informed by various theories, this can be analysed in terms of three kinds of connections:

- Bonding: in international fora like the WJEC, j-educators with very similar profiles (national, linguistic, area of specialisation) have easy scope to initiate or deepen ties with each other – especially if they proactively network at such occasions.
- Bridging: this involves getting j-teachers to leave comfort zones and relate to strangers who are different. For instance, a French-speaking educator from Senegal using English to converse with a colleague from China. Another example: someone whose passion is teaching identity theories so journalists can better understand themselves and the world, in dialogue with someone new to that topic but maybe fired up about teaching blogging.

What's needed is making such complex connections happen, and for the participants to milk the enormous value that comes from exposure to difference within a field.

- Linking: These are connections that are even more challenging. Like getting talks going between recalcitrant j-teachers and more academically-focused journal publishers. Or j-teachers and sceptical, even contemptuous, editors. Between the j-teachers and public-relations teachers, and so on.

If WJEC conferences can create these kinds of concatenations, then there's a real chance of a more self-conscious social movement emerging within the sector. It's about building an international network where people know and trust each other, and actively interact around their common interest in journalism education.

In turn, this scenario points to yet greater heights in the sector: an actual working organisation.

To date the WJEC has been convened under the auspices of the World Journalism Education Council, a very loose grouping.

It's a long-term prospect, but the council is a platform that could begin to evolve into something more formal. Perhaps a more established forum; perhaps a properly constituted association with a programme of action.

What's stopping this? Two factors:

One reason why j-educators as a sector have lagged so far behind other media groupings on a global organisational scale has been limited finances. Yet many j-teachers are based in institutions that can help them attend conferences or pay membership dues. And then there is donor funding. If Amarc can represent – and enrich – community radio stations with such support, there's no intrinsic resource constraint on j-educators getting a worldwide organisation together.

The constituency itself is hard to organise. There are huge pressures under which many j-teachers and j-schools work. One is the pull between the academy and industry, while being under-valued by each. Another is being short of technology and support, but overrun with the intensive demands of mass teaching. Yet it's possible to get over

these hurdles, as shown by the international journalist community which has overcome analogous pressures.

So there are not insurmountable obstacles to the successful organising of journalism educators even on a local level, let alone national and then international.

In fact, the very existence of an international organisation could help deal with local resource limits and job stresses. The purpose of such a body would not be to exist for its own sake, but to add value to the work of the actual j-education practitioners.

In the end, j-teachers do not have to be passive participants in globalisation, nor Cinderella characters at international balls. Instead, an organised global presence of journalism teachers can make a difference to, and through, the existing globalisation of the sector.

The result of this would be to enhance the stature of the practice and the contribution that it can make. In the current age, there can be no dispute that, more than ever, j-educators need to get their international act together.

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If I ran a
journalism
school, I'd

**shake
things
up**



Paul Greenway

JOURNALISM EDUCATION, LIKE THE TRADE ITSELF, HAS MOVED TOO SLOWLY TO CHANGE WITH THE TIMES. YET, SAYS **DAN GILLMOR**, THERE ARE SIGNS OF PROGRESS, AND THE EDUCATORS, WHO USED TO LAG FAR BEHIND THE PRACTITIONERS IN KEY WAYS, ARE CATCHING UP AND EVEN MOVING AHEAD ON SEVERAL FRONTS

I am jealous of my students, and of all students who study journalism. They will be entering a work force that, yes, is full of uncertainty; they will not be likely to have the kind of career that I enjoyed in more than 20 years as a reporter, editor and columnist for major newspapers in America. But there has never been such an open field of opportunity – to create the next version of journalism and the business models that will pay for it – as exists today.

Journalism education, like the trade itself, has moved too slowly to change with the times. Yet there are signs of progress, and the educators, who used to lag far behind the practitioners in key ways, are catching up and even moving ahead on several fronts. If I ran a journalism school, I'd shake things up in a profound way that recognised the changes and the opportunities.

I would start with the basic principles of honorable, high-quality journalism, and embed them at the core of everything else. If our students didn't understand and appreciate them, nothing else we did would matter very much. With the principles as the foundation, I would, among many other things:

Emphasise undergraduate journalism degrees as great liberal arts programmes, even more valuable that way than as training for journalism careers. At the same time, focus graduate journalism studies on helping people with expertise in specific areas to be the best possible journalists in their fields.

Do away with the still-common "track" system for would-be journalists where students focus on print, broadcast, online, etc. These are merging. There would be one track. We wouldn't just recognise our students' digital future; we'd immerse them in it.

Keep what we now call public relations as part of the mission, but move it into a separate programme. Call it "Persuasion," and include marketing and other kinds of non-journalistic advocacy in this category. As we recognise that the lines are blurring, sometimes uncomfortably, we'll require all journalism students to learn the techniques of persuasion. But Persuasion majors would conversely be steeped in the principles of honourable media creation.

Encourage, and require in some cases, cross-disciplinary learning and doing. We'd create partnerships around the university, working with business, engineering/computer science, film, political science, law, design and many other programmes. The goals would be both to develop our own projects and to be an essential community-wide resource for the future of local media.

Teach students not just the basics of digital media but also the value of data and programming to their future work. This doesn't necessarily mean that they need to become programmers; but they absolutely need to know how to communicate with programmers. We'd also encourage computer science undergraduates to become journalism graduate students, so they can help create tomorrow's media.

Require all students to learn basic statistics, survey research and fundamental scientific methodology. The inability of journalists to understand what they're reading is one of journalism's – and society's – major flaws.

Encourage a research agenda with deep connections to key media issues of today. More than ever, we need solid data and rigorous analysis. And translate faculty research into language average people can understand as opposed to the dense, even impenetrable, prose that's clear (if it really is) only to readers of academic journals.

If I ran a journalism school, I'd shake things up...

Require all journalism students to understand business concepts, especially those relating to media. This is not just to cure the longstanding ignorance of business issues in the craft, but also to recognise that today's students will be among the people who develop tomorrow's journalism business models. We'd discuss for-profit and not-for-profit methods, and look at advertising, marketing, social networking, and search engine optimisation, among many other elements.

Promote entrepreneurship as a core element of the curriculum. I'll discuss this further below.

Appreciate our graduates no matter where their careers have taken them. If we understand that journalism education is a valuable step into any number of professions, we should not just celebrate the graduates who've gone on to fame (if not fortune) in journalism, but also those who've made marks in other fields.

Persuade the president (or chancellor or whatever the title) and trustees of the university that every student on the campus should learn journalism principles and skills before graduating, preferably during freshman year. At State University of New York's Stony Brook campus, the journalism school has been given a special mandate of exactly this kind. Howard Schneider, a former newspaper journalist who now is dean of Stony Brook's journalism school, won foundation funding to bring news literacy into the university's broader community, not just those enrolled in journalism courses.

Create a programme of the same kind for people in the community, starting with teachers. Our goal would be to help schools across our geographical area bring media activism to every level of education—not just college, but also grade, middle, and high school. We would offer workshops, conferences and online training.

Offer that programme, or one like it, to concerned parents who feel overwhelmed by the media deluge

themselves, to help turn them into better media consumers and to give them ways to help their children.

Provide for-fee training to communicators who work in major local institutions, such as PR and marketing folks from private companies, governmental organisations, and others. If they could be persuaded that the principles matter, they might offer the public less BS and more reality, and we'd all be better off for the exercise.

Enlist another vital player in this effort: local media of all kinds, not just traditional media. Of course, as noted earlier, they should be making this a core part of their missions, given that their own credibility would rise if they helped people understand the principles and process of quality journalism. But we'd very much want to work with local new media organisations and individuals, too.

Advise and train citizen journalists to understand and apply the principles and best practices. They are going to be an essential part of the local journalism ecosystem, and we should reach out to show them how we can help.

Augment local media with our own journalism. We train students to do journalism, after all, and their work should be widely available in the community, particularly when it fills in gaps left by the shrinking traditional media. At Arizona State, the Cronkite News Service provides all kinds of coverage of topics the local news organisations rarely cover, making our students' work available to those organisations. Soon, we'll be publishing it ourselves on our own website.

Above all, I would try to prepare students for the reality that they may be inventing their own jobs – because they must, in some cases, but also because doing so will be challenging, fun and, for many, enormously satisfying.

This is why instilling an appreciation of entrepreneurship – by which I mean the Silicon Valley-style startup culture – needs to be part of the modern academic method.

To make entrepreneurship a core part of journalism education is not a simple task, but Arizona State University, where I'm working, is among several schools pushing ahead on this idea, and the early experiments are gratifying. Several of our student projects have won funding to create real businesses, and we have high hopes for others. At City University of New York, Jeff Jarvis has received foundation funding for student projects to continue after the class is over, based on semester-ending competitive “pitches” to a judging panel of journalists and investors. We need to see more and more of these and other kinds of experiments.

What does this imply? Among other things, we have to realise that many of our best students, particularly the ones with a genuine entrepreneurial bent, will not graduate as scheduled, if ever. They'll create or join startups while they have the passion and energy, and we should encourage them to try.

But if we can give our students an appreciation for the startup culture – the ambiguities, plus the ownership of the process and outcome – they won't just be better prepared for doing or joining their own startups. They'll also be better off inside the smarter large enterprises of the future, because those organisations will need people who understand how to move quickly with the times.

All this suggests a considerably broader mission for journalism schools and programmes than the one they've had in the past. It also suggests a huge opportunity for journalism schools. The need for this kind of training has never been greater. We're not the only ones who can do it, but we may be among the best equipped.

I remember having mac and cheese at my gran's house

In a tutorial entitled *The evolution of MEdia*, writing and editing lecturer Gillian Rennie introduced Rhodes University first-year journalism and media studies students to Denis Hirson's *I Remember King Kong (the boxer)* and asked them to write their own *I Remember*, focusing on their personal relationships with the media. This is the edited result of a collective exercise in recollection by 270 students.

I remember having mac and cheese at my gran's house. I remember our first cell phone; it was yellow and the aerial had to be extended before you could talk. I remember the day I fell in love; I was watching *Men in Black*. I remember Brenda Fassie's death; I was sad because her music was the bomb. I remember leaving my grandmother for the first time.

I remember the day we got DSTV. We didn't have electricity because we lived in the bush so we had to use a generator. I remember *James and the Giant Peach*, and birthday parties at Spur with Chico the Clown ice creams. I remember when Pepsi stopped selling in SA, when there was no SABC 1, 2 or 3, and I remember when Michael Jackson was black. I remember when Spice Girl shoes were in, the sound of the ice cream truck, and Dub on SABC 2. I remember KFC nights with my mother and sister when I'd done something worthy of praise.

I remember middle partings. I remember side path hairstyles. I remember when the bomshaka hairstyle was in; when I did it I looked like an onion. I remember pink and blue hair-rollers piercing my soft scalp. I remember my first bra, the first time I said the F-word, my first high score on Tetris, my first kiss. I remember watching porn for the first time. I remember *Bananas in Pyjamas*. I remember becoming one of those boys my mom warned me about.

I remember when the twin towers came crashing down. I freaked out at school because my aunt was working in New York at the time. I remember coming home on September 11, 2001, and not being able to watch Pokémon because the World Trade Centre was on all channels. I remember sitting on a speech therapist's couch on a Tuesday afternoon, and on TV the first plane was hitting the first tower; I was distracted by my game boy. I remember my birthday,

The gap between

Priscilla Boshoff

“There's no curriculum! There's no curriculum!” The young man in the focus group was so frustrated that he had to repeat himself, not just once, but several times. I had just asked the group what their feelings were about their second-year coursework.

His sentiments were echoed by many of the students in the group, all of whom had passed the rigorous application process into second year at Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies.

None of them seemed happy about what or how they were learning or the direction in which they seemed to be going. Their evident sense of exasperation and annoyance made me pause for thought when the interview came to an end.

As a member of staff at the school, I have participated in the many hours of debate and reflection that has resulted in what many consider to be one of the most demanding, critical and engaging journalism and media studies curricula on the continent.

This reputation precedes us: 80% of about 300 first year journalism and media studies students come here each year because of Rhodes' reputation for academic excellence, specifically to study journalism and media studies.

So, what is the cause of the discrepancy between the expectations that draw students here to Rhodes, and what for some students proves to be profound disillusionment with the subject of journalism and media studies?

In 2008 I began an empirical longitudinal study conducted via electronically-distributed and self-administered questionnaires, supplemented with focus groups and individual interviews, in which I explore the changing expectations and experiences of first-year students as they traverse the four years of the degree.

In particular, I have been interested in finding out what students' perceptions are of the field of media before they enter the university and how these might inflect students' understandings of the school's curriculum, structured to fulfil the vision statement of producing “self-reflexive, critical, analytical graduates and media workers”.

The vision statement clearly positions the department vis-a-vis its identification with the South Africa Constitution, its critical understandings of media industries within the structural inequalities of the South African socio-political context, and its place within the academy. While vocationally-oriented, it emphasises independent, critical and civic-minded journalism, in many cases the obverse of what has drawn the students to the course in the first place. While journalism as a profession has the advantage of being “visible” to its consumers through its products, the academic discipline of media studies and the role it potentially plays in fostering critical and self-reflexive media practice is opaque to students, to whom it is an entirely new – and not necessarily welcome – subject.

The question of what kinds of students the school attracts is not a new one. There have been occasional concerned enquiries – see Carol Christie's story in RJR 22 http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/RJR_no22/who_are_they.pdf – about our students' lack of a sense of history, poor general knowledge, disinterest in current social and political issues, and a move away from books and newspapers to digital sources for news and information (with all that this implies in a deficiency of in-depth

what
'ought'
to be
and
what
students
want

knowledge and focused and sustained attention).

I suggest that these observations can only take us so far. In a sense, they are the lament of the traditional print media with which journalism education has aligned itself in the past.

It is not surprising then that these anxieties serve as a self-evident explanation for some of the current woes besetting journalism in South Africa.

Globally, in the last decade, there has been a steady current of debate around the “quality” of journalistic reporting and writing, and the “crisis” of public confidence in the profession.

In South Africa this debate is articulated through a lens focused on the deficiencies and needs of the local context, which includes depressingly low skill levels and the urgent need for racial transformation of the media industries. The two reports commissioned by the South Africa national Editor's Forum (Sanef 2002 and 2005 <http://www.sanef.org.za/programmes/quality/>) are testimony to media leaders' grave concern over the parlous state of key journalistic and editing skills in South Africa.

However, while necessarily of concern to the academy – which provides the industry with so many of its workers – the debates in the academic literature do not focus much on “mere skilling”.

This is because in the SA context, an exclusive focus on skills could be seen as inimical to critical understandings of the historical place and role of journalism in South Africa and the necessity of re-visioning its present and future roles in a developing democracy post-apartheid.

What journalism's democratic role “ought” to be and what contribution the academy and its graduates can make to a wider process of social transformation, of which the media is part, thus forms a central theme around which the conceptualisation and structure of our curriculum is organised.

Which brings us back to our frustrated students. What is journalism to them, and what do they think is its role in contemporary South African society? How do they come by their understandings of journalism, and how do these understandings impact on the ways in which they approach their learning?

The Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies attracts nearly 300 students a year: these numbers do not suggest that young people see an industry in crisis. Instead, evidence points the other way – that they perceive the media to be a land of infinite possibility in which to build an ideal career and lifestyle, developing their own media empires, travelling the globe for *National Geographic*, editing *Vogue* or reporting from the frontlines of an exotic war.

Many want to be “real journalists”, citing somewhat stereotypical examples of well-known war or investigative or fashion journalists. Few talk about going back to their home towns or local communities and working for social justice through the local media.

This leaves us as teachers in a difficult position: not only do students' preconceptions about the journalistic field and their potential place in it have to be challenged, in line with the vision of the school (and the ensuing resistance to change empathetically managed), but we must offer an alternative position or positions for students to occupy that entice, enrich and provoke new understandings of what journalism, and media more broadly, can be.

filled with talks of terror. None of the adults left the sitting room that night. I remember unlocking the bazooka in Crash Bandicoot Warped. I remember waking up to milk the cattle with my dad.

I remember Cat Stevens, sandwiches and trips to my grandparents. I remember when we played “Sweet and Sour”, the cars with the big red paw of the wildlife sticker were always the friendly drivers.

I remember eating Chicken Licken on my mom’s pay day. I remember when a pack of decent cigarettes cost less than R20. I remember seeing Archbishop Desmond Tutu crying on television. I remember staring at the morning paper; it displayed nude photos of Zimbabwean Archbishop, Pius Ncube, and his sensational love affair.

I remember seeing Archbishop Desmond Tutu crying on television.

I remember the first Indian guy to read news on TV, “Simunye, we are one”, and I remember when reality TV was a shocking new concept – we’d crowd around the TV to see who got voted off the island this week. I remember getting up to change the channel, when the news was at 8, the Ricci Lake show every day after school, and being afraid of huge faces from the big screen television. I remember watching that really important cricket match where Jonty Rhodes left his bat behind. I remember Allan Donald dropping his bat and dropping South Africa’s Cricket World Cup dreams. I remember watching Hansie Cronje’s televised trial when he was tried for match fixing. I remember the news about his death; my mom had a crush on him and was so sad.

I remember Nokia 3310 in grade 7, snake, snake 2! I remember discovering anime in grade 7. I remember when all my friends were rocking the 3310; I got a colour screen Motorola. I remember seeing a picture of my aunt in grade 8; she was the first African girl in Northlands Girls’ High. I remember the Zuma rape trial: to say that KZN was chaotic is putting it lightly.

I remember the Spice Girls and Britney Spears; I always wanted to be Baby Spice. I remember the Spice Girls; I wanted to be Posh Spice. I remember seeing a picture of Sydney Poitier holding an Oscar for best actor; it reminded me of what I could become. I remember loving Destiny’s Child, being called from washing the dishes to see their *Survivor* video live; I was so inspired. I remember the picture of Cindy Crawford and being influenced by her beauty. I remember seeing Natalie Du Toit winning the gold medal at the Sydney Olympics; it made me believe I could achieve more if I believe in myself.



Paul Greenway

What is enough change?

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR’S *REVIEW* IS DESCRIPTIVE OF THE TIMES WE LIVE IN. IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY PERHAPS MORE THAN EVER. AND IN JOURNALISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING PERHAPS THE MOST. THE HEAD OF THE GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY, **LIZETTE RABE**, WAS A MEMBER OF THE VERY FIRST CLASS IN ITS FOUNDING YEAR DURING THE LITERALLY DARK DAYS OF DEEP APARTHEID IN 1978. AFTER A CAREER OF MORE THAN 20 YEARS IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY, SHE RETURNED AS HOD IN 2001. SHE THINKS AN “AGE OF RADICAL CHANGE” SHOULD BE THE KEY ACCORDING TO WHICH JOURNALISM AND ITS EDUCATION AND TRAINING SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD – ALWAYS.

I am putting the final touches to this piece a day after the shockwaves of the murder of South Africa’s very own ET, Eugène Terre’Blanche, moved like a tsunami over the South African landscape. Looking at this morning’s papers, listening to TV and radio news bulletins, checking the online news sites, some of many questions, as always, can be formulated along the lines of:

What is the role of the media?

How could we report this differently?

How can we provide more perspective, context, insight?

What are media ethics?

Especially in an age of instant gratification in which the media contributed, and contribute, to the “dumbing-down” of society in a time when it is becoming more and more complex?

In other words: what is the role of the media in a democracy which is already 15 years old but still in its infancy as a result of our, oh, so complex past?

For the purposes of this piece: which essential, conceptual, analytical skills should those – who find themselves at the daily coalface of the news desk, in a mediated world, under the omnipresence of the now 24/7 deadline of digimedia – have?

Translated: how should journalists be educated and trained to comply with a taxing career which has to “translate” and “mediate” answers when our complex society tends to overwhelm us?

It is a given that entry-level journalists today must have the practical technical skills to work in a multimedia environment. In other words, they need to know which buttons to push, and sometimes even all at the same time, for print, radio, TV and new media. Luckily, for the tech generation, this is almost like breathing, and “all” we have to do, is to teach them the necessary programmes according to which they should “do” for print, broadcast and new media.

But especially because it is so easy to “push the buttons” in a multimedia environment, the need for conceptual skills has increased. It seems thinking skills are more lacking than ever before...

And that is our challenge in journalism education and training, because we live according to a tireless deadline in an age where circulation/eyeballs/hits and the dictatorship of the profit margin are relentless.

Founded in 1978, today only the beautiful Edwardian building on Crozier Street in Stellenbosch in which the department is housed is still the same. And even that will be different when our main activities move to our new building, an annex just behind the existing building later this year.

In that very first year in 1978 the first batch of bright-eyed journalism fledglings, including current *Beeld* editor Tim du Plessis, were under the wings of Piet Cillie, founding professor

I remember Princess Diana's wedding and her wedding dress and I remember her death. I remember the day Diana died. It was the day I realised I had a beak for a nose, standing in front of the bathroom mirror before my 4th birthday party. I remember Prince Harry's simple card with the word "Mummy" written on it. I remember I cried because my real life princess had died.

I remember the Y2K virus. I remember the end of the 20th century. I remember the day I found out about HIV; I was only 9 years old.

I remember receiving cassettes from my ballet teacher to play at home. The first part had instructions of how to stand and do the moves, and the second part had piano music. I remember when my grandmother told me that they used to listen to *Unomathothulo* on the radio and they would have only have three programmes a day.

I remember when the streets would be empty of children because Goku was about to pull a Kamehameha on Freiza. I remember *Lady and the Tramp*; I still see them sharing a bowl of spaghetti bolognaise every time I eat or make the meal. I remember watching *Titanic*; I believe in love because of that movie. I remember watching the *Sound of Music*, in awe of how they communicated through telegrams with people far away. I remember how much more personal it was to keep in contact through letters with family living overseas. I remember writing letters to fairies, and I kept writing with no replies. I remember only needing small popcorn at the movies.

I remember everyone in my world talking about the "new South Africa" and wondering if it was far from the one I was in now.

I remember my parents going to vote in the first democratic elections. They were gone for hours, my sisters and I ran around the garden and I cut my foot on a yellow broken glass. I remember waiting in a long line with my mother and not knowing what it was for or why she refused to leave. Recently I found a sticker saying, "Vote for Nelson Mandela" that I got from that day. I remember everyone in my world talking about the "new South Africa" and wondering if it was far from the one I was in now.

I remember discovering pink ice-cream; the nurse brought me a bowl after I had my tonsils out. I remember getting toys inside cereal boxes. I remember staying up all night



Paul Greenway

and (really really) big name in Afrikaans journalism. He did not lecture. His classes were "news conferences". And we of course were supposed to take down notes in shorthand and/or snelskrif. Please note, two completely different systems. And the focus was on print. Radio, and TV, the latter only a couple of years old at the time, was not "real" journalism in the eyes of that era's newspapermen. And yes, they were newspapermen.

What has changed? On the surface: the department was founded to educate and train beginner journalists on the honours degree level only – in other words, the first postgraduate tier in the South African higher education framework.

Since then, South Africa and the media have undergone total transformation. So did our school. The honours degree, with an intake of just more than two dozen graduates of the crème de la crème of South Africa's wanna-be journos (yes, we're fortunate) has been complemented with a masters as well as a doctoral programme.

The department today operates along two paradigms: the journalism school in our postgraduate honours level programme with its practical, vocational education and training, and our research focus in the masters and doctoral programmes, respectively with 35 and five candidates.

The department's honours level students have to undergo an annual assessment by the media industry in the form of a four-week internship at the end of their course. The average mark for this internship, awarded by industry, is consistently a cum laude mark for the class as a whole. These outstanding marks have been complemented by other forms of recognition, among others, Unesco's list of the top 12 journalism schools on our continent.

But besides healthy statistics, also in terms of research output by faculty members (only three full-time), how can we answer the question at the beginning of this piece: how can journalism education and training ensure the media contribute in a positive way to our beloved country's painfully slow birth from all kinds of oppression to real freedom?

If you look beyond the number of editors the department has contributed, the literary contributions of many alumni, and even our Niemann fellows – which role should the Stellenbosch Journalism Department play in the ongoing dramatic birth of a "new" South Africa?

How did Stellenbosch help our country to "critically contemplate" South Africa's "story of the day" – the Latin word *diurna* from which journalism is derived?

Of course, one can literally see the change if you look at the students who enter our building. The previously-advantaged white group is now more diverse, but still not as diverse as it should be.

HOW CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL SHOULD WE BE WITH REGARD TO OUR OWN ROLE IN EDUCATING AND TRAINING JOURNALISTS? AND IN OUR RESEARCH?

The department offers several bursaries, through Media24, for black Afrikaans-speaking students. And it is the proud founder of the Percy Qoboza and Aggrey Klaaste bursaries. It is still not enough, and annually the department tries to improve its diversity, despite lacking funds.

Also the curriculum is a "work in progress". Every year the programmes are assessed: how can we make the existing modules more relevant? For example, the Internet course has evolved from a course consisting of two foci, the technical building of a news website plus the journalistic content, to a course which now includes social media and its journalistic interface. And in all our programmes we attempt to find ways to "Africanise" our curricula.

As a whole, the graduate vocational course has developed into an honours course in which multimedia practice and theory dovetail on a daily – hourly – basis. Our masters programme is a challenge for both the practising journalist and the more theoretically-orientated media studies student. And of course, in the DPhil our candidates really want to contribute to answering some of our country's most pressing media questions, to contribute to the "verstehen" of media and society.

But still, how does the department answer to the needs of our country?

Luckily, whereas the department stood in the shadow of that unholy trinity three decades ago, namely the old Stellenbosch University (SU), the old Naspers and the old National Party, the surviving two, the SU and Naspers, have repositioned themselves totally to be part of a new, liberal, democratic order.

One can then also say that the old school under the hand of Piet Cillie (where he tried in vain to help us understand his understanding of nationalism, which, in fairness, was with a lower case n), has also totally transformed itself.

But is it ever enough?

In an era of radical change, what is "enough" change?

How critical and analytical should we be with regard to our own role in educating and training journalists? And in our research? Indeed, if the department itself is not critical-analytical, how can we ever succeed in delivering critical-analytical beginners in our vocational course, or formulate the critical-analytical questions for our research?

Or to come back to today's blood-curdling, screaming headlines: what is the difference between Afrikaner nationalism and African nationalism? Or in the technicolour "rainbow nation" construct: is it only a matter of colour?

And how can Stellenbosch especially contribute to our country's understanding of complex issues in a time of baffling complexities?

fully dressed, suitcase packed, wondering if tonight would be the night that the war vets take over our farm and house.

I remember the image of Heath Ledger being wheeled out of his New York apartment on a gurney; my favourite actor dead. I remember the countdown to Mark Shuttleworth's space expedition. Our whole primary school watched it on TV in the media centre. I remember paging through a book of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs and thinking 'I want to be part of the journalistic world'. I remember watching the televised announcement that the Soccer World Cup would be held in South Africa. My family was together in one place.

I remember bragging that my life didn't depend on having my phone with me, but that was because I was the only one without MXit.

I remember *MAD* magazine, reading the *Daily Sun* (the dog's head in the pot), getting *YOU* magazine every week and looking at the back pages for NSYNC, Backstreet Boys, Spice Girls and Five. I remember bragging that my life didn't depend on having my phone with me, but that was because I was the only one without MXit. I remember letting my cell phone fall to the ground during the call when I heard my good friend had died in a car accident.

I remember eating Simba chips everyday to get the Pokémon Tazos and buying the flavours you didn't like for the Tazos you still needed. I remember when I was told that Pokémon was evil. I had to throw away all my Tazos. I remember hearing that a 50-year-old man raped a 9-month-old baby.

I remember the nostalgia as I sat watching France win the soccer World Cup; I remember the nostalgia as I sat in a Paris café watching South Africa win the rugby World Cup. I remember reading that in Germany money was useless, it was used to make fires and I remember being shocked. I remember holding trillions of dollars in my hands that were worthless and thinking, should I make a fire?

I remember the faces of the newly homeless in New Orleans. I remember seeing Marilyn Monroe's picture with the wind blowing her dress up. I remember the famous picture of Nelson Mandela, and the picture of Hector Pieterse being carried.

I remember learning to write my name.

Focus is the secret

Reg Rumney

While I was researching a story for the Anglo-American in-house magazine *Optima* recently I found myself literally balancing a camera, a notebook and a digital recorder. One or two of them was bound to fall distractingly as I focused on writing, or recording or taking pictures. Luckily it was usually the notebook.

I did my best, but the pictures did not live up to the material. One of the interviewees was a smiling, young woman entrepreneur who owns a funeral parlour in Vanderbijlpark. Thandi Khumalo's funeral parlour, the Bold and the Beautiful, provides rich visuals for a photographer tuned in to colour.

The small digital camera I was using, which was all that I could comfortably handle along with the notebook and the compact recorder, was just not adequate in my hands.

I was visiting the entrepreneurs Anglo Zimele small business start-up fund aids to get a feel for what the corporation's enterprise development actually meant to

them, putting into practice my teaching about business

journalism by going out into the field rather than being content with phone interviews or talking to people in air-conditioned HQs. I didn't allow the camera to be more than a distraction. There was no question that the text-based story would come first; that I

was concerned, for instance, about the interaction between the black recipients of Zimele's small business loans and Zimele's sympathetic but no-nonsense, white loan officer.

And once again, it struck me how wrong-headed the enthusiasm for the multi-media technology in today's newsrooms is. It

makes it possible for people to be ADD, when focus – in more ways than one – is the secret to good journalism as well as much other endeavour. Luckily I wasn't asked to produce a video clip, a radio story and a blog about the experience on my return to the office. For whatever "convergence" or "new media" means in the university, what it seems to me to boil down to in newsrooms is a lot of zeal for doing things like blogging and vlogging simply because they can be done and because they hold out the hope of greater productivity.

This is déjà vu, taking me back to a tiresome bi-media experiment at the SABC, when it became clear that the only way reporters could do both radio and TV reports on a big story was – because radio's prime time is the morning and TV's is in the evening – to sleep under their desks.

True, reporters have the chance to try out new toys, like palm-sized, high-definition video cameras

and ever-more sophisticated smart phones. But if their satisfaction derives directly from the task of creating meaningful stories the excitement of the technology will fade. And after the novelty of the toys wears off, comes the pain of doing more with less, as commercial imperatives demand that there is something to show for the money expended.

I am no stranger to technology and understand the thrill of the new. I was one of the first SABC-TV journalists to use a then cutting-edge, compact, high-definition video camera to take my own visuals for a story, though I don't think anyone took much notice. I love the freedom computerisation has allowed, and am an enthusiastic first adopter of innovative products. I enjoy the freedom of blogging, of the global reach of the Internet, of its potential to knit communities closer together, both geographical and cultural. I appreciate the commercial possibilities of building brands and creating reader, listener and viewer loyalty by interaction.

But teaching journalism has led to me to try to ascertain the essence of what I did for three decades. And the answer to that question leads me to seriously doubt the value of simply mirroring what is happening in newsrooms in our teaching practices.

To be sure, I don't think we should be disconnected from the news media as business as well as its other, social and political, aspects. As a long-time business journalist I retain a strong interest in the financial situation of news media. But we miss the essence of journalism if we see it purely through the lens of commercial functionalism.

I propose a normative approach. In other words, the answer to the question, "What is journalism?" cannot be derived simply from what journalists do, because a lot of what people who call themselves journalists do may superficially look like journalism but it is suspect. The connotations of "journalism" are not simply of a job, or a profession in the sense of self-regulation, but of a task people expect to be pursued with the highest integrity. When the public expresses dissatisfaction with journalism or particular journalists, I believe they have that higher ethical standard in mind, and are judging journalists against that.

Nick Davies, the author of *Flat Earth News*, has described in detail the flaws of modern journalism, even as the profession in the West became imperilled, apparently by the same sort of disruptive technology that threatens the model of music production and dissemination through record companies. His premise in the book is that the main threat to journalism as truth is not so much propagandising media bosses or increasing government and private PR "spin doctoring" of news (though these remain a real threat), but its replacement by "churnalism" – inadequate, quickly-produced, superficial non-news, the equivalent of fast-food, often focusing on celebrities or PR events.

Davies, in line with the emphasis on verification in the seminal *The Elements of Journalism* by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, talks of the defining

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characteristic of journalism being truth: “You could argue that every profession has its defining value. For carpenters, it might be accuracy: a carpenter who isn’t accurate shouldn’t be a carpenter. For diplomats, it might be loyalty: they can lie and spy and cheat and do all sorts of dirty tricks, and as long as they are loyal to their government, they are doing their job. For journalists, the defining value is honesty – the attempt to tell the truth. That is our primary purpose. All that we do – and all that is said about us – must flow from the single source of truth-telling.”

For me, journalism is about finding out the truth and then telling the world. I know that “truth” is a problematic concept, but philosophical paradigms that discount the possibility of its existence are quite frankly bullshit. I am not simply being crude in using that word. In a long essay, “On Bullshit”, that has become famous, Harry G Frankfurt has given it academic respectability, observing that bullshit is not about lying, it is about not actually caring what the truth is. For the bullshitter, unlike the liar, truth is immaterial. Think for a moment about many business speeches you have heard and you’ll instantly recognise the phenomenon. Journalists, however, should care about what the truth is.

What that leads us to as journalists and as journalism teachers is to realise that at the heart of journalism is research, which is another way of saying, “getting a good story”. Communicating that story is the other leg of journalism, which is historically a mass medium, and that’s where cameras, recorders, and various means of broadcasting text come in. And we do it “professionally” ie within a commercial context because that’s what seems to work best, though it could be argued that journalism is often subsidised outright by investors or governments supporting some mission and even, in a sense, by advertising.

Part of the problem of the news media in the West, I guess, is that monopolies of certain information flows have enabled organisations with economies of scale to extract rents from the public in exchange for information. If you had a printing press or a TV station you could ask money for information that was only roughly processed, often passed on in a form that privileged packaging over content in the form of sensationalism.

The Internet cuts through that monopoly in that basic news can be broadcast from many sources instantly: few tech-watchers waited for magazines to find out about the iPad launch. They watched it live via Internet, and read the twitter feed to see what the first experiences of using the “Jesus Tablet” were: hence the excitement about new media.

In this environment, however, research to find out what is not obvious, often what is deliberately hidden, becomes even more worthwhile. The concept of “added value” is useful in understanding the process, but it’s more than that, the kind of depth of understanding that is associated with philosophical thinking.

Philosopher and journalist Carlin Romano, writing in the *Chronicle Review*, has a dig both at universities and donors for giving in to what he calls “faddishness and lack of vision”: “Too many foundations and universities breathlessly fasten on the bells and whistles of new technology, as if tweets shall save us all, rather than attending to longstanding gaps in journalism education.”

As journalists, we have to return to our roots as seekers of the truth rather than being turned into ever more inventive users of new technology that enables us simply to be packagers and repackagers of trivial or stale information; to be, in other words, bullshitters, albeit bullshitters skilled in the use of the latest tools.



In search of critical engagement: a history of South African university based journalism education

BETWEEN THE PRESSURES OF THE APARTHEID STATE OF THE RECENT PAST AND THE NEO-LIBERAL ECONOMY NOW, JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA HAS NEVER QUITE SUCCEEDED IN PRODUCING A CURRICULUM FOR RADICAL CHANGE OR STUDENTS PREPARED TO BE AGENTS OF CHANGE. JEANNE DU TOIT’S DOCTORAL THESIS RESEARCH INTO THE FOUNDING OF THE VARIOUS JOURNALISM SCHOOLS IN THIS COUNTRY SHOWS THAT THERE WAS A BRIEF MOMENT DURING THE HEIGHT OF RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID THAT SHOWED PROMISE.



Jeanne du Toit and Arnold S de Beer

Historical discussions of South African journalism education (Tomaselli 1991: 167; De Beer and Tomaselli 2000; Steenveld 2006) refer to examples of teaching practice which have served as critical interventions into political process. They occur primarily in the late 1970s and 1980s and it is arguable that the social circumstances that existed during this period presented unique opportunities for critical education. The literature suggests, however, that these examples represent the exception rather than the rule. It would seem, in fact, that a critical approach to journalism education has never been realised in South Africa in any substantive way. It is with this argument in mind that I explore, in this paper, the historical construction of journalism as a subject of university education in South Africa.

In the 1960s and 70s, when journalism education first became a reality in this country, three distinct university systems were in existence in this country. One was a liberal, English tradition which drew on the “Oxbridge” model as well as aspects of the Scottish university tradition (Dubow 2006). The second tradition was that of Afrikaans-language universities, and the third that of black universities which were primarily established as part of the infrastructures of the apartheid state (Vale 2008: 122; Jubber 1983: 58).

The newspaper landscape shared many of the distinctions which characterised this university system. It is again possible to identify three separate traditions; that of a white English press, a white Afrikaans press, and newspapers that target black audiences.

Like its counterpart within the academy, the white, English-language journalistic tradition associated itself with humanitarian and liberal ideology, and opposed the policies of apartheid. It did so primarily through an emphasis on the Anglo-American model of objective journalism, insisting for example on reporting “both sides” of the social conflicts that characterised South African society (Pinnock 1991: 123).

Afrikaans newspapers, again in parallel to developments within the academy, operated primarily to promote Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture, often articulating this task explicitly as a struggle against British influence (Pollack 1981:

12). Newspapers targeting black audiences formed part of the same ownership structures as those of the English liberal press (Johnson 1991: 21).

When university-based journalism education entered this context, it did so almost exclusively within Afrikaans-language institutions of learning, and in service of the Afrikaans journalistic community. The first journalism education programme was established in 1959 at the University of Potchefstroom (now North-West University), and the second four years later at Unisa. At the beginning of the 1970s, communication programmes with some journalistic content were also established at the Rand Afrikaanse University and the University of the Free State.

The close association between journalism education and Afrikaans-language universities, at this time, should not come as a surprise. These institutions had become central to the intellectual infrastructure of the South African state and understood their role explicitly in instrumental terms, as serving the interests of hegemony.

The Afrikaans press had adopted a similar role and combined this with a growing sense of professionalism. One implication of this professional identity was that these papers prioritised the recruitment of university graduates. Their interest was in students who had benefited from a general education in the liberal arts, rather than those who had completed a programme that prepared them to work as journalists.

English newspapers also took seriously the need for knowledge acquisition for journalists, but rather than a university education they favoured the idea of on-the-job mentoring and apprenticeship. The

adherence of English universities to traditionalist academic models meant that they, too, expressed very little interest in the idea of journalism education (Hachten and Giffard 1984: 181; Interview: Harber). One exception to the rule is that of the Department of Journalism launched in 1969 at Rhodes University.

It seems curious, given the trends described above, that it was this programme, along with the one established at Potchefstroom, that at this early stage emerged as the two most substantive journalism education programmes in South Africa. One could say, in fact, that at this early stage the English and Afrikaans histories of journalism education, as represented by Potchefstroom and Rhodes, had much in common. Both operated in an academic context that tended to be either indifferent or openly hostile to their existence. The programmes that took shape at both institutions were informed, furthermore, by similar approaches to journalistic knowledge, and to the role of universities in engaging with such knowledge. In each case, the emphasis appeared to be on an instrumental approach, informed by a commitment to producing graduates who could be assimilated into the existing practices of particular journalistic communities (Interviews: De Beer, Switzer and Giffard).

Under the leadership of Gert Pienaar, the teaching programme that emerged at Potchefstroom was designed primarily to deliver students to the Afrikaans-language press. The curriculum for ‘journalism practice’ drew heavily on texts that were standard in American journalism education, and which tended to focus on guidelines for the production of journalism without placing such discussion

primarily within a reflective exploration of social context.

At Rhodes, Anthony Giffard was the first head of department, and then in 1972 Les Switzer was employed as a lecturer. As with the Potchefstroom programme, Giffard and Switzer started off within a practice oriented approach (Interview: De Beer).

Giffard saw the role of the journalism programme as one of supporting independent media in South Africa, particularly the English-language press. His approach to such support was, admittedly, different from Pienaar’s commitment to delivery of students to Afrikaans newsrooms. He wanted to produce journalists who recognised the vital role played by the liberal English press in challenging apartheid policies in South Africa, and who wanted to contribute to this (Interview: Giffard).

The key differences between the two programmes emerged as they matured and in relation to the way that each programme grounded itself within theoretical resources.

In the early 1970s, the Potchefstroom programme expanded the initial focus on practical skills to include a more sophisticated tradition of “perswetenskap”, which drew on a European (particularly German) tradition in the theorisation of media history, law and ethics. The result was not, however, a coherent curriculum. The programme was framed by two spheres of knowledge: that of the “perswetenskap” tradition, and that of vocational training in the conventions of mainstream print journalism (Interviews: De Beer and Fourie). Though efforts were made to ingrate ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, these two spheres remained disjointed, so that the Potchefstroom programme became characterised by the classic schism experienced in much of journalism education in English speaking countries across the world.

The Rhodes programme experienced a similar process of theoretical maturation, but did so at a very different moment in South African history, and in a different institutional context. This would, even if only momentarily, make possible a very different relationship between the study and production of journalism.

The period from the mid 1970s into the 1980s was characterised by dramatic intensification in the contestation of the hegemony of apartheid ideology. On one hand, there was an increasingly confident and widespread public

expression of resistance to the state. On the other hand, the South African government responded to expressions of dissent with increasing intolerance, and with more and more elaborate strategies of social engineering.

The movement of popular resistance to apartheid was growing rapidly in strength, and claimed campuses as one of its sites of struggle. At the same time, there was an infusion of new intellectual ideas into universities, which helped to open up spaces for political contestation. These ideas included concepts drawn from the theories of historical materialism, which began to inform radical challenges to traditional liberal conceptualisations of society. The ideas fostered by the Black Consciousness movement also increased the rift between liberalism and radicalism (Vale 2008: 123). Student resistance politics was intensifying within black universities. The focus of academic debate was, however, primarily on the development of a radical approach to social engagement in English-language universities (Dubow 2006: 269).

In South Africa at this time, the English-speaking community was quite marginalised from the political sphere. The institutions of Afrikanerdom were engaged in a power struggle with the black majority, with English liberals locked out and looking on from the sidelines. One response within the left-wing, English-speaking community influenced by the growing interest in Marxist ideas, was to colonise the English-language press (Interviews: Giffard and Louw). Another, related response was the involvement of this constituency in the teaching of journalism production skills to people involved in the progressive movement as a form of activism. White English liberal university students and

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THE DIFFICULTY OF SUSTAINING A CRITICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION IS, OF COURSE, NOT UNIQUE TO JOURNALISM EDUCATION. DISCUSSIONS OF THE CONTEMPORARY ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE INDICATE THAT THE CENTRALITY OF RADICAL SCHOLARSHIP IS GENERALLY UNDER THREAT. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT SUCH SCHOLARSHIP HAS BECOME RELEGATED TO THE MARGINS OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE. IN PARTICULAR, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES ARE NO LONGER AT THE CENTRE OF CRITICAL INTELLECTUAL DEBATE.

staff, and the student press through the South African Students' Press Union (Saspu) helped to organise and produce community papers (Tomaselli 1991: 167).

It was also such individuals who gravitated towards the Journalism Department at Rhodes University. At Rhodes, the impact of critical knowledge and the impetus towards reform could be strongly felt within journalism education, in a way that was not possible at Potchefstroom. At this time, Switzer experienced a dramatic transformation as an intellectual, which he connected with the learning that his own students were engaged in. He became increasingly convinced of the importance of melding the practical teaching of the fundamental competencies of journalism with a critical mindset (Interview: Switzer).

Teaching needed, therefore, to be grounded in critical theory. He began to read extensively, including literature within a more critical paradigm than the approach of the Rhodes curriculum up to this point. He became interested, for example, in the potential of literary journalism (or new journalism, as it was then called) as a vehicle for communicating the broader realities of popular culture, and created a course on this topic.

He also began to reason that, if journalism educators were going to think critically, then the practical skills that they taught students should include the ability to work strategically with research methods, and the ability to analyse the media. Out of this argument came the idea of a course in research methods and also one in critical theory.

When Switzer took over as head of department in 1979, he took the opportunity to add the words "media studies" to the name of the department. In doing so, he intended to make the statement that the department did not have a 'trade school' mindset in the teaching of journalism. He avoided the term "communication" because he saw in it a code word for the conservatism which, at that time, was dominant within American journalism education. The thrust of media studies scholarship that was then being generated by the Birmingham school made it an attractive alternative.

It would seem, however, that the critical approach that characterised Rhodes at in the late 1970s and early 80s could not be sustained over time. Over recent years, staff working in this department have repeatedly commented, in their reflections on their own teaching, on the difficulty of doing so. One observation has been that students struggle to relate the knowledge that they gain from production courses to those that deal with the study of journalism.

Another is that teaching within the department is, in the end, primarily shaped by the imperatives of industry (Amner 2005; Garman 2005; Steenveld 2006).

The difficulty of sustaining a critical approach to education is, of course, not unique to journalism education. Discussions of the contemporary academic landscape (Hendricks 2006; Vale 2008; Nash 2006) indicate that the centrality of radical intellectual scholarship is generally under threat. It is suggested that such scholarship has become relegated to the margins of public discourse. In particular, the social sciences are no longer at the centre of critical intellectual debate. Furthermore, the close engagement that existed in the 1970s and 80s between universities and South African communities has dissipated. The rise of neo-liberalism within universities is often cited as a key factor in this context, a trend that became powerfully felt in the South African context at the close of the 20th century (Vale 2008: 117).

After the 1994 elections, economic changes overwhelmed South African universities "like a flood through a hole in the wall" (Cloete 2002: 15). There was, in particular, an increasing demand on higher education to be commercially viable, and for university education to serve the needs of "industry" (Singh 2001: 8). In this environment, many social science disciplines have redefined themselves in terms of professionalism. In response to the environmental changes, the centrality of critical scholarship has been replaced by an "instrumentalist" approach to knowledge (Hendricks 2006: 86).

It is suggested that it is also because of the pressure of economic context that the study of journalism has been increasingly appropriated by new sections of the university community. Such courses tend to detach the study of journalism from the teaching of practice, their contribution to the critical engagement with the practices of journalism remain limited (Tomaselli and Teer-Tomaselli 2007: 180).

In this context, ideas that had once formed the basis of critical approaches to journalistic knowledge have become commodified. This appropriation and "hollowing out" of the study of journalism can also be observed within many of the communication science departments at Afrikaans-language universities. Such departments began to incorporate

cultural studies and media studies into their curricula, but did so in a way that simply assimilated these traditions without confronting their political implications (Interview: Louw).

I would propose, in context of the above, that the factors that are necessary for a critical approach to journalism education cannot be traced solely to the influence of any particular disciplinary approach. Of equal if not greater importance is the nature of the relationship that exists between institutions of higher learning and the social context in which they are situated. It would seem, indeed, that irrespective of the intellectual traditions within which teaching programmes are based, their relationship with their social environment tends to be that of conservative instrumentalism. Such instrumentalism remains the constant that runs through the history of South African journalism education, and it is one that has always existed in context of the requirements of oppressive forces. During apartheid, the institutions of journalism and of the academy were expected to serve the needs of an authoritarian state. In the post-apartheid era, the pressure to conform remains, this time framed by the hegemony of neo-liberal economic context.

It is important to remember that the "critical" turn in the history of journalism education, as described in this paper, resulted because the contradictions that defined the South African social context had become too great, and hegemony could no longer be maintained.

At this time, because of their association with a broad popular movement which arose to challenge the authority of the apartheid state, universities were able to develop radical approaches to journalism education.

It may be that, within the current situation, it is again only in context of such broad contestation of the status quo that a critical journalism education can come into existence.

It is, of course, important to draw on the knowledge resources of the university to open up a space for such education. Even more important, however, is the need for educators to engage with social forces outside the university which could form the foundation of a new critical turn.

This paper is based on research by Du Toit for PhD study at Stellenbosch University. De Beer is the co-supervisor of the study.

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WESTERN PARADIGMS AFRICAN MEDIA experiences

Wallace Chuma

Journalism training and journalism practice in Africa, as we know them today, are products of the continent's encounter with Europe. The earliest newspapers on the continent, from the Cape Colony to Egypt, were colonial projects.

Journalism practice at these newspapers was all about promoting the ideals and interests of the white settlers and European culture. Local African communities were not considered as audiences.

In cases where colonial authorities eventually allowed the development of an African press – that is newspapers or radio that targeted African audiences – Western models of journalism and stereotypes of Africans were encouraged and perpetuated.

The subjects were almost always about tribal lifestyles including sport and entertainment. Coverage of serious political and cultural affairs was discouraged. And news was mostly in English.

Popular white-owned, black-targeted magazines such as *Drum* in South Africa, for example, were designed to operate within the framework of the colonialist's definition of African life. And when such media began to breach such frameworks, as *Drum* did during the 1950s, the colonial state usually reacted with force.

Just as the media products on the continent emerged as part of the colonial project, media training was also consistent with the similar goal.

Journalism training in Africa, where it existed prior to independence, was started mostly by colonial authorities and Christian missionaries. In cases where no formal training was available, as was the case in Zimbabwe, in-house cadetships were offered, while senior editors were mostly trained in the metropole.

At independence, 90% of editors at the state-owned

Zimbabwean Newspaper Group or Zimpapers, had been imported from the UK and some from a few other countries such as South Africa.

When eventually formal training was launched at independence, the bulk of the funding came from Western non-governmental organisations and Unesco, while the curricula was predominantly inspired by conventional Western norms of journalism (Nyahunzvi, 1996).

Post-independence Africa

Post-independence Africa – and indeed much of the formerly colonised global South – has remained intellectually dependent on the North for explanatory frameworks for a range of disciplines and fields of study in academe, media and journalism studies being one of them.

As Thussu (2009: 14-15) argues with respect to India, “media and communication research was profoundly influenced by the Western or, more specifically, American tradition of mass communication research, given its prominence during the Cold War”.

As in the case of Africa, the Indian case was characterised by “a dependency relationship in the field of research, evident in the import of text books, journals, citations employment of experts and the funding, planning and execution of research.

Mano (2009) depicts a scenario in post-independence Africa where Western aid and “expertise” resulted in cases where local media training schools adopted, lock stock and barrel, Western syllabi.

He refers to a case where a Nigerian university adopted the entire media and journalism curriculum from the Jackson College of Journalism in the US.

In Zimbabwe, the University of Zimbabwe's first postgraduate media studies qualification was based largely on the University of Oslo's programme. The University of Oslo also offered training opportunities for UZ staff and students.

notes on fraught classroom encounters

Problem areas

The Media-Democracy Debate

A ubiquitous subject in most media and journalism training curricula in Africa and globally is the assumed role of media in democracy and democratisation.

There is consensus in media scholarship that in the best conditions the media are key institutions in the sustenance of democratic life in both established and fledgling democracies. From practically-oriented training modules in investigative journalism to theory-based media studies courses, the perceived key role of the media in democracy is a dominant factor.

What is noticeable, at least with regard to media training institutions in Southern Africa, is that most of the literature on the role of the media in democracy is based on experiences within the liberal democracies of the West. In Anglophone Africa, the predominant literature comes from the English-speaking parts of the West, especially the UK, US and Australia (key names include James Curran, Peter Golding, Graham Murdock, Robert McChesney, all based in the West).

There is a tendency in African media training institutions to apply such experiences and debates about such experiences to African contexts as given templates. Western paradigms are presented as standard, one-size-fits-all, and African situations are analysed from the perspective of how they fit into the existing models.

For example, Habermas's notion of the public sphere is presented as an ideal that applies across contexts and histories, hence students are often asked to analyse the extent to which specific African media and media systems conform to that notion of the public sphere.

The public sphere is undoubtedly one of the foremost applied analytic categories in research on Western media systems and practices, especially with respect to how the media can enrich or impoverish democracy.

The model has its genesis in the West, and arguably captures the situation there best. When applied to South Africa, or to Zambia, it is important that caution is exercised.

"Democratic" systems that emerged after the demise of colonialism and apartheid in Africa are complex in that they contain both anachronisms of the *ancien regimes* as well as "modern", liberal ideals of the present. In some cases, such as Zimbabwe, the uneasy marriage of the past and the present culminated in a bizarre model of "liberal" democracy where elections are routinely held on time (never mind the announcement of results), but the authoritarian state ensures the nominal freedoms that citizens enjoy only exist within the bounds of what is "acceptable".

Related to the issue of the evolution of democracy in Africa is the issue of citizenship. At the core of the Habermasian public sphere is an active and informed citizenry engaged in critical-rational debate.

What does active and informed citizenship entail in Africa? In addressing such questions and therefore interrogating the applicability of the model locally, issues around material access to what one might call "tools of life" – the resources we need to live and to participate, such as food, shelter, clothing and information – will need to be confronted.

IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICA,
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UNCONTESTED, TAKEN-FOR-
GRANTED USE OF ENGLISH.
THE IMPRESSION IS CREATED
THAT JOURNALISM TEACHING
(AND CONSEQUENTLY
PRACTICE) IS ESSENTIALLY
AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AFFAIR. WHICH EXPLAINS
WHY, FOR EXAMPLE, MEDIA
TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN
AFRICA WILL NOT ENROL
STUDENTS WITH POOR
GRADES IN ENGLISH. SO
CONNECTED IS ENGLISH
TO JOURNALISM TRAINING
THAT SEVERAL MEDIA AND
JOURNALISM STUDIES
DEPARTMENTS IN AFRICA
EMERGED AS OFFSHOOTS OF
ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS. THE
TRANSITION WAS DEEMED
TO BE SMOOTHER! THE
EFFECT OF MAINSTREAMING
ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE
OF JOURNALISM
INSTRUCTION HAS BEEN
TO MARGINALISE THE
DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL
AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS
MEDIA LANGUAGES.

We also need to look at what forms of participation are necessary – in that they make a difference – and those that are probably not.

The model of the public sphere may well be used in our attempt to understand the potential of African media systems to enhance democracy, but the starting point in our teaching should not be the analytic model, rather it should be the way in which our political and media systems are structured, how they speak to each other, and to local civil society. It is not helpful, for example, to simply argue – as we have heard and read *ad nauseam* – that the public sphere is negated in Africa because of prevailing conditions, whatever they are.

Radical and Liberal Pluralist Traditions

The radical/critical and liberal pluralist traditions (and their competing approaches to the role of the media in public life) have dominated the academy in the West, much as they have also dominated media and journalism teaching in Africa.

Political economy of communication or its "critical" variant, best describes the crisis of mediating democracy in a liberal capitalist economy where corporate power often rides roughshod over the state and civil society. It also describes scenarios where public consultation in policymaking is limited largely to the elite (Friedman 2006).

African political economy of the media should be modified to take into account the nature of the African postcolonial state and its relationship with citizens, capital and civil society.

For example, where the state in the West tends to cede significant leverage to organised business interests, the African state,

with a few exceptions such as South Africa, remains a key and imposing player in media policymaking.

As a key player in the economy, the state often dictates policy directions and imperatives to business which often consists of local subsidiaries of international capital and a few local/indigenous firms (the majority of which are dependent on the state for their very survival).

The relative weakness of formal business and civil society formations enable the state to dominate the media, especially in areas of broadcasting, in most of Africa. The kind of state that political economists of communication and even oft-quoted leftist critics Gramsci and Althusser talk about is remarkably different from the state that exists in most of Africa today.

It is therefore important to theorise the state in Africa as the predominant player in media practice and policy, first, and then adapting those analytical elements of critical approaches which are relevant to modern day Africa.

It is also important to understand that African media are not as integrated into the rest of the global media as in other parts of the world. Therefore the trends of consolidation and commercialisation have taken a somewhat different trajectory here.

The five biggest global media conglomerates have generally tended to shy away from Africa, save for the brief Time Warner purchase of 20% of Miti TV (now HCI), owners of e.tv in South Africa.

African educators and learners have not yet begun

to experience the collapse of quality newspapers as they fail to cope with the rising power of the Internet. In fact, newspapers are still big business in Africa.

At the same time, there are local trends of consolidation, especially in South Africa, where four big groups control most of the country's commercial media. South Africa is a very interesting case study because it combines elements of the First and Third World in terms of media structures.

The four big groups, Naspers, Avusa, Caxton and Independent Newspapers, in varying degrees, show horizontal and vertical integration trends that replicate the West. And yet media density in the country is still very low, especially with respect to the Internet and newspapers. This is hardly surprising, given that the country is one of the most unequal societies on earth.

Such structural inequalities manifest themselves even in classrooms when, within the same class, students have completely different media experiences and exposures because of their class and – to an extent – racial makeup.

Western paradigms which do not pay sufficient attention to such realities need to be domesticated if they are to be applied at all in media teaching and learning.

It's the Englishness, stupid!

In Anglophone Africa, the Anglo-Saxon character of media training is illustrated most prominently by the uncontested, taken-for-granted use of English as a medium of journalism instruction. The impression is created that journalism teaching (and consequently practice) is essentially an English language affair. Which explains why, for example, media training institutions in Africa will not enrol students with poor grades in English. So connected is English to journalism training that several media and journalism studies departments in Africa emerged as offshoots of English departments. The transition was deemed to be smoother!

The effect of mainstreaming English as the language of journalism instruction has been to marginalise the development of local African languages as media languages. With the exception of radio, African languages have a marginal presence in the media. In Zimbabwe, only two local language newspapers exist, almost three decades after the attainment of independence. And, to make matters worse, the two papers do not practice the "professional" model of informative and analytical journalism, but a sordid brand of tabloid journalism, creating the impression that local Shona and Ndebele languages are only good in newspapers when they describe the bizarre and the macabre.

There is little in mainstream journalism training in Africa that speaks to African ways of communicating. Take the hegemonic 5Ws and an H model of writing. This is consistent with Western ways of communication,

and steeped in Western culture.

In Shona culture, for example, it is not the shocking detail that you begin with when you communicate. You prepare the listener before dropping the bombshell.

In African folktales or stories – the climax does not come first. But when we write news, everything has to be contained in the first 40-50 words.

As a result, a daily newspaper published in Accra, Ghana can be easily mistaken for a Canadian paper, never mind the vast cultural differences. Even the naming of our papers... *Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Gazette*, is so very Anglo-Saxon.

Moving the centre?

African media and journalism educators need to relocate the African experience to the centre, rather than the periphery, of theorising on media. This entails a critical understanding of the dynamics of African citizens' experiences of the ordinary, of the nature of the postcolonial state and its role in public and private life, the nature of business and civil society. It entails an understanding of African history – before, during and after the colonial encounter.

African languages, as part of the African experience, also need to be shifted to the centre of learning, teaching and theorising on media and journalism. The same applies to African modes of self expression, storytelling, celebration – communication.

Doing this does not alienate those aspects of Western thought that are relevant to African media and social systems. A paradigm reconstruction is about mainstreaming the African experience, and borrowing

relevant Western models, but only where necessary to enrich the learning and teaching process.

It is not about re-inventing the wheel, or de-linking, for that will be foolhardy. It is about charity beginning at home, and not next door.

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A conceptually relevant and practically sophisticated journalism syllabus for AFRICA

Fackson Banda

Over 35 African journalism educators gathered in Grahamstown, South Africa in September last year, at the invitation of the SAB Ltd-Unesco Chair of Media and Democracy, to present and discuss initial research papers aimed at defining a common vision of journalism education on the African continent. The meeting was held against the backdrop of the bid by Rhodes University, under the auspices of the School of Journalism and Media Studies, to host the 2nd World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC).

The meeting was also part of a larger initiative of Unesco's aimed at deepening the exchange of knowledge and experiences within the context of the Unesco Centres of Excellence in Journalism Education project. An aspect of the meeting thus involved reflecting on the viability of

the Unesco model curricula in journalism education.

The Grahamstown consultation concluded that there were four key areas which needed continual work by African journalism educators and scholars:

- Interrogating the epistemic-ontological foundations of African journalism education.
- Analysing the complexities of national educational policies and their implications for quality assessment of journalism education.
- Experimenting with new teaching and learning innovations in journalism education.
- Making sense of the impact of African journalism education on journalistic practices and socio-political change.

Another conclusion of the gathering was a decision to take advantage of the second WJEC to be held in Africa to conceptualise, research and design a series of syllabi on reporting the African continent. One reason for undertaking

such an initiative was to influence how the continent is portrayed both in foreign and African media. A journalistic praxis that is rooted in the political history of the continent is likely to get African citizens – and others – to reconnect with their continent in a more organic fashion. The consultation was spearheaded by Rhodes University's SAB Ltd-Unesco Chair of Media and Democracy, Prof Fackson Banda, in conjunction with the Unesco Windhoek Office. It involved contributions from media practitioners, trainers, experts and other interested parties with a keen interest in indigenising journalism education.

The courses elaborated thus represent felt needs, as captured through the online consultation via the web site of the Unesco African Journalism Schools: <http://journalismschools.unesco-ci.org>.

The findings of the online consultation clearly demonstrated the need for an indigenised syllabus on reporting Africa. They also confirmed many of the themes espoused by the Unesco model curriculum, including the need for understanding the political history of Africa as a means to locating the practice of journalism in the African

context.

Peace journalism as a means to respond to the troubled history of conflicts in Africa was among the priorities identified. There was also an emphasis on experiential journalism, with a greater focus on the arts and sciences – knowledge which would enhance African journalistic analysis and reporting.

Participants also highlighted the importance of focusing on the interplay between the African continent and global decision-making institutions as an aspect of the contemporary political history of Africa in the age of global governance and communication.

In addition, they highlighted development journalism as a way of raising critical awareness among student journalists about the key development challenges that confront Africa and Africans, such as HIV and Aids and poverty.

The four resulting courses authored by myself, Prof Abiodun Salawu (University of Fort Hare) and Dr Monica Chibita (Makerere University), represent a series of initial attempts at mapping out a possible syllabus on reporting Africa which can be administered flexibly within any national journalism education curriculum.

The course outlines respond to the need for highly-contextualised teaching and learning materials on various aspects of reporting on Africa as a rich, multifaceted cultural unit of analysis. They take their cue from the Unesco model curricula for journalism education which recognises core competencies in journalism as consisting of:

- An ability to think critically, incorporating skill in comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of unfamiliar material, and a basic understanding of evidence and research methods;
- a knowledge of national and international political, economic, cultural, religious, and social institutions; and
- a knowledge of current affairs and issues, and a general knowledge of history and geography (Unesco 2007: 8).

The Unesco curriculum document is emphatic on the importance of a contextualised understanding and application of journalism. The result is that it recommends various electives for meeting the needs of the varied social contexts in which journalism is researched, taught and practised. For example, it recommends such electives as covering conflict, disaster reporting, development journalism, business journalism, etc. (Unesco 2007: 26).

The syllabus serves another purpose: to reorient students in their uptake of knowledge about the theory and practice of journalism. Many of the concepts presented in the syllabus are introduced and developed through the lens of African scholarship.

Here, African scholarship refers not only to scholarship by Africans but also by others producing scholarship about Africa. Such an "Africana" approach allows for the contextualised and relevant philosophical-intellectual cross-pollination that African journalism education would seem to require (cf. Eze 1997). Clearly, a relevant cross-cultural pedagogy would make it easy for African and foreign teachers of journalism to relate on a common frontier.

For example, with financial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism was offering at the time of this research project a two-year course focused on increasing reporting on Africa and agriculture and women.

There were 15 students – 10 Americans and five international visiting scholars, including a journalist from Uganda – who would all be travelling to Africa to report stories. Their work was intended for distribution with partnering mainstream

media in the US, Africa and internationally, and the students were working to establish collaborations with African journalists while in the field. Their stories and blogs would also be published in a digital site the class recently launched at: <http://africareportingproject.org> (Herrman 2010).

The rationale behind this present syllabus is thus informed by the recognition that Africa is often inaccurately and incomprehensively represented in foreign, and even African, media.

However, it is evident that such representations are ideologically flavoured, often fitting into the media frames that such foreign journalism has, wittingly and unwittingly, evolved over time. As a result, the reporting of the continent is often formulaic, risking a dangerous cultural homogenisation of a continent that is in reality geo-culturally multifaceted and fascinating in many ways.

In this light, the syllabus is an attempt at addressing the paucity of teaching and learning materials on reporting Africa. It is meant to provide a conceptually-relevant and practically-sophisticated basis for reporting a culturally diverse continent in continual flux.

The syllabus consists of four courses: political history of African journalism; journalism ethics in Africa; development journalism in Africa; and indigenous language media and democracy in Africa. Clearly, courses on the political history of African journalism and journalism ethics in Africa can be taught as core courses in any African national journalism curriculum, but they can also be taught as standalone electives or workshops, following the recommendation in the Unesco model curriculum.

What this means is that such courses can be injected into the main curriculum with flexibility. For example, a generic course on journalism ethics would be enriched by considering how aspects of African philosophy could be used as a lens for analysing African journalism ethics. Such an approach would have the advantage of grounding students in a particular intellectual and social-cultural context.

Considered as a whole, then, the key objectives of this four-course syllabus on reporting Africa are:

- to root students in the African historical context of journalistic production;
- to engender a self-reflective journalistic ethical decision-making approach that is grounded in a critical appreciation of the social and historical context of philosophy and morality;
- to promote a critical understanding of the development contexts and priorities that African journalists must grapple with; and
- to experiment with culturally and linguistically innovative media forms which lend themselves to a more democratically engaged journalistic practice.

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A diploma and YOUR OWN newspaper

Wilma Jean Emanuel Randle

Conakry, Guinea: “Hello, Mme Randle? I am returning your call. I am the publisher of the newspaper...” The caller’s greeting took me by surprise. The call wasn’t a mistake. Earlier I left a message asking her to call me. I wanted to talk with her about a new programme at her journalism school. It was the way she presented herself that surprised me, referring to herself not as a student but as the *publisher* of a newspaper.

The fact is she is actually both.

Welcome to the future for journalism school graduates – at least as envisioned at L’ISSIC-Kountia (the Institute for Higher Education in Information and Communication) which was created in 2006 and is the first school of journalism at the University of Conakry – a diploma and your own newspaper enterprise. If this model works, it would answer the two burning questions of every graduating university student: “What am I going to do *now*?” and “Will I find a job?”

In 2009, at the initiation and urging of the school administration, a group of third and fourth year L’ISSIC students started their own private newspaper which they named *Le Tonnerre* – the name in English means “thunder” or “roar”. It is a bi-monthly publication whose mission is to: “*éclairer toute ambiguïté*” – “bring clarity to ambiguity” in news coverage.

It is the first-ever, student-owned private newspaper in Guinea. It is a *real newspaper* – officially licensed and with the objective of competing in the commercial media market – which in Guinea is already very crowded and financially feeble. Its target audience is the general public – not just the university community.

The paper’s legally-registered publisher is Mame Fatoumata Diallo, a 20-year-old print journalism major who is in her final year of school. As publisher and editor, Ms Diallo is a first among many firsts as not just the publisher, but editor of this novel venture, but also one of the rare women in print media management.

Nothing like this has ever been tried before in Guinea. L’ISSIC Director Dr Bangaly Camara is very hopeful that it will succeed. In fact, the school wants to institutionalise this effort.

“We’re looking at putting into place a mechanism so that each journalism class that enters will create its own publication and they will take this with them when they graduate,” he said.

“If they persevere, they could become the grand patrons of the press,” he said enthusiastically. “Most of the media in Guinea is owned by families or groups of friends – this is something totally different.”

The need for training of qualified media practitioners is very real in Guinea, he stressed. “In order to reinforce the capacity of journalism in Guinea you really have to start with training at the fundamental levels. That is our number one priority at L’ISSIC to develop the capacities of our students.”

Employment for the graduates is another real concern that has to be addressed. “We also want our students to be able to find jobs when they leave here.” The reality in the media market in Guinea is the same as it is in many places in the world today, he continued, “competition, financial challenges, a scarcity of jobs and certainly no guarantees about employment for journalists – especially new ones entering the field.”

Camara sees in *Le Tonnerre* what he hopes will become standard procedure at the L’ISSIC: that this student-owned, private media venture, because it is being produced by students under the supervision of professionals via a school of journalism, they will better journalists and the product produced of a higher quality in the market place.

The idea is that the paper will be a collaborative venture between the journalism and the communication departments, although he acknowledged that the school is very much in the development stages and that there are many needs for both the journalism and communications departments in terms of materials and staffing.

Still, he said, this model will offer students an opportunity to “learn, sharpen their skills, and become, if they want to, entrepreneurs at the same time”.

L’ISSIC is not the only institution offering journalism/media training in Guinea. There are at least four private schools (with new ones popping up) offering specialisation and/or degrees in this domain – and thus more candidates in an already crowded market. For Director Camara, this is yet another reason why this model has potential.

Still, when one stops and reflects on some of the recent developments in Guinea-

Paul Greenway



Conakry, in particular its recent political and social turmoil, including the brutal attack by the military on opposition political protests in September 2009, it gives one pause.

It certainly is not a place that comes to mind first when one thinks of freedom of the press or even an active media. Nor would it seem that getting a media license would be easy. In fact, this situation is, as they say in Facebook-lingo “complicated”.

Like a myriad countries in Africa where state-owned media was the rule, particularly in French-speaking West Africa, Guinea in the 1990s liberalised its laws to allow private media, that is print media, to operate for the first time since gaining colonial independence (in the case of Guinea, 1958.)

In every country except for Guinea, media liberty was then extended to broadcast, namely private radio. In Guinea, it was only in 2005, after succumbing to internal pressures from civil society groups and external pressures from international donors, government partners, etc., that it legalised private radio, the last country in West Africa to do so. The first licenses were issued in 2006 to three radio stations.

Since that time the number of private radio stations has mushroomed. There has also been an incredible increase in print media numbers, in particular newspapers, despite the country’s dismally low literacy rates.

According to IREX, an organisation that tracks independent media in developing countries, as of 2008, in addition to the state-owned daily newspaper and the country’s only television station, there were approximately 250 newspapers and 25 private radio stations in Guinea.

There is also a growing Internet presence of Guinea news sites both for print and radio outlets that are based in the country and outside it but that target the in-country and its large diaspora populations. While the government still holds the monopoly on television, many people believe those days are numbered.

The Republic of Guinea is a lush, tropical country that is abundantly endowed with natural resources and whose population ranks among the poorest in the world by almost any development measurement.

Still the cost of the media license fee is not out of reach for everyone. The current fee of 50 000 Guinea Francs (GNF) is, given the country’s rampant inflation, the equivalent of approximately \$10 US. Of course there is a process for having application dossiers approved by the various authorities and finally by the CNC, the national communications authorising body.

This flurry of media activity comes at a time when there is growing discussion about media quality, journalism education, and the role each contributes to democracy in Africa from entities such as the World Information Society global forum and the African Development Forum. Unesco has been charged with looking at

how to help improve and strengthen journalism and communication training institutions on the continent, including the designation of “Centres of Excellence”.

Talk to media owners and editors in Guinea-Conakry and what you’ll hear is how they are not at all impressed by the quality of journalism education being offered as exemplified in the job candidates they encounter.

“Education in Guinea is a real problem, it’s not just journalism education,” said Souleymane Diallo, the veteran journalist and media-human rights activist, who in 1992 founded *Le Lynx*, one of the first private, satirical newspapers and which is still one of the most widely read and regarded in the country.

“There are not enough trainers, that is, not enough trained educators to offer the training that students need in these schools so at the foundation level, the base these potential journalists receive is not solid,” said Ibrahima Diallo, director general of Liberté FM, a popular radio station.

“I don’t work with journalism schools,” said Kabasan Keita, owner of Radio Soleil-FM. “Very few of my journalists have formal training – I prefer it that way because what I find with those coming with diplomas is I have to end up training them anyway.”

“There’s definitely a need for training for those who work on the business side of the media,” added Astou Ndiaye, the marketing director for Radio Djigui-FM.

For *Le Tonnerre* editor-publisher Mame Fatoumata Diallo, owning her own newspaper or even being a print journalist was not her intention when she came to L’ISSIC in 2006. Hers will be the school’s first four-year graduating class.

“My dream was always to be on television,” she said. “Here in Guinea we grew up with the idea that to be a *journalist* you had to be on TV.” She said she loved watching the women who came across the screen of the national RTG (Radio-Television Guinea). She recalled some of the names: “Manciné Camara, Marie Louise Sanoussy, and Youmssa Sidimé – I said to myself, ‘when I grow up, I want to be just like them’.”

At L’ISSIC she was introduced to print journalism. As part of their course work the students were exposed to media outlets such as *Horoya*, the state-owned newspaper, and also government ministries where they saw the different types of communication media and, she said, she began to change her focus. “I’ve always liked writing ... I started to think that maybe this was the field for me and that I could be good at it.”

Le Tonnerre is not the only paper produced by University of Conakry students.

There is also *Le Campus Express*, which is the official university campus-wide paper. It appears infrequently and it actually was the catalyst for their student venture, she said. During her third year of school the students were instructed to produce some stories for *Le Campus Express*, which they did but, to their disappointment the issue was never published.

“During our summer school vacation some friends and I got together and we started talking about starting our own newspaper.”

When they returned to school, they took the idea to their department chair and to their surprise, he told them this was exactly what the school was thinking it wanted students to do. The paper’s name was selected by consensus; they pooled their resources to come up with the license fee and she was selected to submit the registration request in her name – thus she owns this publication and she can take it with her when she graduates.

Ms Diallo insists that they work independently in terms of story selection and content although they consult with their advisor, who is also the head of the print journalism department and they show the final copy prior to printing to the school director.

So what do the students in Guinea-Conakry write about when given access to printer’s ink and a public forum? Well, it turns out, the same thing that the adult-owned publications do. In fact, if it were not for the editorial on the front page identifying the paper’s owners as students at L’ISSIC, no one could tell it apart from the others.

It is, like most papers, a bi-monthly. The cost is the same as most, 2 000 GNF, and the front page and inside content is practically the same, that is, all about politics and political-related happenings, mostly personalities.

“Well, in Guinea, if you’re in the newspaper business and you don’t talk about politics no one is going to pay attention to you,” Diallo said when asked about this content, even as she noted that “most people in Guinea don’t read newspapers – you’re really writing for a very small audience – and, as we get more established we do plan to do more coverage about things like entertainment and sports.”

Diallo is hopeful even though right now its print run is meager – 500 copies, but under 1 000 is the norm for most of the papers published. It has published two issues but is not yet meeting its bi-monthly deadline, just like most of its more established market competitors.

“I think we’ll make it,” she said with confidence. “There was such good feeling among us doing this. It was hard but we had fun. And once the first issue came out, we saw what we’d accomplished.”

“Our biggest worry as students was finding a job after university. Now we’ll always have work. I hope we do inspire other students at L’ISSIC to do the same. It’s hard work but it’s worth it.”

With her university days soon ending, she is confident about her future. “In terms of my dreams – well, I’ve achieved one already with *Le Tonnerre*. I never would have believed that I would one day have my own newspaper in Guinea. I’d like to have a radio station someday, and why not a TV station. In fact, I want to see women everywhere.

I would like to see a woman as president in this country someday.”

SHE LOVED
WATCHING THE
WOMEN WHO
CAME ACROSS
THE SCREEN OF
NATIONAL TV.
SHE RECALLED
SOME OF
THE NAMES:
MANCINÉ
CAMARA,
MARIE LOUISE
SANOUSSY,
AND YOUNSSA
SIDIMÉ – I SAID
TO MYSELF,
“WHEN I GROW
UP, I WANT TO
BE JUST LIKE
THEM.”



I hope to see my children graduate top of the class
 I hope my kids can go to a good school
 I hope to preserve my pension fund
 I hope I have enough money to send him on that soccer tour
 I hope we're always this happy
 I hope she doesn't fall
 I hope he has every opportunity that I didn't have
 I hope I can have a dignified funeral
 I hope she gets accepted into university
 I hope I get my driver's licence
 I hope to go to Rio one day
 I hope my professional practice continues to be a success
 I hope we can do the renovations to the house
 I hope to be the best dad in the world
 I hope I can buy that house someday
 I hope my broker gets the trade done before the market moves
 I hope we can travel together
 I hope I can show him my hometown one day
 I hope I get the financing for my business
 I hope to live out my dreams
 I hope I can always take care of her
 I hope my children will be taken care of
 I hope she says, 'yes'
 I hope my offshore investments perform
 I hope I can pay my medical bills
 I hope I have enough for my retirement
 I hope to, one day, own that house on the hill
 I hope I can afford this holiday
 I hope I can study overseas
 I hope my hard work pays off
 I hope I can get that car
 I hope to see the Northern Lights
 I hope this idea works
 I hope my business succeeds
 I hope I am giving our employees the best
 I hope to dive with dolphins
 I hope the rest of my studies run smoothly
 I hope for trading at the right price and at the right time
 I hope I can provide for my family

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Twenty Ten

African journalism education in a year of radical attention

Dominique le Roux

“African narratives in the west, they proliferate. I really don’t care anymore. I’m more interested in the stories we tell about ourselves.”

These are the words of Nigerian writer Chris Abani in a 2007 talk he delivered for TED (www.ted.com), that educative, inspiring web-based nonprofit devoted to “ideas worth spreading”. Africa Media Online and the project known as Twenty Ten are both all about that very same thing: Africans telling Africa’s stories.

Twenty Ten – or, to give it its full name, “Twenty Ten: African Media on the Road to 2010 (and beyond)” – is funded by the Dutch Postcode Lottery. It is an initiative of World Press Photo, Free Voice, Africa Media Online and *lokaalmondiaal*, and is dedicated to using the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa – a time when a vast global audience is focused on our continent – as a catalyst to tell stories from an African perspective. The project involves African journalists from 34 nations who create written articles, photographs, broadcasts and multimedia productions.

After a call to participation in the five major trade languages of Africa (Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Swahili), we’ve trained 128 African journalists – all working professionals – in four disciplines (text, radio, photo and multimedia) with an initial online training programme and then with workshops in six African countries (Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, South Africa and Zambia).

These journalists had to fulfil the requirements of the online refresher course and the out-of-country workshop and then deliver three assignments, mentored by tutors with extensive working experience – old journalism hands now turned to teaching. (A video of our final multimedia workshop in Zambia can be viewed at: <http://media.blogs.africamediaonline.com/2010/05/07/twenty-ten-give-boost-to-african-multimedia-journalism/>)

The training and mentoring obviously differed for the four disciplines, with the radio and print being provided by the Reuters Foundation, and the

photography and multimedia through partners of World Press Photo.

I think that, were we to do it all over again, we would place far more emphasis on the briefing of the tutors, both in the expectations of the project as well as the nitty gritty of technical detail in terms of how the material would be uploaded to and distributed by Africa Media Online.

I found myself in fascinating debates at the dinner table, for example, with a print and a radio journalist who were both trainers in the Burkina Faso workshop. The radio journalist was adamant about certain ethics – he deemed it an absolute sin, for example, for us to even contemplate asking the journalists to report on a match from the stand, particularly since the bulk of them were not FIFA accredited.

The print trainer (whose name and agency shall remain undisclosed!) cited some significant sporting events that he had covered for an international news agency by merely watching it on television. I would have liked to have seen more of this type of debate take place in advance, so that we could all be singing off the same song sheet, as it were, in the actual training.

Additionally that age-old coaching issue came up: each of the trainers had impressive CVs and extensive work experience around the globe. However, not all were necessarily brilliant mentors. And all differed in their understanding of the role they should play in the production of the assignments the journalists had to deliver.

Some, for example, coached and edited very closely, which meant that the initial assignments by the journalists in their charge were very strong, but later the quality delivered by the same journalists dropped significantly, once the tutors were no longer involved.

From an education perspective, this is simply an interesting observation. But for Africa Media Online, responsible for delivering that content to a waiting audience around the globe, the impact was substantial. We had made a very simple

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THE LOVE OF FOOTBALL

Amos Gumulira

Helen Teye, a loyal member of the Ghana Female Supporters Union, is a lot more than just another football fan. Not only does she fervently support her local team, Accra Hearts of Oak, and her national team, Black Stars, she is also a dedicated wife, a mother of four, a business woman and a devoted member of the Church of Pentecost in her area, popularly called Nana Appa in James Town, Accra, Ghana.

The struggle for female empowerment is typical for many Ghanaian women. Like Helen, they believe that women should have the opportunities to achieve what men can. They want to be self-sufficient, confident and free to pursue their passions.

Helen's passion is football. She is involved in the Women Supporters Union, an organisation that rallies behind both local and national teams. She attends soccer matches religiously and participates in the celebration by wearing her team's colours. In the run up to the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament, Helen, and women like her, will be preparing to go all out in support of their country.



Helen and her daughter, Mary, check their costumes to see if they are dry, before the game between the Black Stars and Sudan.

Helen, kisses her husband as she leaves their family home in James Town for Ohen Adjan Stadium in Accra.



Christopher Kwesi Teye helps his wife Helen with her football supporter's attire, as she prepares to go and cheer Ghana's National Football Team, the Black Stars, during their 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifier.

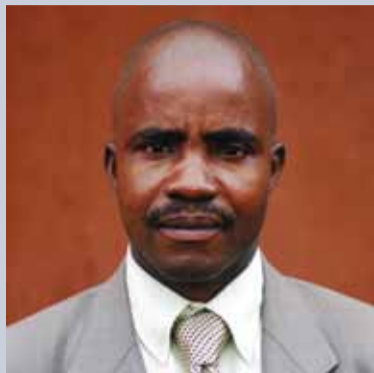




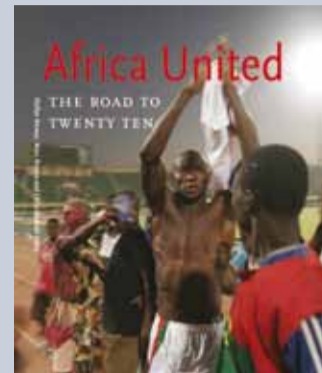
Helen plays football with local children at her home in James Town, Accra, Ghana.



Helen who sells clothes at Makola Market's Tudu area in Accra, shows samples to customers.



Amos Gumulira is a Malawian photojournalist working with Nation Publications Limited (NPL) in Lilongwe. He is also a correspondent for Agence France Presse and Getty Images. He has won several local and international awards, including 2009 National Media Institute of Southern Africa (Namisa) photojournalist of the year, joint winner of the 2009 Namisa Humans Rights Journalist of the Year, joint winner of the 2009 Namisa overall journalist of the year, the 2009 TNM Super League photojournalist of the year and the 1999 Malawi Press Photographer of the year. He holds a diploma from the Institute of Photography in Pretoria, South Africa, and is studying with the Institute of Professional Photography in the UK. He plans to launch a picture agency and develop his interest in teaching photography to beginners.



The Twenty Ten project has already resulted in a book, *Africa United: The Road to Twenty Ten* edited by Stefan Verwer, Marc Broere and Chris de Bode. The book, which is part of the project to use football as a catalyst to tell stories from an African perspective, is full of wonderful photographs and amazingly interesting stories from all over the continent.

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assumption: that the quality of each of the three assignments each journalist had to deliver would improve from one to the next.

From an assessment of the assignments delivered by this group of 128, 18 journalists have been selected to come to South Africa for June and half of July to cover stories on the ground – not sports reporting, but features that give breadth and depth to the news agency coverage.

These journalists represent 12 different countries (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia) and all four disciplines: six radio and two multimedia journalists, six writers and four photographers.

At the same time, the “Allstar” journalists who remain in their home countries will also be producing features on the impact of the event in their respective home nations.

Already a book, called “Africa United,” has been produced from the project, as has a travelling exhibition that will tour a number of African countries after the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Africa Media Online is distributing the content to buyers in Africa and around the world.

It has been encouraging to see how the enduring features the journalists are producing are being snapped up by publications around the world as they are posted on <http://twentyten.africamediaonline.com>

“How well is the project working as a training tool?” you ask, noting that this is an age of radical change for journalists. My answer? It’s working radically well. But it would be more so if not for one drawback: African journalists have not been changing fast enough for the age. And this despite – and this is my personal belief – the fact that this age has more to benefit journalists in the Majority World than anybody else.

The change that I’m suggesting African journalists have been slow to adapt to is that of both a technological and mental shift. Yes, we’re all aware that bandwidth on this continent is a nightmare. But what struck me in each of the training sessions was how these African journalists were not using the free options that are available to them, or personal workflow systems that require lower bandwidth.

One seemingly silly example: at least 75% of these African journalists are using Yahoo for their mail – with an online mailbox only. The result: reading of mails – and therefore assessment and considered response – is rushed, as they can’t afford to spend too much time online. “Why not download to an offline inbox, read and respond at their leisure, and then log on again?” I would continually ask.

Google has some incredible research and storage tools – free – and yet very few of these journalists were familiar with even the most basic. Most did not know the mechanisms of a basic Google search, and would be simply flabbergasted when I showed them the wonders that were available to them at zero cost.

And that for me was the irony: we were teaching fairly sophisticated software programs, particularly to the radio, photography and multimedia journalists, and yet I found myself passionately wishing for the opportunity to spend more time with them sharing the basics – things that the experienced trainers whose history has been with large organisations in a pre-technological era might not be that adept at themselves.

On the subject of the mental shift, I come back to Abani: what are the stories we as Africans tell about ourselves? Therein – to my mind – lies the rub. To my frustration, I have found that the bulk of working African journalists we invited onto this project were initially not telling Africa’s stories; they were telling the stories – both in content and style – that they believed the Western international markets wanted.

Here we are talking of an age of radical change, and African voices seemed to be speaking with fake colonial accents, believing that was what was demanded. Even the stories they chose to tell were not those of their hearts, but those they believed were called for.

The irony, of course, is that the markets are wanting something new and the very people who could deliver this were still trying to play catch-up to the old theoretical glory days of journalism – days that no longer exist, for a myriad reasons.

It has been incredibly gratifying to see that Aha! moment in so many eyes when, through Twenty Ten’s training, journalists on our programme woke up to the fact that their voices were more relevant than ever.

And so together we grappled with some of the issues of practicality and ethic. (This of course is a continuum as the editorial team on which I serve arm-wrestles daily in the process of commissioning this network of African journalists to deliver content that is both relevant now and will stand the proverbial test of time.)

Abani again: “The question is how do I balance narratives that are wonderful with narratives of wounds and self loathing?”

After debating these issues in our workshops, I have seen some wonderfully simple and yet profound answers to that hard question. I think for example, of the photographs supplied by a range of our photographers of home-made footballs – usually balls of twine knotted into a vaguely round thing – across the continent.

At the start of the programme, they might have submitted these images as the story they believed the world wanted: the tired tale of Africa’s backwardness and poverty. A few months down the line, those self-same images are submitted more in the spirit of a celebration of creativity.

Certainly the pic by Julius Mwelu that USA Sports Illustrated is to pay good dollars for and run as a double page spread is one of triumph and defeating the odds. It is an image of pride painted on the faces of defiant African youth. It is the New African journalism that this project has helped bring forth.

And that, I believe, is one of the greatest legacies of the Twenty Ten project. We have some great journalists on this continent, but many had been brow-beaten into believing they had to present in a certain way.

Now, those old ways are broken. Across the globe, those old forms of journalism just don’t necessarily make sense anymore. And the new ways and forms might make a whole lot more sense in Africa. When we’re talking digital versus print, Africa’s photographers benefit. In the past they did not have the bandwidth to send the hi-res images that print needed, now their smaller files and their hyper-localism fit the online bill.

When we’re talking a world of short attention spans, traditional African storytelling is what’s new and fresh.

For more information on the Twenty Ten project, see www.roadto2010.com. Find Africa Media Online at www.africamediaonline.com.



Herman Wasserman

A volcano erupts in Iceland, spreading its ash over European skies and forcing all air travel over this area to grind to a halt. The disruption is not limited to Western Europe: hundreds of thousands of passengers are stranded worldwide, as the knock-on effect of flight disruptions wreak havoc with travel schedules globally.

News reports about the chaos abound, most of them focusing on the implications of the volcanic eruption for air travel, the economic impact on the airline industry and human interest stories of travellers scattered around the world, waiting to get home. Disappointed travellers include a contingent of South African writers destined to attend the London Book Fair. Mentioned briefly amidst the woes and homesickness of global jetsetters, was the fate of farmers in Kenya forced to dump tons of vegetables and flowers destined for markets in Europe. Thousands of Kenyan workers are laid off (Wadhams 2010).

This news event was simultaneously an international and a local story – highlighting the mobility we often take for granted, the global ramifications when that mobility is curtailed, and the often hidden accounts of how distant events affect the lives of people in localities.

Yet sending a ‘foreign’ reporter to Iceland will tell you nothing about the plight of Kenyan families now without an income, or of the anxiety of the parents of a toddler awaiting bone marrow cells prevented from being transported from Canada to the UK (Hough 2010).

Globalisation is blurring the clear distinctions between local and international news, compelling us to think of news as global instead.

Think of how the failure of banks in the US eventually led to the meltdown of markets around the world; how the outbreak of swine flu in Mexico led to a global panic, how the attacks on Manhattan on 9/11 signified the threat of terrorism that may surface anywhere; and think of climate change that marches on inexorably across the planet as a whole (cf. Berglez 2008).

These events were reported by journalists around the world not only as distant, foreign events, but as stories that touched the lives of their domestic audiences locally – yet it was precisely the interrelation between different locales that gave these stories global relevance.

Much of this experience of interconnectedness in global journalism can be attributed to the profound changes that the news industry worldwide has been undergoing as a result of the ongoing development of new media technologies.

The rise of blogging, social media and mobile media have impacted on news production, traditional business models and the very definition of what counts as journalism and journalists. Yet the global reach of these technologies does not immediately imply homogeneity in the way that professional journalists, citizen journalists/consumer-producers and audiences interact with them in different places around the world.

“Foreign’ is not elsewhere

Journalism studies can no longer afford a parochial focus, nor can it be satisfied with old notions of ‘foreign news’ as something happening elsewhere else. As Berglez (2008) argues, the challenges facing the world today are too complex to be met by a journalism that conforms to outdated dichotomies of domestic/foreign news.

Even the notion of transnational news becomes problematic because it uses the nation-state as a basis for comparison, in the face of arguments that supranational organisations or regional regimes have eroded the significance of nation-states (cf. De Beer 2010).

Journalism educators have to find ways of teaching students the interrelationship between local news events and global structures and processes. Journalism scholars have to find ways of theorising journalism in new ways that take

into account the varied and multiple ideologies, practices and institutions of journalisms around the world, yet seek interconnections and comparisons between them rather than succumb to cultural relativism.

A global perspective on journalism does not mean a glib acceptance of the myth that global cultural flows have given everyone an equal chance in the global communication stakes.

For someone losing their job in a flower factory near Kenya’s Lake Navaisha, the global interconnectedness made visible through the eruption of Mount Eyjafjallajökull arguably means more than the temporary disruption to mobility experienced by an elite global cosmopolitan class.

A critical journalism studies will therefore not simply collapse the local into the global, but will have to find new ways of critically relating the local and the global, via the national and the regional.

National media and the state

Research in South African journalism has historically largely been inward looking. As a result of the tumultuous history of the country, scholarly attention has largely been directed inward to national media and its often fractious relationship to the state.

While some university journalism departments (eg Rhodes, with its Highway Africa conference and other pan-African ventures) have succeeded in locating South African journalism within the wider continent, only tentative strides have been made towards including other countries of the Global South such as India and Brazil, or the emerging economies of Russia and China in comparative research ventures.

This while journalism in South Africa probably has more in common with Brazil or India than with Britain or the US.

Contrast, for example, the lamentations about the demise of print in the US and the UK, with the much more vibrant newspaper industry in India and South Africa; consider the parallel tensions between journalists and post-authoritarian democratic governments in Brazil and South Africa; or the ways in which online journalism in South Africa and other African countries is being “glocalised” to suit a context where mobile phones dominate.

Critical studies of journalism in the global context, viewed from the perspective of those on the margins, are important not only for those scholars and researchers located in the Global South.

The experiences of the periphery can highlight the limits of the dominant assumptions about journalism in the centre (Tomaselli 2009: 17), and so may contribute to the de-Westernising or internationalisation of media studies (Curran and Park 2000; Thussu 2009).

What issues would be addressed by a *critical* global journalism studies in South Africa? A few suggestions:

Political economy of journalism

The interconnections between complex localities, regions and transnational cultural flows make it imperative for students and scholars of journalism to understand the political economy of local journalism institutions within a transnational context.

For instance, knowledge of the historical and political circumstances surrounding the South African media’s re-entry into the global media landscape is required to understand the interpenetration (Tomaselli 2009) of media capital in multinational companies such as Naspers and Independent newspapers.

Yet global trends in conglomeration and concentration are important to understand in order to identify the countervailing pressures of this global commercial journalism market and the political repositioning of media companies locally (Wasserman 2009).

Journalism ethics

In an era where media platforms increasingly have a global reach,

journalists’ ethical obligations can no longer be understood simply in terms of local or national audiences.

The now well-known example of the Danish cartoons illustrated how what is seen as freedom of speech in a Western liberal democracy does not unproblematically translate to contexts of reception everywhere.

The global reach of media also raises dilemmas for representation, eg how audiences relate ethically to the portrayal of distant suffering (Moeller 1999; Chouliaraki 2006; Silverstone 2007).

The sometimes conflicting interpretations of central ethical concepts such as truth, human dignity, freedom and responsibility, pose challenges for the field of journalism ethics that require a global outlook, rather than an Anglo-American one masquerading as universal.

Well-meaning attempts to include examples of ethical thinking from “elsewhere”, to fit an existing theoretical framework are not good enough.

The answer does however not lie in unhelpful counter-reactions that oppose African ethics (see Banda’s 2009 reappraisal of Kasoma’s work in this regard) with ‘Western ethics’. A crude us and them opposition could stifle free expression (Tomaselli 2003, Fourie 2007) instead of opening journalism ethics up for debate.

Journalism, democracy and development

Trends in global news and communication in emerging regions (for instance the study of media in “Chindia” by Daya Thussu) and in political communication across new democracies of the ‘Third Wave’ (leading work done by Katrin Voltmer and Barbara Pfetsch) can enrich our understanding of the relationship between South African journalism and democracy in the context of the globalisation of media, from the perspective of emerging regions.

Similarly, globalisation poses new questions for thinking about development journalism. The old models of centre-periphery approaches to development are being challenged by the emergence of rising powers like China, India, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, which at first glance indicate the potential for “developing” countries to successfully navigate global markets to their advantage.

Yet internally in these countries, huge inequalities persist (South Africa and Brazil being two of the most unequal countries in the world). The Indian journalist Palagummi Sainath gives a vivid example (see <http://www.whydemocracy.net/film/34>) to illustrate how establishment journalism in the developing world buys into the Western narrative of countries like India as shining examples of liberalised trade in the global marketplace, while hiding or ignoring globalisation’s underbelly – in the same year that 512 journalists were accredited to cover a gigantic Fashion Week in India in 2006, a total of 1 520 cotton farmers committed suicide because price of cotton have been destroyed by global trade policies which include subsidies for US and EU farmers.

Yet not a single correspondent of that country’s mainstream media has a full-time beat to cover labour or poverty. What would a comparison with South Africa look like in this regard?

Audience studies

Much of the popular debate about South African journalism foregrounds issues of freedom of speech and independence from state interference. The normative insistence on structural conditions that enable citizens the right to communicate is important in the light of the country’s authoritarian past. But too often this is a debate about citizens without citizens, limited to a clique of professional journalists.

“Standards” in journalism are often debated without bothering to ask audiences what they think, how they relate to journalism and how they make meaning in their interaction with journalism.

In studying the attitudes and views of the consumers of especially global journalistic genres and products, parallels between South Africa and other regions in the Global South may also to be drawn to explore patterns of hybridity, contraflow and glocalisation in the way local audiences relate to global journalism.

The role of new media technologies

It would be imperative for journalism courses aimed at equipping future journalists with the skills they will need in the contemporary converged newsroom to give students as much exposure to the technical aspects of using new media technologies. But it would be short-sighted to imagine

that technical skills are all that journalists need in order to flourish in this new journalism environment.

Journalism courses that approach students as if they can continue to work as an elite, professional class will have to make way for reflection on how journalism has become a more collaborative field of practice.

This would mean the incorporation of citizen journalism into journalism courses, providing training to members of the public to contribute to their empowerment as partners in this collaboration, but also encourage students to develop new attitudes and skills they will need when working alongside citizen journalists.

On a practical level this could mean incorporating more collaborative work in teaching – making use of team work, setting up wikis for classroom discussion or collaborative journalistic pieces; encouraging students to open their work up for comment (eg by writing an assessed blog which allows comments from student peers and readers internationally); using social media such as Twitter to connect with journalists globally and disseminate their own work, etc.

This style of teaching journalism could add a global dimension to a range of taught subjects, and will also require a mindset shift of lecturers whose teaching will of necessity take on a more open and collaborative dimension when they use new media platforms to invite feedback and comments from students. This more open and collaborative approach to teaching of course also has its pitfalls, most notably for issues around privacy or confidentiality.

But a critical global journalism will have to incorporate the study of new media technologies not only on the practical, but also on a more reflective intellectual level.

Critical approaches to media globalisation will puncture

the often exaggerated and technological determinist views of the potential of new media technologies for journalism by studying the use of these technologies within the overarching structural economic conditions as well as their actual everyday use.

This would mean taking into account the enormous disparities worldwide regarding access to the Internet, for example, but also the creative ways in which people in the South appropriate and adapt technologies to suit their various socio-cultural and economic settings.

Students in the South could be encouraged to find examples of such adaptations in their everyday lives and reflect on how such practices invite different theorisations about the relation between new media and society than those dominating scholarly literature produced in the North – for example, how mobile phones are adopted in African societies (De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh and Brinkman 2009), how the web is accessed via intermediaries (Wasserman and Kabeya-Mwepu 2005) or how new technologies are combined with traditional media by social movements (Wasserman 2007).

Conclusion

The contemporary global media landscape demands a critical study of how journalism practices and institutions relate to processes of globalisation, that moves beyond older notions of communication between nation-states.

Such a study should be critical, ie based on the scrutiny of the power relations inherent upon global journalism today, as well as cultural, in that it should be informed by an ethnographic approach to the everyday practices of and relationships between journalists, citizens and institutions.

For South African scholars of journalism, the challenge lies in contextualising their own experiences of journalism against a wider, comparative background of similar contexts in the Global South. If a sustained engagement between journalism studies of the South could be achieved, real headway could be made in the internationalisation of journalism studies.

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Teaching
critical
global
journalism

Wrestling with the future

IS TRADITIONAL PRINT
JOURNALISM DEAD?

WILL VIDEO AND
MULTIMEDIA REPLACE
STILL PHOTOGRAPHY?

ARE BLOGS AND
TWEETS THE NEWS
MEDIA OF THE FUTURE?

ARE WE SPENDING TOO MUCH
TIME TEACHING SOFTWARE
AND NOT ENOUGH TIME
TEACHING CONTENT?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO BLEND
THEORY AND PRACTICE IN OUR
CURRICULUM?

David Weintraub

We who teach journalism and mass communications are sometimes compelled to predict the future. What professional skills will our students need to master by the time they graduate? What is the best method to help them achieve this mastery?

Because we have no journalistic crystal ball, we are sometimes forced to wrestle with vexing questions: is traditional print journalism dead? Will video and multimedia replace still photography? Are blogs and tweets the news media of the future? Are we spending too much time teaching software and not enough time teaching content? What is the best way to blend theory and practice in our curriculum?

It seems journalism and mass communications perfectly illustrate the maxim of Heraclitus that change is the only constant. But there is one additional constant: the need for our students to acquire solid business skills.

In other words, they need to understand that the theory and practice of entrepreneurship will never go out of fashion.

For those students planning a freelance career, acquiring solid business skills is essential. And those who plan to become media employees also need to understand that entrepreneurship will help them succeed in an ever-more-demanding corporate environment. So how will our students acquire these skills? Amid the studies in graphic design, advertising, public relations, and broadcasting, where will students learn marketing, self-promotion, negotiating, financial planning, copyright, contracts, and all the other necessities of running a business?

Freelancing for creative professionals

At the University of South Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communications, we are offering an experimental course, "Freelancing for creative professionals". The focus is on how to start and operate your own successful freelance business. I taught a similar course in San Francisco that concentrated on the business practices of photography. For this course, I am expanding the field to include not only photographers, but also videographers, multimedia producers, web designers, and graphic designers, along with those wanting to start their own advertising and public relations firms. Over the course of the semester, I will explain the theory and practice of entrepreneurship and provide students a solid footing on which to stand when they leave the university.

Course topics

During our 28 class meetings, we will discuss the nature of small business and self-employment and determine the characteristics of the successful entrepreneur. Students will also learn about the types of small businesses, including sole proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations. We will examine sources of capitalisation for starting a small business.

Students will learn the importance of creating a written business plan; a professional portfolio and resumé; and detailed marketing, self-promotion, advertising, and sales strategies. We will study various sales techniques and methods for getting and retaining clients. Students will learn to set fees, negotiate with

clients, and determine fixed costs, billable expenses, and realistic markups.

We will then cover the legal and ethical aspects of running a small business, including copyright and trademark, along with issues such as time management, scheduling, taxes, business licenses, insurance, and employees. For their final project, students will prepare a detailed written business plan for their proposed creative professional business.

So many books, so little time

Type the keyword "freelancing" on Amazon.com and you get more than 6 000 results. Clearly, there are many books to choose from if you are looking for a textbook to use in a course on freelancing.

As it turns out, a Nolo Press book by media and communications consultant Peri Pakroo, *The Small Business Start-Up Kit*, perfectly fits the bill. Subtitled *A Step-by-Step Legal Guide*, this book has chapters on choosing a legal structure for your business; picking the right business name and location; writing a winning business plan; pricing, bidding, and billing projects; federal, state, and local start-up requirements; risk management; taxes; running a business from home; contracts and agreements; bookkeeping, accounting, and financial management; marketing; web sites and e-commerce; change-of-ownership issues; employees; and using professionals such as lawyers and accountants.

Assignments

I am devising assignments that will both develop understanding of the course material and provide information students can actually use as they plan and start their own business. Here are some I have used before:

- Answering a questionnaire to help determine whether the student is suited for self employment.
- Preparing a detailed monthly budget to determine the student's current income and expenses.
- Creating a break-even analysis, based on projected income and expenses, to gauge the possibility of profitability.
- Developing a preliminary client list.
- Writing an estimate of start up costs and capital expenses needed to launch the business.
- And, for the final project, submitting a completed business plan.

Students are sometimes surprised at how much writing and math are involved in starting a business – welcome to the entrepreneurial environment!

Obviously, the business world is in flux, given the current economy. For some of my students, this must be a scary time to contemplate leaving the relative security of college and embarking on a career. Other natural entrepreneurs will see great opportunity lurking in the recession and will be eager to test their talents.

Fortunately, many resources are available to the up-and-coming entrepreneur, including trade associations. Part of my mission as an educator is to encourage students to join professional organisations so they can network with colleagues and continue their education after graduation.

Whether our students plan to go it alone or connect with like-minded creative professionals, I believe a solid foundation in the theory and practice of entrepreneurship will serve them well.

Reporting international justice

Robert Brand

Should South Africa's former President Thabo Mbeki be charged with genocide at the International Criminal Court for denying HIV/Aids sufferers access to anti-retroviral drugs?

When Young Communist League leader Buti Manamela made such a call, it led to weeks of debate in the media – and what became clear was that few journalists understood the law relating to genocide and the international criminal justice process involved.

How many South African journalists have even heard of the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court and which defines concepts such as “genocide” and “crimes against humanity”, let alone bothered to look it up?

Recognising the role that journalists play in educating the public, a group of journalists, educators and jurists met in Salzburg earlier this year to develop a curriculum outline on reporting international justice and human rights.

The project, by the Salzburg Global Seminar (<http://www.salzburgglobal.org/2009/index.cfm>) and the International Centre for Media and the Public Agenda (<http://www.icmpa.umd.edu/index.html>) at the University of Maryland, with the support of the Open Society Initiative, is aimed at giving journalism students a better understanding of international criminal law and institutions, and to help them identify stories and analyse events.

The three-day Salzburg workshop, held at the historic Schloss Leopoldskron, focused on the needs of journalism programmes in universities in countries that have wrestled with covering stories about justice and rights: South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Participants identified the core topics, cases, issues, and documents – national, regional, international – that need to be covered in courses on international justice and human rights.

The workshop participants also assessed how to best teach the skills the next generation of journalists needs to identify key stories and appropriate sources, and developed a curriculum outline that can be adapted to suit a wide range of institutions and regions.

The outline takes account of international law; history and institutions of international justice; and journalistic skills. Participant academics will devise detailed syllabi and teaching resources, which may be shared on the group's website.

The conversation in Salzburg took account of realities such as new institutions in the field of international justice, such as the International Criminal Court and war crimes tribunals; new digital technologies as well as new and cross-platform media institutions that provide a much wider range of delivery and engagement methods; and various players in the field, including journalism schools and other institutions which increasingly teach students who may practice journalism or quasi-journalism in non-traditional news institutions such as NGOs and social networking and citizen journalism sites.

The draft curriculum outline is available on the group's website (<http://justicerights.wordpress.com/>) together with other useful resources.

IF YOU LIVED IN KZN CHANCES ARE WE'D BE
Part of your day... Part of your life



THE WITNESS

McCall Trophy Winner
1982, 1984, 1988, 1990,
1991, 1992, 2002, 2004,
2005, 2006, 2008



**Weekend
Witness**
Joel Mervis Trophy Winner
2005, 2008

Quality journalism, incisive writing, relevance to the target audience and presentation are all vital ingredients in a successful newspaper.

Winning awards is great, but winning the hearts of readers is what it's really about.

We've been doing both for more than a hundred and sixty years now...

Here's to the next hundred and sixty or so!

THE WITNESS

**Weekend
Witness**

Irwin Manoim

Editors tend to be lunch people first, political pundit people second, corporate suit people third, words people fourth, and visual people last. Their interest in design, graphics, photography, and what these might accomplish, ranks just ahead of their interest in the Pets of the Month page.

But there is guilt. Editors know better. Every editor who has stayed half awake during a conference on the Future of Newspapers has been made aware, dimly or otherwise, that visual journalism is THE IN THING.

The experts have spoken: If old-fashioned print is to be rescued from the invasion of the dreadful bloggerists, design and graphics are at the frontline.

The challenge, then, is not persuading editors and journalists that design matters. They know it matters. Just like they know that avarice and adultery are sins. The challenge is persuading them that design is about more than a quick coat of paint.

I've devised various exercises that attempt to meet that challenge. They've been stress-tested in classroom or boardroom confrontations with post-adolescent journalism students, greying editors and their lesser editorial minions, and even with such mortal enemies as newspaper managers and marketing flunkies. And I believe that over the years, I have seen sparks of light amid the darkness.

I start off by being wilfully obscure. I present a newspaper page in some foreign language, ideally with a non-Latin alphabet – my favourites have been Chinese and Cyrillic – and I say: "I'm not going to tell you what this paper is called or where it's from or what language it's written in, but I want you to tell me: what's it about?"

Silence.

I ask a set of questions. Is this a high-brow, middlebrow, or browless newspaper? Does it seem to be aimed at banking nabobs, or stay-at-home mothers, or beery sports dudes, or nightclubbing youths? Does this newspaper sell on street corners, or on news agent shelves, or is it sold

Speaking **design** language

mainly by subscription? Is it meant to be read on the bus or train, or in the back seat of a limousine? Does it have lots of readers? Is it careful, or does it take chances? If you could read it, would you believe it?

More pages follow. What surprises the audience is that, despite the unintelligibility of the texts, they are able to form a great many assumptions about the pages, their news values and audiences, and to do so with some confidence.

Then I show a second set of foreign front pages. These have various nasty tricks to them.

There's a front page of a Russian communist party daily, for example. When was it published, I ask. Fifty, 70 years ago, people agree, during the depths of the Stalin era. A fair answer, given the bleak, Cold War appearance of the page, but actually, it was published just a few months ago.

Then there's a sparkly Portuguese page that looks as if it might be the Christmas joy issue. But it's actually reporting a massacre outside the town. Bad design sends out misleading signals.

The lesson, then, is that design is a language in itself, working behind the scenes to tell a story. People have already

formed opinions about a newspaper, based on visual cues alone, before they begin to read.

Design can signal the quality, the tone and the market segment of a newspaper, which would explain that daily marvel of the apartheid era: how whites didn't notice black newspapers and blacks didn't notice white papers.

Next I present a range of newspapers from around the world, all published on the same day, and leading on the same story. Not too many stories make the lead in newspapers all over the world. Only natural disasters on a terrifying scale, or blood-curdling terror attacks, or the infidelities of Hollywood residents.

We make comparisons: see how the same photograph has been used in different papers, at different sizes, cropped in different ways. See how different headlines change the meaning of the same photo. See how colour changes the emotional impact: black and red make the page look angry; blue quietens it down.

I hand the students a bundle of the day's local papers and say: "If you were a newspaper editor, what would your front page look like today?" I give each student a different, rather narrow, imaginary target audience: investors, students, pensioners, teachers, farmers and the like.

They cut and paste the newspapers to concoct their own. Some find this brief return to childhood immense fun. Others, who can effortlessly manipulate cellphones under the desk with a single thumb, show remarkable sloppiness when confronted with a pair of scissors (did they learn nothing at nursery school?).

The exercise demonstrates how design is about news values and how news values are about the cultural values of the audience. Already at this stage, it's possible to tell which students will be the stars.

I would like to be able to end here on a cheery note, by saying that all this effort has paid off and newspaper design in South Africa has greatly improved. So I will: newspaper design in South Africa has greatly improved. Reporting, sub-editing and proof-reading have all gone gently to hell, but design is right up there.

Maybe my lessons should take the credit for this. Or maybe the reason is that the more South African newspaper executives contemplate their sinking circulation and revenue graphs, the more anxious they get, and the more anxious they get, the more willing they are to seize on the option of last resort: let's redesign the paper! (Some of us make a living from this. I would make a lot more if I had a foreign accent.)

South African newspapers are, design-wise, way better than they were 20 years ago. Those who don't believe me are welcome to pop into a newspaper archive (if they can find one) and ponder how bad our papers once looked.

Photographs were undersized, badly cropped... ink smudges. Today, pictures are used far more boldly, and with greater sensitivity to the photographer's intentions.

Info-graphics, unknown in this country not long ago, are becoming more common. We still don't quite get them right, but the effort is being made. And at a great many newspapers, the tabloids in particular, a handful of designers of real flair have mastered the art of taking a news story, actually reading it... and projecting it with real punch.

Of course there might be some more mundane reasons for the resurgence of design. Like: it's a lot easier to lay out good pages when there are no longer too many of those damn adverts getting in the way.

The long, slow death of the printed newspaper might be a good thing after all.



Tanja Bosch

Broadcast journalism education is about much more than simply teaching students how to use recording and editing equipment. Practical skills are critical, but a theoretical foundation is essential to encourage critical journalism practice. Moreover, engagement with real world scenarios via service learning or problem-based learning approaches is useful when approaching the subject of broadcast journalism education.

To a large extent, teaching responsible ethical broadcast journalism is about helping students to cast a critical and analytic look at their communities. Radio journalism is not just about the mechanical production of audio, but involves an ability to think critically about global news events and their relevance.

Classroom discussions about current political affairs often lead to well-written and well thought-out features, even if they cover different topics. Asking students to refine their arguments verbally often results in better writing and presentation skills.

This builds on the notion that the role of journalism in a democracy is to reinforce participatory citizenship. As such, journalists should be prepared to contribute to the debate in the public sphere as analysts, information brokers and as constructors of nation and state in “managing the symbolic arena” (Gans 1980: 290).

Most importantly, there has to be a balance between practical learning and engagement and skills development, theory and theoretical application, and real work experience and engagement with society. The civic journalism approach becomes critical here, to involve students with local communities and to foster a meaningful engagement with the ‘real’ world.

This problem-based learning approach moves beyond traditional approaches of lecture/seminar in classrooms, and results in greater self-directed learning.

I’ve found that placing students in real-life situations, conducting formative research and producing audio for actual clients, resulted in higher reflexivity about the process, and a more meaningful learning experience for students.

Groups that I’ve worked with have produced voter educational public service announcements (PSAs) for a local NGO and HIV/AIDS PSAs targeting youth and based on the tenets of behaviour change theories, for the campus community radio station. They have also produced gender-related podcasts for Durban-based NGO Agenda Feminist Media, as well as a range of short documentaries for various community radio stations.

Similarly, students at Stellenbosch University produce news for the local community radio station; and students from various institutions work as interns at local stations.

Internships are useful, but structured service learning projects, which place a strong emphasis on learning through deep, guided reflection, are also important. Research has shown that “the long-term impact of youth service experience on later political and community involvement can best be explained by the contribution these service experiences make to the creation of an enduring sense of oneself as a politically engaged and socially conscious person” (Erlach 2000: 6).

Through these processes, the trainee radio journalist begins to identify with the notion of civic journalism, discarding ideal notions of impartiality in favour of a journalism which favours social development and developing agency and self-efficacy among its audience.

This represents a fairly radical departure from the notion of the professionalism of journalism, often highly regarded in Western curricula, towards a kind of Africanisation of the curriculum, more sensitive to the local socio-political context.

In this approach, multilingualism becomes a key issue. Students who can speak languages other than English often

Using RADIO to encourage civic- minded journalism



Paul Greenway

find it easier to conduct their research in areas other than the affluent suburbs surrounding the university.

But interestingly enough, students who are fluent in African languages are often reluctant to use these languages professionally. This is not surprising given that all the academic literature (and practical textbooks) on radio journalism are in English (mostly from the UK and North America); as well as the low levels of status afforded to African languages in university environments.

Firstly, good writing skills are critical to good radio journalism, and must be deliberately taught and not left to other areas of the student’s curriculum. Moreover, multilingualism should be encouraged. I know of some radio teachers who have made it mandatory for students to study an additional African language at tertiary level, even if they are already proficient in a language other than English.

I have found it useful to encourage students to produce material in their second language; and to encourage students who speak African languages to produce radio material in that language.

This kind of practice will, hopefully, ultimately lead to the strengthening of our public broadcast and community radio stations. Students must realise that we live in a diverse society, and that public sphere debate need not only take place in English-language media.

Many of my undergraduate radio journalism students go on to produce documentaries and news for community radio stations. Some of them also go to work for commercial music stations, and hopefully the development ethos of their training stays with them.

Hopefully they do not return to the paradigm of “objectivity” when they enter industry. Their exposure to forms of civic journalism may mean increased potential for a trickle-up effect with an increase in the numbers of civically-minded journalists in mainstream media newsrooms.

Radio journalists must also be taught to multitask. For a long time, community radio stations have used rhizomatic approaches to work allocation. News readers often also write the news, programme managers present programmes and manage the schedule, everyone multitasks and records, edits and presents.

Increasingly, this approach is gaining currency among broadcast journalists. Radio students must be taught all aspects of their craft if they are to survive in industry.

A new emerging media ecology also flags the need for revisiting the role of technology and new media. Deuze (2008) argues that the changing interactions between users and producers in the digital era results in a more fluid or

“liquid” journalism.

With the rise of digital technologies and online and mobile social networking, radio journalists have new challenges – they have to blog and podcast, produce digital stories, and record media other than sound to accompany their stories. I have tested a model in which third-year radio production students produce educational podcasts for a second-year introductory writing course. Having graduated from this course themselves, the students strive to produce material which will be entertaining and educational for their peers.

The student-driven podcasts are then also later broadcast on the campus radio station in the pre-exam period.

Moreover, radio journalists have to negotiate a terrain in which the old sender-recipient model is no longer current. The new citizen, argues Deuze (2008) is “monitorial” in that they scan a range of different media, consuming only what they find to be personally relevant.

Online social networks begin to play an important role for journalists as breaking news often finds its way onto networks like Twitter first. Many radio stations are already widely engaging with audiences via Facebook.

In essence, broadcast education in the current epoch is multifaceted. Teaching students to be good radio journalists means first teaching them a host of other skills, within the framework of an advocacy approach to journalism.

Radio is still the most consumed medium in South Africa, and there are over 80 active community radio stations. Radio students must be trained to work within the local context instead of following international models of broadcast education, which tend to focus heavily on mainstream news production.

Fortunately for the student, the resultant composite of skills can be transferred to other disciplines and contexts.

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Geneva Overholser

If our focus on social media is primarily about how to use them as “tools” for journalism, we risk getting it backward. Social media are not so much mere tools as they are the ocean we’re going to be swimming in – at least until the next chapter of the digital revolution comes along. What needs our attention is how we’re going to play roles that bring journalistic values into this vast social media territory.

It is essential to begin by understanding various social media sites and the ways they can enhance the work journalists do. A regular perusal of sites like 10000words.net and savethemedia.com is a great way to do this. But how do we move beyond acquainting ourselves with this world and actually figure out how to “use” it for journalism, which requires understanding its nature and impact on participants and on public life?

What does it mean to journalists, for example, that people are in large measure obtaining, and shaping, their information so differently than they have in the past? In June, as I got on the plane to fly back from the National Association of Hispanic Journalists convention, a young woman cried out: “Michael Jackson died!” Using my iPhone, I googled “Michael Jackson died.”

Several reports showed up – all from years long-gone. His was

Swimming in the ocean of social media

a much-rumoured death. So I checked Twitter, and found the TMZ report – couched in some scepticism from my tweeps. On to the *Los Angeles Times*, where Jackson was still in a coma. Now the flight was leaving. Not until I landed did I get the confirmation I itched for: the *Times*, quoting the coroner.

But what if TMZ had quoted the coroner? Would I have stopped there?

This raises questions about what verification means in this age of social media. And what is journalism’s role in making sure information is verified? It strikes me that most people don’t care as much about who publishes news (or what are often rumours) first these days as they do about whether the sites they rely on have it right when they want it. Now, as we all know, news and information need to be on the platform we’re checking, wherever we are.

Being there and being accurate are how journalistic credibility is brought to the social media ocean. Yet many legacy media have fallen behind in delivering this one-two punch combination. While it’s a given that there will always be a need for reliable verification, what must be better understood is how people seek out news and information and how they learn through their use of social media.

Recently, the MacArthur Foundation’s John Bracken and I talked about the process by which an online community or group digests an event and comes to an understanding of it in real time. This happens among Facebook friends or people whose tweets we follow or folks who create new records of events on Wikipedia. The question well worth asking is where journalism fits in this fast-emerging and ever-changing social media and digital ecosystem.

During a June conference, “Beyond Broadcast 09” held at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School of Journalism, conversations ranged from the information needs of communities to democratising the language of online storytelling, from maintaining editorial quality to enabling dialogue and the future of public service media.

Each topic discussed was central to the future of journalism. Yet, never in the three days we were together did I once hear the word “journalism” mentioned.

From there I went to a conference at MIT, where the organising theme was “civic media”. In many of these situations, I find myself using the term “information in the public interest”. In all these cases, however much journalistic values and practices might be evident, the term itself is absent.

Journalism: the missing ingredient

I’m not suggesting that journalism – as a word, a concept, and a craft – has gone away or is no longer important. I’m saying that those of us who ground ourselves in what we know to be an ethically-sound and civically-essential mode of information gathering and information dissemination have to find a way to be in these conversations – whatever we call the conversations or ourselves. Our job is to keep an eye on the public interest. Bringing our journalistic values to these environments that have captured the imagination of millions is one of the most promising ways we have of serving that interest.

Too often, it seems, those of us who’ve been about building community through our journalism seem to assume a kind of “how dare they?” attitude toward those who construct communities through social media. We’ve got to get over that. People are vastly more powerful now as consumers and shapers of news. The less loudly journalists applaud this development, the further behind we’ll be left until we fade to irrelevance.

Accuracy, proportionality and fairness, as time-honoured journalistic values, are well worth adoption by those conversing through social networks. Useful, too, would be journalism’s (albeit imperfect) emphasis on including a broad range of voices. Cool as a lot of these social networks are, they can be extremely cliquish.

Witness the prevailing Twitter discussions about whither journalism, often filled with more strut than substance, lacking both historical and international context and begging the question: If the web is all about democratisation, how come everybody in the debate sounds like a 19-year-old privileged male?

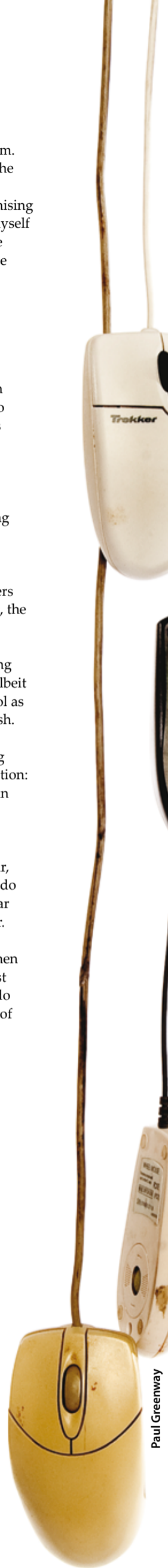
In the classroom

Finally, how do we bring social media into the academy? So far, we at Annenberg have done it patchily by bringing in folks to do series of workshops for students and faculty. We’ve had regular discussions with digital media innovators throughout the year.

One challenge, of course, is that people’s level of understanding and comfort is all over the place. Moreover, when the students learning about social media are 18-year-olds, most are already swimming comfortably in these waters. Yet, they do need to ponder – and practice – the new sensibilities required of them now that they will swim there as journalists. Integrating the questions and issues and tools into everyday classroom discussion is critical. When the focus is on journalistic ethics, the geopolitical implications of social networks’ role belong in that discussion. In lessons revolving around entrepreneurial journalism, there needs to be woven into the conversation the issue of how journalists handle their personal engagement in social networks. Along with this would come discussion of how they “brand” themselves for a future that is likely to include a lot of independent activity.

At Annenberg, we’ve now hired digital innovators and observers – Andrew Lih, author of *The Wikipedia Revolution*, Robert Hernandez, who executed the vision for *The Seattle Times’* web site, and Henry Jenkins, who directed MIT’s Comparative Media Studies programme. Using their ability to weave experiences and knowledge into our curricula, we know that social media will become integral to what is taught in our journalism classes. Timely discussions of emerging examples of social media’s influence on journalism and vice versa must continue, as well.

The journalism academy has another important role to play. It’s the natural home for substantial analysis and research exploring the impact of social media on learning, on the processing of information, and on the civic dialogue. As journalists come to understand the nature and value of information being gathered and conveyed through various social networks, they will not only act more effectively in this new and vital world. They will also enhance the prospects for journalism’s long-term survival.



Paul Greenway



Julie Posetti

Twitter is now well-established as a platform for news gathering, dissemination and global interaction between journalists, their audiences and their sources. It's also become a common news theme, with many breaking stories now featuring 'the Twitter angle' (See *RJR* September 2009).

I began implementing it as a training tool for event coverage with my final year University of Canberra radio journalism students during a regional Australian election in 2008. While Barack Obama tweeted his way through an historic US election, my students used Twitter as a political reporting device for live online election coverage.

The result was both an improvement in the speed and clarity of writing as well as breakthrough engagement with democratic processes and political journalism by a generation of student reporters frequently cast as disengaged citizens averse to political news.

Tweeting an Oz election

UC is situated in Australia's national capital, only a few miles from the seat of federal government and the media hub that is the Canberra Press Gallery. We have a reputation for producing job-ready journalism graduates with a capacity for original story generation.

But like many journalism educators, we've found engaging students in political reporting activities a challenge. However, my professional background as a former member of the Canberra Press Gallery makes me persevere with the struggle and I'm constantly seeking innovative and appealing ways to engage my students in political journalism.

In the past I've taken them to the tally room on national election nights to report for a community radio network. And, when the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) election was called in 2008, I overcame logistical and bureaucratic barriers to enable 12 of my students to join the media throng in the tally room's live broadcast centre, under my supervision. But we were told we would not have access to desk space and or Internet connectivity. So, I turned to Twitter and cell phones.

Getting students Twitter-ready

I devoted one radio production class to training the students on the finer points of Twitter and getting them registered to use the platform. I first established a Twitter account connected to NOWUC (www.twitter.com/nowuc – I'm the administrator of this account) to host the aggregated student tweets on election night and then got each of the participating students to create their own individual accounts, connecting them to their cell phones. The next step involved getting them to follow me (@julie_posetti), @NOWUC and one-another. In turn, I connected my own accounts to theirs by following them.

Next, traditional radio reporting assignments were devised and allocated to the students for election night coverage, with a view to producing and uploading longer-form audio reports to NOWUC in the days following the election.

Interestingly, none of my 12 students had used Twitter before and only a few were even familiar with its existence. Most, however, were Facebook addicts, and the idea of using a social media platform for journalistic purposes excited them. I saw news value in the novelty of this reporting task and so I assigned one of the reporting duos to the story of this Canberra election student Tweet-a-thon.

Challenge #1 – getting the students interested in political reporting – had been achieved with the help of Twitter.

Election night

Challenge #2 was election night itself: 18 October 2008. The plan went like this: each student was assigned a Tweet-Beat, some were attached to government desks or the opposition parties' representatives, while others mingled with the voting public who'd gathered to watch the action. The remainder stalked the main media outlets in the broadcast hub or went in search of colour. They were told to tag each of their Tweets with #ACTelection08, using a hashtag so they could be aggregated by Twitter's search function. Each of the students was then paired in a radio reporting duo to undertake their traditional broadcast production assignments and they alternated between roles as tweeters and broadcast journalists.

Challenges and obstacles

The actual process of tweeting proved logistically tricky. I needed to filter the Tweets before aggregating them on the NOWUC Twitter page in the interests of legal and ethical propriety given the direct link to a UC-sponsored publication.

This was also an important part of the educational process – teaching the students about the perils of live-reporting. But this meant that I had to re-tweet (RT) each and every student post manually via my iPhone.

I edited the posts only very minimally where required in the interests of downplaying the gate-keeper role and I had to intercept only one defamatory Tweet. By the end of the night, I'd re-tweeted almost 70 student news-briefs from the tally room via my phone.

Twitter's limiting of posts to 140 characters also posed significant journalistic challenges – restricting capacity to use quotes and provide background and analysis, for example. Indeed, Twitter, like many social media applications, provides as many opportunities for education and discussion around issues of journalistic ethics and practice as it does challenges to traditional news processes.

Great lessons learned

The content of the NOWUC Twitter feed reveals the diversity of student-experience, talents and the lessons

There's a **tweet** in every class

learned. Some tweets were pithy and witty – colourful political observations. Others were heavily fact-based. Some were clunkily written, while others were stellar examples of clarity and brevity in writing.

Some students tweeted prolifically; others were slower and less productive. For some, the highlight was meeting prominent politicians and broadcasters; for others it was breaking a news titbit ahead of the mainstream media.

Most learned something new about the Australian political process and picked up fresh reporting skills. But, most importantly, they all thoroughly enjoyed the learning experience, describing it variously as "awesome", "a blast" and an "adrenalin rush".

Some of the lessons learned from this exercise were in overcoming the logistical obstacles outlined above. For example, I've since discovered a Twitter tool called Grouptweet <http://grouptweet.com> which allows groups of connected users to post on a single Twitter page using a shared Twitter identity. This tool allows for public or private usage, meaning it can be locked down for training exercises or discussions about sensitive themes in the workplace or the classroom, for example, or opened up to all-comers for publication purposes like the NOWUC Twitter election coverage. Applying this tool in the election coverage scenario would have averted my need to re-tweet all of my students' posts in order to group them @NOWUC, but it wouldn't have resolved the issues around legal and ethical clearance of posts. As counter-intuitive to social media principles as it sounds, a function which allowed for a hold to be put on such group tweets until cleared by a 'super-user' would be useful.

Two of the student Tweeters produced a radio current affairs package about the role of Twitter in reporting, and their experience of it, in the Canberra tally room, highlighting the value of this experiment as a journalism training exercise.

"Our mission was to tweet... as the politics played out around us we were sent into a tweeting frenzy. We were embarking on a new journalistic dawn, competing against the traditional media outlets to break the news first," they reported.

From this lecturer's perspective, the main benefits were in watching the students work as a reporting team, seeing their excitement as their tweets went live, their amusement with the novelty of reporting using cell phones and social media tools and their willingness to mix it with prominent mainstream journalists, along with their rising interest in political reporting as the night unfolded. "This isn't so boring after all!"

Using these contemporary reporting tools helped bridge the gap between 'digital natives' and traditional political reporting.

And, it's a lesson worth repeating.

A social media toolkit for the journalism classroom

My number one tool indisputably must be Twitter. Twitter allows you to tweet or make short 140 character updates (tweets) of your life and your learning. Instead of being an arbitrary tool, you can use it to focus your students' attention in the classroom by asking them to tweet lectures, ask or respond to questions and share resources.

It's quite amazing how trying to dot down presenter's notes forces me to think about what they are saying in summary mode and making sense in the process. You can use it as a notice board for assignments, test dates and resource sharing.

The greatest advantage of using this tool, however, is that it provides cutting edge access to news, as *The Times* editor Ray Hartley (@hartley on twitter) pointed out: "The default switch has been set to online."

Twitter is now a must-have journalist earpiece, networking and primary news breaking tool. A novel idea is to create an informal tweetpaper (twitter newspaper) from your favourite twits' tweets (people that use twitter effectively in your field of interest) or student tweets, using a secondary twitter tool like <http://paper.li/>

For my detailed step by step twitter tutorial, see <http://bit.ly/twitter2teach>.



Social bookmarking can be seen as the digital library of any journalist social media toolkit. You can use it to save and share all your most valuable resource links. Instead of saving your favourite web pages inside your computer browser, you can save them into an online repository where they can be accessed from any computer anywhere, as well as by your network of co-learners, co-workers or students.

By using online social bookmarking tools like Delicious (www.delicious.com) or Diigo (www.diigo.com), you can build powerful knowledge-sharing and resource databases which can be searched according to keywords or tags.

Diigo allows you to annotate pages collaboratively, create groups for your students to share and discuss resource links, as well as generating automated tweets and blog posts.

Think of it as a tool that exponentially amplifies your resource database and exposure.

To get started see my tutorial at <http://bit.ly/bookmark2teach>

SOCIAL MEDIA IS FAST BECOMING THE DEFAULT INTERNET MODE OF INTERACTION, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION SAYS **MAGGIE VERSTER**. AS TEACHERS OF GOOD JOURNALISM HABITS WE NEED TO START MODELLING THE EDUCATIONAL AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS IN OUR CLASSROOMS. THIS POSES A PROBLEM: WHERE DO YOU START? WHICH TOOLS DO YOU CHOOSE? HOW TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE TOOLS IN ORDER TO USE THEM IN A PEDAGOGICALLY INNOVATIVE WAY? TO GET YOU STARTED, HERE IS A BASIC TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM.



Wordle (www.wordle.net) is a visual tool that brings out important elements of pieces of text. This means that you can paste your article into this tool and it will create a word cloud of all the important words or ideas that are most prominent. It calculates the frequency of words in a piece of text and enlarges the words with the highest count. You can even measure student involvement when pasting discussion threads or chats. Try "wordling" your next article as a final check to see if your intended topic has taken its rightful place in the script.



A blog (web-log or online journal) is a place where you can claim your online presence or allow your students to practice their writing skills.

Blogging platforms are mostly free and you can have your own blog site up and running in no time at all. It comes with all the built-in social media bells and whistles, like commenting facilities, RSS feeds, widgets (embedded tools from secondary sources eg a calendar or any other RSS feed), tagging (keyword metadata) and search facilities.

Students can leave comments and get feedback, or become co-authors on a class blog. The advantage of using blogging tools is that you can maintain total control. It facilitates sending blog posts using traditional modes like email which promotes easy publishing.

There are quite a few blogging platforms that make it possible to set up free, good-looking, collaborative, multi-authored or individual blogs. My favourites are Wordpress (www.wordpress.com), Blogger (www.blogger.com) and Edublogs (www.edublogs.org).

For my detailed blogging tutorial see <http://bit.ly/blog2teach>.

Googledocs (www.google.com/docs) is a collaborative online writing space for anyone wanting to work on documents or articles together. You can use it to store documents online and it makes sharing a breeze. All articles can be changed into widgets and embedded into blogs or any learning management system like Blackboard or Moodle. You can even upload a presentation and have an online live discussion session with your students. Another inventive advantage is that you can create online forms which allow for multiple choice, short as well as longer questions, an ideal feature to help with student assessment.



Knowing how to use RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feed tools efficiently can provide any student or seasoned journalist with a way to keep track of cutting edge news. You can subscribe to any blog, news source and twitter feed and it will automatically be downloaded onto your computer or mobile phone, ready for you to scan through when you have time. My favourite RSS Reader (a tool that collates RSS feeds for easy reading) is Google Reader (<http://www.google.com/reader>) which allows for sharing feeds, grouping of related feeds and mobile access for when you are on the move but want to stay in touch.



Facebook is the social networking tool of choice and it is where we will find, and connect with, our students. We do not need to befriend them and infringe on their social space or worse, navigate tricky ethical barriers, but rather gently establish a learning handshake using Facebook fan pages or groups.

Using either of these Facebook tools you can create a social space from where you can send notices, organise classroom events and aggregate learning feeds from any of the aforementioned tools using Facebook's built-in array of tools.

You can make it your classroom's informal start page to kick-start any formal assignments and discussions. I would suggest creating a Facebook group for more structured internal classroom activities and a fan page for special subject related endeavours that will require a more global marketing approach.

For how to use Facebook in the classroom see my blog post with an embedded presentation from Zaid Alsagoff at <http://bit.ly/fb2teach>

So, give each of these tools a try and if you are brave or not so brave, get your students involved in helping you set it up. Remember, it is not about the tools but about the learning.

Feedback is welcome on my blog post about this article at www.school2.co.za/2010/05/17/424/

Poynter's electronic university teaches journalism across the world

Howard Finberg and Vicki Krueger

Since its launch five years ago, the Poynter Institute's News University (www.newsu.org) has changed the way many journalists approach their jobs and how they train for them. With more than 148 000 registered users in more than 200 countries around the globe, News University is the premier online educational resource for journalists, educators, students and others who are interested in journalism skills.

Most important, NewsU's e-learning works. More than 60% of NewsU's users said the courses helped them get better on the job.

"I credit NewsU for helping me do my job better than I could on my own, giving me courage to try new things," says Sheila Hagar, a reporter for the Walla Walla (Washington) *Union Bulletin*. "I don't feel alone when I take a class."

To meet the continued demand around the world from those who are hungry for core training in journalism's craft and values, Poynter's News University has developed a new initiative to transform NewsU modules into other languages and cultures.

NewsU International, a project developed in partnership with the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ), is taking what Poynter has learned about effective e-learning and applying it to training worldwide. Among the first projects of this international initiative are transforming six modules into Persian and three modules into Russian.

This initiative is made possible by the redesign of the NewsU site, launched in January 2010. The new site enables the Poynter to continue to develop timely training in English, and, at the same time, offer training with relevant cultural examples in multiple languages. It may be a new site, but it's a familiar goal – relevant, accessible and engaging training.

The NewsU approach

In a time-crunched and cash-strapped world in which journalists are accepting more and more job responsibility, training is both much more necessary and simultaneously less of a priority for overstretched media outlets. NewsU, created by a grant from the John S and James L Knight Foundation, fills that void by offering courses designed to meet the limited time and financial resources of journalists, educators and others. NewsU designs its courses with specific goals in mind:

Control. NewsU users choose what course they want to take, when they want to take it, and where they take it. They can start and stop on their schedule, coming back as often as they like.

Time. Most NewsU courses are designed to be completed in one or two hours, and they all allow users to move through the information at their own pace.

Focus. NewsU modules provide specific training. Rather than a 16-week course about writing, NewsU courses focus on a targeted skill, such as interviewing or writing better leads.

Cost. NewsU courses are either free or inexpensive. Particularly in an age of shrinking budgets, NewsU's aim is to be as accessible to as many as possible.

Measuring NewsU's effectiveness

That kind of strategic approach to the needs of its audience has paid off. One measure of success is the dramatic growth in the number of users on the site to more than 148 000 in five years. Other statistics show the value of NewsU's training. Sixty-two percent of users say they're likely to use the course they've taken as a reference in the

future. Eighty-two percent say they'll return for another course.

But the true success of NewsU is how it's helping its participants become better journalists. Seventy percent say NewsU modules were useful to extremely useful to their work. Sixty-one percent said NewsU's courses helped them get better on the job.

"NewsU broke me out of my writing rut. Rather than becoming complacent, I began to labour over my stories so I could make them the best possible work under deadline," says Tasha Kates, a reporter for the *Daily Progress* in Charlottesville, Virginia. "A few months later, I got a better reporting job at a bigger newspaper."

John Bonner, a multimedia journalist for Toronto *Social Justice Magazine*, often works alone and doesn't have the opportunity to learn from others on an everyday basis. "With NewsU, I have access to a variety of mentors with different journalistic styles," he says.

Poynter's NewsU also serves as adjunct faculty across hundreds of universities across the world. For many educators, NewsU is a digital textbook that is current and interactive. Educators are using e-learning to supplement classroom instruction, and students are responding enthusiastically.

"NewsU is perfect for my traditional and adult students," says Audrey Wagstaff of Hiram College in Ohio. "It's visual, immediate and interactive. Obtaining and holding (students') attention is increasingly difficult, given the type of media their exposed to, but they actually like sitting down and taking a course with NewsU because it contains material they can mold and interact with."

Training beyond borders

The global reach of the Internet has made NewsU the place to go for journalism education worldwide. Antonieta Rico, a US Army journalist who served a tour of duty in Tikrit, Iraq, says that most of her learning as a journalist has been self-motivated and on the job. "I did not feel like I was properly capturing the essence of the soldiers and their stories in my articles," she said. Then she discovered NewsU. Not only did she enroll in a wide variety of courses, but she also assigned all journalists in her charge to do the same.

In Saudi Arabia, Arab News reporter/translator Hassn'a Moktar, points out that Saudi women cannot receive degrees in journalism within the country and that NewsU has helped her further her career: "I gained so much through the information each course provided," she said. "These were not only helpful courses that taught me so much about building stories, verifying facts and writing, but they were also free-of-charge."

By expanding its global outreach, NewsU can continue to help journalists such as Elias Bangura, a reporter in Sierra Leone, who had little experience in his field and used NewsU to further his career. "(NewsU) has my eternal gratefulness and appreciation," he says.

When Poynter's NewsU launched in 2005, the site had two major goals: The first was to serve as an e-learning portal that would take the best of training from across the journalism community and make it accessible using the Internet. The second goal was to learn more about e-learning and share that information across the industry. With a robust curriculum and a growing user base, NewsU has accomplished those goals.

Meeting those goals doesn't mean NewsU is finished. In an ever-changing world that doesn't allow much time or money for training, Poynter's News University delivers the training journalists and others need with an expanding range of technologies, formats, partners and languages.

Teaching conflict- sensitive journalism

Peter du Toit

We expect court reporters to know something about the law, financial journalists to have a grounding in economics, and parliamentary correspondents to understand politics, but many journalists are ill-equipped handle social phenomenon that is ubiquitous to most beats – conflict.

This is the frustration expressed by the author of a 2010 Unesco-commissioned conflict sensitive reporting curriculum, Ross Howard¹ in his introduction to *Conflict-Sensitive Reporting: State of the Art – A Course for Journalists and Journalism Educators*.

Howard, observes that: “Conflict is a curious blind spot in journalism education and training.” He takes this point further: “Traditional journalism skills development has not included the study of how best to cover violent conflict, and has ignored any understanding of violent conflict as a social process.

“Other subjects demand that journalists have knowledge and expertise and experience... But the dynamics of violent conflict, its instigation, development and resolution are not much understood by most journalists nor proficiently reported on.”

Howard is by no means alone. His views are supported by a host of writers who have focused their attention on the journalist’s potential to either mitigate or exacerbate social conflict.

These writers make up a particularly fractious bunch² whose perspectives on the journalist’s role in conflict can be plotted on an axis ranging from a total commitment to detachment and objectivity, through a point informed by a deliberate commitment to promoting peace and ending with a journalism of attachment that promotes a particular solution for a particular party.

Regardless of where they stand on this axis, most of these writers agree that an introduction to some of the core concepts and analytical tools from the interdisciplinary field of peace and conflict studies could dramatically enhance the journalist’s ability to report on conflict.



It’s also clear that the earlier journalists are introduced to these concepts and tools the better. It may take several years – these days seldom enough – before a journalist is deemed ready to be assigned to highly specialised beat, but the odds are a hard news reporter will be covering a conflict (not necessarily violent) within his or her first month on the job. News is about change and change seldom happens without conflict.

The above would suggest that all journalists should start their careers with a basic understanding of conflict, while those expecting to be at the forefront of change would benefit from a more extensive introduction to the field. It would thus make sense to introduce some of these concepts into a basic journalism curriculum and to offer a more advanced elective to students anticipating careers that involve covering social upheavals at local, national and international levels.

What follows is a sample of concepts that might be introduced into a journalism curriculum to prepare graduates to do more than provide a shallow disservice to people living in conflict affected communities.

Conflict is a process, not an event – the tendency to equate conflict with violence results in conflicts

being ignored until they reach a point where they become severely disruptive. The result is a misleading picture that seldom goes beyond the behaviour (violent acts) of parties to explore the underlying causes. Important stories can be missed because journalists are not tracking social processes as they develop. Violent outbreaks often catch journalists, the public and political leaders by surprise. A deeper understanding of the dynamics of conflict should help journalists to anticipate these outbreaks and report on them before they erupt.

How we frame conflict shapes the way we think about it – conflicts are often treated as competitive events that will inevitably conclude with winners and losers; a tug-of-war in which gains by one side imply concomitant losses by the other. Journalists who frame conflicts in this way are likely to miss important angles and opportunities for exploring the different alternatives that might be available to parties. The recognition that conflicts can be approached cooperatively opens up a whole new line of questioning for journalists and which can provide audiences with a richer and more comprehensive picture of the range of possibility.

There are seldom two sides to any conflict – the concept of balance is normally taken to suggest that



Steve Punter

Gender in media education audit

Pat Made

The Audit of Gender in Media Education and Training in Southern Africa presents some preliminary findings on gender in media education and journalism training in the entry level and postgraduate media and journalism training programmes offered at 23 tertiary institutions in 12 Southern African countries.

The research was conducted in 2009 by Gender Links through the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC). During the period of October 2009 to February 2010, researchers interviewed 305 people across Southern Africa – 58 staff members and 233 students. Of these, 31 staff members and 126 students were women.

The key findings of the audit:

- There are very few institutions with policies or other special measures to achieve gender equality; exceptions are the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania which has a policy on gender equity and on mainstreaming gender in teaching, curriculum development and research, and Midlands State University in Zimbabwe, which has a draft gender policy.
- Males comprise the majority of the academic staff at these institutions (60%), while females predominate as students (57%).
- Sixty-two percent of the respondents said that gender is not considered in curriculum policies and processes at institutional or departmental level.
- Media and journalism students receive very little theoretical grounding in gender. Few institutions, except for the University of Namibia and Midlands State University in Zimbabwe offer core courses on gender, or gender and the media. Gender-specific modules have been developed at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Dar es Salaam and at the University of Zambia. There is evidence of the incorporation of gender into some course content. But the attention given to gender is dependent upon lecturers' own knowledge and commitment. However, there is a fair degree of gender awareness among staff.
- Both male and female students acknowledged the importance of gender in media education and journalism training. Male students indicated that their misconceptions had been changed in courses where gender had been incorporated, while female students noted that gender education tended to build their confidence.
- The wealth of gender and media literature, research and training materials that has been published internationally and within the Southern African region is missing from the prescribed texts, readings and course materials.
- While there are examples of theses and special projects on gender and media issues, as well as projects on women's representation and gender stereotypes, gender and the media has not become an area of academic research and scholarship among lecturers.
- While the audit found commitment among lecturers and students to the mainstreaming of gender in media education there is no comprehensive policy framework to embed gender in curricula.

parties on both sides of a conflict are fairly represented. It's a noble goal, but this way of thinking belies the fact that parties are seldom, if ever, monolithic. Conflicting groups may appear to be cohesive units to outsiders, but a little digging and probing often reveals that this is seldom so. Groups are comprised of smaller groups and these different entities will have their own nuanced understandings of the origins of the conflict and their own ideas about potential solutions. By exploring these different positions a journalist will be able to represent the conflict and the views of the different protagonists more accurately. Failing to recognise that there can be multiple stakeholders involved in a conflict can lead to misrepresentations.

What they say and what they mean are often very different – most, but not all, conflicts will be marked by parties spelling out their demands in great detail. Equipped with the tools of conflict analysis a journalist will understand that these demands conceal a range of more deep seated interests and needs that must be addressed. While it may be accurate to simply relay what different parties are demanding, the journalist who does so is, to a degree, simply allowing him or herself to be used by the antagonists. Yes, journalists must report what people are demanding, but they must also go beyond that. To provide our audiences with a more accurate understanding of

what is taking place requires careful probing and asking the right questions from a range of different sources within the conflicting parties.

These are but some of the ways in which introducing journalism students to some of the core concepts from peace and conflict studies can contribute towards enhancing their understanding of conflict and their ability to report on it. But this will not be an act of kindness.

By encouraging students to develop a more sophisticated understanding of conflict we will make it much harder for them to pass off simplistic narratives as fair and accurate reporting. We will be asking them to dig deeper, to probe more, to broaden their search for answers and to accept nothing at face value. In short, we will be asking them to be better journalists.

Endnotes

1. Ross Howard teaches journalism at Langara College in Vancouver, Canada, and is president of the Media and Democracy Group. His conflict-sensitive curriculum can be found at http://gppac.net/documents/Media_book_niew/a_b_contents.htm
2. For evidence of the fractiousness of this debate see the debate on peace journalism in the journal *Conflict and Communication Online* 2007 6 (2) available at <http://www.cco.regener-online.de/>

Robert Brand

The financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath focused attention on economics journalism as never before. The credit crisis, bank failures, government bail-outs, stock market crashes and deepening global recession played themselves out day after day, relentlessly, on television, in newspapers, on the radio and in the blogosphere, not only in the specialist financial or business media, but in mainstream news bulletins and current affairs programmes.

Strangely, however, economics journalism is not yet recognised as part of mainstream journalism by journalism educators. It is taught at only two of the 11 institutions in South Africa offering journalism qualifications – Rhodes University and Wits University – and then only as a peripheral subject or elective; nowhere is it a standard component of the general curriculum.

The scholarly research record reflects a similar disregard. In South Africa, research has focused exclusively on textual analysis. There is an almost complete absence of research into production and effects of financial news, the history of the field, and its relationship with political and economic processes.

The HSRC's recent survey of South African journalism, *Changing the Fourth Estate: Essays on South African Journalism*, (Hadland 2005), covers virtually the whole spectrum of journalistic genres and skills, including subjects such as travel writing, but completely ignores economics journalism. The picture is not very different elsewhere. In the US, the past 10 years has seen a proliferation of postgraduate qualifications specialising in financial, business or economics journalism, many of them funded by financial media organisations. But it is still rare to find economics journalism in the undergraduate curriculum.

This is odd, because economics journalism is as old as newspapers themselves. Journalism, James Carey has argued, was “invented” in the 19th century in response to “a particularly modern hunger for experience – for the new rather than the old, the surprising and original rather than the unexpected and unpredictable, the novel and original rather than the reproduction of the past” (2007: 6).

Most in need of information were merchants and bankers, whose fortunes depended on conditions in the markets and on the political actions of rulers. The earliest newspapers were therefore purveyors of business intelligence; or, it could be argued, business newspapers. This was

certainly true of South Africa's early press, which focused largely on market reports, shipping news and government proclamations: the kind of information the city's merchants needed to make business decisions.

In the past two decades, there has been explosive growth in the volume of financial news available. In South Africa, this expansion has seen the establishment of new print media titles, radio and television broadcasts and online media. In addition, mass circulation newspapers and broadcasters have strengthened their business coverage, and economics and financial news has become increasingly central to the news agenda.

Business journalism has also developed as a distinct genre, with its own narrative conventions. I think it is safe to say that economics journalism has been one of the fastest-growing fields of journalism over the past two decades. In this, South Africa is following a global trend.

And in South Africa as in other parts of the world, economics journalism has become a coveted beat; one which is perceived – not without reason – to offer better job opportunities and remuneration potential than other forms of journalism. Capable business journalists are highly sought-after by employers.

The Star, which had only one business journalist as recently as 1994, now shares a daily business supplement with other newspapers in the group, which employs upwards of 20 journalists. The Johannesburg bureau of Bloomberg News, a US-based financial news agency, grew from one journalist in 1997 to 16 ten years later. Other business media have showed similar growth.

Whether we teach economics journalism or not, our graduates are feeding that voracious machine.

What? Who for?

What, then, should be the content of an economics journalism curriculum in South Africa at this time? What should we

Purveying intelli

be teaching?

You can't answer that question without reflecting on two other questions: who are we doing it for? and what is the role of economics journalism in society, in particular in a developing economy and emerging democracy such as South Africa?

The first question seems easy. We teach economics journalism at least partly because there is an industry out there that demands journalists with the specialist knowledge needed to cover the economy, business and markets; and partly because students demand it.

If that were the whole answer, it would be easy to determine what we should teach. An ideal curriculum would include coverage of three areas: the economy, companies and industries, and financial markets.

We would teach students to interpret company financial accounts, to understand what drives the prices of stocks, bonds, derivatives and currencies, and to relate all of those to macro-economic issues such as fiscal and monetary policy, gross domestic product growth, and inflation.

This instrumental approach to economics journalism training is followed in most American economics journalism programmes. If we did it well, we would produce graduates who would fit seamlessly into the economics media, where they would play their essential role of reducing asymmetries of information – to use Joseph Stiglitz's term – between market participants.

But the issue is more complicated than that. A recent survey of South African business editors (Rumney 2008) found that editors are far from agreed on what they want in journalism graduates.

Although most editors shared the belief that the education of economics journalists should be less “theoretical” and more “journalism-based”, and there was widespread concern about the knowledge and skills



business gence

shortages in newsrooms, there was no coherent or clear plan of action to remedy these and editors were not specific about the kinds of courses an economics journalism curriculum should include.

There was some appreciation of the essence of higher education – to foster analytical and critical abilities rather than simply transfer skills and knowledge – but also “evidence of hostility, even anti-intellectualism, towards academic qualifications, with some editors displaying a quaintly old-fashioned notion of journalists not needing much prior knowledge” (Rumney 2008: 3).

If the editors can’t agree on what journalism graduates should know, how should we as educators know?

By simply training journalists to be specialist economics or financial reporters, you assent to an economics journalism that is part of the market mechanism, where journalists, though seeing themselves as detached reporters, in fact become part of the events. This is nothing new.

“The history of speculative bubbles,” wrote Robert Shiller in his book *Irrational Exuberance* (2000), “begins roughly with the advent of newspapers”. Galbraith (1955) convincingly documented the role of the media in fuelling the investment trust speculation which preceded the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression.

Shiller (2000) describes the pattern repeating itself during the Dot-Com bubble of the late 1990s, and – although I have no empirical evidence – it seems obvious to me that the media played a significant role in diffusing the beliefs and theories which fuelled the asset price bubbles which caused the most recent financial crisis.

An instrumental approach to economics journalism education may deliver graduates who can serve corporate and market interests, but it does not necessarily enable – or require – economics journalists to serve the broader public interest.

On to the second question: what is the role of economics journalism in society? The financial media play an indispensable role in the market mechanism by providing information for market participants. Without them, markets would not be able to function.

In this role, the economics media serve primarily what Davis (2005) terms “an active elite audience”: the investors, stock brokers, traders, analysts and bankers who use information to make investment decisions.

But that is not economics journalism’s only role. It also influences policy-making processes, and therefore plays a role in the political arena. The economy is a disputed area in all political systems, and studies have linked support for political parties to public knowledge of the economy, mediated by the media (Gavin and Sanders 1998).

Economics media also play an important role in corporate governance by pressuring corporate managers to behave in socially acceptable ways, and they provide

information to help consumers make decisions about a range of issues. In these roles, economics journalism serves a far wider audience than Davis’ active elites.

I would argue, therefore, that we should educate journalists about economics not for the benefit of the financial media only, but for the benefit of the public. Such an approach necessitates a broad view of what constitutes “economics journalism”, a view that sees economics journalism as driven not only by the interests of the market, but also by the interests of the public. It would include journalism about consumer issues, poverty, development, the political process, and a host of other issues.

While not neglecting the skills and knowledge demanded by the financial media, an economics journalism curriculum should aim to produce graduates who are able to bring a reflexive element into the profession, and challenge assumptions about the economy and about what economics journalism is and how it is practised; in effect, the curriculum should have a “dual mandate”.

This conflict between teaching journalism skills and producing critical, reflexive graduates is a ubiquitous theme in the discourse of journalism education. Wasserman (2005: 5) argues for an approach that sees journalism education as a form of praxis, which he defines as “a conception of practice that sees intellectual work as a form of social intervention”. This approach rests on the twin assumptions that the media can play a role in bringing about social change, and that journalism education has the potential to change the way in which journalism is practised.

From this point of view, economics journalism education could be seen as a transformative social intervention aimed at challenging and transforming the conventional ways of reporting on the economy and business.

Reconciling the competing demands from the university (in the traditional sense), the labour market, vocationally-minded students, and the teacher’s own perspective and philosophy of learning, is the great challenge of curriculum design in a professional discipline such as journalism.

If we accept that we are educating economics journalists to serve the public at large, not just investors, corporations or the markets, what, then, should we teach?

What follows is a case study of one teaching strategy I have used in order to teach in a way that satisfies the demand of the labour market as well as career-oriented students. Learning as well as assessment activities are designed to simulate conditions in a newsroom as closely as possible, with deadlines, access to information and sources, an audience, and space considerations taken into account. In addition, students act as the “business staff” for a local newspaper, *Grocott’s Mail*, which is owned by the Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies.

Initially, the experiential learning process was designed around the production of a weekly business section for *Grocott’s Mail*. This was found to be unsatisfactory for two reasons. Firstly, inexperienced student journalists don’t always benefit from being “thrown in at the deep end”; the literature around experiential learning clearly suggests that the creation of a “safe environment” – in which students can make mistakes without being exposed to real-life consequences – is more useful. Experience bore this out: producing a business section for a weekly newspaper was intimidating and inhibited creativity and enterprising journalism.

Secondly, having to cover economics and business news for a real-life newspaper meant that the syllabus was

driven by the news agenda rather than by pedagogical considerations. This did not allow enough time for thorough consideration of theoretical issues, and the acquisition of sufficient subject knowledge, before tackling coverage of economic and business news. The result was an incoherent curriculum and unsatisfactory learning.

The challenge was to devise learning and assessment activities that allowed sufficient time and space for exploration of theoretical issues as well as acquisition of the practical skills needed to produce good news copy.

The method implemented to achieve those ends was to produce a four-page supplement focused on a particular theme. Funding was obtained to investigate issues around gender and business in Grahamstown, where the university is situated, and to produce a news supplement around that theme in co-operation with an NGO, Gender Links.

The supplement was produced in the final week of the six-week module; that is, after the students had already engaged with the basics of economics and business reporting and could bring those technical skills to bear on the project.

Before starting the project, two days of seminars exploring issues such as women in business, representation of women in the financial media, poverty and development laid a theoretical basis. From the third day, students were divided into groups of three each and instructed to find and produce a story within the overall theme.

Students not only wrote the stories, but took photographs and assisted with the design of the final product. Each story was assessed and a grade was awarded by the teacher. The supplement was published in *Grocott’s Mail*.

The advantage of this arrangement was that students were preparing a publication for a real audience, with all the pressures that that brings, but without the drawback of being exposed to the uncertain environment of a deadline-driven newsroom. Preparing the students with subject-specific theory seminars encouraged reflexivity about the production process and resulted in a happy marriage of theoretically-informed practice within the framework of one learning and assessment activity.

Time was built into the process for presentations to the class by each group, and peer assessment, to induce the students to articulate how the theory informed their production processes.

Conclusion

Journalism teaching is about more than simply equipping students with practical skills. It is also about producing self-reflexive and critical graduates whose practice is creative and makes a contribution to achieving social justice.

Achieving technical proficiency and theoretically-grounded reflexivity is a difficult, but not impossible, challenge. Teachers need to think creatively about learning activities and assessment tasks in which theory, practice and reflexivity are integral parts.

This is especially important in specialist areas such as economics journalism, where the emphasis too often remains on skills teaching.

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Why journalism is failing the scientific age

George Claassen

“Whenever you can, count.”

Unfortunately the vast majority of South African journalists and, dare I say, very few editors, fulfil the British scientist and statistician Francis Galton’s wish. If you want to count and interpret your world, whether it is by analysing the variables of the population, HIV statistics, the percentage of line-outs Victor Matfield has won in a match, how serious and how soon climate change will alter our water-scarce world, or any other statistical interpretation, at least you must be scientifically and numerically literate – which South African journalists are not.

The glaring and unpalatable truth is that not even one South African media institution, whether it is newspapers, radio, television or the Internet, has any logical and organised reporting structures in its newsroom to report accurately on science and technology.

Not even one South African newspaper or broadcasting station has a formal science desk headed by a science editor and with a team of well-trained science reporters. Newsrooms employ political editors, arts editors, sports editors, financial editors and life-style editors in abundance. Yet science, the most important field to change the circumstances of poverty and uplift communities in developing countries, is quite often ignored or just covered haphazardly.

Reporters with no experience in science, no understanding of statistics or the faintest idea how the scientific method works, what a scientific theory is, why peer review, observation, experimentation and independent verification of scientific evidence are non-negotiables in science, flourish in their ignorance in newsrooms and their editors are not able to even see the mistakes they make – because they are scientifically illiterate themselves.

It was not always like that. When the Titanic struck an iceberg in

April 1912, the famous managing editor of *The New York Times* between 1904-1932, Carr van Ande, analysed the first reports that the ship would still be afloat despite the gaping hole in its hull. His numerical literacy enabled him to calculate that the ship must have sunk within hours. His paper was the only one to report that the Titanic had sunk – others still believed the myth about its unsinkability.

Then there is the famous story when Albert Einstein first visited Princeton University and a reporter came back to the newsroom from New Jersey with an equation the world famous scientists wrote on the blackboard when giving a guest lecture.

Van Ande immediately saw that the equation was not right and persisted that Einstein be phoned to confirm he had written it as the reporter had noted it. When Van Ande at long last succeeded in getting hold of Einstein, he confirmed he had written it incorrectly on the blackboard.

No one would expect an editor to have these scientific literacy qualities in modern journalism today. Political astuteness, yes, good writing skills, also, managerial qualities, but please do not expect too much from him or her when it comes to understanding science and interpreting it.

In the early days of journalism, journalists were often compared to the Greek mythical hero Prometheus who stole fire from the gods to bring this vital piece of knowledge to the people.

Unfortunately editors have replaced the fire of basic knowledge that journalists should bring to the people with the burning desire to feed the masses with information about Paris Hilton, about celebrities and royalty, their sex lives and where they dined last night with whom.

What is the result of this total neglect of scientific news and the frenetic pursuit of *Paris hiltonitis*?

Let’s look at just one example, so starkly illustrated in 2009 when Charles Darwin’s birth 200 years ago was celebrated in the scientific community.

Enough scientific evidence exists to support Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. This is a rather straightforward fact among reputable scientists who do not even debate the veracity of the statement put in 2009 to more than 10 000 adults from 10 countries by the British Council’s *Darwin Now* survey. The countries included Argentina, China, Egypt, India, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Great Britain and the US.

In not even one of the countries more than 50% of the population believe that enough scientific evidence exists to support Darwin’s theory, formulated 150 years ago in *On the Origin of Species*.

Among the countries surveyed, the best informed populations about the overwhelming evidence for evolution as a scientific fact are Great Britain and Mexico (just above 45%) and China (39%). Only 12% – one in eight of the population – of South Africans believe that evolution is a fact, just beating Egypt in the race for being the most ignorant about science among the 10 nations.

How is it possible that probably the most important scientific discovery ever developed could still be so misunderstood and distorted by the general public? When Darwin’s theory, proven in thousands of peer-reviewed scientific publications through 150 years of research, first appeared in 1859, it became a “universal acid”, so “corrosive that it will eat through everything”, as the American philosopher of science, Daniel Dennett, described it in his book *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*.

The reason for this ignorance about evolution must, unfortunately, largely be laid at the door of the media.

Various research studies have overwhelmingly shown that the serious neglect of science journalism in the media – very notably also in South Africa – to report the facts about evolution boldly and not to relent to pressure of creationists and the intelligent design movement to report that evolution is “just a theory”, leads to this ignorance in society.

In an extensive national study I undertook between



2000 and 2009 to determine the relationship between scientists and the media in South Africa, the Grand Canyon of distrust between journalists and scientists was very clear.

When you study the structures of the media in South Africa, one glaring fact about science reporting stares you in the face: the only two fields in science getting at least some regular exposure in the local media are environmental matters, mostly because of the dangers of climate change which can no longer be ignored, and health reporting.

Technological innovations are mostly put in business sections of newspapers and as part of financial programmes on radio and television.

Yet, if South Africa wants to compete with the best and become a nation solving its immense unemployment and unskilled workforce problems, our media should do better in the way we report on science.

We quite often only give attention to science when some medical “breakthrough” with bold headlines is announced, only for scientists to caution us that it was no breakthrough, rather preliminary results that have to undergo further research.

The measles, mumps and rubella medical scandal in the UK flourished mainly because journalists failed to interpret the fact that Dr Andrew Wakefield’s study was fatally flawed and far too small to make any link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

Recently, after a year-long battle against the pseudoscientific claims of the British Chiropractic Association who took him to court for libel, the scientist Simon Singh at last won an important victory against pseudoscience in a British appeal court.

South African editors, like their counterparts in other countries, quite often do not know the distinction between textbook science and frontier science, treating the latter, despite its high level of uncertainty, as if it is textbook science. And pseudoscience flourishes in the media, often propagated as real science.

The time has come for editors to appoint informed science editors, and, secondly, not to let any reporter loose upon an ignorant public when science and technology news is being reported.

You do not send a rookie to a political gathering, an opera, or the Minister of Finance’s budget speech. Why ignore science so blatantly?

It is easy for editors to blame the pseudoscientific thinking of former health minister Manto Shabalala-Msimang and former president Thabo Mbeki for the disastrous HIV/Aids figures in South Africa. But what is the share of South African editors in the dire figures of scientific ignorance our population regularly show in international surveys?

When Darwin’s theory became known and the wife of a bishop in the Church of England realised how dangerous evolution would be to the world-view then accepted for nearly 1 500 years, she exclaimed: “Oh me dear, let us hope that what Mr Darwin says is not true. But if it is true, let us hope that it will not become generally known!”

It is the media’s duty to inform their readers, listeners and viewers about the facts of science and to understand those facts ourselves. If for 150 years we could not even get the message right about an established scientific fact like evolution, no wonder people with HIV/Aids believe in quacks and natural healers and brewers of concoctions that endanger their lives.

“It is not so much knowledge of science that the public needs as a scientific worldview – an understanding that we live in an orderly universe, governed by physical laws that cannot be circumvented,” the American scientist Robert Park wrote in his book *Voodoo Science – The Road From Foolishness to Fraud*.

The silence of South African editors to heed a recent call by the South African Science Journalists’ Association to reform newsrooms to include science editors and trained science journalists, unfortunately fell on deaf ears.

Paris Hilton 1, Prometheus 0.

a tale of 2 investigations

AT RHODES UNIVERSITY JOURNALISM STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT TO RESEARCH AND PUBLISH QUALITY INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM ABOUT PUBLIC PROBLEMS. BUT, IS THIS ENOUGH? THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THE CLASSIC ‘MOBILISATION MODEL’ OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM – THAT CITIZENS, INFORMED BY THE MEDIA OF WRONGDOING, WILL MOBILISE AND EXERT THEIR WILL ON AN ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT – OFTEN BREAKS DOWN IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT. SOME INVESTIGATIONS ARE IGNORED BY THE PUBLIC, BUT HAVE LED TO EXTRAORDINARY CHANGES. OTHER INVESTIGATIONS ARE SUCCESSFUL IN MOBILISING PUBLIC OPINION, BUT FAIL TO ACHIEVE ANY CONCRETE SUCCESS. DRAWING ON TWO RECENT IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATIONS BY GCINA NTSALUBA, AN AWARD-WINNING DAILY DISPATCH JOURNALIST, ROD AMNER ARGUES THAT STUDENTS WOULD BENEFIT BY BEING TAUGHT A THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT SOUTH AFRICA’S UNIQUE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AND BY DRAWING ON OTHER FORMS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING-ORIENTED JOURNALISM, LIKE PUBLIC JOURNALISM AND DEVELOPMENT JOURNALISM, TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS.

This is a tale of two in-depth stories, both produced by one *Daily Dispatch* journalist, Gcina Ntsaluba, in 2009. One was wildly successful – it helped change the face of the government’s housing policy and won Ntsaluba SA Story of the Year at the 2010 Mondi Shanduka Newspaper Awards. The other was deemed a dismal failure by Ntsaluba himself. Why? And what can these stories teach us and our students about doing journalism in South Africa?

The best of times

Towards the end of 2008 small teams of *Daily Dispatch* journalists lined up for a guilt-free perk – a chance to travel in luxury vehicles sponsored by Mercedes Benz for one week each over 14 weeks. The project, the “Dispatch Adventures”, helped the *Dispatch* build a unique repository of Eastern Cape travel and tourism stories. But, for editor Andrew Trench the idea was also to “consciously broaden our reporters’ appreciation of the area that we cover and to physically make contact with people in areas that are outside our daily beat coverage”.

Current news editor, Brett Horner, was adventuring way up north near Oviston when his team came across a township called Backstage, a ghost town of uncompleted or abandoned RDP houses. In the weeks that followed, several other “Dispatch Adventure” teams were distressed to find thousands more RDP houses in ruins – this in a province already crippled by a backlog of over 800 000 houses.

The *Dispatch*’s discovery laid the foundation for a very successful three-month investigation by reporter Gcina Ntsaluba into widespread dysfunction and mismanagement in the Eastern Cape housing programme. “Broken Homes” drew into the spotlight 20 000 unfinished and/or “broken” RDP houses across the province abandoned by “emerging contractors”.

After his investigation, but before publication, Ntsaluba gave the MEC for Housing an opportunity to comment. “She gave us good feedback and admitted that there were problems,” says Ntsaluba.

It was at this point the new national Minister of Human Settlements, Tokyo Sexwale, stepped into the frame and publically commended the *Dispatch* on its story – much to Ntsaluba’s surprise. Chris Vick, the minister’s special advisor, later told Ntsaluba that the investigation was the only tangible research about the housing situation they had in South Africa, an alarming admission given the enormous resources at the state’s disposal to conduct or commission research on one of its top political priorities.

Sexwale proceeded with a series of far-reaching steps: first he met with all nine national housing MECs, and then with municipal managers and mayors.

Then he directed the parliamentary portfolio committee on human settlements to visit the Eastern Cape to do their own assessment of some of the places Ntsaluba had written about.

Thereafter, says Ntsaluba, houses were demolished in and around Port Elizabeth, contractors were blacklisted or fired, new houses went up “all over the place”, and a new project was started for emerging contractors, the Emerging Contractors Development Programme.

“So we got a national policy intervention, new programmes –

I didn't expect them to go to that extent, I really didn't."

Ntsaluba's analysis of this unprecedented government response to the *Dispatch* investigation was that the story had presented Sexwale with "an opportunity to show his mettle" and "make some noise" in the Eastern Cape.

The worst of times

In 2009, the *Daily Dispatch* hosted four non-partisan, town hall-like public meetings – called the "Community Dialogues" – in suburbs and townships in East London. In the build-up to hosting these dialogues the *Daily Dispatch* issued a simple call to local residents: "What issues need attention in your neighbourhood? Tell this newspaper."

At the lively third dialogue, held in the decaying inner-city area of Southernwood in April 2009, more than 200 residents launched a fusillade of complaints about crime, grime, drugs, illegal shebeens, slumlords and the appalling state of the local parks which had become a haven for criminals and drunks.

Editor Andrew Trench made a personal promise to residents about the parks and the slumlords: "You could see that there were these two things that if you could do something about them, then it would make a big difference to the way people felt about their community."

Trench entrusted Gcina Ntsaluba – fresh from his "Broken Homes" investigation – to deliver on the newspaper's promise to cover the slumlords story.

Ntsaluba went undercover in Southernwood and in King William's Town, where tenants, many of them students, were being overcharged to live in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions. In Southernwood, many are paying rent for the privilege of living in backyard shacks. High density, slum-style living had led to the decline of property values in these areas and also encouraged other social ills – noise pollution, crime, garbage on the streets, and other signs of urban decay. Some neighbours of slumlord-owned houses have been trying to sell their properties for years.

For Ntsaluba, the underlying problem is that "not enough decent working class accommodation" has been built in these areas to cope with demand". Many students from Lovedale College and Fort Hare stay in these places because they can't afford residence fees (which are over R17 000 a year at Lovedale). Slumlords know that these people have nowhere else to go. For Ntsaluba, the resulting exploitation amounts to "a human rights issue".

Early on in the investigation, he got the legal department of the Buffalo City Municipality (BCM) to acknowledge that they were required by law to prosecute slumlords.

He then approached notorious slumlords directly to rent rooms in their houses for a month each and spoke to the tenants to make them understand that he was not doing this to help himself, but ultimately to help them. He says it was "a humbling experience to see how the tenants lived".

In late 2009 the *Daily Dispatch* published online and in the newspaper the detailed results of Ntsaluba's three-month-long undercover investigation, including the naming and shaming of slumlords in King William's Town and in Southernwood.

The response from readers was overwhelming, with hundreds of readers commenting enthusiastically on the investigation online. Ntsaluba believes readers "made a big fuss" about the slumlords investigation because it was a story that was "relevant to them as they see it every day as they drive by".

Unfortunately, however, this overwhelming change in public opinion did not translate into the application of pressure on the municipality to act. Ntsaluba waited for a response from the BCM, who are required by law to enforce the regulations controlling slumlords.

But, no legal action was ever taken and no proposed plan of action was ever put forward. Indeed, until the time of writing this in April 2010 (half a year later), not a single word has emanated from the BCM on the matter.

Trench believes that Buffalo City's political institutions

are so smothering that local government bureaucrats are either too afraid to act or feel that they can't move without a clear message from their political bosses. Ntsaluba believes there are "clearly political interests at stake". He wonders how many of the 'higher-ups' in the BCM are themselves slumlords.

What's the story

The classic "mobilisation model" of investigative journalism states that:

1. Vigilant journalists use their contacts and innovative research methods to bring wrongdoing to public attention (through published media investigations).
2. Their journalism leads to changes in public opinion: an informed citizenry responds by demanding reforms from their elected representatives.
3. Policy makers take corrective action (policy reforms) (Protess et al 1991: 15)

The central idea in this model is that citizens, informed by the media of wrongdoing, will exert their will on an accountable government. It is notable that neither of Ntsaluba's investigations followed this mobilisation model to the letter:

- While the successful "Broken Homes" investigation followed steps 1 and 3, there was very little reader response to the stories and no overt pressure was brought to bear on politicians by the public for housing reform.
- While the excellent (although spectacularly "unsuccessful") "Slumlords" investigation led to discernible changes in public opinion, it could not effect step 3 of the model as there was no response whatsoever from policy makers.

While ironic, the lack of interest from the public in the "Broken Homes" investigation tallies with Protess et al's (1991: 19) revision of the mobilisation model of investigative journalism. They argue that if, as suggested by the mobilisation model, the public is a necessary link between the media and policy changes, then that link is often weak and unreliable.

They argue that while investigative journalists and officials would appear to be natural adversaries their relationships may, at times, be more complex, less adversarial – and considerably more "collaborative" – than is usually understood.

Policy-making changes often occur regardless of the public's reaction and may be triggered by other factors – in this case, a new national minister out to make a name for himself cosying up to a newspaper that hands him a fortuitous piece of research exposing a dysfunctional provincial housing department and some useful clues on how to solve a nationwide policy problem.

Despite the glaring differences in "success" achieved by these two investigations, then, they share a common critical weakness: even when South African journalists go beyond the call of duty in unearthing public problems in dialogue with citizens (in the *Dispatch's* case, through the community dialogues and the *Dispatch* adventures), they proceed to leave citizens out of the problem-solving equation.

In the case of "Broken Homes", it was a national minister who stepped in to solve the problems with seemingly very little regard for public opinion or reference to solutions citizens themselves might have deliberated on and proffered. Aside from helping to set the news agenda in the first instance, citizens were not required to play any further role in the process of finding solutions to housing problems. The *Dispatch* may be accused of failing to help citizens develop the capacity to solve future problems themselves.

In the case of "Slumlords", there was an overwhelming public response to the story, and silence from officials and policy-makers. Why did changes in public opinion not translate into accountability and action from government?

Some South African journalists are coming around to the idea that to find lasting solutions to public problems – for example, policy changes that promote democracy, efficiency or social justice – journalists may, given our conditions of unaccountable governance, need to go beyond the classic watchdog/information dissemination role.

Dispatch news editor Brett Horner is one of them. He feels "deeply unsatisfied with the notion that we should just put stuff out there and if the world ignores it, too bad". He believes that citizens are becoming "much more aware of what they should be doing" and that there is "a new activist sentiment running through the country at the moment".

He says that in a smaller city like East London the *Dispatch* has to play an active role in prodding civil society into life: "We can't do everything for [civil society], but we can get it going."

Ntsaluba agrees and suggests that a second Southernwood dialogue be convened, both to report back to citizens about what the "Slumlords" investigation revealed, but also to allow citizens the opportunity to deliberate on the problem themselves and help find solutions.

However, no-one is entirely clear about how a second dialogue should be framed, organised or structured. Should the famously unhelpful BCM be allowed in the room? Should the newspaper invite "experts" who could help citizens find solutions?

Who should be responsible for applying pressure over time – and what sort of pressure – in order to find solutions? Should journalists encourage citizens to continue their deliberations – and act upon their outcomes – within the institutions of the wider civil society?

Could journalists offer mobilising information to citizens – for example, information on how to join relevant civic organisations? Could they also describe what citizens in other localities have done in the past or are doing to address similar problems; create spaces for citizens to deliberate about those problems among themselves; encourage citizens to join existing or create new (local or larger scale) civic organisations; and publicise citizens' application for resources?

These are just some of the questions testing the leadership of the newspaper as they gear up to find an effective model of investigative journalism in the South African context.

Ultimately, editor Trench says he wants the relationships between the newspaper and the officials to evolve "so that the paper isn't just a yapping watchdog – it also needs to be moving things forward and having an active role in the solutions".

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THE things students should demand from their journalism schools

Robert Niles

The new semester is well underway at almost all the nation's journalism schools. Students have received their syllabi, explaining exactly what the school expects from its students during their courses. But what should students expect from their schools? Sure, they're getting classes and instruction, but those alone won't be enough for most journalism students. Their educations must extend beyond the classroom syllabus if they are to have the best chance to compete in what has become a brutally-competitive information marketplace.

Unfortunately, that experience can "fall through the cracks" of a college education, if students do not seize the initiative to demand it. So here is my list of eight things I believe every journalism student must demand from his or her journalism school:

1. Role models

Students should demand access to working journalists, in addition to the adjunct faculty. Most schools provide that, frequently bringing guest speakers on to campus. But such events often are not required, leaving students to take the initiative to attend.

Not only should they do so, they should let the school's faculty

and administration know what additional voices they'd like to hear from, too. Programming speakers can be a pain. Most schools would welcome students' feedback on guests and events, despite many students' reticence to speak up about them.

2. A mentor

Access to potential role models outside the school's faculty is just the first step. At some point in their careers, students need to deepen their relationship with at least one role model, and adopt that individual as a mentor.

In teaching our "boot camp" for news entrepreneurs earlier this year, Tom O'Malia of the USC Marshall School of Business insisted that campers find a mentor to help guide them on their journey as news entrepreneurs.

Mentorship provides crucial guidance in any professional's lifelong education. Students cheat themselves of opportunity if they wait until mid-career to find a mentor, or if they never find one at all. (Not finding a mentor in my early journalism career remains my single greatest professional regret in life.)

Like a romantic relationship, a robust mentorship can't be forced. It must develop, naturally, between two people. But that does not excuse students to be passive in seeking a mentor. They must actively engage with potential mentors during their time in school.

3. Employment contacts

Yeah, sure, education is its own reward. Yada, yada. But when you're spending this kind of cash to get a degree, you'd better demand some help in getting a job once you're out of school.

Job fairs featuring reps from newspapers that just laid off a quarter (or more) of their newsroom staffs shouldn't count anymore.

Students must demand that their schools begin engaging with publishers who aren't laying off staff and losing market share. Sure, it's nice to meet folks from the big newspaper chains. But journalism schools must start building relationships with emerging online news publishers in their communities, with people who can either hire their graduates or at least provide the entrepreneurial mentors that they will need.

Economic consolidation is coming in the independent online news business.

The schools that build relationships early with the Scripps and Knights of tomorrow will be the ones who place more of their graduates with these emerging firms. No, they likely won't hire as many grads as the old Scripps, Knights and Gannetts did back in their day.

Which makes it all the more important that j-schools have a chair for their grads when the music stops.

EIGHT things

4. A place to hack

Online is becoming the dominant news publish medium. And online publishing will not look the way it does today 10 years from now, just as it looks little now like it did 10 years ago. Students need forums in which to explore and test their interactive publishing skills. They need sandboxes in which to play.

While traditional syllabi train students in established story forms, students must demand time and access to explore emerging forms, in social media and whatever else they might dream up.

Hacking isn't simply programming; it's an attitude that encourages people to find new uses for old forms. That's something journalism desperately needs. If a school doesn't provide those opportunities for its students, they must demand it.

5. Work experience

Every j-school I've ever encountered has a placement office where you can get applications and contacts for internships, part-time jobs, freelance gigs and full-time work.

I'm not talking about those.

Students need to demand directions to the school's general placement office, where they can find jobs that have nothing to do with journalism.

Every j-student needs to spend at least a few summers working outside the field, learning what work's like for other folks.

These shouldn't be the type of jobs that other college students take to earn a few bucks; these should be the type of jobs that some people do for a living.

Great journalists draw upon a wealth of personal knowledge and experience. Work provides as much, if not greater, opportunity to develop that as the classroom does.

I spent my summers as an undergraduate working at Walt Disney World. I never dreamed that job would affect my journalism career, but that experience eventually led me to start a theme park news website that's become my primary source of income.

The fewer, or narrower, life experiences a student has to draw upon, the fewer such opportunities that student will have later in life.

6. Deep knowledge of a field other than journalism

I'm making the same point here, but from the academic perspective.

Today's publishing market has little place for the general assignment reporter. Readers have instant access to experts writing on any topic imaginable.

A journalism graduate must be able to report with understanding and write with insight to compete with the many other available news sources online today.

Academic study in one's beat field provides the foundation upon which a journalism student can build a lifetime's personal experience and reporting to help inform their writing.

Don't slide by with the minimum the j-school requires you to do outside the school. Students must demand, of themselves and of their schools, rigorous coursework in the fields which they will cover when they graduate.

7. Getting your name out there

Here's a scenario I often described for my students, when I was teaching: "Imagine that you are a news publisher. Your budget's tight and you can hire only one j-school graduate this year. You've got hundreds of applicants, many with great clips. Some you have met, and like. And a few have started their own online publications already. Who

ya gonna hire? The student with potential... or the student who's already got 50 000 unique readers a month?"

A generation ago, no students brought an audience to the table. All anyone had was potential, and employers hired based on that. That's no longer the case. Students who bring their own audience have measurably more value to an employer than those who do not.

Don't get caught behind those students. Get your name out there, now. Find opportunities to publish your best work online, with your name and photo prominently attached.

Engage with readers in comments and forums. Demand that your school provide its students with every opportunity to do so.

Journalism schools must act as agents for their students, promoting them to potential employers and readers from the first day they start reporting on campus.

Developing potential isn't enough in this competitive environment. Students need j-schools that will help them offer not just potential, but results.

8. Passion, not excuses

The worst thing that journalism schools can do to their students is immerse them in a culture of failure.

Instructors do that anytime they complain about the state of the news business, griping how much better it used to be and how awful bloggers/forums/websites are.

Students need passion for their field they are about to enter, not complaints and excuses from those who have left it.

There are more news sources available today to readers than ever before. More eyes are watching our governments and our business institutions.

The public can speak for itself to a global audience, moving closer to fully realising the potential of democracy. Experts are becoming storytellers, offering greater detail and deeper insight to the readers who want that.

I can't speak for you, but this fires me up. It should fire up every journalism instructor, too.

There are so many opportunities out there for our journalism students today. But they won't be able to engage those challenges if they've been steeped in a culture of a failure, knowing no other way to work in journalism than to be hired by a shrinking newspaper chain.

Students must demand better than that from their journalism schools. Those schools owe it to their students to deliver.

WE

Richard Stupart

We were many things stepping into class in February. A nurse. A computer programmer, a couple of recently-graduated students. We could all have continued with our different lives, all of us, but we chose to come here. Made a decision to learn the craft. For some it is a pragmatic choice. A desire to be something journalist-like. A writer perhaps. Or a public relations demon. For most, however, there was a degree of idealism to this choice. An idea of the life we could have had, challenged by a life that we felt had meaning for us to pursue. The life we had lost.

We will be the next generation of journalists. Foot soldiers in a world that, we are told, is forgetting why we are needed. One which increasingly needs us, even as it makes it impossible to ever be what we as a profession once were.

That being a journalist will be difficult does not blunt our determination. What it does do, is demand that we learn differently to our peers of a decade ago, if we are to thrive in the world of a decade to come.

Locating

Elijah Chiwota

Imagine after working for seven years as a magazine writer and editor, Rhodes University offers you a place to study for an MA and your first assignment is a critique of a Stuart Hall article.

After thorough preparation, involving burning the midnight oil so to speak, the course professor dismisses your presentation as "not making sense" and advises you to "stay with the text" and not try to impress the class with what you know but what is being argued in the chapter you are reading.

If you have a humpty-dumpty ego it crumbles, and like a humiliated dog, you put your tail between the legs and whimper to the nearest seat waiting to hear where you went wrong. Yes, this is the experience that you go through in the Africa Media Matrix because the "readers" make little sense to you in the early weeks, but with more reading a whole new media world unfolds in front of you.

Like most students, in the early days I had a woolly understanding of the media, and issues of ideology and discourse – which I consider central to media debates today – were conspicuous by their absence in my conceptualisation of journalism and the media.

I suppose this is the logical result of journalism approaches that overemphasised the nuts and bolts: how to produce media without taking into account that the media were socially constructed and

THE JOURNALISTS OF TOMORROW

Fix the economics

We are taught the details of Old Media economics. Then we are taught that enterprises based on Old Media economics are becoming bankrupt. That this is no longer a sustainable model as New Media gouges the books of media organisations. But what are the economics of New Media? How have organisations made blogs, online news and new technologies work to sustain good journalism?

If they have done so, we want, we *need*, to know how. If not, then we need an understanding of what was tried. Of how it failed and why. The economics of advertiser-paying or subscriber-paying for newspapers will no longer exist in the years to come. If we are to survive in the media organisations of the future, we need not to repeat the mistakes of the media in the last decade in dealing with the onset of the New Media world.

Add a little propeller head

The future is in online media, apparently. Blogs, digital media, aggregating or mediating the cacophony of voices in a newly democratised space. That online, in some or other form, will come to matter – and matter a great deal – is obvious. For all of the learning about the coming role of New Media, we will also need the skills to *use* this platform.

We must not become a next generation of journalists

who cannot blog. Who cannot understand how a web page is distributed, managed, mixed in with video and user and self-generated content. Who, worse still, haven't learned what these terms mean.

Without a fundamental grasp of the skills that underlie our future distribution platform, we risk becoming verbal specialists in an age of technological generalists. Dinosaurs from the moment we graduate.

Stir over a strong heat

Stoke our fire. We came here believing that journalism meant something more than a pay cheque. For most of us, there is an idealism to it. A profound sense that South Africa, that the world, needs people to go and tell it the stories it would rather ignore in an age where we often prefer entertainment, channels drowning in spin. Though it may seem silly, laughable, improbable – many of us really do see ourselves as breakers of the big stories, correspondents from the dangerous places, bringers of truth to the powerful who have come to believe it can be evaded forever.

This is what drove many of us from the comfortable lives we could have led, into a discipline where principle is paramount. The more we believe these dreams, the further we will go beyond the basic j-school curriculum, the

hungrier you will find us.

So if you cannot find a journalist mentor for the strangely over-passionate kid, pair him with an investigatory civil society group perhaps. Or some not-quite-formalised activist group that works at the edge of where the mainstream press reports.

It's not quite a classic newsroom mentorship, but is a world more preferable than being told there was nobody who matched our profile. There are people in places that would afford us the chance to learn what being an investigative journalist is like, out there where the stories matter.

The world of the journalist is changing fundamentally. Yet without predicting the destination, it's possible to know the trajectory. To teach relevant, practical skills for a newsroom that will be increasingly online across multiple media. More than knowing why the old models are dying, we must learn how the new models are growing. How we can be a useful part of that new ecosystem.

Teach us this. Then humour our dreams of being journalists that matter in the world of tomorrow. Sure, we may end up writing sports reports or fluff for FHM. Ideals have a habit of coming up short.

Yet they are what drove almost two dozen of us to divert our lives to be here, and it is what will push us above and beyond the demands of simple coursework to do exceptional things.

Prepare us. Entertain our extravagant idealism. We will not disappoint.

my media DNA

involved in the symbolic construction of meanings through news and other products. I learnt that journalism was an interpretation of selected events at the exclusion of others and that there were multiple interpretations.

Notions of “professionalism” that equated journalists to doctors and lawyers were ripped apart; they were like “poets said” studies. Objectivity was a strategic ritual said Tuchman (1978). The bible was an “ideological discourse” to be understood within its context; and news was a genre just like fiction. “Under Foucault's penetrating gaze all that is seemingly solid in social life [...] truth, authority and social identity [...] melts into discourse” (Tehranian and Arno 2000: 1). In this academic swamp what became imperative to me was to locate myself within the field and try to make sense of that location.

Otherwise it was easy to get lost. However, determining your roots after coming from an academic wilderness is a difficult task especially when all you have considered knowledge is turned on its head.

While locating yourself might imply immersion into the field it also means identifying your philosophical preferences from cultural studies, political economy and sociology of news – and other approaches that draw from diverse disciplines.

Sometimes you discover that it is strategic to negotiate through the texts from your political position and to select elements from other analysts to bolster your arguments.

Studying after years of working gives you an opportunity to relate and locate your experiences to theoretical frameworks. This can only happen with some work experience in the media industry. Even though that is the case the linkages are never clear cut and require some analytical skills. Fortunately, this is one of the things that a masters degree gives to a student – incisive skills to critique the media; especially not to see the media and journalism with fixed rose-tinted lenses but to understand the nuances.

Coming to Rhodes was for me a way to upgrade my skills – so I thought. Not having gone to formal journalism school but acquiring skills on the job, I thought the MA would close the gap and formalise my qualifications.

So you can imagine the shock that went down my spine when we were told the MA did not offer production skills or the “how” of journalism but the “why”. So instead of those skills you had to learn to cite sources and build bibliographies.

And it was after a few visits that I began to realise that the courses were taking me to a more exciting destination that would transform my understanding of the media.

After working in Zimbabwe I look back in amazement at the binary nature of my understanding of journalism and media then. Thinking of the field as existing in only two prototypes with nothing in-between: state-owned media that toe the government line and commercial, privately-owned media also referred to as “independent” in opposition to government. Today I question such categorisation or even the deployment of the notion of independent.

The dilemma with this naïve understanding was when views thought to be “independent” appeared in the state media or when the privately-owned media sang songs in praise of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Then you would hear complaints from one side accusing the other of stealing an agenda. It was their idea in the first

instance argued one side. One would then ask if an agenda or ideas could be caged to belong to one group alone and whether it would not benefit society if progressive ideas were adopted and pursued. Then the state media would choose to be mum on political violence. Not to mention conflation of issues.

I reminisce at freedom of the press debates as defined in liberal-pluralist terminology of “market place of ideas” where the role of the media was more watchdog than anything else.

Thrown into the dustbin were critical approaches and anything to do with Marxism. After all, the Soviet Union had collapsed with the end of the Cold War, celebrated the pluralists. Such analyses tended to look at the media without addressing the issue of power.

It is all about power, of course. In the end. The power the media have to set an agenda. The power they have to destroy one. The power they have to influence and change the political process. The power to enable and inform. The power to deceive. The power to shift the balance of power: between state and citizen; between country and country; between producer and consumer (Silverstone 1999: 133).

Looking back would I say I was short changed by the MA course design? Far from it would be my response because as a mid-career journalist I needed to look at the media in a different and more analytical way.

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RHODES JOURNALISM REVIEW
ASKED A BATCH OF WORKING
JOURNALISTS – SOME FRESH
OUT OF J-SCHOOL, SOME WITH
MANY YEARS BEHIND THEM –
THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- **WHEN DID YOU GRADUATE?**
- **HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN**
IN JOURNALISM? ● WHAT IS
YOUR JOB NOW? ● IS THERE
ANYTHING YOU WOULD DO/
HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY? ●
WHAT DO YOU KNOW NOW THAT
YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN THEN?
- **WHAT IS MISSING FROM**
JOURNALISM EDUCATION?



Dibussi Tande

I work as an instructional designer at Accenture, one of the leading global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing companies. I have a bachelor's degree in public law from the University of Yaounde in Cameroon (1989), an MA in political science from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago (1996), and an MEd in instructional technology from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, US (2005). Although I did not attend journalism school, I have been in the field since 1990 when I began writing for a variety of English- and French-language newspapers in Cameroon, among them *Cameroon Post*, *Cameroon Life*, *Le Messenger* and *Challenge Hebdo*. Since moving to the United States, I have served in a variety of roles for a variety of Cameroonian/African newspapers and magazines. I am currently the North American Bureau Chief for *Summit Magazine*, Cameroon's leading English language magazine (<http://www.summitmagazine.net/>). Since 2004, I have also become an advocate of citizen journalism and I have been blogging (Scribbles from the Den – <http://dibussi.com>). On the one hand, I am proof that all roads lead to journalism and on the other, my story is a refutation of the widely held belief that mainstream journalism and citizen journalism are antithetical.

All roads lead to journalism

On very rare occasions, I wonder whether I should have read journalism at university. However, law, political science and instructional technology degrees have given me a much broader and relevant perspective on the world and on the major socio-political challenges in this age of globalisation.

This has helped me immensely in my activities as a citizen journalist and as a mainstream journalist. This of course does not mean that journalism studies are not necessary. On the contrary! It simply implies that for journalism education to be truly relevant in today's world and beneficial to the modern journalist, it must go beyond "pure" journalism to fully embrace other subjects such as law, economics, sociology, information technology, etc.

One of the missing components in journalism today is a truly multi-disciplinary approach to journalism studies. The world is a much different place than it was 50 years ago but many journalism programmes still reflect methods and content an age far removed from today's information age.

WE NEED TO TAKE OUR PROFESSION

Take the profession seriously



Trevor Ncube

I did a Bachelor of Arts Honours in economic history in 1985. I have been in journalism for just over 20 years having started in November 1989. I am the Executive Chairman of *Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Standard* and the newly-formed *NewsDay* and controlling shareholder in Zimbabwe, and Executive Deputy Chairman of the *Mail&Guardian* and majority shareholder in South Africa.

I would have done a management degree, such as an MBA, soon after my first degree, to better prepare me for my current roles.

A lot of people dislike and some are contemptuous of journalism and our conduct is not helping. We need to take our profession seriously for the public to take us seriously.

Life has become complex and a qualification in journalism alone does not stand us in good stead for the challenges of writing for an informed public.

I think journalism education should be offered to people with a first degree in politics, science, medicine, engineering, etc. We need to be experts in what we write about.

So we should pick a discipline and study it and then be taught how to write. Then society will take us seriously.



The views of ordinary people

Ferial Haffajee

I was accepted to study journalism at Rhodes University, but my parents didn't have means to send me. They were both clothing workers and we got by month to month, so I went to Wits instead. I read for a BA degree with an intention to add law onto it. But I only wanted to be a journalist so did not apply myself to the legal texts. I started an honours in African literature but abandoned it when I was accepted as a trainee at the old *Weekly Mail*.

I'm now editor-in-chief of *City Press*. Previously I held the same position at the *Mail&Guardian*. I am on Facebook, I tweet, I have a column on News24 – I know my universe is changing and I know I am in the slow lane so I'm trying to catch up but I still derive true satisfaction from going out to report a story properly, usually about people for whom social networking means asking for a cup of sugar until the next wage packet comes around and who think tweeting is what the birds do.

I want to have a journalism degree and I will study towards it. I would like to be more technically proficient and be able to cut a decent podcast as well as produce a quick and entertaining piece of video. I would have liked to have travelled more widely as a journalist and reported from different places.

As an editor, you learn to quickly work out what is extraneous and unnecessary – I might have saved my own editors a few grey hairs if I'd known it then. I turn over a news story much better than I did when I was a reporter. I think my road as a journalist is still long, so ask me the question in 10 years time?

The young people I work with know so much more than we do. I'd like to teach them that what analysts say is really not that exciting compared to the views of ordinary people.

I publish myself

Brenda Zulu

Twenty years ago when I was recruited at the *Daily Express* in Zambia, I used a typewriter for my stories. The coming of computers, which were later connected to the Internet, changed the face of journalism.

I now publish online and practise what is now called new media using multimedia web 2.0 tools. I am a freelance journalist and I have also set up a loose African new media team to provide e-media solutions to whoever is in need of the service. We've worked with the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, the Media for Development conference in Brussels, the Africa Rice Congress in Mali and the Web 2 for Development conference in Italy.

The coming of the computer and later the Internet has changed the way I do my journalism. Because of the Web 2.0 tools I don't depend on other people to publish me. I can create publishing platforms and publish whoever I want to publish.

Also the reason why it has worked for me, I think, is the fact that I have branded my name in online spaces and when I approach a customer they are confident that I will deliver the work. There is a need for journalists to learn how to brand themselves.

Personal branding of journalists should be taught at journalism school. There are very few role models for this new millennium journalism. We also need to set up mentorship programmes online. We should start by thinking: how can one be a journalist without using traditional media?

Looking back, I wish I had known how to write project proposals earlier and also I wish I had self confidence and entrepreneur skills.



The bottom line and the overheads

Nicholas Haralambous



I have a BA in journalism and graduated in 2005, although I have moved out of the journalism industry and in to new media and technology development in the mobile industry. I work at Vodacom in the social media division. I am the Product Manager on The Grid and a newly launched product called Legends of Echo. My job is very mobile-centric and focuses on location-based technology, social networking and new media.

I don't think there is anything I would have done differently. I chose to focus my studies on writing and photography. This gave me a solid basis from which to grow my area of interest. I happened to choose to shift my focus from old media in to new media formats. I think if I had to single out a specific path that I would rather have followed it would be a business degree instead of journalism.

Today, with the technology that exists (blogging, Internet, mobile web and others) it's easy to be a published author and have the world read your writing. It's not as easy to pick up a contract and understand it, to get a loan and not blow it.

I have a better grip on what real journalism is, means and aspires to be and it isn't the ideals that we were taught in lecture theatres. Those ideals are imperative to gain a good basis but they often don't exist in the real world of media production. I know now how important the bottom line is, the profit margins, the cost cutting, the advertising and the overheads. These are real and important parts of media production and the practice of journalism. I wish I'd learned more about that aspect when I was starting out.

A firm and holistic grasp of the realities of journalism is missing. Students learn the theory, learn how to write or take a photograph and think that they can walk in to the world of media and make it when the reality is much more harsh and cutthroat.

I also think that an innovative angle on media is missing. Things have changed in the past six months, never mind the past five years of media and journalism. There are new tools popping up all over the world that can help journalists in their research, transparency and communication but no one is teaching these and students are not being exposed to them.

The number of students and journalists that I know who cannot tell me what Twitter is astounds me. Recognising cutting-edge and innovative technology is absolutely imperative in today's media landscape.

SERIOUSLY FOR THE PUBLIC TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY



Create your own start-up

Matthew Buckland

I graduated in 1996. I've been in the media in various capacities for the past 14 years. Although I write and blog frequently, I've been involved as a journalist, in the formal sense of the word, for only one of those years.

I'm CEO of Creative Spark, a web agency which I own. I previously founded and ran 20FourLabs@24.com and headed up the M&G Online for seven years. Before that I worked for the BBC in London for their web division.

What I would have done differently? I would have gone on my own much earlier. What I wish I'd known? That I *could* have gone on my own much earlier.

Journalism degrees, like most other degrees, generally train and encourage graduates to join corporates and companies. While this is a good option, I think graduates should be exposed to another option: creating their own start-up.

An education at a first-class institution could assist by giving students the confidence, encouragement and the entrepreneurial skills to create and run their own companies.

This may not apply equally to all sectors, but it certainly applies to web and digital industries.

Verashni Pillay

'Getting it' is half the battle

I'm not at all interested in competitive sports, but the day I graduated in 2007 I knew I'd won. Being a student at Rhodes University is being part marathon runner and part Monopoly player. Think stamina and endurance combined with a good dose of ruthless ambition.

I worked for News24 for about two years as a general reporter and am now the managing editor of the Mail&Guardian Online – which is a catch-all term for a host of exciting and challenging work. I manage the online team, write a weekly column, deal with the business side of operations from time to time and squeeze in as much reporting as I can around that, including multimedia.

The new media direction my career took is all the more surprising given I specialised in writing and editing. There are so many things I would have liked to have been done differently, and I'm sure the department heads are still nurturing the headaches I gave them about it.

Furthermore, the emphasis increasingly needs to be on students getting as many skills as possible. But don't be too stressed about being majorly multi-skilled. I found focusing on writing and politics got me where I wanted to be. But with the world heading increasingly online, what you definitely need to be is comfortable in that online space. "Getting it" is half the battle – the other skills can be taught.

In the end it turned out that the things I did for fun – keeping a blog for instance – is what served me most in the long term.





Lukanyo Mnyanda

I graduated in 1995 and started working at *Business Day* in January 1996 and have been in journalism since then... *Business Day*, *Sunday Independent*, *Business Report*, *Business Times*.

I've now been at Bloomberg for five years. I started in Johannesburg covering South African bonds and foreign exchange markets. I've been doing the

same job from London since April 2007. I write news and features on the dollar, yen and euro as well as the UK pound. I also cover bond markets in the UK and mainland Europe.

As a student? I would have spent a lot more time in the library. Like most people I think it was only after I left university that I began to realise what a privilege having access to all those books (and time) and I wish I had more use of both.

The Internet and all the new technology was relatively new and exotic when I was a student and if I'd known how big and transformative it was going to be I could have done things differently but I'm not sure how.

I hope the necessary focus on new and innovative ways of delivering news does not mean students focus less on the basics... writing well.



Ethics are the heart

Alex Dodd

I graduated with a Bachelor of Journalism from Rhodes University at the end of 1991.

Always torn between the poetics of literature and the immediate pop cultural terrain of journalism, I returned (thanks to a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship) to my studies in 2001, to complete my masters in English literature at Concordia University in Montreal. And I have just embarked on a PhD in the English Department at the University of Cape Town in association with the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative.

Throughout my studies, I have always continued my work as a writer and editor, so as to stay attuned to fresh

currents in the public terrain and hone my writing.

I describe myself as an "independent writer and editor". Each of these words is carefully chosen. I decided to adopt the moniker "independent" because my independence is more of an ethic than a label – something I seek to embody in all aspects of my life and thinking. I find the word "freelance" demeaning and an excuse to treat writers like hired guns, ever ready to turn a quick trick for the right fee.

Although I work in the journalistic terrain, I choose to describe myself as a "writer" because my bent has always been towards literary non-fiction, being less concerned with the headline urgencies of currency, than with original ways in which the immediate facts are received and processed by human beings.

I'm a great believer in learning from my mistakes. Coming a cropper sharpens my craving for evolution.

What seems like hellish/sublime procrastination is often a meaningful journey towards what you're trying to say. I still wish I could trust that process more and allow myself to surf the waves of sense that lead to a line of argument. But a deadline is a deadline is a deadline – hello darkness my old friend, I've come to talk with you again...

A crash course in philosophy that tracks the evolution of theoretical trajectories across the ages is missing from journalism education. For this, I recommend the writings of Alain de Botton and AC Grayling. Ethics are at the heart of everything.



Charmain Naidoo

I graduated with majors in journalism and speech and drama from Rhodes University in 1979, then stayed on to do honours in drama in 1980. I'll have been a journalist, or in journalism, for 30 years in January 2011! I'm the acting-editor of Port Elizabeth's daily paper, *The Herald* (also the oldest paper in the country). However, I am moving

back to Johannesburg to take up an editorial position at Avusa head office.

I have had the most remarkable life in journalism – travelled the world, met world leaders, princes, paupers, politicians and commoners, all linked by a single humanity. It's a useful thing to learn early on – that people, in the end, are just people. It helps to remove the awe and the fear when you're reporting on big stories or covering supposedly important events. It also makes sure you keep perspective: something I think is the most crucial weapon in the journalist's arsenal.

I know now that a healthy detachment from The Story is not only critical, but also helpful in that it provides the kind of perspective I talked about earlier. Otherwise, you lose credibility. I say to idealistic young crusading journalists who see themselves on a mission: If you want to save the planet, join Greenpeace. If you want to write about the effects of climate change, listen to all sides, including the sceptics, and report them all. Let your readers be the judge.

I know now that:

Governments change, politicians don't.

You will cover the same story several times in a career – just the names of the people and the extent of the joy or grief will change.

People have an astonishing capacity for love and kindness, and an equal capacity for hatred, violence and malice. So check motives and individual agendas before you publish anything.

What's missing from journalism education? I think it's more a case of what's missing from young, would-be journalists. You need to have an innate curiosity, a hunger for information and the news, and a doggedness that ensures that you stick with something till you've got to the bottom of it and a good dose of scepticism so you question everything.

Can this be taught? Journalists need to be specialists in hundreds of fields which is why they need to read widely, and pay attention to everything that is going on around them. A tall order? Not really. Basic requirements for a journalist.

A hunger for information and news



I am a blogger

Sokari Ekrine

In 1991 I graduated with a BSc in new technology and education and in 1996 a masters in human rights. I am a blogger and have never considered myself a journalist. There has been much discussion on whether bloggers are journalists and the two are becoming increasingly

integrated. Many bloggers don't wish to be seen as journalists – blogging has its own style and approach to writing and non-journalist bloggers have an independence which gives them far more freedom of expression and opinion. So, no, I don't see myself as a journalist in the traditional sense of the profession but I do think bloggers need to have recognition from the media industry rather than disparagement, which is often the case.

Apart from blogging, I work freelance across disciplines as a writer and researcher/workshop facilitator.

I probably would have studied philosophy with a masters in creative writing. I feel I missed out by not focusing on writing and critical thought.

I wished I'd known that there are so many options in life and one does not have to follow the "traditional" and "set" plan laid out for you by your parents or community.

I don't know much about journalism education but one criticism I do have is about what I call "lazy journalism". The journalists I respect are the ones that take the time to really understand a story and to give historical, political and social context. So often you read a piece in the newspaper and you can tell the writer really knows nothing of the topic and is too lazy to find out.

GIVE STUDENTS CONFID ENCO



Gary Oberholzer

I graduated from Rhodes Journalism Department in 1996 – I THINK that makes about 14 years in journalism! I produce the mid-afternoon *Jenny Crwys-Williams Show* on Talk Radio 702 and also the weekly *Maggs on Media* programme on the eNews Channel. I also consult for Media

Monitoring Africa.

At the time that I studied, the opportunities to gain skills for radio were a lot less structured than they are now. Rhodes Music Radio was separate from the journalism department so the skills gained and the time invested were almost wholly philanthropic! While RMR made for a powerful, creative and independent student voice – and guaranteed great social spinoffs – I would have liked it to count towards my degree credits.

I also wish I paid more attention in my media law class. In today’s news environment an understanding of things like child privacy rights with regards to the media can be VERY handy in how you cover a story!

And then the lecturers of our TV class arranged a field trip to Joburg to expose the class to some of the big programming producers in the local industry. Knowing how important that first foot in the door is, I would use the opportunity in a very different way now. To have been exposed to where their businesses are going and what their new media needs might be in years to come – I should have crafted my skills set to appeal to those market trends. That way I would have been a more attractive employee proposition.

The Internet is a massively powerful medium for inspiring creativity, so make sure you invest time online – you will know if you are looking in the right place by the inspiration you feel at the end of it.

If you want to be a content producer across a number of media you should probably prepare to be an entrepreneur. It is scary but at the same time it can be massively rewarding! Some of my most rewarding work has involved the process of taking content – making the most of it with one presenter on one format and then reformatting and reworking it to appeal to another presenter and another format.



Hamilton Wende

I came to journalism through a love for writing and filmmaking as I studied English and drama and film at Wits, graduating in 1984. I started that very year as a tape runner and then freelance soundman for the BBC, Visnews and NBC working during the terrible years of township violence that started as what was known then as “unrest” and soon became a virtual revolution.

I was still finishing my degree when I started working for the networks, and would often have to rush out from a tut on Wordsworth to get on a plane and fly to Cape Town or Durban or even southern Angola. It was an exciting but also frightening time, but it was an incredible introduction to journalism – working on



Frank Keany

I graduated from the University of Canberra in 2004 with a Bachelor of Communications (Journalism). It’s been just over five years that I’ve been paid as a journalist, about double that trying to become one. I’m editor of the National Rural News, operating out of Radio 2UE in Sydney. I write, research and present a daily 30-minute news bulletin that’s broadcast to 35 stations around rural and regional Australia.

I started off reading the news at Radio 2XL in the Snowy Mountains, then migrated back to my home city of Canberra for about three years with stints in talkback radio and TV. I was also a tutor at the University of Canberra. I’m now working in Sydney, in talkback as well.

The three-year course I did at UC was great for me to get into the mindset of a journalist. There was the writing skills necessary to survive, and prac

work to hone our skills. Of course, nothing beats hands-on experience, but that foundation was vital.

More voice training, would have been helpful. A lot of smaller radio stations, for instance, are less worried about the writing skills of their newsreaders and more about how they sound on-air. While we were taught the “ABC way” of writing and reporting, the reality is that most graduates will start off in commercial radio. While thinking as an ABC reporter in a commercial environment does no harm, reading the news like one on an FM station won’t go down so well.

What’s missing is an emphasis on practical experience. When I was a tutor, I was worried to find many students didn’t know what the reality was for the industry outside of the classroom. Build up their appetite for news. Encourage them to consume as much as possible, in any form they can, and the ones that succeed will have a hunger for news which will serve them for the rest of their career. Get them to start up blogs, to use Twitter to discuss the news with journalists and encourage them to be critical of what they see, hear and read. Make them feel like they’re a part of the news cycle.

Thabo Leshilo



Revisit language teaching

I graduated from the University of the North in 1989 and have a Bachelor of Administration, majoring in politics and public administration. I have been a journalist for the past 21 years.

I’m now Public Editor of Avusa Media.

If I could do things differently I would have studied journalism at university because that’s what I had always wanted to do but did not do so as it was not provided at my university.

I knew that I wanted to be a journalist even before I had finished matric.

What is missing from journalism education? I think there’s a need to revisit the teaching of languages given the poor standards of English among university entrants.

I’d also recommend that all students be required to have proficiency in a language other than their mother tongue.

‘Get that degree’

the biggest stories in the world with some of the most experienced international journalists in the business.

So I’ve been working as a journalist for 26 years now, and imagine I still have about that many or more still to go!

I lived in New York for a time as a freelance writer and I studied journalism and non-fiction writing classes at NYU’s night school which were incredibly useful to me, and, again, I was privileged to be taught by some of the toughest “old-school” journalists in New York and I have never forgotten their advice and how we had always to get more than one source for any fact.

Sadly, in the world of 24-hour news that doesn’t always apply any more as things simply happen too fast to wait for a second source, but to me it is a major weakness in modern journalism.

Today I am based in Johannesburg and am a freelance writer and television producer for the big international networks. I am also an author of both

fiction and non-fiction – my latest novel is a thriller based in northern Afghanistan called *House of War*. I like doing both fiction and non-fiction. Fiction gives you the opportunity to probe deeper into human emotion, whereas non-fiction’s appeal to the reader is that they are sharing in an experience of what really happened.

I think it is very important in non-fiction never to lose faith with the reader. They must know that what you write about really happened.

I don’t really have any career regrets. I have worked all over Africa, the US, the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and it’s been a wonderful series of journeys.

I’m very, very glad that when I was a student I started working as a soundman for the networks, I still had the determination to finish my degree. I always say to young people “get that degree” because you are unlikely to have the chance to do so again as life begins to take over.

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URAGEMENT AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL
SKILLS

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Where Media Leaders Learn



Harold Gess

Wearing two hats

**ACADEMIC WORK IS
USUALLY AN INDIVIDUAL
ENDEAVOUR, SO WHAT
HAPPENS, ASKS JO-ANNE
VORSTER WHEN A
GROUP OF JOURNALISM
AND MEDIA STUDIES
ACADEMICS DECIDE TO
WORK COLLABORATIVELY
TO CONSTRUCT A
CURRICULUM?**

In an attempt to find out, I sat in on the weekly meetings of Rhodes University Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) academics who were developing a curriculum for a fourth year course in 2006. My interest as an academic development practitioner is in collaborative development of professional or vocational curricula. What the meeting transcripts and interviews with these and other academics in the journalism school uncover is a complex process that underpins the curriculum development of professional courses – particularly, those professions that are not regulated by a professional board.

The curriculum development group comprised seven to eight academics at any one time, the majority of whom taught one of a range of practical specialisations. There were also at least one or two lecturers who provided input into the process from a media studies perspective.

Since about 2002, the Rhodes JMS curriculum has been underpinned by a shared value position that states, inter alia, that its aim is to prepare students to be “self-reflexive, critical, analytical graduates and media workers, whose practice is probing, imaginative, civic minded and outspoken. Such graduates are equipped to act as thoughtful, creative and skilled journalists and media practitioners able to make meaningful and technically proficient media productions”.

The school, as outlined in its vision statement, recognises the power of the media to influence the way media consumers experience and view the world. It furthermore appreciates that the media operates within particular political, economic, technological and historical contexts and that it is complicit in the production and reproduction of dominant gender, class, cultural, racial, geographic and sexual relations.

This discourse adopted by the school can be referred to as a regulative discourse, a concept coined by sociologist of education Basil Bernstein, and this value position has implications for

curriculum and pedagogy.

For example, it was recognised that to pursue the values inherent in the discourse the strong boundaries that had previously existed between media studies and media production needed to be traversed to enable the integration of theory and production. Thus, media studies and media production staff would need to co-operate in developing the new curriculum which, in turn, would require students to integrate the understandings they developed in media studies with their media production work.

A strong academic or theoretical basis develops students’ capacity to participate intelligently in “humanity’s conversation with and about itself”. And a strong theoretical foundation makes it possible for students to pursue postgraduate studies.

However, there is also the need for vocational or professional curricula to “face both ways” – towards the industry and towards the academy. It is self-evident that professional courses should take account of the requirements of the target industry.

This begs the question of what the relation between theory and practice should be in a professionally focused curriculum.

The fourth year of the Bachelor of Journalism degree at Rhodes University is regarded as the “professionalising” year. In contrast to the first three years of this degree, the bulk of the final year is taken up by developing or strengthening students’ proficiency in their chosen area of practical specialisation, such as new media, photojournalism, writing and design. At the end of the fourth year, students should be “industry-ready”.

However the school aims not only to cultivate technically adept journalists and media workers, but also ones who can cast a critical and analytical gaze upon their practice and upon the context within which they work and live. To relate the theory they learn with the practical work they do in their production work means they are also able to study media studies as a field in its own right.

During the curriculum deliberations, lecturers articulated the need for students to be “hybrids”, to “wear two hats”, to be able to “code switch”, to be able to “integrate” and “bridge the

gap” between theory and practice. Thus, the pedagogical imperative is the development of graduates who can juggle their academic and journalistic identities.

The lecturers, who have to help students achieve this end, also have complex identities that influence how they relate to their field and, therefore, how they approach the process of curriculum formation.

In the past, practical specialisation lecturers were recruited primarily for their media production expertise and experience. However, given the nature of the graduate identity that should be cultivated, the specialisation curricula are now potentially more complex than they have been in the past.

The complexity of the curriculum they are required to teach, as well as the fact that they work within a university context, require the so-called “specialisation lecturers” to have or to develop a congruent theoretical knowledge base and thus also an academic identity. The combination of academic identity with their specialisation identity allows specialisation teachers to teach in ways that enable their students to become critically reflexive media practitioners.

These lecturers also believe they are able to teach theoretical perspectives on their field. However, it is difficult to achieve the demands of the development of technical proficiency in and creative practice of their specialisation while also developing students’ capacity for theoretically informed critique.

Bernstein distinguishes between esoteric or theoretical knowledge and everyday or mundane knowledge. It could be argued that the technical, procedural aspects of what students learn as part of their practice specialisations is closer to the everyday and mundane. This knowledge is highly context-dependent and can be contrasted with the conceptual knowledge that the study of media theories requires.

Media studies as a theoretical field and the practical journalism and media specialisations are underpinned by different forms of knowledge. The highly abstract nature of the theoretical endeavour of media studies academics is qualitatively different to context-dependent theorisation of practical specialisations.

The reflexive engagement that the school’s regulative discourse points to calls upon the need for students to develop technically proficient, creative productions that take account of the critical, conceptual understanding of the complex interaction of their media texts with the socio-cultural-historical context within which they are being produced.

This is a complex juggling act given that a theoretical curriculum necessitates the development of principled conceptual knowledge, while the development of practical skill and expertise involves learning principled procedural knowledge.

It could be argued that a critically reflexive JMS education also calls upon students to learn how to put into practice some of the theoretical principles they learn in media studies. Thus, there is also a need for a form of proceduralised conceptual knowledge. However, aspects of media studies cannot always be directly related to the media practices that students engage. This creates a need for JMS students to study media studies as a field in its own right.

In other words, the curriculum has to be constructed in a way that respects the different logics of the fields that make up the discipline of JMS.

Lecturers argued that, given the structure of the university year, there simply was not enough time to enable adequate practical learning and the kind of theory-practice integration that allows the development of the kind of critically reflexive journalists and media practitioners envisioned by the school.

This ring-side perspective of the JMS lecturers’ curriculum deliberations has underscored for me that curriculum development is not a process of rational planning. The complexities of the interplay between the regulative discourse framing the curriculum, departmental culture, lecturer identities and the forms of knowledge of the field or fields that make up the curriculum, together with the concomitant logic of the curriculum demanded by the forms of knowledge, all play a role when colleagues collaborate to jointly develop a curriculum.

**THIS IS A COMPLEX
JUGGLING ACT...
THAT A THEORETICAL
MEDIA STUDIES
AND PRACTICAL
JOURNALISM ARE
UNDERPINNED BY
DIFFERENT FORMS
OF KNOWLEDGE.**



My analysis of the process points to the nature of the knowledge of the field and requisite curriculum logic as having greater influence within this context than the ideal of integrating theory and practice in order to produce critically reflexive journalists and media practitioners. This does not mean that theory-practice integration is impossible, only that it is not a simple matter.

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Changing the world (again)

Jonathan Ancer

I was ushered into the office. The man in the suit pointed to a chair. I sat down. Four pairs of eyes stared at me. “So,” said the man in the suit, “why do you want to be a journalist?”

“I want to, er, change the, uhm, world,” I answered.

I knew it sounded twee, but I meant it. The woman next to the man in the suit stifled a yawn.

“Who do you admire most in the world?” the man in the suit asked.

Whatever you do, I warned myself, don’t say “my mother”.

“Er, my mother?” I also meant it.

The man in the suit didn’t bother to stifle his yawn.

The man in the suit was Richard Steyn, editor of *The Star*. I was being interviewed for a space in the Argus Cadet School. Unsurprisingly, I suppose, I didn’t make the cut. In journo terms, I was spiked.

There were other ways for young people to get into the media industry, like getting a journalism qualification or nag and nag and nag a news editor for an internship, but the best route into the industry was to become a cadet and serve an editorial apprenticeship.

The cadet school was a one-stop shop to acquire all reporting skills – from shorthand to touch typing, to learning how not to get your newspaper sued and learning how to find the bars that loose-lipped informants haunt.

After a stint in the classroom, cadets were sent to newspapers to receive on-the-job training – the best sort of education.

Many of our country’s editorial heavyweights went through the cadetship – Paula Fray, Mondli Makhanya, Tony Weaver, Thabo Leshilo, Justice Malala, Philani Mgwaba and Jovial Rantao. Media managers like Nazeem Howa and Mike Robertson cut their teeth there too.

The cadets of the class of 1993, which I was trying to become a member of, would be one of the last to graduate from the Argus Cadet School.

Nobody is quite sure why it shut its doors a few years later – probably something to do with a new owner taking over and a school not being seen as a “core function” of the business.

Its absence, however, left a hole. The Argus Cadet School wasn’t the only one that closed. A number of other media companies’ in-house initiatives also bit the dust in the early 1990s.

By a curious twist of fate, nearly two decades after being spiked, I find myself heading up training for Independent Newspapers SA (the new name of the old Argus company).

I know I have a tough job. Newspapers, not only in South Africa but across the world, have become shadows of themselves. Some pundits blame the Internet and mobile media, some blame the recession and some point their fingers at the owners, claiming that there hasn’t been investment in newspapers.

As my teenage son would say: “Whatever!” The fact is that over the last decade or so many newspapers have been left battered and tattered. Perhaps one reason for this is the fact that there aren’t as many gifted journalists rising through the ranks.

News editors I speak to complain that newbie reporters (even those with journalism certificates) struggle with the basics; can’t see angles; write stories with more holes than a Johannesburg road; file single-sourced reports filled with inaccuracies; and insert their opinions into news stories. But, saddest of all, news editors complain that too many reporters have become so disillusioned with the industry they feel that they can’t make a difference.

Last year, just a few months after I took up the job, I received a call from Moegsien Williams, the group’s editorial director. “Can you come up with a revolutionary training programme to make us the best learning organisation in the industry?” he asked. I swallowed hard.

When it comes to revolutions, I thought, in order to go forward you have to look back. I thought about the exceptional journalists the Argus Cadet School had produced. So, together with Chris Whitfield, Independent Newspapers’ editor-in-chief in the Cape, and Martine Barker, the company’s Cape managing editor, we proposed that the revolution was just a cadet school away.

The proposal gathered momentum. Management threw its weight (and, importantly, its money) behind it. In August the cadet school got the nod.

While architects designed the bricks-and-mortar school, we began building the curriculum.

We carved our 10-month programme into two phases. The cadets would spend three months in a classroom receiving foundational training in three core skills – reporting, writing and subbing (with add-ons such as photojournalism and new media). In addition, there would be an intensive grammar course, classes in shorthand, media law, ethics and numeracy.

The second phase, which was seven months long, would see the cadets working under supervision in newsrooms.

In September we published an advert, urging graduates, who are “insatiably curious and addicted to news” to apply to join the class of 2010. They didn’t have to have journalism degrees, they just had to be passionate about journalism.

We asked candidates to write a story about an incident that changed their life. The applications poured in. We received a metre-high mountain of applications. The 800 or so stories I read gave me some insight into the lives of young South Africans.

Most of the stories were about loss. Many were about violence. A few were about love. And one was about shoes. I was struck by how many promising graduates there were determined to become journalists.

We selected 45 people and asked them to turn one of the world’s worst press releases into a story. We also gave them a general knowledge test and checked their writing skills. Then we interviewed them. (I’m pleased to report that 95% of candidates admire their mothers most.)

We selected 12 bright cadets – people who believe that



Rudolf Vitek

they can change the world and people we believe have the talent and chutzpah to become stars of our newsrooms.

On 1 February the cadets filed into the spanking new cadet school. Half an hour later they scampered around the newsroom on a treasure hunt. Clues, which they had to solve, led them along the production chain – from diary conference to reporter to photographer to news desk to content editor to layout sub to copy sub to revise sub to editor to editor-in-chief.

As they returned to the classroom I realised that we are able to draw on the knowledge and skills of our own journalists – our company has become a learning laboratory.

In addition to all the tools-of-the-trade skills we teach, working journalists from our newsrooms come into the school to share their wisdom. People like award-winning environmental journalist John Yeld; elegant writers like Graeson Haw and Michael Morris, grammar guru Melissa Stocks, subbing ace Craig Dodds, fearless photojournalist Andrew Ingram and new media star Rene Moodie give up their time to teach the cadets.

And every Thursday, in a session titled “Talking Eds”, Chris Whitfield brings in an editor to tackle a topical media issue.

During the three-month classroom segment the cadets have written a profile of Eleanor Rigby, collected extraordinary stories from ordinary citizens, hassled Julius Malema for an interview, tweeted up a storm, written and rewritten intros, dissected newspapers, covered the Jazz Fest and the Pick n Pay Cape Argus Cycle Tour, tried to keep up with a 70-year-old super-fit guide’s walking tour of Cape Town and participated in a laughing yoga session. They have produced more than 50 assignments.

After each assignment we edge closer to our goal of producing innovative, thoughtful and ethical journalists, who turn out accurate, balanced, original and well-written content.

Our aim is to teach the cadets those old fashioned Woodward and Bernstein skills – where good stories don’t fall into your inbox but require resourceful reporters to painstakingly gather the information and put all the bits together.

The cadet school’s class of 2010 won’t solve the print media crisis just yet, but it’s a giant step in the right direction. For one thing, they really believe that they can change the world.



The dynamics and demands of the time

ments in
relationship
client

The Inner Game of
coach Tim Gall-
ed a revolutionary
for overcoming the
business and lapses of
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l psychologist Eugene
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rential leaders — and this is
true for CEOs, who have
ling boards in an organ-

ies need to be diligent and
when selecting coaches for
employees.

tionally, people may have a
e coaching experience, but it
be unwise to conclude that all
ing is ineffective — that would
e suggesting that one had ex-
e means you should never fall in
again.

NOT CRICKET: If your coach talks at you, he's not professional

These lessons must be applied to
other service providers who are not
want a coach to be a coach.

Mathatha Tsedu

In 2008, the Media24 leadership decided that the internship programme in existence was inadequate and needed to be bolstered. That responsibility was bestowed on me as I had indicated my intention to move out of active editing of *City Press*.

What drove this decision? In the main it flowed from a realisation that graduates were arriving in newsrooms to start working ill prepared for the world of work. It was not a new problem. The skills audit done by the South African National Editors' Forum in 2002 had revealed a shockingly low level of skills in newsrooms.

This audit led to an Indaba in Stellenbosch which brainstormed what could be done. Two of the solutions identified were to increase the ability of journalism students to access internship programmes in all media houses, and an approach to the Department of Education to jack up the schooling programme as it was identified as one of the contributing factors. To this end a meeting was held with then Minister of Education Kader Asmal.

Media24's decision was thus in line with conclusions already reached by the journalism fraternity itself about the need to streamline and mainstream internship programmes. As an editor I had dealt with interns and had found language and the ability to use English in particular to be a serious problem. And many of the interns had not even been into a courtroom during their two, three or four years of journalism studies.

This was disturbing as the expectation from editors is that graduates would arrive with a good theoretical grounding and use of language. Editors also expect graduates to bring to the newsroom some practical experience, not just exercises done in lecture rooms but real-world work that would have been marked and even published.

In the past journalism schools taught aspirant journalists a general approach to journalism for the early part of their studies, with students expected to choose a specialisation area – print, radio, TV, PR etc – before completing their course. The world of journalism has moved on, but many training institutions, universities and colleges, are still locked in this mode while convergence now means that a journalist is expected to do all of these.

The fact that a newspaper has a website that has podcasts, photo galleries and video clips of interviews or events, means editors expect graduates to be able to write a story for the web, edit sound for a podcast, shoot and edit short video clips and possess the ability to upload pictures, sound and videos on their own to the website. When all of that is done, they would still be expected to write the story for the paper of the following day or the following weekend. Online sites may expect their most

NOT JUST TALENT, BUT PRACTICE

Remy Raitt

I am working at *The Witness* daily newspaper in Pietermaritzburg. Although I am treated like any of the other reporters here I have a support system behind me. The Media24 Academy is always there if I need help and the editorial seniors are always willing to sit down and unpack any issues I might have. This is similar to the set up my final year class had at *Grocott's Mail*, but at the *Witness* I am working with bigger stories and tighter deadlines.

In the two months I have spent at *The Witness* I have already noticed a drastic improvement in my writing. My lecturers were right; it is not just about talent but more importantly about practice. And whenever I am cast into a tricky situation I try and think back to the ethical training I got at Rhodes and the advice the visiting speakers gave us at the academy.

Although short, my journalistic career so far has been crammed with new experiences – one of the reasons I wanted to be a reporter in the first place. And although I still have a lot to learn I feel the training I have received will allow me to be an ethically-minded, hard-working and inquisitive journalist.

Debora Patta told our academy class that she was worried about the future of journalism. I can't share her concern. I think that if universities continue to instill the importance of fair and balanced reporting and young people continue to show a keen interest in news, then institutions that offer journalism courses and internship programmes like the Media24 Academy will continue to mould young reporters into capable journalists.

junior staffers to edit and upload stories, while magazines often need journalists to also do Twitter, Facebook and mobile sites.

Instead we are welcoming graduates who at best have some idea of uploading a story, or who have “done radio” and thus are able to edit sound but not load it, and so on. This is not helpful today because it means whatever the medium is that takes such a graduate, staff have to spend a lot of time teaching the new arrival basic stuff that should be common in any university today.

To make life even worse, the decline in readership of newspapers in particular has only been offset by the growing tabloids. Many of the people at universities have an antipathy towards tabloid journalism and the graduates from these institutions are ill-equipped to work in this growing sector of our media. Class influences about the content of many tabloids should not affect the preparation of students who are going to work in a world where that is the growing sector, the sector that may employ them.

In forming the Media24 Academy, interviews were done with heads of journalism departments at various universities to share our own approach but also importantly to check our understanding against their own experiences as teachers. Except in cases where some saw the academy as a vote of no confidence in their work or as a threat to bursaries funded by the industry, in the main there was agreement that this would add value.

We also travelled to a number of countries and interacted with industry-based institutions to learn from them. Arising from all these interactions, we formulated a programme along the following lines:

The internship programme lasts for a year and takes 16 graduates.

It consists of a small amount of theoretical class work which helps assess the levels of each intern and where they would be most suitable within our company.

This initial part also involves lots of field work

in courts and at press conferences, visits to the Union Buildings to understand the workings of government, guest lectures by editors, etc.

The interns spend on average three months each working at newspapers, online sites and magazines. While there they are visited by academy staff for interviews and assessments as well as interaction with their mentors and supervisors.

The work in class and at the various outlets is assessed and is used to give the top 70% one-year contracts with various mediums.

The academy also manages the internships of former bursary holders who have completed their post-graduate studies at a number of institutions. These interns are placed at one newspaper for the whole year but we insist that they move around and do news, online reporting, feature writing and some sub-editing.

Finally, the academy is responsible for mid-career training, managing all journalism-related courses for the whole of Media24.

The selection criteria for the 16 graduates are stringent. Besides the usual CV and application form, the applicant must send at least one published work in print, radio, web or TV. We insist that anyone who thinks they want to become a journalist should have been able to get something into a public space given the advances in technology.

They also need to choose from a number of topics and write a 1000-word feature on that subject – this is used to check writing style and ability.

Those shortlisted undergo face-to-face interviews with a panel of editors and academy staff. On the same day, they write a short news story for the web under supervision, to make sure the feature was indeed written by the same applicant and not by some aunt or uncle. They also do a semi-psychological test that includes news sense, logic and general knowledge. The scores on all these are added up and the top 16 are in.

Journalism is about language and logic: the ability to organise information in a logical and informative way is central to the work of journalists. These are the two critical areas we look at.

Since Media24 introduced the academy, Independent Newspapers SA has relaunched its cadet school and Avusa has revamped its internship programme with more emphasis on new media. This is an indication that a number of significant media houses are seeing a need to streamline internship programmes and ensure interns are better equipped to deal with real work before they are thrown into the deep end.

Every generation produces its own journalists who go on to meet the demands and challenges of their time. But for that to happen, those entrusted with shaping the initial training need themselves to understand the dynamics and demands of that time. I am unable to say all institutions do this.

This failure leads to certificated graduates who land in newsrooms unprepared and find themselves lost because the newsrooms are themselves so juniorised that the seniors in many cases need much help themselves.

The basis of all journalism is writing, so universities need to get students to write more. Not just exercises in class but written work that is published in a publicly-

ALTHOUGH SHORT, MY
JOURNALISTIC CAREER SO
FAR HAS BEEN CRAMMED
WITH NEW EXPERIENCES

accessible place such as a campus newspaper or website. Nothing concentrates the mind, when writing, like the knowledge that the piece is for public consumption and not just class work.

Universities and other institutions need to incorporate tabloid writing into their curricula, and make sure all journalism students can edit text, photos, sound and video, and upload these. In addition, universities must help students get driving licences because companies no longer employ people on a permanent basis without a driver's licence – even employing an intern who cannot drive causes practical problems.

When these few things are done, the gulf between industry expectations and what the training institutions are delivering will narrow and internship programmes will cease being the virtual starting base of real journalism. At that point, the academy will be able to focus merely on widening practical experience and become what it aims to be: a bridge from education into industry.

AN EXTREME INTEREST IN NEWS

Tamaryn Sutherns

It is safe to say that these are interesting times that we live in. Julius Malema has been spewed all over the media, President Jacob Zuma's sex life hung up like dirty laundry and the ANC coalition crumbling before our eyes. To enter the media world at this point has been like grabbing a bull by its horns: exciting, challenging and something I've had to grapple with, wrapping my mind around the politics of South Africa.

I did not take enough interest in current affairs at university, where I studied journalism for four years. If I had time I would skim online news sites, but my news knowledge was limited to the local happenings of Grahamstown, something which became a necessity when our writing class worked for *Grocott's Mail* three days a week for the first semester of 2009.

The fact is, if you aren't working in news, there is little pushing you to engage with it. It is only now, once I have to think of my own news stories and generate my own ideas and opinions around politics, sports, business and events taking place in our country, if not the rest of the world, that I find myself taking an extreme interest in the news channels and documentaries. I have replaced evening series shows with news and political commentary, as well as *3rd Degree* – it is safe to say that I would now choose Debra Patta giving political leaders a tongue lashing over *Grey's Anatomy* any day.

I'm working at *The City Press*, where I will be for a total of five months. Media 24 provided us with five weeks of training before we were placed at various newspapers around the country. Every day during training, we were encouraged to read the news and we had discussions about it with Mathatha Tsedu. News awareness quizzes at university do little to push students to grapple with the goings on of the world. Only when these issues can be discussed and understood do they begin to infiltrate the mind. I began to really immerse myself in news when I knew I could talk about the things that I didn't understand and they would be explained to me, debated and the issues engaged with.

After *City Press*, I will be placed somewhere around the country for three months of online experience. After that I will be replaced somewhere again for magazine experience for six weeks. These are diverse and fantastic opportunities to any journalist in training.

When 140 years of small-town newspapering meets journalism education

Anthea Garman

By acquiring a 140-year-old newspaper¹ as its site of experiential learning for journalism students in 2003, the Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies set out boldly to enhance both journalism teaching and journalism practice in Grahamstown and South Africa.

But the relationship between newsroom and classroom has proved to be complex, and the desire to produce excellent teaching and excellent journalism has often been frustrated.

In a quest to understand why this is, I have turned to the idea of “community of practice” to reflect on whether posing *questions* about our identity and practice in the newsroom is not a more fruitful way of understanding our situation than trying to solve the *problems* which we locate in budget, infrastructure, context and curriculum.

In the conclusion to her 2009 history of *Grocott's Mail* (www.grocotts.co.za/content/history-grocotts-mail) the newspaper's General Manager Louise Vale says: “*Grocott's* continues to grow and evolve *within the traditions* [my italics] that have sustained it over the centuries.” The paper which was purchased by Rhodes University in 2003 with a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies, is now operated by a new entity, the David Rabkin Project for Experiential Journalism, and its purpose is, as Vale says, twofold: “To produce a high-quality, independent newspaper that serves the community, and to develop new ways in which journalism is taught at university level.”

In 2004 Rhodes teachers put their first batch of students into the *Grocott's* newsroom for “experiential journalism” and discovered just how complicated an exercise it was to take over a newspaper with its “centuries” of tradition and marry that to the educational desire to provide an excellent and nurturing space for apprentice journalists.

The desire to acquire the newspaper was part of an evolving effort to locate real, consequential practice (and not just simulated practice) at the heart of journalism teaching.

Although there were no overt theoretically-critical discussions at the time of just what kind of model of practice and indeed teaching we were espousing, we knew as teachers that we wanted to marry intellectual and critical approaches to journalism taught in the classroom with actual doing so that we could experiment with new forms of and approaches to journalism in a real setting.

The experience of the next six years of teaching there has upended our simple notions of attaching a working newsroom to an educational imperative. While our students unfailingly come out of their experiences at *Grocott's* with a great deal of learning, they learn because life and experience are great teachers, not because we have managed to craft new forms and approaches to journalism or innovated new ways of teaching.

In a previous paper, provoked by this situation, I argued that the model of “professionalism” as a rationale for teaching young journalists was inadequate (see Garman 2005). This model I saw as “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” which would constitute professionalism and be the cure for the ills of journalism by instilling in a new generation ‘best practice’ (2005: 201).

I was persuaded by the Barbie Zelizer argument that: “Seeing journalism as a profession... may have restricted our understanding of journalistic practice, causing us to examine only those dimensions of journalism emphasised by the frame through which we have chosen to view them” (1997: 23).

By contrast, the Zelizer idea of an “interpretive community” understands journalists as belonging to an “inner-authenticating practice” (1997: 23), a community which has modes of performance, rituals, and narratives. At the time I was persuaded in particular that the journalistic role in the world is one of “interpretation” rather than simply reporting or recording, and that this particular role is important. And that journalists behave as a community, was also a persuasive idea, and the ideas of induction and apprenticeship were therefore important.

“Experiential learning”

In 2008 the School of Journalism and Media Studies hosted a colloquium in experiential learning, to help both us and other educators debate and think through our experiential projects and their effectiveness. Susan Boyd Bell from New Zealand, whose research involved a case study of a university-based newspaper, was invited as keynote speaker. In her presentation Boyd Bell made the following “provocative propositions”, saying that experiential learning:

1. enables students to draw from the expertise of their peers;
2. sensitises students towards their peers;
3. motivates students to give more time for deeper learning;
4. is effective where there is a large amount of responsibility and learning is completed by doing;
5. enables staff expertise to be drawn on in strategic ways; and
6. activates greater opportunity for communication, negotiation, problem-solving and role-playing skills in real-world environments (2007: 16).

Experiential learning as a teaching method is based largely on the thinking of David Kolb, a professor of organisation management. Its value is that attention is given to the kind of learning that comes from direct encounter, from both having an experience and then asking what that experience means (see Smith 2001) and that allows teachers to place value on activities that happen beyond the classroom or outside of the usual academic pursuits of reading,



thinking, debating and writing.

But, as Smith points out, the weakness of the Kolb model (and the various models that have flowed from it) is that it does not problematise the notion of experience itself.

In line with these criticisms I would venture to say that the intractable nature of the problems we encounter in the newsroom experience of teaching is that while we can manipulate a number of things to make changes in our teaching, it is very difficult to change the *nature of newsroom experience* and the *situation in which the newsroom itself is embedded*.

As a result of these critiques I have begun to think more systematically about the Zelizer idea of interpretive *community*.

Communities of practice

It has been tempting to resort to the label “two cultures”² when operating between *Grocott's Mail* and the classrooms at Rhodes, but while evocative, that label leads one into a dead end of negative description and insurmountable barriers. The description “community of practice” is far more flexible and useful because it not only describes and explains actual situations it also has a definite link to learning and education. For my understanding of this term I am working with Mark Smith's commentary on the work of anthropologist Jean Lave and teacher Etienne Wenger. Smith says “learning is social and comes largely from our experience of participating in daily life” (2009: online).

Learning is not simply an acquiring of knowledge (as in the usual classroom mode of transfer) but a participating in social situations that generate it.

Quoting Wenger, Smith says: “Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour...” A community of practice therefore has these characteristics:

- a shared domain of interests organised around a joint enterprise and identity;
- members who engage in joint activities and discussions;
- a practice, which Smith defines (using Wenger) as “a shared repertoire of resources”: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems, documents, routines, vocabulary and symbols and
- such a community also builds a “shared repertoire of ideas, commitments and memories”.

If the emphasis in learning is placed on what takes place in a community then position in the community becomes key to accessing, using and generating knowledge. The notion of apprenticeship is important. Those who join communities start out on the periphery; as they learn and acquire ways of knowing and practising they move further into the community. “In this,” says Smith, “there is a concern with identity, with learning to speak, act and improvise in ways that make sense in the community”. To be a full member of the community is to grow in confidence and ability to generate meaning oneself, or as Lave and Wenger comment, “the purpose is not to learn *from* talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is to learn *to* talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation” (1991: 108-9).

As a result knowledge can no longer be thought of as “decontextualised, abstract or general”, according to Smith. Neither can conceptions of knowledge continue to be separated into “theoretical” and “practical”, “experiential” and “simulated”.

For an educator this way of thinking significantly alters the

**WE HAVE MORE AT STAKE THAN JUST
THE REPLICATION OF JOURNALISM AS IT IS
OR THE REPRODUCTION OF NEW
GENERATIONS OF JOURNALISTS**

approach that can be taken towards teaching in an actual newsroom situation with young apprentice journalists and opens up spaces to engage with the situation and *community* itself that hosts the teaching and learning.

Instead of interrogating the routines, the operations, the infrastructure and the curriculum demands, this frame enables different questions which can start with asking who is in the community, what do they share, what do they think knowledge is, how do they practice and what is their attitude to those joining the community?

The “community” I am examining consists of newsroom practitioners, who are mainly journalists, and teaching practitioners who are journalists and teachers. We are not all one kind of member of this community.

But also important is the newspaper itself. As a reading of the histories written by Vale, Brand and Berger shows (2009), *Grocott's Mail* is itself a significant context. It was started when Grahamstown was a booming cultural and economic power in the Cape Colony. In the 1860s it was one of six newspapers in this city. It moved from a weekly to a bi-weekly to five editions printed a night during the South African War (1899-1902). It remained a daily during World War 1 and was distributed at its high point “throughout the Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal Republic and to missionary subscribers in Kuruman, Bamangwato and on the Zambezi” (Vale 2009).

During the South Africa War *Grocott's* had 18 war correspondents in the field and was doing a weekly war summary which was read in London where an office was opened. By the end of the century it also had offices in East London and Johannesburg. Today's *Grocott's* distributes only in Grahamstown and is bought by only about 3 000 people (but read by about 16 000 each edition).

At its height *Grocott's* operated in the grand, liberal tradition of publishers who banded together to make sure the business of news and printing was free of interference by the government of the day. The spirit inherent in their newspapering and publishing ventures of the time is captured by the intention to found a Newspaper Press Union in 1882 for the purpose of “promoting all objects of common interest to the South African Press, and for the protection of its members in the *proper discharge of their public duty* [my italics]”. It is evident that the high aims of being a vehicle of the public sphere permeated these papers.

By contrast the paper today, while confined to its town, is nevertheless a paper grappling with the demands of speaking to all Grahamstown's residents as citizens. It makes valiant efforts to cover township news and to negotiate the very complex political, economic and social landscape that is post-apartheid South Africa.

The four editors who have been in the employ of the David Rabkin Project, have made strenuous efforts to move the paper beyond its coverage of just the white middle-class and its schools and events which was the situation that prevailed in the more immediate past.

So as a “community of practice” we operate against the backdrop of what seems to have been a glorious history and what appears to be a hollowed-out present³ – although one that is more honestly assessing what it is to make media in South Africa today. This cannot be discounted as a major factor in what can be experienced in doing journalism at this newspaper.

So how to understand our job as teachers against this backdrop? Theodore Glasser's comments on journalism education in a university are useful. He says:

What journalists need to learn – the knowledge they must master – comes mostly from the field, not the library. Journalism requires phronesis, the term Aristotle used to describe the practical wisdom that comes from practice and experience, not books and lectures (2006: 148).

Avoiding the theory/practice trap, Glasser goes on to outline a subtle distinction between what young journalists do in the university and in the newsroom. What they learn in the academy (in the other subjects a university offers) is an education *for* journalism and what they learn in a newsroom is an education *in* journalism (2006: 148). The academy provides the knowledge to draw on for the practice of journalism but only by *doing* journalism

does a student learn how to be a journalist. Turning to the curriculum, he says:

But an education in journalism also involves the study of journalism, an enterprise that benefits students not because it provides a foundation for the practice of journalism but because it provides a context in which to critique and improve the practice of journalism” (2006: 149).

Glasser then goes on to talk in terms which evoke somewhat the idea of a “community of practice” in the academy:

While the practice of journalism remains the centrepiece of any viable journalism curriculum, the study of journalism accounts for the distinctive contribution of a university to the education of journalists. A formal education in journalism matters and succeeds as it engenders among students a certain quality of thinking about journalism, a state of preparedness that manifests itself in the eloquence students exhibit when called on to respond to questions about the value and purpose of what they do as journalists” [my emphasis] (2006: 149).

Our attitude has been to understand ourselves the teachers as part of the academic community, and the journalists at *Grocott’s Mail* as part of a separate newsroom community. We have set up what we call a *Grocott’s Mail*

Teaching Forum as a *bridge* to get these two communities talking to each other. But I am beginning to think that what we need is not just talking about problems we encounter in order to rectify them, but exploring how we could build a shared community or practice.

We could do worse than start by abandoning the rigid duality of the theory-practice mindset (and its associated communities) and begin to think of what we do in apprenticing students as having three interlinked and vitally important components: education *for* journalism (the knowledge of the world and how it works, and how to think about how it works from their other university subjects); education *in* journalism (their doing in the newsroom); and education *about* journalism (the head space we provide in journalism and media studies to think critically about the forms and effects of journalism).

We could also focus more on members and membership of this shared community rather than solely on infrastructure (computers and network), resources, routines and processes.

Ironically those die-hard journalists and educators who believe firmly in journalism as a “trade” are correct in one respect: learning on the job, learning in a community and learning by apprenticeship are extremely powerful and effective forms of education and socialisation.


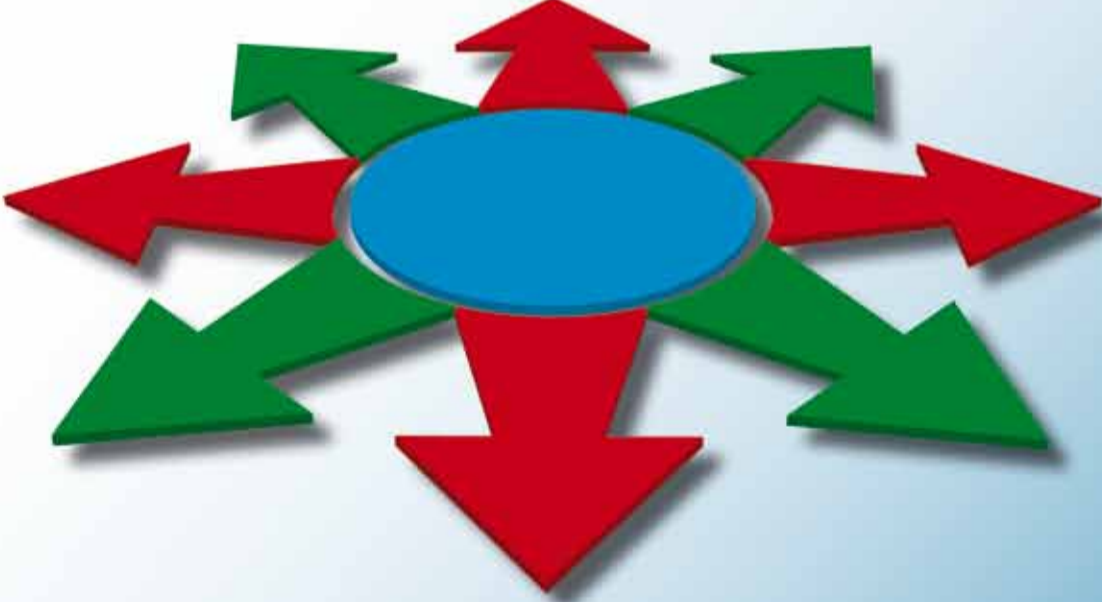
But we have more at stake than just the replication of journalism as it is or the reproduction of new generations of journalists who can take up the baton from those who’ve gone before. The “poly-crisis”⁴ nature of our world, and the challenges of the post-apartheid public domain in South Africa, require of us to impart new values, new ideas, new forms of journalism which are responsive to these new challenges and to the future of journalism.

Endnotes

- 1 What is now *Grocott’s Mail* was founded by TH Grocott who started a printing works in Grahamstown in 1869. He then published a newspaper called *Grocott’s Free Paper* in 1870. In 1872 this paper was renamed the *Grocott’s Penny Mail*. As soon as the paper cost more (after World War 1) the name become just *Grocott’s Mail*. And in 1920 Grocott and Sherry (Richard Sherry became a partner in the business in 1892) bought the *Grahamstown’s Journal* a paper which predated the birth of Grocott’s paper having been started in 1831. So the claim can be made that the existence of *Grocott’s Mail* today represents 178 years of independent newspapering in this city.
- 2 Made famous by CP Snow in his 1959 book *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* which was a fierce critique of the humanities. As the Wikipedia entry on Snow’s book points out: “The term two cultures has entered the general lexicon as a shorthand for differences between two attitudes” and comments that it is a “polarisation of perspective”. It is exactly this kind of polarisation in dealing with our teaching difficulties that I wish to avoid.
- 3 For an assessment of how the Eastern Cape and Grahamstown were removed to the periphery of South African economic and political life in the early 20th century see the work of Jeff Peires.
- 4 This term, according to Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Director of the Environmental Education Unit at Rhodes University, describes the “set of mutually-reinforcing nested crises” our world faces in which “cause and effect relations are uncertain and mutating”. From “Teaching in the world: the place of room 20”, lecture for the Distinguished Teacher’s Award, 19 August 2009, Rhodes University.

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MOBILE PHONES YOUTH RADIO CITIZEN JOURNALISTS



**HOW THE NEWS
IS COMING TO
GRAHAMSTOWN**

MOBILE PHONES CITIZEN JOURNALISTS YOUTH RADIO HOW THE NEWS IS COMING TO GRAHAMSTOWN

Harry Dugmore

Newspapers everywhere are being forced to rethink their role as simply providers of general news of the day. As people can access much more immediate information and news online, from a wide variety of sources, and get to “hear about things” from their friends and contacts through Facebook, Twitter and other “social media”, local papers are having to find better ways to provide immediate and more useful information and news.

Hyper local information, the kind of detailed “granular” news, about a particular suburb, or about a few city blocks, are one way to be relevant to an audience whose alternative media options are growing by the day.

Take crime for example: a newspaper might learn of a dozen small incidents taking place in their town, but only publish news about a few that are deemed newsworthy according to a set of gatekeeping decisions that differs paper by paper.

Sometimes only bigger crimes get reported or, in South Africa, only crimes where there is violence make the grade at bigger news outlets. Pickpocketing or clothes being pilfered off someone’s clothesline are not likely to earn any column inches in even the smallest papers.

And yet it might well not be the size of the crime, or its nature, or the levels of violence that are interesting and newsworthy. Rather, it might have everything to do with proximity.

You may of course already know if your immediate neighbour’s laundry was recently pinched, but you may not know about it if such deeds were also happening two or three houses, or two or three blocks away. A veritable small-scale clothesline crime wave could be happening (and could be coming your way) without you knowing.

Of course, it’s very hard to cover all crime comprehensively using the print medium.

But doing it online, using various forms of visualisation, such as creating “incident maps” where you can visually see where crime has occurred and what crime has been committed, in the last day, or in the week or month, are proving their usefulness elsewhere in the world.

Such approaches can hold a great deal of promise for small newspapers eager to reinvent their role in local communities.

These are the kind of avenues we are investigating with the help of the John S and James L Knight Foundation-funded Iindaba Ziyafika (“The news is coming”) project.

Working with *Grocott’s Mail*, a Grahamstown community newspaper owned by the David Rabkin Project for Experiential Journalism, a Rhodes University-linked company, we’re looking at ways of combining citizen reporting and local sources of “hard data”, such as daily police reports, property valuations and sales, information about government services (such as opening times of government health clinics and when specialists are on duty), as well as a range of information about entertainment, sporting events, and upcoming community events.

We believe community newspapers should inspire people to take action, to find community solutions, and pressure authorities to do their jobs well.

Combining good data sources with trained citizen journalists (and with professional editing) we think we will be able to help, for example, communities and the police see patterns of crime more clearly.

Grahamstown, to give just one example, has a high rate of laptop theft, with more than one pinched every week day. How can we understand how and why this happening, and how can the community and the police stop this laptop-stealing epidemic?

From our work so far, there appear to be three key challenges in providing these kinds of data-driven, information-heavy services.

The first is getting a regular supply of good, hard data so the information is up-to-date, useful, and has a “news” quality to it.

The second is selecting ways of displaying the information so that it is most useful to readers. Will maps do the trick, and how scalable and searchable do such maps need to be? What kind of content filters can we provide?

The third challenge is allowing for comments, feedback and formation of reader and community comment, ie allowing people to help make sense of, and add to, what we know.

With the example of crime information, much of the required information appears to be available from local police stations and from private armed response groups. Depending on the country and the police station, it is often freely available. In the US, the information is available in digital form, which is the whole rationale behind the automated parts of the EveryBlock project, <http://www.everyblock.com/>, which was also initially sponsored by the Knight Foundation.

This type of approach does take time and effort. In South Africa, it can be difficult to get access to crime reports at the local police stations, and when access is granted, the reports are often available in hand-written form. This reduces the possibility of automatically updating crime maps on a news website.

Even thinking about these kinds of approaches means starting to think about a very different kind of journalism. The focus of the news becomes one that strives to provide the often missing link between information that can inspire action, and the presentation and analysis of that information that can suggest the type of action that might work.

Through Iindaba Ziyafika, three key projects are combining to help turn hyperlocal news into something increasingly tangible and useful in Grahamstown – the *Grocott’s Mail* Citizen Journalism Newsroom, with offerings of intensive citizen journalism training courses; a platform to use the immediacy and reach of mobile phones through the new mobile website “Grahamstown now”; and working more with Radio Grahamstown to create shows that rely on audience input via sms and instant messaging through the MXit channel.



Paul Greenway

TAKING CITIZEN JOURNALISM SERIOUSLY

What we are learning from the three citizen journalism courses offered so far – with about 100 people graduating all together – is that you really think through and experiment with style, format, duration, content, and modify your approach as you go along.

We've had to make and remake decisions about how to attract people to do citizen journalism, how to select candidates and enrol them in the course, what to teach in what order, and how to support participants and follow up on their training.

Here are some of the insights we've gathered over the last year of training:

Enrolling

Once you've decided to provide training, getting the word out to interested parties is not as easy as you might first think. For example, in Grahamstown, we accommodate both computer-literate and computer-illiterate people by going beyond simply advertising in *Grocott's Mail* by putting up posters around town.

People are invited to file their applications online or deliver paper versions to the *Grocott's* offices. So far, we've actually found that mouth-to-mouth advertising works best, with previously successful applicants telling others about their achievements.

As a result, we now give each graduate three

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO DO CITIZEN JOURNALISM WELL? DO CITIZEN JOURNALISTS NEED TO BE TRAINED? DO THEY NEED TO BE PAID? DO THEY NEED A SPECIAL KIND OF EDITORIAL "HAND-HOLDING"? DO THEY NEED TO BE "IN" ON DIARY MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING IN TERMS OF STORY SELECTION? OR ARE THEY JUST "LETTERS TO THE EDITOR"-TYPE CONTRIBUTORS WHO ARE GIVEN A BIT MORE SPACE AND LATITUDE? GRAHAMSTOWN-BASED TRAINER ELVIRA VAN NOORT IS WORKING WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF CITIZEN JOURNALISTS VIA THE IINDABA ZIYAFIKA PROJECT. IN 2010, ABOUT 200 PEOPLE WILL GET AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE IF CITIZEN JOURNALISM IS FOR THEM.

application forms to hand to people they think will also benefit from taking part in the training course.

We've worked to ensure that whether the applicant is employed is not, or where they live, is insignificant, so that every citizen in this town gets a fair chance.

The most important consideration for selection is the applicant's motivation letter. This reveals the applicant's proficiency in English as well as allowing us to work out what their motivations are for applying.

Because the *Grocott's Mail* Citizen Journalism Newsroom mission is to "encourage and empower all citizens to more actively engage in debates about important and interesting issues in their lives through producing and publishing their own content to foster a keener sense of community awareness, involvement and, ultimately, pride" (see www.grocotts.co.za), we look for people who have a real hunger for this kind of community building.

How, where and when?

After selecting the applications with strong motivations, we have to figure out should the courses be in the morning or afternoon depending on the profile of those selected? Do we stream groups, so that those with lower levels of computer skill can get more computer time?

To accommodate everyone we have now decided to run four separate classes each week: three times in the





Paul Greenway



Khaya Thonjeni

morning and once in the afternoon. There is one class with people who have both computer and Internet skills, another class for people with computer skills only and two classes for people without any computer skills.

Each class lasts about two hours once a week over six weeks. Plus various homework assignments, the total training takes about 20 hours of people's time.

What topics to cover and in what order

The course it set out to cover a number of basics: what is citizen journalism? What is news? Story structures; facts and opinions; computer and Internet training and multimedia. We also try to inculcate that being a citizen journalist means playing an "active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information" (as Willis and Bowman say in *We Media*), and not hanging around waiting for the news to happen to you.

There are many discussions about the differences between CJs and professional journalists and one of the key discussions is around aspiring to objectivity.

We look at how one of key differences between the CJs and *Grocott's Mail* journalists, besides not being part of the formal journalistic workflow in the newsroom, is their choice in sources and stories.

CJs tend to ask other citizens for their opinions (because they operate on a grassroots level) while journalists choose to go to prominent sources (the mayor, ward councillors etc).

A story from a citizen journalist is also more likely to be based on news that affects citizens directly and comes from citizens themselves.

While this creates a refreshing perspective and creates more diversity in the news, citizen journalists also have to be careful about being fair. We discuss how this can be done while still telling them that critical stories often originate in the community.

Building confidence

In class three, which focuses on interviewing, the trainer invites a well-known local to be interviewed by the class for half an hour in a press conference setting.

The CJs get ten minutes to prepare questions. This is an amazing session with many lessons learned including the banal, such as sitting upright and showing interest, developing listening and note-taking skills (using

quotations properly is a big part of what we cover in this class), asking questions clearly and concisely, not letting the interviewee take over etc.

So much of journalism is based on the ability to interview, in person or over the phone, and people are so nervous about approaching people in power that building confidence and skill in doing this is proving to be much more important than we initially thought.

Cell phones first

A big part of the training is learning how to use cell phones as a reporting aid and tool. We focus on using phones to take notes and, if web-enabled, to do research using tools like Google.

We also spend a lot of time learning about how to take better photos and video recordings. Downloading, editing and uploading the photos took longer in some of the classes but people were always patient and most stayed after the class was over to practise some more.

More recently, graduated CJs with a video cellphone also get extra video shooting and editing skills.

We've discovered that most people are unaware of cell phones' capabilities as a reporting tool and the whole idea of multi-media reporting.

After the class some of the participants enthusiastically took off doing vox-pop type interviews with lots of photos, others recorded interviews and used audio snippets in a text article.

Sustaining viable journalism

Doing journalism is a habit. To get people into the habit, we've created the first full time citizen journalism editor post. From May 2010, the editor has worked with each batch of trainees to get their stories published, and get them into the rhythm of reporting. We also have small payments for stories or photos that get published, which we are hoping will further boost trainees' motivation and confidence.

Gradually, more and better stories are emerging. We're also allowing the top four students in each class to participate in the *Grocott's Mail* newspaper daily diary meetings.

All of these steps are creating a more regular, higher quality citizen journalism, enriching *Grocott's Mail's* role in this community.



Khaya Thonjeni

STEAMING ALONG

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW IN SOUTH AFRICA'S OLDEST INDEPENDENT NEWSROOM

Michael Salzwedel

The transition from old to new media has been marked by a few uncanny moments at *Grocott's Mail*. When I arrived for my first day of work as the new media editor in June 2009, I walked into a staff meeting where it was announced that the historic printing presses were to be switched off forever, the staff retrenched, and the paper printed off-premises in Port Elizabeth.

In with the new, out with the old.

A few months later, we carried in computers for our Citizen Journalism Newsroom (www.grocotts.co.za/cjnr) through the front door just as workmen were removing the printing presses out the back.

In with the new, out with the old.

While saying goodbye to the printing presses may well have been tough for some, their departure has symbolically made room for the newspaper to experiment with new technologies, richer stories, bigger audiences and a wider range of dissemination methods.

During the South African War from 1899 to 1902, as many as five editions of *Grocott's Mail* were published a night to ensure that the latest war news was available. A steam whistle was installed on the roof of the premises, which let out a shrill blast alerting readers to the latest issue.

Today, the Internet and mobile phones are our steam whistles. When we publish a hot story online, we Tweet it and let our more than 700 Facebook fans know about it too.

We also send out SMS headlines twice a week when the paper is published, and when we have any major breaking news.

Grocott's Online was launched in 2006, operated on-and-off by Rhodes Journalism students and staff in the New Media Lab (<http://nml.ru.ac.za>). The site in its current incarnation was launched in July 2009 and, as of April 2010, was attracting an average of 300 unique visitors and 1 000 page views a day, growing at around 10 to 15% month-on-month.

The website, and all related new media projects at *Grocott's*, are part of Iindaba Ziyafika (isiXhosa for "The news is coming"), a four-year Knight Foundation-funded project which began in 2008 and is headed up by Harry Dugmore, MTN Chair of Media and Mobile Communication in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes.

"The core proposition of Iindaba Ziyafika is that information and communication technology can enlarge the public sphere by providing the tools that encourage participation and facilitate that participation," Dugmore wrote in last year's edition of *Rhodes Journalism Review*.

Grocott's Online endeavours to encourage and facilitate this participation by providing and promoting a comprehensive platform for citizen journalism.

Our "MyStory" section is well populated with stories written and photographed by citizen journalists; many of these making it into the print edition as well.

We run six-week training courses in the *Grocott's Mail* Citizen Journalism Newsroom to equip local citizens with knowledge and skills

that help to make them more effective citizen journalists.

We have also appointed a Citizen Journalism Editor, who works closely with *Grocott's Mail* editors and our citizen journalists to ensure that contributions are well managed and that citizen journalism remains a sensible and strategic part of what we do, within both the Iindaba Ziyafika project and the broader visionary framework of *Grocott's Mail*.

Grocott's Online is not the only way we are delving into new media and trying to contribute to improving life in Grahamstown. Mobile phone technology has moved from being the "next big thing" to being very much the current big thing.

We receive SMSs from readers directly into Nika, our open-source content management system, which are then published in print and online.

We also have a free SMS headline alert service (www.grocotts.co.za/sms). Included in this is the capability to communicate with particular groups of people to alert them to news – and opportunities for civic engagement – in their areas, whether geographic or topical.

Our most significant mobile project is Grahamstown NOW (ghtnow.co.za), a mobi-site that brings together a wide variety of real-time (or as close to real-time as possible) information about what is happening right now – or what is about to happen or stop happening – in Grahamstown. The site's core philosophy is that "nowness trumps newness" and "of-use trumps of-interest".

It provides real-time information about events and specials, live views from various webcams around town, as well as the latest news and SMSs published on Grocott's Online.

Grahamstown NOW meets the Iindaba Ziyafika mandate of using mobile phones to encourage civic engagement (in this case by informing people of events such as council meetings) and also provides extra sources of revenue for *Grocott's* (local businesses can list time-based specials on Grahamstown NOW).

At a local level, there is a strong case that the job of newspapers and their websites should be to alert people in advance about choices to be made, to help frame issues and explain what is at stake. With our focus on mobile phone access, increased data mining and presentation of both raw data and analysis of that data, and citizen journalism, we hope to make a real difference to the power people can access and exercise in Grahamstown.



Paul Greenway



YOUNG PEOPLE **SHOULD BE** SEEN **AND** HEARD

Jayne Morgan

It's episode five of Y4Y. As usual, things are slightly chaotic in the Radio Grahamstown studio but we've got learners from Graeme College, Mary Waters and Nathaniel Nyaluza schools all around our mikes and some nice responses coming in on MXit.

It is the week where municipal workers have been rampaging through the town's streets and ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema and the murder of AWB leader Eugene Terre'Blanche have been dominating headlines, so the debate is about leadership and whether South Africa's youngsters have the right kind of role models.

Strong opinions are being expressed for and against the strikers.

In the middle of the discussion, a message comes through from "Twigs". The day's "MXit master" [Zane from Nyaluza] reads it out over the air: "Y4Y is fantastic, it gives us information and it's not just for one race, it's for black and white." In the middle of the studio mayhem, my colleague Khaya Thonjeni (who is also the show's presenter) and I do a little dance and some high fiving. Y4Y aims to appeal to any learner at a high school in Grahamstown. This kind of response means, we hope,

Y4Y IS A YOUTH RADIO SHOW CREATED BY AND FOR GRAHAMSTOWN'S HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS. THE PROGRAMME IS PART OF THE R5-MILLION IINDABA ZIYAFIKA (THE NEWS IS COMING) PROJECT FUNDED BY THE US-BASED KNIGHT FOUNDATION AND RUN THROUGH THE RHODES SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES. ONE OF ITS MAIN AIMS IS TO INCREASE THE GRAHAMSTOWN COMMUNITY'S ACCESS TO, AND USE OF, THE MEDIA, PARTICULARLY THROUGH MOBILE MOBILE PHONES. **KHAYA THONJENI** AND **JAYNE MORGAN** ARE ITS PRODUCERS.



Paul Greenway



Jayne Morgan

that we are making some progress towards that goal.

While the geographical distances between Grahamstown's 13 high schools are small, the gulf between the upmarket private schools in town and the government schools in the townships is gargantuan.

Y4Y has set out to use this South African microcosm to see if we can create communication across the divide.

We started from the premise that, whoever they are, 16-year-olds have certain things in common. As Khaya puts it: "There are some things all teenagers think about: identity, relationships, dealing with drink and drugs, family life, music and fitting in. We're concentrating on those points of connection and, where there are differences, trying to get people to understand each other better."

For that reason, while the production team helps with the technical side, the show's content is generated by the learners themselves.

Every week, three schools from across the spectrum participate. They each create a news bulletin as well as source and conduct interviews. Teams from each school then come in to the studio to take part in a live debate and meet contemporaries they would never otherwise come into contact with.

The topic may be inspired by national events or a local school issue (we did a memorable matric dance special). Whatever it is, it's the learners who drive the discussion and make it relevant.

Opening up the discussion to listeners was essential to hearing as many voices and views as possible.

One of the other things Grahamstown's youth have in common is owning a mobile phone. "We chose the MXit platform so that people can join in the debates at a fraction of the cost of an SMS or a call," says Khaya. "We want the communication to be two-way. We've had an amazing response. As soon as we went on air, people were signing up and commenting. The interaction is growing every week as young

people realise that they can have their say instantly and be heard by the whole audience."

As well as using MXit, Y4Y has a home on the *Grocott's Mail* website (www.grocotts.co.za/y4y) where the audio from the programme is posted as well as pictures, competition winners and other content. This page will become increasingly interactive and provide another communication space. However, while Internet access remains patchy, phones are the key.

Y4Y is also designed to be a learning experience on more than one level and that includes introducing children to journalism and the media. Anyone who takes part is encouraged to think about what makes a news story and how to produce a good interview. In our regularly participating schools, small groups are emerging who are keen to go further and are being trained to record and edit their own audio.

Several – from all backgrounds – have discovered a new passion. However, whether they are budding journalists or not, every learner who has taken part has got a huge kick out of demonstrating our programme strap line: "Young people should be seen and heard".

The discussion is inspired by something going on that week (such as SciFest or matric dance fever) or an issue relevant to the lives of our listeners – boys and girls trying to understand each other or whether their schools are giving them what they need.

A recent subject was the issue of fighting between well-established and recently returned Xhosa initiates. It was picked up during a studio discussion about gender equality. Strong views came out and it was interesting to hear how polarised the boys and girls were. What was also important was that everyone in the discussion – black or white, moneyed or not – had a personal experience of the issue.

Most importantly, it is something we would never have got to if we were imposing ideas from outside.

UPSTART

the paper for youth by youth

Shireen Badat

The city of Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape is renowned for its educational institutions. With Rhodes University the backbone of the city's economic activity, Grahamstown is also home to prestigious private schools like St Andrew's, Kingswood and DSG – noted for schooling the captains of industry and children of the new political and economic elite.

In the west of the city, not too far from these prestigious institutions, an informal study conducted in a Grade 8 class at a historically-disadvantaged school found that a quarter of the learners were functionally illiterate.

In 2007, the city's seven disadvantaged high schools produced 45 learners with matric exemptions – while one private school obtained 83 exemptions.

Grahamstown is also home to the oldest independent newspaper in South Africa – *Grocott's Mail* has been published since May 1870.

In 2003, *Grocott's* was purchased by Rhodes University which created a limited liability company called the David Rabkin Project for Experiential Journalism.

The project publishes a bi-weekly community newspaper and provides workplace experience for journalism students at universities in the Eastern Cape.

At a *Grocott's Mail* Advisory Board meeting in 2007, concern was raised about the huge gap between school leavers' results and it was decided to initiate a campaign to excite young people about reading and writing.

An obvious role *Grocott's Mail* could play was to encourage young people to produce their own newspaper. After consultation with local NGOs, education officials and other stakeholders, a need was identified for enhancing literacy and a culture of reading among Grade 8, 9 and 10 learners.

In mid-2008, with the support of school principals, *Upstart* clubs were formed at seven historically-disadvantaged high schools in Grahamstown. An advertisement was placed in *Grocott's Mail* calling on learners in those grades who were interested in starting a youth newspaper project to sign up as members.

Upstart was thus established, with the assistance of postgraduate diploma students in the Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies. Their involvement was on the basis of service learning, meaning that their work on the project would be assessed and also credit bearing.



Journalism students applied the theories they learnt to the establishment of newspaper clubs. This culminated in the production of the first edition of *Upstart* – a 12-page tabloid newspaper.

Since then *Upstart* has expanded into more than a newspaper project, encompassing other educational and social issues. After the first edition, the project extended into former Model C schools, including an Afrikaans-medium school.

For the first time, there was a project in the city that encompassed young people from all race groups and all the three languages spoken in the Eastern Cape.

There are now 12 *Upstart* clubs with more than 300 members, who meet weekly. Membership has grown so fast that it has been necessary to restrict further growth, and a strict code of conduct has been adopted to ensure more discipline and commitment.

This is the only newspaper for the youth by the youth in South Africa. *Upstart* members identify issues that they would like to address in an edition, and write about these. There are regular workshops, discussion and outings to provide members with experiences to write about.

Students conduct in-depth research and interviews for articles and write prose, poetry, letters and book reviews. Members are encouraged to write in their home languages, but as the medium of instruction at schools is English, most opt to write in English.

After each edition is published, the various clubs meet to evaluate the paper. These gatherings congregate students from different socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds and cultures – and some interact with students from other social backgrounds for the first time in their lives.

Upstart members have been assisted to join public libraries and competitions are held to encourage reading. Some members have learned computer skills for the first time, and all now have email addresses and can navigate the Internet.

Many *Upstart* members grow up in homes where reading a newspaper is not a daily activity. They tend to have extremely poor knowledge of the world around them. The project introduces members to the power of the print media and the skills required to produce a newspaper. This seeks to inculcate the habit of reading newspapers and to empower them to become better informed citizens of South Africa and the world.

By fostering an enjoyment of reading and writing we hope to improve members' chances of entering higher education and making informed career choices.

The first group of Rhodes journalism students involved in *Upstart* faced a steep learning curve and many dilemmas. On one of their first visits to a disadvantaged school, they watched a learner fetching the teacher assigned to help *Upstart* from a tavern across the road.

The journalism students found themselves torn between assisting the enthusiastic learners and their journalistic urge to report on the teacher and the conditions at the school. Back on campus this led to lively discussions with their journalism lecturers about boundaries and ethics.

Lara Solomon, a postgraduate diploma student commented: "I found the *Upstart* programme to be



beneficial to my studies as well as for the pupils that my group was working with. I benefited through putting what I had learned in my course into practice, and they benefited through practising their second-language skills and learning the basics of a trade that can be put to use in later life."

Another student notes that "It was a humbling experience to work with a 16-year-old whose writing skills are very poor or nonexistent."

Service learning as a form of community engagement is mutually beneficial to the university and its students and the *Upstart* project which is under-resourced, under-funded and has a staff complement of just two.

This year, the second in *Upstart's* operation, fourth-year radio journalism students have worked with *Upstart* members to produce a radio show. *Upstart* members keen to learn more about broadcasting were asked to submit essays on why they should be chosen for the programme.

Through this process six were selected to attend workshops twice a week, learning the journalism and media studies school's second-year curriculum for radio broadcasting.

They are taught writing techniques for radio, how to use equipment and how to look for stories. They are sent out over weekends with recording equipment and meet weekly to review their stories. As the broadcast launch date nears, extra workshop sessions are being held on Saturday afternoons.

Ideas for broadcast items are discussed at the weekly *Upstart* club meetings and contributions, including a jingle composed for the show, have been developed by members. The hour-long show which is to be broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays will be hosted on Rhodes Music Radio, which has a high listenership throughout the Grahamstown community.

Other service learning projects this year include working with the Rhodes' Department of Pharmacy to deliver eight workshops for two *Upstart* clubs on healthy lifestyles. This was in response to information gathered from members that many of their parents and immediate relatives had died of Aids-related illnesses or were HIV-positive.

The members also report very high incidences of hypertension, tuberculosis, obesity and alcoholism in their communities. The workshops are aimed at changing the lifestyles and eating habits of the younger generation.

A series of workshops run by Rhodes University's Chinese Studies second-year students will enable *Upstart* members to begin to examine their situations from a different perspective. The students will use their knowledge of traditional Chinese cultural values to address the challenges *Upstart* members face in their communities.

Stories from a different and ancient culture could become an impetus for *Upstart* members to become more self-reliant and to work harder to achieve their goals.

Second-year masters students in psychology will work with *Upstart* members for a semester as part of fulfilling the practical component of their degrees. During weekly sessions *Upstart* members will receive counselling and clubs will learn life skills.

One of the great achievements of *Upstart* is narrowing the differential opportunities that exist for those who live in the east and west of the city by harnessing the myriad resources available through the university, NGOs and communities.

Upstart members are now more comfortable meeting at the Rhodes library or the Albany Museum, which once was as far removed from their lives as Shanghai.

A great lesson of *Upstart* is that despite the wild and scary rhetoric that emanates from some who claim to speak for the youth, *Upstart* members still believe there can be a better future for all.

Upstart has encouraged its members to interact with the world with greater self-belief and confidence, and to think and dream beyond their realities. In a letter to *Upstart* Anesipho Sam, a grade 9 learner from Ntaba Maria School says, "Every time I read *Upstart* I feel inspired and motivated to do more in life... you've changed how people think and live their lives."



→ **CEJA** → **1 + 1**

The goal of the Centre for Economics Journalism in Africa (CEJA) is simple:

To bring about continuous improvement of the media coverage of economics, business and development in Africa.

The centre hopes to achieve this through:

- . research,
- . education and training, and
- . engagement with media, business, government and society.

The centre bases all its actions on the vision of an inclusive journalism that aims to support the sustainable economic development of the continent within the context of democratic principles.

Research into the financial news media underpins our teaching and engagement with a range of stakeholders.

The centre's teaching focuses mainly on working journalists, and running short courses for organisations is an important part of what we do.

Topping the list of our educational initiatives, however, is the creation of a Post-Graduate Diploma in Economics Journalism.

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The wisdom of the crowds

VALUABLE
JOURNALISM AND
THE SEARCH FOR
QUALITY FROM
A NEWS USER'S
PERSPECTIVE



Charles Roffey: charlesfred.blogspot.com



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Irene Costera Meijer

Quality is a central theme for both journalists and journalism scholars. That is understandable as quality is the hallmark for public programmes and, obviously, for quality journalism.

Within the university, the emphasis is on analysing the quality of texts, programmes and the conditions under which the news was produced. Audience research seems to be underappreciated, perhaps because professionals and academics tend to see the quality perspective as incompatible with the audience perspective – taking the audiences' needs into account would automatically result in a loss of quality.

Or, as Buijs wrote: "As soon as editors only deliver what the audience wants, a further discussion on quality would be superfluous" (2008: 38). Many reporters consider the increasing focus on the audience as one of the causes of the decline of quality journalism.

As BBC presenter Jeremy Paxman (2007) said: "Let's spend less time measuring audiences and more time enlightening them."

This article goes against this tide and shows why audience research is still of fundamental importance for the quality of both journalism academia and professional practice.

This is a plea to research the quality of journalism from the perspective of the user: the reader, listener and viewer of journalistic texts and programmes.

Two interrelated societal developments make it more urgent than ever to take the audience seriously. First of all,



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academics and professionals need to realise that the audience has changed.

The news user is more confident and is no longer satisfied with what is offered but puts further demands on journalism.

Secondly, other news media (news websites, Twitter, journalism blogs, etc.) provide people with more opportunities to consume news.

Fixed viewing, reading and listening habits are changing. People no longer buy a newspaper at a certain age or watch the daily eight o'clock news. Instead of news on fixed times and in tightly directed formats today's audience expects constant updates, a broader selection of topics and a greater variety in design.

One can take the users' perspective seriously, without it automatically leading to a further trivialisation of news.

In fact, if you listen to the audience it becomes clear that they request an extension of the democratic task of journalism.

The news user becomes more selective

For a long time journalists thought about the audience as a simple grey mass of people keen on thrills and superficial entertainment.

This view is found throughout a book about the future of quality journalism by Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008: 173) in which they advocate a "paternalistic relationship" to the audience: "Self-consciously apply the perspective that journalists, because of their knowledge and training, know what the most important developments in a society are."

A paternalistic view like this is problematic since it assumes that journalists are primarily "transmitters" of news and the audience a "receiver" of news.

This hierarchical communication model does little justice to the complex relationships that have arisen during the last decade between professionals and citizens (McQuail 2005).

Technological developments, including the improving accessibility of audiovisual equipment, have facilitated the "empowerment of the individual" (Boswijk et al 2005: 45). With the introduction of new communication technologies and the expansion, digitalisation and convergence of news

offerings, people can now decide for themselves what they want to watch, when they want to watch it and where (Uricchio 2004).

Illustrative is the reading habit of Dutch TV presenter Anita Witzier (47): "I sometimes read *NRC Next*, sometimes *de Volkskrant*. It varies. Sometimes I have a subscription. I also buy *Trouw*. I like variety".

The emancipated news user demands a more equal position in the journalistic process. As a result, the traditional top-down pattern in which public broadcasters try to edify their audience is broken.

The audience, not the channel, decides what they want to watch or listen to. So how can journalism attend to a more selective audience? There are two approaches to take:

Participation: make better use of the knowledge and expertise of the audience

The Dutch are increasingly better educated and information is increasingly more accessible (CBS 2009). Journalists are losing their monopoly on knowledge.

They might be aware of general social trends but individual citizens are always quicker and better informed than the journalist (Gillmor 2004). News users take pleasure in sharing their knowledge with journalists but journalists are often – under the guise of independence – reluctant.

Newsmakers hesitate to trust and rely on proficient citizens, especially in giving them the final say (Domingo et al 2008; Hermida and Thurman 2008; O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008; Ryfe 2009). Few realise that their reluctant attitude towards "expert citizens" can unintentionally lead to a loss of trust in the press.

It's not just the expert citizen that is not optimally used as a source – viewers, readers and listeners together, in a mass, often know more than one journalist (however well-informed that journalist is) (Leadbeater 2008).

This "wisdom of the crowds" is barely used as a news source (Patterson and Domingo 2008). A senior journalist from a news website explains: "Look, we used to be the experts. Of course, maybe if you add all the people together they might have been more knowledgeable – but people did not come together. Now with the Internet they do... and the network is more professional than the newsroom can ever be. Journalists can no longer afford to think that they know what is best and how the world works."

Twitter is currently one of the few communication tools that journalists use to scout the "wisdom of the crowds" by checking valuable information with followers.

The quality of journalism can be increased if media learn how to benefit more efficiently from the expertise of citizens (both as experts and a mass) by letting them participate in the journalistic process.

More research into the dynamics between professional journalistic autonomy and the use of expert citizens will show the consequences it can have for media houses and their routines.

Representation: to better represent the audience

A second reason for journalists to start taking their audience more seriously is that a portion of it is dissatisfied with the way they are represented or **not** represented in the news. According to Haagoort (chairman of the Dutch public broadcaster), young people, immigrants and the "socially disappointed" (like extreme right-wing voters) avoid the public broadcasting service (*Trouw* 16 October 2008).

Especially the socially disappointed complain that they get no or little representation from public service broadcasters and quality newspapers. Couldry et al (2007) suggest that the number of people who feel ignored by journalists is increasing.

Why should these people follow the news if it systematically ignores their issues and perspectives? Journalists defend themselves by claiming that they do regularly pay attention to right-wing PVV party leader Wilders. Do they need to give this man and his "despicable body of thought" an even bigger stage?

Recent research revealed that there is no apparent reason for PVV-voters to be disappointed in the news coverage of their party (Costera Meijer 2009a). A search query in the Dutch LexisNexis news database on newspaper coverage about "Wilders", "PVV" or "Wilders AND PVV" finds nearly 7 000 articles between 1 January 2009 and 1 August 2009.

Research into news coverage at Amsterdam regional TV station AT5 can however explain the continuing dissatisfaction with the right-wing voters (Costera Meijer, 2008, 2010). This research looked into the station's social significance for Amsterdam citizens and revealed that its audience has other demands on journalism than just a need for accurate information.



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Besides reports on major events from home and abroad the audience also requires that the media tells the “rest of the world” the essence of their own issues and perspectives. In short, they expect quality media to give an accurate representation of themselves.

People want to understand the world but also want to be understood by the world! The press currently addresses this desire insufficiently – therefore the search term “PVV voter” showed only 107 articles during that same period of time.

Even more remarkable is that only eight newspaper articles actually let a PVV voter speak (*Trouw*, *de Volkskrant*, *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, *Parool*).

This means that media let the voice of PVV party leader Wilders enter the Dutch living room while the mood inside the living room is only sporadically covered in the news.

An extension of the democratic mandate of journalism

On the one hand citizens have knowledge and expertise that news organisations should make use of. On the other hand citizens ask for a more accurate representation of themselves.

Both the demand for more participation and better representation point out a public need to expand the democratic mandate of journalism.

These changes in the relationship between news and the news user support a claim for a different organisation and understanding of news.

Firstly, and everyone agrees to this, journalism needs to provide accurate information – this is a prerequisite for a proper functioning democracy (Dahlgren 1995).

Additionally, the audience does not want to be neglected in the journalistic process.

The latter requires a certain democratisation of media houses.

How can they make it as easy as possible for users to create new or additional information to assist media houses (Drok 2007; Nip 2006)?

The asymmetric distribution of attention for politicians like PVV party leader Wilders and the issues his supporters raise illustrate the importance of correct and proportional representation as a third democratic dimension.

In order to better reflect the concerns and experiences of ordinary people the democratic duty of quality journalism requires an extension.

New journalistic genres and different news values

To live up to the fact that quality journalism gets its audience involved in a democratic society, the news needs to actually be read, heard or viewed by as many people as possible.

However, the viewing, listening and readership figures of all news media (except the Internet) are going down (Dutch Commission for the Media, 2008).

A third explanation, besides a lack of representation and a lack of participatory opportunities, is that the definition of journalistic quality and the news experience are no longer synchronised; meaning that quality journalism does no longer stand for a high quality experience (Costera Meijer 2006; Schroeder and Phillips 2005).

In addition, Blanken and Deuze (2007) argue that the current values within the journalistic quality paradigm are not on par with the emergence of new journalism practices.

Put together the two additional democratic repertoires that the audience demands of quality journalism and it might also point towards new quality formulas and values.

How can media take a more selective news taste into consideration?

Facilitating participation with a different tone and new formulas

News users might differ from each other by age, schooling or cultural background but if they all had to describe quality media they use the same words as its creators: informative, thorough, reliable, factual, in-depth, fair, complete, clear, objective and authoritative (Costera Meijer 2009b).



But there are other qualities that determine if people will actually read the newspaper or watch a specific TV programme like: excitement, recognition and representation, the use of different perspectives, adventure (there has to be something to experience) and a story told from an insider’s viewpoint (Costera Meijer 2009b).

Young people expect journalists to stay on top of the news and to jump in the middle of it for a “participatory” news experience (bodysnatching) (Lewis et al 2005).

However, Heider et al (2005) conclude that only 35% of respondents find speed very important, compared to almost two thirds (59%) of journalists. Women, migrants and the less-educated have a preference for “slow” news with more emphasis on everyday life and less for incidents.

Glasser (2000: 28) emphasises a third aspect of “news participation”: “Without narrative news loses its *expressive* power; and without the power of expression news fails to engage readers as participants in the process of understanding.”

Johnson (2005) suggests that a more participatory-focused journalism can perhaps learn from interactive and speculative formulas of popular programmes such as *Idols*.

Getting a better representation from a wider news selection and news content

News users however emphasise that a more open or participatory style of journalism must not take precedence over trustworthiness (Heider et al 2005).

According to Luyendijk (2006), a critical and impartial news gathering style is an excellent combination with a more empathetic and curious attitude of the journalist.

However, Ryfe (2009) is sceptical about the willingness of news media to change their news selection and news presentation to become more representative and thus “democratic”.

As long as journalists attach news value to certain news moments like press conferences or to news frames like the conflict model, he finds it unlikely that they will take the knowledge and everyday issues of people seriously.

That would require a profound change in the culture of news.

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