

Best Practices in Teaching

Diversity



Sponsored by
The Teaching
Committee
of the Association for Education
in Journalism and Mass Communication

Wednesday, August 5, 2009
11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

AEJMC Annual Convention
The Sheraton Boston Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

Best Practices in Teaching Diversity

Teaching Panel Session: Best Practices in the Teaching of Diversity Competition

Moderating/Presiding: Debashis 'Deb' Aikat, North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Panelists:

First Place: Joel Beeson, West Virginia • Civic Engagement, New Media and Journalism: A Template for the Organic Incorporation of Diversity into a New Journalism Curriculum

Second Place: Lisa E. Baker Webster, Radford • Professor for a Day

Third Place: Kimberley Mangun, Utah • Voices of Utah

Honorable Mention I: Carol Liebler and Hinda Mandell, Syracuse • In-Depth, on the Streets: The Impact of Interviewing in Teaching Media and Diversity

Honorable Mention II: Christopher Harper and Linn Washington, Temple • Multimedia Urban Reporting Lab (MURL)

Honorable Mention III: Sue Ellen Christian, Western Michigan • Exploring Our Personal Biases as Journalists: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Discussants:

Ken Campbell, South Carolina (respondent to winning entries)

Debashis 'Deb' Aikat, North Carolina at Chapel Hill (discussant for teaching of diversity ideas)

Elected Members of the AEJMC Teaching Committee (2008-09):

Diana Rios (chair), University of Connecticut • **Deb Aikat** (vice-chair), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill • **Marianne Barrett**, Arizona State University • **Sheri Broyles**, University of North Texas • **Kenneth Campbell**, University of South Carolina • **Jennifer Greer**, University of Alabama • **Paul Parsons**, Elon University • **Federico Subervi**, Texas State University • **Birgit Wassmuth**, Kennesaw State University

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234 Outlet Point Boulevard, Suite A, Columbia, SC 29210 • 802-798-0271
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Layout and production: Kysh Brown, AEJMC

Foreword

Diversity is vital to journalism and communication. The AEJMC Elected Committee on Teaching Best Practices in the Teaching of Diversity competition theme has relevance across the repertoire of our field. Diversity may relate to:

- Multiculturalism, racial, gender, sexual, cultural, and ethnic heterogeneity and other related issues in media, communication and other fields.
- Perspectives, theories and concepts that address differences in race, class, history, society, ability, gender and sexual orientation, age, religion, language and socio-economic status.
- Complexity of people, perspectives and beliefs in communities or global societies.
- Representation of ideas, people and perspectives from historically excluded and underrepresented groups defined by demographic characteristics
- Other diversity issues.

The winning entries for this year's Best Practices in the Teaching of Diversity Competition feature a wealth of ideas. They covered strategies, skills, methods, concepts and theories relating to fostering diversity in journalism and mass communication.

The AEJMC Teaching Committee blind judged 30 excellent entries. Six were selected for presentation at the 2009 AEJMC convention August 5-8, 2009 in Boston, Massachusetts.

I take this opportunity to thank the competition judges, Marianne Barrett (Arizona State), Kenneth Campbell (South Carolina), Jennifer Greer (Alabama), Paul Parsons (Elon), Diana Rios (Connecticut), Federico Subervi (Texas State) and Birgit Wassmuth (Kennesaw State) for their time and energy.

I am grateful to Jennifer H. McGill, AEJMC, for pivotal contributions to the Best Practices Competition. Thanks to Kysh Brown, AEJMC, and Felicia Greenlee Brown, AEJMC, for design and production help, Mich Sineath, AEJMC, for competition publicity and Rich Burke, AEJMC, for accounting support.

The AEJMC Teaching Committee has sponsored the Best Practices Competition for the fourth successive year. The competition topics were the First Amendment in 2006, media ethics in 2007 and information gathering in 2008.

I hope you decide to enter the AEJMC Best Practices in Teaching Competition next year.



Deb Aikat, North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Vice-Chair, AEJMC Teaching Committee

Civic Engagement, New Media and Journalism: A Template for the Organic Incorporation of Diversity into a New Journalism Curriculum

Joel Beeson, West Virginia

Abstract: One of the stated ambitions of our faculty and school is to encourage diversity in every aspect of its work. In order to engage this vision with daily practice and integrate its ideals into the fabric of the School's culture, we utilize civic-engagement projects to foster diversity in meaningful ways. These projects become reflective laboratories that not only inform our research but also help develop curriculum in lower-level introductory courses that prepare students for the rigors of real world reporting in the community. And with the trajectory of new media, emerging teaching practices must address more collaborative models of civic journalism and diversity.

The Learning Curve

In my photojournalism and multimedia reporting classes, diversity is a crucial part of the curriculum and instruction. But this doesn't mean every assignment confronts issues of race. As a journalism instructor, I have to address diversity with a broader brush. College-age students are just emerging from a youthful preoccupation with being at the center of the universe. For many, college may be the first time they are exposed to groups and individuals who are different in substantial ways. One of my jobs is to teach them that "the other" is a social and cultural construct that takes many forms, and that as journalists-to-be, it is their job to recognize and develop an appreciation for these differences.

My first assignment in the Introduction to Photojournalism class is an exercise in interviewing "the other." This assignment intends to convey the weight of responsibility journalists have for representing others to the world. It's a simple exercise, but it can have astonishing results. Students are asked to partner with, then interview and photograph a classmate. Afterward, students introduce their subjects to the rest of the class. Students quickly discover that the manner in which they are portrayed by an unseasoned journalist may be superficial at best, and at worse, stereotypical. They discover that in the role of documentarian, they are drawn to characteristics and details about their subject that are often the most familiar. Details that are unexpected or different are more difficult to portray. On the flipside, as the interviewee, they can experience for themselves the misconceptions that can arise when someone else speaks for them.

This is the first step in preparing students to enter the intimate lives of strangers.

Students are reluctant to approach people they don't know, and when they do, they tend to select someone like him or herself. We discuss the anxieties they feel when they're asked to approach someone outside of their comfort zone. And I give them real-world opportunities to explore this process in civic engagement journalism projects.

Service learning and civic engagements courses are central to our curriculum. We recognize that these opportunities nudge students beyond the security of sameness and immerse them in meaningful, real-world projects that foster diversity. Many of the techniques I have incorporated into my courses are interdisciplinary and enhance a journalist's toolbox for reporting and crafting meaningful stories. These include methods and skills borrowed from anthropology, sociology and other qualitative fieldwork traditions that are notable for questioning the relationship between observer and observed.

The Veterans History Project

A case in point is the school's Veterans History Project, in which young journalists learned the basics of conducting a historical interview and collected the oral narratives of hundreds of war veterans for the Library of Congress. The character of diversity in this project was primarily generational, but also of values, class, race and gender. Oral historians often regard the narrative as a performance between "informant and interviewer" that involves memory, as well as individual and collective identities. This pushes the boundaries of awareness for students and asks them to recognize the social and cultural nuance that emerges in storytelling and to learn how those shape meaning.

For example, in the oral history project, we found that some male WWII veterans avoided confiding details about violent events or sexual activities they experienced during wartime with a female interviewer. As one veteran put it "I was taught never to talk about those kind of things in front of a female." In this case, sensitivity to diversity means recognizing the roles age and gender gaps play in the process of interviewing. These are valuable lessons that give young journalists insights into the complex process of how to gather accurate information and appropriately validate observations and interview data. Students ultimately discover the burden is theirs as journalists to 'get it right.'

TakingpART: Artists with Disabilities

In the fall of 2007, teams of student multimedia reporters were paired with artists with disabilities to begin an interactive journey of boundary-shaking storytelling. Though the young journalists were armed with emergent media skills, they had a remarkable new model of innovation to consider: Artists with disabilities use evolving strategies, creativity and ingenuity to overcome daunting physical, emotional, financial, political, and cultural barriers to simply "do" their art. Immersed in this community of improvisation, the journalists quickly acquired new skills and tools for creating alternative forms of storytelling. As students adapted their multimedia tools to accommodate unique expression, they entered a complex, interactive dance of identity and narrative

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structure from which new practices emerged. In turn, the artists began to exploit multi-media storytelling and practice as extended tools for expression. The artists found, at the intersection of journalist and subject, a fertile ground for establishing identity in ways that had previously been elusive.

Participatory journalism creates a dynamic, egalitarian landscape and can refine existing value systems where each member of the interaction learns from the other. What we don't know is how far we can take the new-media conversations between journalist and participant to create new practices for journalists, artists and others. New media has created a space for new models of diversity education. In this project I hope to map the emergent practices, adaptations, and media/technology innovations that occur in this civic engagement project. In this program, individuals with disabilities are fully participating in the arts rather than passively observing them. Additionally, students and artists together are using innovative and interactive media techniques to build a virtual community for a group that faces restrictions within their physical and geographic communities. Our project demonstrates how multimedia stories using video, graphics, photography, audio, and multiple points of entry can integrate new models of accessibility in online journalism.

In spring 2008 our students and the artists created a website/community, "TakingArt: The Artists with Disabilities Collaborative Project, involving nearly 30 artists involved in the Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED) Fine Arts program and the multimedia reporting class. Students worked with artists to develop multimedia profiles, artist's gallery pages, blogs and other civic journalism features to the community.

Rationale

These experiences of the Veteran's History Project (VHP) and "TakingArt" are useful as a templates for integrating diversity into the curriculum of most or all of the skills-based and civic-engagement learning courses that form the foundation of the School of Journalism's innovative curriculum. Our experience with these models suggests the following diversity components be included organically in the design of curriculum:

1. Conscious, persistent effort to include outreach and recruitment of a diverse population as sources of stories and collaborative participants in student work.
2. Designing the recruitment of diverse populations into the requirements of student assignments, not just expressed as an ideal.
3. Allowance for the additional time and energy it takes for students to find, gain entrée and recruit sources outside their own cultural and social groups. This means structuring grading rubrics to promote this process, as well as in the rewards of the finished product.
4. Inclusion of diverse voices in the published works shown to students as exemplary pieces of journalism.
5. Inclusion of short, directed readings and writing exercises designed to allow

- students to reflect critically on their practices of diversity.
6. Increasing use of new media to explore innovative narrative structures that can facilitate contextual reporting and allow storytelling complexity that is often needed to overcome cultural, social, economic and racial stereotypes.
 7. Partnering with organizations that provide publishing opportunities, funding, important state and national service, access to diverse populations and other interdisciplinary benefits.
 8. Mirroring trends in new media, teach students not only new media technology, but skills in collaborative content development by engaging with diverse communities of civic journalists or civic journalists-to-be.

Our school's experience with civic-engagement curriculum suggests that the preceding steps can be useful as a template to integrate diversity into the ongoing, daily curriculum of the School, as opposed only addressing diversity in specialized, elective courses on women or minorities in the media.

Outcomes

In our experience, civic-engagement projects like the VHP and TakingpArt have been highly successful in immersing students in situations that force them to understand diversity in complex and nuanced ways that class discussions and watching films do not. (I have included a short film of student interviews about their experience in TakingpArt). The scope of these projects also engages the culture of the School in this process, as not only are student-reporters involved, but also faculty and students from public relations, broadcast news and other sequences. It provides professional project and thesis opportunities for graduate students (who become coordinators, editors and leaders of undergraduate reporters) and promotes prospects for service to the University, the State and nationally.

About the Author:

Professor Joel Beeson is chair of visual journalism and new media at the Perley Isaac Reed School of Journalism at West Virginia University. He has fifteen years experience as multimedia journalist, photographer and photo editor, including contract photographer for the Los Angeles Times. Beeson earned an MA from the Missouri School of Journalism and took doctoral studies at UCSD. His work includes a ten-year study of rural blues in Alabama, and oral histories of WWII African American veterans, for which he produced an award-winning PBS documentary, "Fighting on Two Fronts." The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation honored him in 2008 for his work on this project.

Contact Information

Professor Joel Beeson, Associate Professor, Visual Journalism and New Media, P. I. Reed School of Journalism, West Virginia University, 1511 University Ave., Morgantown, WV 26506-6010, 304-293-3505 x 5422, joel.beeson@mail.wvu.edu

Second Place

“Professor for a Day”

Lisa E. Baker Webster, Radford University

Abstract: *“Professor for a Day”* allows students to focus specifically on an area of diversity in communication they are interested in pursuing. Students are asked to construct their own college level diversity class. They must create a syllabus, research scholarly writings and textbooks on the topic, develop homework assignments and projects, and determine learning objectives they hope their students will grasp. Students are asked to turn in a written portfolio containing a sample of the materials needed for the class as well as “teaching” the class a short 20 minute segment of their course.

Explanation of Activity

This activity is the final project students complete in *Comm 457: Diversity in Communication*. During the course of the semester, students are introduced to a wide variety of theories and concepts relating to diversity in the workplace and conduct several self analysis activities examining their own stereotypes and prejudices they have or may encounter in the future. Topics covered in this interactive class include multiculturalism, gender, age, disabilities, religion, and sexual orientation. With each area discussed, a homework assignment and an in class activity is also completed. This class exposes students to concepts they have rarely encountered or thought of before. Because of the wide range of topics to be covered, it is difficult to fully explore each sub category with complete satisfaction. As students are introduced to these areas, they begin to develop their own interests related to the subject matter.

Students are encouraged to pick a diversity topic they are interested in and pretend they are designing a special topics college course relating to that subject matter. They are the “Professor” and can construct the class in any manner they would like. Students create a syllabus for the class and conduct research concerning textbooks, journal articles, major topics, movies, and class projects. This material is compiled into a portfolio.

Students are then asked to prepare a 20 minute presentation relating to the diversity course they have created. As “Professor”, they are asked to engage the class in one of the class activities they have developed. This activity should be well organized, easy to follow, have a point, and relate to the area of diversity they have researched. Students are encouraged to be as creative as possible, yet still remain focused on the learning objectives of the exercise.

Rationale

When creating this project, I wanted students to do something more creative than just a research paper and to make the connection between what they are learning and how

it relates to the world in which we live. Throughout the semester, the class is structured so that as they are learning about a specific area of diversity, they are also seeing the practical applications of diversity in everyday life. For example, students are required to participate in 5 cultural activities during the semester, this can include anything from eating at an ethnic restaurant (Olive Garden does not count, but the Ethiopian restaurant in the next town does), attending a religious ceremony different from their own, or participating in a cultural event on campus. They also complete a service learning project and investigate study abroad opportunities offered by the school. This final project allows them to reflect on all of the different activities done over the course of the semester, evaluate what they would or would not do if they were in charge. Furthermore, it requires them to not only read more of the scholarly text regarding the specific area they may select, but also apply that knowledge and understanding to everyday experiences.

When students have to think outside of the box and deconstruct the material to teach it to others who may have no prior knowledge of the subject, they tend to understand and retain the material better. Course proposals in the past have included such areas as *Diversity and Stereotyping in Animation*, *Diversity Communication in Families*, and *Diversity and Stereotyping in Pop Culture*. My goal is that I have given them the foundation to view the world in a different way. To what level they explore and apply this information to their lives is their decision. By giving them the freedom to discover more about diversity issues in a less structured yet equally demanding final project, students feel less pressure to memorize the material, but enjoy the experience of learning and the responsibility of “being in charge” of teaching others. By providing ownership in the teaching process, the students gain valuable insight into the subject matter that is beyond the typical classroom experience.

Outcomes

This project allows students to conduct research on an area of diversity they find most appealing. Instead of the typical research paper, students explore a variety of different sources that help them not only to better learn and understand the material themselves, but also how they would teach the topic to their own class. By providing an example of a syllabus, at least three in class activities, at least three homework assignments, one major, detailed project and a reading list/movie list for their class, students not only learn more about the subject, but also about the time and energy it takes to prepare to teach a topic if they are ever working in training and development.

During the presentation, students are asked to “teach” one of the class activities they developed. They are demonstrating a “sample” of their teaching ability; how well they plan, coordinate, manage, and engage the class. This also encourages student to work within a specific time limit and be organized. At the conclusion, students must then answer questions about concepts, theories, and scholars in that particular area of study.

There are two primary outcomes I have seen from this project and they both build

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upon each other. First, it is wonderful to watch students explore an area of diversity they find most interesting. For example, many students growl when we begin talking about feminism and equality in the workplace. However, this is often one of the most popular subjects' students enjoying learning more about when they begin working on this project. Students are quick to decide what they want to research further and are excited about the material they find. What is impressive is how they apply what they have learned. Students create group activities, show television and video clips, and even have "scavenger hunts" around campus to help "teach" their topic to the class. They build that connection between the theoretical and the applied and make it not only applicable, but FUN. Second, students enjoy learning from their peers and participating in the activities been "taught" to them. Class sometimes becomes loud, very loud, with students talking, laughing, sharing, and most importantly, engaging in the material presented. However, these are the events they will remember. With a generation that strives on constant interaction and has a short attention span, activities that are more hands on or includes popular culture helps them to further understand the importance and necessity of incorporating diversity in our everyday lives.

COMM 457 Final Project "Professor for a Day..."

CONGRATULATIONS! Because of your incredible grasp on the topic of diversity and communication, you have been selected to teach a *Diversity in Communication: Special Topics* class for this University during the spring 2010 semester. It is your choice as to the days and time the class will be taught. You can also be as specific or general as you would like. For example, this class is a broad, general introduction to the field of diversity communication or you could specialize, such as an entire class on the topic of *Diversity in Sports, Diversity in Education, Disney and Diversity*, etc. Think back to the topics we have covered in class. What was interesting to you? What would you have liked to have spent more time on?

There are TWO parts to this project. Detailed information is listed below.

THE WRITTEN

For this assignment, you will construct a detailed teaching syllabus and portfolio on a particular topic or theme relating to Diversity and Communication (or an overall general class) and should incorporate specific areas we have covered in class. Such a syllabus should include (but not limited too):

- Course Description
- Format (lecture, class discussion, etc)
- Reading Assignments
- Major Topics
- Classroom Discussion Points
- Audio-Visual support

- Bibliography
- Evaluation Instruments (ex. Tests, Term Papers, Group Projects,)

In addition, I would like for you to include examples of in-class activities, written assignments, homework assignments, groups projects, movies you will watch, etc. that will be distributed over the course of the semester. Do I want EVERY thing you are going to do? No! But I would like a sample. The more detailed, the better.

At *minimum*, your portfolio should contain:

- A syllabus
- At least **three** in class activities
- At least **three** homework assignments
- One major, detailed project
- A reading list/movie list for your “class”

HINT: *You do not have to “reinvent the wheel”. Go on line and look for activities/papers/projects that others have created. Be sure to give credit where credit is due, but it is perfectly acceptable to get an idea from someone else and use it or make some slight changes to it. You may even use ideas from assignments you have been given in the past, the way other classes have been structured, or events we have attended. For example, maybe you will have your students do the public relations for the Volunteer Fair as an assignment.*

If you have kept up with your readings, then a majority of your research is done. You should have an idea of what area of Diversity and Communication that appeals to you and what you would hope to teach others. Go back to the chapters and selected readings and look at bibliographies—this can help you construct a reading list for your class. Yes, you will have to do research and (gasp!) go to the library. Your bibliography should contain a multitude of sources. Think of movies you have watched that would relate to a particular class. Heck, you could even have a class entirely based on movie and television. The choice is yours. You will be expected to know major scholars and theories in the area you select. Learning can be FUN, but make sure you do not forget the importance of the educational material.

What do I want on the due date? I would like your assignment to be handed to me in a folder or binder—first impressions are important! Grammar, misspelled words, organization of material, and consistency will also be graded. Depth, grasp of the material, and creativity will also be important components. Being able to design a course will help you in the future in understanding key elements and contributors to a particular area of study. It will also assist your knowledge of diversity training if you ever host a workshop or coordinate an event dealing with some area of diversity.

This brings me to the second half of your assignment...

THE PRESENTATION

Each person will present their “course” to the class and *briefly* describe the essence of

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the course. Please do NOT read the entire syllabus. You will not have time. Just give us an idea about your area of study.

As “Professor”, you will also be asked to engage the class in ONE of the class activities you have developed. This activity should be well organized, easy to follow, have a point, and relate to your course/diversity. Basically, you will be showing us a “sample” of your teaching ability—how well you plan, coordinate, manage, and engage the class. Pretend we are your students. We know nothing. How are you going to teach us the point you are attempting to make?

Presentations should be between 15 and 20 minutes. At 20 minutes, you will get the TIME IS UP signal. It is important to learn to work within time limits and be prepared. If you have us doing something outside of the classroom, make sure you factor in the time it takes to have the entire class walk somewhere else. Practice your presentation with a family member, friend, coworker, dog or cat, to make sure you are able to properly execute the in class activity and still be able to TEACH something to the class. HAVE A PURPOSE!! You will be graded on such elements as presentation skills, organization, use of time, ability to explain and execute the activity, relation to course you are proposing, class participation, creativity, etc.

Be ready to go with the technology. If you need to log on to the computer, upload videos, etc., BE READY. If you are distributing materials to the class, preparing for a game, etc., be organized and ready to set up the activity.

GOOD LUCK!!!!

About the Author:

Dr. Baker Webster is an assistant professor of Communication at Radford University. She teaches primarily in the Public Relations sequence, but also enjoys the area of Interpersonal Communication. Her research interests include integrated marketing communication, communication pedagogy, and gender studies. Dr. Baker Webster is originally from Clintwood, Virginia and a graduate of UVA-Wise. She earned her master's degree from The University of Alabama and her doctorate from Bowling Green State University. She has taught at Huntingdon College, Auburn University-Montgomery, and Bowling Green State University. She has also worked in higher education administration at UVA-Wise, University of Alabama, and Huntingdon College.

Contact Information

Dr. Lisa E. Baker Webster, Radford University, School of Communication, Box 6932, Radford, Virginia 24142, Lbaker38@radford.edu

Third Place

Voices of Utah: Multimedia Online Reporting of Diverse Beats

Kimberley Mangun, Utah

Abstract: Voices of Utah is a service-learning project that gives intermediate reporting students an opportunity to cover a diverse beat, practice multimedia storytelling, and develop a professional portfolio. Students spend a semester reporting on a designated underrepresented population; they develop sources, learn about the history of the community, meet opinion leaders and community members, become familiar with other style guidelines, and work in a newsroom environment that emphasizes collaboration. Also, they take digital photographs and record audio, then create Soundslides presentations to publish with their stories on a dedicated Web site, VoicesOfUtah.wordpress.com, that is becoming a community resource for underrepresented groups.

Explanation

Demographics in my city and state are changing. In some cases, the changes mirror those in other locations. In other cases, though, Salt Lake City is experiencing unique internal and external challenges due to politics, religion, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Yet I discovered when I joined my department in 2006 that our curriculum was not adequately pre-paring students to cover the changing population here and across the U.S. My students claimed to be “color blind,” a stance that continues to marginalize groups by ignoring issues, history, white privilege, tensions among and between groups, and more. The “thou shall cover diversity” approach favored by many journalism texts was ineffective. And, this method further marginalizes underrepresented populations by decontextualizing issues and enabling journalists to do superficial reporting of the communities they presume to serve. Further, the intermediate reporting curriculum I “inherited” at my institution turned out to be nothing more than a rehash of the beginning reporting course. Students were not learning the skills—sourcing, multimedia, teamwork—they need to secure an internship or entry-level position in a shrinking media market.

In May 2007, I attended the workshop, Teaching Diversity Across the Curriculum, at the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida. I spent the rest of the summer working on a new concept for our intermediate reporting course that incorporated some of the skills and strategies I learned at Poynter. The redesign was guided by three goals: I wanted to incorporate diversity into the course in a sustained and meaningful way; I wanted to initiate beat reporting; and I wanted to incorporate multimedia storytelling into the course. I created a new syllabus, selected new readings and a new text (Carl Sessions Stepp), and established contact with publishers of alternative publications, leaders of advocacy organizations, directors of nonprofits,

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and other key individuals in Salt Lake City.

The new offering was launched in fall 2007. That semester, my class covered the LGBTQ community—a risky selection given demographics in my city. Since then, students have covered the following beats: American Indian; immigrant/ refugee; and Hispanic/Latino(a). I've also supervised a graduate student who selected legal aid for his class' beat. Different articles are carefully chosen each semester to give students background knowledge about the beat and groups such as Unity, GLAAD, or NAJA, and introduce them to award-winning stories about the beat and/or by reporters who are members of the designated community. Two community leaders are invited to visit the class early in the semester. This gives students an opportunity to practice interviewing in a safe environment and also learn about some of the issues facing the designated community and its history in the area. Students expand on these stories by contacting additional sources. Through this initial networking, the class begins to formulate ideas for their third and fourth enterprise stories. Finally, they think about how to use multi-media storytelling techniques to give people a voice and augment their stories, which are published on the Web site I created in fall 2008.

That semester, when the beat was immigrants and refugees, students interviewed in week 4 the resettlement director for the local office of The International Rescue Committee. The draft of their story was due one week later for peer critiques. Their final, two-source story was due the following week. During week 7, they interviewed the director of our local Refugee Services Office. Again, they did in-class peer critiques before turning in their final story. During week 9, they pitched four potential story ideas to their peers and me. Students offered feedback and source information, helped eliminate potentially stereotypical or biased reporting, and helped the presenter narrow the four ideas to two solid topics for their enterprise stories. One story was 850 words; the other was 1,200. Both had to include at least three human sources and feature multimedia items. Drafts were due at specific intervals for peer critiques. Class time was allotted for training on Audacity and Soundslides Plus. Students had additional opportunities to work on their multimedia presentations in class. Training also was given on publishing stories and multi-media items on the Web site. Students were required, too, to publish their photo, a brief bio, and a reflective blog that addressed specific questions about their experiences covering a diverse beat, including: What did you learn from this beat? How did your reporting increase your understanding of this community? What epiphanies have you had about your career? How has this beat resonated with your political awareness or religious beliefs? How has it helped your professional development? How has it connected strands of civic and media responsibility? At the end of the semester, they invite all of their sources, family and friends, and faculty to attend a "launch party." Students discuss their work and what they have learned and share their multimedia storytelling with attendees.

In addition to their textbook, *Writing as Craft and Magic*, and readings from the Poynter Institute and numerous other sources, students working on the immi-

grant/refugee beat were required to critically read four articles related to their beat: the 2006 Pulitzer Prize-winning story for public service, “A People of the Sea”; *The New York Times* story, “Leaving Home Behind to Escape a Nightmare”; *The Washington Post* story, “Portrait of an Immigrant as a Struggling Artist”; and the 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning story for feature writing, “A Muslim Leader in Brooklyn, Reconciling 2 Worlds.” Students evaluated the stories using criteria for excellence in journalism that we had identified early in the term. These criteria (excellent writing and reporting, lack of bias or stereotypes, sufficient context, background, and history, etc.) served as checklists for their own reporting and were used to evaluate and grade their stories.

Rationale

Students hoping to find a job in today’s media market must stand out from their peers. Thus, the emphasis on multimedia reporting is crucial. Even more important, though, their experience with beat reporting and covering diverse populations will help them become better, more socially responsible citizens and reporters, so critical at a time when the media are retooling business models and focusing more on community coverage in an increasingly complex, diverse society.

Outcomes

Students have developed their critical-thinking skills and become more aware of their community and profession. Personal and professional growth has been observed by reading students’ blogs. One white female student, for example, wrote about the LGBT beat: “When I first signed up for the class and received an e-mail from the professor about the semester-long focus, I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to objectively report because of my strong conservative views. After talking with [the professor] I decided that I could do it and it would be a good experience because there might be future events that I might be assigned to cover that I might not agree with personally. This class has sparked my interest in areas I hadn’t given much consideration to before and has been the catalyst for my gaining an internship at [a local LGBT newspaper] as a copy editor.” A Vietnamese student who covered the Latino(a) beat noted that it had forced her to step out of her “comfort zone.” Further, she wrote: “I truly believe that knowledge is power and I think if people are educated then they will become more understanding. I want to help people understand that the diversity in people is what makes our country unique. I think that everyone ... has a story and I want to be the one who has the privilege of sharing it.” A white male who covered the refugee beat wrote: “I was not prepared for the challenge that covering the refugee and immigrant community would pose to my impartiality. ... Reaching a level of sympathy with the refugee population was easy. Instead, my problem was that I was becoming an advocate through my reporting.”

To date, the Web site has had more than 4,000 hits since it went live in fall 2008. In addition, students leave the class with a solid portfolio that contains meaningful stories—not the usual student fare about parking increases—that can be used when applying for internships and jobs.

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About the Author:

Dr. Kimberley Mangun is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Utah. She teaches intermediate reporting and classes on diversity, communication history, and alternative media. Before pursuing her graduate degree at the University of Oregon, Dr. Mangun had a twenty-year career as a managing editor for alternative media in San Diego; Santa Cruz, California; and Eugene, Oregon. She also published an outdoor recreation magazine and has done public relations and newsletters for large companies and considerable freelance writing for newspapers and magazines. Dr. Mangun is a journalism historian who studies the African American press, portrayals of race and ethnicity in the press, and women in journalism. Her book about the career of Beatrice Morrow Cannady, an editor and publisher who advocated for civil rights in Portland, Oregon, from 1912 until 1936, is under contract at Oregon State University Press.

Contact Information

Dr. Kimberley Mangun, Department of Communication, University of Utah, 255 S. Central Campus Dr., LNCO Room 2400, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, 801-585-9935, kim.mangun@utah.edu

Honorable Mention I

In-depth, on the Streets: The Impact of Interviewing in Teaching Media and Diversity

Carol M. Liebler and Hinda Mandell, Syracuse

Abstract: An in-depth interviewing research project allows students to explore a range of diversity issues while hearing first-hand from research participants. Encouraged to go beyond the student population, students often interview members of the local community or the school's alumni to produce a conference quality paper and research presentation. The real objective, however, is for students to experience some aspect of diversity at a deeper level, outside the classroom. Recently, one group of students took the assignment down an avenue that clearly met this ideal, by staging a symposium that highlighted the accomplishments of their research participants and brought together a diverse audience from the city and university.

Explanation

As part of the requirements for a graduate media and diversity course, professional and scholarly students engage in primary research using in-depth interviewing as the method of investigation. More specifically, working in research teams, students design a study related to media audiences or practitioners and any aspect of diversity. Their research may address such issues as media representation, media impact, or media access. Students are actively encouraged to be creative and to go beyond their own comfort zones and the student population, by drawing upon local resources and the school's alumni. Primary data must be collected via a series of in-depth interviews (either phone or in-person, not email), transcribed and analyzed according to proper qualitative data analysis techniques. Each master's student is responsible for conducting a minimum of seven in-depth interviews (approximately 45 minutes long each), and Ph.D. students must conduct a minimum of 10 interviews. The method of in-depth interviewing is taught for one three-hour session, and then woven throughout subsequent class meetings as students share their experiences, challenges and triumphs. Recent examples of research participants have included tween girls, African-American broadcasters, first-generation Indian immigrants, butch lesbians, and inter-racial couples.

The final product has two components: An in-class presentation or poster session that is often opened to the entire academic unit, and a research paper that is of a quality suitable for submission to an academic conference. One group of students in Fall 2008 studied local rappers and became so invested in their project that they took the assignment in yet another direction, as discussed in **Outcomes** below.

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Rationale

One of the challenges in teaching diversity is getting to the students' hearts, as well as their minds — it is only through their hearts that the material will truly resonate. Readings, lecture, and classroom discussions can all be useful tools in this endeavor, but getting students out of the classroom allows the material to become experiential and less of an academic exercise. The paper and presentation referenced above may be the final product, but the real hope for this assignment is that students listen and learn from the experiences of their research participants, and that they not only become more confident in approaching and discussing diversity-related issues, but gather insight into worlds they may not live themselves. Moreover, when students bring their experiences back into the classroom, all members of the class benefit.

Outcomes

One clear outcome of this assignment is that students not only learn in-depth interviewing methodology, but they often have the experience of conducting their interviews across traditional lines of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, (dis)ability and age. This empowers the students to feel more comfortable in discussing diversity issues, and they are often excited at the reactions they get from their research participants.

In addition, this assignment has resulted in several student conference papers over the past few years (e.g. AEJMC 2008: Schweisberger & Wolf, "The queer frontier: Dual perspectives on prime time portrayals of contemporary gay representations." AEJMC mid-winter 2008: Davis & Faillace, "The black and white of Grey's Anatomy: Perceptions of race and interracial relationships." AEJMC 2006 Bhagdev & Schackman, "Digital Desis: New media and the transnational identity of Asian Indians in the U.S.").

In Fall 2008, one group of students took the assignment to a new level. After this group of four students interviewed 31 local hip-hop artists, they produced a 6,000-word paper that explored how local rappers positioned themselves in relation to their city and the broader hip-hop world.

This student group, however, felt that after a semester of learning from the rappers, a term paper was not sufficient to honor the artists they had come to know. Noting the students' interests to take their research beyond the classroom, the professor introduced the students to the notion of praxis, and to the university's commitment to "scholarship in action." Under the professor's supervision, the students then organized and hosted a symposium that showcased the musical skills and life lessons of the local hip-hop artists, most of who come from working class or underprivileged backgrounds, and who have had little local visibility. The result was "House of Rap" held at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications on Dec. 5, 2008, which featured seven performers, a roundtable discussion, audience Q&A's and live performances. The highlight of the event was an impromptu rap battle between rapper Seth Marcel and a student from the audience.

The symposium drew nearly 200 people from the university and community, as well as favorable press in the local newspaper, the *Syracuse Post-Standard*. It was touted as a “Best Bet” in pre-event coverage (http://blog.syracuse.com/entertainment/2008/12/best_bet_friday_dec_5_house_of.html), and after the event the newspaper’s videographer posted a montage (http://videos.syracuse.com/post-standard/2008/12/house_of_rap.html). Additionally, the newspaper’s music critic, who reviewed the event, said it initiated a dialogue among an audience he noted for its diversity. “It was quite a show,” he wrote. “The rappers answered questions from the heart and rapped from their soul” (http://blog.syracuse.com/listenup/2008/12/su_presents_house_of_rap_with.html).

The above outcome is illustrative of the instructor’s goal of getting students to deeply engage the material, for issues of diversity to resonate with them well beyond the classroom. Moreover, the students fully engaged the notion of giving back to their research participants, and brought members of the community and university together. These students will be invited to present their research and a summary of the symposium to next year’s class, thereby challenging future projects to achieve comparable goals.

About the Authors:

Dr. Carol M. Liebler is associate professor and director of the doctoral and media studies programs in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. Her research interests center on race, gender and news, with recent work exploring media coverage of missing girls and women. Each fall she teaches Media and Diversity, a graduate course she designed and that is now part of the Newhouse curriculum. In 2008 she was the recipient of the Syracuse University Excellence in Graduate Education Award.

Ms. Hinda Mandell is a doctoral student in mass communications in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and a regular contributor to the Boston Globe, where she writes on religion. Previously, she was the editor of the Jewish Advocate newspaper in Boston. Her research investigates news coverage of scandal. Mandell was a student in COM 646, Media & Diversity, Fall 2008, and the chief organizer of House of Rap (described below).

Contact Information

Dr. Carol M. Liebler, Associate Professor, Communication, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. cmlicble@syr.edu, 315.443.2448

Ms. Hinda Mandell, Doctoral Student, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, hmandel@syr.edu

Honorable Mention II

Multimedia Urban Reporting Lab

Christopher Harper and Linn Washington, Temple

Abstract: MURL is the capstone course for all 800 students in the Department of Journalism, which includes sequences in news-editorial, photography, broadcasting, and magazine writing. All students have had preliminary courses in audio-video newsgathering and multimedia design. We divide the students into teams of two to cover neighborhoods we select because these areas receive little or no coverage in the mainstream media. The teams produce four multimedia packages; individuals produce two multimedia packages. The topics include culture, economics, environment, politics, religion, transportation and other interesting material from the neighborhoods. This material is then uploaded to the Web.

Rationale

Each team is assigned an underserved and/or under-covered urban neighborhood. Students immerse themselves in the real world issues of newsgathering, production, and content distribution in that neighborhood. These designated areas encompass neighborhoods rich in ethnic diversity and inclusive of African-American, Asian, Euro-American, Hispanic, and other groups. During the semester, we try—instructors and students alike—to answer the central question threading the MURL concept and mission: how can we use convergence to cover, produce, and deliver news to the urban neighborhoods? The answer is ultimately driven by the unique characteristics of each neighborhood. The idea is to increase and enhance understanding and exposure to diversity and multicultural issues.

MURL encourages the use of new technologies as an enhancement to the traditional newsgathering and distribution methods, not a substitute. As technology influences how journalists do their jobs, the hope is MURL will provide students with the confidence to participate in the digital world of journalism. MURL seeks to take students out of their comfort zone on many levels, including technology and community-based reporting.

Methodology and Implementation

The course begins with a look at the need for diversity in reporting. The readings include the Society of Professional Journalists' Diversity Toolbox, material from the Maynard Institute, and Nora Paul's site from the University of Minnesota on digital storytelling. A separate lecture includes Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy on critical thinking, and the course stresses his emphasis on knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The assignments center on in-depth news features that include:

- Individuals produce a news-driven story from any part of the city in which students may report in broadcast, photographic, or written form.
- Individuals produce a comprehensive and in-depth story from the community that the student's team is covering. This project must be on a topic incorporating economics, education, or employment. Print students should write 1,000 to 1,200 words with graphics and visual elements. Photo essays must include at least 12 photographs with audio and some written material beyond cut lines. Broadcast projects must run at least 2:30.
- Each team produces a multimedia package posted to the MURL site at <http://www.philadelphianeighborhoods.com> on how residents in the coverage areas get around other than private transportation. The teams can examine public transportation, private cabs, walking, biking, scooters, skateboards, or any other transportation method.
- Each team produces a multimedia package posted to the MURL site on a quality-of-life topic from the neighborhoods: environment, fashion, grassroots entertainment, unique cultural attributes, or strides for safety.
- Each team produces a multimedia package on the financial crisis the city faces and how that affects the specific communities.
- Each team develops a comprehensive, multimedia enterprise project from the community. This project must be on housing, health care, or the environment. This final group project must include two video packages, two articles, and a photo essay.
- Each team posts at least 300 words each week to a blog. The entries must include a visual element. Individuals may post as well.

Outcomes

For the past five years, MURL has produced an ongoing Web site. The multimedia packages have included material on AIDS, gun sales, racial profiling, trash collection, a profile of a famous singer, the role of boxing in the city, animal mistreatment, environmentally friendly building, gentrification, and ex-offender reentry into communities. Furthermore, MURL has partnered with two major Hispanic organizations to allow community residents to learn to use technology to produce news. Also, MURL has become partners to produce the Web component of a local newspaper, which ceased publication at the end of 2008 after nearly 100 years in business. Community members recently published the first edition of the new newspaper.

Finally, a doctoral student has almost completed her work to assess the impact of MURL on students and the view of the communities on the quality of the reporting. Early results demonstrate that the students find the work challenging but beneficial, while the communities hope to use the MURL program as a means to create better community building.

For more information, please visit the Web site at www.philadelphianeighborhoods.com

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About the Authors:

Professor Christopher Harper, an associate professor of journalism and co-director of MURL at Temple University, spent more than 20 years in journalism at the Associated Press, Newsweek, ABC News, and ABC 20/20 before joining academia in 1994. He has taught at New York University, Temple University, Rostov State University in Russia, and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland. He has written extensively about digital media.

Professor Linn Washington, an associate professor of journalism at Temple University and co-director of MURL, is a long-time journalist in Philadelphia and still writes a weekly column for the Philadelphia Tribune. He served as executive editor of two community newspapers and also worked for the Philadelphia Daily News. He is best known for his coverage of MOVE and Mumia Abu Jamal.

Contact Information

Professor Christopher Harper—315-729-9020, charper@temple.edu

Professor Linn Washington—215-204-2033, lwashing@temple.edu

Temple University, School of Communications and Theater, 2020 N. 13th Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Honorable Mention III

Exploring Our Personal Biases as Journalists: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Sue Ellen Christian, Western Michigan

Abstract: An off-site reporting and writing course sought to address the issue of bias. A class of majority-White students met at an off-campus community center in a neighborhood that was majority African-American. Students covered issues unique to the neighborhood and participated in interdisciplinary exercises and discussions to heighten their awareness of bias and stereotyping, particularly as related to race and ethnicity. Qualitative data in the form of student reflection papers, essays and discussions analyzed using coding criteria from Owen (1984) indicated that students became more aware of journalistic as well as internal biases, and appreciated the educational value of an on-site educational experience. Students practiced bias management and articulated a desire to have an impact on the community.

Explanation of teaching activity

Overall approach: A capstone reporting and writing course that is standard in the major requirements for the university was given a different treatment. In a pilot semester, the class was taken off campus to allow students to conduct diversity reporting within the local community. The students met at a community center in a neighborhood selected because its issues and residents are underrepresented in local mainstream media. Of the neighborhood's 6,000 residents, approximately 95% of whom are African-American, the media household income is less than \$15,000, more than 40% of the population lives in poverty, and at least one in four residents never earned a high school degree.

Examples of pre-course activities to build awareness about individual experiences and attitudes: An adapted contact survey and the Symbolic Racism 2000 survey (Henry & Sears, 2002) are used to help students assess their levels of contact with people of an ethnicity or race unlike their own; Implicit Association Tests help gauge students' automatic preferences (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>).

Examples of activities throughout the course: Students kept a private log to explore individual biases and prejudices they experienced while reporting on neighborhood people and issues. The log was turned in twice during the semester and returned with comments and resource suggestions. Also ongoing were reflection papers on specific bias issues; small-group and whole class discussions on reporting and biases; and use of the Rashomon technique that considers the perspectives of different stakeholders individually to get at a fuller version of the "truth."

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Examples of writing assignments: In the first week, students were assigned a 400-word profile on a resident of the neighborhood designed to immediately engage them with local citizens. Later, they were assigned an in-depth profile on a local resident, a news feature story, and a sense-of-place article that uses a venue as the story's subject.

Examples of exercises and readings: Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (1988); examining bias in language through resources such as Writing for Change worksheets (www.TeachingTolerance.org); critiquing newspaper articles on race/ethnicity and culture to examine framing, standpoint and perspective; selected readings and DVD interviews from "The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity" (Morgan, Woods & Pifer, 2006).

Rationale

This course sought to increase students' ability to identify, understand and manage their personal biases, specifically regarding race and ethnicity, when reporting. The approach sought to accomplish this by placing students in a setting that challenged their understanding of ethnic and cultural norms and common stereotypes. In addition, while *experiencing* racial diversity in their reporting experiences, students were *studying* the theories and explanations of how biases form and *reflecting* on their own attitudes.

The journalistic tenet against bias is espoused in various industry ethics codes, including the Code of Ethics for the Los Angeles *Times*, which states that:

A crucial goal of our news and feature reporting – apart from editorials, columns, criticism and other content that is expressly opinionated – is to be nonideological. This is a tall order. It requires us to recognize our own biases and stand apart from them. It also requires us to examine the ideological environment in which we work, for the biases of our sources, our colleagues and our communities can distort our sense of objectivity (<http://www.asne.org/ideas/codes/losangelestimes.htm>; Fairness section, para.1).

Further, the accreditation body for undergraduate journalism programs is especially focused on improving diversity education in journalism curriculum (<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/BREAKING/divstybook.shtml>). Finally, reporters are a homogenous lot – racially and ethnically, educationally, and socio-economically. The American Society of Newspaper Editors 2008 data on diversity, for example, show that less than 14 percent of the nation's nearly 46,700 full-time journalists in daily newsrooms are non-white.

Outcomes

Student reflection papers, bias logs and in-class responses indicated four themes: 1.) growth in awareness and understanding of journalistic as well as individual biases; 2.) appreciation for the educational value of an on-site urban experience in which people

and place became educators in themselves; 3.) a greater ability to address bias when reporting and writing through use of techniques such as re-framing and 4.) an emerging and active desire to have a positive impact on the community.

The students' writing was published in the local mainstream press, the local ethnic press, the campus newspaper and the course digital newspaper. Three of the students received top awards in a state press competition (in the student journalism category) for the feature news stories produced during the semester. Students, including the four students of color in the class, noted that the experience forced them out of their "comfort zones." Said one student: "I like that we are being forced to interview and speak with people who might not look or act like us."

About the Author:

Professor Sue Ellen Christian is an associate professor of journalism in the School of Communication at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her research and creative activity focuses on journalism pedagogy, diversity, and civic engagement. Her work has appeared in publications such as Quill, Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, Journal of Intergroup Relations, and Reflections: A Journal of Writing, Service-Learning and Community Literacy and the multi-volume text, Communication Activism. She co-produced "The Story Behind the Story," an instructional video and CD-ROM emphasizing diversity and ethics featuring professional journalists. She created and oversees the ongoing Student Newspaper Diversity Project to heighten local awareness of under-represented groups in mainstream media. She joined academia in 2001, after ten years as a staff reporter at the Chicago Tribune, where she covered public health, politics, and state and local government. She has also worked on the staffs of the Los Angeles Times' Washington, D.C. bureau and the Detroit News. She has won several awards for her reporting.

Contact Information

Professor Sue Ellen Christian, Assoc. Prof. of Journalism, School of Communication, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5318, 269-387-3110, sueellen.christian@wmich.edu

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