

The boundaries of belonging: journalist interns' workplace learning experiences across communities of practice

Maarit Jaakkola, Tampere University, Finland

This article examines journalism students' learning experiences during internships by applying the idea of communities of practice developed by Etienne Wenger-Trayner and colleagues. The data consist of pre-structured reflective essays (N=146) written by second-year journalism students as part of their internship reports. The analysis focuses on the boundaries of communities of practice, which are identified to be university-, professional- and employment-related. These boundaries position interns in sometimes contradictory roles in relation to different communities of practice. It is found that encounters with these boundaries make ideas about journalism learned in the university relevant in fruitful ways but also typically contest students' role as learners. It, therefore, is suggested that making visible the learner's role at the intersection of different communities of practice should be a central objective in the preparation of university students as interns.

Keywords: internship; community of practice; landscape of practice; journalism; workplace learning; professional reflection

Introduction

Internships constitute a landmark in professionally oriented academic study programmes, such as the education of future nurses, social workers, teachers—and also journalists. Students often describe internships as one of the most fruitful elements of the curriculum as they demonstrate the value of theory and provide valuable, hands-on experiences and networks for students' future occupations.

Given the critical importance of internships in individual students' learning experiences and the connections between the academy and the industry established, internships constitute an important object of inquiry in studies on journalism education.

This study draws on the recent literature on journalism and communities of practice (CoP) to analyse internship reports produced within a journalism programme at a Finnish university. The theories applied in the analysis include Lave and Wenger's work on practice-based learning (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998) and Wenger-Trayner and colleagues' (2015) later development of the concept. The concept of CoPs has been widely applied in diverse contexts, primarily studies on education, health care and organisational communication (e.g. Murillo 2011, Li et al. 2009, Sutherland et al. 2005). Only recently has the concept of CoP been introduced into studies on journalism (Meltzer and Martik 2017, Hutchins and Boyle 2016, García-Avilés 2014, Schmitz Weiss and Domingo 2010). Consequently, the interrelations of the various CoPs that unfold in landscapes of learning are a recent idea relatively un(con)tested in practice. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework of CoPs and their inherent boundaries put forward by Wenger-Trayner and colleagues (2015) can be applied as a useful tool to grasp the complexity of the 'learningscape' students face during their first contact with journalism work in media organisations.

By looking at the perceived boundaries of presumed CoPs, we may learn more about how the challenges of workplace learning are constituted for newcomers. This understanding is essential to build better structures for supervision and scaffold work tasks during times of change as study programmes are fundamentally redesigned (Zelizer 2013, Robinson 2013, Mensing and Ryfe 2013). Teaching the ability to recognise and acknowledge boundaries is becoming increasingly important to prepare students for work life with no clear, pre-made occupations, a situation already familiar in many areas of cultural work within the so-called creative industries (Ashton 2015; Robinson 2013), not the least in post-industrial journalism (Deuze and Witschge 2018).

The Community of practice paradigm

A CoP is a social body of knowledge sustained by a group of people or a shared structure of social relationships established and maintained through collective learning (Wenger 1998: 45, Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015; see also Lave and Wenger 1991). The CoP refers to 'a social process of negotiating competence in a domain over time' (Farnsworth et al. 2016: 143) and cannot thus be applied to any group or community (e.g. a team). The CoP paradigm provides a productive way to establish a connection enabling the analysis of individuals and social structures. By asking what boundaries journalist interns recognise in the workplace and find relevant to their learning experiences, we may gain essential insights into how the social institution of the semi-profession of journalism can best be taught to newcomers and what relevance the identification of different CoPs might have in the education of these future (semi-)professionals.

Journalism interns have typically been studied with a macro-level focus on the relationship between the academy and the industry, reflected in questions about socialisation into the professional community and preservation of the dynamics of the journalism field (on the Nordic countries, see Willig 2017, Rimestad and Gravengaard 2016, Gravengaard and Rimestad 2014; for English-language studies beyond the Nordic countries, see, e.g., Bigi 2012, Franklin and Mensing 2011, de Burgh 2005). In journalism studies, where much of this research can be located, journalism interns have commonly been treated quite instrumentally, to capture developments and changes in the professional field of journalism rather than examining their learning as such (e.g. Gollmitzer 2014, Deuze and Yeshua 2001, Fry 1989). As Drotner and Erstad (2014) pointed out based on their examinations in the theoretical foundations of media literacy, negotiations between media or journalism studies and educational studies—which this article explores—are still relatively uncommon.

Questions related to workplace learning have only recently become relevant in journalism studies through

research motivated by transformations in the industry to address questions such as editorial practices and the supervision of newcomers (e.g. Willig 2017, Rimestad and Gravengaard 2016, McDonough et al. 2009). Still, the focus has remained the occupation of journalism and its structures rather than individual and collective learning experiences. As known, occupational learning has been richly discussed in studies in other areas of learning, such as teacher education (e.g. Bieda et al. 2014, Kyndt et al. 2014, McKinney et al. 2008; Akkerman and Bruining 2016), and clinical work in healthcare, such as nursing (e.g. Haghani et al. 2013, Paul et al. 2011, Wells et al. 2007). Educational, occupational and professional studies so far have focused on occupations more clearly defined as professions. In this context, journalism, as an open occupation and semi-profession (Zelizer 1993), may have appeared as a relatively peripheral object of inquiry.

More commonly than CoPs, journalism communities have been described using the alternative term ‘interpretive communities’ (Zelizer 1993, Berkowitz and TerKeurst 1999), which shares an emphasis on collectivity (cf. Meltzer and Martik 2017). As a CoP is both sustained organisational activity with shared routines and a location to which new participants are gradually introduced, internships mark a central entry point to CoPs. Identification of and association with a CoP makes a claim to competence as it ‘entails a process of alignment and realignment between competence and personal experience, which can go both ways’ (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015: 14).

The Relevance of boundary work

Boundaries, even if they are often porous and contingent, hold relevance in the study of CoPs (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015; Wenger 1998). First, boundaries are relevant because the sets of practices adopted and developed within a CoP are defended against outsiders who are located beyond the boundaries. Second, newcomers, such as journalist interns, enter CoPs through the boundaries, and from an individual’s perspective, boundary encounters often imply a selection of roles, concerning the choices of how to develop one’s competences in order to become more legitimized participants in a specific CoP.

In the sociology of journalism, boundary work is highly related to the social structures of power. Boundaries are typically examined from a macro-perspective as boundary work is seen to constitute the foundations for how professionalism works. Professional claims serve to set boundaries between those ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the profession to prevent intrusions by external factors (Waisbord 2013). Professionalisation, understood as the gradual, dynamic structuration of a CoP, is a historical process aimed at increasing the specialisation and transferability of skills. This process includes the proliferation of objective standards of work and a theoretical body of knowledge, education and training alongside the establishment of professional rules and entry criteria to support autonomous expertise and a service ideal (Freidson 2001). Professionalisation is also related to the structures of power as professionals struggle to constantly negotiate and maintain their position and ultimately uphold their autonomy, which is a necessary precondition for functioning ‘journalistically’—in other words, in an independent manner (Waisbord 2013, Freidson 2001).

In an occupation with ‘incomplete’ or ‘open’ social closure, boundary work is essentially negotiated in social situations (Wenger-Trayner 2015). In particular, at a lower sociological level, boundary work is important to demarcate the fine line between what is regarded as professional journalism and what is regarded as other, less interest-free forms of communication, such as marketing and self-mass communication (Carlson 2015, Peters and Broersma 2013). Journalists seek the epistemic authority to create and present knowledge about the world through adherence to epistemological conventions (Zelizer 1993). Underlying this process is a constant negotiation of integrity and independence to create autonomy (Carlson 2015). Journalists become advocates of journalism values, and through their actions, they define what counts as journalism.

This social negotiability brings us closer to theories of learning. More specifically, learning experiences occur in what Wenger-Trayner and colleagues (2015) described with the metaphor of a ‘landscape of learning’, or in an interconnected entity of CoPs, through individual trajectories in which the central concepts include knowledgeability, multimembership and identity work (Wenger-Trayner et al. 2015). The journey through a landscape of learning implies constant movement in complex communities, described by Lave and Wenger (1991) as legitimate peripheral participation. Becoming a practitioner of journalism obviously requires only knowledge on many sectors of societal life, but the main mechanisms of the (semi-)profession are more related to the meta-competences of acquiring and presenting knowledge. Newcomers to the field need to recognise the areas of knowledge that stand for ‘professional journalism’ and position themselves in that landscape. According to Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015: p. 20–21), identity work in

professional learning occurs through identification and dis-identification as three modes of identity modulation relate the learner to the boundaries of CoPs: engagement ('doing things', which gives the learner direct experience of the 'regimes of competence'), imagination ('using images to locate and orient oneself') and alignment ('a two-way process of coordinating enterprises ... and contexts so that action has the effects we expect'). A central question in the organisation of internships is how boundaries can be leveraged as learning assets. Wenger-Trayner and colleagues ask if universities 'can help students use significant boundaries to deepen their understanding of the landscape and possibly become brokers across some of the boundaries' (Fenton-O'Creevy et al. 2015b: 153).

We can think of an internship as a space where the intern stands at the intersection of different CoP boundaries. Focusing on boundaries 'helps explain unusual events, connections that are and are not made, ... and unexpected interpretations of events, actions, statements, or documents' (Wenger 1998: 254). By encountering and crossing boundaries, the learner becomes aware of the capabilities required in certain CoPs. The learner needs certain competences to enter some CoPs; in others, it is sufficient to be knowledgeable about practices without mastering them (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015). At the boundaries of CoPs, the intern is obliged to choose to which direction to develop his or her competence, or which CoP to choose to belong to.

Research questions

The study investigates journalist interns' CoP boundary encounters, as reported in their internship reports. For the purposes of this empirical analysis, I use the operational concept of a 'boundary encounter'. In boundary-related learning experiences, students become aware of social practices and structures with a recognisable order and patterns other than those they are familiar with. On the surface, these encounters can take various forms, but a common feature is that they are somehow felt to be *important* observations, worth mentioning in the retrospective report on the learning process. An encounter may be experienced, for example, as a surprise, a moment of astonishment, a conflict in one's values or comprehension, or a story or curiosity that does not quite fit the image of the social structure one has learned. Boundary encounters thus are typically perceptions of *deviant* norms or structures. In this way, controversies, understood as conflicting processes involving people, objects, actions and networks, may expose the social structures of the CoPs at stake, how they are intermingled and thus how the boundaries work in practice.

In more particular, the study asks: 1) Which CoPs and related boundaries do the interns identify significant to their learning experiences? 2) What kind of reflections do the perceived CoP boundaries evoke regarding the roles the interns should take? The findings will have implications for journalism education that attempts to prepare the students for workplace learning.

Data and method

The data consisted of internship reports from 2011–2013 (N=146) produced by academic journalism students for an obligatory, 4-month internship in newsrooms in Finland, which has a more academic education system for journalists than other European systems (Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003, Jaakkola 2019). The students included bachelor's students (N=128, 88%) and master's students (N=18, 12%), and the majority self-reported that they had no more than 3 months of previous journalism experience. The internship was connected to the 5-ECTS course *Internship in journalism work*. The central dimensions of the data are summarised in Table 1.

	2011	2012	2013	Total
Number of reports	50 (34 %)	44 (30 %)	52 (36 %)	146 (100 %)
Authors				
Average age	25.0	24.7	24.1	24.61
Females	39 (78 %)	34 (77 %)	43 (83 %)	116 (79 %)
Photojournalism students	6 (12 %)	6 (14 %)	5 (10 %)	17 (12 %)
Master's students	6 (12 %)	6 (14 %)	6 (12 %)	18 (12 %)

Venues of internship				
Newspapers ²	26 (52 %)	27 (61 %)	24 (46 %)	77 (53 %)
Local newspapers	9 (18 %)	6 (14 %)	7 (13 %)	22 (15 %)
Magazines	5 (10 %)	8 (18 %)	8 (15 %)	21 (14 %)
Radio stations	6 (12 %)	1 (2 %)	10 (19 %)	17 (12 %)
Other media ³	4 (8 %)	2 (5 %)	3 (6 %)	9 (6 %)

1 Average; 2 National and regional; 3 E.g. news, photo and communication agencies

Table 1. Description of the data

The essays were written on a confidential basis, and it was promised that only the instructor responsible for the internship course would receive and read the reports. In the instructions, the students were informed about the reports' post-use as anonymised research materials and were offered the option to prohibit use of their reports for research purposes. It was emphasised that the employers would not receive any information about reported conflicts or problems in the workplace.

In the newsrooms, the students had employment contracts as interns and received monthly salaries of 1700-1800 euros, following the recommendations of the national professional Union of Journalists in Finland (2016). To ensure a minimum standard of working conditions and work of a journalistic nature (in contrast to marketing and communication) that met the learning requirements of the curriculum, the university pre-selected the media organisations hosting the internships. The internship venues included national, regional and local newspapers (N=99), magazines (N=21), radio stations (N=17) and news, photo and communication agencies and other media (N=9). The internship programme did not include television as there was a separate programme for television internships based on co-operation between the university and a national TV station. The journalism tasks the students carried out during their internships were focused on either writing and editing (journalism major, N=129) or photography and photojournalism tasks (photojournalism major, N=17).

The journalism programme curriculum placed the internships in the second year of study. According to the course syllabus, students who completed internships were expected to have 'become familiar with working as part of a journalism work community', 'adapted practices needed in journalism work and the working community', 'developed his or her journalism competences in support by the work community' and thus 'through his or her own experience developed an understanding about the performance and organisation of the journalism work'.¹ To ensure a broad discussion covering all relevant areas of workplace learning in the reports and to identify relevant areas of reflection for students, the internship reports were written following a prescribed structure. The text genre was a reflective essay, and the required length of was five pages. According to the instructions, the essay should 1) describe the individual work tasks during the internship; 2) describe the received supervision; 3) compare the observed equivalence between the requirements in academic studies and workplace learning; and 4) describe the student's own conception of journalism based on a selected piece of academic literature (a list of articles and book chapters included within the instructions).

The qualitative analysis was informed by a grounded-theory approach to the separation and organisation of data (Strauss and Corbin 1990) and focused on the descriptions of boundary encounters throughout the texts to form relevant categories exposing the intersections of CoPs. The initial coding included the identification of boundary encounters following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) description of concepts. The students' descriptions, in other words, were broken down into components presenting an event, situation or observation with a boundary experience (a boundary encounter). The reports were written in different styles and with everyday reasoning rather than the use of certain systematic vocabulary, so the boundary encounters appeared as different kinds of experiences in which the existence of two worlds, communities in general or fields became visible.

Through constant comparison of the concepts found in the data, the boundary encounters were more closely examined to achieve the objective to localise the context of the alleged boundaries. The boundary encounters identified were grouped into more general categories according to the CoPs they were situated between.

It has to be noticed that the analysis was dependent on what the students assessed as worth mentioning in their retrospective reports written within one month after completing their internships. Some incidents and experiences relevant to the analysis might have not been recorded, and the observations were anchored in

the subjective accounts of individuals. A study with another methodological design, such as participative observation or theme interviews encompassing more mutual interactions between the interviewer and interviewees (see e.g. Gravengaard and Rimestad 2014), could cast light on certain dimensions while also possibly leaving out others. As subjective accounts of self-reflection, however, the confidential internship reports delivered information on the learners' perceptions and what they were willing to report. It was precisely the learners' own insights that should be the focus in theory on boundary experiences. In the selected methodological frame, the idea of CoP works as a pragmatic concept to identify experiences 'at the crossroads', or between 'two worlds', which evoke in a learner the question of belonging to them.

Identifying boundaries

At a general level, the boundary encounters in the interns' learning experiences could be related to journalism and journalism work, on one hand, and to workplace learning, on the other. The identified boundaries described by the interns' reports could be further divided into three groups: university-, profession- and employment-related boundaries. I further distinguished boundaries I labelled *school-working life*, *academy-practitioners*, *professionals-non-professionals*, *autonomous-corrupted*, *apprentices-co-workers* and *young-old*. These critical boundaries are depicted in Table 2. All these categories divided communities between 'me' (or us students/interns) and 'them' and marked differences in cultures of 'doing journalism', as the interns described it. Next, I briefly describe how the journalist interns perceived these boundaries. The boundaries between the perceived CoPs were partially overlapping but cast different perspectives on the competence requirements derived from different CoPs.

Boundary	Communities of practice involved
School-working life	Student community-organizational staff
Academy-practitioners	Academic community-professional practitioners
Professionals-non-professionals	Journalists-lay persons
Autonomous-corrupted	Idealized journalists-instrumental journalists
Apprentices-co-workers	Newcomer-established employed
Young-old	Younger generations-older generations

Table 2. Boundaries identified in the qualitative analysis.

School – working life

Although many students had previous work experience, typically in manufacturing, sanitation and other types of physical work and labour markets related to customer service, sales and service-oriented work, the internships presented their first contact with what they conceived to be the 'real' working life. The experiences were aligned with their expectations for their future careers and dreams of becoming journalists. The boundary between being a student and an employee was regarded as different from the times of not being a student because the experiences retrieved from journalism represented a field they had chosen to match their interests and strengths.

For some students, the internships nourished their imagination and fostered their two other forms of identification with the professional community: alignment and engagement. Other students, though, were discouraged in this modulation of identification. What many interns shared was exhaustion from learning experiences at the boundary between university and working life. The hectic schedule and high demands of continuous performance, magnified by the social pressures of the newsroom, came as a surprise to many students, undermining their feelings of self-trust and self-efficacy. Several interns described how their tasks occupied their minds, and they continued working on their projects after the workday and at night:

About half-way through, I started feeling exhausted. It felt that on ordinary working days, I did not have time for anything else than for going to work and doing cooking. I asked myself if this was how work life looked like. ... The previous academic year with its courses in journalism practice and the search for the internship

had, for sure, been wearing, and a dip into the world of real work did not help me recover. ... Because of this unexpected feeling of exhaustion, I started thinking about my personal expectations regarding the working life ahead me.

As a potential reason for work life being more laborious than student life, many interns remarked in their reports that the atmosphere in newsrooms had worsened due to budget cut-offs and crisis discourse. It was felt that the staff journalists lacked self-respect, which the interns had expected based on their education. The development worried many interns:

Before my internship, I had never felt worried about the future of journalism, but after the summer, this has occupied me a lot. The biggest problem for journalism is the lack of time, and no one knows what is going to happen in future.

Taking the step from 'school' to work life in this context appeared to be unsecure, certainly a common experience in many internships across disciplines. The school–working boundary life was fundamental to the other boundary encounters, underlining the change in the learning environment.

Academic – practitioner

Another boundary identified in the interns' narratives was a division between the academic and professional CoPs and their associated sets of competences. Similar to the boundary between university and working life, there was a division between two regimes of competence, but in this category, the boundary was inherent. The interns' concerns reflected this structural division identified in university studies of journalism. Journalism, like many academic fields of education, has an ambivalent relationship to industry. On one hand, journalism education needs to socialise young students into the reality of the media. On the other hand, journalism educators typically feel that they need to act as a corrective to the industry (Deuze 2006).

In the workplace, permanent staff members typically saw the trainees as representatives of the contemporary academy. The interns were expected to be informed about what answers to the industry's problems current research provided and thought to be knowledgeable about the most recent recommendations by the Finnish language planning authority. In contrast to these respectful views, some students described how practitioners downplayed their academic expertise as too theoretical, slow and distant from everyday reality. One student described the differences between academic and professional (or organisational) competences, saying that 'it felt as if I had gone parachuting with previous experience in bungee jumping'.

To be honest, the image I had got about the editorial work during my university studies did not much correspond to the reality. ... The biggest difference was that while in university courses, every single activity was analysed in the smallest detail, in real life, there was no time for that. The biggest surprise for me was that even without such extensive analysis, it was possible to produce good journalism.

Simultaneously, for the interns, the professional CoP appeared to be unambitious, set to day-to-day survival, instead of interested in professional development and reflection. They saw this environment in the lack of feedback and discussions, the culture based on individual work instead of teamwork, the hurry and hustle experienced by workers, the ambiguity or even lack of pre-defined, shared instructions (e.g. on story length and workflow), the lack of systematic ideation and the polarisation or dramatisation of arguments collected for stories.

In such an environment, the interns typically found that academic studies did not provide them with sufficient knowledge about the political processes of local decision-making or the structures of legislation. Academic knowledge was quickly regarded as expendable in favour of professional instrumental knowledge, such as editorial competence and awareness of who was who in politics. However, at the same time, many interns remarked that the competence they most needed was experience-based, empirical knowledge about society and the world.

Professional – non-professional

The boundary between the professional and non-professional marked the intersection of two CoPs where the students actively had to position themselves in relation to a professional community. As professionals-to-be, many interns indicated that they received much empathy and understanding from the staff as long as

they aligned with the newsroom routines and followed the guidelines set by the more experienced journalists. This sense of collegiality could be understood as a preliminary contract among the actors within the CoP according to which the interns were welcomed to the CoP, but their competences allowed them only a peripheral, limited position for participation.

However, interns sometimes deviated from the normal newsroom practices. In that case, when, for example, an intern disclosed personal political convictions in a column or wrote a text in a completely different style than was felt to be appropriate to the story format, the editorial manager elected to not publish the stories. Whereas more experienced practitioners were allowed more power to contest established practices, learners in peripheral positions could not as easily cross the boundary between professional and non-professional without being deemed unprofessional or ignorant of the rules. Many of the ‘rule-breakers’ described the disavowal they experienced in their efforts as perplexing as, according to a high number of reports, they were simultaneously encouraged to do things in a different and more creative way than the staff writers.

In addition to journalists, audience representatives, both sources and readers, tended to position the young, inexperienced journalists as non-professionals. Professionalism was bounded off by references to youth and gender, as in the following example:

This is what interviewees said to me: ‘Especially as you are a woman, you have to remember that we don’t want to find any surprise or naiveté in the article. No fabling. Make a fact-based article out of this’. ‘I wonder where the princess is who just called me’!

However, the use of social media, a matter generally seen to challenge journalism professionalism (see e.g. Compton and Benedetti 2010), provided the interns with a possibility to demonstrate their expertise and thus move towards the centre of the professional CoP. Due to the age structure in many newsrooms, the young students were often more knowledgeable about the use of Facebook and Twitter, then the most-used platforms. The interns thus were in a position to educate older journalists and even take over management of social media channels.

Autonomous – corrupted

As the boundaries between different subfields of journalism have blurred (Kristensen and From 2012; Madison 2014), the boundary between journalism and business has also become more porous (Coddington 2015). Many interns criticised journalism education for promoting an overly romanticised idea of the occupation detached from its economic and commercial context, which was most emphasised in magazines and local newspapers:

In my work, I had to learn that you have to compromise with the sources. There is a limited number of persons who sell the magazine, and they continue to be important to the magazine. For the magazine, it is thus more than important to remain friends with these people.

In the [local] newspaper, the most important news value was not the issue being interesting to the readers. One criterion was, simply put, the fact that an organisation or association got angry if their activities were not noticed by the newspaper.

One trainee reported about a reality that a subeditor, with all seriousness, searched for a person online before deciding whether to interview her based on her looks. The students also reported being asked to change headlines make them more saleable and clickable, favour stories while overlooking facts and make friends with local politicians, all of which contradicted their ethical sense. These stories indicated that the students faced a ‘low culture’ of professionalism that compromised morality and tolerated ethical shortcomings to pursue better-selling stories. Even if in many cases the interns did not seem to approve of such activity, they often showed understanding and were forced to align themselves to it.

Despite the ‘corrupted’ idea of journalism, the students said they could more deeply understand the commercial logics underlying the production of journalism, which they regarded as valuable insights. Those who reflected more on this matter saw that the fact that journalism is adapted to commercial interests could not be entirely resisted, not alone ignored, but they could adopt personal tactics to contribute to more ethically produced journalism. Due to their peripheral role in the ‘corrupted’ communities, they regarded themselves as able to continue fighting for ‘better journalism’.

Apprentices – co-workers

One pattern became especially clear in the reports' descriptions of work: the interns entered the newsroom as learners of their occupations, but after very brief introductions, they were regarded as co-workers by their chiefs, colleagues and 'summer reporters' (fixed-contract workers, often more advanced students, employed for the summer season). The newspapers typically did not indicate students' trainee position, telling readers that an author was an intern. Neither did the interns carry any labels signifying their position in the newsroom, a more common practice in service occupations.

The interns experienced this equal treatment with pleasure, although also partial astonishment. The disadvantage was that the equal treatment pushed their learner's role into the background. Many students reported that maintaining the learner's role would have required active engagement by the interns themselves. Constantly asking questions and emphasising their 'newcomer' role, however, was perceived as uncomfortable:

The employees did not generally have extra amount of time to analyse the stories. Besides, I felt uncomfortable raising my hand all the time to ask questions as I was first and foremost an employee for them.

The positioning of the interns as co-workers, however, was typically limited to the delivery of work tasks and responsibility for carrying out them. In the development of the work, the participation could be turned out to be 'fake engagement', as one student described it:

At a morning meeting, my fellow interns and I suggested a new series of articles as we had been encouraged to come up with new ideas. The reception of our idea was gloomy. ... After the summer, I was left pondering if the great utopia of summer reporters as a renewing power for the newsrooms is in fact limited to slightly uplifting the atmosphere in the office and entertaining at some in-house parties.

Many interns also reported difficulties pushing through their own ideas even if presentation of their own ideas was officially encouraged by their supervisors and editorial managers. The conflict between the learner's and the co-worker's role demonstrated that the differences between the CoPs of the 'apprenticing students' and the 'employed journalists' remained, despite the interns' individual efforts. The employers often used strategies of putting aside the learner's role to make the interns a more effective workforce, giving them tasks as demanding as carried out by the staff writers.

Young – old

Age was a significant factor in many encounters during the internships, as can be seen in the many internship reports describing generational differences, controversies and even conflicts in the newsroom. Interns, who were 24 years old on average (see Table 1), reported several incidents in the newsroom that involved age and generational differences with the employees. Indeed, in many local and regional newspapers, the average age of employees was relatively high, and the interns were the only persons found to represent young people.

These differences became especially visible in decisions concerning new technologies. As remarked, the interns were often more knowledgeable about digital technologies and cultures, and in journalism practice, this knowledge manifested as competences in conducting research in online environments:

I was doing an article on traditional open-air dance occasions, and the news manager recommended that I collect announcements from printed local newspapers to compile an exhaustive list of events in our area of circulation. I did not comply, but instead, I immediately plunged into the Internet.

I proposed a story idea dealing with filtering by search engines. ... The news manager asked what the relevance of my topic would be for the local community. I, of course, could not find any arguments for the local relevance for the topic ... because geographical proximity is not the primary definer for these kinds of topics.

Age differences were often coupled with gender differences. Although a majority of the journalism students was female, most editorial managers in regional and local newspapers were male. The patriarchal structures in decision-making and leadership, of which many interns showed high awareness, were observed to lead to biases in the choice of topics and their journalistic treatment. The interns took a role in sharing what young audiences would desire, but ultimately, according to one intern addressing the age and gender gaps, it was 'the straight, white, middle-class man' who typically constituted the 'imagined audience' of regional newspaper. Topics addressing youth and their interests were often turned down as having

too limited scope, whereas stories on the season's strawberry harvest and traditional open-air dance festivals were considered to have more societal relevance.

Discussion

As can be seen in the various encounters of boundaries described in the internship reports, boundary experiences seem to be crucial anchor points in the learners' perceptions and self-identification during the internships. The idea of journalism becomes a boundary object of learning, and the learning experiences derived from the juxtaposition of various CoPs make the students look at this object from different perspectives. At the intersection of different CoPs, journalism becomes suddenly contested, opposed and questioned. This relativisation of perspective seems to be an important part of the learning process that achieves the internships' learning objectives.

The boundary encounters found are connected to the power structures within the journalists' community, particularly the expectations and mechanisms of conservation and renewal (of the organisation or, more generally, the industry). The interns are only seen as peripheral actors expected to renew ideas and practices with no real influence. The results of their journalism work are made public, and they become legitimate actors in communication in the public sphere, providing them with authentic power and setting them in generally the same category as the more experienced journalists. Indeed, the public nature of their work is a trait that distinguishes journalism internships from many other internships in which interns' activities are less exposed to large audiences. This trait, which also entails increased responsibility, makes journalism internships an interesting case. The legitimate, peripheral actors perform actions that have real consequences, such as scooping a story that quickly transverses the whole media landscape and influences processes in society, moving between the centre and the periphery. However, this work also creates more ambiguity for the learning experiences. The journalist intern might have difficulty reverting to the role of an apprentice who remains in the background. This situation probably explains the supervisors' and editorial managers' focus on the professional or employee role.

Nevertheless, the interns' role is distinguished from that of the staff journalists as the interns are also supposed to make boundaries visible, in turn rendering their learner's position visible and initiating learning processes. What is important for a successful learning experience, therefore, is the ability to assert the learner's status, claiming a legitimate peripheral role that allows for space to learn (Fenton-O'Creevy et al. 2015a). Indeed, a re-occurring pattern in the boundary encounters seems to be that the interns need to explicitly position themselves in front of the community to receive support reflecting on the contradictions aroused by the boundary encounters.

Even though sufficient support and structures for professional reflection are sometimes available, many students were overwhelmed by the reality of the professionals' approach to delivering their workloads: the pressure, monotony and seeming triviality of what journalists were doing against which journalism education had taught to them. The question penetrating all these learning experiences at boundaries was the meta-question of *good journalism*. When different CoPs simultaneously projected contradictory expectations, a central question for reflection and identity work along all the scales of identity modulation arose: how trainees could succeed in establishing an individual relationship to journalism and negotiating a role between the CoPs that aids in learning the practices, routines and values of the organisational community. A boundary encounter typically—especially in the case of 'democratic' or 'commercial' journalism—implied a moral undertaking in which the interns had to negotiate their understandings of good journalism with the reality they faced.

This said, it might be said that the academic journalism education seems to fail to mediate the reality of journalistic work to students, providing the students with overidealized notions of journalism and journalistic work. This, for its part, seems to reinforce the divide between theoretical-academic and practical-professional orientation which the traditional journalism education has been richly criticized for (see e.g. de Burgh 2005, Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003). However—even if this can certainly be taken seriously to consider how to prepare students better for the challenges of working life—it might be the case that the central learning outcome of the internship is precisely the relativisation of what has been learned at school. This finding, again, underscores the fundamental importance of internships as part of studies of journalism in higher education.

Conclusion

The identification of boundary encounters or perceived boundaries between CoPs in the journalist interns' reports highlights that workplace learners are exposed to varied and sometimes even contradictory role expectations derived from the norms of different CoPs. Encounters between these CoPs, whether imagined or real, raise for learners the question of to which community they should or want to belong to, and whose principles are worth following.

The risk in the boundary encounters described in this analysis is that the learner's role will be overshadowed by the social pressure to 'go native' in the work organisation. Supporting management of the learner's role and making workplace supervisors aware of its importance, therefore, should be central objectives in the university's preparation of interns. This preparation should enable newcomers to stand up for their positions as learners, which might entail deviant notions of journalism and its relationships to other societal actors. The making visible of the learner's role is, then, likely to catalyse more reflection that, in turn, might lead to new learning opportunities.

Note

¹ [Link to the course syllabus in English, to be added later.]

References

- Akkerman, S.F., and Bruining, T. (2016). Multilevel Boundary Crossing in a Professional Development School Partnership. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 25(2), 240–284.
- Ashton, D. (2015). Creative Work Careers: Pathways and Portfolios for the Creative Economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 28(4), 388–406.
- Berkowitz, D., and TerKeurst, J.V. (1999). Community as Interpretive Community: Rethinking the Journalist–Source Relationship. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 125–136.
- Bieda, K.N., Sela, H., and Chazan, D. (2014). 'You Are Learning Well, My Dear': Shifts in Novice Teachers' Talk about Teaching During Their Internship. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(2), 150–169.
- Bigi, H. (2012). *Journalism Education Between Market Dependence and Social Responsibility: An Examination of Trainee Journalists*. Bern: Haupt Verlag.
- de Burgh, H. (2005). *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*. New York: Routledge.
- Carlson, M., and Lewis, S.C. (Eds.) (2015). *Boundaries of Journalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Coddington, M. (2015). The Wall Becomes a Curtain: Re-visiting Journalism's News–Business Boundary. In: *Boundaries of Journalism*, edited by Matt Carlson and Seth C. Lewis, 67–82. New York: Routledge.
- Compton, J.R., and Benedetti, P. (2010). Labour, New Media and the Institutional Restructuring of Journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 11(4), 487–499.
- Deuze, M. (2006). Global Journalism Education: A Conceptual Approach. *Journalism Studies*, 7(1), 19–34.
- Deuze, M., and Witschge, T. (2018). Beyond Journalism: Theorizing the Transformation of Journalism. *Journalism* 16(2), 165–181. doi:10.1177/1464884916688550.
- Deuze, M., and Yeshua, D. (2001). Online Journalists Face New Ethical Dilemmas: Lessons from the Netherlands. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 16(4), 273–292.
- Drotner, K., and Erstad, O.O. (2014). Inclusive Media Literacies: Interlacing Media Studies and Education Studies. *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 4(2), 19–31.
- Farnsworth, V., Kleanthous, I., and Wenger-Trayner, E. (2016). Communities of Practice as a Social Theory of Learning: A Conversation with Etienne Wenger. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 64(2), 139–160.
- Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Brigham, L., Jones, S., and Smith, A. (2015). Students at the Academic-Workplace Boundary: Tourists and Sojourners in Practice-Based Education. In: *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning* edited by Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Mark Fenton-O'Creevy, Steven Hutchinson, Chris Kubiak, and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, 43–63. London and New York: Routledge.

Fenton-O’Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., Wenger-Trayner, B., and Wenger-Trayner, E. (2015). Challenges for Practice-Based Education. In: *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning*, edited by Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Mark Fenton-O’Creevy, Steven Hutchinson, Chris Kubiak, and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, 151–161. London and New York: Routledge.

Franklin, B., and Mensing, D. (2011). *Journalism Education, Training and Employment*. New York: Routledge.

Freidson, E. (2001). *Professionalism: The Third Logic*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fry, D. (1989). What Do Our Interns Know about Journalism Ethics? *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 4(2), 186–192.

Fröhlich, R., and Holtz-Bacha, C. (Eds.) (2003). *Journalism Education in Europe and North America: An International Comparison*. Cresskill: Hampton Press.

García-Avilés, J.A. (2014). Online Newsrooms as Communities of Practice: Exploring Digital Journalists’ Applied Ethics. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 29(4), 258–272.

Gollmitzer, M. (2014). Precariously Employed Watchdogs? Perceptions of Working Conditions Among Freelancers and Interns. *Journalism Practice*, 8(6), 826–841.

Gravengaard, G., and Rimestad, L. (2014). Socialising Journalist Trainees in the Newsroom – On How to Capture the Intangible Parts of the Socialising Process. *Nordicom Review*, 35(Special Issue), 81–95.

Haghani, F., Asgari, F., Zare, S., and Mahjoob-Moadab, H. (2013). Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Clinical Performance of the Internship Nursing Students. *Research in Medical Education*, 5(1), 22–30.

Hutchins, B., and Boyle, R. (2016). A Community of Practice: Sports Journalism, Mobile Media and Institutional Change. *Digital Journalism*, 5(5), 496–512.

Jaakkola, M. (2019). The Heterogeneity of the Nordic Journalism Education: The ‘Academic’ and the ‘Professional’ in the Bachelor’s Curricula. *The Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies*, 8(1), 3–24.

Kristensen, N.N. and From, U. (2012). Lifestyle Journalism: Blurring Boundaries. *Journalism Practice*, 6(1), 26–41.

Kyndt, E., Donche, V., Gijbels, D., and van Petegem, P. (2014). Workplace Learning Within Teacher Education: The Role of Job Characteristics and Goal Orientation. *Educational Studies*, 40(5), 515–532.

Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Li, L.C., Grimshaw, J.M., Nielsen, C., Judd, M., Coyte, P.C., and Graham, I.D. (2009). Use of Communities of Practice in Business and Health Care Sectors: A Systematic Review. *Implementation Science*, 4(27).

Madison, E. (2014). Training Digital Age Journalists: Blurring the Distinction between Students and Professionals. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 69(3), 314–324.

Meltzer, K., and Martik, E. (2017). Journalists as Communities of Practice: Advancing a Theoretical Framework for Understanding Journalism. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 41(3), 207–226.

Mensing, D., and Ryfe, D.M. (2013). Blueprint for Change: From the Teaching Hospital to the Entrepreneurial Model of Journalism Education. A paper presented at *ISOJ: The International Symposium on Online Journalism*, 2, 144–161. Available at https://www.academia.edu/3412374/Blueprint_for_Change_From_the_Teaching_Hospital_to_the_Entrepreneurial_Model_of_Journalism_Education, accessed 18 December 2018.

McDonough, K., Rodriguez L., and Prior-Miller, M.R. (2009). A Comparison of Student Interns and Supervisors Regarding Internship Performance Ratings. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 64(2): 139–155.

McKinney, S.E., Haberman, M., Stafford-Johnson, D., and Robinson, J. (2008). Developing Teachers for High-Poverty Schools: The Role of the Internship Experience. *Urban Education*, 43(1), 68–82.

Murillo, E. (2011). Communities of Practice in the Business and Organization Studies Literature. *Information Research*, 16(1).

Paul, P., Olson, J., Jackman, D., Gauthier, S., Gibson, B., Kabotoff, W., Weddell, A., and Hungler, K. (2011). Perceptions of Extrinsic Factors that Contribute to a Nursing Internship Experience. *Nurse Education Today*, 31(8): 763–767.

Peters, C., and Broersma, M.C. (2013). *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed Media Landscape*. London: Routledge.

Rimestad, L., and Gravengaard, G. (2016). Socialisation at the Morning Meeting: A Study of How Journalist Interns are Socialised to Present Ideas at Morning Meetings in the Newsroom. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 5(2), 199–218.

Robinson, S. (2013). Teaching 'Journalism as Process': A Proposed Paradigm for J-School Curricula in the Digital Age. *Teaching Journalism & Mass Communication*, 3(1), 1–12.

Schmitz Weiss A., and Domingo, D. (2010). Innovation Processes in Online Newsrooms as Actor-Networks and Communities of Practice. *New Media & Society*, 12(7), 1156–1171.

Strauss, A., and Corbin, J.M. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Sutherland, L.M., Scanlon, L.A., and Sperring, A. (2005). New Directions in Preparing Professionals: Examining Issues in Engaging Students in Communities of Practice through a School–University Partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(1), 79–92.

The Union of Journalists in Finland, 2016. Lehdistöen palkkaus [Salaries of the Press]. Available at <http://journalistiliitto.fi/fi/pelisaannot/toissa-lehdistossa/taulukkopalkat>, accessed 28 January 2019.

Waisbord, S. (2013). *Reinventing Professionalism: Journalism and News in Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wells, N., Free, M., and Adams, R. (2007). Nursing Research Internship: Enhancing Evidence-Based Practice Among Staff Nurses. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 37 (3): 135–143.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (Eds.) (2015). *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning*. London and New York: Routledge.

Wenger-Trayner, E., and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015). Learning in a Landscape of Practice: A Framework. In: *Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning*, edited by Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Mark Fenton-O'Creevy, Steven Hutchinson, Chris Kubiak and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, 13–29. London and New York: Routledge.

Willig, I. (2017). 'We All Think the Same': Internships, Craft and Conservation. In *Becoming a Journalist: Journalism Education in the Nordic Countries*, edited by Jan Fredrik Hovden, Gunnar Nygren and Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 39–49. Gothenburg: Nordicom.

Zelizer, B. (1993). Journalists as Interpretive Communities. *Critical Studies in Media and Communication*, 10 (3): 219–237.

Zelizer, B. (2013). Tools for the Future of Journalism. *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, 34(2), 142–152.