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Journalism Education

Journalism Education is the journal of the Association for Journalism Education a body representing educators in HE in the UK and Ireland. The aim of the journal is to promote and develop analysis and understanding of journalism education and of journalism, particularly when that is related to journalism education.

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Contributors

David Baines

David Baines is Senior Lecture in Journalism at Newcastle University, degree programme director of the MA in International Multi-Media Journalism, and teaches media law. He is a member of the AJE Committee.

Lorraine Brown

Lorraine Brown works as a Senior Academic in tourism education and qualitative research methods in the Faculty of Management at Bournemouth University. Her research interests include international education, identity and travel, literary tourism and culture contact.

Lily Canter

Dr Lily Canter is a principal lecturer and subject group leader for journalism at Sheffield Hallam University. She also freelances as a family and consumer journalist for The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph writing on everything from reusable nappies to debt collection. As a hybrid practitioner-academic Lily teaches a range of practical and academic subjects such as digital journalism, feature writing, research methods and journalism and society. Her research interests include digital journalism, social media, local media and journalism education. Lily is not afraid to rattle a few cages and is a game target for comment bait on Hold the Front Page.

Emer Connolly

Emer Connolly is a Lecturer in Journalism at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She has worked as a Journalist for several years in the print, broadcast and online media and continues to contribute to national and regional media in Ireland. She is the author of two books, 'Lying Eyes and the Hitman for Hire' (Gill and Macmillan, 2008) and 'Out On Bail: The crimes of Ireland's Bail Breakers' (Gill and Macmillan, 2011).

She has received three Justice Media Awards from the Law Society of Ireland for her work as a Journalist. She has a BA, Higher Diploma in Applied Communications and MA in Journalism from National University of Ireland, Galway. She recently completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Learning, Teaching and Assessment at Athlone Institute of Technology.

Myra Evans

Myra Evans is the Programme Leader for BA Journalism and a Senior Lecturer of Journalism at the University of the West of England teaching Broadcast Journalism, Newsroom Journalism and Multi-media Journalism. Myra is a qualified print and broadcast journalist with 20 years experience in journalism. Before joining UWE Myra worked as a video journalist for ITV West for many years. She has also worked on three local newspapers including the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* and the *Bristol Post* and as a press officer for the University of Bath.

Myra's interests lie in journalism pedagogy and in particular teaching through practice. She has recently completed research into practice-based learning in journalism education with a bursary from the Centre for Moving Image Research at UWE.

Ben Falk

Ben has been a professional journalist for 17 years and taught the subject at various institutions, including London Metropolitan and Birkbeck University, since 2008. He's currently a Senior Lecturer in Digital Journalism at Coventry University. As a freelance writer, author and broadcaster, he has written for Yahoo, BAFTA, The Sun and hundreds more, as well as working as a television producer for Sky1, ITV and Channel 4. He lived for three years in Los Angeles as the West Coast Bureau Chief of Press Association and has written five non-fiction books, including the definitely biography of Robert Downey Jr.

Viv Francis

Vivienne Francis is Course Leader of the BA (Hons) Journalism course at London College of Communication. Prior to joining academia, Vivienne spent a decade at the BBC, joining as a broadcast assistant in local radio, eventually becoming a producer/director in TV Current Affairs. As an academic, she has project led partnerships with Transport for London, Creative Skillset and the Home Office. Vivienne is currently working on funding project that supports refugee and exiled journalists re-establish their careers in the UK.

Aleksander Kocic

Aleksandar Kocic is a journalism lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University and a journalist with BBC Radio. Aleksandar has been a radio journalist for over 30 years, starting in local radio in his native Serbia, before joining BBC World Service in the early '90's. He has been teaching journalism since 2010. His research interests include public service broadcasting models and pros and cons of teaching practical journalistic skills.

Priya Rajaseker

Priya Rajasekar is a freelance journalist, columnist and lecturer in multiplatform journalism at Coventry University. She was former Associate Professor and Head of the New Media Department at the Asian College of Journalism in India. Her areas of interest and expertise include Mobile Journalism, digital Journalism, innovation and disruption in news media, entrepreneurial journalism.

Barry Richards

Barry Richards is Professor of Political Psychology in the Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University. His books include Emotional Governance: Politics, Media and Terror (Palgrave, 2007) and the forthcoming What is Holding Us Together? (Karnac Books, 2016).

Hilary Scott

Hilary Scott is a senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Northampton. She teaches a broad range of subjects with a print, online and social media focus. Her career began in the early '90s as a cub reporter for the Bedfordshire Times, and she stayed in regional newspapers for 19 years before freelancing as a columnist, sub-editor and press relations specialist. Since joining the University of Northampton in 2009, she has become a judge for the Society of Editors regional press awards and sits on the BBC Working Panel on local journalism. Her research interests include journalism work experience and the future of local news

Katie Stewart

Katie teaches on the Journalism Studies BA at the University of Sheffield. She joined the department in 2004 after some stints of teaching broadcast journalism at Hallam and Sheffield universities both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She is the leader of all the broadcast journalism modules.

She began her journalistic career in radio news, working as a reporter and presenter for Northants 96, Metro FM, BBC Radio Cumbria and BBC Radio Cleveland. She was later a reporter and presenter for ITV Yorkshire's regional news programme, Calendar. She became the 'Face of Calendar South' – the news bulletins broadcast from Sheffield. As well as leading broadcast journalism teaching on the BA, Katie is Admissions Tutor and Widening Participation co-ordinator.

Comment & Criticism

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They are published to allow journalism academics to give voice to major issues with only limited research in order to seek collaborators, spark debate, or produce a proposal prior to fuller research. To comment on all papers go to www.journalism-education.org

An outline argument for dropping shorthand

David Baines, University of Newcastle

I have never heard anyone demanding that we teach our students how to use an em-rule, sizing wheel and font book before we let them get to grips with InDesign or Quark Express. Or that before they learn how to record and edit video, they should learn to shoot, develop and print 16mm film - and edit it with a razor blade.

But in this digital age it remains an article of faith for some in journalism education and in parts of the industry that they must be taught shorthand.

In an interview on the BBC's *Today Programme* a few years ago, NCTJ's chair Kim Fletcher said that beyond its practical implications, 'the notion of learning shorthand - I think it demonstrates a real dedication to the craft. And it means in a day when so many people are jumping up blogging, calling themselves journalists. You go and take the trouble to learn shorthand, and it suggests you're serious about things'.

A crisis of identity

Fletcher was offering the ability to do shorthand as a critical definer of a real journalist, something which sets her apart from all those others who are 'jumping up blogging, calling themselves journalists'. Such a marker of distinction might be comforting when 'the people formerly known as the audience' have become 'competitor colleagues' (Rosen, 2006) and traditional models of journalism work in local and national newspapers are under enormous stress.

Learning shorthand is tough, it is painful, but a rite of passage should be. It is journalism's equivalent of adolescent circumcision or a duelling scar: a marker of adulthood, of seniority in the tribe. There is also an echo here of Kierkegaard in, appropriately, his first lecture on communication: 'The task must be made difficult for only the difficult inspires the noble-hearted.'

But there must also be some point to that task. There are plenty of first rate journalists producing first rate journalism in print, on line, on radio, on TV, who have never done shorthand - or who once learned and have since lost it through neglect. And it is unfair to say that they have failed to demonstrate a 'dedication to the craft'.

And offering an ability do shorthand as a critical defining mark of a true journalist puts forward a very limited concept of what journalism is. The simple reproduction of speech leads often to the kind of formulaic reports with which we are all familiar: 'A said …. B said …. C said'. *The Guardian's* Nick Davies bemoaned this form of journalism at the AJE's annual conference at Sheffield University in September 2008 and called for students to be taught not simply to report what people say, but to investigate, check the facts, dig out the truth.

In an interview, the journalist should be thinking hard about the questions she is asking, listening carefully to and thinking critically about the answers. Concentrating on taking a verbatim shorthand note distracts from all this important stuff – when any one of numerous electronic devices can do the job far more efficiently and accurately. And to train journalists today to produce reports in a formulaic manner is to train them for redundancy. Such reports are already being produced by algorithms in the realm of sports and business and even of events such as earthquakes. And the sophistication of these programmes will only increase.

Journalism education in the university

Fletcher's choice of words in that *Today Programme* interview was telling. I do not propose to revisit arid arguments about whether journalism is a craft or a profession, but he was evoking, and endorsing, the traditional craft-school, indentured approach to journalism training. This was how earlier generations of journalists were prepared to meet the needs of local newspaper editors as they took their first steps on the career ladder. It was a functionalist model that valorised the acquisition of skills, but it also largely discounted the equal necessity of nurturing critical, analytic thinking, and the development of the reflexive, philosophical and theoretical tools necessary to inform professional practice. It offered little or no systematic consideration, for example, of what constituted the public good and how journalists should contribute to that.

Journalism education has now largely moved to the university and is delivered at degree level, both undergraduate and postgraduate. A university degree in the Arts and Humanities, where journalism is usually located is not a training course to produce candidates who meet the immediate requirements of a particular group of employers, but to produce 'thoughtful citizens and potential contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of the society' (de Burgh 2003: 98). As de Burgh says in his critique of journalism education: 'It is the very combination of the reflexive practical and the applied theoretical which makes journalism such a terrific subject' at university (2003: 105).

Shorthand does not fit comfortably into such a degree course. Learning shorthand is often compared by its promoters to learning a language, but that is a false comparison. Learning a language is a creative and intellectual pursuit, it is an entry into another culture, developing new perspectives on the world. Learning shorthand is neither intellectually demanding nor creative, but repetitive and mechanistic. The QAA's UK Quality Code for Academic Standards offers a matrix of descriptors for levels of academic achievement. Among these, it states that:

> *Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have*

developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively. (QAA, 2014: 26)

Should a student have achieved that level, but fail their degree for shortcomings on a shorthand module, I suspect that that decision would be open to challenge.

Shorthand also represents a severe challenge bordering on an impediment, for students with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. It can be physically draining for students who suffer from muscular disabilities, and disabilities of the arm, shoulder or hand. Is it fair that the award of professional diplomas (or HE degrees) should be available only to those physically able to complete a component that some may find cognitively or physically exhausting? Is it right that we should continue to laud a skill that simply compounds the lack of diversity in the modern newsroom?

Shorthand is also a major challenge for students speaking English as a second language; in an increasingly globalised journalistic world, do we really want to offer preferential treatment to journalists by dint of where they were born?

But shorthand is not even very good at doing what it is supposed to do – recording speech. Leaving aside its impracticality when you have a biro, a damp notepad and it is drizzling, advocates for the necessity of shorthand tend to place great faith in the NCTJ's standard of 100 words per minute. But people usually speak more quickly than that. The news on radio or TV is delivered at around 180 words per minute. And in my experience, groups of journalists would often gather to confer after a speech or press conference, or part of a trial to reach agreement on what was actually said. It is important to report speech accurately and today, to ensure a high level of accuracy, most journalists use recording devices such as their phones. Especially when their report is going to be posted to a website, or accessed on a mobile, and the editor wants to feature the drama of the spoken word, or of the full episode captured on video.

Technology has moved forward

However, two pragmatic arguments are often put forward for maintaining shorthand and these need to be addressed.

One was put forward by Fletcher in that *Today* interview: 'If you have a shorthand note you can find the quote very quickly. You go in with a tape recorder, or a digital recorder, and if you've spent an hour in there with your recorder you've got an hour of tape to go through, that takes quite a long time.'

A fair point, but technology has addressed it. Modern digital voice recorders allow the user to mark important points as they record and to return immediately to those points in the recording. And there are now pens available which allow you to take notes while they record speech and, by later placing the nib on any point in your notes, will replay what was being recorded when you made that particular note. The recordings and notes can also be transferred to a computer or any other digital device.

Advocates of shorthand usually refer to it as a skill, but it is less a skill than a technology; and as such it is vulnerable to being displaced by newer, more efficient and better ways of doing what it was designed to do. These days anyone can type with their voice directly into a document in real-time, so long as they have a laptop with built in microphone, access to a Google Chrome browser and an account to access Google docs. Yes, those documents will need checking and correcting. Nothing is perfect. But technology has finally caught up with shorthand and rendered it obsolete, just as it is doing with many other dull, repetitive tasks.

Recording the courts

The other pragmatic argument is that reporters are not allowed to record in court, and I will address this in detail. It will be a surprise to some, but that is not strictly true. Section 9 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981 gives judges and magistrates discretion to allow the recording of proceedings in their courts. At the moment they are rarely asked to exercise that discretion, but we should be encouraging reporters to make those applications. This is an issuer that was addressed by the Department of Justice Criminal Procedure Rule Committee and their guidance to judges came into force in October 2011.

The legislation which governs the making of recordings in court is set out below:

Contempt of Court Act 1981

S.9 Use of tape recorders.

Subject to subsection (4) below, it is a contempt of court—

to use in court, or bring into court for use, any tape recorder or other instrument for recording sound, ***except with the leave of the court;*** (my emphasis)

to publish a recording of legal proceedings made by means of any such instrument, or any recording derived directly or indirectly from it, by playing it in the hearing of the public or any section of the public, or to dispose of it or any recording so derived, with a view to such publication;

to use any such recording in contravention of any conditions of leave granted under paragraph (a).

(2) Leave under paragraph (a) of subsection (1) may be granted or refused at the discretion of the court, and if granted may be granted subject to such conditions as the court thinks proper with respect to the use of any recording made pursuant to the leave; and where leave has been granted the court may at the like discretion withdraw or amend it either generally or in relation to any particular part of the proceedings.

(3) Without prejudice to any other power to deal with an act of contempt under paragraph (a) of subsection (1), the court may order the instrument, or any recording made with it, or both, to be forfeited; and any object so forfeited shall (unless the court otherwise determines on application by a person appearing to be the owner) be sold or otherwise disposed of in such manner as the court may direct.

(4) This section does not apply to the making or use of sound recordings for purposes of official transcripts of proceedings.

The Department of Justice Criminal Procedure Rule Committee considered Section 9 and the issues raised by recording in court by the press and others and published the following Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction effective from October 3, 2011.

Department of Justice Criminal Procedure Rule Committee

The Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction, October 2011

(Part I Practice Directions of General Application

Part 1.2, Unofficial recording proceedings.

www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/criminal/practice-direction/part1#id6178056

(1.2.1 of the Practice Directions sets out the terms of the CCA 1981, as above)

1.2.2 The discretion given to the Court to grant, withhold or withdraw leave to use tape recorders or to impose conditions as to the use of the recording is unlimited, but the following factors may be relevant to its exercise:

(a) the existence of any reasonable need on the part of the applicant for leave, whether a litigant or a person connected with the press or broadcasting, for the recording to be made; (my emphasis)

(b) the risk that the recording could be used for the purpose of briefing witnesses out of court;

(c) any possibility that the use of the recorder would disturb the proceedings or distract or worry any witnesses or other participants.

I.2.3 Consideration should always be given whether conditions as to the use of a recording made pursuant to leave should be imposed. The identity and role of the applicant for leave and the nature of the subject matter of the proceedings may be relevant to this.

I.2.4 The particular restriction imposed by section 9(1)(b) applies in every case, but may not be present to the mind of every applicant to whom leave is given. It may therefore be desirable on occasion for this provision to be drawn to the attention of those to whom leave is given.

I.2.5 The transcript of a permitted recording is intended for the use of the person given leave to make it and is not intended to be used as, or to compete with, the official transcript mentioned in section 9(4).

With regard to 1.2.2(a) in the Practice Directions: Reporters have traditionally used shorthand to record court proceedings and judges and magistrates have not as a matter of course permitted reporters to use sound recording devices to support their note-taking. But in drafting the original Act, Parliament clearly recognised that there were occasions when it would be appropriate to permit non-official recordings by people involved in cases. The Department of Justice Criminal Procedure Rule Committee recognised in the practice directions referred to above that it was appropriate for a court (including Crown and Magistrates courts, inquests and tribunals) to take into account a ‘reasonable need’ on behalf of an applicant to make a recording, and that such an applicant may be ‘a person connected with the press or broadcasting’.

Asking permission to record the proceedings

The ‘reasonable need’ a journalist would put forward would be to enable him or her to make a ‘fair an accurate’ report’ to be ‘published contemporaneously with the proceedings’ – criteria such a report must meet in order to hold privilege under S7 (1) of the Defamation Act 2013, replacing and extending the scope of S14 (3) of the 1996 Act.

With regard to 1.2.2 (b), the judge must take into account ‘the risk that the recording could be used for the purpose of briefing witnesses out of court’

In the first instance, as the Practice Directions make clear, the general prohibition in the 1981 Act of S9 (1) (b) would apply and a reporter breaching those terms would be liable to penalty under the Act. A journalist would also be putting his or her employer in jeopardy: a double disincentive against a breach.

But a degree of trust is inevitably required. From time to time judges have exercised their discretion under S9 to permit recording by members of the press as an aid to making an accurate report. Mark Turnbull, a blind reporter (now sadly dead) who used to work for the BBC on Teesside, was permitted to use a tape recorder when covering the Crown and Magistrates courts, inquests and tribunals, in that area.

If a journalist is permitted to use a recording device because he or she is blind or otherwise disabled, and is trusted not to publish or play the recording in the hearing of the public, that permission to record is granted simply in order to allow a journalist who has no other way of taking an accurate note to do so. The expression of trust in the journalist not to misuse the recording is not conditional upon him or her having a disability. A lack of shorthand may not be a disability, but it is an impediment to a reporter making a fair and accurate report, and should equally be considered by the court to constitute a ‘reasonable need’ to make a recording to ensure the accuracy of her notes. But I would argue that a reporter who did possess good shorthand would nevertheless be making a reasonable request to record the proceedings if she did so in order to ensure that there was an accurate record against which her shorthand note could be checked should doubt arise over a particular passage. She might, for example, have misheard it or might not have taken a note of an exchange that later turned out to be significant.

With regard to 1.2.2(c) Having regard to ‘any possibility that the use of the recorder would disturb the proceedings or distract or worry any witnesses or other participants’.

Modern digital audio recording devices are small and inconspicuous, have built-in microphones and can record for many hours at a time. There would be no need to use a microphone on a cable connected to the device, which would make it obvious that the proceedings were being recorded. There would be no need to change tapes at intervals. The digital devices have no moving parts and are noiseless in their operation. Some recorders, but not all, do emit a brief beep when switched to record mode.

With regard to I.2.3: Consideration should always be given whether conditions as to the use of a recording made pursuant to leave should be imposed. The identity and role of the applicant for leave and the nature of the subject matter of the proceedings may be relevant to this.

There would be no problem with the judge imposing a condition that, for example, any recording be deleted once it had been transcribed or used to ensure or confirm the accuracy of a note.

With regard to I.2.4 (need to remind the person making the recording that the prohibition in 9 (1) (b) applies in every case) and I.2.5 (that the recording is not an official recording and is for personal use). These would not stand in the way of the proposal that recording be allowed.

It has long been assumed by journalism educators that recording in court is not allowed and student journalists are warned about this in their media law classes. But judges have had discretion in this matter since 1981 and since 2011, they have been advised to exercise that discretion – and specifically, to exercise that discretion to the benefit of a person connected with the press or broadcasting.

This has not been the only movement in this direction from the judiciary.

Concerns over unreported courts

In March 2011, the then Lord Chief Justice LCJ Judge, voiced his concern that courts were going unreported and his belief that the courts could take advantage of new technologies in order to facilitate better, and more, reporting of judicial proceedings.

LCJ Judge said:

'My fervent hope is that the advance of new technology will make it easier for the media to be 'present' in court, and that the present trend for fewer and fewer reporters in every court will come to an end, or at any rate, that court proceedings will be reported.....

'.... Of course we - judiciary and media - must use all the technology available to us to ensure speedy justice, ease of communication, and all the many advantages which may come our way.' (Judge, 2011: 11)

Judges might initially be reluctant to allow journalists to record their proceedings. But I suggest that if it became routine for reporters to ask for permission, it would soon become routine for judges to grant permission, as they do now for reporters to tweet from court. While journalism educators are priming their charges to challenge reporting restrictions they should also be priming them to ask permission to record – in accordance, of course with S9 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981. Judges were initially resistant to reporters using Twitter to report from court. But, in part in response to then LCJ Judge's reflection on technology and court reporting, this resistance has largely disappeared and that has led to something approaching a (small scale) renaissance of the art, if you know where to look. The most high profile, and arguably the most high-impact court reporting in the UK in recent years hasn't been transcribed into shorthand – its been typed up in 140 characters or less, and published in near-real time direct from the court room. Just look at James Doleman's coverage of the Coulson perjury trial; Peter Jukes' coverage of the hacking trial, or more recently, Martin Hickman's coverage of the Neil Wallis trial. Today's court reporters prefer Twitter to Teeline.

Conclusion

This paper has contested the argument that shorthand is a marker of the real journalist, and countered the case that it remains an essential skill. But there are some advocates of shorthand, in education and in some parts of the industry, for whom it seems to be almost an article of faith that people who want to become journalists must learn shorthand.

It is difficult to challenge dogma through reason alone - but the validity of the doctrine is being questioned, even in the inner sanctum. In June this year NCTJ CEO Joanne Butcher said questions needed to be asked about the 'relevance of touch typing, coding and shorthand'. I submit that this paper has answered those questions, at least insofar as shorthand is concerned. Coding and touch typing are matter for another occasion.

References

Department of Justice Criminal Procedure Rule Committee

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Part 1.2, Unofficial recording proceedings.

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Articles

All papers in the Articles section are peer reviewed and discuss the latest research in journalism and journalism education. These are intended to inform, educate and spark debate and discussion. Please join in this debate by going to www.journalism-education.org to have your say and find out what others think.

Evidence and ideology: moderating the critique of media Islamophobia

Barry Richards and Lorraine Brown, Bournemouth University

Abstract

Recent studies of British media coverage of Islam, influenced by Said's critique of 'Orientalism', appear to have established that 'Islamophobic' stereotyping is highly characteristic of that coverage.

However, a review of these studies finds that they fall into two groups. One comprises substantial empirical studies, which give grounds for serious concern but also indicate that this is a complex area in which some journalists are making efforts to avoid negative generalisations. In the other group of studies there is very little systematic empirical material, but a tendency towards polemical critique. This second group of studies has been influential in building a broad consensus about media Islamophobia. Some potentially damaging consequences of this consensus are discussed.

Introduction

Journalism training should arguably include an examination of how the profession is seen by the public, and of current debates or controversies about its role in society. This paper is concerned with the issue of how British journalists represent Islam and Muslims.

At present there is a rather one-sided 'debate' in progress on this topic, comprising frequent assertions that the British news media are deeply Islamophobic. However, the evidence for this view is less extensive than is often assumed, and the conclusions it supports are more qualified than statements which some writers on this topic have made. We find that while there are some substantial empirical studies, all of which give grounds for serious concern about aspects of media coverage of Islam, there are a number of other studies which advance criticisms of the media that far exceed their evidence and the rigour of their analyses. Media research in this area appears to be at risk of creating a self-reproducing consensus that is increasingly divorced from evidence. Situated as they are at the interface between academic research and practising journalists, journalism students and educators have a particular need to take a more informed and qualified view of media Islamophobia.

Starting point

The impetus to undertake this review of research came from a study (Brown et al., 2015; Brown and Richards, 2016) of how a small sample of international Muslim students in the UK viewed British news media representations of Islam. Their views were strongly critical of anti-Islamic coverage. However the self-reported consumption by respondents in this study of British media was very minimal or non-existent, which raised the question of how they knew that these media were Islamophobic. We speculated (Brown and Richards, 2016) that there may be a process of 'passive media consumption', analogous to passive smoking. Or had our respondents been influenced by a climate of opinion shaped by academic research on this topic? This prompted the following review of research on Islamophobia in the British media. It suggests that although there are some substantial problems in media discourses around Islam, some of which are not easily solved, there has also been a tendency for research to spin off into polemic. This carries a number of risks, which we will examine later.

Islamophobia in the media: the evidence

a) The leading research paradigm

The major starting point of the critique of media Islamophobia is Edward Said's (1981) *Covering Islam*. This is an erudite and eloquent polemic, directed particularly at influential anti-Islam intellectuals of its time (Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes, Judith Miller, *et al.*). Said considers an unsystematic sample of reporting during and after the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979, mainly from the US media, but with some British examples. He suggests that there was a strong tendency for the media to present Islam as a negative 'Other', a part of the Western outlook he termed 'Orientalism'. A recurrent and central point in his analysis, and one which remains crucial today, as will be seen below, is the tendency in news contexts for Islam to be treated as a given and homogeneous reality. Said was perhaps less prescient in his support for the view that political Islam had failed, and in his scepticism about the value of the idea of fundamentalism, but that is another matter. His work rapidly gained iconic status amongst Western intellectuals, and many journalists who have been through university in the last three decades must have been influenced by or at least been broadly aware of his critique. Indeed a study of the content of British broadsheets and their French equivalents from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s concluded that by the 1990s there was a variety of media discourses about and around Islam, including some based on a media reflexivity that embodied Said's critique of Orientalism. This research by Malcolm Brown (2006) used an unsystematic, convenience sample, and the author does not attempt to judge the preponderance or influence of different types of representation. His overall contention is that during this period there occurred a transition in the leading popular stereotype of the Muslim from exotic to fanatic. Yet alongside this move within 'Orientalism' there were examples of journalism which were critical of all 'Othering' discourses, and which sought to de-construct the homogenising of Islam. So critical media studies was apparently having an impact on journalism some time before 9/11 and its consequences for representation.

Nonetheless, just before 9/11 an article appeared which set the tone for a number of later studies in that it fixed Said's Orientalism thesis as a critique of the British media in general. Abbas (2001) offered an application of Said's theory to the British press. Though describing itself as a work of theory, his article made some very large empirical claims. After somewhat fragmentary discussions of the demography of Muslims in the UK and of press ownership, and a critique of the term 'fundamentalism', the author comes to the abrupt conclusion that 'The West finds it unproblematic to infer that the Qur'an is a violent and extremist text. In short, "Islamic fundamentalists" are seen as the *true* Muslims and all Muslims are fundamentalists.' (Abbas 2001: 250). While the empirical meaning of 'the West' may be hard to grasp, we might infer that it is the 'press' in general who are seeing Muslims in the manner described. This large and unsupported generalisation is illustrated with the example of the extensive media coverage given to the 1989 incident in which copies of Rushdie's novel 'The Satanic Verses' were publicly burnt. The coverage is analysed as a hostile distortion of an action which was 'a legitimate symbol of the hurt and frustration that the book had caused them [Muslims]', and was a denial of their right to freedom of expression.

Abbas seems here to be defending a particular moment of intolerance, while criticising the media focus on the activities of intolerant extremists rather than on Islam as a peaceful and tolerant religion. Still, much later work trod the path set by Said's critique, though with considerable variation in the use of evidence.

b) Major empirical studies

There are four projects with data of sufficient scope and quality to contribute evidence to the debate. The first of these was the work of Elizabeth Poole on print media reporting. Poole (2002) studied broadsheet reporting across three years (1994 to 1996, a total of 6507 articles). She additionally sampled the same newspapers (the *Guardian* and *Times* and their sister Sunday titles) in the following year, along with reporting in two tabloids (*The Sun* and the 'mid-market' *Daily Mail*). She followed up this work with a later study (Poole 2006) after the start of the Iraq War in 2003. Overall, she found that coverage of Islam tended strongly towards negativization and problematization, and that there was evidence in support of the thesis that an Orientalist discourse was to be found in the British press. Quantitative analysis of topic frequencies showed that Islam was most commonly presented in relation to problems or contentious areas – fundamentalism, criminality, educational separatism, the Rushdie affair, etc. Yet she also concluded that 'Orientalist' theory 'neither embodies the diversity of representation within specific national contexts nor takes into account the distinctions made between Muslims based on national/ethnic stereotypes, which results in a more diverse though still limited and reductive range.' (Poole, 2002/2009: 50-51). She found British Islam had a wider range of representations than did global Islam, but was still tied to a narrow range of negativising topics. This tethering of Islam to negative topics and the predictable associations it thereby acquires is a recurrent finding.

Moore *et al.* (2008) studied a large sample of newspaper items from 2000 to 2008, and found that the use of terms such as Islam and Muslim was strongly associated with themes of terrorism, extremism and controversial aspects of Islamic culture (with stories about such adverse cultural differences becoming more frequent across the period studied). In frequency counts of words juxtaposed to 'Islam', 'radical' was seventeen times more common than 'moderate' (Moore *et al.*, 2008: 24). They also found that visual images used in this reporting predominantly showed Muslims engaged in activities and in places associated with extremism. Their findings applied to the broadsheet press almost as much as to the tabloid titles.

Flood *et al.* (2012) conducted an extensive study of all Islam-related items on three evening news programmes, one on each of BBC1, France2 and Russia's Channel 1. Programmes were recorded nightly for two years from November 2006, yielding a total of over 30,000 news items. In their conclusion, the authors state: 'The BBC exhibited an admirable desire to frame domestic terrorism in impartial terms which guarded against any automatic assumption of Muslim involvement in terrorist incidents' (2012: 244). In the BBC's domestic coverage, they report a tension between on the one hand a wish to stress that the great majority of the Muslim community is 'loyal', and on the other the use of a 'radicalisation' model which implied some responsibility for that community in its providing spaces for that radicalisation process to occur. This was an example of the broad tension between a 'tendency to demarcate an alien Muslim Other' and a 'European tolerance project whose mission is precisely to accommodate otherness' (2012: 248). Overall then this study 'dispels the notion of a uniformly Islamophobic European media as resolutely as it rejects the notion that news bulletins bear no responsibility for popular anti-Muslim sentiment' (2012: 255). That responsibility they saw to derive in considerable part from an adherence to conventional news values which demand conflict and damage, rather than to an ideological need for 'Islamophobic' framing.

Familiarity with Muslims in one's own country, and concerns with community relations, may make journalists and others less likely to apply Islamophobic stereotypes to domestic terrorism than to terrorism abroad. Hence Flood *et al.*'s observation (similar to one of Poole's conclusions, see above) that the effort to separate Islam as a whole from terrorism is sometimes greater in domestic coverage than in international news (as Ibrahim [2010] had found in a study of the US media).

Finally, Baker *et al.* (2013; see also Baker, 2010) used linguistic corpus analysis, a technique of quantitative analysis, on a very large body of UK print media material. They assembled over 200,000 articles from the national press between January 1998 and August 2005. Central to their method was the identification of the most frequent 'collocates', words that appear next or near to any of a list of index words, which in this case were words such as Islam, Muslim(s), and Islamic. Collocation frequencies can be interpreted to show broad patterns of associative meaning. As might be expected, words such as 'extremist' and 'radical' were found to be frequent collocates of the index words. Less predictably, however, the most frequent were words such as 'world' and 'community'. While this may seem more benign than we might have expected, the researchers see it pointing to the tendency to homogenise Islam, which of course carries the risk that all or most Muslims will be seen in the negative light of political extremism. Baker *et al.* conclude that 'British Muslims… would feel justified in claiming that sections of the British press were against them' (2013: 267). However they offer a nuanced discussion of their findings, in which they are careful not to present a simplified picture of malign media. In particular they note that it is 'difficult to assign motives' for negative stereotyping (2013: 269), and they recognise the importance of news values (here, the appeal to audiences of conflict, violence and threat) rather than ideological bias in steering reportage. They summarise the larger patterns observed by saying 'the presentation of Islam and Muslims in the UK press is anything but uniform' (2013: 66).

c) Other studies

There are a number of other articles, chapters and books published since 2001 the titles, abstracts or jacket summaries of which give the impression that they offer systematic empirical evidence. Another early study of broadsheets parallel to that of Poole was by Richardson (2004; 2006). On the face of it his dataset of 2540 items from the period October 1997 to January 1998 could have supported some well-founded conclusions. These were articles which mentioned Islam or a Muslim individual, organisation or country, or were about specific Islam-related issues such as the Luxor bombing, or Muslim schools. He coded this material for the presence of over 80 variables, and reports finding four themes in all of which Islam was presented as a threat (military, terroristic, political and social). Underlying these themes were processes involving the separation, differentiation and negativisation of Muslims. However his 2004 book does not give an overview of what the variables were nor how the coding was done. His conclusions seem to be based more on a Critical Discourse Analysis of the texts, of which a number of selected examples are given. Many of these specimen analyses are very tendentious. For example, a sports journalist is criticised (2004: 123ff.) for concealing Islamophobia, by writing about racial prejudice in cricket and not about anti-Islamic prejudice. However there is no reason from the evidence given to think that the journalist's use of the category 'Asian' was a misleading one. Richardson's analyses are generally presented in a very rhetorical way that seems to reflect the author's *a priori* views about 'Othering' and Islamophobia. He states that the most fundamental reason for the study was 'to contribute to a better understanding of … the prevalence … of anti-Islam racism in elite discourse' (2004: xviii).

Later, in another paper, Richardson (2006) drew on the same dataset to point out that Muslim sources are used less than non-Muslim ones in articles reporting on Islam-related topics. This may point to a problem in sourcing practices, although since these articles are probably on topics of concern to the general public it might be reasonable for a substantial number of non-Muslim sources to be referred to. Similarly, the greater frequency with which Muslims are quoted when Islam is seen as a factor in explaining the news in question does not necessarily point to a selective exclusion of Muslims on other matters: sources designated as Christian are probably not frequently called upon unless Christianity is seen as substantively linked to the story's topic.

An empirical study commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA 2007) has become a frequently-cited source on media Islamophobia. The research was undertaken by a team of nine, seven of whom had previous experience of writing about or campaigning against 'Islamophobia'. The bulk of their ninety-four page report is given over to interviews with selected Muslim journalists, a qualitative analysis of four case studies selected from the print media, a critique of one edition of the BBC current affairs programme *Panorama*, and some contextual material such as polling data. Eight pages are devoted to a more systematic study of all British national print titles in a 'chosen at random' but 'typical' week in May 2006. In the print media for that week the researchers found 352 articles which contained some reference to 'Islam', 'Muslim', 'Islamic', 'Islamist' and other related words, and classified those articles as 'positive', 'negative' or 'neutral' in their representation of Islam.

We are not told how the classification of articles was undertaken, other than that it was based on the 'associated context and subject matter' of the article. Thus if the word 'Muslim' appeared in a story about the 7/7 bombings in London or about a speech by an Iranian leader, that story would be counted as a negative portrayal of Islam. The great majority of stories were about such conflict-laden topics. The week chosen saw the publication of the official report into the 7/7 attacks, although arguably such topics would in any week be those most likely to arise in conjunction with Islam. The overall categorisation of stories was then bound to be heavily negative, even though many stories may have contained no negativity whatsoever towards Islam or Muslims per se. Some of the articles did not actually refer explicitly to Islam, but were ones where a word such as 'extremist' was used in a context such that 'it was reasonable to assume that an association with Islam or Muslims would be made' (GLA, 2007: 17). Again, the operational definition of 'reasonable' is not given. So the researchers also counted in their 'negative' total those articles which did not explicitly refer to Islam or Muslims at all - but where a word such as 'extremist' may - in the researchers' view - have led readers to think of Islam. This somewhat creative approach to coding gave the project additional help in reaching its conclusion that 91% of articles assessed were negative in their representation of Islam.

This leads us to an issue at the heart of debate about allegations of Islamophobia in the media. Media content that links Islam only or predominantly with terrorism and fanaticism is going to produce an effect of 'guilt by association' at least for some sections of the audience. There will no doubt be examples of language and image which explicitly encourage that association. But it cannot be assumed that all or even most of the 91% 'negative' articles were doing this. The GLA research made no distinction between articles that wrote only of 'Islam' and those that used a terminology of 'Islamism' or 'Islamic extremism' when discussing terrorism. Some reportage and commentary may employ this terminology in order to indicate that the problem is not 'Islam' per se but fundamentalist, politicised and violent forms of it. The GLA study pays no attention to this distinction between Islam and Islamism. In fact, it states that the distinction is an 'over-simplification' (2007: 8), which – the authors suggest - can lead readers to the conclusion that all Islam is extremist. No evidence is offered to support this counter-intuitive, indeed somewhat illogical, argument.

A different but related argument is to be found in a paper by Shaw (2012) who cites a post 7/7 *Daily Mail* piece and highlights the references to 'al Qaeda', 'extremists', 'radical imams' and 'violent and fundamentalist meetings'. He argues that these are evidence of 'explosive and offensive stereotypes', on the grounds that they 'are just too easily conflated with Muslims' (Shaw, 2012: 518). However this allegedly easy conflation is simply asserted, without further analysis of how or why, and amongst whom, it should occur. While any reportage or editorialising on 7/7 is likely to have fuelled anti-Muslim feeling amongst some people with underlying prejudice, in the piece quoted it is hard to see how the text could have been more explicit in its choice of terms such as the above to describe violent Islamism, and its avoidance of general references to Islam or Muslims as a whole.

Shaw does not suggest, as the GLA researchers do, that the alleged conflation is somehow due to the attempt to *distinguish* Islam from Islamism. Instead he seems to imply that it is Islamophobic stereotyping to draw attention to the existence of Islamist extremists. This is tantamount to claiming that any reportage of the activities of self-declared Muslims is necessarily a slur upon all Muslims. If accepted, this argument would require that the Northern Ireland conflict should have been reported with no references to the Protestant or Catholic affiliations of the protagonists.

Common to both the GLA report and Shaw's paper is the assumption that audiences will conflate terms such as 'extremism' with Islam as a whole (even when Islam is not explicitly mentioned). The charge against the media of Islamophobia therefore rests in part on an assumption about how audiences will receive media content. The assumption is that audience prejudice will cancel the efforts that parts of the media may be making to protect Islam by differentiating it from Islamism.

This question of whether Islam is distinguished from Islamism, by audiences or journalists, and if so how and with what consequences, is at the heart of the debates about Islam in the media. We lack the audience research which could tell us how much news audiences and readerships can and do make that distinction. Since politicised and violent takfiri Islamism is a prominent force in global politics, and has to be reported as such, the task of the media is to report on it in ways that clearly separate it from peaceful Islam, and that enable audiences to understand the multiple forms that all religions take. And one task of media researchers is to gather evidence on the effort and success of the news media in creating news frames which defuse or contain the potential for violent Islamism to inflame social tensions.

However apart from the four projects described earlier, there is very little systematic evidence of that type available, less than the number of publications on this topic might suggest. Shaw's paper claims to be based on a Critical Discourse Analysis of articles selected 'randomly' (2012: 517) from eight British newspapers in the three months following the 7/7 attacks. However it offers only passing references to or brief quotations from eight articles from seven newspapers, and gives no indication of how CDA or any other systematic analytic method was used.

In a number of other recent publications there is a mismatch between the strength of claims made about Islamophobic media content and the strength of the evidence adduced to support those claims. Khiabany and Williamson (2012: 134), in a strongly polemical piece, assert that British Muslims face 'demonisation in the media'. Their evidence for this is a series of selected quotations from four British commentators known for their particularly critical views (albeit differing ones) on Islam (Trevor Kavanagh, Rod Liddle, Martin Amis and Christopher Hitchens).

Khiabany and Williamson also repeat the attack made by the GLA report on those who wish to distinguish Islam from Islamism. They cite the *Guardian*'s Polly Toynbee in connection with the view that the threat is not Islam but Islamism, i.e. Islamic fundamentalism. This view is taken by them to be part of the problem, because, they claim, Islam is collapsed into Islamism and so opposition to Islamism becomes an attack on Islam. They offer no further description of, nor evidence for, this alleged perceptual collapse, whereby the diversity that is Islam becomes lost in the specific contemporary phenomenon of global militant jihadism. While, as acknowledged above, some media content and everyday public attitudes may be based on such a collapse, we might reason that this makes it all the more necessary to make the distinction, as much other media content continues to do (and also as many Islamists do themselves, in their contrasting of the 'jihadi' with the apostate). This distinction is arguably the key to responsible reporting. Yet following Kundnani (2008), Khiabany and Williamson (2012) imply that the distinction is made only to enable those who make it to avoid charges of racism, when their real purpose is to attack Islam per se. They present no evidence for this allegation. Moreover the authors themselves later in the article seem to *advocate* such a collapse in their statement that to differentiate Muslims according to their degree of commitment to the British state is a 'false dichotomy' (2012: 146). It is hard to make sense of this casual remark, though it does imply that, for them, a commitment to democratic politics is neither here nor there. Again, as with the GLA report (2007) and with Shaw (2012), there is some incoherence in the critique of media attempts to discriminate Islam from Islamism.

In sum then, while it makes plentiful assertions about 'a broad Islamophobic consensus in the UK' (Khiabany and Williamson, 2012: 136), this article has no new, substantial or systematic evidence to support those assertions. The same authors also have a chapter in the volume edited by Petley and Richardson (2011) which uses the same method of selective quoting, plus a few headlines and lines of copy from the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express* and *The Times*, to contend that all debate about the wearing of the veil is Islamophobic, part of an 'ideological campaign' (Khiabany and Williamson, 2011: 199) against Islam.

Their 2012 paper does however make one important and relevant point. This is that while cases of Far Right would-be terrorism and actual violence are not uncommon in the UK, they receive much less media coverage than do those cases of jihadist plots and attacks. This may be partly due to scale and threat; the would-be Far Right terrorists are less ambitious than jihadists, and often less competent. But it is plausible that news values here are also influenced by an unconscious orientalism, by a subliminal sense that the raw and angry faces of white working-class men are somehow more comprehensible and familiar, and therefore less suited to the role of terrorist than are faces of dark otherness carrying the menace of deep difference.

The Petley and Richardson collection includes three other chapters which offer empirical analysis, though none is additional to the studies already discussed: Lewis *et al.* report on the same substantial dataset as in Moore *et al.* (2008). Muir *et al.* (2011) provide an entertaining account of the four cases of extravagant media confabulation on the theme of 'Political Correctness gone mad' (the 'banning' of Christmas, etc.), which were part of the GLA study. This is a very promising territory for researchers wishing to establish an anti-Islamic bias, at least in the tabloid media, and case studies (even when hand-picked, as here) can provide a telling indication of the parameters of a discourse, even though they do not present an overall profile of media content.

In the same volume, Petley's essay discusses another case from the GLA study, this one offering a close study of a 2005 BBC Panorama programme which investigated the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and alleged that a number of its affiliated organisations were promoting or supporting extreme Islamism. As the MCB was at the time the semi-official voice of mainstream Islam in the UK, this allegation was a challenging one for all those who wished to separate Muslims in general from violent extremism. Petley argues that the programme was 'thesis-driven journalism': that is, was out to prove a point held before the investigation.

However, Petley's essay, though full of detail about the programme and the debates around it, is itself implicitly thesis-driven. It introduces no new material or arguments and appears to want to persuade its readers that as the journalist John Ware was clearly hostile to some of his subjects, by implication his thesis must be erroneous. It does not address most of the substantive issues which the programme raised, focussing instead on its (admittedly prejudicial) style. If Petley's critique of aggressive questioning were applied elsewhere, much of the BBC's news and current affairs output (*Today*, *Newsnight*, etc.) would face censure. One may agree or disagree with Petley, but crucially the article does not contribute to the evidence base for any assessment of the extent of Islamophobia in British media.

Massey and Tatla (2012) present a study of media reports following a riot in the northern England town of Bradford in July 2001, when Muslim youths clashed with police. They begin with the assertion that 9/11 and this riot 'resulted in increasingly polarised and negative media representations of the Muslim population' (2012: 161). The phrase 'polarised and negative' is somewhat unclear: presumably they intend to convey that the media situate Muslims in opposition to the rest of the UK population. Massey and Tatla claim to have used quantitative data from a content analysis of some national print media, covering seven daily titles and one Sunday newspaper, *The Observer*, and some unspecified local press. However they give no information about the sample period or selection criteria for articles, nor about their method of analysis. Their analysis does not offer any quantitative data, nor indeed much qualitative data either, except for a few quotes. Their study offers tendentious discussion of six themes they say were recurring in the texts, which are unsurprising ones – segregation, unemployment, racism, multiculturalism, education and the Far Right parties the BNP and NF.

The overall shape of their analysis is not clear; we may infer that they think some of the themes to be important in understanding the riot, and others less so. In particular, they critique the prominence of the 'segregation' theme, implying that the media were wrong to present this as one cause of the riot. Media responses, they say, focussed on self-segregation and the failure to integrate, which is seen to have led to the failure of multiculturalism. However even in the five quotes they report in relation to this theme, there is no statement of any kind to that effect. Some papers are criticised for using the term 'virtual apartheid', although the term 'apartheid' definitely does *not* convey the idea of *self*-segregation. Once again then we find here a study which is long on assertion, short on data and weak on logic.

Finally, mention must be made of the study by Elgamri (2008). Again there is a substantial dataset here (albeit only from three print titles) but extraordinarily this was composed of articles from the British broadsheet press selected for analysis *because* they met a pre-existing criterion of hostility to Islam. This sample was then used to support generalisations about how Islam is represented, including assertions that there is a 'purposeful conflation' of Islam and Islamism, and that phrases such as 'Muslim terrorists' are being used to 'describe all Muslims' (Elgamri, 2008: 219).

Conclusions

The overall picture in this field is one of a group of core studies which build quite qualified or complex conclusions on substantial databases, and a growing penumbra of other studies which tend to offer simpler conclusions based on insubstantial evidence in which empirical fragments are mixed with assertions and generalisations. The consequence is a body of ostensibly scholarly work which promotes the idea that the mainstream British media news *en masse* are engaged in a concerted and sustained assault on Islam and on Britain's Muslim communities. This paper has sought to present the mismatch between statements on the extent and nature of Islamophobia in the UK news media, and the evidence offered to support them. Following Buruma and Margalit's (2004) analysis, we might say that there is an 'Occidentalist' bias at work, an anti-Western ideology, displacing more level-headed judgement.

However, this should not obscure the fact that while the British media may not be, for the most part, explicitly or deliberately anti-Islamic, some of their reporting conventions are likely to create or maintain anti-Islamic views and feelings. There are two main problems which arise in routine reporting, and it may be useful to clearly identify them and to examine how they might be alleviated, lest the possibility of alleviation gets lost under the blanket of critique. Both problems are linked to the tendency of at least some media content to homogenise Islam, to present it (if only implicitly) as a monolithic doctrine, and its followers as cut from the same cloth.

a) Avoiding guilt by association

Moore *et al.* (2008) make a point about the connotations of visual images used to illustrate news reports. A respondent in the author's research observed that a picture of a mosque was the constant background to an interview about Islamist extremism, linking the mosque in the mind with terrorism. The mosque may have been one attended by the extremists in question, so there may have been a justification for using its image, but nonetheless the impact on the audience of its silent conjunction with the topic of extremism may have gone far beyond any factual sense of 'this is where these particular men gathered' to a rhetorical meaning of 'mosques everywhere are gathering places for extremists'.

While more responsible reporting might at times avoid implicit association between Islam and terrorism, this association might sometimes be impossible for journalists to avoid. For example, where a militant group advocating violence or condoning terrorism or preaching hate against homosexuals is doing so in the name of Islam, it is part of the journalist's work to report that. If abortion clinics in the UK were being bombed in the name of Christianity, again that would be important to know. While some people differentiate clearly between Islam and Islamism, or between mainstream and violent fundamentalist Christianity, such distinctions are not clear to others, however much the news media may try to abide by them. Profoundly though the media affect us, there are non-mediatised sources of prejudice and hatred for which the news is not responsible. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of news media to ensure that the distinction between Islams and Islamisms is made at every opportunity, and more generally to engender a firm sense of the heterogeneity of Islam as one of the great religions.

b) Neutralising the negative impact of news values

In relation to contemporary Islam, the problem of association with badness is exacerbated by another structural feature of its presence in the news. This is that there is very little good news about Islam or Muslims, either in national or international news. Stories about conflict, intolerance and political repression abound, while accounts of Muslims leading processes of reconciliation, liberalisation and political reform are rare. To some extent this is a problem for many other categories of people who - given the nature of news values - expect to appear only or mainly in bad news stories (politicians of all types, for example). It would be interesting to have data on images of Christianity in the news comparable to that which we have on Islam. Homophobia, sexism, forced institutionalisation of children, paedophilia, creationism and anti-abortion terror have dominated much of the media coverage of Christianity in the UK and US in recent years. But the lack of balancing material may be a particular problem around Islam, and may encourage particularly negative generalisations about it.

However it is not easy to see how a one-sided impression with its focus on conflict and turbulence can be corrected. In one way or another, most news is bad news, or about the end of bad news - which, although 'good' news, typically doesn't erase the associations stemming from the bad news ('Islamist bomb plot foiled', 'al Qaeda losing support', etc.). Yet there must be ways in which reporters, sub-editors, editors and others can mitigate this. Muslim voices against violent fundamentalism, often little more than short quotes near the end of an article, could be headlined and pictured more often. 'Tabloid' news values concerning heroism can be deployed to dramatise the depth of British Muslims' commitment and contribution to an inclusive and peaceful British society, as happened to an extent around the father of a young Muslim murdered in 2011:

But with immense dignity, Tariq Jahan, whose 21-year-old son was mown down and killed in an apparently racist murder in Birmingham, appealed for calm yesterday. (Seamark, 2011) .

Another example from the Mail (usually seen as one of the most culpable purveyors of Islamophobia) would be a front page headline praising Jabron Hashmi, the first British Muslim serviceman to die in Afghanistan: 'British Muslim, British Hero' (Hickley, 2006). This kind of usage of celebratory news values could be more frequent, and could perhaps help to neutralise the accumulation of negative associations derived from the news.

Such shifts in the media iconography of Islam and Muslims will require changes over time in the default habits and reflexes of journalists. This involves a process of incremental cultural change. Though that might be supported by the formulation of some explicit guidelines, an attempt to codify good practice or somehow legislate against discriminatory framing is likely to seem overbearing and/or to be ineffective (see, e.g., Frost [2004] on the shortcomings of the now-defunct Press Complaints Commission's 1990s code on reporting race).

c) Moderating the critique of Islamophobia

At the same time as there is large scope for improvements in journalistic practice, there is a need for critics of the media to accept that in an intensively mediatised world of marketised media there is no escape from news values which place a premium on conflict, terror, violence and negativity. Nothing is sacred, not even the sacred, and the mixed nature in reality of all complex social phenomena means that bad things will be said about everybody and everything. Mature audiences know nothing's perfect, and should be able to put things in perspective and proportion. Of course there is a circularity here: we need responsible media to help develop audience maturity. So the media are not let off the hook. But a more proportionate approach to media Islamophobia is called for, as there are potentially some seriously damaging effects of the disproportionate polemic about it.

a) First, there is the possibility of discrediting the field of media studies, and particularly of putting at risk the credibility of work which addresses problems of representation in a more rigorous way. As Charles (2015) pointed out in a recent edition of *Journalism Education*, a little less name-calling and more reflexivity on the part of critical researchers would be a good thing.

b) Second, the split between journalism and academia may be deepened. The belief amongst some journalists that most media academics do not really understand how the media work is unlikely to be challenged by academic outputs which present simplistic accounts of the news. And those journalists prepared to engage in critical self-reflection regarding their practices in reporting on Islam and Islamism will not be helped to do so by critiques which seem to be primarily interested in accusing them of wrongdoing.

c) Third, more broadly, the academic consensus on media Islamophobia strengthens a general sense that hostility to Muslims is always about to surface. This adds to the risk that a charge of Islamophobia may undermine legitimate concerns about intolerant fundamentalism of an Islamist variety, proscribe expressions of anxiety about social change, or simply cloud an issue which in reality is little to do with Islam (see, e.g., Allen's [2013] case study of debates around the building of a mosque in Dudley).

d) Fourth and finally, and perhaps most damagingly, it may bring another polarising pressure to bear on social divisions, by encouraging feelings of isolation and threat amongst British Muslims. It invites the perception that they are *all* under attack by and in deep conflict with the rest of British society and all its dominant institutions. There is no doubt that some anti-Muslim sentiment is now deeply embedded amongst sections of the British public, and has changed the profile of casual racism and xenophobia (see for example Abbas, 2012; Cole, 2009; Halliday, 1999). At the same time, British Social Attitudes surveys show a long-term trend towards lower levels of racism generally, despite the negative impact of 9/11 and 7/7. Yet the academic chorus of 'Media Islamophobia!' is at risk, in its indiscriminate shrillness, of gratuitously raising levels of mistrust and resentment.

The frequent conjunction throughout the news of Islam and Muslims with terror, extremism, controversial cultural practices, and so forth, is a serious problem, though not one amenable to simple correction. There is also a strand of egregious stereotyping, especially in the tabloid media. But these two features do not add up to systematic and culpable Islamophobia across the media. While journalism education should point to the toxic influences of media representations in some areas of life in British society, it also needs to develop awareness of how researchers may allow political preconception to replace evidence.

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Examining the impact of group work on first year journalism and new media students

Emer Connolly, National University of Ireland, Galway

Abstract

Group projects have become a key component of the curriculum in a variety of programmes in third-level education, including journalism and media. Group work prepares students for workplace practices. This project will investigative the impact of group work on first year BA in Journalism and New Media students who took a news writing module at the University of Limerick. Through action research, the project looks at approaches to teaching, problem-based learning, group selection, group size and the division of work within each group. The project's goals are to establish if the teaching method used is suitable and if the group work has a positive impact on students. The project sought to determine what changes, if any, should be made to teaching and to group work specifically, based on the findings of this research.

Educational situation

Journalistic Writing for News 2 (see Appendix B) is a mandatory first year module (semester 2) for students completing the BA in Journalism and New Media at the University of Limerick.

There are 33 students in the class, the majority of who came in through the Central Applications Office (CAO) (processes first year undergraduate applications in Ireland) and started the four-year programme in September 2014. There were also five international students who were studying at the University for one semester, while there are three mature students in their mid-twenties in the class. There are 22 females and

11 males in the class.

This module is an important core module in this programme in first year and prepares students for the foundations of all journalistic writing they will do during the course and in their chosen careers. It focuses on news writing, interviewing, generating news ideas and analysis of news.

The research concerned potential changes to practice focusing on the lecturer's approach to teaching, giving clear instructions for the group projects, of which there are five in this module. This included group discussions, research (in and outside the class) and one group presentation arising from the work.

This project was divided into two stages, cycle 1 and cycle 2. It looked, at the end of cycle one, at students' feedback on how the class should be divided into groups and roles allocated, for each group project. This was particularly important for the second cycle, as while the group work was not graded in cycle 1, one group project in cycle 2 was graded.

Previously this module was heavily focused on individual projects but it was felt by tutors that the focus should shift to incorporate group work, so that students could learn from each other and prepare for opportunities on placement and in the workplace, where group work is a key component. While individual assignments remain a part of this module, the group work has now taken on a more important role. Group work was part of the module during seven classes in the semester (out of 12 x 100-minute weekly classes in the module).

Sometimes students are not sure what is expected of them in group projects and rather than tackle it, they are reluctant to participate. This was addressed in this project through an inclusive approach and a clear and coherent structure, which was outlined to students at the beginning of term.

Literature Review

There is a variety of opinion on the value of group work in educational settings. There is an overall acceptance that we learn from each other. However, on the other hand, many people have had a negative experience in group situations, particularly in relation to the division of work, or failure of members of the group to agree on key aspects of the work. Biggs (2003) says that while group projects have become increasingly popular and prepare students for the workplace, they are not popular among students for practical reasons such as difficulties in coordinating times to meet, and also because the assessment does not usually take individual contributions into account. Cohen (1994) believes that everyone benefits from interaction when there is thinking and discussion in group work assignments.

> *"People of any age deal with the uncertainty of a challenging task better if they consult fellow workers or students than if they try to work by themselves" (p. 11).*

Jacques (2000) looks at the variety of purposes for the formation of groups which includes learning from each other, pooling resources and sharing ideas and is of the view that the aims of group discussion are intellectual, social and emotional.

Preston-Shoot (1987) is of the view that group work has limitations and makes the point that they are not an "alternative setting for one-to-one work with the addition of an audience" (p. 18).

A lecturer's approach to teaching plays a role in deciding if group work is a fit for a particular subject. A behaviourist approach, where the learner is passive, is common in some third-level teaching. This is an approach that Jordan et al. (2008) believe is "outmoded" and "fails to take account of people's ability to take action for themselves" (p. 33). Through experience, the lecturer's approach to teaching has changed from behaviourist to social constructivism where facilitation is key (Jordan et al., 2008) and this is an approach that facilitates group work in small classes and also works well for this subject area.

This approach is also vital for problem-based learning (PBL) which is an important part of group work in this module. PBL involves presenting problems from practice to students and this provides a "stimulus for learning" (Boud and Feletti, 1997, p. 15). O'Neill and Hung (cited in Barrett and Moore, 2011) say that the PBL process supports student involvement in their learning activities, while Drinan (cited in Boud and Feletti, 1997) stresses the importance of the PBL process being reviewed and further developed. Brainstorming works well as part of PBL and involves all students pooling ideas. It ties in well with social constructivism; it is acknowledged that "no two people will have exactly the same discussions with exactly the same people" (Jordan et al., 2008, pp. 59 – 61). Everyone can feel confident about getting involved, as there are no correct responses (Davies, 1999).

Assessing group projects can be done in a number of ways with different methods being favoured by different module leaders and lecturers. One of the biggest concerns is the practice of allocating one group mark as this can lead to angst for students, as the division of work within the group is rarely even. Biggs (2003) believes that awarding one overall grade for the group is not a good idea. Roberts (2006) suggests that the most reliable and fair way of distinguishing between individual contributions in groups is to focus on peer assessment within the groups. In reality, however, this is potentially problematic, particularly at first year level as students can give more positive feedback to their friends, compared to those with whom they are not as closely acquainted.

Management of group projects is important. For instance, the optimal method of dividing a class into groups, group size, the division of work and the allocation of roles, to ensure everyone benefits equally from the process. Preston-Shoot (1987) says that the resources and personalities of those involved should be considered when decisions regarding group size are made. “In considering size, the task is to create the optimum conditions for the group to achieve its purposes” (p. 33).

Some people favour large groups, while others are of the view that pair work gets the best out of everyone, depending on the circumstances. Davies (1999) believes that productivity is increased in small groups and shy students experience an increase in confidence. Biggs (2003) says there is “no set answer” on group size, “as it depends on the nature of the group task and the group dynamics” (p. 92). Johnson and Johnson (1999) argue that the smaller the group the better as the more difficult it is for students to hide in small groups, but that there is “no ideal size for a cooperative learning group” (p. 19). On the other hand, they note that as the size of the group increases, so too does the range of abilities, skills, expertise and diversity of opinions.

Selecting members for groups is an “intricate exercise” (Preston-Shoot, 1987, pp. 34 – 35). There is no “cut-and-dried response” (Bennett and Dunne, 1994, p. 114). Johnson and Johnson (1999) outline several options such as random assignment, teacher-selected groups or preferences i.e. based on favourite pastimes. Regardless of the methods chosen by the lecturer, it is important to be clear on the roles within the group environment, as lack of clarity can create problems such as lack of confidence or anxiety (Adair, 1986).

Inclusiveness is vital in group projects. Cohen (1994) argues that problems of non-participation can be avoided by “teachers’ planning and preparation” through the use of roles (p. 87). Johnson and Johnson (1999) advise rotating roles so that each member of the group gets the opportunity to fill each role. Time management is also vital when preparing, delivering and working on group projects. Cohen (1994) stresses the importance of estimating how much time each phase of a project will take and advises making a time schedule and sticking to it.

At the start of term, a colleague at the University outlined the details of the research to students and invited students to take part if they wished. It was clear to students that participation would not impact on their marks and all surveys and feedback provided by participants were anonymous.

The idea of inviting a colleague to explain the project details was requested by the University’s Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee, which approved the Ethics application for this research. It is important that participants are informed about the aims and purposes of the research (Radnor 2002).

It is also important that students are aware of what is expected of them and also that their input into the project is not linked in any way to their results in the module.

Research questions

The main concern in this project surrounded the approach to teaching, the impact of group work on students and also ensuring that the group work was delivered in the fairest and optimal way.

The following were the project’s main research questions:

How effective is the approach to teaching in terms of ensuring instructions are clear and that students can learn from the group work?

Are students engaged in group work and problem-based learning (PBL) in the module?

How should teaching approaches be changed in terms of dividing the class into teams for group work, assigning roles, deciding on optimal group size and ensuring the work is spread evenly, for the various group projects in the module?

This took the following questions into consideration:

- How is the class divided into groups, in a relevant and fair way?
- How are roles assigned?

- What is the list of roles and responsibilities and how is this explained from the start of the process?
- How is group work graded – is there a focus on individual and collective marks?

Methodology

This research featured a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods and data collection focused on triangulation (Cohen et al., 2006; Campbell and Fiske, 1959, cited in Cohen et al., 2006). It also sought to build on work carried out in this field by international academics including Biggs, Cohen and Jacques.

For each class, a lesson plan was prepared. A PowerPoint presentation, delivered in the first section of each class was also prepared. This included clear instructions for the particular group project to be discussed in that week's class. A diary was kept, which featured regular entries during the preparation and completion of the research. This, allied to the lecturer's observations, formed one data collection method. Two written surveys/feedback sheets – one at the end of each cycle – were completed and a focus group was facilitated at the end of cycle 2, in which students were given the opportunity to discuss the group work they had undertaken in the module.

In advance of the first week of cycle 1, the following was completed:

Lesson plans were prepared for each week during the first cycle where group work was part of the module

Clear criteria for group work were drawn up, to include roles and responsibilities, structure and marking criteria

Questions for the first survey were compiled

Clear assessment criteria for group work were outlined to all students i.e.:

What is expected of each student in group projects – what is each person's responsibility?

How are the marks divided – what marks are allocated for individual work within the group and what marks are allocated for the group collectively?

How are roles divided in the group, to ensure fairness?

A session on group work was presented to the class at the start of cycle 1 where the background and details of the project were explained. By the end of this session, each student was clear on his/her role and responsibility in the group work, the breakdown of marks – what marks were allocated for individual work and group work – and how roles were assigned for group projects in this module.

In week 6 (at the end of cycle 1), when some of the group projects were completed, a survey, on hard copy, was circulated. This gave students the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the group work conducted during cycle 1. Questions included a mix of open-ended and yes/no answers. They included:

- Do you think the group work on this module is adequately structured and that the marking scheme is suitable?
- Do you feel that you actively engaged in the group work in this module?
- Do you think there was an equal division of labour within groups in the group projects?
- How were roles assigned within your group?

The data gained from this questionnaire was analysed during week 7 of semester. It was then taken on board for the group work in the second cycle, during the second half of the semester (cycle 2), from week 8 onwards. The project then moved on to cycle 2, at the end of which a second survey was circulated; online via SurveyMonkey. It featured similar questions to cycle 1, whilst focusing on a new area, based on the feedback from cycle 1. A focus group was facilitated at the end of cycle 2. All students who took the module were invited to attend and engage in an open discussion on group work in this module, where the main research questions were explored.

Findings, data presentation and analysis

Raw data from the triangulated sources was collected: a handwritten survey at the end of cycle 1, an online survey at the end of cycle 2 and a focus group at the end of cycle 2. Raw data was also collected from a diary that was kept before and throughout the semester, which focused on the lecturer's observations and reflections.

Cycle 1 - Actions

Cycle 1 was undertaken in four classes in the first half of the semester, between January 27, 2015 and March 3, 2015. During that time, the lecturer changed her style of teaching in that the social constructivist method replaced the behaviourist approach and facilitation, team work and discussions played a central role (Jordan et al, 2008). It was felt that this was the best way that group work could be effectively completed and that facilitation was a key component of this. The lecturer also focused on clear communication and delivery of clear instructions on the group work. Clear lesson plans were prepared and PowerPoint presentations were delivered each week, while a discussion was opened in class, to ensure every student was clear about what was required of him/her individually and also in the groups.

Clarity of instructions is important for group work. In cycle 1, students were given the opportunity to work with whoever they wished and they were also given the chance to allocate roles to each other within each group i.e. one student was an editor, another student was a reporter etc, as long as each student had a role and roles were rotated (Johnson and Johnson, 1999). The group projects in this part of the module were not graded as it was felt it would not be fair to put the students under too much pressure at this early stage of their programme. Also, it was important that students could familiarise themselves with group work and enjoy the process, rather than be totally focused on marks. Feedback on this decision was desirable, in the survey completed at the end of cycle 1.

In cycle 1, the group work was done in class and out of class time was not required for the group projects. In total there were three group projects in cycle 1; one focused on writing news stories in pairs, another focused on writing and analysing news in groups of three, while the third project focused on role play for interviewing, in groups of three. Problem-based learning (PBL) was an important part of each of these group projects and groups took part in brainstorming sessions, with the lecturer as facilitator.

Each class was of 100 minutes' duration. Half of the group attended on Mondays and the other half attended on Tuesdays. This meant that there were no more than 18 students in any of the classes. This facilitated smaller groups, ranging in size between two and three. It also meant that group work could be facilitated more effectively than in larger groups.

Cycle 1 – findings, data presentation and analysis

A quarter of each class was spent on teaching and the remainder (75 minutes) was spent on facilitating group work. In previous group projects the lecturer had facilitated in other modules previously, the instructions could have been clearer and on occasion there were issues with time. Bearing this in mind, plans were put in place in advance of the start of term and a lesson plan was followed each week. Twenty-four of the 28 students who completed the feedback forms at the end of the cycle 1 either strongly agreed or agreed that the instructions for the group work were clear. Four students said they were not sure, but did not elaborate any further on this. 100% of students found the feedback helpful and 15 out of 16 respondents felt that there was sufficient time to complete the work in the time allocated (CR1). The feedback on this was also positive in the focus group. Respondents were happy that instructions were clear at all times and if anyone wanted to ask a question, they felt comfortable doing so. Student A said: "I like the way it was structured" (CR1).

In the diary, it was noted on March 10 (at the end of cycle 1) that it had been a good idea to deliver a presentation at the start of term outlining the details of the group work, the process and marking scheme. "The session on group work at the start was a good idea. It was important for students i.e. roles, what's expected of them etc." On that date, the diary also included the following comment: "I was happy with the feedback (feedback forms – cycle 1). Change to practice i.e. clarity in relation to group work has been achieved." (CR1).

Problem-based learning (PBL) was also a focus on each of the group assignments and it was felt that students adapted well to this. In the feedback forms at the end of cycle 1, 22 out of 27 respondents said they learned from each other. One student stated: "I enjoy group work. Each week I work with different people and I can learn from them" (CR2).

In cycle 1, it was decided to give students the opportunity to work with whoever they wished, but they could not work with the same classmate on more than one occasion. The group work in cycle 1 was not graded. In hindsight, this could have been addressed in a different way, as students who were friends worked together, while the international students were not integrated very well.

It was noted in the diary on February 10 (week 3 of cycle 1): "Maybe I should divide them into groups, randomly, as they tend to work with each other i.e. friends working together. Some groups then wander off talking about other things." In the diary on March 10 (after cycle 1), the following comment was included: "I need to mix gender and integrate international students better." In the diary on April 21 (at the end of cycle 2), it was noted: "Randomly selecting students in groups worked well. I should do this more" (CR6).

In the feedback forms at the end of cycle 1, 26 of the 28 students said the division of the class into groups was done fairly (CR6). Two students were not sure if this was the case. However, when asked to elaborate further, one student responded: "I am nearly always paired with other girls. Mixing gender could be helpful." Another student stated: "Maybe switching partners even more could help with overall participation in class."

There should be a focus on more variety in the topics for the group projects, to ensure students are engaged. A number of students felt there should be more variety. One student stated that there should be "more variety in the type of work" (DR3).

Students who took part in the focus group felt that random selection is a good way of dividing up the class (CR6). Student B said: "I think there needs to be a gender balance. It's important to get a mix of people, but still have it random." Student B added: "In our class because we are so close, everyone is comfortable giving their opinions." Student C said: "Randomly selecting groups was good. You worked with people you might not have talked to before."

Feedback in relation to allocating roles within groups was also desirable. It was found that students were happy to allocate roles themselves. In the feedback forms, 20 students said that the roles should be decided by students, six said it should be decided by the lecturer, while two students said it could be either (CR5). In the focus group, Student B said: "The fact the students themselves decided who was to do what meant that it was a group effort and everyone was happy with their roles."

Cycle 1 – Analysis and reflection

Having reviewed the data from cycle 1, it was felt that the lecturer's approach to teaching worked well for the group work. The additional time taken to draw up clear lesson plans, the focus on clear instructions and on facilitating class work, as opposed to doing a huge amount of teaching, worked well. The feedback from students at the end of cycle 1 was very positive in this regard. However, some other issues emerged which need careful consideration. One relates to dividing the class into groups. While there were no concerns expressed in relation to integrating international students more into the group, it was something that needed to be addressed in cycle 2. While overall, students felt the division of the class into groups was fair, one student did say that gender balance should have been considered (CR6) and this was a valid point.

Another concern that was raised by some students was the division of labour (CR4). Some students felt that the division of work was uneven and that some were left to do the bulk of the work. Twenty-two students felt the division of work was equal; six were not sure and one student said it was not equal. Asked to highlight the most negative aspect of the group work, five students stated the unequal division of work. One student suggested: "If the lecturer made you include a list of who did what, so you would know that everyone contributed equally."

The introduction of an individual reflective essay for the graded group project in cycle 2 is important. There was a group and individual mark for this group project. This was a change in approach for cycle 2.

Cycle 2 – actions

As with cycle 1, the roles, responsibilities and criteria for the team work projects in cycle 2 were clearly outlined in class each week. Each week, students were given the chance to ask questions in class, to ensure everyone was clear on what they were expected to do. In cycle 2, it was decided to continue to focus on clear structure and instructions on the part of the lecturer, adopting the Social Constructivist approach and focusing on PBL. It was also decided to zone in on two of the findings in particular from the first cycle and introduce two new actions: divide the class into groups through random selection (ensuring there is gender balance and that the five international students are integrated into the group) and introduce a reflective essay for the group project that was marked whilst allocating an individual mark for part of the group project. This was aimed at ensuring those who did the work were rewarded and a reflective essay, combined with the lecturer's own observations in class, would help to establish who contributed to the work. One student felt that the work done by each student in the group projects could be more closely monitored (CR4): "In other modules, when group projects are completed a cover sheet is filled in detailing who has done what job in the process, it might be a good way of keeping track of progress in the group."

Cycle 2 – findings, data presentation and analysis

Cycle 2 was carried out over three classes, between March 23, 2015 and April 21, 2015. In the first week, students worked in groups of between four and six and the groups were selected based on theme. Each student had to submit an idea for a profile they planned to write and those who focused on a theme of sport were grouped together and so on. Then in the second and third weeks, students were randomly divided into groups – with consideration given to gender balance and ensuring there was one international student in most groups – for a news day assignment over two weeks. This involved PBL in class on the first day, take-home work and a presentation on the second day. Students were required to submit a group assignment and also an individual reflective essay. On the first day, each group was given a topic and they were required to generate ideas relating to the topic and then deliver a group presentation on the second day.

Similar to cycle 1, it was felt that the approach to teaching worked well. The facilitation was important, particularly in the team project in the second and third weeks of the cycle. The feedback was largely positive: In the feedback form, one student stated: "I believe the marking scheme is suitable and that guidelines are clear" (CR1). In the focus group, Student A said (CR1): "I like the way it was structured. A certain amount of marks went to group presentations, but the individual mark and reflective essay was good, because if someone in the group didn't do the work the whole group didn't lose out on marks." In the focus group (CR3), Student B said: "In nearly all of my group projects, there was at least one international student in it which I thought was good, because you learn a bit from them as well and you can help them out."

It was felt that while the group work was done effectively overall, it appeared, from listening to the presentations, that some students didn't put a lot of work into the marked assignment and this is something that should be considered, going forward. In the diary (CR3), the following was noted: "I felt the students were happy to communicate effectively via social media but not meet which is disappointing. If more marks were allocated to this, done over a few weeks, then perhaps students would put more work in. Also, this was the first and only graded group assessment; maybe students got into the habit of ungraded work and weren't inclined to put enough work in." It is clear, from experience in industry and academia, that a combination of social media and face-to-face meetings is vital for projects of this nature.

The findings from the focus group showed that the division of labour in the second cycle was equal, while the random selection also received positive feedback (CR6). For group work in this module, it was felt that groups of four or five (CR7) worked best, while students who took part in the focus group felt that groups of between three and five worked best (CR7).

Cycle 2 – Reflection

The approach to teaching worked well in cycle 2. The group size was larger in cycle 2 and it was felt that students adapted well. The PBL was effective, facilitation worked well and the introduction of random selection and an individual reflective essay was of benefit. Going forward, more graded group work could be introduced earlier in the semester. Groups should be randomly selected from the very start of cycle 1 and peer reviewing of group work should also be considered. The lecturer had been of the view that this would work better from second year of BA programmes onwards, but having gained good insight from the feedback in this project, the idea of introducing it from first year level onwards should be examined.

It should also be noted that international students usually join the class just after they arrived in Ireland and they can be isolated; there needs to be more integration into the class, even through an informal group discussion in the first week of term.

It is my argument that Social Constructivism should continue to be a focus, in practical-based modules like this, in future, as it worked very well here. Careful planning and delivery of lesson plans continued to be important; this was vital, as time management was key.

Implications and Recommendations

Eight main findings have been identified from this research project:

My argument is that a social constructivist approach to teaching, coupled with a focus on PBL, and clearly structured group projects, works very well and could be recommended for all practical modules in the University. The feedback from students in both surveys and in the focus group indicated this. The approach to teaching was the main focus at the outset and the findings showed that this approach worked well.

The behaviourist approach to teaching does not lend itself as well to a module of this nature, particularly as the module is more focused on practical work than on theory. It was clear that students were happy with the approach and many students felt comfortable running ideas by the lecturer, tweaking ideas after they received feedback and also sharing ideas with colleagues in the groups.

Random selection should be employed from the start of term. The semester is very short – just 12 weeks – and the learning experience should be part of this from the very start. The idea of allowing students to choose team mates for group sessions is not recommended.

My argument, based on the research undertaken in this project, is that more variety should be introduced in the teaching for group projects, whilst taking the subject into account. While the feedback on the group work done in Journalistic Writing for News 2 was positive and engagement was excellent, a small number of students felt that it became a bit mundane at times and that there should be more focus on variety i.e. a broader range of topics should have been included and a combination of in-class reporting and field reporting would have been desirable. It is important to adhere to the learning outcomes and this can still be achieved by employing a more varied approach. Consideration should be given to doing actual interviews with news sources and less role play. Also, the students found the more 'real' (i.e. reflective of work likely to be replicated in the workplace) assignments in cycle 2 to be more beneficial than the role play in cycle 1. Inviting guests from the political, social and sporting worlds into class would work well in this regard, as students could carry out interviews and write news stories based on that. Currently, this is done at second year level, but feedback from industry has, on occasion, noted that students lack confidence when doing interviews with sources, when they go on placement in third year. This would require additional resources.

While it was not raised by students, it is felt that more effort should be made to integrate international students from the start of the semester, both in terms of briefing them on news and current affairs in the Irish media and also ensuring they are placed in groups with Irish students and not paired together in isolation. It is important to liaise with the international office in the university to establish how many international students take the various modules and also to find out details of their countries of origin and the media and news systems there. Clear, coherent lesson plans worked well in this project and equally a clear plan on integrating students from overseas could work equally well. This is an issue that has occurred in other subjects, so communication across faculty is recommended. It was encouraging to note that the mature students in the class blended in very well for all projects.

Group projects should be allocated marks earlier in the module. One group project was marked in this module – in the last two weeks – and several students didn't put a lot of out-of-class time in, as they were in the habit of doing work that was not marked and did not take it seriously enough. It should also be considered that the last two weeks of terms is a very busy time for students who are completing assignments across a multitude of modules. Also, given that group work is a substantial part of this module, it is appropriate that a greater portion of the marks be allocated for it. The group projects should incorporate a group mark and also an individual mark. The group project that was marked was worth 20%. If more marks were awarded, it is my argument that students would have invested more time and commitment to the work.

Writing a reflective essay for group work is important and the content of this, allied to the lecturer's observations, can play a role in ensuring that marks are distributed fairly. It also gives students the opportunity to reflect on the learning experience and how the project worked for them. It will also indicate how the work was divided within each group, while it will give the lecturer the opportunity to establish how teaching methods can be improved.

Consultation with colleagues is important in deciding if peer marking should become part of the marking scheme for group work in this and other modules. It has worked well for more senior classes, but has not been used much at first year level in the past.

If the right environment is created, then the students will respond. By creating clear, coherent structures, students were happy to immerse themselves in group work, as they were clear about what was required of them. The lecturer is responsible for ensuring that guidelines for group work are clearly structured. It is the lecturer's role to ensure there is clarity across the board, to encourage participation and also to ensure those who work hard are rewarded through the marking process.

Conclusion

Elliott (1991) sums up the aim of action research as "to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge" (p. 49). Coleman and Lumby (cited in Middlewood et al, 1999) say that there are two aspects of action research: to promote reflection among practitioners and to bring about change.

The lecturer's approach to teaching and the structure of group work in this module shifted as the action research process evolved as the main research questions were addressed, focusing on approaches to teaching, the impact of group work on students and the fairest way of delivering group work.

McNiff (2014) notes:

"One event transforms into another in perpetual motion: the oak tree emerges from the acorn where it has lain phylogenetically dormant throughout history" (pp. 15 – 16).

The social constructivist approach to teaching is suitable for this subject and worked well for this particular group of students. Students were clear about their roles and responsibilities for each individual group project.

The level of engagement with group work in this module, overall, was good. Much has been achieved in relation to the structure of the group work, but more progress can be made. For example, the group selection process needs to be more rigorous, while the marking scheme should be reassessed.

The content in the module is interesting and adheres to the module's learning outcomes. However, some feedback from students indicates that there could be more variety in the content and processes and this is taken on board. One change that is desirable is a focus on a variety of themes in the various group assignments i.e. instead of focusing mainly on work in the classroom involving just lecturer and students, one option that could be explored is to invite guests from the community into the classroom who students could interview. Feedback from other students in other years and across a range of modules would be of benefit in this regard also, as it is difficult to draw conclusions based on one research project. It is also noted that students filled out the handwritten feedback forms in cycle 1 (28 students) in larger numbers than those who filled out the electronic feedback forms in cycle 2 (14 students).

This project has sharpened the lecturer's preparation techniques and has highlighted the value of careful preparation and delivery of lesson plans. Keeping a reflective diary was also a worthwhile exercise, for this project. Reflection is often neglected in teaching at third level, such are the academic, teaching and administrative demands. Some of the lessons learned in this project will be adapted for other modules going forward, as the aim to continue to improve teaching methods and approach to teaching will continue.

Having completed this project, it is agreed that "Action research is a powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level" (Cohen et al, 2006, p. 226) in that it is a valuable and flexible method. Drinan, cited in Boud and Feletti, 1997, says that constant reflection on our observations can lead to an improved learning environment and also enhances our understanding of how we learn.

Action research can be learned only by doing it (McNiff, 2014). Feedback is important and is part of the learning process for all. All feedback is part of a bigger picture and as part of the plan to ensure that teaching is as effective as possible, so that, ultimately, the learning experience for students is enhanced.

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Appendix A

List of Data Records

Data Record Number	Data Record Time	Data Record Description
DR1	Lesson plans (cycle 1)	Lesson plans for classes delivered on January 26/27, February 2/3, February 9/10 and March 2/3, when group work was part of the module.
DR2	PowerPoint presentations (cycle 1)	PowerPoint presentations for classes delivered on January 26/27, February 2/3, February 9/10 and March 2/3.
DR3	Student feedback forms (cycle 1)	Twenty-eight handwritten student feedback forms, completed at the end of cycle 1. There were 10 multiple choice questions, 10 Q & A questions and a suggestions box at the end where students were invited to outline any suggested improvements for group work in this module.
DR4	Diary	Collection of my observations and reflections before, during and after this Action Research Project.
DR5	Lesson plans (cycle 2)	Lesson plans for classes delivered on March 23/24, April 13/14 and April 20/21, when group work was part of the module.
DR6	PowerPoint presentations (cycle 2)	PowerPoint presentations for classes delivered on March 23/24, April 13/14 and April 20/21.
DR7	Student feedback forms (cycle 2)	Fourteen student feedback forms, completed electronically, at the end of cycle 2. There were 15 Q & A questions and a suggestions box at the end where students were invited to outline any suggested improvements for group work in this module.
DR8	Focus group (end of cycle 2)	Recording of a focus group carried out at the end of cycle 2, on Monday, April 27, in which five students took part.

DR9	Research Ethics application form	Ethics application form which was submitted to the University's Ethics committee, as a result of which approval for this study was granted.

Appendix B

JM4012 Journalistic Writing for News 2 (abridged)

SYLLABUS:

News stories based on the inverted pyramid: You will write hard news stories, based on the inverted pyramid.

Building up sources: You will build up sources and apply this to journalism.

Interviewing techniques: You will focus on interviewing skills in journalism.

Writing news stories from speeches and press releases: You will write news stories from speeches and press releases.

Writing reviews: You will write reviews of various events, suitable for publication in magazines, newspapers or online media outlets.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Journalistic Writing 2 follows on from Journalistic Writing 1 in Semester 1. By the end of this module, students should be able to:

Write and structure a news story

Apply the principles of accuracy and good grammar to news and feature writing

Write a range of news stories and feature stories suitable for a variety of publications

Develop news gathering and news writing skills through a combination of team work and individual assignments

Understand the principles of writing a breaking news story, news feature, short profile and review

Evaluate the coverage of news and current affairs in the media in Ireland

Develop interviewing techniques for journalism

JM4012 SCHEDULE for AY2014/15

LABS

Week	Topic	Content
1	Feedback from Semester 1 News Group discussion	Review of Semester 1 news writing Style Book revisited Writing skills News analysis - coverage of issues in the public domain
2	Writing news stories	Writing from press releases, speeches, information

3	Writing news stories: Breaking news	Writing from press releases, speeches, information; Breaking news stories. Impact of the internet, breaking news and online journalism
	Grammar/punctuation exercise	Grammar/punctuation exercise
4	LAB ASSESSMENT 1 (15%)	Lab assessment: Writing a news story, Grammar/Style Book (15%)
5 & 6	Interviewing techniques – news and features	In-lab interviews; Generating news angles from interviews; Writing well-structured news stories based on interviews
7	Generating news ideas – community news pieces/breaking news stories. Getting published	Coverage of politics on a local and national level – specific examples. Local authorities, courts, tribunals. Community events. Building sources ** Details of community news assignment outlined – deadline week 11 (15%)
8	Profiles, opinion pieces, colour articles, editorials	Differences between news and colour. Main components. Analysis of profile/opinion/colour/editorial articles. Style/subject/audience. **Details of profile assignment outlined – deadline week 12 (20%)
	Exercise based on lab	Proposal for a profile (250 words)
9	Profiles	Profiles – in-lab preparation. Writing skills
10 & 11	Team project (20%)	Teamwork – generating ideas for a publication. Students appointed to various positions and decisions taken – newsroom style. Cultivating contacts. Ideas for stories. Filling pages. Prioritising stories
12		Profile presentations and Q & A. Writing skills. Recap

Assessment:

This module is examined via continuous assessment.

Lab assessments:

Week 4: Writing a news story/Grammar (15%)

Weeks 10 & 11: Team project (20%)

Week 11: Community news story (15%)

Week 12: Profile (20%)

Attendance and participation (5%)

Proceedings

All papers in the proceedings section were presented by the authors at the Association's summer conference in June 2016 in London. The papers have been re-edited following discussion at the conference and are intended to inform, educate and spark debate and discussion. Please join in this debate by going to www.journalism-education.org to have your say and find out what others think.

Co-authoring a paper with your undergraduate student

Dr Lily Canter, Sheffield Hallam University

This essay explores the untapped resource of undergraduate dissertations, which can be developed into quality peer review journal articles with the right supervision and support. It is based on my own experience at Sheffield Hallam University where I supervise a small number of Level 6 dissertations each year.

In 2016 I successfully co-authored a paper with Daniel Brookes, which was presented at the 2015 Future of Journalism Conference and published in the corresponding special edition of *Digital Journalism* (Canter and Brookes, 2016). The paper examined the tweeting habits of journalists at *The Star* newspaper in Sheffield and how the role of the journalist influenced the way in which they used Twitter.

Students often want to use their dissertation to look at how social media has changed journalism but then don't know how to go about this. The resulting dissertation can sometimes be a disappointing string of interviews with random journalists, lecturers and commentators, which are neither properly sampled nor empirically robust. To prevent Daniel falling into this trap I introduced him to content analysis and encouraged him to read my previous Twitter research which coded thousands of tweets by journalists at the Bournemouth *Daily Echo* and *Leicester Mercury* (Canter, 2013; Canter, 2014). Using these studies as his foundation, Daniel developed a similar coding system and gathered a one-month sample of tweets. As his supervisor I was able to oversee the process to verify its validity and act as a second coder to minimise any subjective coding. By building upon my earlier empirical research Daniel was able to add further evidence to the trends emerging from the comparative studies of local journalists' Twitter use, giving his own dissertation more relevance and academic clout. It was therefore evident from fairly early on that the data from his study would be strong enough to form the basis of a research paper and it was a good opportunity for both of us to co-author a paper.

Research Excellence Framework

The next round of the REF has now begun and universities are already working towards their input for 2020/2021. As a result there is increasing pressure on all academic staff - both researchers and practitioners - to produce high-quality, impactful research outputs. Yet many of us find that we have limited time to conduct original research or collect data, and research time allocations are being squeezed or handed out to four and five star producers only. But there is an easier way forward. Each and every one of our institutions is sitting on a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data produced by undergraduate and postgraduate student dissertations. Each year thousands of students conduct interviews, surveys, focus groups, content analysis, discourse analysis and more, and in doing so they often - but not always - gather insightful and valuable data on a range of journalism and media related topics. But once these dissertations have been marked and graded they are hidden from the wider research community and left to gather dust on the library shelves both real and digital, in the hope that another student may stumble across them one day.

There is a huge opportunity here to unveil the best of this research, analysis and data to the academy as a whole to the benefit of both the academic and the student. This will enable lecturers to meet their REF requirements but will also give new graduates an eye-catching addition to their curriculum vitae. And although this essay focuses on undergraduate dissertations, as this is where my experience lies, the same sentiment could be transferred to postgraduates. The only caveat would be that postgraduate students may be more confident and competent to strike out on their own to publish papers without the need of a co-author.

Myth busting

In some disciplines co-authoring with students is a very much part of the academic culture and seen as integral to their learning experience. But in other areas there is a cautiousness and anxiety about the exploitation of students. Australian academic Dr Brian Martin - who has taught a wide range of topics, including communication studies, environmental studies and peace issues - argues that exploitation by supervisors must stop (Martin, 2010), but he exposes the very worst practice rather than the best. When co-authoring is a consensual decision with agreed designated roles and authorship, it is a mutually beneficial partnership much like a joint byline on a news story. And although many journalism students may not ever intend to venture into academia, the presence of a journal article on their curriculum vitae is a talking point for job interviews as it will be something that few other graduates have. It demonstrates their ability to undertake critical thinking and analysis to a very high standard alongside their practical media-making skills.

Some lecturers might also be guilty of thinking that their students, who are largely career focused, will not be interested in co-authoring a paper, particularly if it involves work beyond their final hand-in deadline. But my experience is that students will be flattered that you think their work is good enough for publication and it will give them a real confidence boost, even when they realise they won't be paid. My tutee Daniel now works as a marketing co-ordinator for the Mortgage Advice Bureau but he proudly presents his journal publication on his LinkedIn profile and was genuinely excited when I first presented the idea to him.

> *I found the whole process exciting and a good form of validation as other people thought my dissertation was good enough for publication. I was very enthusiastic as it meant getting my dissertation out to another avenue, which could only be good for my CV (Daniel Brookes, personal communication, 2016).*

Another myth worth debunking is that dissertations are not good enough for publication. Admittedly the quality of dissertations are variable, reflecting the diverse student cohort, but even badly written work may contain great data. Daniel's dissertation ended up with a high 2.1 mark, not a first as you might expect, as his literature review and conclusion were underdeveloped. However his research design and implementation was vigorous and his content analysis stood up to scrutiny. This meant that most of his words did not end up in the final paper but his numbers did. The value of his data meant that the final paper was REF-able and worthy of publication in a Routledge Taylor and Francis journal.

I had originally anticipated that the paper would be suitable for Platform: Journal of Media and Communication, an online open-access graduate publication. I contacted them and they said they would consider a paper co-authored by an academic and an undergraduate. In the meantime Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies put out a call out for papers for the 2015 Future of Journalism conference under the theme of Risks, Threats and Opportunities, with sub-categories including social media. I had successfully presented a paper at the conference in 2013 and, although it is competitive to get a paper accepted, I thought our topic had a good chance, so Daniel and I put together an abstract and pressed send.

The great thing about this conference is that every speaker has to submit a 5,000 conference paper which is shared internally to all delegates and from these about a third are chosen for publication in a Future of Journalism special issue of Journalism Studies, Journalism Practice or Digital Journalism. As it turned out we were lucky on both fronts as the abstract was selected from more than 320 submissions to be presented at the conference in September 2015 and the paper was then selected from the conference shortlist for publication in Digital Journalism (Canter and Brookes, 2016).

The lesson I learnt from this process was to aim for the top before considering publications with lower rankings because unique evidence-based research is sought after by everyone. A good starting place would be to talk to the student about where they think their paper might fit and which of the publications on their referencing list would be most appropriate.

Harmonious working

So there you sit with a excellent dissertation in your hand which is ripe for publication. But then you have to ask yourself 'can I work with this student?' The first rule of co-authoring is pick your student wisely because ultimately it is as much about the student as it is about the work. They may have a great dissertation but are they someone you can work with, who will take your advice? And remember if the student is graduating they won't have access to their university email account for very long so make sure you take an alternative email contact.

In order to create a collaborative partnership with your co-author student, rather than an exploitative one, it is vital that you clearly set out what your individual roles are from the beginning. It may be that you simply intend to rewrite the dissertation using the student's data or you may want to help the student rewrite it themselves with in-depth support above and beyond usual dissertation supervision. From the outset you need to explain to the student that the paper will be co-authored, what that actually means and you must agree on who the first author will be. As the academic guiding the student, you may feel that your name should be first but equally you may not be precious about this and would prefer to give the student a boost - particularly if they are going into academia - so you are happy for them to be the lead author. This discussion will help to sow the seeds for a good working relationship.

> *When I found out it was going to be co-authored I had no issue as I understood the dissertation would need adapting and tweaking to be appropriate for submission (Daniel Brookes, personal communication, 2016).*

Once the ground rules have been laid down, be prepared to put in some time, effort and patience. This could be time to do a complete rewrite or to give feedback on repeated drafts. It will take longer than you think as I soon realised when I began preparing Daniel's 6,000 word dissertation (not including references) for a 5,000 word paper (including references). Not only did I have to cut down the word count but I had to develop the gaps in the literature and missed opportunities in the analysis. Fortunately at Sheffield Hallam University our BA Journalism dissertation module is only 20 credits so the word count is limited to 6,000 but at many institutions they can reach 10,000 words and beyond. Be aware then that most communications journals ask for around 6,000 to 8,000 words and you may have to slice 2,000 words or more which is harder than it sounds. Then there is the ethics procedure to consider which will vary between universities. All of our dissertation students have to fill out an ethics form to complete the module so this was already in hand to cover the data collection. The publication itself went through the standard university ethics committee procedure which was straight forward given that there were no human participants.

Communication is key throughout all of these processes as students who are used to quick turnaround journalism deadlines will not realise how agonisingly slow the academic publication procedure is. Daniel started his dissertation in September 2013 and the paper was not published until May 2016 - almost three years later. In the interim Daniel graduated and got his first job, I had a second child and the paper was presented by my colleague at the Future of Journalism conference. But although it is a slow journey, this doesn't mean students can't put the pending publication on their curriculum vitae or website as this is the norm for academics. Students should also be made aware that the final article may look very different from their original dissertation, especially if their supervisor is rewriting it. It is important to communicate that this is not a poor reflection of their original assignment but it is about portraying information in a particular academic style. When I co-authored my paper with Daniel, we discussed how this would work and he was more than happy for me to rewrite his dissertation and for him to comment on drafts. Although the final article was quite distinct from his dissertation, he remained "very happy" with it as it "still maintained the original feel and tone" of his original assessment (Daniel Brookes, personal communication, 2016).

End result

The whole process has been a learning curve for me but one that I would definitely repeat. I am extremely pleased with the finished article and the publication we secured. What started out as a little experiment turned into a REF-able output and a great achievement for Daniel.

> *I have added it to my CV and my LinkedIn profile and it can only help validate my work experience and university experience listed on my CV. My advice to other students is that if you're offered the same choice, go for it. You have nothing to lose and you never know, it could help you to land a job or get that freelance gig assessment (Daniel Brookes, personal communication, 2016).*

In all honesty the process was slower and more time consuming than I imagined and the rewriting took much longer than I had anticipated or scheduled. But the end result was worth the effort as it gave Daniel a new opportunity and enabled me to build up my research portfolio in local journalism and social media without having to crunch the data myself. I already have a keen eye out for potential students to work with in 2017.

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The accreditation dilemma: for us or against us?

Accreditation. We need it to attract and recruit students to our Journalism courses. Or do we? We need it as an employment passport for our students. Or do we? It ensures quality, professionalism and high standards of Journalism. We think. Doesn't it?

Journalism tutors at universities and colleges admit to working with many vague assumptions when making decisions over whether to seek accreditation for their undergraduate and postgraduate courses. There is so little data or hard evidence out there.

As part of a review of our BA provision at Sheffield, a group of us were tasked with gathering some data on the importance of accreditation to prospective students making choices about their applications. We also surveyed current students on our Journalism Studies BA, a triple-accredited degree at a Russell Group university. This research coincided with a difficult accreditation visit from the BJTC, and a realisation that we would be forced to make some radical changes if we were to meet the new and 'tightened up' requirements. Should we stay or should we go? It was a massive decision and required some deep reflection and soul-searching – one thing was clear though, the best interests of our students had to be at the heart of the decision.

In the end, to cut a long story short, we felt that too much would be sacrificed to make way for the curriculum being imposed upon us. For example, while we fully embraced Newsdays, to comply with the 15 per student per year requirement would mean losing valuable elements of long-form journalism as well as some of the reflective elements of the degree. We believe our students need to work in a range of different types of journalism, not just 'on-the-day' news. And this takes time. We need to find space for our students to think about the 'why' as well as the 'how'.

Our MA Broadcast Journalism course is still BJTC accredited. Our BA is still NCTJ and PPA accredited.

So what did our research tell us? Would withdrawing from BJTC accreditation mean a sudden slump in numbers and a huge rise in unemployed graduates?

Recruitment

87 prospective students responded to our questionnaire given out on pre-offer Open Days. While only half claimed to have any real knowledge of Journalism accreditation, there was a general perception that it was in important factor in narrowing course selection down. Accreditation meant approval from the industry. There was also a belief that accreditation would help them get a job. The vast majority had only heard of, and were only interested in, the NCTJ. 65 felt that accreditation was very important in their degree choice, 15 that it was fairly important or an added bonus, and the remaining 7 didn't know or felt that it was not important at all.

We also asked current first years and half of the 66 who responded would not have selected Sheffield as an option if the course had not been accredited. However, the degree (in terms of reputation and content) was the most important 'volunteered' reason for choosing our course. The NCTJ was by far the most important accreditation body in the eyes of current first years.

That accreditation plays a significant role in recruitment was backed up by a survey with Journalism educators from courses across the country.

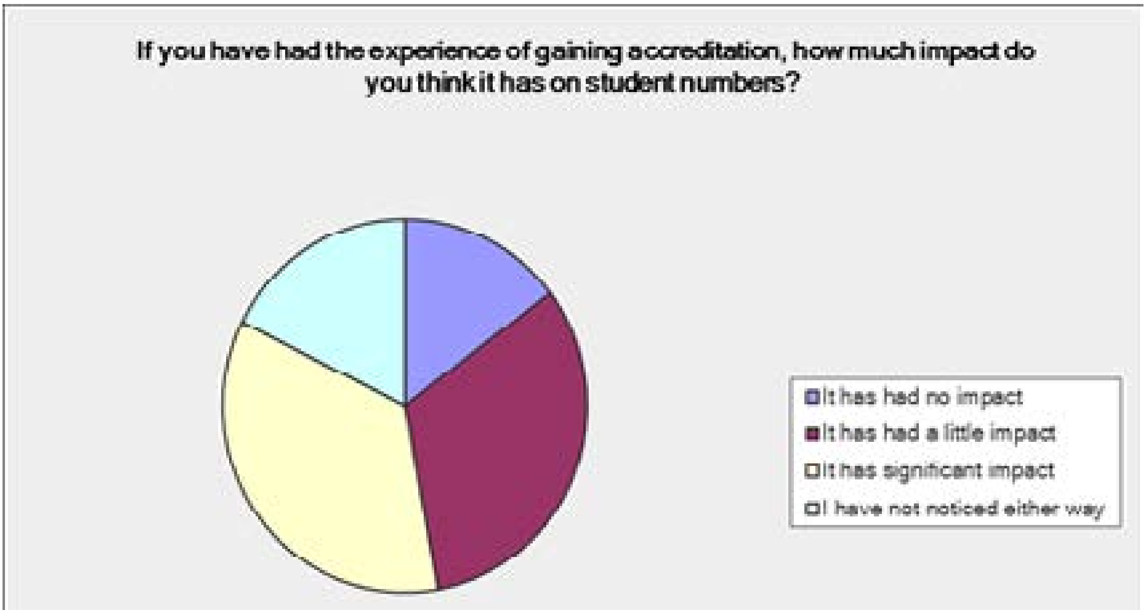


Figure 1 Impact of accreditation on recruitment

Employment

Speak to any Journalism tutor, particularly on an undergraduate degree and you will find that the spread of career ambition among students is very broad. Lily Canter, principle lecturer and subject group leader for journalism at Sheffield Hallam University, interviewed 14 editors representing all sectors of the industry. Her findings depicted ‘a changing landscape where writing skills and digital skills are held in equal regard and work experience takes precedence over qualifications’ Her research concluded that ‘accreditation was not a key factor in the employment of entry-level journalists’ (Canter, L, 2015).

Research we carried out with a different set of employers, admittedly many of whom actively employ University of Sheffield Journalism graduates, came up with a contrasting set of results. 65% of respondents felt that accreditation was very important, with 27% saying it depended on the specific job.

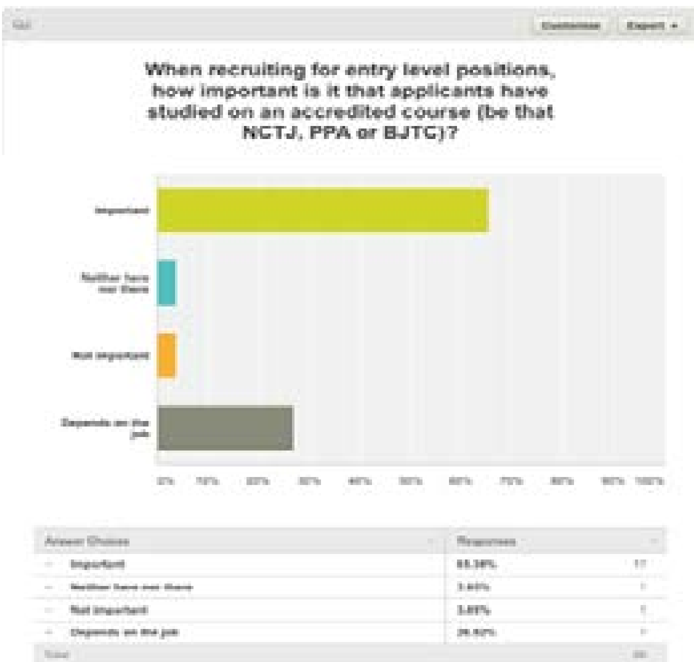
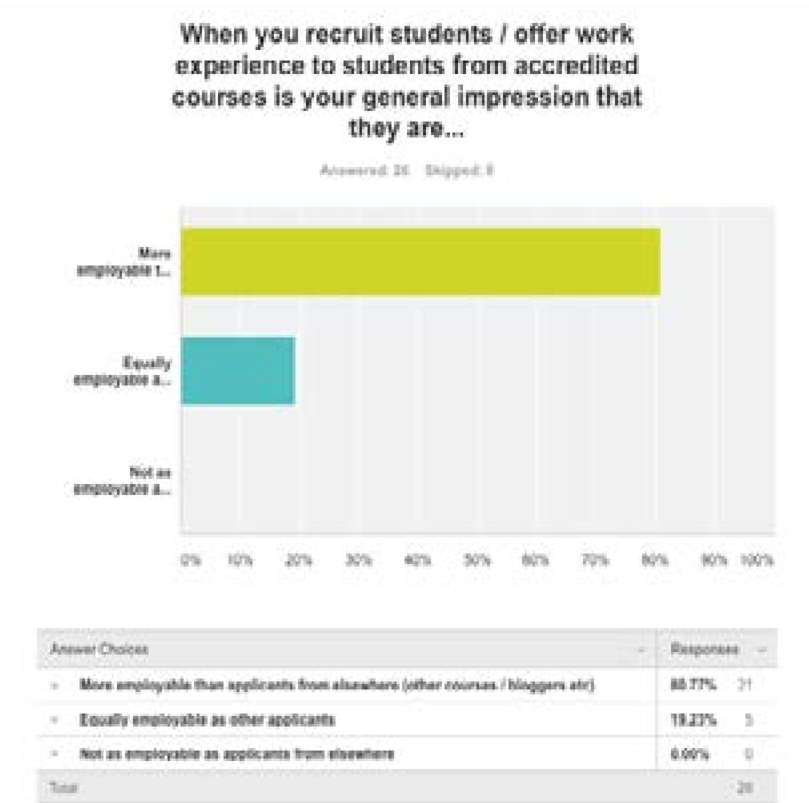


Figure 2 Employers on importance of accreditation

The employers' views on the difference in quality of graduates from accredited courses versus non-accredited courses were also clear cut. 80% felt that accreditation produced more employable students.



Answer Choices	Responses	
More employable than applicants from elsewhere (other courses / bloggers etc)	80.77%	21
Equally employable as other applicants	19.23%	5
Not as employable as applicants from elsewhere	0.00%	0
Total		26

Figure 3 Employers on quality of students from accredited courses

The Journalism tutors questioned came from a range of different courses, mainly with some form of accreditation. Over 70% had courses accredited by the BJTC, 43% by the NCTJ and 25% by the PPA (some with overlaps and double or triple accreditation). There was certainly a feeling that accreditation has a positive impact on graduate employment, but the response was tentative, with the majority opting for the 'somewhat important' answer on the questionnaire.

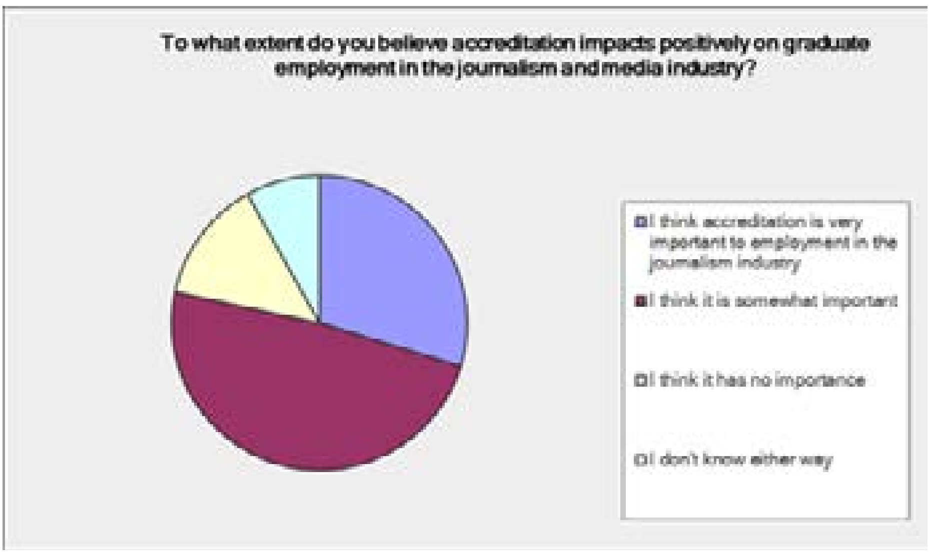


Figure 4 Journalism tutors on impact of accreditation on employment

Why seek accreditation?

The overwhelming response as to what drives courses to seek accreditation was pressure from university managers who see it as an important marketing and recruitment tool. Heads of schools and departments see the word 'accreditation' and make certain assumptions about quality assurance. Interestingly, although some tutors agreed with their bosses that accreditation should be a priority, others felt there was a mismatch between management perception of what accreditation might bring, and the views of the teachers themselves:

> *"This was imposed from above, suddenly and counter to received wisdom in the department. Felt like a senior manager 'had an idea' and had the power to impose it against the better judgement of those who actually do the teaching work"*

> *"Because the university board likes accredited courses. It believes it attracts applicants…I do not think it adds much value at all to our curriculum, It does in fact constrain it"*

> *"We are going to go for BJTC again because our head of school wants us to. I don't have enough evidence to say, there's no point, it's too restrictive. So we will go for it and if it ends in disaster, it is his disaster"*

Another popular reason was the bargaining tool for more resources – managers are far more willing to spend money on improving facilities if the accreditation carrot is in sight. A general perception of respectability, validity and professional ethos were popular driving forces to seek accreditation. Gaining recognition from employers and strengthening industry links were also mentioned. Obviously, some courses trying and hoping to gain accreditation do not actually achieve it for a variety of reasons. In some cases though, institutions or departments take an active decision to withdraw from accreditation or not to seek it in the first place.

Why choose *not* to seek accreditation?

A theme cropping up frequently was a feeling of conflict between what a degree is trying to provide and what the accrediting bodies think should be delivered. Journalism educators often feel caught in the middle – on one side we have university bosses (who sometimes have little understanding of the practical nature of journalism) demanding a curriculum full of rigorous theory, analysis and critical thinking and on the other side, accrediting bodies whose focus is solely on replicating the practices and processes taking place in newsrooms. While most journalism tutors, and journalism students for that matter, see the need for both elements, it can be one of the most challenging tasks of all trying to marry the two together. The sense of 'restriction' being imposed by accreditation requirements is a strong one. As is a lack of creativity and innovation:

> *"The NCTJ is very prescriptive and the narrowly-focused, which would restrict our ability to explore with our students new and innovate approaches to journalism"*

> *"The NCTJ is expensive, draconian, out of touch and has no understanding of the idea that universities are meant to be institutions of higher education and therefore have a responsibility for the intellectual development of their students not just their training in vocational skills"*

> *"Those teaching journalism (all with direct experience of the trade) felt it was important to devise courses rooted in practice but with significant elements of reflection and analysis. Moulding courses to fit models imposed through accreditation made it more difficult to produce something special"*

> *"Rather than dictating curriculum, the accreditation bodies should look more qualitatively at the courses to assess how they prepare journalists for the future news industry"*

> *"Modules have to be designed with the accreditation commitments in mind which often means you have to drop other modules which may be useful/interesting, especially to our students who may not all end up going for jobs in the journalism industry"*

> *"Costly, rigid structure and lacks innovation, with no discernible impact on recruitment or employability"*

Overall benefits

Some tutors felt strongly that their courses and students reap benefits from accreditation. A couple felt that the external input helped to 'keep them on their toes' and even welcomed the shaping of curriculum provision and course structure. Partnership days and conferences were also mentioned as a bonus.

Overall negative impact

The list of negatives around accreditation was a long one. The most common criticism was the lack of understanding around how HE works.

Andy Cairns, the Executive Editor of Sky Sports News, is on the NCTJ Accreditation Board and describes himself as ‘an employer trying to make sure the NCTJ and the training centres understand how the industry is changing and what employers look for’ and the skills they need students to learn. He argues that board members have a good understanding of the different types of courses out there

> *“Fast-track, degree, post-graduate diplomas, masters. Board members, and the best employers will know the difference in balance between academic study and the more practical journalism elements of the different courses – especially degree and post-graduate”*

The prescriptive nature of the curriculum offered by accrediting bodies is a real worry for many Journalism tutors.

> *“Can be challenging to reconcile demands of university academic programmes and BJTC, such as number of Newsdays and work placements, without losing identity or unique teaching approaches of each course”*

> *“Newsdays are often difficult to schedule within the university timetable as some modules by their nature need to be taught on a weekly basis, and therefore the week can't easily be given over to journalistic production”*

Professor Diane Kemp, who teaches journalism at Birmingham City University chairs the BJTC Journalism and Accreditation board is well aware that the Newsday requirement (15 per student per year) has caused controversy and explains how lengthy discussions and debates have taken place recently between industry and academic representatives.

> *“We know our students are going into a multiplicity of roles but we still come back to this thing our industry partners are saying, this is our bottom line that we need to ensure that if somebody comes from a BJTC accredited course, we know that this is the baseline”*

The second most popular gripe emerging from the survey was the cost involved. Our department conducted an audit in 2015 to calculate accreditation expenditure when we were triple-accredited. The calculation was based on membership, panel visits, paying for student first sittings of NCTJ exams, academic staff time and professional service staff time. The galling annual figure came to £85,784.20 for the year. So perhaps the resentment around the sheer expense of buying into accreditation is hardly surprising. The pressure of preparation workload was another gripe. Another recurring theme was that accreditation bodies do not move fast enough with the times and are out of date with current practice:

> *“It's a very heavy tail that's wagging an increasingly weary dog. It's essentially FE, so it tends to dumb down content. It's too prescriptive, and is dominated by legacy and traditional media”*

> *“As a former practitioner it was shocking to see how outdated and moribund these bodies have become and how they seemed not able to come together as one body representing journalism as it is today and now what it was 30 years ago”*

Andy Cairns argues that this is not his experience. He suggests this criticism in itself is possibly out-dated.

> *“Good industry practise will look at media trends, technical advances, changing demand from the customer (reader/viewer) and adapt and make plans to adapt accordingly. It's our responsibility to make sure that students of today are being prepared for the journalistic world of tomorrow and not that of yesterday….*

> *…If anything it can feel that some course leaders are slow to respond to industry changes, for example, print journalism courses, not incorporating digital journalism and inconsistent interpretations about multimedia”*

Conclusion

One of the biggest challenges is undoubtedly working under the pressure of University processes and protocol. Journalism education and training does not always sit naturally in Higher Education institutions.

No matter how strong the desire of tutors to provide students with the full immersive news culture experience, some other (often very important) aspect of the course is likely to 'get in the way'. Richard Horsman, Journalism tutor at Leeds Trinity University puts it like this:

> *"A big story breaks in the patch and the opportunity is there for students to gain priceless experience assisting established local and regional media in gathering audio, video and vox-pops, or to act as studio runners – but that chance is lost if the trainees are scheduled to sit an ethics test" (Horsman, 2015)*

Martin Buckley, Journalism tutor at Southampton University sees the benefit of accreditation:

> *"The accreditors, who are mostly senior journalists themselves, provoke rather more incisive and stimulating discussions than the mutual back-scratching exercise that external examination can sometimes be. And they do mandate a level of ethics and public affairs"*

But he agrees their demands leave tutors with a dilemma:

> *'over how much practice and how much more intellectually broadening content is appropriate on a degree in British higher education' (Buckley, 2016)*

Despite the difficulties in reaching agreement over the perfect Journalism course and the roller coaster ride for many course leaders in relation to accreditation demands, one thing is clear; as long as these issues continue to be debated with such heat and passion by people who have students' educational needs and employment prospects at the heart of what they do, it will be very difficult for journalism trainees to lose out. Let's keep debating.

Surveys

July 2015: Prospective students at University of Sheffield Journalism Studies BA Open Days: 87 responses

July 2015: Current Journalism Studies BA first years at University of Sheffield: 66 responses

October 2016: Journalism tutors across a range of institutions: 40 responses

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Acknowledgement

Thanks to all the Journalism tutors who responded to the survey and to those representing accrediting bodies who were interviewed for the piece.

Future proofing careers for journalism educators outside of research

by Vivienne Francis, London College of Communication, the University of the Arts London.

Over the past decade, the career development of the journalist-turned educator working at traditional HEIs has principally been framed around their contribution to academic research. Studies have highlighted the expectation placed upon these "hackademics" to mould their activities around institutional research agendas and REF-able outputs.

Whilst the argument for the journalist educator to build a research profile and grow their academic currency is a strong one - as it supports pedagogy and the creation of new knowledge – not enough focus is being placed on advancing the skills-dimension of the role.

Alongside the research agenda, if the journalist educator is also expected to design a curriculum that is forward thinking, ambitious and relevant, it is equally important that practical skills and industry awareness are not left to become too distant or out-dated. Teaching practice needs context and graduates need educators to be fully cognizant of the demands of the industries. The forthcoming Teaching Excellence Framework is predicted to raise the stakes even higher, as academics will be under even more pressure to demonstrate the quality and congruity of what they are offering students.

The journalist educator typically arrives at the academy expected to enrich the curriculum with their wealth of industry experience and contacts. In the rapidly shifting world of journalism, it is an approach that can only sustain itself for a few years, at best. As the gap between the time spent in industry versus the period as an academic grows, questions emerge over the relevancy and authenticity of this on-the-job experience. Some attempt to maintain currency through embarking on short courses or CPD. What is missing from this approach is the ability to apply and test these newly acquired skills in a real world environment. Although the theories on experiential and situated learning generally apply to students in higher education, flipping their application from students to lecturers opens up an interesting debate. Can immersing academics in a busy newsroom or editorial office help develop their teaching practice?

A little over a year ago, I stumbled across an article about a fellowship programme called "Back in the Newsroom" run by the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) and funded by the Knight Foundation. It started in 2014, with the aim of "…better aligning what students learn with the rapid pace of change in newsrooms". The means of achieving this is by sending nominated academics to work in industry over the summer break as professional interns. Speaking of the scheme in 2014, Michael Maness, Vice President of Journalism and Media Innovation, at the Knight Foundation said: "Professors need to be at the forefront of the movement to modernize journalism education. This program allows them to do just that – providing the skills and insights to lead students into the newsrooms of the 21st century."

The scheme targets those academics who have been out of industry for a number of years. There is also a diversity dimension to the project as it works primarily with traditionally black universities. The list of companies who have participated include: The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, CNBC, Los Angeles Times, ProPublica, BuzzFeed and WNYC. There is no cost to companies, as travel and accommodation expenses are covered by the project. The academics continue to be paid their university salaries for the duration of the fellowship.

Having seen three cohorts of academics go through the programme,

Elisa Tinsley, Deputy Vice President, Programs, at the ICFJ says:

"…the goal is for them to have developed a relationship with the media outlet to change their syllabus and possibly even their entire curriculum…in year 1 all fellows changed their syllabi post placements." The experience seems to have had a significant impact on encouraging academics to shift their teaching from a traditional content-first editorial production to one that prioritises social media and digital content.

This has been the experience of Yolanda McCutchen, Assistant Professor at Howard University who spent a summer as a fellow with The Washington Post. Her fellowship consisted of: Conducting video and analytic research; shadowing video producers at PostTV, homepage producers on universal newsdesk and the social media team; writing copy and headlines; and participating in mobile shooting and word press workshops. When McCutchen returned to her undergraduate course, she replicated the Post's mobile journalism course for her students; increased the use of social media and the analysis of traffic to the student website; and organised student trips to the Post.

Tinsley says other benefits they have observed include a greater collaboration between industry and universities, for example, due to the contacts built up during a fellowship at The Wall Street Journal, the newspaper is now mentoring student journalism projects at Savannah State University. The participating companies cite the project benefits as widening their future talent pool and bringing millennial-ideas into their organisations.

I was curious as to whether a similar approach could work here in the UK as a way of introducing a more experiential aspect to a journalist-educator's career development. I conducted a small anonymous online survey with a group of senior editors and academics. They were asked a series of open and closed questions designed to explore the feasibility of HE academics undergoing industry placements or fellowships. The Journalism academics were from a selection of UK universities. Those surveyed had entered academia from industry and were now teaching on undergraduate courses with a large practical focus. The companies who responded were: Buzzfeed, The Huffington Post, The Independent, the BBC and Bauer Media, The Observer, and Vice Media.

Examples of questions

Academics

Are there any barriers that hinder the development of your continued professional practice? If so, what are they?

Are there any gaps between what you feel students should be taught and your knowledge/skills base? If so, please outline these areas.

How useful is a project that places academics on internships with industry?

In what areas would it be most beneficial to place academics

How long should the internship be?

What difficulties/barriers would a project like this face?

Could you envisage a project like this being facilitated by your institution?

Industry

How well do journalism courses prepare students for the industry?

What would you like to see the j-schools doing more of?

Do you think there could be value in academics doing internships?

How long should they be?

What activities could they get involved in?

What skills and knowledge would you expect the academics to have prior to the internship?

What would the benefits be to your organisation?

What would be the challenges?

How far would you welcome more collaboration between industry and j-schools?

Summary of key responses (Academics):

Those surveyed commonly expressed frustration at institutional staff development processes and a lack of funding for professional development. Some also expressed concerns over busy/ admin heavy workloads and the impact this was having on their professional practice. As a consequence, finding the time to take part in such an initiative and successfully negotiating a release from their academies were cited as potential barriers to participating in the project.

Some suggested that the scheme would need to take into account the prior experience of the academics, focusing on “updating” rather than learning new skills. The suggestion was also made that it needed to concentrate on those who had been out of the industry the longest, as they were most in need.

In terms of the duration of the fellowship, six weeks was the most popular suggestion. One respondent suggested having an industry placement for a whole year and that academics should be required to go on placements on a five/six year cycle to ensure that curriculum was up to date.

The use of the words “placement and internship” were challenged as it suggested the experience would be below the academic’s professional standing.

Summary of key responses (Industry):

They were keen to develop relationships with reputable institutions and create a pipeline of talent by having access to strong graduates, and having the ability to feed into the curriculum.

A number of those surveyed expressed a concern that students were still being prepared for print industries and the inclusion of recent advances in digital content within the curriculum was limited.

There was the view that courses needed to respond to the fact that “…publishers are now looking for all-rounders who can source photos, design and promote their own work. Being able to write/report is no longer enough.”

Companies were keen to offer experiences around the metrics associated with journalism and audience development. Other activities for placements suggested: Content planning, analytics tools, distribution techniques (social and SEO).

One respondent suggested the relationship could be reciprocated, for example, academics could offer their expertise in the area of subediting or commissioning and help to develop young writers on the publications to develop writing tone and understand legal considerations.

So what now? Overall, there was a sufficient level of interest expressed by those who responded to the survey, and from others whom I have spoken with informally to warrant running a small pilot project in the summer of 2017. The precise details are still being formulated, but the pilot is likely to incorporate some of the following features:

- It would be based on a six-week fellowship model.
- There would be an open call for academics to apply. This would be restricted to those who had been out of the industry for more than five years. Participants would be selected based on a set criterion in order to identify those that are most likely to benefit from the scheme. An academic’s participation would need to be endorsed by their University.
- An academic’s prior experience and development needs would be aligned with the participating companies. Crucially, it would avoid prescribing a set template of activities for the academic to undertake. It would need to be tailored around the specific development areas for the individual academic.
- Academics would be supplied with company peer mentor who were working within senior roles.
- The academic and company would co-design and agree a work plan (with specific outcomes and measures of development).
- Academics would complete a weekly log of activities.

Once the outcome of this pilot has been evaluated, the ambition would be to seek funding to roll out the project and involve more participants in 2018/19. During the course of the 2017 pilot, discussions would also take place with universities to explore whether there a mechanism could be developed to integrate the fellowships into staff development or sabbatical schemes.

Further details on the pilot will be published via www.ajeuk.org.

Reflections on work experience: are some newsrooms failing the next generation of journalists?

Hilary Scott, Senior Lecturer in Journalism, University of Northampton

Abstract:

While undertaking short periods of work experience has been a time-honoured route into the journalism industry, placements have failed to keep pace with the requirements for mutually beneficial training. Yet work experience has the potential to solve many issues relevant to today's newsrooms, including recruitment of talent and the ability to refresh ideas and communicate news to a younger audience. This study examines student reflection on short work placements offered at UK media organisations by journalism undergraduates between 2009 and 2015, and also by journalists who have been employed in the media for many years. It covers national and regional newspapers, broadcasters, and press and public relations offices. Initial observations were disseminated at the Association of Journalism Education Annual Conference in June 2016. This article unpacks the findings of a follow-up survey which indicates the majority working in news media today believe their work experience cemented their ambition to become a journalist, while others still believe it is an unfair way to get your journalistic foot in the door.

Introduction

THERE is no doubt that becoming a 'workie' is an essential step on the ladder to a career in journalism and associated news media professions. "The perpetual drama of no job without experience and no experience without a job is one that everyone goes through when starting

a career. Getting your foot in the door somewhere is crucial…" says Alastair Reed (2013) for journalism.co.uk. Just about every journalist started this way, begging, nagging, or haranguing for two-week stints of unpaid labour.

Of the 111 survey responses, 35 per cent of respondents had completed work experience in the last 12 months, while more than 33 per cent had undertaken placements more than ten years ago (See appendix 1). This diversity in the career age of respondents may reinforce the embedded industry argument regarding the work experience method of 'training' - if you want to be a journalist badly enough, you will put up with it.

Purpose

This study of the contemporary reflections of those who have undertaken work experience came about after observing a growing number of undergraduate students who claimed to have been put off a career in journalism, or in a specific news media (newspapers, local radio) due to an unproductive placement. Issues to be taken into consideration included a small percentage for whom a career in the media had become a challenge, because of a variety of reasons, including lack of interest in the subject or lack of self-motivation. Nevertheless, Northampton's academic staff, all previously employed as journalists, observed that talented and committed students were being lost to the industry before they had even started because of their placement.

The issue of 'difficult' work experience settings is nothing new. "…it is possible for even the most charming person to have a really nasty time on a work placement. They didn't know you were coming, there is nowhere to sit, nobody will give you any work to do, and when you ask to go out with a senior reporter your request is greeted with a sigh" (McKane, 2004). Similarly, comments at the end of our survey reflected frustration with supervisors: "I found work experience to be a literal waste of my time. I spent hours sitting and desperately trying to find something to do. Any writing or suggestions/ ideas were ignored or declined. I was very aware that I was just another work experience student to them, and I was treated unfairly because of this. (R101, Work experience - an essential requirement for educating journalists? 2016)[1] Another commented: "I feel that for work experience to be effective it needs to be coupled with guidance from staff at the placement. Being left to my own devices I didn't feel as if I learnt anything new." (R5, 2016). Tutors at Northampton encourage critical self-reflection as part of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) for students, and it was notable that during feedback and reflection, both orally (presentations) and written (essays), students found it difficult to reconcile in the analysis, conclusion and action planning stages (Gibbs,1998), that they could have done anything differently – and in many places it was difficult not to agree. They had done everything and more to get the most from their placement, but were left feeling they were failures, when in truth they had been failed by absent supervisors and over-worked or disinterested reporters.[2] As (McKane, 2004) adds: "This is why it is essential to get several different placements. If one is the placement from hell, the next will be better fun."

Setting

The initial seed for the research was sown in 2013 during an informal feedback discussion with around 20 final year undergraduates who were discussing the pros and cons of their work experience placements. This came after formal submission of a summatively-assessed placement presentation, including a diary and cuttings portfolio. Many 'good' students who showed talent and commitment to journalism as a career during their three-year degree, which includes compulsory 'real-time' newsdays and a module on careers in the media, were actively avoiding a career in a newsroom as a direct consequence of their placement.

Work experience of at least a fortnight between years two and three had been a compulsory element of

1 The Work experience - an essential requirement for educating journalists? Survey allowed respondents to remain anonymous, while indicating which type of setting they were in, how long the placement was for, and how recently it was completed. Respondents are numbered.

2 One student had gone out and found a story, written it up with a photo and edited together a short video the day before starting at a local paper. The supervisor was impressed, and surprised, at the student's dedication and ability. Yet the story, despite gentle reminders, was not used and the student was mostly ignored for the rest of the week, although they asked repeatedly if they could help, shadow or go out and try and bring in more stories. After this experience they took another placement at a local council press office and chose to pursue that career on graduation instead.

the degree at Northampton for more than ten years. [3] Since 2014 this has been extended to a minimum of a week between years 1 and 2 and a further fortnight (as a minimum) between years 2 and 3 as part of the accreditation awarded by the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC). The BJTC unequivocally supports work experience as essential for journalism students:

Our industry partners consider structured, supervised work placements an essential element of an accredited course...Time and again student feedback suggests that a placement is one of the elements they most value on their course. Additionally, on the completion of a work placement students are better able to contextualise the skills they have acquired either on their course or while on placement. They understand the necessity to continue to apply and enhance these practical skills to achieve the standards they have observed during an immersive industry experience." (BJTC, 2016)

As a BJTC accredited degree, Northampton can also put forward students for a small number of applications to larger broadcast employers such as the BBC and ITV in London and Salford, but pragmatically these are often difficult for Midlands-based students to take due to transport and accommodation costs and, generally, a less-affluent student profile. However, positive feedback from the handful who have been able to be accepted onto these placements, and been able to raise the funds to take them up, indicates that they tend to be more actively managed by supervisors keen to find and nurture those who excel. "We find the work placement system allows employers like the BBC, ITV, commercial radio and many others to keep an eye on the next generation of talent, and in turn allows that talent to demonstrate its skills and accomplishments to potential employers." (BJTC, 2016)

The rise of the intern

There has been much debate about the increase in longer, often unpaid internships, frequently organised by large magazine groups but increasingly being used by newspapers and PR companies. While this study concentrates on short periods of work experience, the impact of intern culture in the UK cannot be ignored. Unpaid, or low-paid, internships have been widely criticised, not least by the NUJ's campaign to stop the exploitation of student journalists. NUJ General Secretary Michelle Stanistreet said, "In recent years, work experience has grown from a short placement as part of a recognised course to months of unpaid or poorly-paid work which can continue long after a student has become fully qualified" (NUJ, 2013). "Employers are remarkably good at complaining about highly educated kids who don't know anything about the real world,' Warwick University's Professor Kate Purcell notes, 'but less good at actually getting students in to do structured work experience that actually teaches them something" (quoted in Kelly, 2010).

Methodology

Interrogation (with written consent) of reflective diaries, essays and presentations by former and current students who had been on work experience between 2009 and 2016 to determine which factors were affecting motivation. There were limitations in gaining a full record due to a move to digital preservation of student work on different servers, combined with some students taking hardcopy submissions back to use for job interviews.

Examination of data (feedback from supervisors)

Interviews with providers to see if universities need to do more to help manage WBL[4] process

Interrogation of existing literature on work experience in various media sectors

Surveying those completing work experience in recent years. (See appendix 1)

A survey of 13 questions was created in June 2016 and sent out via email and social media, loosely aimed at current and former journalism students. Making the survey available via social media accounts[5] effectively widened its reach to those who had done work experience more than 10 years ago, before significant changes in the industry. In retrospect this may have skewed the survey, as analysed below in the limitations section.

3 Mandatory for all BA (hons) single-honours journalism students – who after re-validation in 2013 became BA (hons) Multimedia Journalism students. Joint honours students are encouraged to find placements but are not assessed.

4 Work-based learning.

5 Twitter, Linkedin, Facebook and emails were used to distribute the survey link

Early results from student reflections were disseminated at the AJE Annual Conference in June during a short presentation. (See AJE website)

Survey findings:

The graphs in Appendix 1 show how the 111 survey respondents recall their work experience. Contrary to much of the early feedback from students' reflective writing, fewer than 10 per cent said they had not had an opportunity to contribute to and learn from their placement. This may be hindsight: "The most valuable aspect of work experience is that it helps to dispel misconceptions about journalism. I went to Vogue imagining all glamour and excitement and instead found it shallow and dull. I would never had had the career I did in newspapers if I hadn't done it - particularly as it was pre-journalism degrees." (R19, 2016)

While a quarter of the survey respondents are students, the majority are now in careers, 19 per cent in newspapers or online, 10 per cent in broadcast and 19 per cent in PR or press office jobs. Time and further experience may have made these graduates more positive about the impact of work experience on their overall career. It is also worth noting the majority of respondents, 82 per cent, did work experience as part of their university or college course, showing the shift in training from industry to universities (Frith & Meech, 2007).

The local route (with newspapers dominating) is still the most popular, allowing students to work close to their home or university. Almost 40 per cent worked with local papers, while 22 per cent were with regional broadcasters. National magazines took 9 per cent and online-only sites were low for placements (2 per cent), possibly because of the nature of solitary home working. Fewer than 2 per cent did work experience in PR or press offices, yet almost 20 per cent of respondents now work in this area. The marked growth of these public relations roles in recent years, and the reduction in the numbers of staff in newspaper and broadcast roles, may have created this new career path for ex-reporters. This said, the majority of respondents are still employed in newspapers and online.

Perhaps due to the impact of the NUJ's guidelines, 21.6 per cent received payment of expenses and 5 per cent received 'freebies' such as tickets. (NUJ, 2013)

Limitations

Had the survey been worded differently, better interrogation of the data might have resulted. The targeting of respondents should have been towards a specific timeframe for work experience to allow deeper understanding of recent changes in newsrooms. Feedback from employers and supervisors is needed to extract that angle of evidence, and would offer a more objective overview.

Conclusion

While there is anecdotal evidence that a poor work placement experience can put 'good' trainees off, the survey shows that almost half the respondents are still employed in journalism or PR settings. The others were split almost equally between those who are still students and those employed in other fields. The majority (60.4%) believed work experience is still essential to a career in journalism and that you would not get a job without it. A further 28.8% agreed, but said graduates could be employed without work experience. Just 3.6 per cent believed it was an out-dated concept which penalised the less well-off.

Further development of this research is required to better understand the changes in newsroom practices and formulate a more organised and mutually-beneficial system of on-the-job training for all students of journalism.

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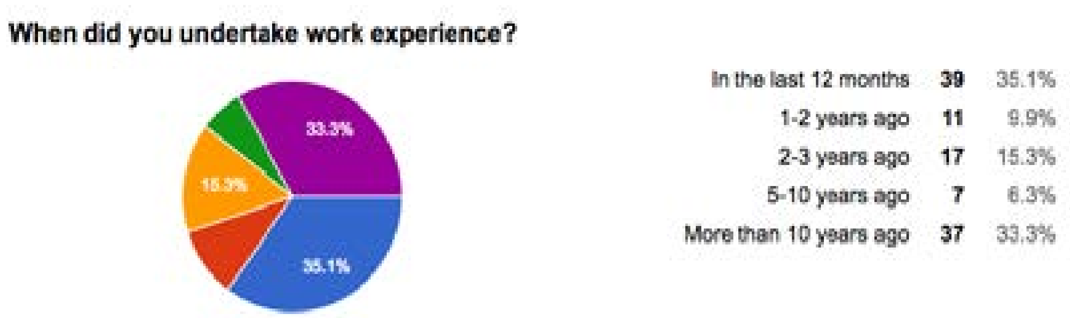
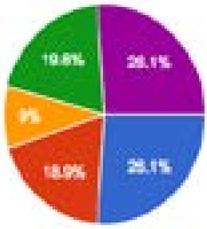
Appendix 1: Survey findings. Work experience - an essential requirement for educating journalists? (Survey, 2016)

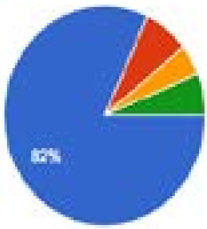


What is your current role within the media? (please state role if 'other')



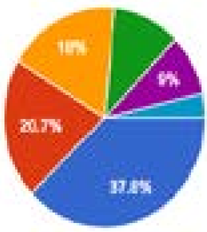
Journalism/media student	29	26.1%
Journalist (newspapers/online)	21	18.9%
Journalist (broadcast)	10	9%
PR/press relations	22	19.8%
Other	29	26.1%

When did you undertake work experience?



While at training/university	91	82%
After training/university	8	7.2%
Straight from school	5	4.5%
Other	7	6.3%

How long did your work experience last in total?



1-2 weeks	42	37.8%
2-4 weeks	23	20.7%
1-2 months	20	18%
2-6 months	12	10.8%
6 months +	10	9%
Other	4	3.6%

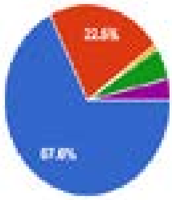
Where was your placement? (please state setting if 'other')

At a local newspaper	44	39.6%
At a national newspaper	3	2.7%
At a local magazine	1	0.9%
At a national magazine	10	9%
At an online-only publication	3	2.7%
At a local broadcaster	24	21.6%
At a national broadcaster	7	6.3%
In a PR/marketing setting	2	1.8%
In a press-office setting	1	0.9%
Other	16	14.4%

Did you organise your own work experience or was it arranged for you?

I organised it myself	90	81.1%
It was organised for me via my school/university/training course	13	11.7%
It was organised by my family/friends	1	0.9%
Other	7	6.3%

Did you feel you had a clear opportunity to contribute and learn in the field you wished to pursue (eg, journalism/PR)?

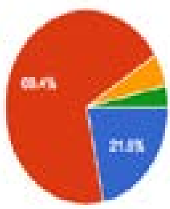


Yes, I was given supervised instruction and opportunity to contribute	75	67.6%
Yes, but I was left to my own devices	25	22.5%
No, I felt I was not trusted to perform basic media-related tasks	1	0.9%
No, I felt I was used only to fulfil administrative work such as filing, tidying and making tea	6	5.4%
Other	4	3.6%

Did you have the opportunity to get a by-line or professional credit for your work?

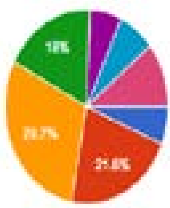
Yes, in print	30	27%
Yes, online	11	9.9%
Yes, in print and online	25	22.5%
Yes, in broadcast	18	16.2%
No	13	11.7%
No, They gave the credit to another member of staff	2	1.8%
Credit not possible due to the nature of my placement	8	7.2%
Other	4	3.6%

Did you receive payment of expenses?



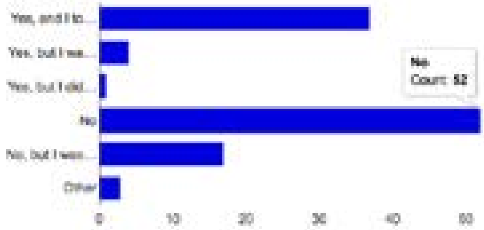
Yes	24	21.6%
No	77	69.4%
Payment in kind: eg, tickets, freebies	6	5.4%
Other	4	3.6%

How far did you have to travel to the work experience placement?



Less than 1 mile	7	6.3%
1-3 miles	24	21.6%
I had to use public transport which cost more than £5 a day	33	29.7%
I needed to be able to drive in order to get there	20	18%
I had to stay over to complete the placement (at a hotel or similar)	7	6.3%
I had to stay over to complete the placement (with friends)	8	7.2%
Other	12	10.8%

Were you offered paid-work as a result of your work experience?

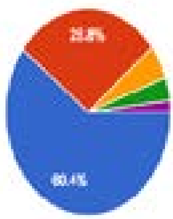


Yes, and I took it	37	33.3%
Yes, but I was not able to accept it	4	3.6%
Yes, but I did not want it	1	0.9%
No	52	46.8%
No, but I was offered the chance to continue unpaid	17	15.3%
Other	3	2.7%

Did your feel that your work experience...

encouraged you to pursue a career in that field of work?	74	66.7%
discouraged you from a career in that field of work?	15	13.5%
made you think about a career in another area of journalism?	19	17.1%
Other	6	5.4%

Overall, do you feel work experience is still essential for anyone intending to pursue a career in journalism?



Yes, you will not be considered for a job without it	67	60.4%
Yes, but it is possible to get a job without it	32	28.8%
No, it should not be a prerequisite to getting a job	6	5.4%
No, it is an out-dated concept which penalises the less well-off	4	3.6%
Other	2	1.8%

The survey also produced 41 voluntary comments as detailed below:

It's still the case that unless you have parents who can look after your living expenses it's almost impossible to get a foothold in the media. Laws on interns/work exp have improved the situation for work experience and clarified the area for employers. Many employers would like to take work experience on but there is no centralised online system to make that easy.

I do think exposure to the real-life world of newsrooms is important for would-be journalists. Many have unrealistic expectations of the job and so spending some time in a newsroom can open their eyes to the realities. While my experience convinced me it was the job I wanted, I've come across plenty of examples of people who've decided to pursue other careers after spending some time with working journalists. Having said that, I feel strongly that journalism should be a career open to everyone and requiring would-be candidates to undertake unpaid work experience could definitely close the door to those for whom that would not be manageable.

I think work experience is extremely valuable. The newsroom was not like I expected, it was much better! But that might not be the reaction for everyone. I was lucky that in that era one week on a local paper was all the work experience I needed to land an in-demand trainee role with Trinity Mirror which included the fast track Newcastle course. It is a shame that people in that position today would be likely to have to work unpaid for weeks or months, with much less guarantee that it would lead to a job.

In an increasingly competitive job market it is absolutely essential that trainee or wannabe journalists undertake work experience, and to be prepared to work for very little initially to get their foot in through the door. Without maximising opportunities they won't get very far!

Work experience is essential for the individual as it allows you to realise whether that profession is something you want to pursue with further.

Too many work experience students appear brain washed / innovation and spirt is required.

Make sure you come with ideas and knowledge of the outlet you're working for. Read listen or watch in advance

I think work experience is absolutely essential for journalists, experience is so important in the industry and gives students the chance to see what roles are and are not for them. It was definitely beneficial for me.

Work experience was invaluable in determining what I wanted to do as a career and it also provided me with material for a showreel. It also allowed me to meet people who were instrumental in me getting jobs and further experience in broadcasting.

Regarding the above question - it's crucial you get it, because it makes you understand a work environment. But you should get expenses and it shouldn't be longer than two weeks at a time so it doesn't penalise poorer people

The most valuable aspect of work experience is that it helps to dispel misconceptions about journalism. I went to Vogue imagining all glamour and excitement and instead found it shallow and dull. I would never had had the career I did in newspapers if I hadn't done it - particularly as it was pre-journalism degrees.

Although I didn't go into the area I did my work experience, it still taught me skills that I can apply to my current role (Communications Officer). I found it really helpful and learnt a lot and it helped me decide where which sector I wanted to go into once I had graduated.

I did three lots of work experience at three different local papers and one at *The Times*. With each of them I was left to my own devices but had some basic instruction as to what was expected. When I found myself forgotten, I went up and asked for more work. I also sorted the experience out for myself and, although one of the sessions was at my local paper I also paid for myself to go to London and Nottingham, where I stayed with family and friends. The standard of local journalism has been affected by reductions in staff and the pressure to put apparently unedited work online but the industry itself is still extremely competitive so I don't know how anyone would get a job without work experience on their cv and it is invaluable for the students themselves. I've seen students fail to land work experience as they've submitted badly spelled emails to editors and I've seen students walk out on placements because they haven't had enough to do, but that's part of the test- getting yourself in, making a decent effort, showing initiative and imagination. The busier the workplace the less likely people will be able to spoonfeed, but that's what working as a journalist is like in reality.

Is a good sign to recruiters that someone is passionate enough and organised enough to sort out work experience - plus resourceful enough to carry it out regardless of hurdles. Actually *doing* the job is so different to what you're taught that I'd be very wary of someone without real-world experience.

I feel it definitely determined that, at age 14, this defined what career path I wanted to take. And, having hosted many many work experience students over the years I do feel it is the best training and insight for them, albeit a minor grudge for the editors and staff, especially in the summer months when you spend so much time trying to make their experience worthwhile when you are already trying to balance a hectic workload.

I truly feel that you have to be in this field to get opportunities in this field. I've written for papers since High School. I find it challenging in Indianapolis in general. As Freelancer, you have a little more flexibility. You must make consistency unless you make it! I truly enjoy research, writing, learning, people and various perspectives. At times it appears as if the people aspect of writing is now shifted to technology and not content and facts.

I think companies need to make more out of their work experience candidates. It seems as though you're a nuisance- and you have to fight to stand out!

Learn and watch and take the initiative, news editors can only say no.

I enjoyed my first week of journalism, I was taken out with different journalists to help contribute to stories, was helping the photojournalist to set up picture opportunities and was encouraged to find my own story to get a by-line for. After work experience I wrote a lot for online blogs, which I enjoyed as I was a lot more free to write what I wanted, how I wanted to write and the feedback from the online community was very positive and encouraging.

Really try and do as many placements as possible whilst you're at university with a lot of spare time and a free overdraft! It's much harder to work for free after university when all of your friends are in paid jobs. Also, don't aim too low for your placements. Only apply to your dream places because if you're working for free then you need to enjoy it!

Most jobs require you to have experience so I feel it is necessary to have it.

Especially now there is much for the employer / mentor to learn from younger people who is on experience re tech, language, communications prefs, and excellent questions which have not been tainted by years of experience.

It's a joke that even some of the biggest places don't pay a single penny towards expenses when completing a placement (cough, BBC, cough). Yes I think you should have to work hard to get a placement and work hard while you're on it, but that hard work should be rewarded somehow.

Experience is just as valuable as a degree to some extent!! Worth pursuing, even if only for a couple of weeks. It was beneficial for me.

There are certain aspects of editorial operations that a would-be journalist should absorb before he or she enters the profession full time. Especially given the little amount of time editorial managers and administrators have to offer on-the-job training, this is essential in any internship or other experience one can gain.

The fast-paced growth of technology demands work experience to stay abreast of changes and tools used in the field.

My work experience was unpaid and I had to stay at a hostel in London - I was living in Liverpool at the time, so had to pay for accommodation, travel and living expenses while I was there. If you're from a poorer background, like I am, look around and see what help is available. I was able to get a hardship grant from my university to cover the costs of my travel. I applied for the work experience early (five months in advance), so was given the time to save money to cover my accommodation costs and have a bit aside for food (plus a suitcase full of pot noodles!). Although it was expensive I absolutely do not regret taking part and would recommend it to anyone. I felt that I learnt a lot in a short space of time, was given a professional reference at the end, a bylined piece for my portfolio and a clearer image in my mind of where I wanted to end up.

From my own personal experiences, the smaller the company the more you will learn and get involved in.

Honestly, no other industry hires students to work for free. Most business students have co-op and are PAID. Why do news rooms and magazines think it's okay to not pay a student? It's harder for those starting out to get a job, when newsrooms/magazines know they can just get an intern for free to do the work instead.

Some of the most specialized journalism roles (reporting) still really require work experience. Producers and other more technical skills could succeed without one, though it still would be preferable

Tip for anyone going for journalism work experience: show you can speak to people! Don't sit there quietly, show you can interview people face-to-face and over the phone, don't hide behind computer screens and email people, get out there and speak to them personally. Be full of ideas and make yourself seen and heard. Make an impression.

I found work experience to be a literal waste of my time. I spent hours sitting and desperately trying to find something to do. Any writing or suggestions/ ideas were ignored or declined. I was very aware that I was just another work experience student to them, and I was treated unfairly because of this.

I loved doing work experience because on all my placements I was capable enough to be able write stories, etc (I even got a splash). It confirmed journalism was for me. Having worked as a journalist and now in PR, I think work experience placements work best if the candidate has enough experience to be able to get on with journalism-type tasks. I hated seeing workies twiddling with thumbs and would try to take them on jobs where I could, but in busy newsrooms or with desk-bound reporters this isn't always possible. It's great when the work experience person is enthusiastic, clued-up and capable. I think it's really essential, but I never did more than a two-week placement and I think anyone who says their placements must be for months unpaid is taking the piss.

I wish there were more opportunities available for those wishing to pursue journalism, that have little or no experience. I have wanted to have a career in journalism for years but felt in a catch 22 position in terms of experience. Eventually I decided to apply for a post graduate course in Journalism, and got access to some experience that way.

Essential! My first journalism experience gave me a great insight into PR, which is what I decided to pursue in the end. I wouldn't have known that my passion was PR without seeking and undertaking work experience in journalism.

I find that the most successful journalists usually have at least two internships under their belt before they get hired full time - in my case, I had three internships, plus one unusual work assignment (my first work experience was as an undercover reporter) - I find that there are things that even if you study journalism in college and work for the college paper, there are things that aren't or can't be taught in a classroom, but must be learned on the job

Great way of understanding how the real life of a journalist works after we all finish uni

While it feels like a daunting process at times, I feel as though Work Experience is absolutely necessary for my chosen career path. It gave me the opportunity to not only practice and hone my skills, but help others in the process. It's a great system that helps you prepare for the wider world and post-graduation climate.

I feel that for work experience to be effective it needs to be coupled with guidance from staff at the placement. Being left to my own devices I didn't feel as if I learnt anything new.

"It's not what you know, it's who you know" after speaking with various people on my work experience I understood that this phrase is particularly relevant within journalism when it comes to pursuing a career within this field of work. I believe that if the work experience are willing to allow people to do journalism and media during their experience then it's a good idea to get some practice but if it's just to do work that otherwise would be delayed like emails then it's not for someone doing work experience to do this.

Before my work experience I ruled out a career in Journalism as learning about Journalism is completely different to actually working within the industry. Because of work experience I now have a clear idea about what I want to do in the future.

We're all storytellers now...

By Ben Falk and Priya Rajasekar, Coventry University

At the forefront of any university journalism department discussion is a simple question: what kind of people do we want our graduates to be? With what skills do we want them to step out in the real world and – perhaps more daringly – what kind of personality?

The time of journalism being a marginal university degree are gone, but more importantly there has been little coherence about how it should be taught at higher education institutions (Evans, 2014). It's a cliché to say the industry's shifting underfoot every second, but trying to pin down what a new journalism graduate is expected to be is fundamental if we are supposed to train the next generation (White, 2016).

We live in a post-convergence world. So-called pathways are breaking down more quickly than we can name them. We think we can define a modern journalist, but are they, "someone who works for a printed product, radio or television? In which particular roles? Are photographers or videographers journalists? Or can a journalist also be someone who breaks news on social media?" (White, 2016). And that's not even counting those who work on the commercial side, whether that's in branded content (sometimes known as native advertising) or simply selling curated content to providers.

The response, surely, is to revisit what we perceive to be journalism education. We are too content to repeat and re-affirm the lessons of the past, rather than attempting to broaden or invigorate (Stephens & Hart, 2009).

So then, how? Our solution was to take concepts we've been using and refining for years – news days, making audio and video etc. – and break them down. Furthermore, look more closely at how modern media newsrooms are actually defined and adhere strongly to that. Above all, be more honest about what our students are likely to be doing the moment they take off their mortarboard and gown.

And that means storytelling. Not thinking about anything other than how best to tell the story. Identifying the story and being open to presenting it in way that suits it. This skill, this openness to innovation and freedom of expression, has for some time been consigned to the background of journalism education. Too concerned with following the traditions learned and understood by themselves to mean journalism, aging hackademics have often re-inforced the invisible barriers between media disciplines, forgetting that above all journalism relies on creativity and imagination as much as it does on technical knowledge and craft (Evans, 2014)

Because we generally struggle to comprehend the new methods – often due to a lack of recent experience in Buzzfeed-esque newsrooms – it's much easier to draw the kinds of strict lines that used to exist, rather than acknowledging the blurring of them.

> *"The ways in which news is reported, written, packaged, and produced are being redefined by decidedly nontraditional organizations...Organizational management structures within media companies, too, are evolving." (Webb, 2015, p.4)*

This isn't evil. This isn't something to be feared. This isn't an excuse to argue how much better it was in the old days. Employers still want excited and inquisitive people, but they also want staff who can think more closely about audience (White, 2016). Washington Post editor Marty Baron still believes that stories should be well-reported and well-told, but also wants openness to innovation (Stephens, 2014).

In fact, Stephens and Hart (2008) argue, "the profession often tends to be more adventurous than the professors."

There is significant research evidence to suggest that journalism education is struggling to keep pace with the developments and demands of the profession and it is easy to understand why. The question that we need to be asking is how to develop a curriculum that remains responsive to a volatile and dynamic environment where change is the only constant. The advent of Web 2.0 has made it necessary for an overhaul of journalism education and journalistic practice so they can continue to serve their socially assigned purposes (Seizov, 2016).

Over the past decade or so when media has seen the rapidest and most radical changes, thanks to the growth and explosion of digital technology and social media, the recurring pattern has been an emphasis on 'storytelling' in a way that is increasingly 'platform agnostic'. One way to ensure journalism students are able to adapt and thrive in the new ‘normal’ media world might be to develop a curriculum that focuses on storytelling without defining pathways and platforms too rigidly. By doing this, even as platforms, apps and forms keep evolving, the curriculum with storytelling as the central theme and an emphasis on professional skills that prepare students to seek out and stay current in their ability to tell stories using whatever the latest and most sought-after media are, will serve the needs of students and the profession better.

Interestingly, while journalism educators have been more receptive to the idea of including new skills and technology, there has been a general reluctance to shake-up traditional boundaries and challenge long-established domains.

In the mid-to-late 90s and the early 2000s, news media in many countries, particularly in the West, began to work towards an online presence. While the primary offering was through the dominant platform (print, radio or television), a web presence was gaining popularity.

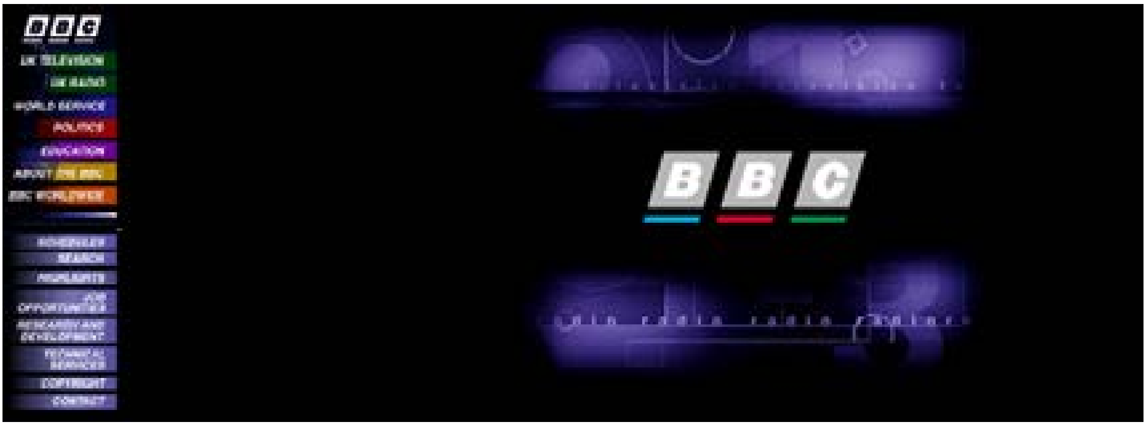


Figure 1: BBC Archive April 28 1997 screenshot

It was around this time that journalism educators increasingly began to recognise the importance of computer-assisted reporting in journalism education as it was felt that with this, it was unlikely that many journalism program graduates would find themselves at a loss if expected to use this source on the first day of employment (Fico & DeFleur, 2002). There was still no argument at this point to move away from media and pathways as the profession continued to recognize these differences.

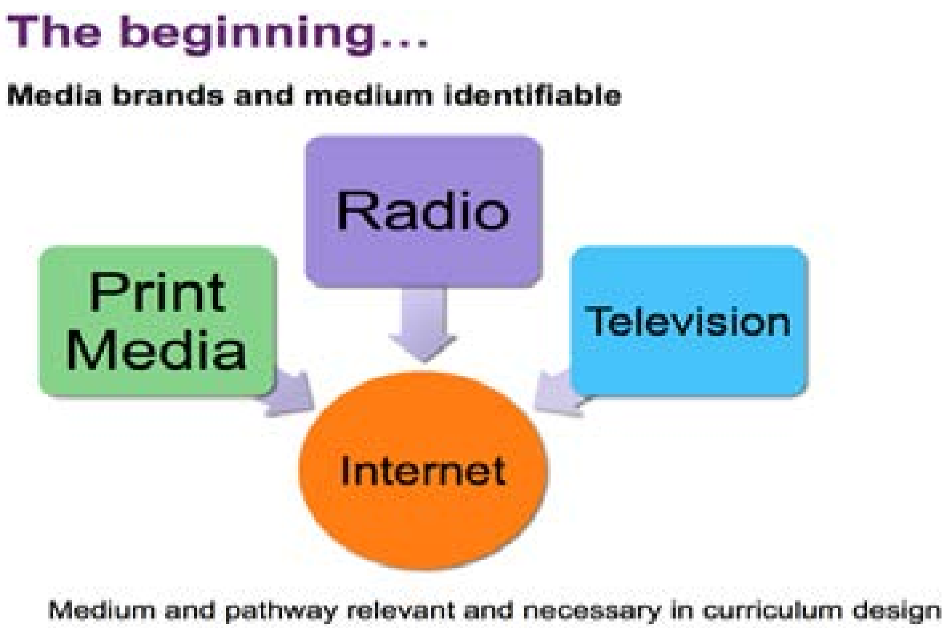


Table 1: With the arrival of Facebook and Twitter, both journalists and journalism educators also began to talk about including social media journalism in their curriculum.

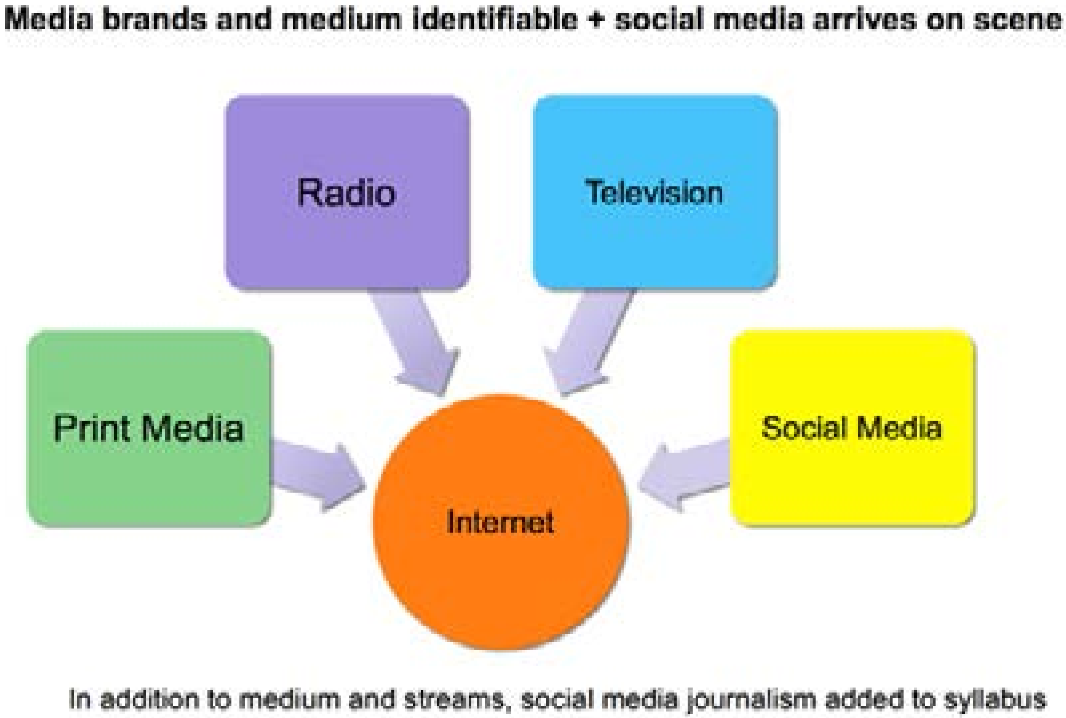


Table 2: It was a little later, in the early to mid 2000s, that convergence became a part of the conversation and leading institutions had already begun their move towards convergence.

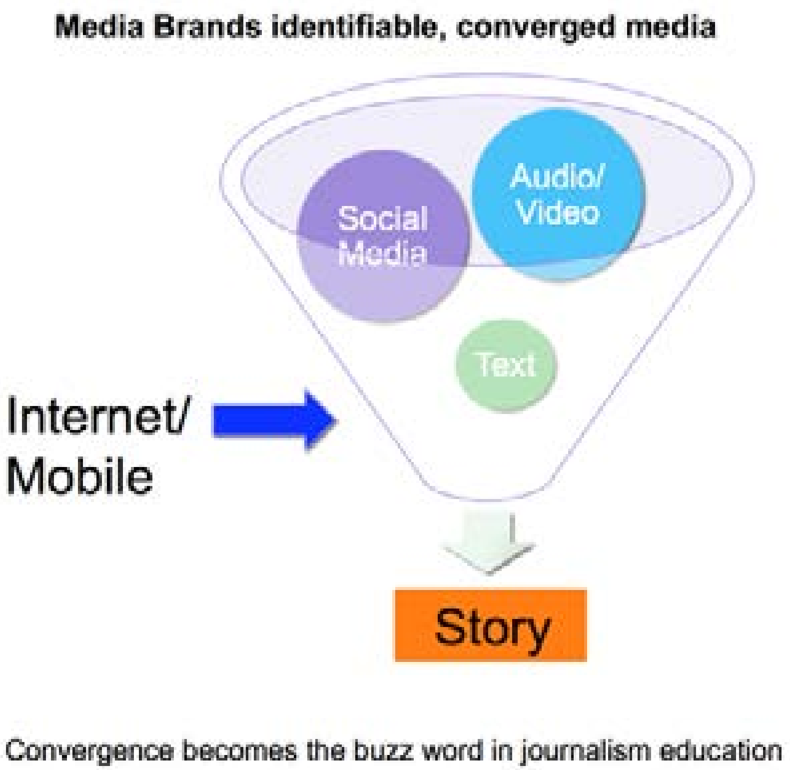


Table 3: A 2003 survey of a sample of forty-six top-tier journalism programmes found that 85% have begun to pursue curricula that address media convergence, but most schools still maintain separate tracks for print and broadcast (Daniels & Becker, 2005).

Even as convergence was gaining currency in the media world, the increasing use of smartphones to access news meant that content had to be simultaneously produced or repurposed for different platforms and devices. The Digital News Report 2016 published by the Reuters Institute reveals that in terms of main device, the mobile/tablet now outstrips the computer. According to the report, the UK has reached the mobile tipping point with a publisher like the BBC reporting that around 70% of traffic now comes from mobile devices. The use of smartphones to access news is understandably more prevalent among younger users, who also tend to consume news predominantly on social media, with brands losing their distinct identity.

"When we ask people about the main way in which they come across news stories we see that people use social media more on the smartphone, whilst they are less likely to use a branded entry such as a website or app. This is true even if we take account of the fact that smartphone users tend to be younger and tend to use social media more." (Reuters Digital News Report 2016)

Table 4: brands still identifiable

Table 5: brands lose identity

In 2015, Facebook, the largest player in the social media space with over 1.2 billion users globally, also began to allow media houses to publish directly to Facebook through its Instant Articles feature. Articles published directly to Facebook largely followed the format and style of the social network, stripping some of the uniqueness of the media brands the stories originated from.

Increasingly, we are reaching a stage where news is largely consumed through social media, amorphous when it comes to platform identity, complex in terms of being identifiable by source (news brand, professional journalist Vs citizen journalist) and nebulous in distinguishing between news and opinion.

The innovation lag (DeFleur & Davenport, 1993) between journalism classrooms and the realities of the media world is getting bigger and needs to be addressed in a way that will future-proof the curriculum without diluting core values and concepts that have added value and purpose to an academic degree in journalism.

In this sea of confusion and incessant disruption, by turning our attention to storytelling as a singularity, journalism educators can reinforce core journalism values and ethics and equip students to become trusted curators.

The profession of journalism

The module coded 235MC at Coventry University is a 2nd year Journalism module also known as The Profession of Journalism.

The module descriptor explains:

> *"This module sets out to transform you from a student journalist to a practitioner capable of working at a professional level…The learning environment will recreate a working rolling news environment, complete with live assignments and deadlines. Students will be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to work in such a professional multi-media newsroom." (Coventry University, 2016)*

But what does this really mean? In the 2015-16 academic year, it meant the entire cohort producing a live TV in Term 1 and in Term 2, they were divided into TV, radio and Online groups to produce outward-facing material within those capacities.

It was over-archingly successful. In the module evaluation questionnaire, 100% of the students said it was "intellectually stimulating and engaging", whilst 100% also said the "quality of this module was satisfactory". In their written comments, participants praised the "hands-on work", the "tasks" and the "practical" nature of the module.

However, it's also clear that curriculum development is often too slow-paced (Webb, 2015). There needs to be a sense of urgency in reacting and responding to our, for want of a better word, clients. Change comes slowly in academic departments, which is not conducive to effective teaching.

As such, we read the negative comments in the module evaluation. There weren't many, but one clear one said in the section for areas to improve, "make the newsdays multi-platform, more emphasis on online, social media".

Utilising my own professional experience in the Yahoo UK newsroom, the solution came instantly. Throw out the words TV, radio and online in any course literature. Think of the outlet as merely a delivery system, not a form of media in and of itself. Talk about teams as part of an integrated whole, not a form of division. And change the portfolio requirements to create "artifacts". Not packages, or pieces, or articles, or shows, but a more nebulous word which can mean a variety of things.

These are not new ideas. This is not revolutionary. But it's about changing the mindset of the course so that we are in sync with, rather than chasing, modern working methods. Editors have to be quick to adapt in a variety of areas (White, 2016), why not journalism departments or module leaders too? We have to admit to ourselves that journalism teaching is generally focused on training students to work in so-called traditional media environments (Evans, 2014). We can also tell ourselves that it's okay to experiment. The only way to succeed is to use our students as, if you will, guinea pigs – to have a vision we want to achieve but then be prepared to hone, refine and improve if necessary.

It is our job as educators to define new agendas for training (White, 2016). Amy Webb suggests that curriculum redesign involves a host of possibly intransigent stakeholders whose intractability can be the enemy of progress (Webb, 2015). But we would argue that maximising change by understanding and implementing based on the fluidity of the module descriptor year-by-year, even month-by-month should not just be encouraged, but mandatory.

The new 235MC

> *"The module aims to recreate a professional journalism office where you will work in specific jobs for a public-facing media outlet as an editorial team. You will have to apply for the job you would like to do and sit in front of an interview panel to try and get it."(Falk & Coventry University, 2016)*

This is the mission statement of the revised module. Every member of the cohort works together under a student-governed editorial hierarchy in pursuit of one simple goal – make the product (known as iCov) great. Choosing an audience and engaging that audience by telling stories using any means they choose or desire.

Students apply for the job they want, undergo job interviews with the module leader and a member of the university careers team so they take ownership of their position and ideally want to do it to the best of their ability.

235MC is, according to the module descriptor, expected to, "implement a range of professional norms – including standards of personal conduct toward colleagues, ethical practice and adherence to deadlines, which govern journalism practice in a newsroom." (Coventry University, 2016).

We are trying to achieve this by unifying the cohort and getting them to understand that what they are doing is telling stories together in a variety of ways under the same umbrella, with the same ultimate goal.

People work in teams, just like at, for example, Yahoo UK or Buzzfeed or Vice. But there is a greater sense of interaction amongst a larger group (45 students), an improved idea of working for a single entity rather than a series of individual or small group projects that can frequently propagate in news day-based modules. There is also a clear adherence to Marty Baron's underlying principles to ensure participants are "being challenged to do work that is superior in its understanding, insights and presentation" (Stephens & Hart, 2009), at least in its attempt.

Fundamentally, storytelling is king; emulating reality to the best of our ability is paramount – while the module and to some degree the course itself is being interrogated pedagogically. Importantly, the students themselves also have a stake in the transition, which may or may not yet succeed. As long as we are open to reflecting-in-action on the changes however, any failings can potentially be rectified.

Future-proofing

If we are going to ensure the viability of our courses and more importantly the quality of our graduates, then we need to future-proof. Of course this comes as a response to the technological revolution (Stephens & Hart, 2009), but it's also about absorbing and synthesising the kinds of skills the UK journalistic accreditation bodies demand, while recognising that successfully doing that doesn't create the finished, ready-for-work human article (Evans, 2014).

Don't impose your – out-of-date – experience

We're old. However many Twitter followers we have, we're still old.

That doesn't alter the amount we understand and can teach about the fundamentals of storytelling. Or how to work in an office environment, or how to frame shots on a camera or pin down a source – perhaps the kinds of critical thinking that some consider the immutable skills of journalism (Webb, 2015). But what it does mean is that there needs to be a caveat in how we present what success looks like to graduates now, or how we prepare them for their likely very different careers to ours.

A lot of students still define themselves by the traditional model. How do we shock them out of that?

One of the most difficult aspects of this change is that the students themselves sometimes don't realise that they are living in this transitional media world. At open days, when asked what they want to do, there are frequent replies of "print journalism" which they perceive to mean the Times or Cosmopolitan. Of course that is still a valid and valuable element of the industry – but it shows that the traditional constructs of media are still prevalent, even if these youngsters haven't actually ever bought a physical copy of the paper they aspire to work for.

Being told they aren't sure whether to come on the course because "it doesn't seem to be writing-focused" is confusing because it demonstrates they don't understand there is writing intrinsic in almost every facet of the industry, including magazine-style feature writing on the Web.

This requires hackademics to a) stop using the language of the past, such as TV, radio, etc. and think more realistically about how modern organisations work. It's about instilling the thrill of being in the middle of a story and having the responsibility of communicating what's happened (Webb, 2015).

Above all, it is our job to interpret an uncertain future for our students who may not understand it yet themselves, even if they are already consuming and even contributing to it.

Be prepared to alter and react on the fly

If nothing else, it will make for a more enjoyable teaching experience. Still, it's useful to remember that "if the journalism we have, if the methods we are defending, were more perfect, maybe this resistance to experimentation would be less of a problem." (Stephens & Hart, 2014). This includes simple changes, like altering the language of our Moodles and module books.

Think about monetisation and commercialism

Neil White is clear on this and it's a skill drilled into editors at new-model media companies like Buzzfeed. As one editor from the outlet explained, "It would be helpful for journalists to understand that what they do is monetized…The editors at BuzzFeed understand that we need to make money and they understand the business model. That's important." (Webb, 2015)

Writing, recording and filming stuff will never go out of fashion

Don't worry – it just won't. As editor Kevin Riley of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution told Amy Webb, "Our capacity to tell stories has never been greater than it is right now."

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Hands-on or hands off: reviewing the newsday as a teaching tool

Aleksander Kocic, Edinburgh Napier University

Abstract

Journalism is now a graduate occupation and apparently it is extremely difficult to enter the industry without a degree. Training no longer occurs systematically on the job. Instead, the industry increasingly relies upon higher education to provide it. While some see this as a positive and natural role for higher education, others believe vocational training should be separated from academia. The emphasis on employment-related skills has sparked a renewed debate about the right approach to the teaching of journalism. One of the most widely used teaching tools available to journalism educators is the Newsday. Although popular both amongst the educators and the students, the Newsday as a teaching tool is inadequately researched and so this paper aims to provide an introductory review of existing literature on Newsday and underlying theories.

Introduction

The first writing courses were offered at US colleges in the nineteenth century, and the first academic journalism department was established in 1908, at University of Missouri.

Other pioneers in the teaching of journalism included Michigan State University, the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Kansas State University. Right from the beginning, it was obvious that there was no single approach to journalism education, which soon became an interdisciplinary mix of the humanities and the social sciences. Some institutions focused primarily on hands-on training, while others treated journalism as social science.

Journalism education in Britain gained a firm foothold in the university sector much later than in the United States and parts of Western Europe (Frohlich and Holtz-Bacha 2003). In 1991 two polytechnics launched Britain's first undergraduate, single-subject journalism programmes (Delano 2001, cited in Hanna and Sanders 2007). By early 2006, 38 British universities were offering journalism as a single-subject first degree. Some of these also offered first degrees combining journalism with other subjects. A further 28 universities offered such combined degrees only. Some journalism first degrees in Britain have vocational training in at least 50 per cent of their content. Others, badged by universities to include journalism, contain much less training (Hanna and Sanders 2007, p406).

Now more than ever, journalism graduates are expected to have the capacity to engage immediately and effectively in the professional setting where they secure employment and so the higher education sector places great emphasis on teaching skills suitable for entry-level jobs (Stephens 2002 cited in Mensing 2010). Some scholars (Dickson 2000 cited in Mensing 2010) see that as a problem, saying that journalism education has always been under fire by both practitioners and academics for focusing too much on the teaching of skills and techniques. Accreditation rules have encouraged a journalism curriculum that includes a small core of conceptual courses and an emphasis on reporting, editing, writing, and production courses (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications 2004 cited in Mensing 2010, p515).

This emphasis on employment-related skills is at the centre of debate about the right approach to the teaching of journalism. As Atkins (1999) explains, proponents of the acquisition of such skills maintain that it is both in the interest of the individual student, and in the interests of local, regional and national competitiveness to do so. He says that this argument is based on a view of the 'contract' between higher education and society, where in return for the public monies invested in it, higher education must contribute to the economic prosperity of the country.

Philip Gaunt identified several essential levels of journalism education, including the following:

(1) understanding the media system in which journalists work;

(2) basic skills, such as writing and editing;

(3) the use of technical equipment;

(4) understanding social, cultural, and economic issues in society; and

(5) specialized training for certain areas in the profession.

The categories boil down to two different visions in journalism training: practical skills and content and theory (cited in Blom and Davenport 2012).

One teaching tool available to journalism educators is Newsday, which bridges most if not all of the above mentioned levels. Although widely popular both amongst the educators and the students, there is little research into Newsday and underlying theories. This paper is divided into three parts: the first looks at general theories of learning, the second at teaching of journalism and the third at Newsday as a tool itself and its applicability.

Theory of learning

There are several models that try to explain how people acquire skills, how they learn. The two main schools of thought on how learning happens are the behaviourist and the cognitive. Behaviourists say that learning happens through stimulus, response and reward, in other words, that it is a conditioning process. The now widespread emphasis on expressing the curriculum in terms of intended learning outcomes can be said to derive from the behaviourist school of thinking. The cognitive view focuses on perception, memory and concept formation, and on the development of people's ability to demonstrate their understanding of what they have learned by solving problems. It arose from the work of Lewin (1952) and was extended by Kolb (1984) in his Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Kolb's model says that most of what we know we learn from experience of one kind or another, and then breaks this down into four stages, turning them into a learning cycle (see figure 1).

Race (2001) agrees that the most effective form of learning is experiential learning – 'learning by doing'. However, he departs from Kolb in identifying a new, highly important element in the process - the internal motivation that makes a person want to learn something in the first place. He describes this as 'wanting'. In

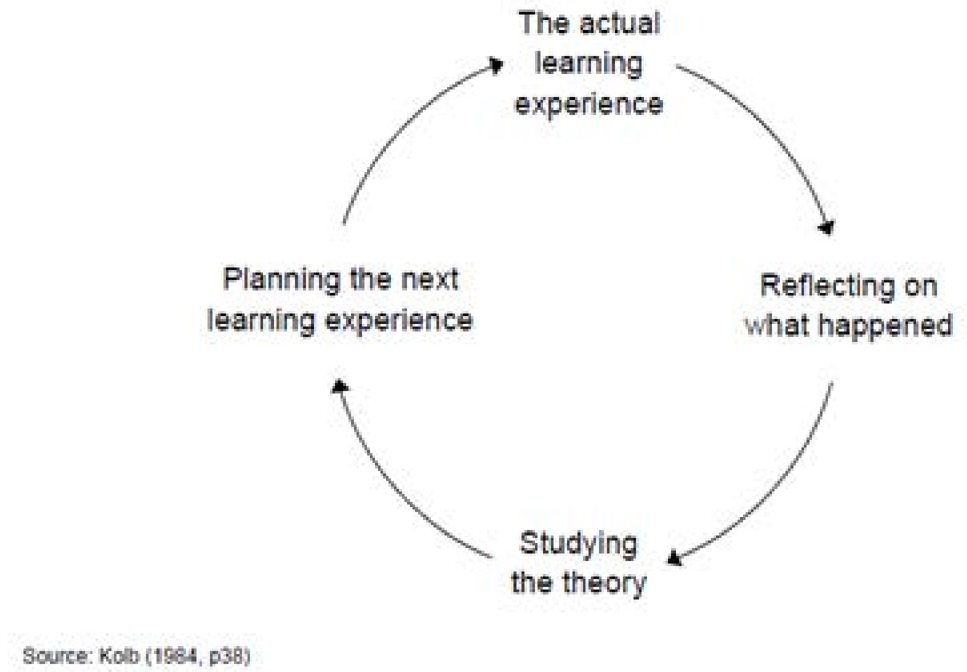

Figure 1: Kolb's learning cycle

his model, the four basic elements that constitute successful learning are:

- wanting (motivation)
- doing (practice; trial and error)
- feedback (seeing the results; other people's reactions)
- digesting (making sense of it; gaining ownership).

Race's model of learning differs from that of Kolb in that its various elements are regarded as constituting an integrated, interacting whole – like the ripples on a pond.

HE institutions have recently realised that in addition to subject-related knowledge and skills, students also need to acquire the competence to use this knowledge in real situations. This requires active learning or learning by doing (Race 2001). This is where competence is usually measured in performance, where students can apply passive, theoretical knowledge usefully in real situations.

Based on the Active Learning approach, many HE institutions have for a long time incorporated into their teaching programmes laboratory, field and studio practicals. Those are used to develop skills or acquire knowledge, and among the reasons for using practicals are:

Developing manual and manipulative skills

Developing applied understanding of a subject's basic methodology

Consolidating basic knowledge

Developing higher cognitive skills and professional attitudes

Developing communication skills

In many professional programmes, such as architecture, business, dentistry, engineering, fine arts, and healthcare, much of the declarative knowledge is learned not for its own sake so much, but to construct a platform for launching informed decision makers and performers into the workforce (Biggs and Tang 2007, p135). There are two broad steps in educating students for such professional decision making. The first is to build up the appropriate declarative knowledge base, and the second is to put it to work. Thus far, this follows the traditional fill-up-the-tanks model: declarative knowledge is built up first, the application of that knowledge second. In that context, Harvey and Knight (1996) suggest that good teaching is that which depends upon academic staff seeing their role as facilitators of transformational learning, not merely as purveyors of data.

One way of engaging and motivating students to become responsible for their own learning is by integrating active learning and appropriate assessment into the curriculum. When meaning and understanding are created by the student's learning activities (Biggs 1999), the academic's role changes from source of all knowledge to learning facilitator. Students in this scenario embark on a path of experiential learning, which Brandon defines as a process during which a person experiences an event, acquires competencies, and then compares the knowledge gained during the process with the knowledge gained in similar situations (2002, p62). Dewey (1958) views experience as a great liberating force for people, and a form of learning that gives people room and movement. Experiential learning plays a large and important part in journalism teaching.

Journalism teaching

The knowledge journalists need is divisible into two categories: the generally academic and the professional (de Burgh 2003, p96). Most British universities now claim that their journalism degrees 'integrate' theory and practice (Greenberg 2007 cited in Wright 2012). As Poerksen (2010 cited in Wright 2012) says, this 'promise' may appeal to university applicants, but it is misguided, as it implies that the two will complement one another - when they often don't. Researchers for the Higher Education Academy in the UK have criticised Journalism educators for failing to clarify what they mean when they claim to link theory and practice (Wright 2012).

Nevertheless, the skills journalism students acquire are similarly divisible, into the transferable and the specific or vocational. The transferable skills include research and investigation; information assimilation and assessment; communication skills; and expression (de Burgh 2003, p99). The profession-specific skills include news story analysis and construction, professional conventions in production, operating skills, production management, interviewing and the very particular teamwork that is required in covering a big newspaper story or making a TV programme (de Burgh 2003, p101).

Many of these skills are gained through Team Based Learning, which is regarded as an instructional strategy and not merely a teaching technique. Pedagogically, team learning itself is not new and has origins from multiple educational theorists. As Gomez, Wu, and Passerini (all cited in Han and Newell 2014) argue, TBL-related theories are primarily based on constructivism and social learning. As Han and Newell (2014) point out, constructivism centres on the paradigm shift from the traditional teacher-to-learner knowledge transfer, to a learner-as-an-active-agent learning process where students contribute to developing their own knowledge through engaging in pre- and in-class activities. In the field of journalism and mass communication, team learning has been identified as a principal pedagogical trend, as teamwork is one of the dimensions central to the objectives in communication curricula (Han and Newell 2014).

Much has been discussed about the need to ensure that degree programmes increase graduate employability and the need to connect degree curricula and employability by introducing work-based or work-related learning (Mason & Robinson 2009 cited in Heathman and Mathews 2014). In research undertaken on behalf of the UK's Higher Education Academy, Moreland defines work-related learning as 'involving students learning about themselves and the world of work in order to empower them to enter and succeed in the world of work and their wider lives'. He asserts that work-related learning therefore involves students in four interrelated areas of learning: learning about oneself – capabilities, confidence, life interests and career decisions (Efficacy and Metacognition); learning and practising skills of value in the world of work (Skilful Practices); experiencing the world of work (or facsimiles thereof) to provide insight (Understandings); and learning how to learn and manage oneself in a range of situations, including those to be found at work (Metacognition). For educators, this presents a challenge: how best to not only incorporate these four areas of learning into the curriculum, but also find an appropriate, meaningful form of assessment that can measure such development (Moreland 2005 cited in Heathman and Mathews 2014, p29).

As the demand for workplace-ready graduates increases, so does the need to shape teaching designs and assessment methods to replicate workplace practices. Along with it comes a need for a range of creative and active learning approaches that engage students and enhance their understanding (Rao & Stupans 2012 cited in Heathman and Mathews 2014). In the teaching of journalism, Newsday is a widely used tool and an interesting example of work-related learning, as it combines classroom and real-life professional experience for students.

Newsday as a teaching tool

Most journalism courses in HE run simulations of which Newsday is the principal one. Newsday is a hybrid activity in which a classroom is turned into a newsroom, where the print, TV or radio news programme is compiled to more or less professional deadlines, under the management of practising editors managing for the day. These exercises are very popular with students who see them as exciting and 'real' because of the deadlines and sometimes because of the professionals who are brought in to whip them into shape. The rationale for Newsday is to provide a learning experience for students that would replicate, as closely as possible, the real world of journalistic practice.

As de Burgh points out, Newsday serves several different learning and teaching functions: it is an assessable test of students' journalistic and technical abilities; it provides a framework in which students gain understanding of how newspapers and broadcast shows come together and what is realistically possible under technological and professional conditions; it provides the excuse for inculcating professional disciplines from the basics such as studio behaviour to the administrative, such as the tailing and clocking of broadcast packages; students are subjected to pressures not only to achieve deadlines but to exploit the newest technology and other resources to the full (de Burgh 2003, p101).

Other simulations which can be used on their own or in conjunction with Newsday include pitches to commissioning editors, reports to class and interviews with (usually local) decision-makers, experts and opinion-formers.

Rhodes and Roessner (2008) investigated the teaching of magazine publishing through experiential learning, considering 16 magazine publishing courses in US universities where students worked together in simulated newsrooms to produce magazines from concept to publication. The study found that linking learning, thinking and doing by providing students with 'real-life' educational experiences in their workshops meant that the courses were answering the calls from industry and educators for more hands-on, real-world approaches in the classroom. They found that the students were initially anxious but this bred confidence as they began to understand more about working together and managing the pressure of professional deadlines.

Because of this Newsday is without a doubt a useful teaching tool that draws heavily on the theory of experiential learning. It is by no means the exclusive format for teaching journalism, but as an example of experiential learning it is an essential ingredient in any journalism course. According to Rhodes and Roessner, the ideology of experiential learning was introduced into the American educational system in the mid-1930s, based on John Dewey's philosophically pragmatic approach, which emphasized the role of experience and reflection in education. Experiential learning "links learning, thinking and doing" by providing students with real-life educational experiences through fieldwork, internships, or workshops, and journalism and mass communication programmes continued moving in that direction (Rhodes and Roessner 2008, p35). Beginning with the National Institute of Education's Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education and the Oregon Report in 1984, educators and professionals suggested that professors at the nation's journalism schools should utilize more hands-on, real world approaches in the classroom. In subsequent years, the need for more hands-on was echoed by other journalism professionals and educators (Rhodes and Roessner 2008, p36).

The tendency to offer more practical journalism instruction is followed by calls for increased academic research on experiential learning in journalism education. Dewey (1958), often identified as the father of experiential learning, called for pragmatic education, one that linked knowing to doing. Examining models of experiential learning in magazine publishing, Rhodes and Roessner argued that 'If experience is the best teacher, then journalism education should include professional training in the classroom' (2008, p305).

However, some scholars remain sceptical of experiential learning, concerned that experiences detached from context and conceptual instruction can ring hollow. Noting Dewey's admonishment that "not . . . all experiences are genuinely or equally educative," Katula and Threnhauser argue that there already exists "an abundance of 'doing'" in many communication curricula, not all of which may be appropriately thought out (all cited by Parks 2015, p127). Creating an experiential project in which students reported and edited on deadline meant less in-class time for instruction, reflection, and review. In previous news writing courses, the professor had run students through a series of practical reporting assignments covering crime, courts, city government, and other beats. Some scholars have suggested that the trade-offs prompted by experiential learning could be too great—that too much traditional and analytical instruction is sacrificed in the name of "real-world" experience (Parks 2015, p136). Pedagogical discussions should not polarize scholarship and practice; journalism educators rather should aspire to arm students both with experiences mirroring professional practice and with knowledge of how communication theory and research can make journalism better

(Parks 2015, p137).

Group projects (such as Newsday) are becoming increasingly common for two major reasons: they aim to teach students cooperative skills, in line with ILOs or graduate attributes relating to teamwork; and the teacher's assessment load is markedly decreased (Biggs and Tang 2007, p219). Group projects, however, are not always popular with students, because the assessment may not take into account individual contributions (Biggs and Tang 2007, p219). Gray (2001 cited in Heathman and Mathews 2014) emphasises that work-related or work-based learning should include the acquisition of technical skills, but it must also involve reviewing and learning from the experience. The importance of such practical experience – and subsequent reflection – follows the model of Kolb's learning cycle (1984). Based on this conceptual model, a learning design that incorporates hands-on work in the newsroom, followed by formative feedback and the regular opportunity to apply learning week after week before a final summative self-assessment, should prove effective for the students (Heathman and Mathews 2014, pp29-30).

A simulated work environment also enables students to undertake problem-based learning (PBL) by working as a group to tackle a common challenge. Highly regarded in several disciplines, and shown to result in learning with a longer 'shelf-life' (Dochy et al 2003 cited in Heathman and Mathews 2014), PBL represents a shift to student-centred education with process-oriented methods of learning in which students have the opportunity to learn material in the context in which that knowledge will be used (Ahlfeldt et al 2007 cited in Heathman and Mathews 2014, p30). Finally, as Lynch et al. (2006) note, the emphasis upon situation and context provides a broader yet deeper way in which everyday learning in higher education and the workplace can be understood.

Group projects are commonly used in tertiary education to practise team-work (Kuisma 1998, p2). Working as a member of a team is an essential characteristic in many professions but this ability does not always develop naturally and should therefore be practised (Jacques 1991 cited by Kuisma 1998, p2). A disadvantage of the group project compared with an individual project is that it may allow the less enthusiastic students to be carried along by their colleagues. It may also put an excessive pressure on the more able group members who feel that they have to shoulder the responsibility for the whole group (Kuisma 1998, p2). There is a lot of anecdotal evidence which shows that this is exactly what happens on Newsdays.

Conclusion

The concept of learning by doing is similar to other constructivist perspectives on learning, such as that of Bednar et al (1995) who argued that real world problem solving, and using the tools available in problem solving situations, are key. Models of experiential learning aimed at complementing existing learning and teaching approaches have been used across disciplines for a number of years. However, though the teaching of practical aspects of journalism is commonplace in journalism education, research on this process is limited. For example, Steel et al (2007) argue that ways in which students learn from and with each other through the development of communities of practice within journalism is relatively under-researched. Another area further research into Newsday as a teaching tool should address is that of role play and its effect on the learning process, as on a Newsday students are not only expected to work as a team, but as a team with a clearly structured hierarchy, where peers stop being peers.

Projects such as Newsday are productive models for meeting both practical needs identified by the profession, and pedagogical needs identified by scholars. Future studies should continue to examine how practical journalism experiences can meet the pedagogical needs of students and the civic needs of communities (Parks 2015, p137).

The ultimate objective of journalism education should be to improve the practice of journalism not only by training skilled practitioners, but also by teaching how journalism impinges on other areas of public life and illustrates critical social issues. Understanding these issues is as relevant for the media-literate press consumer as for the would-be professional. From the standpoint of the news media themselves, however, the training role predominates. This, combined with accreditation requirements by bodies such as NCTJ or BJTC in the UK, makes further research into various aspects of Newsday essential.

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Providing students with real experience while maintaining a safe place to make mistakes

By Myra Evans, University of the West of England

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Abstract:

A news day is a hybrid of simulation and experiential learning where students become practising journalists in a learning environment in order to learn the trade. The days are undertaken on 58 journalism courses in the UK accredited by the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC). Initial research by the author has found that news days - "doing it for real" - had huge benefits for students. They were able to experience the pressures of being a working journalist whilst being allowed to make mistakes in a safe environment. This research examines this juxtaposition of "doing it for real" in the public domain versus the pedagogical safety net of being in a classroom environment by comparing news day practice at two BJTC accredited journalism courses at Nottingham Trent University and the University of the West of England. It concludes that placing news day material in the public domain increases motivation and accountability among students whilse posing a number of pedagogical challenges for staff, changing their role from lecturer to facilitator. Furthermore, if the material goes into the public domain, their role changes to that of a news editor.

Key Words: journalism education, pedagogy, training.

Introduction:

In an era dominated by social media and where everything that people do seems to be captured by camera and posted online, it may seem odd to even consider whether student work produced on news days should be published online, particularly when most students seem to share their lives on the internet.

However, the pros and cons of putting student work into the public domain needs to be thoroughly explored since there are implications for students, lecturers and the teaching of journalism.

A news day is a hybrid of simulation and experiential learning where students become practising journalists. The Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) the industry accreditation body, requires all accredited courses to include 15 'news days' a year at each level.

Universities in the UK differ in their approaches to putting their students' news day work in the public domain. By comparing two very different approaches at two BJTC accredited journalism courses in the UK, the University of the West of England (UWE) and Nottingham Trent University (NTU), and interviewing lecturers teaching on these courses, this paper examines the advantages and disadvantages of putting this material in the public domain and the changing implications for the role of the lecturer.

It builds upon initial research by the author (Evans, 2016), which found that news days have huge benefits for the students. For example, they are able to experience the pressures of being a working journalist, whilst being allowed to make mistakes in a safe environment.

Literature Review

Experiential learning is widely used in journalism education in higher education through news days and work placements. This evolving form of news media pedagogy is being undertaken on 58 fully-accredited BJTC courses in the UK at 38 institutions and has implications on the changing priorities for vocational courses and the role of the lecturer. While the model is backed by industry and required by the accreditation body, academics have asked how valuable it is in the changing world of journalism (Mensing, 2010 and 2011).

The pedagogical theoretical framework for these courses is Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). The learning cycle draws upon four main bases that the learner must engage with: concrete experience; reflective observation; abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation and then the cycle returns to concrete experience. It builds on the premise that practice will be adjusted based upon the reflection and the theory building. The learner can engage with the cycle at any stage.

Learning through experience though is nothing new. For years nursing staff have used this model in training alongside simulation (McCallum, 2006). In addition, workplace learning (Teunissen, 2015) has been advocated widely in other disciplines such as economics (Hawtrey, 2007).

Much has been written about the benefits of experiential learning and simulation in nursing, management and, to a lesser degree journalism (Charles and Luce 2016, Evans 2016, Kartveit, 2009, Steel et al, 2007). Charles and Luce argue that different people get different things out of experiential learning and it depends on prior skills. However, one of the key findings in all of the work was that students needed to feel safe while experiencing this kind of learning.

Pollock and Biles (2016) explored the lived experience of learning in immersive simulation in nursing education and offered an insight into what it means to undergraduate student nurses. They concluded that:

"Immersive simulation has been described as an experience where students are willing to take risks to test the limits of their capabilities and practice readiness. Faculty who want to use simulation as a teaching and learning methodology can strive to create safe and supportive learning environments where students are willing and able to engage and take those risks." (Pollock and Bile, 2016, p.318)

They called for further study into this area.

Meanwhile, in management education Kisfalvi and Oliver drew upon the work of psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1965) in arguing that in order for experiential learning to be beneficial a "safe space" needed to be created early if deeper learning is to be achieved and this would enable critical thinking (Kisfalvi and Oliver 2016, p.735).

Winnicott (1989) says the classroom becomes a transitional or in-between space that prepares students to move into the real world. Kisfalvi and Oliver also look at the changing role of the teacher in this process and refer to Ramsey and Fitzgibbons (2005) who claim that the learning approach needs to be more holistic and should be about "being in the classroom and forging a learning community" as opposed to "doing something to students" (2005, p.35). This issue of the changing role of the teacher will be taken up later in this article.

Brandon (2002) suggested that students undertaking experiential learning used mistakes as learning opportunities therefore they need a safe place in order to do this.

This concept of a safe place to make mistakes was borne out in the author's earlier research findings (Evans 2016). Former students now working as journalists said they appreciated having the time and the space to get things wrong and learn from their mistakes.

> *"I think definitely going out into the city and doing news gathering and filming and making all the mistakes that you need to at that point." (R18, 2015)*

> *"...we obviously had time before we went on air here [refers to place of work] to sort of hone things a little bit more and get used to the work-load a bit, but having that platform is vital." (R17, 2015)*

However some academics have questioned the notion of a safe space. Gayle et al (2010) discussed the tensions involved with balancing "safe spaces" and critical thinking capacity and examined what they called "moments of difficulty" when comfort and evaluation collide. Meanwhile Stengel and Weems (2010) looked at what constitutes a safe space and whether the comfort of the classroom was sufficient for the level of challenge needed in education today. They concluded that a safe space in education is not impossible or undesirable, but that it is always contested and ambiguous.

Methods

This research uses semi-structured interviews with journalism lecturers in 2016 at the UWE and NTU, both BJTC accredited journalism courses. It uses the two institutions as case studies comparing practices on news days, approaches in relation to publishing/broadcasting news day material and identifies themes emerging from both places.

Five journalism lecturers participated in this part of the study. Two were from NTU and three from the UWE. The two universities have very different approaches to placing material in the public domain. The purpose was to look at the different approaches and examine how this affected the pedagogy and the role of the lecturer. The interviews were audio recorded. They were then transcribed and coded into themes for analysis.

The researcher used grounded theory for analysis involving the construction of theory through the analysis of data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, cited in Croucher and Cronn Mills, 2015) using a combination of both approaches.

This research also draws upon the semi-structured group interviews with students of Journalism at UWE and Coventry University and former students of journalism from UWE now working in industry, who took part in the author's previous study conducted in 2015.

Twenty participants took part in the initial study in 2015. Four focus groups were held in Coventry with under-graduate students, ten first years, four second years and one third year. One semi-structured group interview was conducted at the UWE with two third year students. The three former UWE students were all working as video journalists and had graduated the previous year (2014).

Participants were invited to take part via emails to all students in their year groups. It should be noted that their participation was self-selecting so has a subjective effect on the results as it tended to be those who enjoyed news days that chose to take part.

Findings and Discussion

The different approaches to news days

The two universities use very different approaches to placing news day material in the public domain.

The University of the West of England employs a very cautious and gradual approach to autonomy and exposure, focussing on the process of production rather than the final product.

News days are integrated into the modular teaching structure at undergraduate and post-graduate level. Students undergo a series of workshops to learn the basic skills and then put those skills into practice during a series of weekly news days.

During the first year students learn basic TV and radio newsgathering skills. At second year the broadcast skills are increased considerably and mobile reporting and editing is introduced. Students rotate through a number of newsroom roles including reporters, news editors or producers, presenters, bulletin editors, gallery director and forward planners, aimed at giving them a feel for all the roles in the newsroom and how they integrate together. However, the TV and radio material is kept in house and the deadlines, although adhered to strictly, are purely for teaching students to work within time restraints and to create a sense of urgency in the newsroom. In the third year, news days focus on tri-media: radio, TV and online. The online content is produced for a password protected website with the material moderated by the lecturer on the day. The pedagogical premise behind this approach is that the focus is primarily on the process rather than the final product. However, during the course of the module the lecturer may take the decision that the students are at a standard which he/she considers safe to publish into the public domain and are able to remove the safety net of the password. The decision is made by the lecturers themselves, if and when they feel the material is safe to place in the public domain. This stringent and cautious approach means, however, that some student work may not make it onto the website at this stage as the story may have errors, thus depriving them of the public exposure. This tri-media model with a gradual autonomy and exposure to the public domain is also used on the Masters level news day modules at the UWE.

At Nottingham Trent University news days are again integrated into the modular teaching structure but staff have a different approach to those at UWE when it comes to placing material in the public domain.

At undergraduate level they produce material for TV and radio bulletins whilst simultaneously populating an outward-facing website. The focus of the news day is digital first so students are encouraged to produce content for the web from the outset and update it as the day and the story progresses. The material is only published once the lecturer feels it has been sufficiently moderated and is safe to do so.

The university has also recently started to upload TV and radio programmes to YouTube once they have been checked by the lecturer and any technical errors ironed out.

A similar approach is employed at Masters level where the students' TV news day material is uploaded to a Vimeo channel and online work is uploaded to a public facing website. The lecturer makes the decision whether to publish in both cases after they have made checks for legal issues and, to a smaller degree, production issues. On one occasion this year (2016), Masters students also took part in a live radio show on one of their news days that was live streamed via Facebook. Due to the nature of it being live, it was not able to be moderated.

This approach was adopted to increase student motivation and create a sense of doing it for real as opposed to within a safety net.

Although very different approaches were employed by the two universities, there were a lot of similarities in the issues raised by lecturers about placing material in the public domain.

A range of themes emerged of which four were identified as recurring. These will be discussed below.

Public domain exposure increases motivationAll of the respondents commented that when they placed news day material in the public domain it increased the motivation of the students. One used the term "galvanising" to describe the affect putting the material in the public domain had had on her students. All said that the sense of "doing it for real" (Steel 2007 and Evans 2016), increased and it gave them a real sense of purpose and urgency. Almost all of the respondents also said it raised the students' game when they knew their work was going into the public domain.

This is particularly evident in the quote below from a lecturer at UWE.

> *"...it adds an extra tier of excitement for the students, I think, knowing that people will see their stories... from a professional point of view it adds to the potential employers, if you read this site you will see my work and you will see that I can do things so it demands that extra level of complete accuracy from them because it is going in the public domain. If they make a mistake, everyone will see their mistake. It adds a pressure and in real life daily news is about pressure and dealing with pressure so I think that if you can do it there are some real advantages to it; it's just you have to balance those advantages against the risks. " (R6, 2016)*

The quote also picks up a common theme amongst all the participants of the student desire to share their work. Students like to be able to show their friends, whether it be through social media and tweeting pictures of what they are doing or being able to send a link to their mum of themselves on the TV. They are able to actively participate in the day on a public platform and show off what they have done. The following quote from a lecturer at the UWE attributes this to growing use of social media and the apparent need among some students to document their lives on it.

> *"...it makes them feel like they're professionals, it gives them a big sense of confidence and, it sounds a bit sad, but they can show their mum, their auntie; they really like showing their family. What I've found with radio is that even when they're doing the bulletins that are broadcast in the newsroom they are taking pictures and tweeting themselves doing 'look at me I'm in the radio studio' because they want to share, they are really into sharing the new internet generation are really, really into sharing so the advantage is it's really easy for them to do that." (R5, 2016)*

On one occasion at Nottingham Trent University where lecturers decided to live stream the radio programme on Facebook they experienced an increased level of engagement from students.

> *"...the level of engagement of those students went through the roof. They were much more engaged, they were much more willing to go that extra mile, they were more creative."(R3, 2016)*

Participants were also asked how putting material in the public domain or not had affected students' ability to get more from their contributors or whether contributors were more willing to contribute. Data from both universities showed mixed results. In some cases students found that people were less willing to participate if the material wasn't going to be published/broadcast as it was only a seen as a training exercise and less real.

However, in other cases the opposite was true. Respondents commented that with sensitive stories contributors were more willing to participate if the material wasn't going into the public domain.

Confidence and accountability

If and when lecturers do choose to publish, upload or even live stream material into the public domain there is a notable difference in student confidence and also their accountability for their work.

One lecturer noted that students were conscious to ensure they were doing things right as the quote below reflects.

> *"One of the students articulated to me the sense of accountability she felt by producing a story knowing that the public will hold her to account is she doesn't get the story right." (R4, 2016)*

Although they may well be galvanised and motivated by the product ending up in the public domain, for many this was an added pressure. Earlier research by the author found that once students were working as journalists after graduating they appreciated the safe space to make mistakes that they didn't have in industry. This can also be seen to bear out Winnicott's transitional space concept (Winnicott, 1989), whereby the classroom is a transitional or in-between space that prepares students to move into the real world. Having a safe place to make mistakes allows the student to be more creative and take risks, without the fear of complaints or legal action. It also enables the teacher to create an environment where deeper learning can be achieved through reflecting upon the mistakes of others (Winnicott, 1965). This was borne out strongly by comments from lecturers at the UWE:

"If they are terrified of making a mistake because it's going into the public domain, they always take the safe course. They won't develop as journalists. Sometimes you can see that they are going to make a mistake or something and let them make the mistake so afterwards you can sit down with them all and say, 'OK, let's analyse this story. What was good and what was bad about that, what was wrong with it?' And they can then see what went wrong and what the danger was and use it as a teaching aid, but if it was actually going out on air you would have had to stop that. [But in that scenario, just] one student would learn from you shouting at them 'don't do that, that's wrong' but the others wouldn't. Being able to make a mistake in a safe environment that you can discuss [with all the students] is a great advantage." (R6, 2016)

Checks and changes

Another point raised by all the respondents in this study was the level of checks and changes needed to news day material if it was to be placed in the public domain. At both universities students are supported by academic and technical staff during their news days. The students gradually experience more autonomy as they progress through the course at different levels, following a instructional scaffolding approach, a concept introduced by Bruner in the 1950s and based upon Vygotsky's concept of an expert assisting a novice, or an apprentice. (Wood, Bruner, Ross, 1976; Vygotsky, 1987)

But this research showed that that concept of scaffolding takes on a different dimension if the institution chooses to publish or broadcast news day material. Rather than stepping back and allowing the students more autonomy, the lecturers at both universities found themselves becoming more involved and taking steps to correct material before it went out into the public domain, as the following quote from a lecturer at NTU illustrates.

"I keep a running track of the changes and I document them in my marking, for the benefit of an external, also for the benefit of the student. I will point out 'This is the mark that your piece gets. I have had to change spelling errors in order to publish it. I've changed your headline from what you wrote to what I have written.' I don't restructure and I don't re-write. I change spelling mistakes. I change grammatical errors. I make it clean and I document all of that." (R2, 2016)

Lecturers at both universities were very keen to ensure that material was legally safe before broadcast and said that on occasions material was not published if the lecturing staff could not be certain that it was safe.

Alongside the fear of being sued if legally unsound material were to be published or broadcast, there was a strong sense of protecting the university's reputation and the public perception of the institution. Lecturers were keen to ensure that some general standards were met if the material was to become public facing. One lecturer at UWE suggested that if student news day work was to be published or broadcast in the public domain then it should be clearly labelled to help prevent any misconceptions.

"I think if it was broadcast as a news outlet then I think that the viewers or the listeners might enjoy some of the creativity but I think they may be slightly confused as already there are conventions out there about how news is delivered and if you are not making it to that standard then people aren't going to listen, aren't going to watch, aren't going to look at the website and that kind of thing. If it is labelled clearly that it is student work then I think that helps." (R5, 2016)

Labelling student work as such when placing it in the public domain was discussed following the presentation of this research at the Association of Journalism Education conference in June 2016. Some delegates argued that this process has been used in the performing arts for years, whereby student performances are recorded and uploaded online but clearly labelled so viewers understand the level the students are at. However, one delegate pointed out that at his university he had received a call from the Vice Chancellor's office asking him to take down student journalism work from the internet as there were technical errors in it and there were fears that it would reflect badly on the university and the course.

This raises questions as to how far staff should become involved in student work. Should staff clean up student work if it is to be published/broadcast? If they do can it still be called student work? How do teaching staff assess this work if the lecturer has changed it to make it safe for publication? The NTU lecturer kept a record of all the changes but on a busy news day this is time-consuming and changes the lecturer's role somewhat from teacher to news editor.

The lecturer's role

Experiential learning takes the traditional lecturer role away from the 'chalk and talk' style teaching and to a more informal method that puts the learner at the centre of the experience and requires the teacher to become more of a facilitator. The news day method of teaching is based firmly on this pedagogy, whereby students are required to act and do things for themselves, assisted by the teacher. After the student has experimented with the "doing" stage, then the teacher provides feedback that the student can use for reflection and to develop theories and practice, echoing Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

The BJTC guidelines for news days state that students must run the day themselves and teachers should act in a supervisory role as executive editors, to provide feedback in a safe learning environment (BJTC, 2015).

Once the decision is made though to place the material in the public domain, the role then changes again to resemble that of a news editor. This point was raised by lecturers at both universities

One of the lecturers at UWE was particularly concerned that if material was placed in the public domain she would face an issue balancing her education role and achieving the learning outcomes alongside the need to be a news editor.

> *"One of the important decisions that we make before we publish anything is the question, 'Can it be sufficiently moderated?' If it cannot be sufficiently moderated by the tutor – and this doesn't mean replacing their education goals with a news editor's goals. You've got to balance, 'How can I still maintain my educational outcomes and the learning experience, alongside being a news editor as well, who is having to sufficiently moderate everything?'"(R4, 2016)*

Highlighted area does not make grammatical sense: can it be slightly rewritten?

The same observations were raised by staff at NTU, who, although keen to give their students exposure in the public domain, realised it changed their jobs.

> *"We just have to be on our guard a little more and we have to be editors as well as teachers. At the end of the day, we're the ones ultimately that press the 'publish' button and also give the engineers the nod as to whether or not to post it on YouTube. So everything gets an eye cast over it before it goes." (R2, 2016)*

This raises pedagogical questions into how much learning is being done? Some of the participants were concerned that if the lecturer becomes the news editor then the student was not taking responsibility for their mistakes or their learning. Questions were asked by respondents as to whether by re-writing or tweaking the edit, the lecturer was becoming the author as well as the publisher and the material that ends up in the public domain becomes a hybrid of staff and student work.

Conclusion

This research has shown that there is a conflict between the benefits of placing student material in the public domain and giving them the exposure that leads to confidence and a sense of reality and the pedagogical safety net of the classroom.

While exposure in the public domain brings increased engagement and motivation and adds to the sense of "doing it for real" (Steel et al, 2007; Evans, 2016), it also brings with it some serious pedagogical challenges.

If the product of a student learning exercise is placed into the public domain then the lines between simulation and real world become blurred. News days are a hybrid of experiential and simulation based learning and, according to the industry accreditation body's guidelines, tutors on these days should act as "executive editors providing feedback in a safe learning environment." (BJTC 2015).

Kisfalvi and Oliver (2015) argued that in order for deeper learning to be achieved and for experiential learning to be beneficial, a safe space needed to be created early in the pedagogical process and this would enable critical thinking.

This concept has been born out in the data from this research both from lecturers and former journalism students now working in industry.

However, with multi-media newsrooms/classrooms in universities claiming to echo industry's "digital first" mantra and the increasing normalisation of people's lives being recorded on social media, then it poses the question of how do we protect that safe space?

With the exception of one live-streamed radio news day at NTU, staff at both universities conducted vigorous checks before material was published or was uploaded into the public domain, ensuring legal and technical errors were eliminated. However, this raises questions about how to assess this material fairly and the authorship of the material itself. One solution offered by staff at the UWE was to assess students on the process of their news days rather than the end product. Staff pointed out that the day was structured around the process of learning and not whether the final piece made it to air. NTU employed a similar yet slightly different approach in that students were assessed on the version of the work they had made and then the lecturer made changes to tidy up the piece for publication, with the student by their side learning from the mistakes.

It would seem that publishing/broadcasting news day material to the outside world inevitably means less autonomy for the student and more staff intervention.

This model of news day workflow subtly changes the teacher's role from lecturer to facilitator and, if the piece needs to be published, news editor. Moreover, staff become news editors with a room full of trainees on their first day. It also raises questions as to how equipped we are as teachers and universities to carry the responsibility of publishing/broadcasting to the outside world and whether it is fair on the students. After all, these are students, they are learning and they make mistakes

It is hoped that through this small study further research will also be carried out into how best to balance the need for exposure in the public domain and the pedagogical safety net of the classroom. Further research into the extent of this with more BJTC accredited courses would be welcome to give a fuller picture.

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Reviews

The reviews pages are edited by Tor Clark. If you have a book you would like to review or have come across a new book we should know about please get in touch. Also if you have recently had a book published and would like to see it reviewed, please contact Tor on tclark@dmu.ac.uk

The Reviews section

Edited by Tor Clark, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK.

We may have only just waved off the Three Wise Men, but this New Year edition of *Journalism Education* is able to offer readers its own holy trinity – three Professors of Journalism (no less) offering us their wisdom on recent and classic texts.

This edition's Classic from the Journalism Bookshelf is an apt choice. Richard Keeble, Professor of Journalism at Lincoln University, and himself a prolific author, pays due tribute to acclaimed journalist Phillip Knighley, who died in December.

Perhaps best known journalistically for his Evans-era work on the Sunday Times, Knightley leaves a rich journalistic legacy, especially in the form of his seminal work about war reporting: The First Casualty.

It's a rare book, working as an enjoyable read and a valuable academic text. Most dissertation tutors faced with the many students over the years interested in war reporting as a topic, will direct them to start right here. Professor Keeble is a fan of Knightley and his classic text and suggests it is a fitting tribute to the late journalist.

Professor Ivor Gaber of Sussex University reacquainted himself with the latest edition of the classic US text, Lance Bennett's News: The Politics of Illusion, and was delighted to find some major movement in its central thrust, despite this being its tenth edition. Using Donald Trump's election campaign as a backdrop, Professor Gaber hails the latest version of this book in the context of the political communications landscape in which journalists, academics and students must now all operate.

Meanwhile our third wise man, Professor Mick Temple of Staffordshire University, grapples with one of the biggest issues of our journalistic time – the possible demise of print journalism in a new edited collection Last Words? How Can Journalism Survive the Decline of Print by leading journalists, academics and industry experts, edited by John Mair, Tor Clark, Neil Fowler, Raymond Snoddy and Richard Tait.

Declaring an interest, we will leave it to Professor Temple to cast a verdict on such a major issue as addressed by a diverse cast of more than 40 contributors from the UK and the wider world.

Finally, another wise man, though not a professor, John Mair, lead editor of the above-mentioned collection, the 18th of his 'hackademic' series, many co-edited with Professor Keeble, and a regular contributor to the Journalism Education reviews section, offers us an inside line on one of the UK's best-known journalists, Jeremy Paxman.

Paxo, the scourge of politicians over a quarter of a century on Newsnight, has penned revealing memoirs, which Mair compares with the real man he has known and worked with for almost four decades. He concludes Paxo has indeed offered us some wisdom from his high profile career and should be properly recognised for his contribution to TV journalism.

So, a small, but top quality reviews section. We would like to make it longer in future, but we do of course need you, our readers, to volunteer to review texts for us and to recommend books about journalism to feature. If you would like to get involved as a reviewer for a future edition of Journalism Education please email TClark@dmu.ac.uk

Until the next edition, a big Happy New Year to all our readers. Enjoy your journalism and enjoy our reviews section.

A classic from the Journalism bookshelf

The First Casualty by Phillip Knightley

Review by Professor Richard Lance Keeble, Lincoln University.

In the obituary I wrote for Phillip Knightley, who died on December 7, 2016, I described him as 'the supreme journo, always sceptical, fiercely intelligent, courageous, witty, highly sociable, politically astute – as well as being a brilliant writer and storyteller'.[1]

His achievements in journalism and publishing were vast: major roles in The Sunday Times's investigations into the thalidomide scandal and Kim Philby, the British intelligence chief exposed as a Soviet spy; twice winner of the Journalist of the Year award; closely involved in the work of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists – and so on.

The First Casualty, first published in 1975 with follow-up editions in 2000 and 2004, remains the seminal text on Western war reporting. As I commented in the obituary, like all his other books (such as The Second Oldest Profession, on spying, and his autobiography, A Hack's Progress), it captures the best elements of journalism: original, clear writing, a political awareness, an immediacy; a sense of history and a fascination with the complexities of human nature. Moreover, its elements are so varied: Knightley records the cock-ups and the heroic scoops, the fictional 'exclusives' and the often intense rivalries amongst the press packs; the attempts of governments and militaries to muzzle the media and sanitise the reporting of atrocities – and the too-often willingness of editors, columnists and frontline reporters to beat the warmongers' drums.

Most striking is the way in which Knightley synthesises such a vast amount of information. His sources include interviews with reporters and photojournalists (including Wilfred Burchett, Martha Gellhorn, Tim Page, John Pilger, Nicholas Tomalin), transcripts of TV interviews, letters, back issues of newspapers and magazines (from France, Germany, Poland, South Africa, the UK and US), biographies, autobiographies, academic journal articles, political and military histories. The selected bibliography lists more than 130 texts.

At the end of A Hack's Progress, Knightley wrote: "So my advice for the new generation of journalists is to ignore the accountants, the proprietors and the conventional editors and get on with it. And your assignment is the same as mine has been – the world and the millions of fascinating people who inhabit it."

That fascination with people appears most strikingly in The First Casualty in the many, short, concise, extremely detailed and often witty profiles of journos, censors and military folk dotted about the book. For instance, of Irvin Cobb, the American reporter who became extremely popular during the First World War, he wrote: "His appearance – melancholy expression, apple-red cheeks, alligator jaw, fierce eyebrows and a permanent cigar – made him easily recognisable and the American troops regularly mobbed him. … Cobb, scrupulous about important facts, was not above altering minor ones if it was to his advantage."

British censor Captain Charles Tremayne is described as: "One-time chairman of the Duke of Beaufort's hunt committee and captain of the English polo team. He was seldom sober. The correspondents, well able to handle liquor themselves, remember him as the heaviest drinker they had ever seen. He drank neat gin for breakfast and was known to have finished six bottles in two days."

Knightley is also keen throughout to debunk some of the many myths surrounding war correspondents and the events they cover. For instance, William Howard Russell is often glorified as the heroic 'father' of war reporting – with his brave despatches for The Times from the Crimean War about the incompetence of the British military command supposedly leading to the downfall of the Earl of Aberdeen government in January 1855. But the press was merely one factor amongst many as a powerful section of the elite moved to dislodge Aberdeen. And of Russell, Knightley wrote perceptively: "Although he criticised the lot of the ordinary soldier in the Crimea, he was careful not to hammer too hard at a comparison with that of the officers, to whose social class he himself belonged. … Above all, Russell made the mistake, common to many a war correspondent, of considering himself part of the military establishment."

Knightley never deals in high theory. Concepts such as 'the propaganda model', dominant ideology or the 'the society of the spectacle' are nowhere to be seen. But The First Casualty is bursting with ideas, analysis and meticulously detailed argument. And throughout he makes clear his loathing of those journos who succumb to the lure of the secret state, getting too close to the spooks – and of those (such as Claude Cockburn during the Spanish civil war) who peddle propaganda 'and disseminate it as honest reporting'.

Not surprisingly, The First Casualty has won international acclaim. In the Introduction to the 2000 edition, fellow Australian John Pilger hails it as a 'clear sighted and principled book' which should be read 'by those who retain pride in our craft of truth-telling, no matter how unpopular and unpalatable the truth.' My University of Lincoln colleague, Professor Brian Winston, describes it as 'the best, most serious and ground-breaking book ever-written by a journo from the belly of the beast'. I agree!

The First Casualty by Phillip Knightley published 1975 by Purnell.

Note

1 http://www.communicationethics.net/news/index.php?nav=blogs&pg=/?p=232

News: the Politics of Illusion (10th edn) by W Lance Bennett

Review by Professor Ivor Gaber, University of Sussex.

This is an important book giving a comprehensive account of contemporary news values, political communications and the current challenges facing the American media. It is pithy, authoritative and enhanced by a stream of appropriate case studies. It is also, almost very timely – timely that is but for Brexit and the US presidential election.

A word of explanation: This is the tenth edition of Lance Bennett's book, that is in itself is a mark of its significance in the political communications literature. In Bennett's words it marks something of a sea change 'the great transformation edition' as he calls it. Why? Because he makes the focus of the book not his notion of 'indexation' as in previous editions (though the concept is well covered) but because he now sees the central challenge facing the American media, and by extension the media in most of the developed world, as the disruption to legacy media posed by 'native digital upstarts', news websites such as the Huffington Post, Buzzfeed and political blogs, to which I would add Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Bennett writes: "The legacy press is struggling to reinvent itself while maintaining, as best it can, journalism standards developed in the last century; balance and objectivity, timeliness, credibility and relevance to name a few. Those standards are being disrupted."

Important and as relevant as this contention is, I describe the book as only 'almost timely' because, although Bennett admirably covers much of the recent US election campaign (but not the result), he focuses not on what came to be the central media issue of the campaign, but on how the legacy media sought to compete with the online media in terms of interactivity and fine targeting. However, as the latter stages of the US presidential campaign revealed (as did the Brexit campaign) the real challenge facing both old and new media was that created by the growing phenomena of post-truth politics and fake news, challenges that Bennett foresees but only in passing.

In earlier editions Bennett had talked about audiences being 'captive' because of the relatively few information channels available to them and how small differences there was between them was. In this context he developed his gate-keeping theory of indexing: “Information in the news media tended to be packaged around cues from prominent authorities... Those cues shaped opinions and channelled participation in politics.” But Bennett now argues in the disruptive media ecology of today, with a multitude of sources offering audiences a ‘Daily Me’, indexing as previously conceived has changed, not only because of changes in the media but because of growing disillusionment with conventional politics and the fragmentation of modern society.

Bennett doesn’t abandon indexing per se but adapts it to suggest the media has increasingly come to see itself as one of these prominent authorities (strong support here for the mediatisation hypothesis) and as a result much political coverage involves one journalist interviewing another to supposedly reveal inside information. He suggests this has reinforced the ‘inside the Washington Beltway’ syndrome in which West Wing-style politicians, aides, journalists and lobbyists all swim in the same aquarium, leaving the rest of America pushing their noses against the glass to try and gain some insight into the political process, or more likely to just apathetically turn away.

Then along came Trump. He identified this phenomenon and based his entire campaign on being seen to side with those with their noses against the glass. And here’s where Bennett’s re-working of the indexation hypothesis requires further revision. For in a very counter-intuitive way Trump represents a rather surprising return to the status quo. For his pronouncements during the campaign, such as those about Mexican and Muslim immigrants, or Hillary’s emails, had all the media, legacy and digital alike, dancing to his tune, despite the contention of Trump and his supporters that the media were irredeemably ‘liberal’ and untrustworthy.

From the media’s point of view, notwithstanding how outrageous or palpably untrue Trump’s remarks might have been, they were great box office. As Leslie Mooves, chief executive of CBS put it: “It may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS.” Hence, Trump can be seen as exemplifying a classic case of indexation, with the media, perhaps against its better judgement, portraying him as a ‘prominent authority’.

For a legacy media suffering serious financial challenges the Trump campaign represented something of a goldmine as audiences and revenues rose. CNN, for example, estimated its Trump coverage was worth at least $100m in additional advertising revenue and, in return so-to-speak, Trump received the equivalent of $3bn worth of coverage from the main news channels.

In the context of Trump’s undoubted ability to set the news agenda, there were two particularly troubling aspects to his relations with the media. First, he became a past master in the ‘art’ of post-truth politics, or in American comedian Stephen Colbert’s memorable phrase ‘truthiness’, by which he meant a politician, or anyone for that matter, making statements that only ‘might be true’ or ‘sound like their true’ or are, in fact, straightforward lies. During his presidential campaign Trump’s truthiness became almost his calling card, with one fact-checker recording him lying once every 50 seconds during one of the presidential debates. Bennett addresses the problems this phenomenon poses for journalists who, under the indexing hypothesis, can only challenge these statements if they can find another comparably ‘authoritative’ source to shoot them down. However, such sources are often extremely reluctant to give such claims further air time and therefore refuse to comment, allowing the post-truth statement, the lie, to remain on the record.

The other issue, which goes beyond Trump, is fake news, often generated by news websites designed to look authentic but anything but. Bennett addresses the issues of truthiness and fake news but only in the context of the daily news comedy shows now such an important part of the American political communications ecology.

Despite small reservations, I am unstinting in my praise of this book. Often new editions of books involve little more than a re-worked introduction and some cursory updating of the text, but not in this case. As a survey of the political communications and news landscape it represents a tour de force, an excellent source book for teachers, students and scholars alike.

News: The Politics of Illusion (tenth edition) by W Lance Bennett published by University of Chicago Press, paperback, £24.50, 304 pp.

A Life in Questions by Jeremy Paxman

Review by John Mair, academic and former BBC TV producer

Jeremy Paxman truly is a riddle wrapped in an enigma. He is simply the best television journalist of this generation, in and out of the studio, yet surprisingly unconfident and to read these, his early memoirs, an accidental man lucky in school, lucky at Cambridge, lucky in the BBC.

But it is luck made by a huge talent.

Paxman is aggressive in his work yet depressive in his private life. He admits in the book to regular therapy to compensate for an oppressive father and one of his BBC bosses told me that in dealing with him he had to constantly work around the 'Great Dog'. In the closed world of TV journalism he is revered both for his professional skills but also for his personal kindness.

Reviewers should declare an interest. I have known JP for nigh on four decades. We spent a year as close colleagues on London Plus. One of the highlights of my own modest TV career was Paxo telling me during the Real Lives walk-out at the BBC in 1985 that he had almost resigned live on air that night in disgust because 'I knew only you would let me..' We have been sort of friends (JP's favoured mode) since. I am a huge fan.

As an interviewer he is unparalleled. Each encounter is a challenge. He prepares for it meticulously. On Newsnight he had a brainstorming session each night with his producers just like a matador getting ready for the bull. His technique is simple – aim for the solar plexus with the first question. It is difficult to recover after that. Ask the hapless Chloe Smith, whose ministerial career was destroyed in five minutes by Paxo simply asking her: "When did you know about this decision? Before or after lunch?"

Ask Shaun Woodward, the rather posh defectee from the Tories who had taken his butler up north with him, who was asked on winning St Helens for Labour in 2001: "Mr Woodward did your butler vote Labour?" Or Tony Blair, who was asked whether he and President Bush prayed together.

The most famous grilling/toasting of them all was then Home Secretary Michael Howard, asked 14 times in 1997: "Did you threaten to over-rule Mr Lewis?" about a decision he had made. Howard took a long time to die. Paxo later claimed he was filling space. I think he is being economical with the actualite there. I produced a tribute dinner to him a decade ago. I sat him and Howard next to each other. It was tres amusant; not a meeting of minds.

Paxo giving interviewees a stuffing comes in a short tradition of British television losing its deference to politicians and authority. It was only five decades ago that Robin Day transferred his interrogatory skills from the courtroom to the TV studio. Commentators say the central Paxman dictum is that of Louis Heren on politicians: "Who is this lying bastard and why is he lying to me?' He denies it. Many have tried, and still try, to imitate Paxman on screen. Most fail. In his book Paxman damns all others bar Jon Snow with less than faint praise for their skills. Aggressive questioning is no substitute in itself for good research.

Yet he is a creature of the format. Give him a gladiatorial one-on-one and he thrives. Get it wrong and he shows his contempt and looks ordinary. The Channel Four Referendum debate in June 2016 was a dog's dinner and Paxo as MC could not rescue it.

But TV history will also remember Paxman as one of the great film reporters. From Spotlight in Northern Ireland through to Tonight and Panorama on the BBC he has understood the central yet understated role of the reporter on film – words, well-crafted but few, plus presence on screen. One speaker at the Paxo tribute dinner had interviewed him for his first job in Belfast. After he left the room the BBC appointments panel turned to each other and said: "Do you think we impressed him?!" Honing his reporting skills in The Troubles was the perfect journalism academy – one mistake and you could be on the way to being a dead man with the terrorists.

He dominated Newsnight for a quarter of a century. Since his 'retirement' it has lost kudos, gravitas and audience. When he was the anchor woe betide any new programme editor with ideas like using new media or having a weather forecast. Paxo killed them simply by being withering on air. On form, on the night he was superb, a great journalist prepared to do his homework and to dig and dig until he got to what he considered to the truth or kernel of the story. Not the science of propulsion but a lesson for all wannabes now and in the future.

But who is Paxman? Some clues come across in the book though he protects his personal privacy very well. The product of a solid middle class family, less solid once his father left the Navy and guaranteed status for the uncertain world of Midlands manufacturing. Keith Paxman ultimately left his family behind for a new life in the Southern seas. His mother, Joan, was rich enough through inheritance to put her children through the local (minor) public school, Malvern College. He achieved a Cambridge scholarship. There, the 'accidental man' was lucky again falling into student journalism.

But you will not discover a huge amount about Paxman the man from these 325 pages. Those secrets are left on his therapist's couch.

This book is a good read, as you would expect from a good journalist. Will it answer your questions about the meaning of life and media, will it face up to the great cultural studies issues of our times? Barely, Paxman has decided. His skill is not grand theory but practice day after day. Appreciate it, honour it, but most of all salute a master of the craft.

A Life in Questions by Jeremy Paxman, published by William Collins, 2016, ISBN 9780008128302, £20.

Last Words? How can journalism survive the decline of print? Edited by John Mair, Tor Clark, Neil Fowler, Raymond Snoddy and Richard Tait

Review by Professor Mick Temple, Staffordshire University

With the publication of Last Words? John Mair et al deliver their latest up-to-the-minute collection of essays from the great and the good in all aspects of journalism. Owners, academics, broadcasters, editors, CEOs, distributors and various other interested parties, all put their opinions into this fascinating collection.

In total, there are 50 chapters, ranging from bite-size to regular chapter-size. As always with Mair's collections, the authors are authoritative – if not always convincing in their arguments. Throughout, the opinions are overwhelmingly bullish and hyper-optimistic about the future of journalism, if not always the future of printed newspapers.

Sadly, as Roy Greenslade has often pointed out, talking optimistically doesn't change the future. The harsh reality is printed newspapers are dying, sales are dwindling and the 'traditional press' has yet to find an economic model for the new online world.

Sir Ray Tindle presents his long-established belief that newspapers will live for ever but his chapter effectively ignores the online world. The press will always be with us, the downturn will be reversed, is his message, but Sir Ray also fails to tell us the ways in which his newspaper empire survives. Fewer and fewer journalists producing stables of local newspapers must weaken the quality of independent journalism those local papers produce and that will have an effect on an audience increasingly searching for something other than rewritten press releases.

Mark Thompson, now its CEO and President, argues the 'New York Times way' is the only way: 'every story should be worth paying for'. It's difficult to disagree with his assessment that the business models for digital news providers, based on building big traffic and digital display advertising, are suspect. The overwhelming majority of British local newspaper online sites (in particular) are disasters, with pop-ups, generic video content and intrusive advertising seriously inhibiting the end-user experience. But the paywall model is unpopular with British users and general internet advertising has decreased print revenue.

The emphasis of many of the chapters is on the local and regional press, which lacking a national online audience arouse the most concern among us long-term lovers of newspapers. Davd Hayward's interesting chapter correctly notes that, contrary to some of the opinions in the book, the regional press is 'certainly in need of radical change'. Hayward posits the importance of creative online video to create compelling content and also cites the important words of Phillip Trippenbach from Edelman – 'don't interrupt the content they're consuming with ads. Create the Content They Want to Consume'. That message needs to be absorbed by everyone involved in the production of public service news if our great print titles are to survive and prosper in the new online environment.

Perhaps Roger Parry's chapter offers the most apposite words of wisdom to local newspapers 'after the fall'. Pointing out the daily publication on newsprint is not the answer, despite the heartfelt beliefs of Raymond Snoddy and Sir Ray Tindle, Parry supports Mark Thompson's view that the future of local newspapers is multi-media and subscription-based. Publish in all media and charge for access, after working out what people will pay for in terms of both content and format. As he acknowledges, 'easy to say, hard to do'. But it has to be done.

Some of the most interesting suggestions come from outside of the newspaper/online bubble. Richard Tait worries that by comparison to broadcasters, newspapers have much less detailed information about their readers, which seriously inhibits their ability to respond to rapid changes effectively. As Tait points out, editors who boast of their intuitive knowledge of who their readers are and what they want from the paper are actually 'largely in the dark'. For Tait, the different online permutations tried by the newspaper industry, ranging from almost entirely free and advertising-funded to subscription, has been a distraction. Compelling content should be the focus. As GQ editor Dylan Jones puts it, content is king; 'if it's good, if it's relevant, and if it's entertaining and sold in the right way, it works'. Get to know your audience and get closer to them online. Registration could be the key.

Of course people won't pay for rehashed press releases produced by hard-pressed and low-paid journalists. But there are some things we need to know about what is happening in our world. Most observers agree the only future for 'journalism' – especially in an age of fake news and celebrity PR bumpf – is producing quality public service journalism and making people pay for it. How to do this is the difficult bit.

In the meantime, this entertaining section of chapters will no doubt provide the industry and journalism academics with much to debate. My congratulations to John Mair and team for the range and quality of these assessments; this collection will be essential reading for my students.

Last Words? How can journalism survive the decline of print? By John Mair, Tor Clark, Neil Fowler, Raymond Snoddy and Richard Tait (eds), 363pp, Abramis: 2016, £19.95. ISBN 978-1-84549-696-8

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We accept original articles about journalism education and topics linked to journalism and education that are not offered for publication elsewhere at the time of submission. Articles for peer review should be in the range of 5000-7000 words.

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The copy deadline for the next issue is: March 10, 2017 but material sent earlier would be appreciated. Articles should be submitted to the editors at ajejournal@gmail.com together with a 100-150 word abstract. Comment and criticism articles can be more polemic and do not require an abstract.

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All tables and figures must be produced separately either at the end of the article or in a separate file. Each should be clearly labelled Tab1e 1:….. Table 2…… Fig. 1:…. Fig. 2: etc and a note inserted in the text identifiying approximately where it should be placed.

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