Designing pedagogies for cadet journalists on the ground and doing it

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Introduction

- Development of a PD program for cadet journalists
- Establishing a range of technology enhanced learning environments;
- The perceptions of the 1st cohort indicate the usefulness for developing practice and the potential benefit to careers

Why this program is different

- Redesigned journalism curriculum
- Flexible online delivery
- Work integrated
- Integrates APN Readers First (R1) in-house training
- Connects APN staff/students from Biloela to Coffs Harbour

Flexible relationship

- 4 half credit point courses
- 2 credits for USQ standard university journalism courses
- Provides a certificate of successful completion of the program, and,
- APN invests in full fee-paying, work-based editorial training

APN Professional Development Program

- Published feature stories as a teaching tool
  - provides commentary on style and approach,
  - structural analysis of writing techniques to achieve reader interest
  - writing activities
- Reader engagement through storytelling & narrative
  - JRN3001 used to model a sustainable program
  - Led to a commercial partnership USQ delivering basic journalism training to APN employees, on the job.

Why APN wanted this program

“For years, many of us have lamented the enormous gap that exists between the expectation of newspaper employers and the inability of graduates to meet them. To not put too fine a point on it, in many cases the first months of a cadet’s employment is spent ‘unteaching’ many of the things they learned at college.”

Peter Owen
Group executive editor APN Australia
ICE course materials

APN PDP Structure

Examples

Transformative learning
Teaching narrative writing transformatively

- Reflective writing practice based on daily work at the newspaper, posted to program wiki housing web blogs
- Students write progressively and responsively generate their own narrative – the story of their story

Portfolio-based assessment model

- Contains reflective writing about people, stories, and work in newsrooms
- Builds individual and collective records
- Narratives constructed from these records
  - tells of journalists’ learning,
  - traces thinking through choices of angle, interviews and narrative structure,
  - fosters empathy with human subjects of news,
  - writing techniques developed

Application to other contexts

- opportunities afforded by online media for multi-layered narrative writing
- individual writing builds into blogs, which build journalism communities of self, peer, and instructor assessment, which evolve the narrative potential of stories in the news media
- can be adapted to most undergraduate and graduate journalism courses using the portfolio-based assessment model

Conclusion (from the students perspective)

- “I think most of what is taught to be very relevant and helpful”
- “I’ve been finding the course very relevant to my job, as I am now in the newsroom and in fact a lot more interesting than I thought it would be”