

Ideas for Teaching Diversity

Notable submissions
Standing Committee on Teaching Annual Competition 2018

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Using US Census Data to Help New Communicators Create Inclusive Communication Strategies

**Dr. Kelly Bruhn, Ph.D., APR
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100-Word Abstract:

Using Census data, students examine the demographic characteristics of the university's city, including race, age and ethnicity. Students split into teams, and each team receives a name from a list of top employers in the university's city. They conduct online research for each employer, examining the visuals and copy found on websites, social channels and other relevant sites. The instructor facilitates discussion of their findings, often sparking lively debate. Students are confronted with the significance of the choices they make as communicators, and they are also introduced to the important and multi-dimensional role they play as PR professionals.

Explanation of the Teaching Practice or Activity:

Using interactive data on census.gov and the library, students explore US Census data to examine the demographic characteristics of the university's city (their new hometown), including race, age and ethnicity. Students are then split into teams of four, and each team receives a name from a list of top employers in the university's city. Teams then conduct online research for each employer, examining the visuals and copy found on websites, social channels and any other relevant sites. During their research, they compare the demographic characteristics reported in the Census with the demographic characteristics they see represented in each employer's communications. The instructor facilitates discussion of their findings, focusing their conversations around the following key themes:

- Did employers' sites/channels reflect the community in which they operate?
- Are there any groups missing from their communications?
- Did you find any examples of employers communicating effectively with a group not represented by your data (Probe for Religion, Sexual Orientation, etc.)?
- What actions might an employer take if they would like to expand their outreach to a particular audience (Probe for Size of Typeface, Translation Services, etc.)?
- Are there any ethical considerations in promoting an online presence that doesn't accurately reflect the employer's reality?
- What research might you conduct to ensure effective communications?

These questions often spark lively debate, particularly in a relatively homogenous university community. Students are confronted with the significance of the choices they make as communicators, and they are also introduced to the important and multi-dimensional role they play as public relations professionals.

Rationale:

In the introductory Public Relations Principles course, freshmen and sophomores begin their six-course major in public relations. To prepare them for client projects in every other public relations class, the PR Principles class introduces students to the role of public relations in today's organizations, helping them to develop an appreciation for and understanding of the critical thinking, research, planning and communication skills necessary for the effective practice of public relations. They acquire a solid foundation in the basic theories and concepts of communication, persuasion, motivation and learning which are integral parts in the success of public relations and in engaging people. And, the class infuses many exercises like this one, to bring that learning to life.

Aligning with the college's core values, the assignment is designed to help students "demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications," "understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information," "think critically, creatively and independently," and "be engaged with the community: the university, the local community, professional groups."

Outcomes:

This assignment aligns with the following selected Public Relations Principles learning outcomes:

- Understand the history of public relations, how the industry is evolving due to technology, globalization and related ethical implications today.
- Apply these principles to specific industries.
- Analyze the implications of public relations campaigns in an increasingly connected multicultural/global society.

It also serves as a powerful conversation starter regarding diversity and inclusion. Many students, particularly freshmen and sophomores, are introduced to new ideas, subjects and cultures in college. While this assignment forces students to gain a better understanding of their new hometown and potential employment opportunities available, it also provides an opportunity to openly discuss the important and complex decisions communicators face every day. The assignment provides a framework for students to assess representation across multiple channels, and it reinforces the commitment all communicators must make to inclusion. It localizes the issue, showcasing how powerful even small changes could be in facilitating more effective engagement. Perhaps most importantly, the assignment equips the next generation of public relations professionals with an understanding of the importance of research and the ethical considerations they must make in serving a diverse population.

Calling out stereotypes: Using media literacy to deconstruct media racial/ethnic stereotypes

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100-word abstract

We conducted a media literacy activity to deconstruct racial/ethnic media stereotypes and evaluate how these stereotypes could influence students' attitudes towards Blacks and Latinos. The activity centered on 'calling out' media stereotypical representations, discussing the role of these representations, and thinking about counter representations. Outcomes of the activity were based on students' thoughts about the activity and their racial/ethnic attitudes, which were measured at the beginning of the semester, mid-semester after the activity, and six weeks later. Students enhanced their attitudes towards Blacks and Latinos and found the activity eye-opening.

Explanation of the teaching practice or activity

Media literacy focuses on the critical analysis and deconstruction of media messages. We conducted a media literacy activity in two introductory classes.

The activity asked students to (1) identify and deconstruct stereotypical images associated with the main racial/ethnic groups in the U.S., and (2) think about the effects of such stereotypes on audiences. We first used a brief discussion on the U.S. census to have students come up with the five main U.S. racial/ethnic groups for our opening exercise. We distributed 4x6 index cards to the students and asked them to draw a column for each of the five groups they had just identified (in their terms: White; Hispanic; African American; Asian; Native American). Students then had two minutes to promptly write down the first thoughts that came to their minds about each group. We then asked the students to move around and exchange their card with five other students without looking at any card until they received their fifth one. Students then read out loud the content of that card, which we wrote on the white board. Almost all cards included similar stereotypes about each group (see Appendix A). We discussed why each group was associated with these terms, and asked students to think of media images that both supported and countered these stereotypes. We then played three selected scenes from the movie *Crash* to further discuss racial/ethnic stereotypes.¹ After each scene, students wrote down all the stereotypes they identified in the scene and we discussed their foundation and role in the movie's narrative. We concluded the activity with examples of counter stereotypical media portrayals of racial/ethnic minority characters and how even these characters may subtly reinforce established stereotypes about their group (see Appendix B). At the end of the activity, students completed an evaluation of the activity and a questionnaire addressing their attitudes towards Blacks

¹ *Crash* addresses the racial and social tensions in Los Angeles from the perspective of different characters. *Crash* has been used in interventions to enhance faculty awareness about multicultural issues in the classroom and in multicultural courses to encourage students to think about race, racism and race relations.

and Latinos. The activity lasted 75 minutes, including the outcome assessment, and it was completed by 61 students (87% White).

Rationale

Given racial tensions in society and on college campuses, as well as continuous media stereotypical representations of racial/ethnic minorities and the effects of these representations on audiences, we developed a media literacy activity grounded in a social constructivist approach to learning and cognitive information processing. The activity aimed at deconstructing racial/ethnic stereotypes to explore if it could enhance college students' attitudes towards Blacks and Latinos. We decided to focus on both Blacks and Latinos because even though they belong to two distinct cultures and find themselves in the U.S. for different historical reasons, media representations of Blacks and Latinos have been dominated by similar stereotypes that paint an unfavorable picture of them (e.g., Black and Latino characters in entertainment shows are mostly pictured as poor, uneducated, and aggressive).

A social constructivist approach to learning posits that knowledge is actively constructed in response to a particular environment. Social constructivism emphasizes the role that culture and language play in cognitive development by influencing our perceptions of the world. In our case, we are focusing on students' media environment and how media representations may influence perceptions of Blacks and Latinos. This approach is particularly relevant because it aligns with the cognitive-based media literacy approach that stimulates critical thinking and fosters skepticism. This framework enhances the saliency of how messages are constructed and allows audiences to use that knowledge to make sense of media messages, thus reshaping perceptions. Indeed, media effects research has demonstrated that thinking about media representations and their potential effects can diminish their influence on audiences.

Outcomes

Students' racial/ethnic attitudes towards Blacks and Latinos were measured using a close-ended questionnaire at three different times in the semester: six weeks before the activity (baseline attitudes), immediately following the activity (short-term effects), and six weeks after the activity (longer-term effects). 'Control group' students in two other similar classes also completed the questionnaire at the same times without taking part in the activity. Students who completed the activity also provided written feedback about the activity.

Attitudes towards Blacks and Latinos were measured using the validated Katz and Hass' (1988)² attitudes toward Blacks scale with ten "Pro-Black" items and ten "Anti-Black items." The items were also used for participants' attitudes toward Latinos by substituting "Latinos" for "Blacks."

² Katz, I., & Hass, R. G. (1988). Racial ambivalence and American value conflict: Correlational and priming studies of dual cognitive structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55(6), 893-905.

Repeated-measures ANOVAs revealed that students' pro-Black and pro-Latino attitudes were significantly enhanced in the short- and longer-term, but their anti-Black and anti-Latino attitudes did not decrease (we suspect this to be due to the "anti-" items being more overt than the "pro-" ones). Students' attitudes in the control group stayed the same. In their written reactions, students said that the activity "opened their eyes" to the prevalence, role and effects, "even subconsciously," of media stereotypes. Some learned how to "think differently about people," while others said they "never thought about how some of the ethnic backgrounds aren't even represented at all" (see Appendix C). This activity 'touched' the students by getting them out of their comfort zone. Directly confronting the stereotypes students wrote on their index cards required them to question some of their long-held beliefs. This social constructivist approach might also empower students to think of potential counter stereotypes they could create to diversify messages they would produce in the future, thus constructing new meanings associated with members of racial/ethnic minority groups.

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Gaining understanding and respect: How case studies on real-world public relations campaigns help students learn about diversity in the U.S. and worldwide

Abstract

A major deliverable in the 300-level Global, Intercultural, & Multicultural Public Relations course is the creation of case studies on public relations campaigns addressing diversity, inequality, and power imbalance, specifically ones that encourage audiences to better understand and respect others (race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) in the U.S. or abroad. The case study report provides a comprehensive background on cultural, political, and economic factors affecting the situation, as well as the campaign's strategies, objectives, target markets, campaign execution, timeline, budget, and evaluation of results. Teams also present highlights of their findings and engage the class in discussions and activities about the campaigns.

Explanation of Case Study Project

At the beginning of the course, students complete a questionnaire to identify issues of interest. Small teams of five to six students are formed, based on their responses. The assignment includes four steps: selection of topic; research, writing, and editing of a collaborative case study; in-class presentation with required audience engagement; and peer evaluations.

- **Step One: Selection of Topic**—Each team identifies a real-world public relations/integrated marketing communications campaign addressing diversity and human rights created individually or collaboratively by a multinational corporation, nongovernmental organization, nonprofit, government, or public figure in the U.S. or abroad. The online teaching resource also includes a list of anti-discriminatory and human rights organizations and articles on specific campaigns for inspiration. Each case study topic is approved in advance to ensure that each team works on a different topic.
- **Step Two: Research, Writing, and Editing of Report (10% of total grade)**—Teams investigate what has been written and shared about this case study by looking at the organization's content on its website and social media, as well as other communication platforms used to spread awareness of the issue. They also examine media coverage and social media commentary, and they are encouraged to interview PR staff at the organization or its PR agency for more in-depth commentary. The report provides a comprehensive background on factors affecting the situation, as well as the campaign's internal and external audiences, strategies, tactics, timetable, budget (if available), and analysis of results. Students also provide

insight on lessons learned and address how they would have created and conducted the campaign differently. The report includes nine parts: introduction, situation analysis, target audiences, campaign overview, messages and communication tools, measurement and evaluation of results, conclusions with lessons learned, discussion questions, and references following APA.

- **Step Three: In-Class Presentation (10%)**—Students are required to bring the case study alive with a PowerPoint (or Prezi or other visual resources) to the class. The goal is to present the core highlights and key learnings—and to engage the class in a dialogue about the campaign. Students can show videos and other visual examples to illustrate the case study, and they are encouraged to be as creative as possible to encourage participation through interactive quizzes, group or individual exercises, and other ways to get students to think and share their thoughts in a supportive environment. Each student in the audience also receives a questionnaire to complete and hand in at the end of the presentation that asks about his or her familiarity with the campaign, favorite parts, major lessons learned, and any other comments to share.
- **Step Four: Peer Evaluations (5%)**—This project is a collaborative effort, and each student is evaluated by his or her peers in the group.

Rationale

In today's multinational workforce and diverse multicultural society, the demand for international and multicultural training for public relations professionals is greater than ever before. Communicators need to understand globalization, the growing interdependency within our global village, and evolving mass media and social media. They also need to be sensitive, respectful, and aware of cultural differences while conducting business and developing strategies to connect with diverse audiences. The case study assignment addresses equality and human rights campaigns with storytelling approaches that illustrate how contemporary public relations professionals can connect with audiences to encourage inclusivity. These learnings should help students understand strategic and creative solutions to combat ethnocentricity and promote equality with audiences in the U.S. or worldwide on multiple platforms.

Outcomes

Students have examined and presented such case studies as “Free and Equal” (United Nations’ global campaign against homophobia and transphobia), “It’s on Us” (social movement to stop sexual assault created by Obama’s White House Council on Women and Girls), “Racism: It Stops with Me” (anti-prejudice campaign across Australia), “Love Has No Labels” (campaign to treat all people respectfully and fairly in the U.S.), “HeForShe: Stand Together” (created by UN Women for gender equality), and “Commit to Inclusion” (campaign to empower people with disabilities). The in-class presentations created a platform for thought-provoking questions and insightful dialogue. In the students’ end-of-course reflective essays, many commented on the positive outcomes of the case study project that showed a shift in their perceptions about people from diverse backgrounders. Here are a few comments that students shared:

- “Another benefit to this final presentation was the topic of gender, race, and diversity that sparked insightful conversation in the classroom. Because these campaigns were all focused on different causes/issues, they allowed us to look at them from different perspectives. The answers I put for questions such as defining diversity and my views on multiculturalism are vastly different from the broad definitions I was able to give at the beginning of the course.”
- “Through learning about diversity in our class and case studies, I was also able to see my classmates present on inclusion, which I could also relate back to my work with the kids with disabilities I teach to swim to children at the sports center on campus.”
- “The best things I took away from this project involved an increased understanding and open empathy for different cultural experiences in communication.”

Appendix A: Sample index cards from students who participated in the activity

White	Hispanic	African-Amer.	Asian	Native Amer
School	Mexico	Rap	China	Indians
family	Chips + Salsa	Kanye West	Sushi	Pokahontas
myself	Spanish	Basketball	Math	Nature

White	HISpanic	Black	Asian	Native American
		Slavery	Smart	Indians
	immigrants	MLK	Math	Casinos
dominance	Spanish	Boycott		
Forrest		Rap		
Group				

White	Hispanic	African Amer/ Black	Asian	Native American
· Average	· Culture	· Urban	· Smart	· Indian
· Family	· Loud	· Large	· Strict	· Reservation
· Household	· Colorful	·	· boys	· Ancestors

White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Native American
European	Mexico	African	China	Indian
light	Spain	S. Africa	Japan	Cherokee
me	S. America	dark skin	Korea	tan

white	Hispanic	African Amer	Asian	Native
-tall	-poor	-uneducated	-smart	-cultural
-smart	-	-	-short	

White	Hispanic	African American	Asian	Native A
Teacher	Mexican	Sports Players	Smart	Old
Smart	Food	Tall	Foreign	Long hair
Parents	Spanish speaking	Tough	Technology	Chiefs

White	Hispanic	AA/Black	Asian	Native A
money	mexico	SPORTS	Smart	OKlahoma
part	spanish		dark skin	market

Appendix B: Examples of counter stereotypical (yet subtly stereotypical) representations



Appendix C: Sample quotes from students who participated in the activity

Thinking more in-depth about media stereotypes:

-I learned the extent of ingrained stereotypes in the media. I had thought about how minorities were not represented well, but I had been thinking in terms of the number of characters out there. I had only given passing thought to the personality and make-up of their characters.

-Today, I learned how racial stereotypes are portrayed in the media, and how they affect me. I really enjoyed the examples and the activity because it really made you think.

-I learned that there are many more stereotypes in the media than I ever knew. I also never thought about how some of the ethnic backgrounds aren't even represented at all.

Role of media stereotypes on perceptions of others:

-I learned that the way the media portrays race is not accurate for everyone in that race and that generally we stereotype people based on what we have learned from media.

-I learned that media has a large impact on the way we view people of different ethnicities.

Media affects our day-to-day lives, even subconsciously. The way that media portrays different cultures can enhance the stereotypes in this country, sadly.

Countering media stereotypes:

-Race in our society is on a constant cycle and we need to continue to provide positive lights on each race so that our generalizations can decrease.

-It's important to be aware of stereotypes in the media to avoid reinforcing them.

Need for similar activities:

-I believe these are conversations that need to be had. It allows people to know other perspectives and creates a conversation about something that makes people uncomfortable. Without having these conversations, perceptions/stereotypes cannot be changed/alterd/ignored. I wish there could have been more discussion (at least two classes).

-I learned a lot of different opinions about race and racial groups. I thought that even though some of the ideas and opinions expressed made me uncomfortable, it was important to talk about these issues. I love how relevant the topic is and the examples of TV shows and characters were great because they were all shows I watch.

The Framing of Sexual Orientation Through “Gay-Vague” Ads

Dr. Joel Geske
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Abstract: *This exercise is used in a course titled “Ethnicity, Gender, Class and the Media”. It combines framing theory, advertising and critical thinking skills. Students find LGBT advertising and discuss the pros and cons and audience reactions to “gay-vague” ads. Student feedback is very positive based on objectivity and theory-based approach and the instructor finds it strengthens critical thinking skills and helps challenge students.*

In the Sexual Orientation module, we talk extensively about Framing Theory in journalism and that it extends to other areas of mass communication such as advertising. As such, we know, “audiences interpret information through their own frames. Audiences’ frames may overlap or contradict the media’s frames.” (There is much more on frames in the course.)

Many advertisers today are reaching out to the LGBT community to be inclusive. Some advertisers frame this as openly gay couples and some are more “gay-vague” or leave room for interpretation. This classic Volkswagen ad from 1997 is one early example and is called “Da, Da, Da,” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSjDX9e2EOE>.) It leaves room for interpretation. Are the subjects just roommates or romantically involved? This is gay-vague. As the viewer, you could frame it either way. As Stuart Elliott, the New York Times’s advertising columnist, wrote:

“Nothing much happens in this winsome commercial: Two young men cruise aimlessly in a Volkswagen Golf. But as “Seinfeld” has proved, nothing can sometimes be transformed into something. Two elements help with that alchemy: the novelty song “Da Da Da” playing on the soundtrack and the suggestion — fed by the spot’s introduction during the coming-out episode of “Ellen” — that the pair may be a couple.”

“Target” the Gay Family

A Target ad campaign in 2014 might be a bit more clear, but it’s still a quick shot. The shot is so quick you’d have to be “tuned into it” to notice it amid the collage of shots, but the gay members of the audience noticed and shared. It’s two men doing art with a child and the assumption can be made they are gay dads but they could be brothers, so it’s gay vague. (Source: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7CDh/target-made-to-matter>)

Campbell Soup drew criticism in 2015 for their ad showing two dads feeding soup to their child in a less “gay vague” ad. Huffington Post reports “Days after Campbell’s Soup unveiled a commercial featuring gay dads, a right-wing group notorious for getting worked up over everything slammed the ad for “normalizing sin.” Calling the commercial “a marketing decision [the company] will regret,” they urge readers to stop buying Campbell’s products if the ad is kept on the air.”

The Assignment

Advertisers walk a tight rope. On one hand, many want to be inclusive and attract the lucrative LGBT community. On the other, some of their customers find LGBT marriages and relationships unacceptable. Find an ad from the past year that is similar to the historical ones discussed. The ad should feature a gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual person or couple. If it is a print ad, include a small image in the paper. If it is broadcast, include a link to view the ad.

How is it framed? Is it positive, negative or neutral (if there is such a thing.) Is the company using a gay-vague approach that might shield it from public criticism or is it openly gay? Discuss the pros and cons of such an approach and why that particular company might want to use it. Include Framing Theory in your discussion. The 2-page assignment should follow the standard format and grading rubric outlined for the course. Remember to cite all your sources.

Rationale

As a teacher, I have moved away from approaching diversity topics in a way that encourages students to tell why they like or dislike (or agree or disagree) with the topic at hand...in this case advertising that features gay families. The discussion is about the theory (in this case framing) and how it is applied to the field of study. By having to discuss the pros and cons of the approach, the student has to put himself (sic) into defending both sides and thus encourages critical thinking skills.

A phrase from the framing readings that comes up often in answers is “Frames are mostly cultural in origin” and the student discusses how people from different cultural backgrounds or belief systems might view these ads. It takes the student out of their *own* frame to make them think more broadly and critically, while helping them understand that they also have a frame.

Outcomes and Student Feedback

This particular exercise actually gets mentioned with positive feedback in student evaluations:

“I like that this class uses great examples using research and real-life situations instead of personal opinion or political agenda by the professor. Uses an un-biased and theory-based approach.”

“I like how we broke diversity down...into gender and sexuality, too. I learned a lot on how to be a sensitive media professional.”

“I really enjoyed the section on gay, lesbian and transgender. I found the essay fun because we were able to really apply our knowledge to an already created ad campaign.”

“This class challenged my conventional way of thinking. I learned a lot and have come out differently at the end. That is what I hope for in every class I take!”

“This course made me look at sexism, racism and sexuality differently. I find myself questioning the way things are in these areas. I would not have asked myself these questions before.”

Learning...Thinking...Challenged...Questioning...I learned to be a media professional. What more can a teacher expect?

Gay Ad Analysis

For this assignment, I decided to focus on both an LGBTQA friendly advertisement and company. Starbucks has always worked to develop strategies that allow them to use their business resources to help social causes. This advertisement is no exception as it helps to normalize the image of a gay couple for the general public.

The advertisement pictures two women embracing and kissing while the iconic Starbucks logo is turned to mimic to women next to each other. The imagery frames gay relationships as very positive and uses the tagline “this is the real thing” to enforce that real love can be seen within any couple. Starbucks does not use the gay-vague approach towards this advertisement. Companies who wished to remain more neutral on the topic, and framing their message to be less direct about homosexuality, may have pictured the women standing near each other at a parade. The Starbucks logo may have the LGBTQA rainbow but not contain the straight forward tagline. Starbucks is taking a picture of the gay couple and framing the context as positive as these are their true feelings. One of the large issues surrounding homosexuality is that groups of people do not believe you can be born gay. Starbucks takes this argument and interprets it as “love doesn’t choose”, encouraging its customers to support the movement.

Given that the topic of homosexuality can lead to very colorful discussion and debate, businesses walk a fine line between alienation and empowerment when promoting or discrediting LGBTQA movements. By embracing LGBTQA culture a business may be able to improve customer relations as they will see the company as progressive. Though a beer campaign focused on gay couples enjoying a night out may alienate some of their customer base, the marketers are hoping to build/strengthen the connection gay customers may feel towards their brand. By not publicly supporting the

movement a business may run the risk of being seen as closed-minded. For example, when the CEO of Chick Fil-A announced he did not support gay marriage there was mass amounts of backlash against the company. Plenty of customers boycotted the restaurant and even protested, a PR nightmare.

This explains why a company may lean towards a gay-vague approach as they can straddle the line much closer. The inserted ad from Abercrombie is a perfect example of a picture being able to be interpreted in several ways. To some the men may just look like good friends on the beach, while others could easily see a couple. Staying ambiguous, and just placing good looking men on a poster, allows Abercrombie to appeal to both sides, while not fully embracing one or the other.

Ultimately, the framing of an image is important to how its message will be perceived. Companies are always conscious of how their brands are interpreted in the public which means their messages must be framed to either strengthen or change this perception. As much as a company may want to support LGBTQA members it also does not want to lose business. Once gay marriages/relationships become more widely accepted across America the use of vaguely framed messages may not be needed. However, for now they remain a part of our society.

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News for New Americans: Helping Students Practice Diversity Reporting
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Abstract: In Mosaic, a capstone journalism course, students focus on diversity reporting by producing stories for and about refugees and immigrants in the state. They assume the role of news providers for this diverse audience by publishing stories on a website, curating a weekly newsletter and posting content to three social media channels. The course helps prepare students by giving them opportunities to interact with and develop empathy for diverse peoples. With its established publishing channels, the course becomes the perfect lab for students to explore ways to create journalism that will meaningfully engage diverse audiences.

Explanation of the teaching practice or activity: As a required capstone, Mosaic is designed to help students demonstrate what they have learned about journalism in previous courses through creation of a creative product. In Mosaic, the creative product includes multimedia web stories, newsletters, social media content and engagement strategies. The stated goal of the course is to provide a holistic way for students to practice and use the concepts and skills they've learned to engage and inform a niche audience through well-reported stories.

The course is a mix of lecture, class discussion and newsroom practicum, in which students help plan coverage, develop engagement plans and prepare stories for publication. Students are introduced to solutions journalism and encouraged to develop stories that can be framed in that way. They also study the history of international migration and community engagement strategies.

Students come to the class with a limited knowledge of refugees and immigrants, and they have no experience interacting with them, much less interviewing them and writing about them. To help them prepare, the course uses the following activities:

- Observational activities. Students are asked to do a mix of the following: Observe English classes offered by a non-profit; observe a class or activity at a refugee agency or center; and attend a New Americans Task Force meeting to learn about the people who help refugees.
- A two-hour poverty simulation conducted by university extension staff. Students assumed the roles of family members in low-income households in order to understand what it might be like to try to survive month-to-month.
- Diversity textbooks. Two textbooks help provide the underpinnings of the course: "The Middle of Everywhere," which recounts author Mary Pipher's interactions as a psychologist with refugees in the community; and "Overcoming Bias: A Journalist's Guide to Culture and Context," by former journalist Sue Ellen Christian.
- Guest speakers. These often include refugees and immigrants and the state's refugee coordinator. The slate also changes to match the topic of a semester's in-depth reporting project. During work on a project about mental health, for example, the speakers included a refugee health coordinator and a minority health researcher.

Rationale: At a time when the media face criticism for being out of touch with its communities, news organizations have stepped up efforts to better understand their audiences and earn the trust of readers. As the nation continues to witness demographic shifts, news organizations are keenly interested in how to better serve diverse communities. They want to hire journalists who have the knowledge, expertise and experience in reaching these communities.

Mosaic helps prepare future journalists to cover an increasingly diverse world. Students are able to experience community journalism in a real, hands-on way. Through their reporting, students help members of diverse communities find their voices while helping the larger community understand and appreciate its diverse members. Ultimately, students learn how journalism can bring about unity and understanding in communities.

Outcomes: Since its inception in 2010, students have published more than 500 stories, including four in-depth reporting projects, on the Mosaic website, which averages about 4,000 page views per month. Newsletters and social channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) account for about 740 followers and subscribers. Student work has garnered five collegiate journalism awards.

But beyond the numbers, the course fills a communication need in a city with a large contingent of refugees and immigrants from all over the world and a growing Hispanic population. The course has come a visible and well-respected endeavor, attracting the interest of campus and community collaborators. Mosaic students were asked to contribute to a multi-agency exhibition about health and diversity at the state's history museum, and they collaborated with the campus art museum and a visiting artist-photographer on a refugee-related project.

In post-course reflections, students often speak about Mosaic as a transformational course. Here are four examples:

- *Overall, this semester exposed me to refugee issues during a time when knowledge on the subject is crucial. My horizons were definitely expanded. I learned a lot about my own reporting style. From editing, editing and editing some more I was able to hone in on the more essential parts of the pieces I wrote. It was a privilege to speak with refugees and friends of refugees. I am so glad I played a part in sharing their stories.*
- *There were so many times over this semester where I was deeply moved by the humanity of it all. Where a hug from a refugee or a smile across the room in an English class would humble me so deeply. There is so much to connect with these people on.*
- *I have become a better journalist and grown as a human and part of the community, and I am very thankful to have had the chance to learn and grow.*
- *Last week I took photos of Hasan Khalil at a Yazidi Sere Sal celebration. Hundreds of Yazidi were there, dressed to the nines—I stuck out like a sore thumb. But I felt more welcomed there than any place I've gone to for journalistic endeavors. The air was hot from hundreds of smiling, laughing people dancing together to Kurdish music. Children kept asking me to take their photo and show them on the camera. I couldn't wipe the grin off my face, and I owe the experience to Mosaic.*

Through the Looking Glass: Reflections and Corrections on What It Means to Objectify Gender in Advertising

**Dr. Karie Hollerbach
Southeast Missouri State University**

Abstract

Students demonstrate their understanding of gender objectification in advertising by posting and discussing in an online forum a current advertisement that features the gender opposite of their own. Males post ads that they feel objectify women and explain why. Females post ads that they feel objectify men and explain why. Students then work in diverse teams with a selection of the posted advertisements to deconstruct where each advertising execution is failing in terms of gender depictions and to then reconstruct each advertising execution in order to improve gender depictions.

Explanation

Students enrolled in Advertising and Society take a course that is designed to investigate the ways in which advertising has become a crucial part of today's society, by both informing and being informed by society and culture. While the entry-level course attracts enrollment from across the campus, it is a required course for students in the advertising sequence. Thus, the student composition of the course is fairly diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, student classification, and type of academic major.

For the unit on gender in advertising, students read a corresponding pair of published essays where the first essay supports the position that gender can be the basis of an effective creative strategy when used appropriately. The second essay supports the position that gendered appeals are often ineffective and contribute to gender objectification. Students also watch the following documentaries available from the Media Education Foundation about gender depictions in advertising and mass media: *Killing Us Softly 4*, *Tough Guise*, and *Codes of Gender*. These documentaries explore the theoretical foundations of the power of the symbolic image as it relates to gender stereotyping as well as provide numerous examples, past and present, of advertising executions “gone wrong” with regards to the depictions of both men and women.

Students apply what they have learned about using gender in advertising in two related activities. The first application is an online forum discussion where the male students are asked to post a recent advertising example that they feel objectifies women and to provide their rationale, using information from the readings and the documentary films, as to how the ad does this. The female students are asked to post a recent advertising example that they feel objectifies men and to provide their rationale, again using information from the readings and the documentary films, as to how the ad does this.

Students' advertising examples can only be posted one time to the discussion, thus providing for a broad cross-section of examples and eliminating duplicate posts of the same ad.

The second application is a team discussion and presentation that takes place during the next class meeting after the online forum assignment has been completed. I review all of the posted gender advertising examples and select five for further analysis and discussion. I then create five diverse advertising agency teams from the students enrolled in the class. These teams reflect different genders, ethnicities, and academic majors. There is at least one advertising student assigned to each team and he or she serves as the agency account executive to direct the work of the team. Each team is assigned one of the five gender advertising examples that I have selected, and the team is charged with answering the following questions about it:

- Identify who is the target audience for the ad. We typically describe target audiences using four key market segmentation areas: geographic (where does the target live?), demographic (gender, age, income, ethnicity, education level, etc.), psychographic (adjectives that describe the audience - how do they look at life?), and behavioral (what is their purchase behavior for the brand? heavy user, light user, competitive user, swing user?)
- Are there concepts in the ad that the target audience could find objectionable? Are there concepts in the ad that people other than the target audience could find objectionable?
- How could this ad be revised to be less objectionable and still resonate with and be relevant to the target audience?

During class, the agency teams build a presentation slide deck that outlines their responses. The teams show their assigned advertising example to the class and then share their presentation decks and answers to stimulate further discussion.

Rationale

Asking students individually to identify and discuss an advertising execution that utilizes a gender depiction other than their own encourages the students to consider a different point of view. Bringing the students together in diverse work groups to deconstruct an ad to find its weaknesses as they relate to gender and then asking them to reconstruct the ad for a better outcome demonstrates the power of diverse points of view in action.

Outcomes

In the online forum discussion, students must demonstrate individually that they can reflect upon and connect the theories and concepts related to gender objectification with current advertising examples that utilize the gender that is the opposite of their own. In the in-class team discussion, students must work together with other people to reach a consensus about where the ad is failing with regard to gender depictions and how to correct the ad in a manner that does not negate its relevance to the target audience. The class discussion that takes place after each team's presentation allows for observations to be made by everyone regarding the original problems with the ad and

the potential solutions presented by the team. Students report that this assignment both challenges and interests them and that they find value in identifying both an advertising problem and an advertising solution with regards to gender depictions.

Example of Individual Student Post to the Online Forum:



Miller Lite – Man Up

This ad implies that men who have tastes that are more “feminine,” like caring about fashion and their appearance, are not real men. The man in the video is wearing skinny jeans and needs to “man up” by drinking a Miller Lite. By using this expression, the ad is implying the man wearing skinny jeans is not living up to the standard for being a “real man.” As stated in the Tough Guise video, there is a price to pay for not being considered a “real man,” and that is demonstrated in this video by the ridicule from the waitress and the man’s friends. The ad implies that because Miller Lite has “more taste,” it is more masculine, and drinking one will make the man wearing skinny jeans more masculine.

Miller Lite had a whole “Man Up” campaign with commercials similar to this one that ran in 2011.

Example of Team Presentation Deck:



AGENCY 4

NIVEA AD

TARGET AUDIENCE

- ▶ Working men
- ▶ Rural
- ▶ Age 20-40



OBJECTIFYING ASPECTS

- ▶ Stereotypical working man
- ▶ Fit, ideal body type
- ▶ Objectified by women
- ▶ Women will only like you if you fit these stereotypes and look like the men in the ads



REVISED AD

- ▶ Show more professions (i.e. business man, barista, athlete)
- ▶ Show a bigger diversity of men

“Teaching ‘Conscious Style’ in Language Use”

Rick Kenney, Ph.D.

Augusta University

Abstract

Studies have shown that journalists, among others, sometimes follow traditional professional craft values of language and style rather than paying attention to the need for critical thinking behind the ethics inherent in language choice. For example, news media may identify “imagined neighborhoods” that result from “verbal redlining” that can isolate or divide communities by coding identification according to demographics of race and/or class. This lesson plan introduces students to the mindfulness of inclusive “conscious style” that better recognizes and illuminates the diversity of people whose stories they tell.

Explanation of the teaching practice or activity

Students in reporting and editing classes (beginning and advanced) are assigned to study a helpful, but obscure (to most students) movement in *conscious style*, as illustrated at consciousstyleguide.com. The resource was created by Karen Yin, awarded by ACES (now The Society for Editing) the 2017 Robinson Prize “for furthering the craft of professional editing.” ACES itself is a professional organization worthy of students’ interest, and CSG provides an intense engagement with writing, editing, and language use overall. Many students, however, guided to follow traditional style guides and dictionaries, are unlikely to be aware of inclusive conscious style or to find the site on their own. This assignment requires them to learn about the concept of conscious style by exploring the site; to become expert enough in a certain section of it; and to curate—to teach—what anyone might learn from it. This way, the students need not memorize the entire site and its sections. Instead they take ownership of their own learning and that of their classmates by digging deep into one section and by sharing their sudden understanding (and expertise) with the whole class.

Rationale

As even professional communicators must learn, all of us might fall back on a subjective frame of reference when writing and editing and otherwise choosing words. Associated Press and house style guides can help, but they address usage mostly according to GPS: grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Students generally learn about conscious language choice and related concern of inclusivity/exclusivity/diversity only if they are fortunate enough to receive good supplemental instruction in that area, perhaps in an ethics class. Therefore, some, if not most, journalism students may never be led to consider the impact of words that perpetuate stereotypes or code talk that is unfair and does not lead to diversity and social progress. For example, at the 2017 ACES convention in St. Petersburg, a panel introduced the concept of *verbal redlining* by reminding attendees that just 20 years earlier, race riots (or were they *civil*

disturbances?) erupted in that city after the fatal shooting of a black motorist by a white police officer. At a community forum that followed the disturbance, some complained that local news media always referred to the affected area, where many were injured and much property was destroyed, as “South St. Pete,” an unofficial label that, longtime residents noted, meant “where poor Blacks live.” Such *verbal redlining* represented a giant backward step to the unconstitutional practice of *redlining* in real estate (discrimination based on racial and economic mapping of cities and neighborhoods). That specific lesson in learning *conscious style* helps students understand the tragic history of such language use and, by identifying and discussing it, requires them to explore and discover and suggest and adopt pro-social alternatives that do not discriminate, but rather are more accurate, more helpful, fairer, and more ethical in their orientation.

Outcomes

Each student assigned a topic to research on ConsciousStyle.com writes a submit a 150-word, single-paragraph summary of their section, which is distributed to all for assembly in a thin loose-leaf binder. (Students may also download the digital version from the course-specific LMS (learning management system) website. Each student also creates a PowerPoint presentation of three slides to display while, in turn, teaching classmates about that section. Each presentation must include a relevant example mined from a recent publication that demonstrates *conscious style* or which violates or offends a sensibility, as the website predicts. The audience is encouraged to civilly challenge the presenter: to ask *why? what if? and how about?*

The ensuing lively discussion usually increases understanding and raises consciousness overall—though, naturally, some students may continue to disagree and resort to claims of political correctness by the “speech police.” Such dynamics provide additional teachable moments about the 1980s origins of the “P.C. Movement” and the ongoing debates regarding “hate speech”—all of which leads to a clearer view of inclusion and exclusion and diversity in both thought and language.

Once all presentations have been completed (less than a three-hour, or two-meeting process for a class of 20 students), they are given access to all of the presentations via the LMS website to review for a short exam that includes fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions, as well as examples that students are required to identify and critique by, again, suggesting superior alternatives.

Conscious Style Guide Exercise

Each of you is being assigned a section of the online resource [Conscious Style Guide](#) to explore and to explain. You will submit a 150-word, single-paragraph summary **and** a PowerPoint presentation of three slides to the D2L Dropbox titled “Conscious Style.” You will be called upon in class to present your slides and explain your section to your classmates.

Assignments:

Student 1: How to [talk about disability](#) issues on the Internet.

Student 2: What is [Ableist language](#), and why should you care?

Student 3: [Person-first language](#): why it matters.

Student 4: Is it OK to [call someone fat](#)?

Student 5: Epicene “[they](#)” is gaining greater acceptance.

Student 6: 9 gender and sexuality [acronyms](#) you should learn.

Student 7: The long and ugly tradition of treating [Africa](#) as a dirty, diseased place.

Student 8: Don’t call us [old](#).

Student 9: “[Elderly](#)” no more.

Student 10: “Native American” or “American [Indian](#)”?

Student 11: Covering [Asian America](#).

Student 12: Why women aren’t [crazy](#).

Student 13: Covering [Black Americans](#).

Student 14: [Sex work](#) style guide.

Rubrics:

Summary

100 = **Precise.**

90 = **Excellent.** Strong content. Fewer than 3 AP/GPS errors.

80 = **Good.** No more than one slip in content judgment. Fewer than 5 AP/GPS errors.

70 = **Average.** Significant content missing. Fewer than 5 AP/GPS errors.

60 = **Poor.** Significant content missing. And/or more than 5 AP/GPS errors.

0 = Late or missing work.

PowerPoint Presentation

100 = **Precise.**

90 = **Excellent.** Strong content. Fewer than 3 AP/GPS errors.

80 = **Good.** Fewer than 5 AP/GPS errors.

70 = **Average.** No more than one minor slip in content judgment. Fewer than 5 AP/GPS errors.

60 = **Poor.** Significant content missing and/or poor design. And/or 5 or more AP/GPS errors.

0 = Late or missing work.

LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED OR GRADED AT ALL.

Your PowerPoint must look just like this.

<u>Title As Given</u>	<u>Three Key Points</u>	<u>Usefulness</u>
Firstname Lastname URL	1. 2. 3. Include 1 image to illustrate.	No more than 30 words.

Example: Conscious Style Guide **Summary**

A Student
Oct. 27, 2018

ConsciousStyle: Epicene “they” is gaining greater acceptance

This article discusses how the term “they”, when referring to a singular person rather than only plural, should be more acceptable in writing. The author states that there have been multiple occasions where having to state “he or she” just didn’t seem appropriate or seemed more confusing than just saying “they”. The world today contains more than just two genders and the author is trying to say that writing needs to keep up with the times. Sometimes when writing someone may come across having to refer to someone who may be biologically one gender but identify with another or who does not identify at all. This is challenging and with the AP style forcing writers to pick one or the other or say “he or she” forces people into categories. “They” would be the most accurate way to refer to any and all humans.

Contexts and reflections: Helping students move toward their own diversity understandings

**Jacqueline Lambiase, Ph.D.
Texas Christian University**

Abstract

This learning-centered practice for first-year advertising and public relations students involves three related reflection activities. These culminate in students creating their own personal diversity plans at the semester's end. These plans, focusing on the student's place within the larger university community and the world beyond, are connected to the university's mission statement using an integrative-learning approach. These individualized personal diversity plans are uploaded by students to their ePortfolios, within the learning-goals module.

Explanation of the teaching practices or activity

Students complete three related reflective assignments. For the first one, before coming to class, they conduct a social media audit of their most-used social platform (usually Instagram), to discover who they are following and what sorts of content they are consuming on a daily basis. This is a content analysis of the accounts they follow, as well as a snapshot of content posted by their favorite accounts, with a focus on gender, race, and LGBTQ status; other "Fault Lines" (Maynard's term) may be used. Once they've completed the audits, they engage in small group discussion about their digital community.

The second activity focuses on their family of origin, with an emphasis on whiteness, since the institution is a majority white one. (Please see the attached worksheet, which includes a reading from Debby Irving's book *Waking Up White* and Roxane Gay's blog post, "Ways to Understand Your Privilege.") Students reflect and write about their identities and connections to their family of origin, with an emphasis on their heritage, background, and comfort zones.

The third assignment is an original research project with a diversity focus, which directs them to complete a content analysis or theme analysis of a mass media form such as magazine advertising, social media content, website content, news, or entertainment. Again, reflection is key; students must report findings, but then reflect on the representations of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion or other Fault Lines that served as a focus.

Once these projects are completed, students begin creating their own personal diversity plans. In these, students must articulate three actions they will take in the current academic year to push beyond their own communities of identity and beyond the typical media content that they consume most. Then they must envision three more ways they will expand their diversity understanding after the first year, until they graduate. And finally, the plan must articulate three things they will continue to work on after graduation. These nine actions are placed under “learning goals,” and uploaded to their ePortfolios.

Rationale

This teaching practice is rooted in the inquiry process supported by ePortfolio thinking and learning. EPortfolios are both a process and a product, with the process involving inquiry, reflection, and integration of learning (Barrett, 2008). This teaching practice is well suited for any mass communication classroom. It prompts students to understand their own media habits and personal backgrounds. They are asked to develop strategies to push beyond those worlds in order to connect in empathetic, authentic, and respectful ways with readers, target audiences, stakeholders, and other external publics on the job. The function of reflection “is to make meaning” among experiences, relationships, and knowledge of self and outside of self (Rodgers, 2002). Reflection supports understanding oneself and one’s context.

Outcomes: Students create an ePortfolio with diversity reflections as a foundation, resulting in self-authored learning goals. Eportfolio thinking turns students into intentional and accountable learners, helping them to express an understanding of the relationship between self, a diverse community, media representations, and the world

beyond graduation. Other outcomes include students' abilities to consciously understand their identities, to develop an understanding of their digital communities, to reflect on the media world through critical inquiry such as content or theme analysis, and to document their growth and progress as learners and as media-professionals-in-training.

References

- Barrett, H.C. (2008). "Balancing the two faces of ePortfolios." In *Education for a Digital World: Advice, Guidelines and Effective Practice from Around the Globe*. Retrieved from <http://oasis.col.org/handle/11599/52>
- Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers College Record* 104 (4), 842-866.

Reading, worksheet, and reflection prompt for part I of Personal Diversity Plan assignment

From *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving (page 187)

“Creating a racial just world demands a reconsideration of the assimilation (“melting pot”) model long enforced in America. By creating one dominant culture and multiple pissed-off, marginalized subcultures, the approach has wreaked havoc on America’s economic and social systems Continuing to pursue that path only promises more discord and wasted human potential

“Cross-cultural collaboration done well expands everyone’s ability to innovate and solve problems. But there’s a major catch: it’s much harder than one might imagine because it starts with personal change. Just as I sought for 25 years to bridge the racial divide by “helping” others, many people hope that “helping” or “including” or “celebrating” people from nondominant racial or other cultures is the goal of multiculturalism—that it’s all about the “other.” In my experience, I could not begin to develop a multicultural sensibility until I first looked deep within myself to understand the ways in which the culture I’d live in ended up living in me

“There’s no rule that says I have to reject my culture. But if I become aware of its beliefs, values, and practices, I can try to see it as one culture of many and expand my beliefs, values, and practices beyond it in the name of becoming a better global citizen.”

Personal diversity plan assignment: part 1

In a few weeks, you’ll create a personal diversity plan to help you work on building diversity opportunities and perspectives into your own life. This plan helps us address the university’s mission statement, in terms of preparing you to work in a global community and showing ethical leadership. It will also help you in the workplace and as you continue to adapt and educate yourself on important issues related to diversity.

This worksheet addresses your personal identity, understanding where you stand in the world and how your current perspectives and place in the world were formed. Think about your network and those good ideas for expanding your own network.

For this part of the assignment, you’ll begin to investigate your own background for clues about how you have learned to see the world, view others, and understand yourself. Please write a short summary of your identity, as you understand it from your standpoint as a first-year college student.

Gender and/or stepping away from those binary categories	Heritage
Geography	Religious or nonreligious upbringing
Educational background	Family interests and activities
Socioeconomic group	Ways you understand your privilege (please read http://therumpus.net/2012/05/peculiar-benefits/ , which is an essay by Roxane Gay)
Sexual orientation and/or community affinity	Outgroups you are part of/Ingroups you are part of
Race	Other indicators and influences that have mattered to you
Ethnicity	
Background	Other possible categories

An excerpt from original research, male student, contained in his ePortfolio:

How to Get Away with Murder

Episode	Number of Male and Female leads	Racial Diversity of women	Role of women in show	Portrayal towards audience
Season 1 Episode 2	Male: 4-5 Female: 4 Still a mostly male cast.	Much more diverse. White: 3 Black: 2	Strong female lead by Viola Davis, professor and head of law firm. Women have an equal role to the men, such as students and researchers.	Portrayed as confident and stern. Lot less portrayal as victim. Still sometimes shown as vulnerable and afraid.
Season 1 Episode 12	Male: 4 Female: 5 Greater representation of women	Same as Episode 2	Women have more prominent roles than men, such as lawyers and assistants	Women portrayed as confident and also fight. Women sometimes are vulnerable and afraid
Season 2 Episode 1	Same as Episode 12	Same as Episode 2	Roles include a murder victim, law firm owners, assistants, lawyers, and students	Once again shown as confident, strong voiced, and stern. Victim portrayal happens once

An excerpt from one student's reflection and plan, contained in her ePortfolio:

Diversity and the Media

[site map](#)

Home | Essays | Listicle | Final Project | [Diversity Plan](#) | Resume

Diversity Plan

Throughout this semester, we have learned how to act as responsible global citizens in a diverse world. Living in America as a white, middle class female, I often lose sight of the discrimination and injustice occurring not only across the globe but also in my own country. It is important to remember that it is not just tyrannical governments and extremist military groups performing these injustices, but also individual, every day people. By being conscious of what I say and how I treat people, I hopefully will be able to influence other people to do the same and decrease the micro aggressions that take place every day. These small scale changes will eventually work their way up to make necessary large scale changes to the way we treat minorities. Additionally, by surrounding myself with a diverse group of people who are from different places, do different things, and think differently than me, I will be able to broaden my perspective and learn how to treat every individual with respect, which reinforces the idea from *Cosmopolitanism* that "everybody matters."

Journalism Ethics and Diversity
Raymond McCaffrey, Ph.D.
University of Arkansas

Abstract

A journalism ethics class spent a semester immersed in a project focusing on the ethical challenges of reporting on a diverse society. A visiting professor assigned to cover race and diversity for a major U.S. news operation was brought in to co-teach the class. Highlights included a workshop in which students met in small groups with journalists to develop strategies to better cover issues relating to diversity. Students also completed a research project in which they analyzed how race and ethnicity factored into ads and tweets from the 2016 presidential candidates and the corresponding coverage by broadcast and print outlets.

Explanation of the teaching practice or activity

The multi-faceted project in which a journalism ethics class focused on the ethical challenges of reporting on a diverse society included regular class visits by a visiting professor who was concurrently assigned to cover race and diversity for a major U.S. news operation. The in-depth classes culminated with a workshop at the end of the semester in which students worked in small groups with professional journalists to develop strategies to better cover issues relating to diversity. Students also actively participated in a research project in which they analyzed how race and ethnicity was touched on in ads and tweets from the presidential candidates in the general election as well as the corresponding coverage by leading broadcast and print outlets.

Rationale

The rationale behind the semester-long emphasis was that students could best learn about covering diversity through immersive instruction and active learning. The instruction included ongoing exposure to as diverse a group of working journalists and educators. One panel discussion, “Covering Race and Gender in the New Millennium,” included the university’s history chair who is also affiliated faculty in African and African American studies; and the director of gender studies. The visiting professor, whose work includes science fiction, gave a public lecture titled, “Race in Reality and Fantasy: From Ferguson to Star Wars.”

The active learning centered around the part of the project in which the students gathered in small groups to analyze the use of media across multiple platforms during the 2016 presidential election campaign. The decision to work in groups was inspired by research, which - according to Barbara Gross Davis, in “Tools for Teaching” – shows that “students working in small groups tend to learn more and demonstrate better retention” and are “more satisfied with their classes” and experience “a sense of shared purpose that can increase morale and motivation.”

Outcomes

The outcome of project could be seen in two semester-ending events. The first was a workshop for students and media professionals, titled, “America Post Election: Bridging the Gaps in Race and Gender.” Students were able to augment what they had learned throughout the semester by joining with leading media figures to develop strategies to better cover issues relating to race and diversity. The second event involved the conclusion of the research project and the uploading of the results onto the university’s

journalism ethics center website. The students' findings were later presented at a regional research conference. The students and their project also were profiled in a national publication that describes its coverage area as media and technology.

Student work and supporting materials

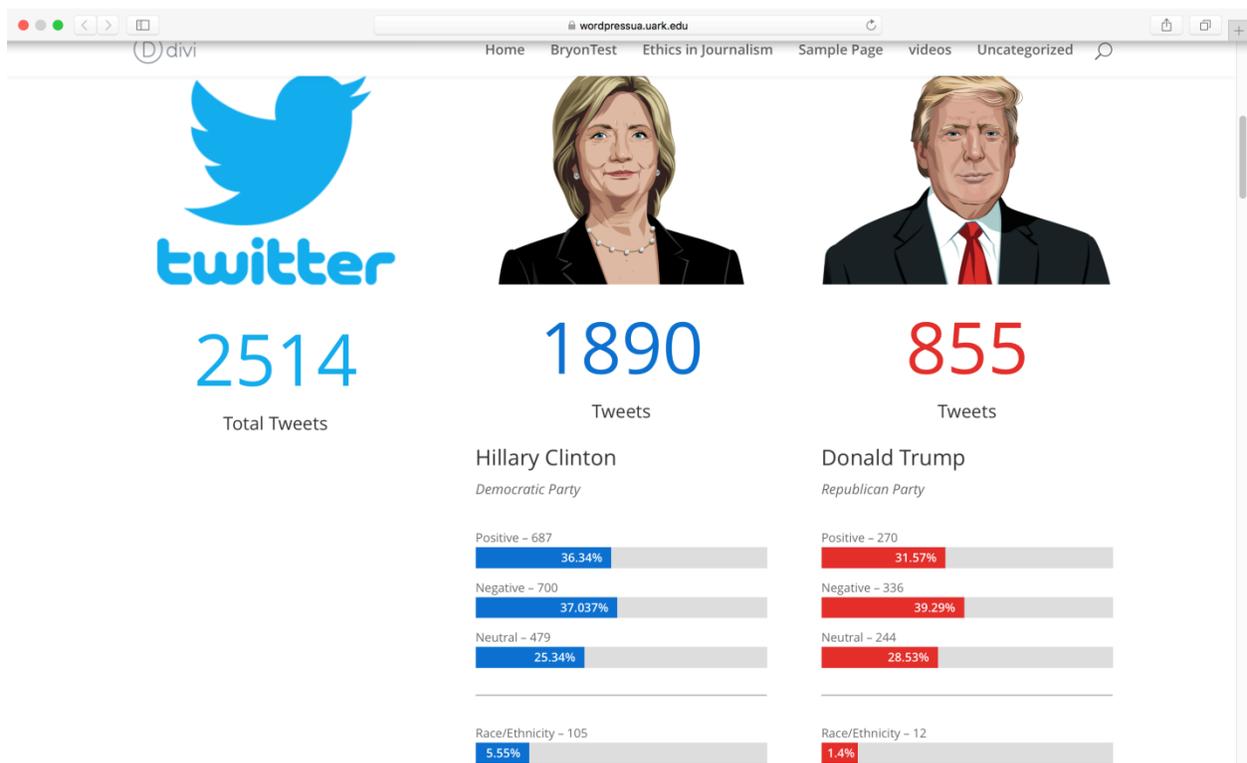
A multimedia presentation on the journalism ethics center website included video of the students at work and a complete overview of the project's method and an analysis of the data that was collected. Advertisements, tweets, and news stories were all analyzed as to whether they had a positive or negative tilt, or a neutral tone, and also whether they delved into issues relating to race, ethnicity, and diversity. The three-dozen students were divided into nine groups organized according to the sequences they declared as journalism majors, with the Editorial News group examined front-page newspaper headlines, the Broadcast Radio/TV group analyzed opening weeknight TV news segments, and the seven Advertising/Public Relations groups were assigned one day a week to analyze every tweet from the two candidates. The entire class helped study every TV advertisement produced by the two candidates during the general election campaign.

Students also reviewed prominent advertising, journalism, and public relations ethics codes so as to evaluate the conduct of the journalists and candidates alike.

The students' findings included the fact that matters of race and ethnicity arose the most in campaign ads. Nearly half of Clinton's ads touched on this area, with many attacking her opponent's controversial comments about immigrants and others from different backgrounds and religion. The students determined that Trump was the subject of twice as many negative newspaper stories and more than six times more negative television

news segments than Clinton. The candidates helped fuel that negativity, most prominently through their use of Twitter. Though Clinton had more than twice as many positive tweets as Trump, she also had more than double the amount of negative ones. “It was shocking how negative they were toward each other,” one group of students wrote of the candidates. “It was annoying how they would avoid questions about their past. It was crazy how much they tweeted.”

(Below is a draft of one page that was to go with the web presentation.)



“Get on the Bus: Investigating Diversity in Journalism 1” Teresa Moore

University of San Francisco

Abstract

Beginning reporting students are randomly assigned San Francisco bus routes. They ride from one end to the other and take notes on the various kinds of diversity (race, class, occupation, age, interests, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.) they observe among their fellow passengers and in the distinct areas on their routes. Students write chronological, detailed stories about their trips. Preparing for assignment and sharing their experiences with the class forms foundation to discuss the complexity of “diversity” and journalists’ responsibility to recognize, understand and include the fullness of humanity in their stories. Assignment helps ease students into getting out and reporting.

Rationale

My goal was to challenge my students’ understanding of diversity as my own assumptions had been tested as I learned to report in a new city. During the decade I was a non-driving, daily reporter in San Francisco, I spent a lot of time catching rides with photographers, interviewing sources while they drove, taking the occasional cab, and, most often, riding public transportation. I discovered that the San Francisco I saw on the bus was worlds away from the Chronicle’s newsroom: much younger *and* much older and far less white. Louder, more colorful and, sometimes, smellier. A teaching colleague once pointed out that when she rode the bus, she realized she was probably the most affluent passenger and I suspect that was often true for me, too. Riding the bus gave me a deeper and more nuanced sense of the much-vaunted “diversity” of San Francisco. As a Black woman who had moved out here from D.C., I recognized that yes, there were a lot of different kinds of people in the city, although not that many like me. Sometimes that was lonely, but more often, for a curious writer, it was fascinating. The “Get on the Bus” assignment, which I have been giving my Journalism I students since my first class in 1996, grew out of those experiences.

My students knew the parts of the city they needed or wanted to know: where they worked, where they shopped, where they partied. In 1996, most students lived on campus and many of them had cars. (Although today few of them live on campus and many of them rely on Uber or Lyft, outside of classes they still tend to exist in mono-cultural bubbles.) I wanted them to learn the city beyond the postcards and the cable cars, the slogans and the fables. The first lesson would be to challenge their understanding of what San Francisco’s “diversity” really looks like and get them thinking like good reporters. I decided to put them on the bus.

San Francisco’s Muni bus lines traverse a wide range of neighborhoods and subcultures. On a single line you can travel from the Bayview, an enclave of public housing, bay views and the city’s greatest concentration of Black homeowners, to

Pacific Heights, one of the wealthiest and whitest parts of the city. But I could also see this assignment working in my hometown of Danville, VA, where the Black and white regulars on the bus defy simplistic assumptions about race relations in the South. Wherever you have people who are relying on the bus, you have fertile ground for learning something about how a place works. I chose a dozen of the most dramatic Muni routes and had students draw the route numbers from a cup. Their assignment was to locate their route on a map, get to either end of the route and ride the whole route, describing their fellow passengers and areas they travel through. The shape of the story had to be chronological and follow the shape of the route – no beginning in the middle or looping back or ending short of the terminal. They were allowed to use first person, but the focus had to be on who and what they saw: in short, what does diversity really look like in San Francisco?

Here are a few excerpts from the assignment memo I send them:

“...the purpose of this assignment is to see how well you recognize and report the various kinds of diversity you encounter as you travel from one end of your Muni route to the other....

Ordinarily, we only note race and class in a story if it is essential to the reader’s understanding. In this case, you are *supposed* to note race, class, age, occupation and apparent interests of the people on the bus with you and in the areas you through which you are traveling. In most cases, you will be guessing at these demographics based on what you can observe. In later stories, when you are doing more comprehensive reporting -- and if these details are relevant, you will need to confirm them with your sources....

Write with your senses.... Notice what people are carrying and wearing. It is fine to eavesdrop in public, but you’re not required to interview anyone. This is an observation assignment. Pay attention to the assumptions you may be bringing to the exercise. If you write that an area looks “dangerous,” you need to show what gives you that impression. Notice how the people on the bus behave with one another....Do not be queasy or coy about referring to people’s races – that’s a requirement of the assignment. Also, it would be strange if you rode through the Castro and didn’t note that it is a historic gay neighborhood. Everyone you mention in your story should have a race – including white people. You should not assume that any ethnicity is the norm or default. If you do not include race, I will assume those people are black like me.”

I knew the assignment was a hit when students came back excited. They’d had an adventure. They saw parts of the city that were new to them. Some of them talked to strangers. They all had stories to tell. I’ve made a number of modifications to the assignment over the years, but the essentials have remained the same: Ride your route from end to end. Take lots of notes. Show the reader where you were in the city and who you were with. Show what you saw, not what you assumed you’d see. Make the reader feel as if she’s riding along with you.

Before they go out, we talk about the many elements that can constitute diversity. When they return, we talk about how they felt, how they were treated, what surprised

them. The assignment gives students a mission (reporting what they observe) in a situation that might feel uncomfortable (recognizing they may be surrounded by strangers who don't look like them). We also look at excerpts of excellence from everyone's story – there's always something.

Rationale: Preparing for the assignment, riding and writing about the route and unpacking the reporting and writing experiences gives us a comfortable way to talk about differences and the reporter's responsibility to recognize and represent, not ignore and exclude.

Outcomes for "Get on the Bus":

Students' assumptions about San Francisco's diversity are tested. What does "diversity" really look, sound and smell like?

Rookie reporters accomplish a contained reporting assignment: riding a bus route from end to end and observing and describing the people and places they encounter.

Rookie writers attempt the simple, chronological story structure of an end to end bus ride.

Students practice taking notes by hand.

Here are a few examples of how the assignment gets students thinking about themselves in relation to other San Franciscans:

"The younger black men and teenagers sat at the corners of the square. Many of the younger men had long dread locked hair and wore black hooded sweaters and large blue jeans. One man in his early twenties came up to me and said, "Amigo, Amigo, let me get a cigarette?" I found it interesting that black people here referred to me in Spanish by calling me, "Amigo." I quickly noticed another Latino being stopped by another black male. The black man said, "Amigo, what time is it? You speak English amigo?" Bayview was full of short conversations, cars honking, people yelling, and an intensity that hid in the relaxed walks of the residents. It smelled of hot garbage." –

Mario C., Fall 2009

"I watch as tourists clutter the sidewalks, dodging homeless people and walking too slowly for local taste." – Maddie K., Spring 2015

"A horde of Hispanic construction workers got on and filled the bus with laughter and the smell of heavy cologne trying to mask sweat. A white woman, whose age was difficult for me to discern due to her apparent use of drugs, also hopped on. She had the facial structure of one who does meth—the jutting jaw, sores, sickly green skin. Outside of the

Academy of Arts campus, three female Asian students were carrying big portfolios and Blick bags. Once we passed Van Ness and Sacramento, new passengers, also middle-aged Hispanic men, were dressed more for the office than for construction. A black man of about 70 was wearing a fantastic head to toe brown leather outfit. I saw many people smile as he passed them. He seemed to be aware of his awesome get up.” – Haley K., Fall 2017

“Salvation arrives in the form of another passenger – a Latino boy with a lopsided smile I would’ve enjoyed back when I was “straight.” He welcomes me to 4th and Market with a smile—the first one I’ve received all route—and I’ve never felt so relieved. If “FiDi” was working, Market is *living*, and here the people populating the streets represent life with artistic precision. Sure, through the window I can still see plenty of business-types pushing kids like me (cheap backpacks, dangling school IDs and all) out of the way to get to Starbucks, but more often I see people I’d want to hang out with. Like the well-dressed Asian women jetting from store to store, comically carrying more bags than should be physically possible. Or the somewhat-older Black woman who climbs on the bus, cat-carrier in tow. Or the white father and son, decked out in matching Angry Birds brand bike helmets.” – Corie S., Fall 2013

INTERACTION, INVOLVEMENT GET STUDENTS ENGAGED IN LEARNING DIVERSITY

Renea D. Nichols
The Pennsylvania State University

Abstract

Discussions about race, gender, sexual orientation and the influence of media can often be difficult, especially on a predominately white institution. Establishing ground rules, nurturing a cooperative environment, incorporating technology, flipping the classroom to allow the students to learn from each other and requiring out-of-class multicultural learning experiences leads to a more engaged, critical-thinking student. Giving students a greater role in the learning process and using multiple approaches such as videos, guided small group discussions and Kahoot quizzes also create a dynamic learning environment. Extending the learning environment outside the classroom ensures the conversation continues beyond the semester.

Teaching Practices

- **RULES FOR RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS:** Clear guidelines on how to effectively communicate opinions and disagree respectfully are outlined and reviewed. Students are asked to use evidence and facts (reading, research, stats) to support their positions, respectful language, avoid generalizations. Students must speak for themselves and not their entire race/gender. Students are given prompts such as “I respectfully disagree... and here’s why,” and “In my opinion...” Rationale: Every student needs to feel free to express their views, ask questions and know that their perspective is respected and needed.
- **DIGITAL STORYTELLING:** Each student is required to set up a personal WordPress blog via the University’s web-publishing platform and Twitter account. The blog is used to post assignments, thoughts and share views. Twitter is used to share relevant media stories and current events pertaining to discussions using a class hashtag. Rationale: Using technology encourages all students, especially those who are shy in class, to be active participants in learning and extends learning outside of the classroom.
- **SHARING OF CULTURES:** The first three weeks of the semester are spent getting to know each other’s culture and background. Students write a “My Culture” post and 60-second video to their required public blog (on University server) about who they are that is read by classmates. A worksheet with the list of topics to cover is provided to guide this first introduction. During class, in small groups, students share different aspects of how they grew up everything from family traditions, vacations, foods, friendships, school activities, discipline and rules on media use, relationships. The third week digs deeper

into early formations of attitudes on stereotype, privilege, race and gender issues. Rationale: It's important that students get to know each other and understand the origins of their views before discussing tough issues. Encourages open and free communication.

- **INTERACTION:** I believe in lots of interaction and try to get students moving in the classroom. Students may be reluctant to be completely honest or give unpopular opinions. I use KAHOOT, an online game-based learning platform, to conduct polls to gauge attitudes and positions on topics to jumpstart discussions and review chapter material. Students use their smartphone and answers are real time on the screen. The Harvard Implicit Bias Test is another helpful tool. Rationale: Make learning fun.

- **STUDENT-LED LECTURES:** Students are grouped in teams of 4-5 based on their interest in topics discussed in the chapter, and develop and give a lecture using the textbook and additional research. The lecture must include ice breakers, engagement/interaction with peers, assessment questions and a multi-media presentation. Student teams are required to meet with me two weeks prior to their student-led lecture for assistance and guidance. Rationale: Students are more invested in learning when they have input on the material and approach and are more attentive when learning from each other.

- **WEEKLY REFLECTIONS:** Each Friday students post their "reflections" of the week's reading and discussion on their blogs. Students then read each other blogs and provide comments. Students are required to read/comment on at least three different blogs each week. Rationale: This allows students to continue conversations beyond the classroom, provide additional information (links, images and videos) to topics brought up in discussion and connect with each other on more personal levels.

- **MULTI-CULTURAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES:** Over the course of the semester, students complete five (5) Multicultural Learning Experiences. These involve attending a cultural event (on or off-campus) that immerses the student in cultural experiences outside of their own culture. These may include speakers, lecture series, events/meetings or activities focused on and cultural celebrations. The student must then write about their learning experience. The last MLE must be action/advocacy oriented and requires students to develop their own teaching activity or social experiment where they are educating others (their choice) on a topic discussed in class. Rationale: Encourages students to go outside of their comfort zone to learn about other cultures, races, genders, sexual orientations, religions and ethnic groups. Then allows them to share knowledge and educate others.

- **CLASS PLAYLIST:** In addition to the textbook, students are given a list of a variety of documentaries and films accessible on Youtube or Netflix that cover diversity and/or diverse populations. They are assigned only 5-6 to watch outside of class. Rationale: Broadcast media add yet another method for the different types of learners in the class. Using video also encourages students to watch media they would not normally seek out while doing something they do anyway.

OUTCOMES: Class attendance is near 90% each class session, average scores on exams are above 85%, students' weekly blog posts on average include additionally researched material and students report watching films and videos beyond those assigned (all viewing is ungraded), sharing exercises and discussing topics with family and friends, reading beyond the required three blogs each week, becoming media literate and establishing diverse relationships at the completion of the course gained through multicultural experiences. Students also report enjoyment of the course.

Example of Student Feedback:

"From this class I have taken away the importance of listening to people who are different from you or people you may passionately disagree with. This is just proof that the biggest problem with our society is unity. It isn't hard to listen to others and just listening alone can solve a world of conflict because sometimes just want to be heard. When people don't feel heard they say and do outrageous and mostly stupid things. So personally I will make it my mission to try to involve myself in issues I may not be directly related to. Also, I will try to foster more discussions on controversial topics with my peers to make a difference." Student, female, black

"Wow, this is really it. Throughout this semester, (REDACTED)has surely been quite the eventful class. It seemed like every time I went to this class, I learned something new, as someone always had something interesting or eye-opening to share during discussions. I was amazed at all the unique and diverse perspectives that the students in this class section had, and I am so thankful that so many people were willing to share their experiences with the class." Student, male, Chinese

"I have grown so much through this course and look forward to continuing to be more aware of my relationship with the media and step outside of my comfort zone to learn about opinions and cultures that differ from mine! Thank you to everyone for creating such an open environment. I felt so comfortable being able to talk about tough topics in this course, which is unfortunately rare to find! Student, female, white

"I really enjoyed this class and what we have talked about this semester. First off, I really enjoyed the structure of this class and how interactive it was. I think classes where students are allowed to put in their honest opinions leads to very interesting discussions. These discussions are what shape intelligence and awareness of what is going in the world. It was interesting to hear the point of views about topics that were gender and race sensitive from such a diverse group of classmates." Student, female, white

"Overall this class was a very enjoyable experience. I made new friends that I hope to keep throughout the remainder of college and even after. I think (REDACTED) is really onto something here with how she runs her class. If it was not for the multi-cultural learning experiences I would not have gone out and explored the many things I got to explore. If it was not for the group project, I probably would not have paid as close attention in class as I did. I had a lot of fun in this class and will definitely be suggesting

to my friends that they take the class. I am sad that this class is ending because of how much fun it is but wish everyone the best in the future endeavors. I would also like to thank everyone who took the time to read my blog throughout the semester.” Student, male, white

SAMPLE EXERCISE: Students complete worksheet anonymously, then papers redistributed in class for students to read & discuss.

LATINO/HISPANIC NATIVE AMERICAN HWA/PACF.ISLANDER
OTHER_____ STRAIGHT LGBTQ POC
NONPOC INTERNATIONAL

ADD:

WHAT DO YOU THINK NON POC DON'T KNOW ABOUT BEING A POC, ESPECIALLY ON A PWI

IF YOU COULD TELL THEM ONE THING ABOUT BEING A POC, ESPECIALLY ON A PWI:

WHAT DO YOU THINK POC DON'T KNOW ABOUT BEING A THE MAJORITY ON A PWI:

IF YOU COULD TELL THEM ONE THING ABOUT BEING A MAJORITY ON A PWI:

WHAT DO YOU THINK MALE/FEMALE DON'T KNOW ABOUT BEING MALE/FEMALE:

IF YOU COULD TELL THEM ABOUT BEING MALE/FEMALE:

WHAT DO YOU THINK STRAIGHT/LGBTQ DON'T KNOW ABOUT BEING STRAIGHT/LGBTQ

IF YOU COULD TELL THEM ONE THING ABOUT BEING STRAIGHT/LGBTQ:

VOICES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

LaReeca Rucker

University of Mississippi

Abstract

Collecting the stories of African Americans in the South who lived before and during the Civil Rights Era can be compared to recording the history of Holocaust victims. Many are growing old, and their life stories will never be heard. Journalism students were given a project related to the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They were asked to interview senior citizens over the age of 70 who lived through the Civil Rights Era about Dr. King's legacy. The project gave students hands-on experience as social justice reporters.

Explanation Of The Teaching Practice Or Activity

Last semester, I gave students in three sections of journalism classes a challenging final project. I wanted them and readers to better understand the effects of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination that happened 50 years ago this April in Memphis.

Social justice reporting is an important beat I had been hoping to incorporate into classroom assignments that I knew would challenge students to step away from common campus stories and learn firsthand about recent history from those who had endured it.

Any assignment or journalism project you do with students is always experimental because you know some will deliver and others will not, so I wasn't exactly sure what the completed project would look like. Their objective was to interview a person over the age of 70 about their lives, their memories of Dr. King's assassination, and the impact they believe his life and death had on them and the world. Many returned with compelling stories.

One student found Mary Redmond who met King after one of his speeches. He shook her hand and told her "things were going to get better." This was an important encounter and message for a woman whose father was beaten to death because, as a child, she accidentally bumped the arm of a white girl.

They interviewed Hezekiah Watkins, who met King after Watkins was jailed at age 13 for being one of the youngest Freedom Riders. When he and one of his young friends wanted to get a closer look at the people who were traveling and fighting for equality, they rode their bikes to a Greyhound Station. There Watkins, a child, was arrested and jailed along with the others.

Students interviewed Senator Samuel Jordan, who personally attended the trial of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, charged with the murder of Emmett Till, 14, in 1955. Pitching in

a quarter each for gas, Jordan and friends traveled to the scene and watched reporters interview Mamie Till, Emmett's mother.

They also interviewed others with memories they can't shake. When Belinda Carter was around 10, her school bus driver drove past Carter and her siblings for a week as they stood on the side of the road waiting for the bus because the driver refused to pick up black children.

As a kid growing up in the 1960s, Cut Miller was a member of a student boxing team. About 50 percent of the team was black, but only white members were allowed to use the restroom of a local restaurant because the sign on the door read "White Only."

Rationale

While we are all conscious of the fact that horrible things like this happened in the 1960s and prior, many stories are still shocking to read. It's almost impossible to believe a nation collectively agreed it was acceptable to treat other human beings unfairly, and often brutally, because they viewed them as inferior and unequal. As Senator Jordan pointed out: "My whole life, I've wondered how a man can be faithful to the word of God and be a racist."

Today, there is another wave of social justice activism happening in our country. Conversations are needed, but there is a lack of communication, listening and understanding – a roadblock for modern civil rights progression.

There is also a difference in reading about history in books and meeting someone face to face who has lived it. That is why I intend to continue using this project as a teaching tool.

As with the Holocaust, when people die, we lose their perspectives that are part of the American story. Their words offer a more detailed look at a time we must never repeat. They are warnings to treat others better, to evolve, to obey the Golden Rule and love our neighbor – principles of truth almost impossible to reject.

To many young students, the Civil Rights Era seems like something that happened eons ago. This is a way to help them better understand that it wasn't very long ago when our culture was radically different and there are people still alive who endured it.

Outcomes

Students from three sections of journalism classes submitted their final projects. Of those, about 30 were selected for a website that we created at <https://mlkmemories.wordpress.com/> that will be open to the public around April 4, the anniversary of the assassination. We are currently working with a local newspaper who told us they will consider publishing some of the stories students have written.

I hope to use this project in other classes as a springboard to collect and share more stories of aging citizens who have lived through the Civil Rights Era. In the supporting materials, you will find more information about the outcomes of the project from students.

Supporting Materials

Students who participated in this journalism project, like Sarah Kane, said their thoughts about it changed after interviewing their subject. “I realized that this was more than just another project,” she said. “This assignment was very special, and the content needed to be delivered in a very respectful and proud way. I look at life in a different way now because of my interview with Ms. Carter, and I am extremely honored that I got to take part in this assignment.”

Student Morgan Quinnley said she felt anxiety about the interview, but that changed during the conversation. “It was very insightful to see the world through someone else’s eyes,” she said. “After interviewing my subject, I became excited to complete the project and share her perspective. It was almost as if the project was designed with her in mind; everything came together seamlessly once I had her input.”

Student Katherine Johnson said the project made her realize how widespread King’s assassination was felt. “It was not consolidated to the African American population in any sense,” she said. “My time with Willingham allowed me to understand how this event molded the world that we see today. He shared with me his ideas on further breaking down the racial barriers in our society and impressed that these were a continuation of King’s ideals. In my mind, this project changed from being about something isolated in the past to a topic that remains current and important in our modern world.”

Student T’Keyah Jones said she was surprised about the topic and found it interesting. “Over the course of the project, it really opened my mind and eyes to see that history isn’t just recorded in textbooks ... History is in the person sitting next to us – teachers, preachers, custodians, directors and so many other people.

“My thoughts did change after the interview because it made me really see that there are some people who refuse to actually make equality and unity real. We speak about it all the time. There are posters about it. There are television shows about it, but how many of us honestly practice these (ethics.) This project gave me the courage and challenged me to not wait on others, but take the initiative myself and show others that we are and will be better when we work together and honestly accept each other.”

Student Benjamin Warnick said after his interview, he saw things more clearly. “I truly understood the importance of preserving Dr. King’s legacy. In a time when our country is struggling to progress civilly, writers must shine a light on those who still believe in the right way to create change, as Dr. King so passionately dreamed of.”

STORY (PROFILE) EXAMPLE

Mary Redmond

“(King) shook my hand and told me things were going to get better.”

Mary Redmond was born in Yazoo City Nov. 16, 1938 and grew up in the segregated South during a time when African Americans could only buy goods from a “blacks-only” grocery. One particular trip to the store was different when Redmond had a confrontation with a white family.

“On the way there, my arm hit a little white girl’s arm,” she said, “and she told her dad, ‘That black girl just hit me.’ Her mom and dad started to hit my dad, and that’s when my dad told me to run home.”

As she raced home in the shadow of fear, Redmond briefly turned back to see a group of white people beating her father.

“I was scared,” she said. “I kept running until I got home, and I told mama. Mama got a call. That was the last time I saw my daddy.”

“Mama never told me what happened that day, but at the funeral, I heard some people talking, and they said that they had beaten my daddy so bad, and still threw him in jail, and that’s where he died.”

Redmond eventually moved to Chicago after the death of her mother, but she returned to Mississippi in 1964 at age 16. She later graduated from training school, an accomplishment for a black woman in the South in the 1960s.

“Things seemed a little better, but not much,” she said. “... I grew up in times when being black was a crime, a crime that we could not correct ourselves of.”

Mrs. Redmond would go on to one day meet Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“When I was 25, I met Martin Luther King at a march he had in Benton,” she said. “He shook my hand and told me things were going to get better. I had already had one child and had another one on the way. But those words were touching. Later that year in March, I had my baby girl, my only girl.”

That year was 1968, and King was murdered a month later. However, his words lasted a lifetime, providing hope to the hopeless, especially for Redmond.

“He gave the black people hope and a dream,” she said. “And it did get better. Hell, I lived to see a black man become president. That was one of the best days of my life. I’ll never forget it.”

Redmond has witnessed change personally and nationally. Her grandson, Carl Tart, is a standout student at ... a school she could have only dreamed of attending.

Carl describes his grandmother as a hero, saying, “She took care of me when I was younger due to the fact that my brother was born with a hole in his heart, and my parents had to move to Cleveland, Ohio to be at the hospital with him until he was old enough to have surgery.”

Teaching Social Justice in Journalism Skills Courses

Adina Schneeweis, PhD

Oakland University

Abstract

In the context that much of the existing curriculum in journalism is organized around skills, with a nod to diversity relegated to at most one class period or one week in the syllabus (typically, the week on “ethics”), I have implemented an assignment titled “the social justice beat,” in which students work in groups to produce multimedia storytelling on topics that are meaningful to students and directly engage with contemporary socio-political issues. The key outcome of the assignment is that students understand issues of diversity better and become invested in the content they produce and committed to create stronger journalism.

Description of Teaching Practice and Activity

I have noticed a disconnect in the last few years between the topics of discussion, writing, and multimedia storytelling in my practical journalism classes, and the important issues in the wider society. In fact, much of the existing curriculum in journalism and writing programs is organized around skills, with a nod to diversity relegated to at most one class period or one week in the syllabus (typically, the week on “ethics”). The curriculum commonly ranges from defining race for a newsroom, to cautioning against over-emphasis of race and ethnicity in news, to mentioning in passing issues around covering race riots, to urging attention to the cultural diversity of newsroom staff and of audience members. As a symbolic elite, the media have a prominent role in the discursive reproduction of -isms in society – and such a culture needs transformation. Today’s communicator needs to hear and learn about diversity every day.

I have begun therefore to pay attention to the possibility of teaching diversity *at the same time as* I teach skills such as news writing, photojournalism, and digital storytelling, following increased news attention to hate crimes, political discourse about immigration and otherness, and concerns about media literacy most generally. As a first step, I have incorporated a few smaller changes in my courses, such as including more diverse images in my presentations, changing the names in class examples to allow for more cultural diversity, and seeking more diverse voices in the articles I ask my students to read. As important as first steps are, I still have felt that such changes are too small, with incomplete effects in the classroom.

I have then introduced a substantial assignment in two of my classes – a digital storytelling course and a multimedia journalism class. I titled the assignment “the social justice beat.” I have found enhanced student engagement in the classroom, and an overall sense of enthusiasm as students have directly engaged in meaningful contemporary socio-political issues.

The assignment entailed the following:

- At the outset of the semester, I facilitated a brainstorming session on issues that students cared about or have been personally affected by. After an extensive process of voting, narrowing down, rephrasing, and grouping of ideas, the groups chose to document human trafficking, the economic regrowth of Detroit, teen suicide, living with racial stereotypes, gender discrimination in the workplace, rape culture, the value of education, the effects of social media on body image, and the causes of violence in protests.
- Throughout the semester, students spent class time to research, and find meaningful voices to interview and include in their reporting. They submitted worksheets after every day dedicated to the project. While the content I covered in my lectures and small lab assignments focused on journalistic skills in both classes (writing, blogging, photojournalism, podcasting, video storytelling, crowdsourcing, maintaining a professional website, etc.), examples and class discussions frequently examined content relevant to the various groups' areas of emphasis. I also included readings related to diversity that were tailored to the groups' work.
- By the end of the semester, each group produced multimedia journalistic presentations that were moving, thorough, insightful, relevant, and exciting to the students themselves.
- On the day of the presentations, as a surprise to the students, I invited outside guests that were experts on the topics the students presented, to give realistic feedback, and to embody the voice of potential employers – such as faculty from the departments of psychology or writing, a colleague that teaches ethics, another whose expertise is social media and interpersonal relations, or a professional that had worked for the Detroit Public Schools. The guests were always unanimously impressed with the assignment and the opportunity to practice, and reflect on, diversity in journalism.
- Students were provided with a rubric at the outset of the semester; 4-5 worksheets completed in class and submitted throughout the semester were graded along with the final projects and presentations; students also completed group- and self-evaluations of the quantity (ideas, research, production, presentation, etc.) and quality (communication, flexibility, cooperation, etc.) of the work in the groups.

What most struck me with this assignment was the students' level of involvement. It was so evident that so many of them had been hungry to do something meaningful, to channel their energies and ideas into something they cared about. Students exhibited a higher motivation to do good work, as well as a personal stake in the assignment. To illustrate, after the end-of-term presentations, as we debriefed from the assignment, one student said, "I usually can't wait for the everyone's presentations to be done, to go home and begin my break. This time, I couldn't wait to see everyone else's

presentations. I felt so invested in everyone's topics." Another added, "We all seemed to care so much more about these projects, our own and each other's projects." All students recommended that I repeat the assignment in subsequent semesters. One student enrolled in another course I taught the following term, in order to have the opportunity to continue to explore the topic of her group via additional multimedia reporting (she was part of the human trafficking group).

Each semester I gave "the social justice beat assignment," I was convinced by the end of the course that students earned strong grades and produced meaningful journalistic content because they thought more intentionally about the course content and they were invested in the issues they covered. As a result, they interacted at a deeper level with each other, with me as their instructor, and with the course curriculum. I am also convinced that the assignment has better prepared them to think critically about meaningful issues of diversity in our society and has given them tools to ask important questions and produce relevant journalistic storytelling.

“If I were....” project.
Alice A. Tait, Ph.D.
Central Michigan University

Abstract

This project is a summative assessment that allows students to demonstrate their understanding of media theory and analysis of racism and invidious discrimination of “other” groups in mass and social media; apply that knowledge to media content; integrate the findings into a comprehensive picture of group treatment; and, most critically, to flex those higher level thinking skills as if they were actually members of the group. Students orally present their answers to a set of questions which analyze both a positive and negative image of, for example, LGBTQ, and we explore current media practices and their implications for society.

Explanation of teaching practice

This activity requires students to (1) identify a negative and a positive media portrayal of the assigned group (e.g., African American, Hispanic) and apply media theory (e.g, agenda setting) to explain how the sample supports or undermines racism or invidious discrimination in society; (2) choose a major societal institution (e.g., the criminal justice system) and evaluate how someone of that group might be affected, positively or negatively, living and working within that institutional setting if they are seen, or see themselves, through that media lens; then more personally (3) describe how she/he would sustain her/himself as a citizen involved with that institution, “If I were a member of that group...” ; and, (4) describe how seeing myself through that lens would affect my ability to self-actualize as a human being and citizen, “If I were a member of that group...” (Maslow). (5) Next, each student presents his/her analyses and evaluations to the class in an oral presentation, followed by class discussion designed to integrate the individual findings into a larger snapshot of current media portrayals of the assigned group and to infer possible implications for individuals and society.

Rationale

I designed the course, Racial Diversity: Mass Media’s Role, as a University Program offering for juniors and seniors, the majority of whom are non-journalism majors who may not understand the powerful influence of mediated images/messages, but would have a basic knowledge of major societal institutions. Central Michigan University is also a predominantly white campus, so providing a simulated experience for students to “walk a mile” in an ethnic minority citizen’s shoes increases the power the learning experience.

The structure of the project is derived from Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive and Affective Domains. Course objectives require students to engage in higher level thinking skills like analysis, application and evaluation. But a full appreciation for the impact of mass media on diversity, something that goes beyond understanding, requires activities that awaken a student’s ability to empathize.

Outcomes

Learning objectives are measured in several ways: (1) my evaluation of the student presentations and content; (2) classmate reaction forms completed during each presentation, including whether he/she had a different interpretation of or reaction to the positive or negative example; (3) an end-of-group (e.g., Native American) class construction of a “media-profile” of how group is currently presented; and, (4) semester end student self-reporting on the value of the activity to their own learning.

Results using the first three measures have been overwhelmingly positive. This semester I am attempting to convert the qualitative comments into a more quantitative tool to use in future classes. Since I give the students an opportunity to rehearse their presentations in advance and get feedback, the activity itself is perceived as fair and helpful.

Here is a representative sample of student comments:

- 1) “The most important thing I learned in this class was the extent to which so many groups experience discrimination in media content. The presentations were eye-opening. Doing my research, I was surprised at how many negative examples I experienced each day myself. They never stood out before I had to do this project. The range of negative examples in my peers’ presentations shocked me.”
- 2) “Before this project, I was not aware how much minorities and women struggle with media stereotype portrayals. I learned to relate to these issues at a personal level.”
- 3) “Through this project, I’ve learned that media portrayals of minorities and women are often very negative and can hurt individuals and cause problems as they live and work. However, after doing my two presentations and listening to my peers’ presentations, I have come to appreciate that some advertisements are actually now creating more positive images.”
- 4) “Through these presentations, I’ve learned that racist and discriminatory media images make it hard for groups to participate in the society. I also learned that mass media is not limited to television, film, or radio. It can be a poster, a package bag, a board game or an advertisement. The public looks to the media for pointing out what’s important. The media should be respectful of people and how it treats them.”
- 5) “I always knew that there were [sic] a lot of stereotyping in our society but I never realized how often it is portrayed in ads and commercials. It was eye opening watching all of the presentations of the negative examples of race and gender in the society to see so many different ways that these groups are stereotyped.”

The end-of-semester self-reporting statements are generally very positive. A small number of students report they learned, but didn’t like the activity. That reaction seems to be associated with them thinking about being a member of a group, such as LGBTQ, from which they feel socially distant or with which they have had little direct experience. All students must leave the comfort of their own group: straights must contemplate gay sensibilities; men, women’s; African Americans, Asian’s. This is, of course, difficult, but their discomfort is useful feedback which I’ve tried to address in refining the activity. I

hope that discomfort will cause them to be more aware of their feelings toward “others,” as they continue to encounter images of minorities and women in the media.

Oral Presentation Outline and Evaluation Form

(Maximum 26 points)

1. Describe the example: (1 point)
2. Indicate where you found it: (1 point)
3. Explain why it is either negative or positive: (2 point)
4. Indicate what media theory helped you analyze your example: (2 points)
5. Choose a societal institution (e.g., real estate, banking, health care) and evaluate how the ability of someone of the gender/race group in the example might be affected, positively or negatively, living and/or working with the institution, if they are seen or see themselves through such a negative/positive image: (5 points)
6. Describe how effectively you would be able to act as a citizen involved in/with that institution if you were seen by others in this negative/positive way. Start by asking yourself “If I were a member of that group...” (5 points)
7. Describe how you would feel about yourself as a human being and interact with the institution (e.g., the criminal justice system, the military, the church) as a citizen, customer, etc. Start by asking yourself “If I were a member of that group...” (5 points)
8. Employ effective platform skills: talking, not reading (1 point); maintaining eye contact (1 point); speaking clearly and loudly (1 point); using appropriate and well designed audio/visuals (1 point); wearing appropriate clothes for a formal presentation (1 point); and, keeping to the 5 minute time limit (1 point).

The Real Hunger Games: When JMC Classes Collaborate to Alleviate Food Insecurity, Diversity Is Met Head-On in Real Contexts

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Abstract: When undergraduate students from predominantly white, upper-middle class families learn that 25% of the population of their university's community is food insecure they conjure images of the homeless in soup kitchens. In truth, food-vulnerable populations include diverse racial and ethnic minorities and the economically disadvantaged, many of whom are educated, employed home owners. Using a constructivist active learning model, two instructors cooperated to build an experiential learning project that would break students out of their university-safe "bubble," engage with food insecure populations, and make practical, substantive use of the writing skills taught in their two distinct courses.

Explanation of the Teaching Practice or Activity: Two classes engaging 40 students collaborated to create discrete elements of a semester-long project: to study and then alleviate problems they identified in reaching, teaching, and serving vulnerable groups. Courses included a first-year writing seminar (FYS) and an introductory public relations (PR) writing course, both of which engaged a community organization whose need was to enhance current supplemental food assistance services by transforming an existing food pantry into a new "choice" system that encourages clients to make healthier choices in food selection and consumption. The goal of the community partner was to promote implementation of the new pantry and inform target audiences on its purposes and uses, as well as the importance of choosing healthier food options.

Students in the FYS were assigned to survey the clients and volunteers of the food pantry on site in order to collect data in the initial phase of the pantry transformation and assist the community organization in analyzing data and reviewing the findings. After review and compilation of findings, students in the FYS made a formal presentation to the students in the PR writing course and the community partner. Students in the PR writing class visited the food pantry to simulate the role of a food pantry client and experience the new food selection process. The class was then assigned to develop communication tools and messages that reach the target audiences identified by the community partner with appropriate messaging.

The FYS students' survey findings drove development of deliverables by the public relations students, which included a **news release** to announce the implementation of the new pantry system; **issue brief** on the implications of providing incentives for healthier food selection; **brochures** and **fact sheets** on fighting hunger and the new food pantry model; radio **PSAs** about food insecurity; and an Adobe "**Spark page**" that tells a "web story" of the new food pantry and food insecurity. See attached images of deliverables (academic institutional identifiers redacted).

At the conclusion of the semester, PR writing students presented deliverables and rationale for usage and messaging to the community partner and to representatives from the FYS course, which met a key objective for the PR course: *evaluate a community partner's market position, and create, present and defend a portfolio of public relations writing on behalf of that client.*

Rationale: The school seeks innovative opportunities to "teach" about diversity in ways that reflect its core values. Expressly stated the program prepares students to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

Teaching about diversity on a campus and in a community with a small minority representation creates challenges for engagement. Research on collegiate teaching and learning suggests students learn more long-lasting skills by practicing skills—using active learning—once the concept being studied has been taught by more traditional methods.³ Thus, this project relies on Jonassen's⁴ constructivist learning model by creating environments where learners actively engaged in cooperatively constructing meanings from their classroom instruction, in this case through research on food-insecure populations requiring real-world interactions with diverse clientele and through creation of deliverable products that were actualized by the partner "client."

Outcomes: Assessing the effectiveness of the multi-course collaborative project took multiple forms. First, students' knowledge of issues surrounding food security, as well as their own attitudes and perceptions were measured at the outset and conclusion of the project. Overall pre- and post-class assessments revealed marked improvement in student learning of the client and greater understanding of food pantry clientele. For example, the percentage of students correctly identifying the number of food pantries serviced by the client improved from 13% to 93% upon project completion. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of students recognized their original inclination that most clients were homeless and uneducated was wildly off the mark.

To that end, a second critical-reflection assessment required students to evaluate their experience with the project and identify their own misconceptions about issues surrounding food pantries. A sample response pulled from an essay indicative of many students (see attached for more examples): *"I thought only people who were homeless and unemployed used food pantries. After learning more I realized that it is more common than I thought for families to be food insecure."*

³ See Caroline J. Roettger, Lloyd O. Roettger, and Frederick Walugembe, "Teaching: More Than Just Lecturing," *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* 4:2: article 6 (2007), for an extensive review of best practices to serve diverse student learning needs at university level.

⁴ D. Jonassen, "Designing Constructivist Learning Environments," in C.M. Reigeluth, ed., *Instructional-Design Theories and Models, V. 2: A New Paradigm of Instructional Theory* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum), pp. 215-232.

As a project with an applied component, final assessment of student learning and skill development took the form of client feedback. Client representatives were provided links to an anonymous online survey to permit candid feedback on the project and student deliverables. Client feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with representatives commenting: *"The work we received provides valuable information to help our organization...This experience working with * public relations students was a great investment for our organization."*

In sum, as FYS students surveyed food pantry clients and PR writing students interviewed both clients and volunteers, they each discovered the people behind the statistics and their stories. Those interactions built skills in navigating difficult conversations and fostered understanding about difference. Exposure to the real hunger games not only provided students an opportunity to develop real-world critical thinking and communication skills, but it did so in a way that promoted greater understanding of diversity through an often misunderstood aspect of society.

Sample responses from student reflective essays

"This class has taught me much about the issue of food insecurity, about how to treat people and humanize something that was frequently mentioned in such an inanimate way, and in general how to approach issues that are so complex. This is important because people need to be able to approach issues in order to learn and develop solutions to them."

"It was important to learn about the food pantry before we went and interviewed the clients because it gave us a better understanding of the stereotypes that are prevalent in today's society with food pantries and poverty."

"Through the service project with *, I became less ignorant about who the food insecure are and what their circumstances are. For me, they became more human in my eyes. I now see their stories and with the knowledge that I gained, I feel so much more educated. Furthermore, service projects help you become more involved with your community. It allows you to understand who exactly is in your community and the issues that surround where you live."

"I was extremely nervous about interviewing at the pantry. Although my Myers Briggs identifies me as an extrovert, in new situations I often find myself more introverted. Since this experience was new, I was apprehensive. It felt wrong for me, a middle-class girl who attends an expensive private college to be asking these food insecure people about their life. Nevertheless, I went to the pantry. The day I did the interviewing the first time, I had to sit and wait for a little while before there was someone to interview. This allowed me to observe the pantry and the workers. This was kind of the first change in my perception."

"By learning this, I became more aware of who in actuality food insecurity affects. Before I thought it was just the poor uneducated Americans or perhaps just those looking for free food. Based on this one experience my perception changed so much."

"After going to the * food pantry and surveying its clients, you can really draw some parallels on how food security affects the clients on a daily basis. It was through these surveys we took that I really got to build a relationship with the people who attend these food pantries."

"I was very excited about this considering I was just starting college and I had the opportunity to see things in reality. We got to see a pantry and learn about *. We learned all the background and how the food pantry operates. This was very cool to look back on and see how Food Pantry 2.0 changes my view of what a food pantry could look like."

Students simulate a client's food pantry visit.

Example client deliverables produced by PR Writing students



Landing page of student-produced Adobe Spark Page created to inform target audiences about client's new Food Pantry 2.0 initiative. Full Spark Page available for viewing at: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/JUnPjCF19AoZ3/>

Sample student-produced fact sheet