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THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE™ & Students in Transition

The New York Times

USING NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Resources to Improve Teaching and Learning

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PREFACE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN *Using National Newspapers in the College Classroom: Resources to Improve Teaching and Learning,* the latest volume in the monograph series produced by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition. A little over a year ago, we began conversations with several officers of *The New York Times* College Program about our common desire to produce a publication that would provide college faculty a comprehensive view of the ways national newspapers can aid the teaching/learning process. Betty L. Sullivan, Program Liaison, Patsy Morton, Director, and Regina Howard Glaspie, Midwest Regional Manager, along with Steven Knowlton and Edward DeRoche of the *Times* College Program Advisory Board, joined us in several lengthy conference calls to explore the rationale and content for such a volume. Although this monograph was conceived in those initial conversations, it has become a reality because of the willingness of article authors to share their good ideas for using newspapers in college classrooms.

On behalf of the University of South Carolina, it has been our privilege to work with the outstanding *Times* staff and with the 42 authors of the articles that constitute this monograph. We believe that this is a truly outstanding collection of "teaching tips" across the curriculum, and it is our hope and our belief that you will find many ideas in these pages that work for you.

If you have additional strategies to share, both we and the *Times* College Program staff would like to hear from you. Best wishes in your teaching, and as always, we welcome your comments and feedback.

Betsy O. Barefoot, Co-Director for Research and Publications
John N. Gardner, Executive Director
March 1999

FOREWORD

Janet Robinson
President, The New York Times

COULD A DAILY NEWSPAPER have a role to play in your course? Could it enrich your curriculum, stimulate pertinent discussion, nurture your students' intellectual curiosity, deepen their knowledge, and enhance their skills? I hope that some of the articles in this monograph will help you consider these questions.

The New York Times has been used as a teaching resource in a great range and number of courses nationwide. We believe this reflects the wide variety of topics the paper covers, its depth and quality, as well as the interest of educators in using supplemental materials to complement their standard texts.

Newspapers enable many students to see timely applications of principles they study in courses such as history, government, science, and composition. Students can also gain a clearer understanding of these and other subjects, much as many longtime newspaper readers rely on their dailies for insight into the day's important issues. Newspapers at their best can fit very naturally into an educational program; they are themselves educational institutions, existing in order to inform their readers.

I believe that many newspapers can prove useful to educators, whether those publications stress local issues (as do most papers), a global context (as *The New York Times* does), a particular area of interest (*The Wall Street Journal*), or a quick-take, more graphic, rather than analytical, approach to news (*USA Today*). Most relevant is the need of the particular educator and how the particular paper can meet that need.

Although we at *The New York Times* are proud of its tradition as the nation's newspaper of record and its continuing dedication to providing full and balanced coverage of an extremely broad range of subjects, we are hardly alone in our efforts to seriously chronicle major news, issues, and trends.

Teaching with *The Time*s or any other news resource will not of course be appropriate in every situation. But when it is, it will not only add a dynamic new element to the curriculum, it will also foster among students the habit of using a quality news source . . . of staying informed about events changing their world . . . of thinking about and putting that knowledge to good use . . . and of becoming more analytical about news coverage and other information they seek out in our Information Age.

INTRODUCTION

Steven R. Knowlton
Editor

THE STRAINS ON AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION have increased from many directions in the last dozen years or so. On the one hand, students come to campus increasingly ill-prepared to handle college-level work, are depressingly ignorant of the world around them, and are decreasingly able or willing to read much beyond the TV listings. Yet more than ever, students are canny consumers, demanding the practical knowledge to qualify them for the good jobs they increasingly say are the point of going to college in the first place.

Meanwhile, the cost of higher education has risen to dizzying levels and is still climbing. Several years ago, the select private colleges crashed through the $100,000 figure for four years of education. The $50 price tag on a textbook, not long ago reserved for advanced texts in the hard sciences, is now a bargain, particularly in hardback, even though questionable new editions will make current texts worth three cents a pound in three years or less. Parents are outraged at what they now have to pay for what they get and are complaining to both college bursars and state lawmakers.

All in all, though most educators agree that the top tier of American students is as good as ever, hardly anyone in or out of academic life is satisfied with the state of higher education in this country. The problems are complex, the solutions difficult and often contradictory, and consensus probably impossible.

Take heart. A small but significant part of the solution is at hand — a good daily newspaper and this volume of tips on how to use it in the college classroom. A good newspaper is not a panacea for all that ails the American educational system, of course. But properly used, a newspaper can be a tremendous help.

Most obviously, perhaps, encouraging undergraduates to read a serious newspaper will go a long way toward overcoming their woeful ignorance of global and local affairs. So perhaps it is not surprising that a large number of the essays in this volume address this question. Would-be employers, of course, value highly knowledgeable employees.

But a newspaper can do a great deal more than help teach civics and current affairs, important as those areas are. *The Times's* managing editor, Bill Keller, argues compellingly in an article written for this volume that the knowledge to be gained from a newspaper does not merely keep us informed; it helps keep us civilized.

Some disciplines lend themselves easily to adopting a newspaper as part of the regular reading assignments. Among the most obvious are political science and journalism. But as the articles in the volume demonstrate, newspapers may profitably be used in a large number of other disciplines — history, business, biology, statistics, and so on. Moreover, reading a newspaper has value broader than any particular discipline. Many instructors find national newspapers valuable in freshman interdisciplinary courses found on many campuses. Several faculty who teach such first-year courses are represented in this volume, too.

Broader still, inculcating the newspaper habit attacks the almost universal complaint of educators that undergraduates simply do not read enough. Survey research cited in this volume indicates that part of the reading problem is that many students are put off by the arcane language that seeps from the academic literature faculty write for each other and into the textbooks faculty supposedly write for students. A well written and carefully edited newspaper avoids that problem and provides the clear but elegant language that students say they want. It may not be too much of a reach to hope that by getting students to read and appreciate what a newspaper has to offer, we may teach them the joys of other reading.

And a newspaper is cheap. For less than the price of a hardback text, students receive a huge amount of information — a daily newspaper for an entire semester. (Some papers, including *The New York Times*, which is a partner in this book, offer half-price student subscriptions, bringing a semester subscription down to the price of a paperback.)

There are, however, some problems associated with using a newspaper as a textbook, and that's what this book is designed to address. Perhaps the first problem is vagueness. Exactly what is one to do with a daily newspaper? The articles in Part Two offer part of that answer. Nearly three dozen academics from a wide variety of disciplines and types of campuses have submitted articles detailing just what they do. Think of them as annotated recipes for successful classroom innovation. They are a written version of the sort of conversations that colleagues ideally have in faculty meetings or in the hallways at an academic conference. And although these are articles, not dialogues, the authors have provided contact information and invited interested readers to contact them directly.

Then there is uncertainty. Speaking as a full-time college professor, I know that faculty tend to stick with what they know works. I also know this is not sloth. Faculty work hard at their jobs and take their undergraduate teaching duties seriously. But most faculty have heard or have experienced firsthand the horror story of the seemingly sure-fire innovative classroom technique that falls disastrously flat. One of the essays addresses that question — precisely the article, "Teaching Without a Net." Yet in an important way, all the articles in this book help to provide something of a safety net.

And finally, sometimes faculty members are themselves unsure about how a serious newspaper is laid out and what the typographical cues mean. The first section of this monograph contains an article that tries to explain some of the visual cues to *The New York Times*. *The Wall Street Journal* has issued a similar guide to reading that paper. The nation's other major national newspaper, *USA Today,* born in the era of modern typography, has always placed a premium on making its elements easy to understand at a glance.

Read. Enjoy. Ponder. And get in touch. Everyone connected with the volume is dedicated to helping to improve undergraduate education and believes that your morning newspaper can be a great help.

PART ONE

MAKING THE CASE FOR USING NEWSPAPERS IN THE CLASSROOM

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER AS A TOOL FOR EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT: ORIGINS AND RATIONALE

John N. Gardner & Betty L. Sullivan

WE ARE PLEASED TO INTRODUCE *Using National Newspapers in the College Classroom: Resources to Improve Teaching and Learning,* which is the result of collaboration between *The New York Times* and The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition. We are convinced that after reading this monograph, you will want to join the growing number of college and university faculty who are using national newspapers to engage students more effectively in active learning while promoting both their knowledge of the world and their skills as readers and critical thinkers.

This article will provide an important historical context for the several centuries of newspaper use in American educational settings. It will also provide a comprehensive rationale for using newspapers as an effective teaching and learning tool in the undergraduate college classroom as well as a set of reasons why media literacy is particularly needed now, at the dawn of a new millennium.

The Historical Role of the Newspaper in Educational Settings

The role of the newspaper as an institution in the education of individual citizens living together under a single unified government has been noted in historical studies. In *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876,* Lawrence A. Cremin (1980), an historian of education and former president of Columbia University's Teachers College, surveys "the press as educator of the populace" during the late 18th century and first half of the 19th. Cremin suggests that the steady growth of population and the development of civilization on the American frontier during what is now called the early national era was directly paralleled by the establishment of newspapers and the increasing efficiency of news gathering and transmittal. As for the press, it is important to bear in mind that the purveying of messages of news, information, and opinion became increasingly efficient during the early national era. Given the steady improvement in the efficacy and speed of communication and the consequent growth of the audiences reached, an extraordinary fund of common knowledge was disseminated (p. 215).

For more than two centuries in this country, newspapers have been used in classroom instruction. Although innovative teachers probably enhanced instruction with newspapers since they were first printed, the earliest known reference to newspapers as tools for learning appeared in the *Portland Eastern Herald* of Maine on June 8, 1795, from which an excerpt reads as follows:

> Much has been said and written on the utility of newspapers; but one principal advantage which might be derived from these publications has been neglected; we mean that of reading them in schools, and by the children in families. Try it for one session. Do you wish your child to improve in reading solely, give him a newspaper; it furnishes a variety, some parts of which must indelibly touch his fancy. Do you wish to instruct him in geography, nothing will so indelibly fix the relative situation of different places, as the stories and events published in the papers. In time, do you wish to have him acquainted with the manners of the country or city, the mode of doing business, public or private; or do you wish him to have a smattering of every kind of science useful and amusing, give him a newspaper. Newspapers are plenty and cheap, the cheapest book that can be bought, and the more you buy the better for your children, because every part furnishes valuable information. (quoted in *Editor & Publisher,* 1984, p. 16)

With its tone of subtle humor and the persuasive

For more than two centuries in this country, newspapers have been used in classroom instruction.

language of the Age of Reason, this passage highlights the rationale that still substantiates today's use of newspapers in education: improves reading ability; sparks interest; furnishes variety of style and content; provides context and anecdotal reference points for less accessible subjects such as geography; acquaints the reader with contemporary ideas, practices, and trends; and gives the reader an introduction to specialized topics. Furthermore, newspapers do all this with considerably less cost than one would have to pay for the number of books it would take to achieve the same outcome. The historic article in the *Portland Eastern Herald* went on to say, "Encourage newspapers and you encourage learning: encourage learning and you secure the liberties of posterity." This is a clear message insisting that newspapers play an important role in securing traditions of freedom, the basis for a democratic society.

In a reference book for teachers published early in this century entitled *Practical Selections from Twenty Years of Normal Instructor and Primary Plans* (1912), author Grace Faxon admonishes educators to devote 15 minutes each day to discussing news in class:

> The tendency of men and women in any profession is to confine themselves too closely to their main idea; but I know of no surer way of escaping ruts than by interesting one's self in the affairs of the wide world. Take 15 minutes every day for informal discussion of the news of the preceding day. The minutes thus spent will do much for the future of the young people of the nation. (p. 20)

Titles emerged such as "Current Events Instruction" (1929) and "The Newspaper in the Classroom" (1939), drawing from a movement originating in the 1890s that argued for changing the foundations of the school curriculum from the traditional focus on the past to a new dual emphasis that would include the current events of the world in which the students were being prepared to live (Sullivan, 1992, pp. 3–7).

Contemporary research on the rationale for using newspapers in education still validates these early claims by documenting the value of newspaper-based instruction for building students' learning and thinking skills, growing their knowledge base, stimulating their interest in reading, and developing the tools for good citizenship. The question arises of how newspapers in an instructional setting can accomplish so much. The answer might lie in the versatility of newspapers, both in terms of their flexibility as a teaching tool and the wide range of topics covered, particularly in national newspapers. This rationale was advanced in the 1970s through the research of John Guenther, a leader in social studies education and the author of a number of teachers' guides for using newspapers in instruction.

Some of the most significant research on the use of newspapers for citizenship education comes from John Haefner, Professor Emeritus of Social Studies Education at the University of Iowa. In a seminal essay, "Partners in Education," he wrote:

> If the tensions and conflicts inherent in an open, pluralistic society are to be resolved, then popular information and widespread knowledge of the problems and issues confronting such a free society are crucial. The need for people who are both informed and concerned becomes painfully obvious with the declining percentage of voters who take part in national elections. The Newspaper in Education program makes its first and most important contribution toward the development of informed and concerned citizens. . . . Students, given the opportunity, come to see the newspaper as a bridge between the confining and often unreal world of school, and the vibrant, confusing and complex "real" world of which they are a part. Students will read a newspaper when they will not read other school materials because the newspaper records events that have meaning for them. (1975, p. 17)

The impressive canon of research that underlies this methodology has grown significantly since the

pivotal development of newspapers as an instructional tool in 1932, when Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger, the daughter of the publisher of *The New York Times,* prompted the premier forerunner of today's Newspaper in Education program (NIE). In response to a few secondary teachers in New York City who wanted to use *The New York Times* in teaching current events and social studies, Iphigene Sulzberger persuaded *The Times* to begin a regular system of newspaper delivery throughout the boroughs of New York City (Dryfoos, 1981).

The New York Times also sponsored research that aimed to study the ways newspapers were being used in the curriculum nationally. In explaining the goals and purposes of the study, Sulzberger wrote:

> The New York Times has for many years been deeply and actively interested in the field of education. This interest has been due to the conviction that only an informed and intelligent public can maintain our forum of free democracy. The New York Times presents daily to its readers as full and unbiased a coverage of the news as its great staff can gather, but it is the teachers who must train the minds of the young readers to understand and evaluate what they find in the news columns. (Corbett, Brown, Mitchell, & Quigley, 1950, p. iii)

The study provided yearlong fellowships for three New York City teachers to visit hundreds of schools throughout the United States and conduct a survey of how current events were being taught. The report concluded: "Where the daily newspaper, the current issues of weekly and monthly magazines, and other appropriate instruction aids were close at hand, there too we generally found more student interest, better informed classes, and more intelligent discussions with wider participation" (Corbett et al., 1950, p. 264). Thus, by midcentury, newspapers and other periodicals had begun to find their way into classrooms (Sullivan, 1992).

The 1960s and 1970s saw growing interest in the social and political implications of illiteracy, which is still an area of concern. The existing body of knowledge about newspaper reading has expanded through the work of professors and students in academic journalism settings, as well as teacher educators, curriculum developers, and teachers in the various fields of education. In the 1980s, cognitive psychologists and linguists began to investigate newspaper text in the light of schema theory and discourse analysis. In 1991, an extensive study of research on the use of newspapers in education entitled *The Newspaper: A Resource for Teachers and Librarians* was published by Edward F. DeRoche, Dean of the School of Education at the University of San Diego. A dominant figure in NIE methodology, DeRoche, who is an article author in this monograph, also maintains the largest known collection of research reports on the use of newspapers in educational programs with over 750 titles.

With this thriving canon of methodology responding to the questions of how NIE works and how we know that it works, newspapers in education programs have grown to roughly 700 newspapers that deliver to schools, colleges, and universities within their circulation areas, reaching over 67,000 schools. Since its inception at *The New York Times* in the 1930s, the NIE program has spread to all 50 states and U.S. territories, and some 40 other nations. Although no two programs are identical in educational emphasis or services and materials offered, they often reflect the needs and interests of educators and learners of all ages in the areas served. In addition, the NIE program also becomes more vital to newspapers as publishers and editors invest in future readers. If the early years of this decade are any indication, education specialists expect NIE to grow exponentially in the first decade of the new millennium.

To capture in a nutshell the many benefits of NIE programs that reach beyond the obvious contributions to students, the Newspaper Association of America Foundation (NAAF) presented the following in their 1995 manual, *NIE: Getting Started — A Guide for Newspaper in Education Programs* (pg. 5):

Benefits to Schools

- Sharpens students' thinking skills
- Increases students' interest and motivation by providing study materials relevant to their lives
- Prepares students for active citizenship in their democracy
- Heightens teachers' interest in new teaching techniques
- Involves schools in the lives of the communities they serve
- Improves relations with students' families
- Responds to the needs of local businesses as future employers

If college students constantly have to depend on someone else to give them the information they need, they will remain more dependent and thus weaker than others who are capable of retrieving their own information.

Benefits to the Newspaper

- Encourages long-term readership of newspapers
- Improves public and community relations
- Increases circulation, even though at a reduced rate
- Increases advertising revenue through special sections and a guaranteed audience through NIE

Benefits to the Community

- Enhances the quality of citizen participation in schools and local government through better mutual understanding among journalists, educators, students, and parents
- Transforms students into interested, active citizens
- Recognizes newspapers as the main source of continuing education for members of the community no longer in the classroom

The Newspaper Proponent's Dozen: A 12-Part Rationale for Using National Newspapers in the College Classroom

Why is the use of national newspapers particularly important for undergraduate students in the 21st century? Of the myriad reasons we could offer in response to this question, we have chosen 12 for further reflection and response.

1 *National newspapers are a tool for educational and personal empowerment.* At the risk of using an overworked phrase, we want to use it anyway: Information is power. At further risk of overusing another element of educational jargon, the use of national newspapers is a tool for "empowerment." If college students constantly have to depend on someone else to give them the information they need, they will remain more dependent and thus weaker than others who are capable of retrieving their own information. Particularly vulnerable are new college students. Many of them arrive on a college campus expecting to be provided information by someone else, and hence they have a very dependent attitude toward this critical information-retrieval process. In order for students to become more independent and increase their active learning, they must be able to find, evaluate, and communicate information independently. National newspapers are an excellent source for the presentation of information and extensive commentary to assist in its evaluation. College-educated citizens in the 21st century have to become independent and self-reliant seekers, gatherers, and interpreters of information. National newspapers, therefore, can facilitate the development of these skills through both an intellectual and personal empowerment process.

2 *College students need global information.* To the extent that college students read newspapers at all, most of them have grown up reading local newspapers. Surely the trends and developments of the late 1990s have persuaded educators, and many of their students, that although necessary, local information is not, in and of itself, sufficient. Given the increasing global interdependence of the world economy as well as political and social infrastructures, there has been enormous growth in the need for timely national, and especially global, information. However, findings from over 50,000 responses to the 1996 College Student Experiences Questionnaire (Kuh, Vesper, Connolly, & Pace, 1997) report that more than 70% of undergraduates seldom or never have conversations on campus about international affairs. A forte of the national newspaper is to move the reader beyond localism and regionalism to a greater sense of international awareness.

3 *National newspapers help students anticipate trends and understand rapidly changing events.* Reading national newspapers enables student readers to anticipate in advance a host of trends which, for better or worse, originate in the major urban power centers of the United States where national newspapers are published (e.g., New York and Washington). College-educated citizens need to anticipate change before it reaches them in order to plan appropriately and perhaps

College-educated citizens need to anticipate change before it reaches them in order to plan appropriately and perhaps learn from the mistakes of others.

learn from the mistakes of others. On a more materialistic level, as students plan for their financial future, they need to be able to anticipate trends to develop appropriate strategies for professional development, career selection, specific job opportunities, and financial planning and investment. They also need to be able to anticipate trends in order to be knowledgeable participants in the political process.

4 *College students need comprehensive information.* As information has become more and more critical for functioning in an information-based society and economy, sources for retrieval of information have become increasingly segmented and specialized. There is no way individual college students can read the enormous array of sources providing such segmented data. National newspapers play a critical role in combating this problem of specialization of information presentation because they are one of the few remaining sources of information that are comprehensive, interconnected, and offered in one format. What other kind of publication can you read at one time and in one context and find information on politics, international affairs, business, health, science, arts, entertainment, travel, and sports? There is no single educational source that matches the portability and comprehensiveness of national newspapers. This, of course, assumes that college students are reading newspapers at all, which is, in and of itself, a reason to consider the use of national newspapers as an important teaching pedagogy.

5 *Newspaper readership is declining, especially among college students.* Unfortunately, college students have become more and more like their parents: They spend less and less time in discretionary reading and more time working and engaging in various forms of recreation. A landmark study of the trends in values and characteristics of entering college students has been conducted since 1966 by Alexander Astin and his colleagues at the University of California, Los Angeles. This study, known as the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) results in an annual publication entitled *The American Freshman.* In 1997, the CIRP study found that only 9% of entering students across the country engaged in more than five hours of pleasure reading per week during their last year in high school; however, over 52% of the same students held part-time jobs during their senior year, working more than 10 hours per week (Sax, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 1997). The decreasing amount of time spent by students reading newspapers and, in general, reading anything is appropriately an issue of great concern to educators and newspaper publishers alike. The future of any strong democracy depends on the educational level of its citizens and their ability to make informed choices.

6 *Reading national newspapers combats student political disengagement.* One of the measures the UCLA researchers have been taking of college students over 33 years is their level of political engagement, or the alternative, their political disengagement. In 1997, the CIRP study found levels of political disengagement had reached an all-time high. A record 73.3% of entering college students expressed little to no interest in politics — whether national, local, or campus-based (Sax, et al., 1997). This finding also correlates with another finding in the same study: 36% of high school students reported "being bored in class" as they make the transition to college. We, therefore, argue that national newspapers are an important source of intellectual stimulation that document for college students the importance of political engagement.

7 *Using national newspapers in the classroom promotes critical thinking.* Critical thinking abilities can only be developed if students are exposed to stimulating information about which probing questions can and must be asked, and if they are provided examples of critical reasoning as manifested in the printed word. This skill is also

developed by exposure to a blend and balance of widely differing opinions most likely to be found only in national newspapers. What better place to observe this practice than through the juxtaposition of factual presentations with op-ed pieces written by world-class thinkers representing various political and social constituencies?

8 *National newspapers help students develop vocabulary.* A significantly greater vocabulary is required to read with comprehension, let alone appreciation, a national newspaper like *The New York Times* than virtually any local paper published anywhere in the United States. The level of vocabulary used in national newspapers assumes a more intelligent, educated, professional, and influential readership than the level of writing and word choice used in many local newspapers. Certainly then, this is another important reason for using national newspapers in the college classroom.

9 *National newspapers are compatible with the philosophy of liberal arts education.* National newspapers are an intellectual resource that mirrors the interdisciplinary curriculum of a good liberal arts education. The kind of reading, critical thinking, analytical skills, and synthesis skills needed for comprehension and application of the information provided in national newspapers is synonymous with the kind of interdisciplinary thinking encouraged by the liberal arts education process. Use of national newspapers for serious engagement of the liberal arts helps college students make connections between different fields, subjects, topics, issues, and events, and hence helps them ask the right questions.

10 *Reading national newspapers contributes to citizenship development.* The undergraduate years are the critical period for traditional-aged college students when they develop their adult citizenship knowledge, values, interests, behaviors, and skills. In this critical period, we are attempting to introduce college students to the kind of behaviors we hope they will practice as adults. Adult literacy, critical thinking, global thinking, and information analysis are all illustrations of adult behavioral skills and college outcomes that are facilitated by reading national newspapers.

11 *National newspapers give students access to verbatim transcripts.* In order for students to participate knowledgeably in the electoral process, they must be able to analyze independently the thinking, statements, behaviors, and hands-on issues of candidates, and, as a rule, only national newspapers provide verbatim transcripts. Students need to be able to read for themselves the texts of important speeches, press releases, statements, and reports so they can draw their own independent conclusions. If students can't read the President's speech itself or responses to his written testimony before a congressional committee, they are totally dependent on others to tell them what he said and what he meant.

12 *Reading national newspapers enables students to connect with a source of national power.* Finally, national newspapers are, in and of themselves, a source of enormous power. Regular reading by college students of national newspapers connects them to one of the major sources of power in our society. We could argue then that this is not only a critical form of information, but a critical survival skill as well. If only our students could have that rare opportunity to visit *The New York Times* world headquarters and walk down the Pulitzer Hallway, they would see hanging on the walls the many framed photographs of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Times* reporters juxtaposed with framed copies of their prizewinning stories. It is this kind of writing as featured in national papers that moves individuals, and even governments, to reaction and action. This is the ultimate personification of the notion of information as power. Thus, to be empowered, students need their own direct access to and connection with a major source of national power, the American national newspaper.

Conclusion

The special contributions that national newspapers can make to the college classroom as described in the foregoing 12-part rationale begs the questions not why should, but why *shouldn't* they be used in college classrooms, and why wouldn't faculty want to add this resource to their teaching? We believe that there are many reasons why more college faculty don't use national newspapers in the classroom. For example, some believe that newspapers are not sufficiently related to their discipline. In all probability, they didn't have college teachers who required them when they were college students to use

national newspapers. Or they simply don't know how to go about obtaining subscriptions for their students. Perhaps they don't have any idea of the myriad pedagogies that have been developed for integrating the use of national newspapers into the college classroom, and it is this latter issue that will be addressed in detail subsequently in this monograph.

For the time being, we would like to close by suggesting that we believe the first year of the college experience is an especially good window for the introduction of national newspapers in the college classroom. We believe that natural curricular vehicles are required courses such as college composition and first-year seminars. The latter are now found at approximately 71% of the accredited undergraduate degree-granting colleges in the United States. These seminars are engaged in an active partnership with first-year English courses in attempting to achieve student empowerment, increased independence, active learning, critical thinking, vocabulary development, and appreciation for the goals and substance of a liberal arts education. We believe that in the first year of college there must be a more intentional approach taken to increasing student reading for pleasure, laying the foundation for citizenship development, combating political disengagement, increasing global awareness, and in sum, virtually all 12 elements of the rationale statement provided here. We challenge and invite our readers to consider further how the use of national newspapers can and will enhance the effectiveness of college teaching and learning.

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NOT JUST FOR WRAPPING FISH*

Bill Keller

THE ONLY TIME I EVER SAW blows exchanged in a Russian shopping line, the customers were not battling over scarce oranges or a late shipment of winter boots. The fight, between a red-faced bureaucrat and an old woman brandishing a shopping bag heavy with cabbages, was for a newsstand's last copy of a popular magazine called *Ogonyok*. Each week, in those years when the Soviet Union was emerging from generations of lies and fear, *Ogonyok* could be counted on to publish some scandalous truth about Russia's past, or an investigation of corruption, or a long-suppressed gem of Russian art. In the late 1980s in Russia, where I was a novice foreign correspondent, newspapers and magazines were not merely worth reading, they were worth fighting for.

For an American slightly complacent about his freedoms — and a journalist from a country where most citizens consume their news in simpleminded sound bites — the role of the Soviet press in those years was a revelation. People devoured newspapers for lost bits of their history and culture, for signals about whether the new freedoms would last, for glimpses of an outside world that had long been the subject of flat-earth mythology. The press served as a tutorial in democracy, a battleground of liberty, a psychiatrist's couch, and a national textbook.

The last, quite literally. I visited many classrooms in towns across Russia where the press was the curriculum. What else were conscientious teachers supposed to teach? The old textbooks had been cleansed of any unpleasant details about Soviet history and packed with propaganda about the triumphs of the Soviet system. The libraries had been purged of writers whose loyalties were doubtful. Art texts and museums ignored artists who did not serve the purposes of the Communist Party. Even the sciences had been corrupted by party dogma and a distaste for individual initiative. And much of what younger teachers yearned to teach their students they had not been taught themselves.

So teachers turned to newspapers like *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Argumenti* and *Fakti*, popular magazines like *Ogonyok*, thick literary journals like *Novy Mir*. In town after town, I visited history classes where the principal textbook was a communal file of recent press clippings about the previously blank spots in the national story — the rivalries among the Bolsheviks, the Gulag of prison camps, the suffering imposed by collectivized agriculture, the stifling of religion, the banishing of poets and painters.

In the years since, the Russian press has deteriorated toward yellow journalism and a new kind of propaganda, serving the capitalist barons who now pull the strings in Moscow. (Like many newspapers and TV stations, the weekly magazine *Ogonyok* is now partly owned by one of Moscow's banking titans and has thus lost much of its credibility.) But in those critical, precarious years of change, the press served many functions: It announced, by the way it constantly pushed the limits, a grudging tolerance of dissent. It demonstrated the robust debate that brings democracy to life. It gave citizens the first crude tools to begin making their own decisions. The scrutiny of a more independent press taught leaders the manners (if not necessarily the morals) of accountability. Ultimately, the press delivered the signals that the jig was up for communism, and for the Soviet Union itself. It is not yet clear whether democracy will take root in Russia, but I would argue that the flowering of an independent-minded press helped give it a chance.

Of course, America is not the Soviet Union at the twilight of totalitarianism. And, yes, the American press can be sloppy, sensational, and superficial. But the role of a reading public is at least as important in preserving our freedoms as it was in nurturing Russia's.

Reading a good newspaper is, in an era of 30-second campaign spots, sound-alike candidates, and lowest-common-denominator lobbying, the best way we have of holding our public officials and institutions to account, of comparing promises with performance, and tracing policies to their results. Newspapers connect our experiences to those of our

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neighbors, including our neighbors across the country and around the world. They introduce new immigrants to America. They mark the great moments that bind us as a nation.

Television news, which is the way most Americans get their daily update on what is happening in the world, is accessible and easily digestible, and sometimes more successful than the printed word at bringing a highly visual story to life. But it is also, by virtue of time constraints, more superficial (a one-minute news spot contains about a third of the information in a 1,200-word newspaper story.) The information flows past so fast that it often does not register and cannot be reviewed and reflected on. The high cost of stationing correspondents and crews has driven TV networks to cut back radically on their coverage of things that happen beyond the borders of the United States. And because of its hunger for pictures, TV simply takes a pass on many important stories that are not inherently visual. So although the nightly network news can provide a quick dose of the daily headlines — and a continuous news network like CNN may offer updates on demand throughout the day — even most television journalists will tell you that unless you read a serious newspaper you are not truly informed.

Why a national paper? Some local papers do an excellent job of covering their hometowns. Most pay only cursory attention to the world beyond their circulation area. They do not maintain bureaus in foreign countries or American regions (except Washington, DC). On matters of business, foreign affairs, national politics, world culture, they tend to be News Lite.

Newspapers are as essential to understanding our past as they are to monitoring our present. One way to enliven the study of history is with a daily reminder that it continues and that current events quickly become history (witness the Soviet Union itself). A surprising amount of what we call news is, in fact, a revision of our historical record. Fifty years after the fact, we are still watching Europe come to terms with its treatment of Jews and assets belonging to Jews during the Holocaust. Contemporary wars — in the Balkans, in central Africa, in the Middle East — are waged over rival interpretations of history. Our arts pages regularly consider new interpretations of classic works, or trace the heritage of new artists deep into the past. In our science pages, astronomy, archeology, and new studies in DNA reopen debates about the entire history of the universe, our own planet, and human evolution.

Newspapers arm us for the debate that keeps democracy alive — information about the war in Vietnam, civil rights, being a citizen. Being well informed enough to succeed in business, to vote, to judge America's place in the world, and to influence the institutions that influence life means being armed with information. Newspapers will not tell us what to think, but they will give us the information that starts us thinking and enables each of us to persuade others.

So, although this is a lofty claim to make for something as seemingly simple as a newspaper, I make it with conviction: Reading the news does not just keep us informed, it goes a long way toward keeping us civilized.

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READING THE FUTURE? GEN X AND THE NEWS

Tom Goldstein & Kimberly Brown

VIBE MAGAZINE, THE CHRONICLER of the hip-hop generation, celebrated its fifth anniversary in September 1998 with an exuberant 312-page homage to itself. "Old Media has hit an iceberg," asserted Keith Clinkscales, president of the magazine. "And Old Media czars sit calmly on the decks of their struggling luxury liners wondering where exactly you all are going."

With a brashness that is characteristic of the magazine, Clinkscales, photographed wearing all black (including a black shirt and black tie), predicts:

> We know where you're going. You're going to music. You're going to the Internet. You're going to MTV and to "South Park," to "The Practice" and to Yahoo! You're watching the X Games, "The X-Files," and the nearly X-rated version of the "Jerry Springer Show." You treat fun and passion for life as precious commodities that should always be celebrated.

Later in the issue, editor Danyel Smith elaborates on the *Vibe* formula:

> No more judgment or editorial decisions based on what is "positive" or "negative" but a lot of writing and reporting about what is. Belief in young people's desires. In their cravings for the new sounds, in their yearnings for what's next. No melting pot; just some "We're all here, and we like a lot of the same shit, so why not turn up the music and live?"

With a readership of 600,000, *Vibe* is not about to displace the mainstream media. Nor does it reach more than a fraction of Generation X or Generation Next readers, those young adults born between 1965 and 1980. But the words of the magazine's president and editor give uncommonly valuable insight into why this treasured group of readers — the backbone of the print industry's next generation — prefer other media to newspapers.

It is received wisdom that these readers leave newspapers off their media nutrient list. Besides this generalization, it is unsettling how little is actually known of the habits of the young and how the various surveys do not necessarily paint a coherent picture of these habits.

For many years, newspaper readership has remained essentially flat while the population has increased steadily. In the total readership pie, the younger generation occupies a smaller and smaller slice.

Of the many studies on newspaper readership published since 1996, we could find only one — by Roper Starch Worldwide — that shows that more than half of Generation X reads the paper on a given day. One recent Pew Center study found that just half as many Gen Xers, 28%, read the paper yesterday — and only for about 10 minutes on average. Another study, published by research firm Yankelovich in 1997, finds that on a daily basis a dismal 22% of 16- to 32-year-olds "read or look through a newspaper at home."

Historically, young readers were never the prime audience of newspapers. But when they reached their early 30s — the time to settle down with a family and a house — they typically turned to their local newspaper. In the past several years, the early 30s conversion to reading newspapers has become less certain.

Although there is no unitary explanation for this phenomenon, there is much speculation for why this occurs. Perhaps the MTV effect, leading to diminished attention spans, is to blame. Or reader falloff may be a natural consequence of a busier age.

Jay Harris, publisher of *Mother Jones* magazine, offers a slightly different hypothesis in a *New York Times* article about his magazine's recent makeover to attract Generation X readers. "This generation communicates visually as well as verbally," he said in describing why the muckraking magazine has

decided to take an approach that includes much stronger graphics.

To be sure, Gen Xers are trailblazers in the new media world. They venture on-line to get news more than any other age group, according to the Pew Center. For traditional media, age — more than race, gender, or education — determines an individual's appetite for news.

It also must be emphasized, and survey data support this, that the differences between Generation Xers and their older peers should not be overstated. Although Gen Xers consume less of all types of traditional news programming than older generations — TV, radio, and newspapers — by and large the sources they go to for news are the same. They also watch similar amounts of entertainment programming and share many hobbies. (Across the ages, interest in investing, reading, and crafts is similar, but Gen Xers are more interested in music and less interested in needlework.)

In the past several years, many newspapers have targeted young audiences with more pop culture and lifestyle stories and sections replete with snappy graphics. But much of this material comes across as pandering and condescending, what older editors think the hip young are interested in. Compare *Vibe* with its plucky uninhibited writing and displays to any of the newspaper supplements, and you will encounter a nearly unbridgeable gap in understanding the young.

Probably the most that can be concluded from a slew of readership surveys is that this young generation is hardly lazy or apathetic about reading — only different from their elders. Young people today have many more sources for information than ever before, and they enjoy picking and choosing among a variety of information options. In fact, Gen Xers say they are "turned on by information, off by news," according to a recent Pew survey. This generation is more likely to have read a magazine yesterday than any other age group, though they read news magazines less often than others. Other insights: More Gen Xers consider "Hard Copy" and "Inside Edition" as a "news" source. They watch much more ESPN and listen to slightly more radio news than others.

Ultimately, though, these surveys should be viewed with caution. Results from responsible sponsors of such surveys vary widely, in part because they ask questions differently, even if the distinctions are subtle. For example, what is the difference between reading a newspaper "regularly" and "daily"? Even though the questions sound similar, results differ dramatically. And there is little consistency in age groups that are surveyed. For instance, some studies look at 16- to 32-year-olds. (How much in common do 16-year-olds in high school have with adults twice their age?)

It seems to be a fundamental mistake to view Generation X as a monolithic market. They are far from uniform. Keith Clinkscales and his crew at *Vibe* may be on the right course, but they are far too new to take it easy and lounge on their luxury liner.

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BEFORE COLLEGE: NEWSPAPERS IN K–12 SCHOOLS

Edward F. DeRoche

THE INTENT OF THIS ARTICLE is to provide college and university professors who plan to use *The New York Times* or other national newspapers in their courses an overview of newspaper use at the precollege level. Elementary and secondary schools have used newspapers for more than 60 years. In the 1930s, *The New York Times* became one of the first newspapers to establish a program that enabled teachers to order *The Times* for classroom use. In the 1940s, *The New York Times* sponsored a major program encouraging teachers to use the newspaper (at no cost) and provided them with curriculum supplements and instructional aids.

During the '50s and '60s, with the support of circulation managers like C. K. Jefferson of *The Des Moines Register* and Harold Schwartz of *The Milwaukee Journal,* as well as Professor John Haefner at the University of Iowa, and Merrill Hartshorn, executive secretary of the National Council for the Social Studies, the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) Foundation created a nationwide program called Newspapers in the Classroom (NIC).

During these two decades, newspapers were delivered to schools at no cost, teacher training was introduced, subject matter teaching guides were published, and publishers began to hire NIC "managers" to handle the increase in teacher interest in using newspapers in their classrooms. With impetus from the ANPA Foundation and some college educators, graduate credit workshops and seminars were created, in most cases cosponsored by local newspapers.

In the '70s, the program spread, and research interest surfaced. In 1971, *The Times's* education services director, Marjorie Longley, developed and tested *The New York Times* Mobile Reading Program, a 10-week pilot reading program involving 185 middle-grade students in five classes. In this, the first effort to determine the effectiveness of newspaper use on students' reading scores as measured by the Metropolitan Reading Test and a teacher-constructed social studies examination, results showed that participating students experienced a 1.2 grade-level increase in vocabulary and a 1.1 grade-level increase in comprehension. On a subsequent social studies examination, the class average for the newspaper group was 76% whereas the control group scored 59%.

The last two decades have seen continued growth of what is now called Newspapers in Education (NIE), adding adult and family literacy initiatives to the popular and effective K–12 programs. The increasing cost of newsprint led the industry to begin charging schools for newspapers (half the daily rate). This rate enabled newspapers to continue receiving Audit Bureau of Circulation advertising credit but required many NIE managers to find sponsors to pay for the product for school use. Sponsorship and partnership arrangements have taken on a major role in the daily life of NIE managers who seek support for getting newspapers into schools, for special "tabs" (special-edition newspapers on specific topics), and for educational and community service events. The popular vacation donation program is one example of these efforts.

NIE programs offer K–12 educators a variety of services in addition to newspaper delivery to schools, including tours, speakers, training programs, conferences, writing and art contests, spelling bees, recognition programs, and a variety of NIE-supported community service projects. Nationally, there is now a Newspaper in Education Week, Geography Awareness Week, and an International Literacy Day, to name a few. These special programs are supported by local newspapers and their sponsors, the Newspaper Association of America (NAA) Foundation, the International Reading Association, and the National Council for the Social Studies. There is also an NAA Foundation-sponsored national conference on Newspapers in Education and Literacy.

There are more than 700 local newspapers with NIE

programs in the United States and Canada reaching more than 100,000 students. Now one can find NIE programs in South Africa, England, Norway, Japan, and many other countries. It is clear that publishers have supported NIE programs because they see a need to cultivate young readers and to get them into the habit of daily newspaper reading in the hope that they will become future newspaper readers and subscribers.

Why is newspaper use popular among K–12 teachers? First, they have found newspapers to be a valuable instructional resource for motivating students and enhancing their interest in school subjects. Second, teachers report that newspaper use increases students' knowledge of current events, including people, places, and social and political issues. Third, newspaper use seems to contribute to students' reading skills, particularly vocabulary development and comprehension, as well as develop positive attitudes toward reading. Fourth, testimony from both students and teachers suggests that using newspapers in classes contributes to class discussion and is seen as a valuable supplement to the textbook. Fifth, use of newspapers in classrooms seems to help students learn to read the newspaper more effectively, increases their newspaper reading habits, and adds to their knowledge base and to their understanding of the purposes of newspapers and the services they provide citizen-readers.

Suggested Readings

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Drop Heds, Op-Eds, and Ragged Right: How to Read and Understand *The New York Times*

Steven R. Knowlton

NEWSPAPER READERS HAVE A GREAT deal of control over where and when they learn about their world. By contrast, members of a broadcast audience must be in front of a set or tuned in to a radio — or must think far enough ahead to tape a newscast — and they cannot choose the information they wish to get or the order in which they wish to hear it. And they cannot avoid the intrusion of commercials. But the greatest power in the hands of newspaper readers is the power to decide what to read, in what order, and how much time to spend on each item. Television, by contrast, chooses the pieces of a newscast and puts them in the order the network or station believes will attract the most viewers. However, all this choice can bring confusion to new readers. They can feel bewildered and overwhelmed. And even old hands can miss some of the visual cues put into a newspaper to help readers navigate through it.

Editors of good newspapers spend very little of their precious news hole (the space allocated for news, as opposed to advertisements) telling the readers about the cues they provide, yet they do put a great deal of effort into typography and layout to help readers know what editors think is important and to help readers figure out which articles are meant to inform, which to put the news into context, and which to entertain as well as inform. This article is devoted to explaining some of those visual signposts in *The New York Times,* one of only a few national newspapers in the United States. But remember: Making a newspaper is not like making an automobile. There are no bins of identical parts formed and shaped under close tolerances and tight supervision. The wondrous cacophony of the world's planned and unplanned events dictates what is in the next day's paper and what it will look like. Editors and reporters try to stay on top of developing stories to minimize surprises, but serendipity and luck count, too. Weeks of digging and years of developing sources pay off on some days. On some days they don't. And every 24 hours, it must all be done again.

So in trying to decode the visual cues of *The Times*, the first caveat is that most of the rules presented here do not always apply. Most of the following clues are based on what *Times* editors do or would do on the impossibly perfect day when *Times* reporters found out about enough things of the right importance and got plenty of accurate and thoughtful background material, when the shape and impact of photographers' pictures fit the shape and size of the ideal page design, when the satellite transmissions and the phone lines worked flawlessly across the country and around the world, when the last piece of a long-term story fell into place, and when it all happened early enough in the day for the top news managers to *fashion* the pages with thought, care, and grace. On such a day, principles do not collide and no compromises need be made. The real paper, of course, is an approximation of that perfect paper, varying a little here and a bit there.

In very recent years, *The Times* has undergone its most profound visual transformations in its nearly 150-year history: The addition of front-page color photographs and graphics in October 1997 and the expansion to six daily sections are the most obvious. Yet *The Times* still presents a consistent face to the world.

It is important to note that *The Times* does not try to be all things to all people. Every communications medium is designed for a particular audience. Although *The Times* is considered a newspaper for a general audience, it is not — any more than any newspaper or broadcast station — truly designed for universal consumption. All editors in all news

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media must consider whom their news product is designed to reach. A network television news show is designed to appeal to the broad middle: to millions of viewers from all regions of the country, all social and economic classes, and more or less all age groups.

A newspaper is different. For all of the nation's roughly 1,500 daily newspapers, the audience is defined by geography, and for all but a handful, that means the local town, city, or region. Such local papers appeal first and foremost to the residents of the area in which they are published. That is why a great city paper — *The Chicago Tribune,* for example, or *The Philadelphia Inquirer* — is, essentially, an out-of-town paper everywhere but in Chicago or Philadelphia. Back when large cities had a dozen or more daily newspapers, papers could and did gear their product to a certain segment of the citizenry: to the rich, the poor, the liberals, the conservatives, the Blacks, the Whites. But as the number of dailies has dwindled and more cities have only one local newspaper, such papers have increasingly tried to reach a broad audience in their circulation area.

A national newspaper, unlike a local paper, does not consider all 260 million Americans its target audience. *USA Today* is equally appealing to a reader in Tacoma as one in Tampa. But it is designed primarily for the business traveler in a hotel room or at an airport gate who is willing to spend a few minutes with a newspaper to catch up on the news of the last 24 hours or for those who prefer a splashy format with lots of short news and sports summaries. Similarly, *The Wall Street Journal* appeals to a national audience primarily interested in business news (despite a nameplate, or *flag* — as it is known in newspaper argot — that suggests the most narrowly focused audience imaginable: a single street, less than a mile long, in lower Manhattan).

The New York Times is a New York paper as well as a national paper. Part of that apparent schizophrenia is resolved by having separate editions: a New York edition with a heavy emphasis on New York metropolitan news, and regional and national editions, which strip out most of the purely local news.

But *The Times* is not written for all Americans or even all New Yorkers. Its readership is for an intellectual elite, a successful, generally college-educated audience with catholic and sophisticated tastes. In recent years, it has made serious efforts to move beyond its traditional audience, which was both white-skinned and white-collar, but the new target audience still includes people who are successful, intellectually if not financially, although the two often go together. (School teachers and college professors, for example, are very much part of *The Times's* intended audience, although neither group is particularly well paid.)

It is with the *Times* reader very much in mind that writers and editors go about their business of putting out the paper. That reader is thought to want the news put into context, with enough background provided for the reader to understand why something happened, not just what happened. That reader also wants to know things beyond the usual definitions of news: what's going on in the arts and entertainment, in the sciences and in the halls of academe as well as societal trends, religious news, consumer information, and all that goes into gracious living. Any particular *Times* reader may not be interested in all of that every day, but the aim is to give the reader those choices.

The sheer bulk of the newspaper on many days is daunting to many readers who wonder how to get through it all and still get anything else done that day. Here's a loosely held trade secret: Nobody reads it all, not even the most conscientious of *The*

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Times's own editors. But the paper is laid out so that experienced readers can find what they are looking for and skip quickly past the rest. If you have no interest in sports, that's an entire section you can skip; if you're a fan, you can start there. And that goes for business and the arts and all the other specialty sections. And you can take comfort from the fact that if something really important has happened in one of the areas you've skipped, it will be covered in the main news sections.

Where to turn first in the paper is a matter of taste and inclination, but many begin with the News Summary, which appears every day on page 2 of the main news section. All the most important news articles from every section of the paper appear in abbreviated form in the News Summary. People in a hurry who read the summaries with care will know a lot about what is going on in the world, but the summaries should point you in the direction of the articles that you will find most interesting on that day. The three dozen or so shorts are tightly written, tightly edited nuggets of information. For extra convenience, the summaries are categorized, much as whole sections of the paper are. But there is little joy to be had in reading these Cliff's Notes of journalism. Many find relying on the summaries to be something like memorizing world capitals. On the other hand, many people like to *begin* with the summaries to get a quick overview of important developments on a wide range of fronts, then follow the page numbers listed with each summary to get more of the story.

Page 2A is also the regular place in the paper for corrections and related items. For most of the history of American journalism, editors have been extremely reluctant to admit their mistakes. Other than the standard reluctance we all have to admit errors, newspaper editors argued that to run corrections would cause readers to lose confidence in the paper. But in recent years, editors at *The Times* and other papers have come to see the question differently. They argue now that running corrections is a basic part of keeping faith with the readers, which they see as telling the truth, as well as they are able, and admitting mistakes. Readers will gain, rather than lose, faith in the paper if they believe the paper will consistently admit its mistakes. Beyond that, each error in the paper represents a number of people who know the paper made an error. The faith of those readers will be based on whether the paper admits its error or tries to pretend the mistake was never made.

The real pleasure of understanding begins with the front page. What goes on the front page each day is a complex decision made by several top editors who confer every afternoon to determine the mix of stories to appear on the next day's front page. The editors aim for a front page with geographical balance — international, national, and local articles — if the news justifies such a balance. The editors also try to include a variety of subjects, said Allan M. Siegal, an assistant managing editor at *The Times* and the one person most responsible for page 1. "There is a tendency, if you are well staffed and have people in all the right places where important things are happening, to have too much institutional news, too much bureaucratic news," Mr. Siegal said. "And so we try to put a thumb on the scale in favor of some human stories and some stories representing the other pursuits of mankind aside from governing and making money and making war."

The paper's basic format is to have six columns of type (each column of type two inches wide) on each page, numbered one through six, from left to right. Type sometimes is set extra wide to give the paper's makeup some variety, especially in the feature sections. A point of possible confusion: Journalists often call the paragraph containing the essential

Understanding and explaining human motivation is far more difficult, and thus far less reliable, than presenting information about more concrete things that can be counted, quoted, and weighed.

information about an article, which is usually the first paragraph, the lead, or lede. Journalists often spell "lead" (rhymes with seed) as "lede" to distinguish it from the soft, heavy metal, which a generation ago was used to space out stories. Leading (pronounced ledding) is still the term used to describe the spacing between lines of type, even though that is done by computer now, not by inserting spacers made out of lead.

So the lede story is the most important story of the day in the minds of *Times* editors. Just how important can be inferred by the size of the headline — the size of the type, the number of columns the headline runs across, and the number of lines of the headline. A one-column headline — known as an "A hed" in *The Times's* internal shorthand (three lines of a main headline followed by a single line of a secondary headline, then three lines of smaller type further explaining the significance of the event) — is what is used most frequently. An A hed is the least amount of trumpeting a lede article can get. Lede articles that editors consider to be about more important events get headlines that are wider and bigger.

Often another article or two will be tucked into the display for the main article. Usually, a rectangle could be drawn around the entire package. And that is what such a group of articles is considered: a package consisting of a main article and one or more sidebars, related pieces that expand upon one aspect of the event.

Articles on the front page of *The New York Times* are of different types. The first is a staple of news outlets everywhere and in every medium. That is the event story, an account of something newsworthy that happened the day before. The lede story in the paper is usually an event story. The *Times* story will use more complex language than, say, a story from The Associated Press or the story as read on the nightly network news; but it will, ultimately, be an account of an event — the famous who, what, when, where, how, and especially in *The Times,* why — that news articles are supposed to address.

The reader has the right to expect this type of article to be objective. Objectivity does not mean that the writer has no opinion about the events being described. It means that the writer does not interject personal opinion into the article and tries to be as fair as possible to all sides of an issue. That includes making sure that the reader knows any information necessary to judge the credibility of a source of information. For example, if a member of Congress is quoted, either directly (in quotation marks) or indirectly (the gist of the Congressman's remarks is given, but the exact words are not repeated so no quotation marks are used), the Congressman's political party will also be given. That doesn't tell the reader that the Congressman's opinion is credible or not credible — it merely says that this opinion is coming from a Democrat or a Republican, so readers can use that information in forming their own judgments of the person's credibility on this issue. The reader is also told if someone in a story has a financial interest in the outcome of an issue — again, to help a reader judge a source's credibility. And ethics policies at *The Times* mean that readers can assume that the writer of an article will not have a financial or political interest in the issue involved.

But even straight news articles in *The Times* will not read like an article from wire services, which use an inverted-pyramid style of organization that takes the reader on a straight line from the top of the story to the bottom, from the most important to the least important information. Wire-service articles usually have a great deal of who, what, where, and when but not much how and very little why. But at *The Times,* even straight news stories try to get beneath or beyond the surface reality of the story and explain the underlying forces.

Many college students employ something of a reverse-interest index when they are first learning about news judgment.

Such attempts to explain the why of a story are admirable, but they can also be dangerous. Understanding and explaining human motivation is far more difficult, and thus far less reliable, than presenting information about more concrete things that can be counted, quoted, and weighed; so an article can more easily lose its objectivity when such context is provided. Yet nearly all serious news organizations made a conscious decision several decades ago to include analysis and interpretation after the horrors of McCarthyism, in which lives and reputations of thousands of people were ruined in the 1950s by Senator Joseph McCarthy and others, who used journalists to spread unsubstantiated charges. Under the journalistic practice of the day, if a legitimate newsmaker — a United States Senator like McCarthy certainly qualified — made a statement, it was news and reported as such, whether or not the reporter knew that the statement was false. Much of the contemporary practice to put context into news stories stems from the need to label poppycock honestly, even if it comes from the lips of a high government official.

The Times emphasizes the need to put context and background into news articles. And some articles are primarily analysis, not reports of news events. When an article is primarily analytical, a label of "News Analysis" appears near the top of the article. These articles, however, should still be fair and balanced. They are not editorials.

The front page also includes what many senior editors call a snapshot story, a story that freezes a moment in time to take a look at a trend — for example, the growing popularity of recycling or working from home. There is no one news event that leads to such a story. Such trend stories fit into the category of news features. News features often begin, and sometimes end, with an anecdote; the paragraph that encapsulates the article's significance can be three or more paragraphs from the top. Other news features can be about anything *Times* readers would find interesting in any area — sports, the arts, business, literature, science, literally anything.

One common mistake new *Times* readers make is to assume that everything on the front page is supposed to be serious policy analysis. Many college students employ something of a reverse-interest index when they are first learning about news judgment. If an article is about a ponderous political development or a governmental shake-up in a place they've never heard of, they figure that it is important and belongs on page 1. But they assume that a news feature they find interesting, especially something from the world of sports or entertainment, must be too trivial to be important and worthy of page 1.

The Times's choice of news features for page 1 sets it apart from most other papers just as much as its typeface for the A hed. They are often about something in the arts or the sciences, something that will not appear on the front page of other newspapers. Sometimes it is a solution to a famous mathematical problem, and sometimes the discovery of musical manuscripts. Mr. Siegal describes these stories as "the secret handshake" that binds members of the club of *Times* readers to each other and to the paper.

"Once in a while we put something on page 1 *because* we know nobody else will," he said. "The fantasy I like to have is to visualize people going out the next day and saying, 'Did you see what they had today?' and not even have to identify what 'they' is. You want to know that you are setting the agenda, or at least the opening conversational gambits, at dinner parties of intelligent, educated people."

All the articles on the front page and in the news sections should be free of opinion. To find out what the newspaper's editorial board thinks about an issue, consult the editorial page, which is the last opening of the first section of the paper Monday through Sat-

The word dateline *is one of those journalism terms that has moved into common English usage and has lost a bit of its precision along the way.*

urday. On Sundays, it is in the same spot in the Week in Review section, a section of news analysis. Writers and editors on the editorial page are kept as separate as possible from operations of the newsroom. Even after the paper takes a position on an issue on its editorial page, readers are still entitled to find the news coverage of that issue to be fair and balanced. Editorials appear on column one of the editorial page. They run under the masthead, the staff box that lists the chief executives of the paper. Editorials are usually unsigned and reflect the opinion and judgment of the newspaper itself, as rendered by the members of the editorial board. Letters from readers are also run on the editorial page.

The opposite page, the next-to-the-last page of the section, is called the Op-Ed page, short for opposite the editorial page. Opinion columns appear on this page, both regular columns written by *Times* columnists and guest columns written by people not on the *Times* staff. Op-ed columnists have a largely free rein to express their opinions. The guest op-ed columnists are often people of impressive credentials, like former Cabinet members and foreign heads of state. But ordinary people can be published, too, if they have something timely and original to say that catches the eye of the op-ed page editor.

Opinions can also be expressed by regular *Times* columnists in some of the other sections. An article can be identified as a column, which is an opinion piece, in several ways. Most columns appear on column one of a section front, like the Metro section, rather than on the front page. To give their type a different look, editors set columns ragged-right, with an uneven or ragged margin on the right side. Also, columns have labels that run over the headline and identify the name of the writer and of the column. Examples include Clyde Haberman, NYC; Harvey Araton, Sports of *The Times*; and David Gonzalez, About New York.

Section fronts are not merely the home for columns, of course. Each section front is the show page for that department's best stories (except for the best of the best, which go on 1A). Sports, Business, Metropolitan, Arts and Leisure all have their own sections nearly every day. The sixth section of the daily paper rotates among several nonhard news departments — Science, Circuits (consumer technology), Home (decorating), Dining In/Dining Out. The National Desk's show page is inside the A section, at the end of the International report, which begins on 3A and continues for several more pages. The line between the end of the foreign report and the beginning of the national report changes daily, depending on news flow and the total number of pages in the section. Like the front page, each section front (plus the national news show page inside the A section) is designed with a mixture of stories in mind. Since *The Times* expanded its color capabilities in the last few years, the feature sections have gone to larger and larger photographs and other illustrations on the section fronts. Many days, a section front will have a single piece of art covering the whole top of the page and only one story appearing on the page.

The word *dateline* is one of those journalism terms that has moved into common English usage and has lost a bit of its precision along the way. Even within most newsrooms, a dateline isn't what it used to be. But at *The Times,* it still means what it meant in the 19th century when telegraph operators began their transmission with a line stating the city from which they were sending and the date of the transmission. Gradually, most newspapers dropped the date part of the dateline, leaving only the city from which the story originated. *The Times* is also one of the few papers that insists that the reporter writing the story actually be in the datelined city at the time the story is written. Many papers have taken liberties with the original meaning of the dateline and put out-of-town datelines on stories that were reported and written by telephone from the newsroom.

The Times *makes an effort to include visual information in the frame that tells the viewer the picture was posed — getting some of the other photographers in the picture, for example.*

Although it has become customary elsewhere to loosen up on the use of datelines, *Times* editors consider it part of the bond with the readers that a dateline will be used only on a story reported and written from that city.

The question of integrity comes up in photographs as well. The rule is simple. All photographs appearing in *The Times* are unposed except for those that are *obviously* posed. It sounds contradictory, but it isn't really. Photographs are supposed to be spontaneous, the photograph capturing action of real people behaving as they really behave. However, many people accustomed to being photographed, public figures especially, pose for the camera or create a photo op, which is short for photographic opportunity. A typical example is the obviously posed picture of the President of the United States meeting with a visiting foreign dignitary. The two sit in comfortable chairs and appear to be talking to each other while the cameras record the posed scene. *The Times* makes an effort to include visual information in the frame that tells the viewer the picture was posed — getting some of the other photographers in the picture, for example. Other times, the paper relies on what it takes to be the reader's visual sophistication to determine what is obviously posed and what is a genuine news photo.

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TRADING TEXTBOOKS FOR NEWSPAPERS

Donna Besser & Gerald Stone

SHOULD COLLEGE TEACHERS BE concerned about shortchanging their students if they use newspapers instead of textbooks? More to the point, can a newspaper contribute equally well to helping college students learn? These are interesting questions, but the answers have been largely anecdotal because so little solid research exists on students' views about textbooks. In 1998, we completed a study that provides some insights into their thoughts on textbooks with implications for newspapers. In a nutshell, the textbook characteristics students find helpful are a prescription for a good newspaper.

The study was performed using a convenience sample of students taken at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, a large public university, and the University of Miami (FL), a large private university. Both groups gave highly similar answers about their texts, as did a national convenience sample of mass communication majors. In all, the survey included 1,170 students from a wide variety of undergraduate majors, and we were gratified to note that respondents' opinions about textbooks were focused on the writing content.

Helpful and Nonhelpful Traits

Asked to name the most helpful aspect of a textbook, the results were as follows:

1 Relevant examples and problems
2 Easy-to-read with clear writing
3 Relevance to everyday life
4 Good organization of material

Of the helpful learning aspects mentioned, 49% of the answers dealt with the text's writing content, and the four answers listed accounted for 41% of the responses.

Asked to name the least helpful aspects of a textbook — that is, something that did not help (or interfered with) learning — the results were even more pointedly aimed at the writing:

1 Long sentences or wordiness
2 Confusing writing
3 Boring and uninteresting writing
4 Poor examples
5 Generally difficult to read
6 Too much on unimportant topics
7 Too much technical jargon
8 Outdated content

Of all the nonhelpful aspects noted, 58% dealt with the text's writing content, and the eight categories listed here accounted for 50% of the responses.

Implications for Newspapers

The study had nothing to do with using newspapers as textbooks, yet the students were so emphatic about the importance of writing in their texts that the implications for newspapers are inescapable. All of the most helpful traits named are found in good newspapers, and good newspapers disdain all of the most negative traits.

Moreover, nationally recognized newspapers such as *The New York Times* take pride in offering:

- Relevant examples
- Easy and clear writing in short sentences
- Interesting writing
- Content that relates to everyday life
- Excellent organization of material
- Important topics
- Up-to-date content

In all, those aspects that students value in a college textbook are precisely the strengths of newspapers. Based on the findings of this study, college students would be likely to rate using a good newspaper equal to or better than using a traditional class textbook (assuming course content relates to newspaper content).

Additional Study Findings

This student survey of textbooks did identify some properties that newspapers don't have, such as chapter summaries, glossaries, and study questions. But given a series of rating scales, the students invariably selected "interesting" and "relates to everyday life" over other choices. A somewhat surprising finding was that textbook illustrations — such as charts, tables, and photos (even those in color) — received relatively low ratings in comparison with writing quality, interest, and practical application of the material presented.

What do students really find annoying about their textbooks? Long blocks of text were the chief distraction, followed by cost of the book. A book costing $50 or more is rarely worth the price, students said. The next most distracting element was "dated material" followed by "long sentences and paragraphs that are needlessly confusing."

As noted in the earlier sections on helpful and non-helpful findings, the studies about textbooks underscore the strengths of a good newspaper. They suggest that using a newspaper in a college course should be a viable substitute — or at least a supplement — for using a traditional textbook.

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NEWSPAPER READERSHIP DISCONNECT AT J-SCHOOL?

David L. Nelson

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT that you are a professor of dentistry who learns that some students fail to floss or brush their teeth regularly. Now let's say that you're a journalism professor who at first suspects — and then through testing finds out for sure — that some students do not read newspapers or do anything else to keep up with current events. Although the first example might be a stretch, it serves as an effective metaphor when I confront those students in the second example, because they really do exist and many of them are my own.

Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism is among the nation's best, and so are its students. But many of them arrive without having developed a newspaper reading habit. In this regard, they demonstrate behavior consistent with their demography but not, unfortunately, with the standard discipline required when one selects journalism as a course of study. As their teachers, before launching them into the information industry, one of our tasks must be to inculcate in them a regular-use pattern of both the traditional and new media for the assimilation and analysis of news and information which can result in wisdom.

On observation, it appears students' primary use of the new media serves personal and social purposes. Although the lines between entertainment and information may blur in today's mainstream media, recent research from the Gallup organization suggests most cyberuse is not a quest for news or information. Personal communication and entertainment are the main draws. And that's what I see. Late assignments, rewrites, and an occasional excuse or two come via my office e-mail daily. Research for projects would be better in most cases if the students would unplug and take a walk — to the library. Most frustrating to me are the reports that come in that rely on outdated material culled from the easy-to-reach Web sites.

Although some of this information could be valuable for adding perspective, when a student drops it into a paper as the end-all and be-all of knowledge, oblivious to a recent event of major significance, this drives me to e-mail to prompt the student to dig deeper and get up to date before writing again. When it becomes clear that surface skimming is not enough to earn a decent grade, I notice some modification in student behavior.

Many of our students do use the new technology quite effectively in the design function of information presentation. But this leads to the obvious question of whether they know what they are doing. Does the content they're working with merit the pretty packaging? From some segments of the industry, design is undeniably a major attraction right now, and students who are good with design are hot property. We can't provide enough of them to meet the demand in either the traditional or new media.

Medill awards about 150 undergraduate journalism degrees and about the same number of graduate editorial degrees each June. Class sizes are small — most news labs have a dozen students, and seminars cap under 20. Professors and students move quickly in this educational environment, and they also get to know each other pretty well.

At a recent faculty meeting, two or three teachers shared some of their experiences and frustrations over the of students' lack of awareness of current events. Medill's dean, Ken Bode, took note. As the moderator for the PBS show, "Washington Week in Review," he is driven by an ever-present appreciation for current events. So, he asked that Medill administer a diagnostic test on current events to determine how serious a problem we had with students who choose to major in journalism but avoid its daily diet.

Teachers must prepare their students to become more critical consumers of commercial journalism.

Such testing could assist committees in developing curriculum. It could tell teachers about what their students need to know. It could serve as a benchmark to detect any significant shifts in attitude or awareness among students from year to year — though many of the senior professors believe the issue is no greater or less today than a generation ago. And, in its most practical form, it could simply serve as a message to students that this stuff is important.

The test was administered to 569 students during early April 1998. It consisted of 45 questions on domestic and international issues. The students showed increasing knowledge as they matriculated through Medill:

- Freshmen scored 58%.
- Sophomores scored 64%.
- Juniors and seniors scored 67%.
- Graduate editorial students scored 70%.

My class, a graduate seminar on contemporary media issues, ranked highest of all those tested at 82% (thank heavens!). Given the subject matter of the course and the fact that daily reading of *The New York Times* was required, they should have tested highest.

At the bottom were those enrolled in a first-year editing and writing course. These students' tests were about half right or half wrong, whichever way you wish to look at it. One could react negatively or even extremely to this, perhaps pointing to all the problems with accuracy and honesty that blotted the mainstream news media this summer. That would be wrong, however. These are bright 18-year-olds who are getting one of their first lessons in what won't cut it professionally. They have two years to learn this lesson fully, because Medill requires that they spend 10 weeks of their junior year in a practicum program that places them inside a professional newsroom. Most "get it" by the time they get there.

The architect of the exam is not negative about either its results or the students who took it. With a doctorate in Mideast studies, she might be miffed personally that a third of those tested think Mecca is in Israel, but she isn't angry about it. "That's the way things are," Professor Marda Dunsky said. She points to the overall media climate — with "Hard Copy," the Drudge Report, and "CBS Evening News" all seeming to blend together — as part of the problem and, just maybe, part of the solution. Teachers must prepare their students to become more critical consumers of commercial journalism. But, Dunsky reports that faculty reaction was lukewarm to the test and its results. The dean, however, does not share that opinion — and the diagnostic testing will continue.

The students have their own ideas about the test. Some of their unsolicited and anonymous comments include these:

> "I resent being tested."
> "I found this survey slightly insulting."
> "These questions don't really test if you have a broad historical background. They only test whether you know facts, some of which are trivial and others that could be easily found in an almanac." (If only they would take to their almanacs!)

But by no means were all the comments negative:

> "We definitely don't know enough about current affairs."
> "This is really a good idea."
> "It's a sad commentary on the state of our society as a whole when a college junior cannot fill out this survey with 100% accuracy," wrote one student, who scored about 50.

One student termed the test a "wake-up call" — and, really, that's all it is. One of my colleagues who served in the Vietnam War can assume that now at least 20% of our students no longer think the United States was allied with North Vietnam during that military engagement. And there's a good chance that our students will now be able to name more

In order to instill the necessary discipline among journalism students right after they arrive on campus, I think that regular testing on current events is essential. Integrating these issues into classroom discussion is necessary.

than two provinces or territories in Canada.
What can we do to encourage more readership and knowledge of current events? A lot of newspapers offer so-called reader rewards to those who buy the paper: coupons, discounts, premiums, free classified ads, you name it. They seem to work in many markets. In order to instill the necessary discipline among journalism students right after they arrive on campus, I think that regular testing on current events is essential. Integrating these issues into classroom discussion is necessary. Those students who stay on top of current events will receive praise, good grades, and solid job references. In time, they'll come to view reading a daily newspaper as natural as brushing their teeth each morning.

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PART TWO

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

USING NEWSPAPERS TO KEEP BUSINESS COURSES CURRENT

George M. Dupuy

The Institution

Presbyterian College is a liberal arts institution located in central South Carolina. The college enrolls 1,100 students, almost all of whom are of traditional age.

Classroom Setting

The teaching technique I describe here is called a module because it is extremely flexible and can be implemented in numerous courses in many disciplines. For example, because I am at a small undergraduate college, I teach business courses in several unrelated areas: marketing, organizational behavior, and human resources and strategy. I use this module in all of these classes. It would also be appropriate for other fast-changing social sciences like psychology, sociology, and political science.

Rationale

One of the greatest challenges business professors face today is to keep their undergraduate courses up-to-date with the rapidly changing business world. What may be a cutting-edge strategy today can be ineffective and obsolete in a matter of months. Using the latest editions of textbooks will not solve this problem because the books are written several years before they are published. For example, Al Dunlap, former CEO of Scott Paper, is cited in many current business strategy textbooks, reporting his success in turning Scott around before it was acquired by Kimberly-Clark. Dunlap earned the nickname "Chainsaw Al" because of his dramatic use of downsizing to cut costs. New 1999 editions of business texts are likely to report Dunlap's initial success in turning around his most recent project, Sunbeam. Yet *The Wall Street Journal* dated May 22, 1998 includes an article that describes how his initial Sunbeam success has suddenly gone sour, and questions his controversial turnaround strategy (Hagerty & Brannigan). In business classes we need to talk about what is *currently* working (or not working), not celebrate past successes that may no longer be effective. And if six months from now "Chainsaw" finds success with a new strategy, we need to be evaluating this latest news. This cannot be accomplished with textbooks but can be accomplished with newspapers.

Instructional Strategy

I have developed a teaching technique, the Article Presentation Module, that utilizes current national newspapers in reporting and studying the latest business news. Here is how the module works: Every student in the class presents a course-related article to the class orally. For classes with more than 30 students, this would require a great deal of class time; therefore, the assignment could be presented in writing, albeit with some reduction in the benefits described at the end of this article.

About a third of the way through the course, students are assigned presentation dates. They must then find a course-related article published within 30 days of their presentation date to insure timeliness. Articles must be at least 250 words long and may be selected from the following national newspapers: *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Christian Science Monitor,* and *USA Today* (although most *USA Today* articles are not long enough to qualify).

Presentations are evaluated on the quality of the article summary (20 points), presentation skills (20 points), audiovisual support (20 points), and most importantly, application to course concepts (40 points). I weigh "application to course concepts" most heavily in the total grade because I find that this is where the most learning takes place. This process of application stimulates critical thinking skills and reinforces mastery of important conceptual ideas.

During the presentation I take notes on a grading form, evaluate the notes and assign a grade after class, and finally provide constructive feedback to each presenter. Each presentation can last no longer than 15 minutes and is followed by a question and answer session to involve the rest of the class actively.

In addition to keeping the course current, the Article Presentation Module provides several other learning benefits. As noted earlier, the most important benefit is the learning that results through applying the article to course concepts. And since the information is presented orally, the whole class benefits from the reinforcement and understanding of these applications to current business events.

Nearly every occupation occasionally requires oral presentations; therefore, this assignment provides valuable experience. Presenting in front of an audience is almost universally feared, and like driving a car, it must be experienced to be learned. Most students dread this assignment but come away from it with a real sense of accomplishment.

In order to find their article, students have to spend considerable time perusing daily national newspapers. Most students find that this part of the assignment is rather enjoyable. Ideally, they are establishing reading patterns that will be useful for the lifetime of learning that lies ahead. Finally, the module adds some fun and entertainment to class. Talking about current applications can make text concepts come alive. Student presentations provide pleasant variety from class lectures, and many students make presentations that "knock 'em dead."

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USING *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL* TO EXPLORE ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING

Donald E. Lifton

The Institution

Ithaca College is a private residential institution with about 5,000 students, most of whom are of traditional age.

Classroom Setting

Since Fall 1995, *The Wall Street Journal* has been an integral part of the First-Year Seminar in Management, offered to incoming management majors at Ithaca College's School of Business. Approximately 60 first-year management majors are enrolled each Fall semester in one of four one-credit weekly seminar sections to concentrate on the topic of organizational decision making.

Instructional Strategy

Graham T. Allison's challenging 1971 classic, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis,* is the course centerpiece. In the book, Allison presents his readers with three distinct models to analyze and interpret decisions that organizations adopt. He uses the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 to illustrate how each approach, when applied to the episode, would emphasize different aspects of the situation and result in different interpretations of the decisions undertaken by the American and Soviet governments.

Regularly assigned articles in *The Wall Street Journal* become crucial supplements to illustrate how Allison's (1971) models can be applied today in the current world of business. The students are required to peruse *Journal* news items three times each semester to create an up-to-date separate article pool for each model, and the assigned articles are drawn from this larger pool. Using the student-selected *Wall Street Journal* articles for these course supplements is particularly appropriate for the seminar because (a) management majors become familiar with their business discipline's national "newspaper of record" in their first semester of study, and (b) the myth of the *Journal* as inaccessible niche periodical that only serves the needs of successful financiers is debunked.

The Rational Actor model is the first of Allison's three frameworks. This theory focuses on explaining the logic of the decision — that is, why it was undertaken. The Organizational Process model shifts the analytical emphasis to the constraints that organizational rhythms and bureaucratic procedures place on the quest for rational decision making — that is, how the decision was undertaken. Finally, the Politics model explains the outcome in terms of the people involved in crafting the decision — that is, who was involved — including a discussion of their motives, their positions in the organization, and their bargaining skills. The following chart

Allison's Three Approaches to Analyzing Organizational Decisions

Model	Frame of Reference	Unit of Analysis	Key Concepts	Pattern of Inference
Rational Actor	Rationality of value-maximizing, purposive acts. Thus, "***WHY?***"	*Choice* selected from range of options.	Goals; objectives; choice; options.	Predict organization's goals based on observed, presumably rational actions.
Organizational Process	Organizational context and its pressures. Thus, "***HOW?***"	Action as just another *organizational output.*	Standard operating procedures (SOPs); factored problems; bounded rationality.	Predict organizations' actions based on their existing SOPs.
Politics	Action as a result of bargaining. Thus, "***WHO?***"	Action seen as a *political "resultant."*	Stakeholders; power; position in "game"; action channels.	Predict future actions based on "players" in the "game."

highlights the noteworthy elements of each model. In simple terms, Allison shifts the focus away from why a decision was made to how it was made and who was involved in making it. In each instance, the liberal arts history lesson of the Cuban missile crisis becomes his tool to demonstrate the application of the models. The course builds sequentially, model by model. The articles selected from *The Wall Street Journal* are used to further student understanding by applying a model to the current business event at hand.

After explaining the Rational Actor model and discussing Allison's application to the missile crisis, the students are divided into teams to write and report on how the model might be used to explain the decisions described in up to five different assigned *Journal* articles. A separate article is given to each three-person group. For example, during Fall 1997, an article dealing with a postponement of a bank merger in Japan was a decision analyzed through the lens of the Rational Actor model.

Because many Americans often seek logical explanations to the phenomena around them (an emphasis on "why"), applying this model to the news report is an easy way to expand an understanding of Allison's first approach — given the amount of one bank's bad debt holdings, the merger delay just seemed to make rational business sense.

The current event drill is repeated, but with more challenging applications related to the Organizational Process and Politics models. For example, a Fall 1997 article focusing on Nike's decision to spend $120 million over eight years to sponsor the U.S. Soccer Federation reports a marketing ploy that might not have been the most rational allocation of corporate funds. Students have the opportunity to substitute other models to reach an understanding of the decision. By the end of the semester, the students have discussed up to 15 different current events from the world of business and have seen how different perspectives might explain them.

The Wall Street Journal, therefore, serves a dual purpose: It not only is a source for informing students of current issues in their discipline but also becomes a mechanism for exercising students' fledgling critical thinking skills in learning to apply abstract explanatory theories to current realities. Anonymous course evaluations at the end of every semester provide an assessment that strongly supports the integration of material from *The Wall Street Journal* into the class. Students report that the discussion of the articles helps make the theories "come alive." Of course, they also enjoy learning about the current events in their newly chosen field of study.

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TAKING ANOTHER LOOK: MAKING NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS HIT HOME ON A LIBERAL ARTS CAMPUS

Michael A. Longinow

The Institution

Asbury College is a nondenominational Christian liberal arts institution with an enrollment of about 1,200, located near Lexington, Kentucky. Students at Asbury hail from 42 states and 18 nations.

Instructional Strategy

The college's main library carries more than ten newspapers, including *The New York Times* national edition, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Washington Post*, Knight-Ridder's *Lexington Herald-Leader*, and two Gannett newspapers, *USA Today* and *The Louisville Courier-Journal*. But students rarely pack the library newspaper racks, which reflects a nationwide neglect of media by college students (Demers, 1996; Barnhurst & Wartella, 1991).

Most of the time, students don't like to read. They do it fast and only think about it when it's required. National newspapers, in contrast, grab students. I'd suspected this for years based on my own experience. (But I have an excuse: I used to be a reporter and I teach journalism.) I first tried my newspaper-reading theory on students in a seminar on the history of media readership. It was an afternoon class — Spring semester — so creativity was mandatory. I walked in one day and handed each student — most of them women — a copy of *The Wall Street Journal*. They were only mildly interested. "Find yourselves," I said, warning that it might be a challenge. They hesitated, but perked up. Most had never been to New York, but common mythology about it made this Big Apple newspaper, which is read nationally, a bit intriguing. Could it reflect them? Should it? We talked about what they found and what seemed to be missing on purpose — like stories on women and minorities. Some got angry. Some shrugged it off. But all were reading with new intensity, coming at newspapers as a meeting place for dialogue — something scholars argue caused journalism to flourish more than a century ago (Anderson, Dardenne, & Killenberg, 1996; Leonard, 1995; Schudson, 1978). Something had worked; I decided to try it again.

For this reason, in 1997 I began requiring my students to subscribe to *The Wall Street Journal* for a course titled Principles of Business Writing and Communication. The course, required for communications and business majors and an elective for English and journalism majors, combines the study of how corporate businesses package written information and data and how oral presentations work in the same arena. Usually enrolling from 25 to 30 students, the course had been team-taught by English and speech faculty before I came to Asbury in 1989. But its written portion lacked any clear connection with real-world journalism, and students dreaded it. Though *The Wall Street Journal* was meant as pizzazz, I was hesitant about the students' take on it. I required them to subscribe, but only suggested they read it — telling them neither how nor why. Bad move. Few read it. Worse, some complained at course's end of having wasted money on the subscription — if they'd subscribed at all. I refused to give up. The next year, I applied advice from Roy Peter Clark in a Poynter Institute session years earlier. Someone there had griped that students don't read homework assignments. "If it matters that much, why aren't you reading it in class?" Clark asked. I decided we would.

Every Wednesday became *Wall Street Journal* day, when we'd spend a third to half of the class period on the newspaper. The syllabus, in bold type, told students to bring the newspaper and, in groups of

three or four, to come up with a story, news brief, even an ad, that exemplified business communication. We'd talk about it as a class, tapping group spokespersons for highlights. I primed the pump a few sessions earlier with a list of questions such as, "Where's conflict management happening?" "Where are businesses talking to each other through this newspaper?" "See any cultural business gaffes?" The first Wednesday was a challenge. Several students cut class, and most who came didn't have their newspaper. ("Oh, you mean we have to *bring* it!") I simply reminded them of points attached to these sessions — points irretrievable if missed. The next session saw better attendance and lots more newspapers. As I circulated, I heard group banter about concepts crucial to the course, most related to how journalism works and how business audiences think about it. In addition to the in-class session, students were to send me an e-mail message (posted within 24 hours of the Wednesday session) describing the group's *Journal* highlights. In that e-mail, students were not only to tell what they had found but what every other group member — by name — had contributed. I had borrowed such reader-writer accountability from Donald Murray (1993) and others (LeFevre, 1987; Gere, 1987; Chiseri-Strater, 1991).

I would like to say that the experiment was 100% successful. I can't. A cardinal rule of student culture is that creative assignments will be labeled by some students as inscrutable and therefore ignored. Another rule forbids snitching on students who don't contribute to the group effort. But still another rule is that students who care about learning make creative courses succeed — and they hate seeing slackers get points off their labor (yet another rule). The latter two rules don't outweigh the former two. Many *Journal* e-mails to me were vague (even after point-cuts and reminders like, "Tell me more!"). A group or two never did come up with stellar insights. But across the class, many were reading in ways that showed this newspaper had infected them; they were talking sidewalk-level journalism as well as accounting, economics, international trade, and national economic policy. I knew I'd succeeded to some degree when a senior in the group — one I'd noticed carried his newspaper to class every day, not just Wednesdays — looked up during a non-mandatory class discussion and said, "All of you saw the piece in *The Wall Street Journal* about that, didn't you?" A few nodded.

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THE DETERMINATION OF ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS: USING *USA TODAY* IN PROMOTIONS COURSES

Melodie R. Phillips

The Institution

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) in Murfreesboro, TN, is the regional public university that serves the metropolitan Nashville area. MTSU is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Nashville and enrolls over 18,000 full- and part-time students. The student population is a mixture of traditional and nontraditional students, most of whom work full-time and attend classes part-time in the evening.

Classroom Setting

Promotions, MKT 385, is a three-credit course with an average enrollment of 30. Most students in the class are majoring in marketing, recording industry management, advertising, public relations, or interior design. The course is an introductory marketing elective that serves junior- and senior-level undergraduates. Students must have completed an introductory course in principles of marketing. Promotions integrates theoretical information on consumer psychology with practical applications of creative development and design, media planning, and advertising strategy development. The course consists of lecture materials supplemented with in-class activities, homework, and a term project.

For the term project, students develop an advertising campaign for a hypothetical product of their own design. In-class activities and the term project are completed in groups randomly assigned at the beginning of the term to insure interdisciplinary (majors and out-of-college minors) participation. The course incorporates the business and entertainment sections of *USA Today* to identify advertising effectiveness, TV ratings, current events in advertising, and media trends.

Instructional Strategy

While the introduction of timely and reliable information is vital in developing an academic curriculum, this proves especially critical in fostering practical skills in promotions and advertising management courses. I find that hands-on exercises are crucial supplements to lecture materials and provide valuable learning experiences. These exercises force students to work together to gather relevant information from credible external sources. Group work results in the lively exchange of competing ideas and philosophies. Further, group assignments foster teamwork skills and leadership qualities mandatory in successful career development. Finally, it is this interactive process between group members that yields an in-depth analysis of advertising and promotions campaigns.

One of my favorite group assignments each year is built around the advertisements that premier during the Superbowl, when the most creative and expensive campaigns in the world of promotion are launched. The assignment begins the week before the Superbowl actually airs. Students scan the Internet, television, and newspapers for publicity pieces previewing advertisements, new campaigns, and products scheduled to debut during the game. Student groups then get together, watch the game, and identify those commercials that *they* perceive as memorable, likable, effective, and well-placed in terms of media and audience reach.

Before returning to class the next week, students are asked to pick up the Monday edition of *USA Today* and review the business and entertainment sections. These sections provide analysis of the Superbowl advertisements and viewer responses. Students are able to view nationwide sample results within 12 hours of the debut of these commercials. The analysis of the advertisements through consumer preference rankings provides the basis for student groups to discuss and review any regional

or personal differences they perceive from the national survey results. This also opens the door for discussions about the usefulness of humor, celebrities, and branding for these advertised products, and highlights the budgetary impacts of these high-priced media placements based on the targeted audience's responses.

Student groups are then asked to complete an in-class exercise designed to highlight the perceived effectiveness of the advertisements based on consumer responses. The exercise is designed to help students spotlight differences between commercials that score as popular and likable versus those determined to be truly effective at promoting a product or service. It highlights the differences between popularity and effectiveness through analysis of advertising objectives, audience composition, and media expenditures. The students also investigate the innovative and creative approaches taken relative to their memorability and likability as assessed by the surveyed consumers.

Although several national newspapers could prove helpful in analyzing Superbowl advertising campaigns, *USA Today* has proven particularly useful to my students. It is written in a conversational style that is easy to comprehend and enjoyable reading for undergraduates, and it also has the advantage of being easily accessible and affordable. Furthermore, the paper generally presents summary statistical information in graph form and includes photographic images of high-scoring commercials.

USA Today also helps students complete their term projects, in which they must identify highly rated television shows that reach targeted groups of consumers in order to formulate an effective media plan for their hypothetical product. Television ratings and the associated costs of commercial time during these programs are essential information in determining effective budget allocation and identifying target audiences.

USA Today has a Web site that students can use daily to access the entertainment and business sections in order to identify useful data on television ratings, newspaper and media audience trends, and other pertinent current happenings. Internet access has enabled the quick and cost-efficient access to headline-worthy information that can then be evaluated in depth through information reported in the daily edition of the paper. Additional information on new product introductions that coincide with advertising campaigns may be acquired through other national publications, television, National Public Radio, and local newspapers.

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ENGLISH
WOMEN'S STUDIES

USING *THE NEW YORK TIMES* TO CELEBRATE THE LIVES OF WOMEN

Cheryl Harris

The Institution

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), with its central location in the capital city, draws 10,000 students from all regions of the state. The majority of these students are women who are older than traditional students, with an average age of 27. Most are the first members in their families to attend college.

Classroom Setting

In an effort to promote the academic and personal success of all students, but in particular of the first-year students, the faculty at UALR have united in an effort to provide enrichment activities, one of which is specialty theme courses. With the nontraditional female student in mind, I have designed a first-year research writing course called Women and Self-Esteem: Celebrating Who We Are Through Research and Writing. This academic writing and thinking course includes regular reading assignments in Linda Tschirhart Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan's *Women & Self-Esteem: Understanding and Improving the Way We Think and Feel About Ourselves* (1985). The writing assignments all include researching specific related topics in *The New York Times.*

Instructional Strategy

To introduce the students to the course on the first day of class, I usually assign them to one of three groups, each with a specific assignment in *The New York Times*. The first group scans an issue of the newspaper and tallies the number of times women appear in the photographs, compared to men. The second group analyzes the reasons women are pictured, again compared to men. The third group reviews the movie and play advertisements in a Sunday edition of *The New York Times* to determine if stereotypes of women are present, either in the printed or pictorial material. The groups report back to the class, and we then discuss the possible effects of their findings on women and the ways they envision and think about themselves.

The New York Times proves invaluable as a tool for assisting the students in introducing themselves to the class and as a source to use for each of the major writing assignments. In the second class period, I ask the students to scan an edition of the paper and discover something that reminds them of their childhood, which is the theme of their first essay. They may choose a personal interest story, a photograph, an editorial, an advertisement, a cartoon, or a review of a book, movie, or play. One likely choice might be "Barbie Pulls Teeth," a column by Maureen Dowd (1997) that took a look at an updated version of a favorite toy of many girls. When they return to class, I ask the students to introduce themselves by sharing what they have selected and why. Because their first writing assignment is a reflective piece based on a childhood experience, I then ask the students to spend 10 minutes free-writing on their researched material and the next 10 minutes free-writing on the early memory or experience evoked by their choice. The students then use these initial writings in drafting their first essay. This one-source writing assignment provides the students with an introduction to using parenthetical notes and a Works Cited page, the basic format for Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation.

The second writing assignment is a discussion/response paper on a topic related to the theme of adolescence. The students choose a universal experience or problem associated with this stage of life. They research their topic, drawing material from the course textbook, *The New York Times*, and at least one other source. In their paper they must discuss the issue by taking information from these multiple sources and including their own reflections on an effective response or solution to the issue they are exploring. They read selections in the textbook

on physical changes, gender roles, rites of passage such as dating, learning to drive, or graduating from high school, and teenage cultural icons. They likewise search *The New York Times* for additional resource material such as, "Showing Girls The Virtue of Abstinence," a 1997 feature article that related directly to a major concern of adolescent girls. This multiple-source essay leads the students to a more advanced stage of completing academic research.

For the third writing assignment, the students expand their understanding of their topics, the library, research methods, and MLA documentation by preparing an annotated bibliography including at least ten sources. Using the basic textbook and related news reports in *The New York Times*, we explore the theme of intimate relationships and brainstorm possible research topics, such as sibling relations, birth order, marriage, motherhood, the mother-daughter or mother-son relationship, single-parent families, stepparenting, abusive relationships, and divorce. To complete this project, the students must select a topic, locate their sources, correctly organize the bibliographic information on the Works Cited page, and preview each source in order to write a brief summary of the work. This research activity prepares them for their fourth assignment, a research paper of at least 1,500 words on the same topic.

This particular thematic writing course offers all students, especially the nontraditional female student, the opportunity to research and write about issues of personal interest and concern. The relevancy of the topics, along with the accessibility of the material in *The New York Times,* inevitably leads to both intellectual excitement and academic success for the students.

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The New York Times in Introductory Research Writing and Composition Classes: Helping Students Develop the Ability to Focus

Anna R. Holloway

The Institution

Fort Valley State University is a four-year land-grant and liberal arts institution with approximately 3,000 students. It is a traditionally African American institution that is part of the University System of Georgia, and the majority of the undergraduate students are of traditional age.

Classroom Setting

I teach English at Fort Valley State, but I have also taught journalism. The two courses in which I have used *The New York Times* are Introduction to Research (English 240), taught to mass communications majors, and Composition I (English 101), where I wanted to include reading for the first-year students in a new and more effective way. Introduction to Research concentrates on the process of writing nonscientific research, and during the semester described here, 15 students completed the class. Composition I classes, which have section enrollments of 25 to 30, emphasize the essay and include beginning research skills.

Instructional Strategy

My experiment with *The New York Times* in the classroom began in late 1997 at an educational conference when I signed up for information about using newspapers in instruction. I knew that I was not devoting enough class time to making my students read, I was tired of managing class discussions based on published readers, and I wanted something new that would work. What I have discovered since is that *The Times* provides a context for informed research topic selection, and it offers reading material on a college level that appeals to students. More of my students' research papers are successful now, and I think that the students' reading practice, focused on an interest in the news, will pay off by helping them develop better reading skills.

In Introduction to Research, I asked students to study the news and feature articles in order to choose limited topics on focused issues; in the meantime, I adapted exercises in our text, *Writing from Sources* by Brenda Spatt (1996), so that we could use articles in the paper to practice research skills. Each day we used one or more *Times* articles to practice skills related to research. These included the following:

- Summarizing
- Paraphrasing
- Selecting and using quotations
- Blending quotations or paraphrased material into paragraphs effectively and coherently
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Citing sources

One of the more ambitious exercises I created required the students to do the following:

- Select three articles on the same general topic.
- Take notes on three elements of the topic, each of which are addressed in at least two of the three articles.
- Write a thesis that relates the three elements of the topic.
- Support the thesis with three paragraphs, each of which has citations from at least two of the sources.

My students were not happy with this assignment, and I spent three class days encouraging all of them

to try following the instructions so that they could complete the assignment. But in spite of this resistance, I was able to refer back to the assignment many times later to remind them that their research paper paragraphs, like those in this exercise, should be constructed of information from several sources in addition to their own ideas. This helped them see how to avoid making their papers into what Spatt calls "cannibalized patchwork quilts." Here is an outline of a student's paper showing how this worked:

Thesis. By gaining the most populated audience, networks can be guaranteed power over the fate of other networks; and the audience that attracts every network's attention is the young male.

PARAGRAPH ONE. Networks are willing to spend large amounts of money now in order to get the top-rated shows. *New York Times* citations from: James, Caryn. "Critic's Notebook; 'Must See,' 'Must Not': Switching Channels" 1/15/98, A1; Carter, Bill. "Pro Football; NFL Is Must-Have TV; NBC Is a Have-Not" 1/14/98, C29.

PARAGRAPH TWO. Some networks stake everything on their top-rated shows. Citations from: James, 1/15/98; Carter, 1/14/98.

PARAGRAPH THREE. The Walt Disney Corporation, which owns ESPN and ABC, took a gamble by insuring that it would have control over all Sunday and Monday night football games. Citations from: Carter, 1/14/98; Sandomir, Richard. "Pro Football; Monday Football Stays on ABC; NBC Out of Game After 33 Years" 1/14/98, C30.

As the students worked on their exercises, they also read the paper every day in search of a good limited research topic. Here are four examples of topics individual students finally decided on:

- "The Microsoft Corporation Is Under Fire by the Justice Department" (using 11 articles that appeared in *The Times* between 1/12/98 and 2/15/98 as well as articles from five other sources).
- "America's Opinion on Partial-Birth Abortion" (using one article from *The Times* of 1/15/98, Carey Goldberg's and Janet Elder's "Public Still Backs Abortion But Wants Limits," and 11 Web sites).
- "Adolescents' Perceptions of Cigarette Advertisements, the Results of Marketing Techniques Used, and the Argument Over Needed Regulations Between the Government and the Tobacco Industry" (using five articles from *The Times* appearing between 1/14/98 and 2/2/98 and seven articles from other sources).
- "Illegal Immigration: Controlling the Border" (using three *Times* articles appearing between 1/28/98 and 2/6/98, one from 5/3/96, and ten articles from other sources).

A side benefit was that those who at first grumbled about reading *The New York Times* became proud of themselves when they found that professors in their other courses were impressed that they were *Times* readers. Because they are future journalists and broadcasters, the experience was also a crucial step in becoming part of the culture of the profession. And it appeared to me that the students enjoyed receiving the paper every day and reading at least parts of it.

My first use of *The New York Times* was over a four-week period in Composition I, in place of a reader. I believe that the best way to increase one's reading proficiency is to read actively, so I required the students to do summaries of two to four articles per day (at least two had to be from either section A or the Business section), with the articles averaging 25 inches each. The students in this class were good sports and had an interest in many of the articles. I checked their first several summaries, and I counted them at the end.

In the 1998 Spring quarter, I assigned the summaries to two sections of Composition I. These students are the ones who, for various reasons, do not get into the first-year English course until the third quarter. They may be repeaters, or they may be students who have just exited remedial courses. Some are even in remedial reading while enrolled in this class. I have learned the importance of having them neatly organize and count their summaries and found that a larger number than in the previous quarter conscientiously completed the assignments. However, they complained more, and a few were such poor readers that their summaries were inaccurate. In other words, the task was too much for about 6 out of 50 students.

In Composition I classes, I required that the students' three-page essays use a *Times* article as one of the three required sources. Those who followed these directions the first time were more successful

Quite naturally, a news event reported on a specific day is more conducive to producing a limited topic than terms like abortion, *the* death penalty, *or* drug abuse.

than my first-year students usually are at choosing a good limited topic. Quite naturally, a news event reported on a specific day is more conducive to producing a limited topic than terms like *abortion*, the *death penalty*, or *drug abuse*. Among the topics were smoking among young African Americans, early campaign expenditures for the year 2000, why Pol Pot was not brought to justice, and sanctions against Iraq.

I used specific articles and opinion pieces that quarter as springboards for essay writing — for example, "Remedial Lessons for CUNY," by John Patrick Diggins (1998), and "Politics of Youth Smoking Fueled by Unproven Data," by Barry Meier (1998). I assigned these essay topics:

- Do you believe that, by passing laws regulating tobacco companies, the government can reduce youth smoking? And do you think tobacco companies should be fined if youth smoking does not decrease by 60% in 10 years?
- When students graduate from high school unprepared for college work and need remedial courses to get ready, should they take these courses at big four-year institutions or at two-year community colleges that have instructors whose job it is to teach these remedial courses? Explain your choice and use examples.

Many of the students wrote essays with much better use of content and critical thinking than they have shown with generic topics such as, What are the characteristics of a good parent? a good student? and so on.

I have limited follow-up test data. In the Fall quarter, when I used literary essays and editorials as reading material, the percentile changes between pre- and posttest reading scores varied from -8 to +13. The average change was +3.4. The first time I used *The New York Times*, the percentile changes varied from -16 to +21. The average change was +3.8. The second time I used *The Times* in Composition I, the percentile changes varied from -15 to +24, and the average change was +9.31. I will have to use more controls and study more pre- and posttests in order to draw meaningful conclusions about immediate increases in reading skills among students reading the newspaper five days a week.

Fort Valley is a small town, so I must have the newspapers delivered by Greyhound to a local bus stop, carry them to class myself, collect the students' money, and pay the bill. This is a bit strenuous, but, on the other hand, it insures that each student has a paper every day. When more classes adopt *The New York Times*, we may be able to have our bookstore handle the subscriptions, and I hope that the students will be responsible enough to get the papers before the bookstore discards them. I intend to continue using *The Times* along with library research. *The Times* has given my students more focused practice in reading and thinking than have the reading texts I have ordered in the past or the sources related to topics they choose on their own for their research papers. Furthermore, the newspaper subscription is cheaper than most books, and the papers can be used for both reading practice and research.

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TEACHING WITHOUT A NET: *THE NEW YORK TIMES* IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

Marie J. Secor

The Institution

The Pennsylvania State University is a public, land-grant, research university with about 40,000 students at its University Park campus. Most entering students (numbering about 5,000) are traditional-aged, highly competent students with average entering SAT scores well over 1200 and average high school GPAs of about 3.5.

Classroom Setting

I use *The New York Times* as the only textbook in my honors first-year composition course, English 30. Students who take English 30 are Penn State's most able students, many of them enrolled in the Schreyer Honors College, and they constitute about 10% of the first-year class. I have also taught the course described in this article as an elective course in advanced argumentation, and other instructors have taught it as a standard freshman course. Because the teaching of writing is labor-intensive, class size is always limited to 24 students.

All of Penn State's writing courses are rhetorically oriented. That is, they teach students how to construct effective arguments by observing the available means of persuasion. In our writing courses we place special emphasis on the ways in which writing is shaped by both its personal and institutional purposes and its audiences. The aim is to produce students who can analyze, evaluate, and write effective arguments that address a variety of different people, purposes, and situations. Class time is spent examining a wide variety of arguments, and students engage in group discussion of issues, preparation for writing, and various forms of peer review.

Instructional Strategy

Instead of assigning a supplementary reader with essays or fiction, I use *The Times* as a living, constantly changing, unpredictable, and highly relevant textbook that provides both models for writing and subjects to write about. The unpredictability of the daily newspaper is both the major advantage and the major challenge. Although my course has a clear outline and a defined sequence of papers, I have to be prepared to modify whatever we are doing if something jumps off the page in the morning. This potential for spontaneity keeps both teacher and students alert. No one can work off old notes, old papers, or old habits, and I have to be prepared every day to find examples to illustrate (or alter my understanding of) every principle I want to teach.

Using *The Times* as a textbook allows me to teach students about three things: argument, genre, and style. One of the most important lessons of any writing course is that arguments are all around us, even in places where we don't think to look for them. Clearly, the editorial pages of *The Times* are full of arguments: the editorials, the letters to the editor, the regular columns, the essays submitted by interested citizens, even the advertisements in the lower right-hand corner of the op-ed page. But there are also arguments on the front page, both implicit and explicit. Many articles try to convince readers that a state of affairs or a trend exists: Iraq is or is not cooperating with U.N. peacekeeping forces; New York is or is not a safe place to live; the economy is prospering or faltering. Other articles contain strong implications about values: A breakthrough has occurred in the treatment of cancer; a public official is in serious trouble. There are also arguments in every section: arts, style, sports, science, business, and advertising. Students need to become sensitive to the nuances of language and the nature of evidence in order to understand why certain choices are made in the presentation of stories and what those choices imply about what we think is significant.

We begin by following a front-page news story for a

I also use The New York Times *to teach students how the constraints of genre affect writing.* The Times *is full of different prose genres, forms that have evolved to fulfill readers' expectations about the requirements of different kinds of situations.*

week (one selected by the students) in order to become more conscious of language and choice, then move on to the more structured and direct arguments on the editorial pages, then broaden our interest to take on the rest of the paper. We analyze arguments short and long for logical, ethical, and emotional appeals, and students respond to, critique, and imitate them in their own writing.

I also use *The New York Times* to teach students how the constraints of genre affect writing. *The Times* is full of different prose genres, forms that have evolved to fulfill readers' expectations about the requirements of different kinds of situations. We always stop and pick out generic characteristics in what we are reading. We look at the shape of news stories, the common characteristics of letters to the editor, the distinguishing features of analysis pieces. One assignment very important for the identification of genre features is the obituary: Who gets a *Times* obituary, what are the common elements of obituaries, how are they structured, what kinds of topics are developed in them, and what are people praised for? After the class spends time reading obituaries, I ask them to write an imaginary obituary for a living person whom they admire. This assignment teaches the class about what is valued in our culture and how one goes about praising the admirable. The discussion of genre is very important in writing pedagogy, but it is easily neglected in writing courses that read mainly fiction or familiar essays because the distinctive features of the most common prose genres often go unnoticed by both teachers and students.

The third element is style, and we examine style carefully all over the newspaper by asking questions like the following: Why are quotations and information attributed in certain ways in news stories? Who gets to be an agent, a doer of action, in news stories? What kinds of technical language do we see on the sports pages? How common is figurative language? What kinds of figures of speech do we see in various kinds of writing? Why, for instance, do we rarely see irony in news articles but often find it in op-ed pieces? How formal or technical is the writing, and how does it vary in different sections? What does that variation tell us about audience? I often assign students to identify 30 or 40 different figures of speech used in the news so they can learn how powerful and ubiquitous figurative language is. We also discuss the distinctive registers of music reviews, science, business, and sports reporting.

All students are required to read the newspaper every day, with special concentration on the part we are focusing on for the next paper. I expect students to be reading the paper when I walk into the classroom and to bring the previous day's paper as well as the most current one to class. We begin by commenting on and analyzing the part of *The Times* we are most interested in, and then spend some time refining the current writing assignment to adapt it to the unfolding news.

One cannot give exactly the same assignments every time, but I try to follow a rough order: The first assigned paper asks students to follow a news story for a week or so and analyze the coverage; the second concentrates on editorials in order to learn the elements and structures of argument; the third examines obituaries; the fourth discusses reviews and asks students to write one themselves; the fifth takes on a cultural analysis of the sports pages in order to determine how the culture of sports reflects or differs from the rest of the paper; and a final assignment offers the opportunity to repeat or revise one of the earlier ones. Depending on the class and the salience of certain kinds of issues, other assignments may be substituted.

I have found that using *The Times* as a textbook has both direct and indirect benefits for a writing class. In addition to facilitating instruction about

Part of what should happen in a college course is a broadening of horizons, an awareness of a larger, more significant world of trends, events, and subjects of interest to an educated person.

argument, genre, and style, the newspaper offers students the opportunity to become immersed in fresh and relevant subjects to write about and allows the class to observe how stories develop and issues are formulated. As we discuss emerging events, they learn to distinguish what's at stake in any given case — whether issues of fact, definition, value, or policy — and how each of these questions gives rise to a different type of argument. Writing instruction comes alive when it is connected to actual, immediate writing.

But there are larger educational benefits as well. Part of what should happen in a college course is a broadening of horizons, an awareness of a larger, more significant world of trends, events, and subjects of interest to an educated person. First-year students especially need to become engaged in a world less cloistered than the campus, and this course can help establish the lifetime habits of newspaper reading and intellectual curiosity. Finally, speaking from the personal and professional perspective of the teacher, I find that using the newspaper as a textbook keeps my teaching of writing fresh and forces me to question and clarify my pedagogical and disciplinary assumptions. My field is rhetoric, which preaches the significance of audience and context, and there is no greater challenge than dealing with writing as it develops and changes before our eyes both in the newspaper and in the texts produced by my students.

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FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR
HONORS SEMINAR

ENGAGING FIRST-YEAR HONORS STUDENTS BY USING *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

Brian Adler

The Institution

Valdosta State University is a public comprehensive university of about 10,000 students, most of whom are of traditional age.

Classroom Setting

I teach an introductory course in the University Honors Program under the generic umbrella of Introductory Seminar, in which basic skills like critical reasoning, research, oral presentation, group reporting, group dynamics, and some aspects of cultural literacy are covered. Over the four years that I have taught this course, I have focused on particular topics, as indicated by some of the course titles: Myth, Mandela, and Freedom; Hero, Myth, and Culture; Heroes, Freedom, Culture; The Heroic Ideal in Modern Time; Myth, Heroes, Freedom: Methods Toward Understanding; From Freud to the Future: The Determination of a Generational Psychology; Whither Civilization?; Civilization: Definitions, Conflict, Directions; The Current Scene: Dissent, Foment, Connect; and Civilization: Issues, Values, Directions. In addition to materials unique to each course, the one common element shared by all the courses over the years is that students must subscribe to *The New York Times.*

Instructional Strategy

Students in the honors seminar use *The New York Times* as a textbook. I ask students to do four things with the newspaper. First, I ask them to scan each page and focus on articles they find of interest. I actually give a "how to read a newspaper" lecture with a demonstration. I point out that a newspaper as densely written as *The New York Times* requires a particular type of scanning technique. I also speak about the civilized behavior that reading a newspaper is part of, and the type of cultural assumptions embedded in the free press.

Second, using our campus e-mail system, students become distributors of articles from the newspaper. Each week, a designated committee of distributors meets to decide which articles the class as a whole should read in preparation for class discussion. These articles are then sent out over e-mail, which usually results in intense discussions in class as well as in cyberspace.

Toward the end of the semester, I ask students to report on an issue pertaining to our course that has emerged from articles culled from *The Times,* supplemented by other research. Students receive grades based on the amount of knowledge they have extracted from the articles and the depth of their research. In one seminar a team of three students researched the impact of advances in medical technology on the development of civilization. As part of their report, they went back through *The New York Times* of the 1860s to make meaningful comparisons. This impressive effort also demonstrated to the class how much fun researching can be as well as what role newspapers play in preserving (and creating) historical perspective.

Finally, I ask students to build an archive made up of newspaper articles from *The Times,* along with a rationale for the collection, and provide commentary throughout concerning articles and groupings of articles. I emphasize that an important part of the student's work is not simply to provide this archive to me, but to retrieve it and keep it for years to come. I ask that students become "pack rats" throughout the semester, pulling out articles of interest and organizing them into chapters or categories for the archive. I explain that the archive becomes a window to the events of a particular year and quarter and to the interests the student had at this particular time. One of the students eloquently explained the purpose of his newspaper archive by saying that he would "take isolated events randomly from all corners of the earth, seemingly unassociated with each

Our job as educators is to help students go underneath the randomness and look for patterns and causal relationships, fitting events together into a meaning-producing mosaic.

other, and from these create a sort of journal over a given period of time — metaphorically speaking, a day in the life of the world." This student has picked up on the random quality that is a basic structure of the newspaper and of reality. Our job as educators is to help students go underneath the randomness and look for patterns and causal relationships, fitting events together into a meaning-producing mosaic. The students benefit from the comprehensive coverage of events that *The Times* has to offer, thereby giving them a more richly textured window on the world; but in the very act of selection and justification, they also open up a window into themselves.

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FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

"ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT": READING *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

Verne A. Dusenbery

The Institution

Hamline University is a moderately selective, private university with approximately 1,550 students in the College of Liberal Arts. Most Hamline undergraduates come from the upper Midwest, many from small towns in Minnesota and surrounding states. Most are not regular newspaper readers, and the newspapers they do read tend to be small, local dailies or weeklies.

Classroom Setting

The First Year Seminar (FYSEM) program at Hamline University has three main goals: (a) to introduce new students to college life and the college community; (b) to develop essential learning skills (e.g., careful reading, critical thinking, group discussion, effective writing); and (c) to develop interdisciplinary interests and habits. At Hamline, members of the full-time College of Liberal Arts faculty take turns offering FYSEM on a topic of their choice during the Fall semester to a group of 12 to 18 first-year students.

Instructional Strategy

In Fall 1996 and Fall 1997, I offered a FYSEM entitled "All the News That's Fit to Print": Reading *The New York Times.* As the course description sent out to incoming students suggests (see column at right), I was motivated by my concern about newspaper illiteracy on the part of my students and by my belief that newspaper reading is itself a civic virtue (Roberts, 1995; Anderson, 1991).[1] As an anthropology professor and the director of our interdisciplinary international studies program, I was particularly distressed to find that my students often lacked general knowledge of current events and the shape of their world. My hope was that I might instill an early appreciation among at least some Hamline students of the personal and intellectual value of becoming regular readers of America's newspaper of record. Certainly, I believed such a course would meet the goals of the FYSEM program and would be consistent with Hamline University's mission of "provid[ing] knowledge, values, and skills to those who wish to prepare for a life of leadership and service to their society and the world."

Course Description

Two recent surveys have suggested: (a) that fewer and fewer Americans in the 18–29 age group regularly read a daily newspaper, and (b) that people who read more newspapers than average exhibit greater trust in others and are more active in civic affairs. Taken together, what are the implications of these two findings for American society now and in the 21st century?

This seminar will take as its primary text the national edition of *The New York Times.* Our first goal is to become news literate — to become knowledgeable and sophisticated consumers of the news, analysis, and opinion published in *The Times.* Given the breadth of coverage in *The Times,* we will be exploring story lines as they develop in various areas of international news, national news, economic news, arts news, science news, education news, etc.; and we will be reading book/theater/movie reviews, editorials, op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor. In our careful readings, we will learn to distinguish among information, interpretation, and opinion. We will learn to think about points of view and to become aware of how assumptions enter into the selection and presentation of material in a newspaper. We will also learn how to follow up in the academic literature stories covered in the popular press. And, as we gain understanding of newsworthy topics, we will try our hand at composing and submitting letters to the editor and opinion pieces.

The Times is America's newspaper of record. Consequently, it has drawn criticism from various parties who consider its news coverage and/or editorial positions to be biased. Our seminar will examine these claims. To do so, we will give some attention to the historical role of newspapers in general and of *The Times* in particular, and we will make some comparisons

between *The Times* and other newspapers and news media. In our group discussions, we will end up talking about the content of "all the news" as well as what is deemed "fit to print" and why.

Finally, we will consider the future of *The Times* and other newspapers in an electronic age, as we explore the award-winning on-line version of *The Times* and look to other Web sites as alternative news and opinion sources. If you register for this seminar, you must live on campus.

Linkage with Residential Living. Since 1996–97, a portion of the FYSEM courses have been taught in the residence halls as part of the Living/Learning Center (L/LC), an initiative intended to bring about a closer integration between student living and academic learning environments. Besides teaching their FYSEM in the residence hall, faculty participating in the L/LC are expected to undertake additional co-curricular activities with their FYSEM students who all live on a single floor in one of the residence halls. I chose to offer "All the News That's Fit to Print": Reading *The New York Times* as part of the Living/Learning Center program. I decided that sitting in a lounge reading and discussing the news was a closer approximation to habitual reading than would be meeting in a classroom. I also hoped that having students who live together on a single floor would allow for conversations about the news to continue outside of class, since students could presumably count on their hallmates (at least those in the seminar) having access to the same "prior texts" (Becker, 1995).[2] Finally, having the students living together allowed me to arrange with *The Times's* distributor placement of a lock box outside the residence hall, greatly simplifying on-campus delivery to my students.

Highlights of this Teaching Experience. Following are highlights of what I learned from my two years of experience offering the seminar. First, I learned never to *overestimate* my students' backgrounds. Most of my students were not previous newspaper readers. Nor had they, by and large, had the experience of regularly discussing current events with family and friends. Consequently, I needed to spend more time than I had anticipated easing them into *The New York Times.* This meant spending several weeks exploring the structure and content of the paper; learning to differentiate news articles, news analyses, editorials, op-ed pieces, and so on; learning to parse articles and build vocabulary; and giving them the contextual material and prior referents necessary to entice them to read articles in various sections of the paper that they were originally convinced were "boring" or "over our heads."

Second, I came to appreciate anew the importance of bringing into the classroom the experiences of practitioners. In this case, that meant making the magic of journalism come alive. Students were particularly energized by visits to our seminar from working journalists (e.g., former *Times* staff writer and critic, Nora Sayre, and Pulitzer Prize winner and Chicago bureau chief, Isabel Wilkerson), by our visit to the newsroom of our largest metropolitan daily, *The Star Tribune: Newspaper of the Twin Cities,* and by some features about the paper on the *Times* Web site.

Third, I learned that my colleagues, in a wide array of disciplines, were eager to talk about their own experiences reading *The Times.* This led me, in the second year, to invite several of them into the seminar to share their reading experiences with my students. Besides affording students the opportunity to meet a number of faculty members, students felt empowered to read by finding that different faculty members representing different disciplines read *The Times* in quite different ways.

Although I may have originally envisioned the seminar as a sort of news and literary salon where we would discuss momentous events of the day, generate brilliant letters to the editor and op-ed pieces for submission to *The Times,* and develop sophisticated cultural studies of the media, the reality is that my students first needed to learn how to read what was, for most of them, a new kind of text: how to think critically about current events and the role of the press in society, how to discuss intellectually challenging and politically controversial issues with their peers, and how to write an expository essay for an educated audience. In the end, we did not solve the problems of the world. And no one earned the "A" for the writing component of the seminar that I offered to anyone whose letter or op-ed piece was published in *The Times.* Probably no one — certainly not I — had as much fun as I had hoped we would have. But students did learn some things.

Late in the semester, each FYSEM is required to put together a poster representing the seminar and its

I came to appreciate anew the importance of bringing into the classroom the experiences of practitioners. In this case, that meant making the magic of journalism come alive.

topic to other students at the annual Fall Academic Fair. Much as they may have groaned about the ever-increasing pile of newspapers they had accumulated over the course of the semester, my students did provide public testimonial on their collective poster (and, subsequently, in their individual course evaluations) to the value they perceived in reading *The New York Times.* Measured in the number of my students who have resubscribed or who now read *The Times* daily, my courses were probably not a total success. But presumably, as their lives become a bit less hectic than are those of the typical undergraduate, these students will know that they can pick up *The Times* and figure out how to reenter the conversation taking place throughout its pages. The intimidation factor is gone.

Endnotes

[1]On the relationship between newspaper readership and civic engagement see Roberts (1995). Following on Ben Anderson's (1991) now-classic argument about the important role of newspapers in the rise of modern nationalism, one might want to ponder whether and how the decline in newspaper readership is related to globalization and the current crisis of legitimation of the nation-state.

[2]The term *prior text* comes from A. L. Becker's "Silence Across Cultures" (1995). In this insightful essay, Becker offers an amusing anecdote about his initial "intimidation" during mealtime conversations at "a rather prestigious East Coast institution," intimidation that persisted until he realized that what he lacked was the conversational prior text — that day's *New York Times.* Becker's notion of "prior text" is applicable to my students' predicament in entering into *The Times.* Although they had read the current text, they lacked the prior texts — both general knowledge and specific previous articles from *The Times* — that would allow them, effortlessly and without intimidation, to read, to understand, and to converse about the text.

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BAGELS AND *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

Sharon Green

The Institution

D'Youville College is a private college of about 1,800 students in the heart of Buffalo, New York. Most students are of traditional age, and D'Youville also enrolls some English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Many students come to D'Youville to pursue degrees in the health sciences.

Classroom Setting

I teach a noncredit developmental Reading and Study Skills class to students who test at a Grade 9-10 reading level on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. The course includes two weeks of study skills and twelve weeks of intensive reading. During the last week, we relax with the newspaper.

Instructional Strategy

It's really rather simple — we have breakfast with *The Times.* That's how I introduce these students to *The New York Times* at the end of each semester. My objectives are to expose students to a newspaper that few have ever read, to encourage them to become regular newspaper readers, to allow them to discover they can find interesting, readable articles in a newspaper that they may perceive as esoteric or dull, and to do so in a relaxed atmosphere.

Unfortunately, most of these students have done little if any independent pleasure reading before coming to college. Although we have a fine local newspaper (*The Buffalo News*), a reading autobiography that I administer during the first week of class informs me that those students who do look at our newspaper read — or skim — only local news, sports, and entertainment articles. Usually, these articles do not challenge their reading.

Our campus bookstore saves unsold copies of *The New York Times* for me, which I pass on to each student at no charge (my classes are small, typically 8 to 10 students). Each student receives a different edition, usually spanning a recent two-week period. I reserve a private dining room with large tables adjacent to the student dining hall; my department covers the cost of bagels, juice, and coffee for the class.

In preparation, I assign Walter Cronkite's essay "How to Read a Newspaper," part of the How To series published by International Paper Company. In this brief, readable essay, Cronkite recommends doing a three-minute overview before actually reading a newspaper. After we get our breakfast, this is exactly what we do. Students spread their newspapers flat on the table and flip over every page. They scan each page (I urge them not to be distracted by the disproportionately sized ads) and put a large *X* next to any article or editorial that looks interesting to them. And I do this exercise along with them.

Then the students choose one of these articles to read in its entirety. A handout instructs them to underline or highlight key points, because each of them will summarize the article for the class. They must also underline any unfamiliar words they encounter (a given with *The New York Times*) and look up at least two of them, using the dictionaries I bring to class.

After they finish reading, they succinctly summarize for the class the main idea of the article and mention three details that they consider significant. They also explain why the article or editorial first caught their eye and how they respond to the points made by the author. Finally, they tell the group the meaning and correct pronunciation of two new words from the article.

If my class is large, these oral summaries may require two sessions to complete. Although the second class occurs back in our classroom, without breakfast, interest is sustained because students have selected articles on a wide range of topics. As time permits, I ask questions to spark discussion on the topic of each article.

My short-range goals are to pique students' interest in newspaper reading in general and to expose them to *The New York Times.* Two popular courses at D'Youville require students to read *The Times,* but this can be a formidable assignment for

My long-range goal is to encourage developmental readers to make newspaper reading a part of their lives.

developmental readers. *The Times* has small print and longer articles, many on political and international events (topics that weaker readers tend to feel less comfortable with). Sentence structure is more complex, and vocabulary is more sophisticated. However, my in-class activity shows students that when they peruse each section of *The Times,* they discover many intriguing articles. Because my course includes vocabulary instruction, I also want students to see its relevance. This occurs as they find many unfamiliar words in *The Times,* sometimes even words that I taught earlier in the semester.

My long-range goal is to encourage developmental readers to make newspaper reading a part of their lives. My students appreciate receiving the gift of an impressive-looking newspaper and a nice breakfast, and they are usually surprised to find *The New York Times* more "reader-friendly" than they had expected. This activity provides an incentive for developmental reading students to return to the newspaper, and it enables them to feel more confident and curious about reading a college-level newspaper. As my students sip coffee and juice, munch on bagels, and read *The Times,* they are on their way to becoming real readers.

This is the handout I provide my students:

Peruse your copy of *The New York Times,* and select one article or editorial that interests you. Read it silently. As you read, mark (i.e., highlight, underline, and use symbols in the margins) the main idea and any details that seem significant. Also, underline any unfamiliar vocabulary words.

After each person in your group has finished reading, you will share your article with the group as follows:

- Tell the title of the reading selection.
- Tell the author of the selection.
- Tell the date of your copy of the newspaper.
- Tell the group why you chose this article or editorial. (Be detailed and specific; you must say MORE than "It looked interesting.")
- Tell the group the main idea of the article or editorial.
- Tell the group at least three details that you consider significant.

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**When this article was written, Sharon Green was a Reading and Writing Specialist at D'Youville College.*

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

HELPING STUDENTS BEGIN THE PROCESS OF CAREER CHOICE

Avis Hendrickson

The Institution

New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) is an independent senior institution of higher learning. Multiaccredited, nonsectarian, and nonprofit, it operates year-round and provides undergraduate and graduate career education for men and women of all ages and from all walks of life. Programs lead to associate, bachelor's, master's, and Doctor of Osteopathy degrees.

The mission of New York Institute of Technology is based on fundamental principles that include career-oriented education, access to opportunity and applications-oriented research, and service in public interest. NYIT maintains three campuses — Old Westbury, Manhattan, and Islip — offering courses in traditional and accelerated formats in day, evening, weekend, and distance learning sessions. The college is strongly committed to the principles of access.

Classroom Setting

The First-Year Experience Program at New York Institute of Technology includes several strategies designed to increase student retention. One of those strategies is the College Success Seminar, a two-credit required course that is part of the core curriculum. The curriculum of the College Success Seminar includes library, student services, and academic units. The course is team-taught and presented in seminar format. Class size is small, with a minimum of 10 students and a maximum of 20. The full course description for the College Success Seminar is as follows:

> *College Success Seminar (CIS2).* This course provides students with the tools necessary to succeed academically and socially in their collegiate years. In this course students receive an overview of the campus environment and engage in instruction and activities that will both advance them toward their career goals and promote their academic achievements. Students learn strategies to handle the social, emotional, and academic rigors of the collegiate experience through sessions in college-level study skills and time management, research methods and writing, critical thinking, health and stress management, and current social issues impacting academic work environments. The course also has a strong career exploration and planning component in which students examine potential career choices and appropriate academic programs. This course is required of all freshmen, as well as transfer students entering NYIT with less than 12 college credit hours. All students who desire to improve their academic adjustment to college life, study skills, or career exploration are encouraged to take the College Success Seminar.

Instructional Strategy

In the first week of classes, College Success students receive a syllabus and career portfolio guide. The career portfolio guide has a description of each career-related assignment and the due dates. The career assignments include library searches, interviewing a professional in the student's chosen field, and bringing classified job announcements to the classroom. Selecting a classified job announcement assists students in further defining and refining their career objectives and promotes directed career planning. The assignment requires students to select a job announcement for a position they would like to have once they graduate. Consistent with the practice of using the same textbook for each student in the course, one resource is used for the job listing assignment — the Sunday edition of *The New York Times*. This paper is easily accessible and features a listing of positions from a wide array of career interest areas.

Students are referred to certain sections of the newspaper — either section 10, Help Wanted; section 4, Week In Review; or section 3, Money and Business — to identify a position they would like to have on graduation. On the date the assignment is

Students learn strategies to handle the social, emotional, and academic rigors of the collegiate experience through sessions in college-level study skills and time management, research methods and writing, critical thinking, health and stress management, and current social issues impacting academic work environments.

due, students are asked to volunteer to write their position announcement choices on the chalkboard. This activity takes about ten minutes. Once the listings are placed on the board, each volunteer reads his or her selection. As a class we then decode the position announcements. The decoding is an analysis of the position's educational requirements, work experience, and fit with the student's preferred work environment. Generally, the job description can be decoded to identify the job setting, work environment, office or company site, independent or collaborative responsibilities, skills needed, and experience required. This information can then be transferred and applied when students make their four-year plan of course selections, decision to participate in extracurricular activities, and selection of career-related experiences through volunteering, internships, co-ops, and student-government-related activities. The exercise provides clarity about what students should do from first year through graduation in order to meet their career objectives.

Generally, students in the College Success seminar have varying abilities and an assortment of career interests. Using the Sunday *New York Times*, with its vast listings of positions in a wide range of occupations, allows the assignment to be generally applicable regardless of the student's major and career choice.

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**At the time of submission, Avis Hendrickson was Assistant Dean of Student Development at the New York Institute of Technology, Manhattan campus.*

"NO HORSES AT THIS WEDDING, PLEASE."

Malcolm D. Gibson

The Institution

The University of Kansas, located in the eastern part of the state, is a Carnegie Research I institution with an enrollment of more than 25,000 students.

Instructional Strategy

The following sentence was the final "answer" on "Jeopardy": "This American figure from the Revolutionary War could be described as quisling." The next day, I posed that Final Jeopardy to the students in my upper-level editing and reporting classes. A chorus of voices rang out with the correct response: "Who was Benedict Arnold?"

None of my students had seen the TV show the day before, but they did have an advantage. The first week of the semester, they had faced a similar question when they were asked to define the italicized word in this sentence: "Western attempts to probe who killed whom in Yugoslavia between 1941 and 1945 — and particularly the role of the Catholic church in *quisling* Croatia's genocidal drive against Serbs and Jews — were scarcely serious because they met political objections." That time, only 2 of my 60 or more students had been able to answer the question correctly.

The sentence had come from the Week in Review section of the Sunday *New York Times*. All of my students are required to read it each week. As the quisling example illustrates, they are responsible for literally every word.

Being a success on "Jeopardy," while perhaps a noble goal, is not the chief reason for using *The New York Times* in my journalism classes at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Among the main motivations are the following:

The Need for Journalism Students to Be Exposed to Quality Journalism

The Week in Review section contains stories written by some of America's best journalists. The stories are written in a way that, I believe, the next generation of print journalists are going to be required to do more of, and a lot sooner, in their careers. Because of CNN, the Internet, and the like, print's "immediacy" role has been lessened, or even lost. Its role to explain events, not just report them, is increasing. Today's students must learn to do that difficult task earlier in their careers, long before they have had an opportunity to mature into seasoned journalists. The stories in the Week in Review expose them to the journalism they will be required to do — and do well — to succeed.

To accomplish that goal, my students are required to read all the articles in the Week in Review section and are quizzed on specific aspects of the stories, not just vocabulary. All questions are open-ended. An answer, in 10 to 15 words, must capture the essence of an article's purpose. Moreover, in my reporting classes, we set aside at least a half hour each week to discuss the writing and reporting of the stories, specifically focusing in on what the reporter needed to do to write the story as it was published. Then, students are encouraged to apply the same techniques in their own reporting for the class and the *University Daily Kansan*, the student-run daily newspaper, where their stories appear.

The Need to Make My Students More Aware of the World Around Them

Each year, the top journalism students take a highly competitive test administered by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund for coveted newspaper internships. (Only about 1 in 10 who take the test are selected.) The section of the test that is most feared is current events. After reading the Week in Review section for a semester, students have a good grasp of the events moving the world ahead — and not just with Eastern Europe, the Middle East, or the most recent scandals in Washington — but on such topics as anachronistic rock groups regaining their popularity, Yiddish words that have crept into our language, and gourmet delights such as a *geoduck* (a giant clam).

Having a perspective on all of our society — local,

national, international, and even the quirky — helps them to be whole, intellectually and perceptually. This, too, is part of the discussion and quizzes. Students also are required to apply the perspectives they find in those stories — not only in subject matter but in the "voices" reporters seek out — in their reporting for the class and the *University Daily Kansan.* The weekly quiz asks not only *about* the stories but also the *why* — why it was important to report, and why it was or should be important to readers.

And the Need to Keep Horses from Traipsing Down the Aisle with the Bride on Her Wedding Day

A student once had a question about the use of a word in a sentence on a quiz. Part of the sentence read: ". . .and the wind swirled Wilma's hair as her horse raced up the bridal path." I, of course, wanted them to change "bridal" to "bridle." The student, a good one in my classes and all others, asked: "How am I supposed to tell the difference?" I responded: "Osmosis." Then I explained that the only way to recognize different words was to bump into them as often as possible. *The New York Times* offers me the opportunity to get them to bump into a lot of words very often.

The bridal/bridle incident spurred my use of the Week in Review section. It was and is an effort to get them, as upcoming reporters and editors, to recognize and understand good writing, as well as the exact meanings of words. Words convey thoughts. That's why, when they read the section, they have a dictionary at hand. *Quisling* was on the first quiz I gave. Few remembered even seeing the word. That's not unusual. When most readers see words they don't know, they just keep reading, using the context of the surrounding sentences to grab the meaning. If asked later, those same readers never even remember seeing the word. That's okay for regular readers. Not for prospective editors. I demand that my students begin the difficult task of sensitizing themselves to see — really see — every word they read, in every sentence, every paragraph, every story. Getting students to see every word is an important step in becoming a good editor and writer. So on the quizzes, in addition to the questions on overall content there is a comprehensive vocabulary section, with many of the words coming from *The Times.* By semester's end, my students see all the *quislings* — and know the meanings, an important step to becoming truly literate and a necessary requirement for success in their chosen professions.

It's also important unless, of course, you really do have a horse at your wedding.

A Postscript

I even use the daily crossword from *The New York Times* in my classes, another important step in my effort to get students to bump into words as often as possible. I break them into three-person teams (different for each puzzle), and the students can use any resource, including the Internet, to root out the correct answers. I do this in 15-minute blocks, and it usually takes them two sessions to complete the puzzle. I start with the Monday puzzle (the easiest) and work my way through the week as the semester progresses. Winning team members get a reward: individual packages of M&Ms with peanuts (something even college seniors appreciate).

The puzzles also are important because they get students to look at words from different perspectives — is the word a noun or a verb or a pun? — and to think about how words can be used in so many different ways. It enhances their critical thinking skills. The puzzles (and the M&Ms) are so popular, in fact, that on one spectacular spring day, the first after a rather dreary winter, I made this offer: We could cancel the remaining hour of the class or break into teams for a *Times* crossword. The vote was unanimous. To my surprise, the *Times* crossword won.

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ANALYZING NEWS CONTENT BY USING *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

Robert A. Logan

The Institution

The University of Missouri is a Carnegie Research I institution enrolling approximately 22,500 students.

Classroom Setting

Journalism 10, The News Media's Ethics and Social Responsibility, is a service course open to all undergraduate students who are not journalism majors.

Instructional Strategy

Students are given two options for completing this assignment. In Option 1, students are asked to analyze news coverage on the front page of *The New York Times* for any 10-day period since 1992. The criteria for the analysis are provided to each student. For Option 2, students write a case study using a more qualitative, free-form approach about how *The New York Times* covered one ethics topic. The selected topic can be about journalism or any other major profession such as politics, law, government, medicine, science, business and financial institutions, and engineering. The case study should be a recent topic that *The Times* covered either for several days, or extensively in one article on one day.

The primary purpose of this assignment is to help students increase their media literacy while writing a required term paper. The subtleties and nuances of news judgment often become clearer to students as they read a newspaper in a systematic manner. For many students, the assignment is their first exposure to *The New York Times* or a news organization with a national and international orientation. The experience often challenges student predispositions about bias and parochialism in the press.

The assignment also requires some students to gather data in a systematic manner and then interpret what the data suggest without overextrapolation. The gathering and interpretation of quantitative evidence is a useful skill that few students experience in many undergraduate programs. If students choose the qualitative approach, they must provide a literature review and generate their own evaluation criteria.

The work required of students is equivalent regardless of the selected option. Papers must be about 10 pages, typed, double-spaced on white paper, with complete citations on separate pages. The paper's originality (if germane), spelling, grammatical and scholarly accuracy, use of citations, comprehension of the literature, and compatibility of the topic to be explained in a short paper all affect a student's grade. Students are surveyed during the third meeting of the semester to select their option preference. The papers are due the 11th week of a 16-week semester; on a special Saturday morning class in the 13th week, students present to their peers the best three or four papers within each option. A complete explanation of the assignment is presented below.

OPTION 1

Analyzing Depth of News Coverage: Instructions to Students

Please catalog the following criteria regarding news coverage on the front page of 10 consecutive days within *The New York Times* since 1992. Please ignore the Indexes (usually called Inside and News Summary) that are on p. 1. Also, ignore any ads and promotions of news stories and photographs. Read the complete story; most "jump" from p. 1 to other areas within the newspaper.

First count up the number of total stories for all ten days; then provide tables/charts that summarize:

- The frequency of episodic and event-orientation stories compared to the sum of all stories

The subtleties and nuances of news judgment often become clearer to students as they read a newspaper in a systematic manner.

- The frequency of reporting with a social, historical, economic, ethical, or legal background compared to the sum of all stories
- The frequency of a human interest approach to framing a news story, compared to the sum of all stories
- The frequency that stories feature conflicts among quoted sources compared to the sum of all stories
- Topic emphases within the sum of all stories (e.g., national, international, U.S. regional, politics, government, business, communications, diplomacy, legal affairs, economics, major social issues)
- The frequency that mobilizing information is provided to readers (are resources, books, phone numbers, contacts placed in a sidebar adjacent to the story?) compared to the sum of all stories
- The frequency of a favorable, unfavorable, or mixed impression left with readers about key news sources or topics within all stories

As an example for the first criteria, simply set up a table that looks like this:

Number and percentage of stories with episodic reporting: _____

Number and percentage of stories with event-orientation reporting: _____

Total number of stories for 10 days: _____

Then, count them up and provide similar tables for the next six criteria.

After you have all the facts and present the findings from tables, ask yourself, and write about:

- If there are more news stories originating from episodic and event-orientation than news stories with a social, historical, economic, ethical, or legal background orientation
- If there are more news stories with a human interest focus than news stories with an educational context
- If there are more news stories that emphasize conflicts among sources than news stories that do not emphasize conflicts among sources
- If there are more governmental officials interviewed than news sources reflecting other types of backgrounds
- If there is any impression left by aggregate of reporting that seems to be favorable or unfavorable toward government, industry, public interest organizations, or other types of social institutions
- If the impression left by aggregate of reporting seems to be favorable, unfavorable, or mixed toward specific demographic types (such as low, middle, or high-income persons, gender differences, race, religion, geographic location, age categories)
- If the stories provide mobilizing information — such as, examples of how to learn more about the topic, or how to take individual initiative

Please answer these questions and provide examples from the stories read. Please be careful not to exaggerate the overall implications of the findings; they represent the front page for a selected 10-day period only. Please remember that all seven criteria should be applied to each story.

For the purposes of the assignment, event-oriented reporting is operationally defined as a story that primarily reports on information originally obtained from a news conference, speech or press release from a university, public interest group, government agency,

The gathering and interpretation of quantitative evidence is a useful skill that few students experience in many undergraduate programs.

scientific organization, biomedical organization, or industry. All stories categorized as nonevent-oriented do not originate from a news conference or press release from a university, public interest group, government agency, scientific organization, biomedical organization, or industry.

Episodic reporting means the story is a follow-up to an event that has been covered during a several day period. For example, after Princess Diana's death, most newspapers covered news related to her accident on the front page for several weeks. The initial story about Diana's death is an example of event-oriented reporting (i.e., her death was announced in a news conference by the French police and Buckingham Palace). But all ensuing stories in the aftermath of her death are considered examples of episodic reporting (i.e., it follows an episode with many twists and turns).

News stories with a social, historical, economic, ethical, or legal background orientation focus on broader issues such as sociological, cultural, ethical, historical, educational, ethical, scientific, and biomedical questions, contentions, problems, and topics.

Normally, this is clear from the story's opening paragraphs and clearly reflects independent, reportorial enterprise. Usually the focus of these stories (a) primarily excludes human interest reporting about the featured source in the story; (b) is not from a news conference; (c) raises sociological, cultural, ethical, historical, and educational, questions or contentions; and (d) explains, elucidates, clarifies, describes, or analyzes a news item.

Human interest reporting is operationally defined as a feature story in which the focus of the article centers on the personality, characteristics, demeanor, lifestyle, and habits of a featured source, or the ambiance surrounding a featured source's work. This contrasts with stories centered on a social, historical, economic, ethical, or legal orientation, or an educational context.

All of the stories categorized as human interest stories primarily contain background that concentrates on informing readers about the personality or lifestyles of a featured source. These types of stories contrast with stories centered on a social, historical, economic, ethical, or legal orientation, or an educational context. The latter provide more background about the previous history of the featured source's interest, explain how his/her work fits into a context, and explain its economic, sociological, cultural, or practical impact to readers.

Conflict reporting is operationally defined as stories that primarily contain arguments, debates, disputes, or disagreements between primary sources. Stories that primarily focus on a body of work, ideas without refutation, critical discussion, or challenges are categorized as non-conflict reporting.

Favorable or unfavorable direction within news coverage is determined by criteria proposed by Budd, Thorp, and Donohew (1967). Please stand in for a reader as you make this determination. Is the overall impression left by the entire story favorable, unfavorable, or mixed about key news sources or the overall topic? If a story does not leave a strong or mixed impression, simply count how many stories are favorable, unfavorable, or mixed from the grand total of all stories.

According to Budd, Thorp, and Donohew (1967), favorable commentary depicts issues or individuals as progressive, peace-loving, moral, intelligent, unified, law-abiding, or exercising leadership. Favorable commentary suggests social cohesion, cooperation, political and economic stability or strength judged on the basis of a person's or an issue's contribution to political, social, or economic affairs. Unfavorable commentary depicts issues or individuals as backwards, domineering, impractical, unlawful, disunified, immoral, and lacking in leadership. Unfavorable commentary suggests social conflict and disorganization and economic instability or weakness judged on the basis of a person's or an issue's disruption to political, economic, or social affairs.

The more sophisticated and better explained the criteria, the better the analysis will be.

OPTION 2

Analyzing Journalism Ethics or Coverage of Ethics in Other Professions: Instructions to Students

To complete this option, please find and analyze one longer story, or a series of related stories, in which *The New York Times* reports about ethics in a major profession. Please try to use examples within the past decade.

Please look for stories about journalism or finance-business, law, medicine, science, politics, or government in which the primary focus is on ethical practices. All students should categorize what ethical issues are raised by the reporting and note the variety of topics that are discussed.

Option 2 contrasts with Option 1 because it is less structured and students may not have to read as much news coverage. Conversely, there are challenges in Option 2 that are not in Option 1. Each student needs to select a set of criteria used to judge the quality of *Times* coverage of an ethical problem. The criteria and resulting analytic framework must be derived from the literature about news coverage of ethics.

The more sophisticated and better explained the criteria, the better the analysis will be. Therefore, students trade extensive reading of news coverage in Option 1 for significant reading about ethics in Option 2. Students also need to use citations far more extensively in Option 2 than in Option 1. The course syllabus explains how to present citations and provides some literature about journalism ethics and broader ethical theory to help each student get started.

Each student who selects Option 2 should answer these questions:

1 What criteria can be used to evaluate news coverage?

2 How did the actual reporting match the selected criteria — what was included and what was excluded?

3 Why was the story deemed newsworthy?

4 Did the news coverage leave a prevailing impression about the subjects of the articles?

5 How socially responsible was the reporting?

Reference

■ Budd, R. W., Thorp R. K., & Donohew, L. (1967). *Content analysis of communication.* New York: Macmillan, pp. 53–54.

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TEACHING BY EXAMPLE: NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS AS A TEACHING TOOL IN JOURNALISM CLASSES

Clint C. Wilson II

The Institution

Howard University, located in Washington, DC, is a private, comprehensive research institution enrolling approximately 10,500 students. It offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. The university was founded in 1867 and has traditionally served students whose heritage is African American, African, or of the African diaspora including Caribbean, Central, and South American nations. In addition to schools and colleges dedicated to the study of the various arts, sciences, and humanities, Howard University houses professional graduate schools including medicine, dentistry, law, and divinity.

Classroom Setting

Journalism 202 (Reporting and Writing) is a three credit-hour undergraduate course designed as the sequel to its prerequisite course titled Fundamentals of Journalism. Students are typically sophomores majoring in print or broadcast journalism. Because the course seeks to develop writing skills through the coaching method, its enrollment is restricted to a maximum of 15 students.

Course objectives are the following:

1 To develop and enhance student skills in news gathering, reporting, and writing techniques
2 To provide practical experience in preparing news and information articles for publication
3 To analyze daily newspaper content regarding coverage of African American and other cultural minority groups

Instructional techniques include lectures, class discussions, required reading of national daily newspapers (e.g., *The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and other news periodicals), and individual and team reporting assignments. The rationale for use of national newspapers is based on the premise that news writing techniques are improved by (a) critical *reading* of quality news articles, and (b) *practice* of the writing craft.

Instructional Strategy

Class sessions begin with discussion of current news events with attention to analysis of news gathering, reporting, and writing techniques. Students are expected to keep abreast of major stories appearing in various news media and be prepared to analyze and discuss issues involving international, national, and local news — including government, politics, business, education, and law.

Particular emphasis is placed on how issues affecting African Americans and other peoples of color are reported and how such journalistic coverage may be improved. Class discussion also compares differences in coverage among media forms (television and radio news) and approaches to stories within specific media (e.g., that of *The New York Times* compared with *The Washington Post*).

Periodic unannounced quizzes are administered on current events appearing in the daily newspaper press. Students are tested on both the content of news and their attention to details, such as correct spelling of names, proper titles, affiliations, and so on. The current events discussions form the basis for lectures on various aspects of reporting and writing techniques such as interviewing, story structure, and ethics.

Instructional application of national newspapers in the course is through the use of weekly news analysis assignments. Students are asked to clip a news story from *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* and attach it to their written analysis of its form,

content, structure, and so on. Specifics of the assignment are contained in a course handout given to each student. Students are evaluated on the thoroughness and quality of their news analyses and the extent to which their own writing improves during the semester.

Reporting and Writing (Journalism 202)

Handout on News Analysis Assignments

Students will complete weekly news writing analysis assignments that are due on Thursdays. Students who miss the weekly Thursday deadline will be treated as professional journalists, that is, late work is not accepted. The assignments are based upon the expected daily reading of *The New York Times* and/or other reputable commercial newspapers. Following are format requirements for these assignments.

Clip the article from the newspaper and attach it to your report, which must contain the following information:

A. Name of the newspaper
B. Date of publication
C. Page number and section
D. Analysis in written narrative form of the article's:
    1 lede paragraph(s)
    2 organization and structure
    3 use of quotes
    4 readability
    5 transitional phrasing from one aspect to next
    6 cultural/racial biases, if any
    7 general strengths
    8 general weaknesses
    9 suggestions for improvement
    10 how story helps improve your own writing

Acceptable assignments will be typewritten (or computer word-processed) and may be on local, national, international, sports, or business news, or news-feature stories. DO NOT choose celebrity profiles, columns, opinion-editorial pieces, or movie, entertainment, restaurant reviews, and so on.

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MAKING PHILOSOPHY RELEVANT TO LIFE THROUGH THE USE OF NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Robert Ginsberg

The Institution

Penn State, Delaware County, is a location of the University's Commonwealth College in the Philadelphia suburbs. This campus draws an enrollment of about 1,500 traditional-aged and nontraditional students.

Classroom Setting

I have used newspaper assignments in most of the 55 different courses that I have taught at Penn State. These include courses in philosophy, classics, humanities, comparative literature, and Science, Technology, and Society. In philosophy, my principal field of instruction, courses (each three credits) in which I require the use of newspapers include the following:

1 *Critical Thinking and Argument.* Basic modes of reasoning.

2 *Ethics and Social Issues.* Application of ethics to contemporary social controversies, such as racism, sexism, militarism.

3 *Moral Value.* Great Western theories of ethics.

4 *Values in the Western Cultural Heritage.* Love, despair, selfhood, and community.

5 *The Meaning of Human Existence.* Life-and-death questions that come with being human.

6 *Professional Ethics.* Applications of ethics to medicine, law, business, and journalism.

7 *Introduction to Philosophy of Law.* Theories, applications, and cases.

8 *Business Ethics.* Theoretical and practical explorations of ethics in the business world.

9 *Philosophy of Art.* Theories, applications, and experiences in aesthetics.

10 *Philosophy of Death and Dying.* Values in human mortality.

11 *Technology and Human Values.* Interrelationship of value questions, social structures, and technological advances.

12 *Philosophy of Values.* The human core to morality, art, and religion.

Courses 1 through 4 are at an elementary level of introduction. Courses 5 through 8 are at the 100-level, a higher form of introductory work. Courses 9 and 10 are at the still-higher 200-level. Courses 11 and 12 are 400-level specialization courses intended for juniors and seniors.

All these courses are taught by the Socratic discussion method, usually in a roundtable setting. The 400-level courses are taught as seminars with presentations of papers by each student. Enrollment ranges from 30 to 35 in the introductory courses, and from 8 to 20 in the advanced courses.

The newspapers required are *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times.* The primary academic purpose in using newspapers is to have students actively connect classwork with the world. Philosophy is a rather abstract discipline. Its examples are traditionally "textbook cases." By turning to the newspapers, the students must forge the links between philosophical thinking and real-life cases. Another major purpose is to awaken the students to their responsibilities to the world. Thus, while the course is going on, the world too is going on. Both course work and "world work" call on the students for understanding, evaluation, and action.

A further purpose is to develop in students critical skills in reading about the world, just as in reading philosophical texts. Students should look for presuppositions, values, and perspectives in the news presented to them. They are to become judges rather than recipients. Getting students to critically

explore a national newspaper during a semester also aims to shake them out of their parochialism. They may come to look with a questioning alertness at what appears — and what does not appear — in their local newspapers. Finally, because the students are required in their undergraduate course to read cosmopolitan and well-written newspapers, they may continue the habit of reading such papers, which is good for their general education throughout life.

Instructional Strategy

The assignment requires students to search the newspapers for material relevant to the course. They are thereby obliged to figure out the purpose of the course and weigh what is going on in the world. In addition to news items and editorials, students are asked to look at advertisements, cartoons, photographs, and want ads. To help the students sharpen their search, I initially bring a newspaper to class, and opening its pages for the first time, I read out items that may be related to our work. The students then have to draw out the relationship.

As students find pertinent materials on their own, they are asked to post them on the bulletin board in the classroom or make copies for distribution to the class. Two or three class sessions are made available for students to discuss the items they have selected. Because they have usually chosen different items, the students question one another about the issues at stake. If the same news story is chosen by several students, they have to engage in dialogue to work out their different interpretations and judgments.

One exam features an essay question on the newspaper work, in this form:

> Summarize one item from the newspaper that you have selected as related to our work in this course. Then apply to that item the insights and theories we have studied, and draw out of that item fresh insights and new problems demanding philosophical study. Evaluate everything at stake with careful reasoning.

The students are not required to subscribe to the designated newspapers. They may purchase them locally or review them in the campus library. I do not combine newspaper use with other media. But once students have developed critical skills in looking at reality through print, they are encouraged to turn their attention to the representation of the same events on television, radio, and the Internet. Textual study of newspapers helps them see nonprint media in a new light.

Classroom discussion, oral reports, and written exams give evidence of how well the students have explored the world through the newspapers and how well they have exercised their critical thinking in responding to the material. The students generally progress from a passive, uncritical, noncommittal attitude toward the world's events to a questioning, puzzled, explorative consideration of the events of the day, and thence to a mature assessment of daily life and their part in it.

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SCIENCE
CHEMISTRY

USING NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS TO AID LEARNING IN THE SCIENCES

Keith D. Beyer

The Institution

Wisconsin Lutheran College is a small, private liberal arts college with an enrollment of around 500. Students are primarily of traditional age, and 75% live on campus.

Classroom Setting

At Wisconsin Lutheran College, enrollments in the sciences are small, ranging from 5 students in upper-level courses to 36 students in lower-division classes. Even with these smaller course enrollments compared with enrollments for similar courses in large universities, it is still a challenge to give students one-on-one attention. To this end, I devised biweekly cooperative learning projects in the Chemistry 101 course using articles from *The New York Times*.

Instructional Strategy

Fundamentals of Chemistry (Chem 101) is the course for nonscience majors, and enrollments usually range from 20 to 30 each semester. The course consists of three lectures and one three-hour lab per week in a 15-week semester. The textbook, *Chemistry in Context*, approaches learning chemistry in the context of addressing environmental issues: Urban air pollution, stratospheric ozone depletion, global warming, water pollution, acid rain, and energy consumption are the topics covered in one semester. Finding articles in *The New York Times* covering one or many of these topic areas is not difficult. *The Times* often carries articles of environmental concern that can be analyzed with somewhat limited scientific understanding. The Science Times section can be a particularly fruitful source of articles. However, for a 101, nonscience majors class, I find the most useful articles to be in the main section of the paper.

During one semester, for the biweekly projects, students were placed in groups of three or four. Each student was assigned a particular role to perform: leader, recorder, or researcher. As the instructor I acted as their consultant; they could ask me any question, but I could also refuse to answer some that were too revealing. The articles to be read were handed out during the class period before the project day so that students would be prepared to begin working right away. On the project day, the students were given a set of questions to answer. Some were questions about the reading to insure they had read the material. Others were based on the reading but were more open-ended to provoke thought and group discussion. The intent was to get students to use their new knowledge base from the articles and the class to think critically about real, present-day problems — which is a useful way to convey the importance of science literacy in our increasingly technological world.

In one particular example, two articles were compared on the topic of global warming: one from *The New York Times* and one from the journal *Science*. The article in *The Times* (January 4, 1996) bore the headline: "'95 the Hottest Year on Record As the Global Trend Keeps Up" and was a report on data that had been released from the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia and the Hadley Center for Climate Prediction and Research. According to the article, the data showed a slightly higher global average temperature (0.07% C) than the previous record of 1990. The article in *Science* is a rebuttal of sorts to the *Times* article: "1995 the Warmest Year? Yes and No" (January 12, 1996, pp. 137–138). In the *Science* article the researchers were interviewed directly and were somewhat less forceful in reporting the significance of the data than the *Times* article had led readers to believe. Students were asked to analyze the content of the two articles through a few key questions I developed. Then they were asked to compare the two articles and make

The intent was to get students to use their new knowledge base from the articles and the class to think critically about real, present-day problems — which is a useful way to convey the importance of science literacy in our increasingly technological world.

judgments on the validity of one versus the other. Finally, they were asked to determine which was simply more believable to them. This process was educational not only for the students but also for me. I could see how they reacted to articles written from different perspectives and with different goals: *The New York Times* — reporting newsworthy information to the public; *Science* — reporting science to scientists.

I have found this process of using national news articles as tools in teaching science to nonscience majors very effective. Because an article is from *The New York Times*, students immediately seem to assume that it is important and worth learning about. Assigning them work in groups aids discussion and learning. I envision expanding media use in the classroom to the Internet and other sources as the flow of information grows and becomes increasingly more sophisticated.

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USING *THE TIMES* TO INCREASE STUDENTS' EXPOSURE TO THE SCIENCES

Sharon Hanks

The Institution

William Paterson University of New Jersey is a public institution that offers bachelor's and master's degrees in liberal arts and professional programs to a student population of 10,000. William Paterson primarily serves traditional-aged students but has a significant proportion of nontraditional students as well.

Classroom Setting

Although I use *The New York Times* to bring current information to all of the courses I teach, both Field Biology and the Junior Environmental Seminar have specific assignments using *The Times*.

Field Biology is a four-credit, first-year level, general education course offered by the biology department for nonscience students. Class size varies from 50 to 100. The primary goal of Field Biology is to introduce students to the complexities of the biosphere in terms of science as a way of knowing. The main focus is the structure and function of the biosphere and current environmental problems. Major recurrent course themes include the following:

- The theory of evolution and its importance to biology
- The idea of hierarchical structure and the interconnections between levels of complexity
- The relationship between structure and function
- The ideas of feedback mechanisms and control
- The importance of the questioning approach
- The idea that science is a state-of-the-art discipline

The course is structured so that the students not only learn content but also can increase their academic abilities and cognitive development. During the course the students learn how to do the following:

- Relate biology to other parts of their lives
- Broaden their perspective
- Read and explain the content of scientific articles from a secondary source
- Evaluate critically the impact of human activities on an ecosystem
- Describe the flow of matter and energy in an ecosystem
- Explain the structure and function of an ecosystem
- Explain basic ecological principles

Instructional Strategy I

The purpose of the *New York Times* assignment is to give the Field Biology students practice in the academic skills of summarizing information and using library reference systems. It also helps the students realize how science relates to their everyday lives.

Each student is to select and read an article in the Tuesday Science Times section that relates to field biology. After reading the articles, students, using a uniform format and process described in an assignment handout, write a summary and explain how the article relates to field biology. They then find in the library two citations that relate to the article. I ask them to attach the *Times* article to the summary and citations when submitted. Articles from Q & A and Science Watch in the Science section are not acceptable for this assignment because of their brevity.

Any article selected must have been published during the semester in which the course is taken to insure current topics of interest. This assignment is repeated four times during the semester and is worth 40 points toward the final course grade of 500 points. The individual submissions are assessed

based on completeness and quality. Student reaction to the *Times* assignment is gathered at the end of the semester in the course assessment questionnaire.

Junior Environmental Seminar, offered by the environmental science/geography department, is a requirement for the environmental science degree and a prerequirement for the Senior Practicum. The course carries three credits, meets twice a week for 75 minutes, and is taught in a seminar format with a class size limited to 12 students. This course is designed to give third-year students majoring in environmental science exposure to specific topics in the field. Students are expected to do library research, perform critical evaluation of articles and reports, give oral and written presentations on selected topics, participate in class debates, and design an experimental student project.

The main course objectives are to enable the students to apply their academic background to specific environmental problems, to help increase library and other research skills, to develop critical and independent thinking skills, and to provide experience in writing reports and giving oral presentations.

Instructional Strategy II

In the Junior Environmental Seminar, each student gives a weekly 10-minute oral presentation based on an article from *The New York Times*. Students are not required to subscribe to *The Times,* but it is strongly recommended. The assignment is to select from any section of *The New York Times* an article that deals with an environmental issue. The oral presentation should cover the content of the article chosen and address the following questions and requirements:

- What is the issue, question, or problem under discussion?
- Which scientific laws, theories, principles, or processes are important to understanding the matter under discussion? Be sure to explain why each one is important as it relates to the article.
- Who supports the issue and why?
- Who opposes the issue and why?
- What are the long- and short-term ecological and economic effects?
- Using the information in the article and background knowledge learned in this class and other classes, discuss your position on this issue. (Be sure to incorporate your reasoning.) This should be a well-developed discussion.

The students must also locate a related article from another source and incorporate the material into their presentation. Student reaction to the assignment is part of a semester-long self-assessment paper. The oral presentations account for 25% of the final grade in the course.

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SOCIAL SCIENCE
POLITICAL SCIENCE

HELPING STUDENTS BECOME CRITICAL READERS OF MEDIA

Christine Barbour

The Institution

Indiana University, Bloomington, is a flagship public research university with a student population of approximately 34,000.

Classroom Settings

The national media are an integral part of the two courses I regularly teach: Introduction to Political Controversies and Introduction to American Politics. Introduction to Political Controversies enrolls 180 students and is taught in a combined lecture and discussion format. The class may break into small groups of about five, or the class as a whole may debate various issues. Introduction to American Politics is a lecture class of 300 to 400 students. In addition to large lecture presentations, weekly discussion sections of 30 students are led by graduate instructors. Both classes draw primarily traditional-aged first-year students and sophomores. In both, I put considerable emphasis on helping students develop critical thinking skills as well as citizenship skills, and these come together in a classroom/homework exercise I call "Consider the Source."*

Instructional Strategy

In Consider the Source I ask students to become critical and savvy consumers of the media. The ability to critically analyze the media is essential, not only because democracies require attentive and informed citizens but because, as political scientists, we can find no better laboratory to observe our subject than in the world of current political affairs.

I have used both *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* in Introduction to American Politics, and *Newsweek* in Introduction to Political Controversies. In the latter class, I also use articles from *The Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today,* and the Bloomington (IN) *Herald-Times.* In addition, the students often go to the Web to find articles from other sources. Our goal is to become sophisticated readers/watchers/listeners of political news, and to be able to sort out the various biases, distortions, and decisions of journalists, politicians, and even ourselves that alter the content and character of the news we receive.

I ask students to focus on a number of issues that I have grouped into 10 questions they should ask themselves when reading the paper, watching the news, listening to the radio, or surfing the Web. We routinely use these questions in class, and we supplement our in-class work with background out-of-class research. My hope is that these questions (or shorter versions of them) will become second nature. The 10 questions are as follows:

1 *Who owns this media source?* Look at the page in newspapers and magazines that lists the publisher and editors. Take note of radio and TV call letters. Check out the chart on media conglomerates in the magazine *The Nation* (Miller, 1996), and see if the source is there. Look to see who takes credit for a Web site. Ask yourself: What might this owner's agenda be? How might it affect the news that you are getting?

2 *Who is this journalist (reporter, anchor person, Web master, and so on)?* Does he or she share the characteristics of an average American or of the media elite? How might that affect his or her perspective on the news? Has he or she been in politics? In what role? How might that affect how he or she sees current political events?

3 *What is the news of the day?* How do the news stories covered by your source (radio, TV, newspaper, magazine, or Web) compare with the stories covered elsewhere? Why are these stories covered and not others? Who makes the decisions? How are the stories framed? Are positive or negative aspects emphasized? What standards do the journalists suggest you should use to evaluate the story — that is, what standards do they seem to focus on?

4 *What are the issues involved?* Can you get beyond the "horse race?" For instance, if reporters are focusing on the delivery of a politician's speech and her opponents' reactions to it, can you get a copy of the speech

to read for yourself? Check the Web or sources like *The New York Times*. Similarly, when the media emphasizes conflict, ask yourself what underlying issues are involved. Look for primary (original) sources wherever possible that have not been processed by the media for you. Ask who is responsible for resolving these issues. If conflicts are presented as a choice between two sides of an issue, ask yourself if there are other sides that might be relevant.

5 *Who are the story's sources?* Are they "official sources?" Whose point of view do they represent? Are their remarks attributed to them, or are they speaking "on background" (anonymously)? Such sources frequently show up as "highly placed administration officials," or "sources close to the Senator." Why would people not want their names disclosed? How should that affect how we interpret what they say? Have these sources been through "the revolving door" of politics and journalism? What audience are they speaking to?

6 *Is someone putting a "spin" on this story?* Is there visible news management? Is the main source the politician's press office? Is the story based on a leak of some sort? If so, can you make a guess at the motivation of the "leaker"? What evidence do you have for that guess? What is the "spin"? That is, what do the politician's handlers want you to think about the issue or event?

7 *Who are the advertisers?* How might that affect the coverage of the news? What sorts of stories might be affected by the advertiser's presence? Are there potential stories that might hurt the advertiser?

8 *What is the media doing to get your attention?* Is the coverage of a news event detailed and thorough, or is it "lightened up" to make it faster and easier for you to process? If so, what are you missing? What is on the cover of the newspaper or magazine? What is the lead story on the network? How does the media's efforts to get your attention affect the news you get?

9 *What values and beliefs do you bring to the news?* What are your biases? Are you liberal? Conservative? Do you think government is too big, captured by special interests, always ineffective, or totally irrelevant to your life? Do you have any pet peeves that direct your attention or areas of special interest? How do your current life experiences affect your political views or priorities? How do these values, beliefs, and ideas affect how you see the news, what you decide to pay attention to, and what you skip?

10 *Can you find a news source that you usually disagree with, that you think is biased, or always wrong?* Read it now and again. It will help you keep your perspective and insure that you get an influx of views that will keep you thinking critically. We are not challenged by ideas we agree with but by those that we find flawed. Stay an active consumer of the media.

In Introduction to American Politics, I integrate current events into lectures, but the major media analysis is done in discussion sections. Having read *The Times* or *Newsweek*, depending on the semester's assignment, students break into groups of four or five to answer some or all of the 10 questions about a specific article. They then report their analysis back to the whole class. Students are graded on their participation and on regular quizzes that incorporate current events.

In Introduction to Political Controversies, we are able to focus more exclusively on current events; students bring *Newsweek* to class, and I often bring in copies of articles from other sources as well as clips from televised news shows (network news, CNN, CSPAN, and shows like "Crossfire"). We may break into preassigned groups of five to answer the 10 questions, or we may tackle them as a class. Students are graded on attendance, weekly quizzes, weekly reaction papers, and a group research paper, all of which have heavy current events components.

*Barbour, C., & Wright, G. *American government.* Copyright 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Used with permission.

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HELPING FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS UNDERSTAND HOW WASHINGTON WORKS

David T. Canon

The Institution

The University of Wisconsin, Madison, is a large (about 40,000 students) public university with a strong commitment to research and teaching. A majority of undergraduate students are in the standard 18 to 22 age range.

Classroom Setting

I use *The New York Times* in an introductory course entitled American Politics and Government. The course enrolls primarily first-year students, but there are also some sophomores. About a third of the students in the course take it as a requirement (business or education); many of the rest will become political science majors. This is a large class (450 to 550 students) consisting of three 50-minute lectures a week and one 50-minute discussion section that is facilitated by graduate student teaching assistants (there are about 20 students in each section). Students receive four semester credits for the course, and there are several sections that are designated as writing-intensive.

The course provides students with an understanding of both how the government makes policy and why decisions are made as they are by combining insider accounts of "how Washington really works," scholarly work on the governmental process, and debates on various political issues and institutions. We begin with a discussion of the foundations of our governmental system: the constitution, federalism, capitalism, and questions concerning the democratic nature of our government. Then we turn to political participation and examine public opinion, parties, campaigns and elections, the media, and interest groups. Next, we cover the American political institutions: Congress, the bureaucracy, the President, and the courts. Finally, we see how it all fits together by examining social policy, civil rights, economic policy, and foreign policy.

Instructional Strategy

I use *The New York Times* in a variety of ways. I often begin my lectures by discussing a current event that is relevant to the week's topic. For example, the recent controversies over campaign finance illustrate many of the general principles and concepts that I discuss concerning the role of money in elections. I find it useful to refer students to the relevant articles in *The Times* in order to summarize some of the high points, but not to spend the entire class time discussing the current events.

I devote some time every week to talking about the relevant Supreme Court cases for the given topic. *The New York Times* provides excellent coverage of Supreme Court decisions by providing extensive excerpts of the landmark decisions and good summaries of the lesser cases. For example, in a recent class session on political parties, the class discussed the "fusion" tactic used by third parties. This is a tactic whereby parties endorse a major-party candidate as a means of gaining political clout. A week later, *The New York Times* included an excellent discussion of the *Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party* case that held that states are not legally required to allow fusion. If I had not pointed out the article, the students would likely have missed this important case entirely (our local paper rarely provides coverage of the lesser Supreme Court cases).

In short, the most important contribution of *The New York Times* to my teaching is that it helps bring to life the theoretical and conceptual arguments that I make in lecture. If the students can read an article about the Democratic National Committee and foreign money the same week that I am talking about soft money and campaign finance, the concepts become much more meaningful. I have not required that the students purchase *The New York Times,* but I strongly encourage them to read a national

Times *articles can also serve as a vehicle for debates within the discussion section.*

newspaper by making available to them, on the first day of class, the subscription forms provided by the *Times* College Program.

Activities for Students

Another useful activity for students that uses *The New York Times* is to have several of them begin their discussion section by reporting on an article they found that is relevant to the topic for the week. This often serves as a mechanism for prompting student discussion.

Times articles can also serve as a vehicle for debates within the discussion section. The teaching assistant can locate articles on controversial issues for the students to read. For example, when the class topic is social policy, the students could read the various articles on the Senate debate over late-term abortions (or "partial-birth abortions," as they are called by opponents to the practice). The class can then be divided into pro and con sides in an informed debate over the issue.

During election years students may be assigned a specific Senate or governor's race to follow. Usually students have to go beyond *The New York Times* to acquire sufficient information, but *The Times* is a great place to start. Students then report on the campaign throughout the semester as relevant issues arise.

There is no guarantee that students will do the "highly recommended" reading from the daily newspaper, but several indirect incentives help students keep up with the reading. First, if I mention the news stories at the beginning of class and make it clear that I am not providing the whole story, students have an incentive to go read the rest of the story. Some may read only the article I mention. However, if they pick up the paper and read at least one story, chances are pretty good that something else will catch their eye. Second, discussion section participation is 10% of the student's grade. It would be difficult for students to receive an A for the discussion section if they do not keep up with current events and link them to the course readings. Some instructors may prefer to test students on the current events readings on the exam, and I am sure that a greater proportion of students would read the newspaper if that content were tested directly. Which option one chooses is a matter of pedagogical style.

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BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COURSE AROUND *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

Alan Dowty

The Institution

The University of Notre Dame is a private institution with about 8,500 traditional-aged undergraduates. Roughly 90% of the students live in campus residence halls.

Classroom Setting

Political science has generally been the second or third largest major at Notre Dame, and one of the first courses students take in the major is Introduction to International Relations. Although this course is required for political science majors, it is also a university elective. In recent years, a typical section has enrolled from 50 to 60 students who are about equally divided between majors (many of whom are prelaw students) and others. This course is offered in both first-year and sophomore-level versions.

Instructional Strategy

I have made use of *The New York Times* in international relations courses since daily delivery at Notre Dame first became available around 1983. During the intervening 15 years, my dependence on *The Times* has evolved from its use as a marginal resource to its becoming an integral, and finally a central, component of the course. *The Times,* together with written historical case studies, now supply the basic content for what might be termed an empirical or inductive approach to the topic.

Using *The Times* in such a course was an easy decision because it enables students to connect with current developments in international relations. But it was apparent at the onset that though students were interested in hearing about current issues, most would neither acquire nor read a daily newspaper unless they were required to do so. Even after on-campus delivery became available and subscriptions were made part of course requirements, readership lagged. Many students continued to try to get by on class discussion alone; more recently, some have tried to make do with the *Times* Web site despite the obvious drawbacks for later discussion and review.

The pattern of residential life at Notre Dame (and probably on other similar campuses) is, as it turned out, inimical to the habit of daily newspaper reading. Delivery problems are compounded by student lifestyles that favor late-night over early-morning activities and group activities over solitary pursuits. Students complained that they had "no time" to read the paper before a morning class; this problem was eventually neutralized by scheduling the course in late afternoon. I also learned to make the assignment and expectations as specific as possible: to read the international news in the first section plus any relevant editorials or op-ed pieces, and to skim the Business section for major international developments. Students are also asked to bring the newspaper to class and to save important articles — as identified in class discussion — for later review.

In short, in order to make an impact on student reading habits, it was necessary to make the newspaper an integral and central element of the course in all respects. Up to half of each class period is now spent in the discussion of developments since the last class. This includes either two or three days of *The Times.* (The students subscribe on a Monday through Friday basis.) As the course develops, I focus on three or four ongoing crisis situations that relate to major course themes; this also helps students learn to distinguish more important stories from more trivial one-shot reports. When important analytic pieces appear, they may be assigned for a later class of particular relevance (for example, an overview of the Asian financial crisis for the class on international economic developments).

Full integration into the course means that, yes, it will be on the exam. The first time I asked specific

exam questions related to material in *The Times*, however, I was struck by the general superficiality of the answers, even from better students in the class. Reading a newspaper, even when it was assigned, was not being approached in the same way as other reading. Students were reading *The Times* as they were accustomed to reading a newspaper — by taking in the headlines and skimming the rest. It was essential to make the point that reading the newspaper meant actually *reading* it. Clearly the habits being changed were not simply those of campus life. What was involved was nothing less than a lifestyle change. In fact, since then, my syllabus has noted, "It may be objected that reading a morning newspaper requires a change in lifestyle. That is absolutely correct. The object is to change your lifestyle."

Putting more emphasis on *The Times* and on current issues became part of a general evolution in the course toward a more empirical or inductive approach. I had long been disillusioned by texts that plunged students into theoretical issues despite their lack of historical or factual knowledge needed to understand or test theories, and I had been attracted to the use of the case method as a way of imparting a sense of both history and theory. Although I still use a text in the course, I have selected one that begins with solid historical background and builds a fairly modest theoretical structure in the latter chapters. Text reading is combined with case studies of critical decisions from the early Cold War period to the present and *The New York Times*.

Consequently, classes in the earlier part of the semester may be divided sharply between historical material and *Times*-based discussion of current issues, though even here there are cross-references. But as the course progresses, such cross-references multiply; historical patterns can be seen to repeat (or not repeat) in contemporary international relations, while the cases overlap with the history and also demonstrate the dilemmas and pressures faced by policy makers, past or present. In the end, the three strands of the course are brought together to create a modest theoretical framework designed to help students cope with future developments in international relations, just as they have been taught to cope with developments that occurred during the course.

Student reaction to this approach, and to the use of *The New York Times* as part of the approach, has been overwhelmingly positive. In written evaluations students often talk of being "hooked" on reading a daily newspaper by the experience. One student wrote, "When I go home for breaks and miss a few days of my *NYT*, I feel utterly out of the loop." A typical remark is that "reading the *NYT* is imperative for an international relations class." In the Fall 1997 course evaluations, 85% of students rated use of *The Times* as definitely worthwhile and effective, 11% had mixed views, and only 4% responded negatively. The major complaint — expressed by 15% of the students — was the amount of time required to do the assigned reading.

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USING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES TO ACHIEVE COURSE GOALS IN INTRODUCTORY AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

James Eisenstein

The Institution

Pennsylvania State University is a public, land-grant research institution located in central Pennsylvania. Penn State enrolls over 30,000 traditional-age undergraduates (18- to 23-year-olds).

Classroom Setting

Introduction to American Government at Penn State is a three-credit course enrolling over 300 students each semester. Many students take the course in order to fulfill a university-wide general education requirement in the social sciences. Consequently, the students come from a variety of majors and colleges at Penn State and range from beginning freshmen to graduating seniors. Students attend a mass lecture twice a week and a smaller discussion section (25 to 28) taught by a graduate assistant once each week.

Instructional Strategy

In addition to a standard American government introductory textbook, I require students to read a daily newspaper. Students living on campus already have access to *The New York Times* through Penn State's Newspaper Readership Program, which distributes *The Times, USA Today,* and the local newspaper to all residence halls. Off-campus students must purchase subscriptions to *The New York Times.*

Because most students in the class will not become political science majors, or indeed ever take another course in political science, my principal course goal is to provide students with a set of general concepts and specific substantive knowledge that will help them understand American politics throughout their lives. Because most of the information about politics that they need to understand will come from the news media, I provide students with repeated opportunities to practice applying concepts and knowledge to current events as depicted in the media. The class emphasizes active engagement, including small group discussions and collaborative exercises interspersed with short lectures in the auditorium where the whole class meets twice weekly.

The New York Times serves as the primary source of information about current American politics to which both specific information about the various subjects covered (for example, public opinion, Congress, interest groups) and general concepts (for example, the types of political resources employed, the strategies employed in using resources) can be applied. Throughout the semester, students receive worksheets based on current *Times* articles as small group exercises that give them practice in applying course concepts and knowledge. I also refer to articles in my lectures to provide examples of how concepts and knowledge can be applied.

Over half of the final course grade consists of scores on 10 short graded essays based on *Times* articles. Students receive a copy of a current article with its paragraphs numbered. Each graded exercise asks the same question:

> What general concepts and specific information about politics [covered in class or in the textbook] can you use to understand what is described in the article? For each concept or piece of information, discuss briefly how it applies to a specific paragraph in the article (refer to the paragraph number). Make sure you confine your answer to a discussion of how concepts and information can be applied. Do not merely restate the facts and events presented in the article.

Most students, especially at first, find it difficult to apply course concepts and knowledge to articles. Many anticipate that a large introductory course will use the "transmission model" of education, where the professor lectures and they passively take notes, memorize the facts presented, and answer multiple-choice questions on a midterm and final. The active engagement and critical thinking required to work through the in-class group worksheets and to write essays on the graded exercises poses a real challenge. The structure of the course is designed to help students meet this challenge. The main text, *The Play of Power,* employs a framework throughout that emphasizes general concepts organized around the metaphor of politics as a "grand game." As they proceed through the text and see its concepts applied in lecture, and as they repeatedly are asked to apply these concepts in worksheets and graded exercises, their performance on the exercises improves.

Course evaluations indicate that most students feel that the class enhances their ability to understand politics and that their critical thinking ability improves. They prefer the mix of lecture and small group discussion during the main class meetings to straight lecture. A majority said they were now more likely to read a daily newspaper than before taking the class.

Independent evidence that students learned was obtained by comparing the answers students gave on essays asking them to apply concepts and knowledge to *Times* articles given on the first day of class and again on the final exam. Graduate students in educational psychology trained undergraduate honors students to blind-code the essays on four dimensions: the number of general concepts used, the number of topic-specific concepts employed, how appropriately concepts were used, and the overall organization of the essay. Students showed substantial improvement on the final exam essays along all four dimensions.

Using current *Times* articles works quite well. I cover less material than I would using only straight lecture with a traditional midterm and final, but students learn more of the material that is presented. More importantly, integrating course concepts and information into a series of worksheets and exercises based on newspaper articles succeeds in enhancing students' ability to understand politics and government.

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UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF NUMBERS IN POLITICAL ARGUMENTS

Charles H. Franklin

The Institution

The University of Wisconsin, Madison, is a Carnegie Research I university with a student enrollment of approximately 40,000.

Classroom Setting

Understanding Political Numbers (PS 218) is a statistics class for first-year students and sophomores that deals with a paradox: Numbers are abstract, neutral, and value-free, but politics is concrete, charged, and value-laden. What happens when politics uses numbers for arguments? How are abstract, neutral, value-free numbers transformed in political debate into weapons? And how is it possible to use the power of numbers for sensible policy debate? Most important, how are ordinary citizens able to understand political and policy debates when they are couched in terms of competing statistical claims? The goal of the class is to explore these issues and to provide students with some tools and experience for understanding political numbers.

Instructional Strategy

My advice to instructors is as follows: Employ newspapers to bring students face-to-face by using the quantitative evidence in the real world. The goal of PS 218 is to teach students to hear the stories that numbers have to tell and to know when these stories ring true and when they don't. This is a statistics class without algebra (or at least very little). I place a great deal of emphasis on graphical presentation of quantitative information as well as the logic of the numerical story.

Newspapers are a superb source of this information, and they are, of course, precisely the medium in which students will actually encounter this information throughout their lives. My point to the students is that this is not just an "academic" exercise, and the use of newspapers proves my point.

I also compile case studies of 6 to 20 newspaper articles dealing with particular topics such as global warming or the use of sampling for the U.S. Census. This is particularly instructive because it allows students to see the development of an issue over months or even years. By selecting news articles, rather than scholarly publications, I again drive home that this is how the students will receive this information in the future, because few will become regular readers of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* or *Science*.

As for what we do with the newspapers, I'll tell that here as I tell it to the students:

> Unlike many statistics classes, we will not be concerned with memorizing formulas. As the authors put it in your textbook:
>
> > Why does this book include so many exercises that cannot be solved by plugging into a formula? The reason is that few real-life statistical problems can be solved that way. Blindly plugging into statistical formulas has caused a lot of confusion. So this book teaches a different approach: thinking. (Freedman, Pisani, & Purves, 1998)
>
> I think that if you learn to think about quantitative problems, you'll still be using this class 10 years from now. If you memorize formulas, you won't be using it 10 months from now. And my goal is for you to learn some skills and habits that you will use for a long time to come.
>
> So what will I teach you in the class? Less than you will teach yourself. Unlike statistics classes based on lectures, this course will focus on short presentations of specific tools by me, with much more time devoted to group discussion and projects done by you. You will learn far more by working out questions among yourselves, with my assistance, than by listening to a semester of lectures. This demands more of you than lectures, but the rewards are also much greater.
>
> Each class will be organized around some political or policy issue, usually taken from a newspaper article,

By selecting news articles, rather than scholarly publications, I again drive home that this is how the student will receive this information in the future, because few will become regular readers of the Journal of the American Medical Association *or* Science.

though sometimes from a TV news story or other video. These topics will include the following:

- Affirmative Action in College Admissions
- Gender Equity in College Sports
- Global Warming
- Dropping Crime Rates
- Who Gets the Death Penalty
- Polling and Public Opinion
- Forecasting Election Results
- Presidential Popularity and Foreign Crises
- The Hot Hand in Basketball (not everything has to be political!)
- The Spread of AIDS
- The Speed Limit and Highway Deaths

As the semester progresses, we will incorporate articles that you select on topics you think important.

Your reading and assignments are as follows. First, you must read a daily newspaper for the course. Any good daily paper will work, though the major national papers have a richer selection of topics. You should look for articles that deal with political or policy issues and raise statistical or quantitative issues or debates. Those stories which seem particularly provocative to you will be submitted and will form the basis for future class discussions and projects. You should turn in your articles once a week.

You will also keep a journal of your reading and reactions to articles, class discussion, and projects. This journal should summarize (very briefly) articles you've read, explain the quantitative evidence used, and raise questions about the nature of the evidence or its use. You should critique the articles you've read, in light of what you have learned in class. This journal should also ask questions about things we do in class, or applications of tools to specific problems. Your journal should show that you are thoughtfully considering these issues, and attempting your own explanation. And when you are just plain confused, your journal should explain why you are confused! Good exposition is important in your journal. Write it as if you were explaining the class to a friend.

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THE POLITICS OF GOVERNMENT — THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE

Alessandra Lippucci

The Institution

The University of Texas at Austin is a public flagship research university with a student population of approximately 48,000.

Classroom Setting

My basic American government class at the University of Texas at Austin ranges from 250 to 350 students and consists of two lectures. Each of my three teaching assistants holds two discussion sections per week. After experimenting with a number of newspapers for several years, I decided to settle on a single paper to allow me to test students on it. I chose *The New York Times,* which I have now used for over 10 years, as required reading Monday through Friday.

Instructional Strategy

I use the paper in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons beyond the obvious one of keeping students abreast of current events in American politics. Foremost among these is to familiarize students with a key pedagogical feature of the class: the politics of knowledge. We approach the paper with the premise that the context of every text, including a news story, is shaped or "framed" by its author based on a variety of implicit or explicit factors, and moreover, that the reader of every text interprets the meaning of a text in terms of his or her own concerns and understanding. Thus, the attentive reader will, on the one hand, look for signs of such framing in each news story and, on the other, attempt to discern the ways in which his or her own concerns and understanding affect his or her interpretation of the text.

Next, students consider the contents of the news story in terms of the definition of politics that comes from their textbook, *Practicing American Politics: An Introduction to Government,* by David V. Edwards and Alessandra Lippucci (1998). According to this definition, politics involves "disputes over claims to the authority to decide what is, what's right, and what works." Students are encouraged to identify disputes in news stories and editorials in terms of these three questions — What is? What's right? What works? — and to identify the claims to authority that each party to the dispute is making. Students then learn to apply the same analysis to the reporting of news stories and the writing of editorials. Having these tools with which to approach the paper sharpens students' critical thinking skills and gives them control over what could otherwise be an intimidating reading experience. I have watched my students read and evaluate news stories with and without these tools, and the difference is dramatic. They not only visibly enjoy the challenge of analyzing the stories in this fashion but also enjoy the feeling of competence that goes along with it.

Preparing Students for Tests on *The Times*

At the start of the semester, students are understandably anxious about whether they will be able to identify the articles on which they are expected to focus and the information they are expected to know for quizzes and tests. First, I make it clear that they are not to read the paper from cover to cover but instead are to learn how to read it efficiently in terms of the pedagogical goals in the course. This means learning what not to read as well as what to read and what details to skip.

Students receive a handout with guidelines on how to identify the types of stories I expect them to clip and file. Typically, these are front-page stories about disputes among competing political actors — stories, in other words, that facilitate the type of critical analysis described above. Stories with the highest priority are those that complement or update chapter material in the textbook on which the class is currently focusing. Students are also expected to keep up with major stories — especially the domestic and foreign policies of the current administration — and to learn the names of the top people who run

We approach the paper with the premise that the context of every text, including a news story, is shaped or "framed" by its author based on a variety of implicit or explicit factors, and moreover, that the reader of every text interprets the meaning of a text in terms of his or her own concerns and understanding.

the government and others who are making the news. In the domain of international relations, they are to focus primarily on stories that affect the United States, especially its domestic politics. However, to give students an incentive to keep up with the rest of the international news, I give them bonus questions on foreign policy subjects that are not directly related to American politics. Finally, the handout contains a number of sample short-answer and essay questions that draw on material from the paper. Short-answer questions usually focus on major stories, and essay questions ask students to illustrate their analysis of some topic from lecture or their textbook with a major news story of their choice. Early in the semester I show overheads with more sample questions and ask students to answer them in class. In the process they speculate on why I chose to ask those particular questions and what sorts of answers I expect to receive.

I offer my students the following tips for reading *The Times:*

- Don't let the paper pile up on you unread; there is nothing more boring than reading stale news. Reading the paper is something you must do every day without getting behind. It helps to have half a dozen file folders labeled "Congress," "Courts," "Presidency," and so on, and fill them with the clippings you think are important. If you like, buy a clip-it (a device the size of a ballpoint that clips like a charm).
- Take the front section of the paper with you throughout the day (or fold up individual articles and tuck them in your purse, wallet, or backpack) so that if you have to stand in line somewhere you can get some reading done. Make a breakfast ritual of the paper, or take it on your coffee break.
- If you find yourself spending more than 25 to 30 minutes reading the paper, then come to office hours, and we'll go through the paper together and learn how to cut down on reading time.
- If you find that you cannot manage to read the paper properly for a given day, then be sure to look at the news summary in the box on page 2 and listen to the news on television or radio. If you listen to National Public Radio ("Morning Edition" starting at 5:00 a.m. and "All Things Considered" at 5:00 p.m.) en route to school, jogging, and so on, you will recognize some of those stories in *The Times,* and if they are important, clip them but skip them. You may also watch "The News Hour" on PBS around dinnertime. (It is usually repeated on a companion PBS channel later in the evening.) If you have a VCR, you may wish to tape the program and fast-forward past those stories you don't want to watch. You may also check the *Times* TV schedule (in the Sunday Sports section) to see what guests will be on the Sunday morning news magazine shows.
- For those of you who are real news addicts and have access to cable, tune in to C-SPAN for coverage of Congress. C-SPAN coverage is complete, uncut, and without commercial interruption. Programs, which often include press conferences, political, legal, and economic symposia, special interviews, and call-in shows, are repeated around the clock.
- If you have access to the Internet you may go to www.nytimes.com; but for this class there is no substitute for the hard copy, which may be transported around, clipped, and filed.

Why I Use *The Times*

- It is the newspaper of record in this country, printing virtually complete accounts of presidential and other important press conferences, speeches, and documents.
- It is the most talked-about newspaper and the one most high-powered people read.

- It has wide international coverage as well as other valuable information on the arts and sciences that is not required for any course but is interesting to students.
- Its business news differs from that of *The Wall Street Journal* in ways that business majors find interesting.
- It is printed locally in Austin, and students receive it in time to read before the school day begins.

Student Feedback

According to student responses on midsemester evaluations, one of the features they like best about the course is *The Times*. The majority say they like knowing what is going on in the United States and in the world. Anecdotally, students occasionally report (after returning from a holiday) that, intellectually, they have risen in stature in their parents' eyes — something they attribute to their reading the paper.

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LEARNING ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH READING *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

Jerry Mitchell

The Institution

Baruch College is an urban university in midtown Manhattan that is known for its graduate and undergraduate programs in business, public affairs, and the liberal arts. A part of the City University of New York system, Baruch has an internationally diverse community of 14,000 students that represent almost every nation in the world. Many of the undergraduates are the first members of their families to attend college. A large number work part-time to support their education, and most view college as an unique opportunity to earn the rewards of American democracy.

Classroom Setting

I teach a three-credit, freshman-sophomore-level course in public affairs that introduces students to the structure of American government and the design of important public policies, such as criminal justice and the environment. Most of the 60 to 80 students in my class are majoring in business subjects such as accounting or finance. Very few of them have had any exposure to the study of American government.

Instructional Strategy

Reading *The New York Times* is a required part of my course. Beginning the third week of the semester and for the next 10 weeks, the students must clip two articles from *The Times* about the subject matter that week. The article topics include the following:

1 The U.S. Congress
2 A federal court action
3 The New York State Legislature
4 The mayor of New York City
5 Any federal cabinet department
6 Anything on taxes
7 The public's influence on government
8 Civil rights policy
9 Environmental policy
10 International trade

The articles must be from *The Times* for the weeks indicated in the course outline, and they must be originals (no photocopies). Each clipping has to be stapled, pasted, or otherwise neatly presented in a report. Next to each article, students must write a paragraph that offers a personal opinion about the topic. So that I can provide intermediate feedback, I collect half of the articles in the middle of the semester and the other half toward the end of the semester.

This newspaper assignment accomplishes several pedagogical objectives. First, it forces the students to read most of *The Times*. To find the pertinent articles, they have to look through the national and metro sections. Second, the assignment provides up-to-date information about the course topics as a supplement to the text material. For example, a current story about air or water pollution complements the readings on environmental policy. Third, everyone is encouraged to come up after class or during office hours to check whether they are clipping the correct type of articles. This is a good excuse for the class members to make contact with me and to bring up other problems they are having with the course (many of them are reluctant to talk in class because of language difficulties and cultural differences).

Fourth, *The Times* provides interesting topics to discuss in class including those which are the subject of op-ed pieces the students have read. Fifth, the assignment affords each student an opportunity to practice her or his writing skills and to think of ways to put together a quality report. It is important for students to create such a document because it is very likely that they will have to prepare reports

when working in either a business or government setting. Finally, when the students write out their thoughts about American government, I am better able to identify misconceptions and to find obvious flaws in the logic of their arguments. I can then address these issues in class.

I grade the reports based on whether the *Times* articles are from the weeks indicated and if they match the assigned topics. Although the students can write anything they want about the clipped article, I grade their writing for proper grammar and spelling. I also look at the quality of each report: whether it is neatly presented, well organized, and shows evidence of clear, careful thinking.

There is perhaps no better indicator of the impact of this assignment than when former students tell me years later that they began the process of regular newspaper reading in my class. They may not remember my name or the exact subjects examined in the course, but they invariably remember clipping articles about American government and public policy from *The New York Times.*

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POLITICS/POLICY/HISTORY

LINKING PAST AND PRESENT: DEVELOPING A SENSE OF HISTORICAL CONTEXT THROUGH NEWSPAPER READING

Richard Sobel

The Institution

Harvard University includes the oldest college in the United States among its 10 schools and 18,000 students. For many years Harvard has been one of the world's major teaching and research centers.

Classroom Settings

I usually use newspapers to complement text readings in both graduate and undergraduate politics, policy and history courses at different institutions. Moreover, newspapers at times become primary reading material in courses on public policy analysis.

Instructional Strategy

In classes I have taught at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, I use newspapers — including *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune, The Boston Globe,* and *The Christian Science Monitor* — to help students develop analytical perspectives. Students may have read some of these newspapers, but many in the classes are using newspapers as a tool for critical analysis for the first time. For the most part, students like the idea of using newspapers to help them understand how daily events fit into larger patterns and appreciate how critical reading of the papers helps in their overall intellectual development.

Beyond developing awareness of significant recent events, the goal of getting politics and history students to read newspapers regularly is to encourage their making connections between ongoing events and larger political patterns and historical trends. A good example of this occurred during the 1980s when the Reagan administration began its program of downsizing government tied to the "Reaganomics" transformation of the economy and politics. Similar issues have arisen during the Clinton administration, particularly in Vice President Gore's initiatives for "reinventing government." In fact, President Clinton declared that the "era of big government is over." These issues were widely covered on the front pages of newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post.*

Reading daily newspapers provided details of the stated reasons and specific policies that the Reagan and Clinton administrations proposed to reduce the size, costs, and regulations that government programs entailed. Particularly effective in providing a wider context for these changes were analytical articles, op-eds, and weekly perspectives pieces, in coordination with course readings that discussed contrasting historical periods like the New Deal. This was an earlier era when government had grown larger and taken on more tasks that families and communities had previously performed.

In developing this comparative context through reading both course materials and contemporary journalism, students began to develop a sense of American life before the Depression, when government was less involved. This provided a context for exploring similarities to and differences from what the Reagan and Clinton administrations promised. The course readings and discussions identified the growth of the government's role from the New Deal through the Carter years. The newspaper stories presented the details of government downsizing during the Reagan-Bush and Clinton-Gore eras. The comparisons highlighted similarities and differences between the Democratic policies of the New Deal and Republican and Democratic promises and policies in later periods of the 20th century.

In this sense, the combination of more traditional course materials with newspaper accounts and commentaries provided a wider context for and deeper

insights into understanding the change in the role of government in American life. Students attained a better understanding of the characters of various eras and forces in politics and history, as well as of the role that reading newspapers like *The Times* and *The Post* could play in their educations.

In short, contemporary journalism provides the details of current developments. Each day's paper presents intriguing complexities of the ongoing political process. Course readings, lectures, and class discussions provide context for understanding the rush of recent events. The combination of texts and newsprint provides a powerful educational tool for comprehending patterns in politics and history.

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THE SPACE OF *THE TIMES*: TEACHING GEOGRAPHIC ACCOUNTABILITY WITH NEWSPAPERS

Matthew Sparke

The Institution

The University of Washington is a public flagship research university that enrolls approximately 35,000 students. Most undergraduates are of traditional age.

Classroom Setting

I have used *The New York Times* in a course entitled Geo-Politics. This course enrolls approximately 40 third-year students and is cross-listed with geography and the Jackson School of International Studies. I plan to use a similar format, contrasting the coverage of issues in *The New York Times* with their coverage in local presses, in a new course for 500 first-year students called Global/Local: World, Region, and Local Linkages. The exercises with *The Times* will be conducted in small groups with tutors.

Rationale

Geography is a vast and wide-ranging discipline, but if there is one thing that distinguishes the work of geographers in general, it is their attention to place, spatial relationships, and most especially, the importance of different geographic contexts in shaping human life. Among the discipline's diverse contemporary contributions, such a geographic accountability to space and place is a useful pedagogic supplement to the constant call universities hear today for a rather restricted, numerical, and instrumental approach to institutional accountability. Such a geographic supplement also provides educators with a way of teaching a more inclusive and socially responsible form of citizenship, of actually taking into account all the diverse communities in which higher education finds its place. To make this critical link, reading the newspaper regularly is a rich resource.

Whether to illustrate and animate lectures, provide material for group exercises, or provide starting points for out-of-class projects, newspaper reading opens up the ivory tower and simultaneously links and teaches civic and geographic literacy. For students, knowing where they and others are in the global-local flows of information, commodities, and people ideally involves their coming to terms with more than their own place-bound experiences, diverse as they may be. Regular and disciplined newspaper reading can also teach them how what happens "over there" affects them here. In other words, it introduces them to the educational odyssey of accounting for their positioning in terms of powerful relationships — economic, political, and cultural — with other people placed anywhere from a short walk to a distant world away.

Clearly, different newspapers enable such geographic accountability at different scales. Local and alternative papers are invaluable when it comes to the urban and personal spaces in which students live. At the global end of the scale, geography, financial and specialist nongovernmental organization (NGO) reporting provides useful materials for coming to terms with the "space of flows" which comprise globalization. But in between these micro and macro scales, a respected mainstream national paper like *The New York Times* helps flesh out the national space in which American students find themselves placed as educated citizens.

Instructional Strategy

A useful introductory exercise in political geography involves teaching students to read *The New York Times* as a newspaper that provides a mediating link between the international communities on which it reports and the national community it seeks to address. One way of highlighting the significance of *The Times* in national life is simply to stress its

significance as an information resource and an op-ed mouthpiece for diverse policy makers and managers. Equally, reading *The Times* in class alongside a media-monitor magazine like *Extra* enables students to reflect on how even well-respected mainstream news media represent particular topics from what are inevitably particular (not universal and omniscient) points of view. However, a more interesting exercise for students that further encourages them to take account of the particularity of the national space of the newspaper involves reading it through a strategy of *contrapuntal contrast* (for a more elaborate explanation of this approach see Sparke, 1998). Reading the paper through contrapuntal contrast means contrasting its reporting on an international incident with local reporting from the region of the world in question. Some good examples of this approach to recent international topics include these:

- Contrasting *Times* reporting on the so-called Asian financial crisis with that of Hong Kong's *The South China Morning Post,* Singapore's *The Straits Times,* and Tokyo's weekly *The Japan Times*
- Contrasting *Times* reporting on the stumbling peace process in the Middle East with that of *The Jerusalem Post* and Cairo's *Al-Ahram*
- Contrasting *Times* reporting on the nuclear arms race in South Asia with reports from *Dawn* of Karachi, *The Free Press Journal* of Bombay, and *The Statesman* or *The Hindustan Times* of New Delhi
- Contrasting *Times* reporting on NAFTA and transborder issues in the Americas with *El Financiero* of Mexico City and Canadian papers like *The Montreal Gazette* and *The Vancouver Sun* (the latter providing particularly interesting recent contrasts in reports on the so-called Salmon Wars with the United States)

A number of aspects of this approach recommend it as a way of teaching geographical accountability. First is its practicality. With the World Wide Web as well as good research libraries providing easy access to foreign-based English-language (and non-English-language) reporting, students can work on such projects with little extra preparation of materials by the professor. Second is the straightforward way such a contrapuntal reading approach can be bolstered with some recent texts introducing students to theories of the discursive scripting of geopolitical events (O Tuathail, Dalby, & Routledge, 1998; Herod, O Tuathail, & Roberts, 1998; Agnew, 1998). These texts are sophisticated and yet accessible, even for first-year students. Third and most important is simply the fact that the approach makes students feel like active participants in the process of discovery and scholarly reflection. Professors can talk endlessly about the particular perspectives of reporting, the different interpretative and political frameworks within which the news media cover the world, and the general need for students to become critical readers of the news. But there is no substitute for students discovering this by themselves. The simple approach outlined here allows this process of discovery to move forward at its own student-centered tempo. Students can come to read and thereby hear the new sound of the internationally subdominant made equal to the nationally dominant through the process of contrapuntal contrast. They can orchestrate for themselves an edifying lesson in how national U.S. news reporting is composed out of and in relation to far more diverse and complex international arenas.

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USING *THE NEW YORK TIMES* TO ENERGIZE REQUIRED SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSES

Barry N. Stein

The Institution

Michigan State University is a large land-grant, research university with an enrollment of some 42,500 students, of whom more than 33,000 are undergraduates.

Classroom Setting

I use *The New York Times* in a 300-level social science course, War and Revolution. The course carries four credits and meets twice weekly for a two-hour period. This is a lecture class of 400 to 600 students who are mostly sophomores and who generally do not like taking a required general education course about subjects that do not interest them or that they judge to be lacking in immediate relevance to their narrow career focus. At Michigan State, all undergraduates, no matter their major, must complete two terms of social science, one 200-level course and one 300-level course.

Instructional Strategy

I have been using *The New York Times* since 1975 as part of the required readings for War and Revolution and for other required social science courses such as Global Diversity and Interdependence or Power, Authority, and Exchange. I require the students to subscribe to *The Times* for only part of the term — Monday to Friday for seven weeks covering the 4th through the 10th weeks of a 14-week semester. The delay at the start of the semester is to get the large class through the churning of drops and adds. By the 11th week, I find that *The Times* has accomplished its purpose and students can use the extra time for other readings. Most students subscribe to the paper at a 60% educational discount. The paper is delivered to their dorms or local address by 8:00 a.m. each day.

I use two devices to incorporate the paper into class and to insure that students read it; I assign the stories they will read, and I test them on the stories. I assign up to five stories each day from the paper and use e-mail to transmit the assignment to my class, usually before 9:00 a.m. (E-mail is also useful as a source of questions and feedback from students who are reluctant to speak out in a large class.) The following example of three days' assignments from March 1998 shows both required and recommended readings.

Required Reading:

Tuesday, 24 March
- Germ...
- Nigeria...
- Atrocities...
- Into...
- Recommended: Far-Right...

Wednesday, 25 March
- Blood Bath...
- School...
- Kosovo...
- Afghanistan...
- Model...
- Recommended: Yugoslavia...
- Recommended: Secrets...

Thursday, 26 March
- Rwandans...
- Arkansas...
- Town...
- Genocide...
- Guns...

During the semester, I give six 30-question multiple-choice tests, four of which have from five to seven questions based on assigned newspaper stories. The questions are simple, asking "Why, What, Who" about the headline. The Tuesday story "Germ"

resulted in this question: "Iraq Arrests Scientist Viewed as Father of Its Germ War Effort." Why? The Thursday assignment "Rwandans" was the basis for this question: "Clinton Declares U.S., With World, Failed Rwandans." What was the failure?

Why Use *The New York Times*?

There are two main reasons for using *The New York Times* in class: first, to provide students in a required course, who are largely ignorant of and disinterested in international events, with a set of common experiences and shared information; and second, to illustrate my lectures and the textbooks and make them relevant to the students.

I tell my students that the course and the newspaper are not a current events exercise. I wave my notepad, with yellow pages held together by tape and covered with post-its and marginal notes of many colors, and explain that my notes are older than they are — I've been teaching for 32 years. The textbooks as well as my lectures — and the theories, models, propositions, concepts, ideas, and thoughts that they contain — were written long ago and modified as times changed, but they are still relevant to today's events. Through the medium of *The Times,* the real world will provide the wars, revolutions, coups, aggressions, conflicts, and other events that are the subject of the course.

During Spring semester 1998, stories about going to the brink of war with Iraq provided a hook for lectures on disarmament, the United Nations, weapons of mass destruction, sanctions, just war and civilian casualties, and the nature and limitations of threats. The death of Pol Pot was the basis for discussions of ideology and the reign of terror. President Clinton's trip to Africa raised subjects such as genocide, ethnic conflict, the national interest and international inaction, and weak states. The uprising in Kosovo led us to examine ethnic conflict, guerrillas, counterinsurgency, and the seeds of conflict among revolutionaries after victory. The ECOWAS intervention in Sierra Leone was a source for analysis of coups d'etat, weak states, and regional international organizations. In addition, there were valuable one-time stories on abusive husbands, the International Criminal Court, ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, and the soldiers who stopped the My Lai massacre.

Using *The New York Times* adds a welcome measure of disruption and spontaneity to a highly structured course. The real world does not provide stories in alignment with my course outline. Big, breaking stories — or even little ones that hit the right topics — provide an opportunity for special lectures that offer background on such well-known places as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Sierra Leone, for presentations on special topics such as the nature of Security Council Resolutions and the role of the Secretary-General, and for analyzing how our lecture and textbook hypotheses predict events will proceed.

Students have to be taught how to read and use the newspaper. Reading textbook assignments the night before an exam may work for most students, but it will produce a hopeless jumble if students go through two weeks of news just prior to a test. Was the coup in Armenia, Angola, or Abkhazia? Was the genocide in Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan, or Cambodia? The paper only works if it is read daily, with students using the summary index on page 2 as a refresher for the test. Most stories that run for a week or two will have a great deal of background duplication that the students can skim as the material becomes familiar. Focusing on the headline forces the students to find out what the story is about: Who are the players? What are the issues? Why is there a conflict?

Student assessment of the newspaper is very positive. Of course they would like less work and readings structured so they could figure out test questions in advance. Many, however, comment that they like having concepts related to present-day events, being informed about what is going on elsewhere, and developing an interest in world events. Some come back after the course to find out how they can subscribe to *The New York Times* in the future.

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HISTORY

THE NEWS AS HISTORY

Frans van Liere

The Institution

The College of Charleston is a four-year liberal arts college in the South Carolina state system, with an enrollment of approximately 10,000. Most students are between 18 and 25 years of age and come from South Carolina. Many of them work part-time to pay their tuition.

Classroom Setting

I used newspapers for a one-time project in Modern Europe (History 102), the second half of a two-semester Western civilization survey course that carries three hours of course credit. This course is required of all students at the College of Charleston as part of their general education program. Most classes have between 30 and 35 students; the usual form of instruction is lecture, full-class discussion, and occasional discussions in smaller groups. The class meets twice a week for 75 minutes. Although I had occasionally photocopied newspaper articles for the interest of my students, I had never used newspapers as a regular part of instruction before.

Instructional Strategy

The newspapers used in this class were mainly issues of *The New York Times.* Supplemental materials included articles from the *New York Review of Books,* maps, and photocopies from John Merriman's *A History of Modern Europe* (1996). Students could provide their own materials as well. Most consulted their history textbook, *Western Civilization* by Marvin Perry et al. (1996), and some students used that day's Charleston *Post and Courier.*

I decided to use newspapers in this classroom because of the lack of up-to-date materials for teaching present-day European history. For the final class of the semester, I wanted my students to learn about the situation in Europe today, how it is affected by the historical developments they had learned about in this course, and ultimately, how historical issues govern the political and economic situation of today. I wanted to raise their awareness of how this can affect their lives.

For the project, I divided my class into smaller groups of three to five students and assigned each group a particular question. They could then distill the answer to that question from the newspaper clippings and materials I provided. Each group was asked to imagine itself as a committee assigned to report to the General Assembly of the United Nations and prepare a brief report. The students were asked to respond to questions such as, "What is the present state of democratic development in Russia?" "Should NATO be expanded to include Eastern European countries?" "Will ethnic conflict in Kosovo lead to a Serbian civil war?" "Will the present peace agreement secure a lasting peace for Northern Ireland?" and "Is Germany's economy weakened or strengthened by the reunification of 1990?" They were also asked to evaluate their own learning process and performance during the exercise. Each group was to present its conclusions to the rest of the class, after which a brief class discussion could follow.

The projects were graded on the students' ability to distill a synthetic view of the material, relate historical material to present-day situations, and cooperate as a group. After grading, I provided each group with a brief rationale on their grade. During the project, I noticed that few students actually were accustomed to reading newspapers and many of them were unaware of the issues the project presented.

Although most students evaluated the assignment as "fairly easy" or "fun," some had difficulty reading the newspaper articles or presenting their opinion in a synthetic way. Most students evaluated the project as a valuable learning experience. It was judged a success, both by me and by my students.

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BRINGING THE WORLD TO THE CLASSROOM THROUGH *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

John P. Willerton

The Institution

The University of Arizona is a large state university enrolling approximately 34,000 students of both traditional and nontraditional ages.

Classroom Setting

Access to contemporary world news developments, with fresh and insightful commentary and analysis, is a fundamental necessity for my introductory international relations courses. Whether conducting a large lecture course of 200 students with small breakout discussion sections or a focused honors seminar of 15 participants, I strongly encourage students to consult daily *The New York Times* or some other major printed news source. I want to expose them to a diversity of international issues while simultaneously exposing them to the national interests and perspectives of other countries. Thus, although I commend *The New York Times* to students because of its detailed attention to global developments and to differing perspectives of various nation-states, I also encourage them to use whatever linguistic abilities they have to consult foreign newspapers or to use some of the many excellent English-translation sources (for example, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*) for foreign-language news sources.

Instructional Strategy

A major focus of students' activities in my introductory international relations class is researching and writing a foreign policy analysis paper concentrating on the bilateral relations between the United States and some other nation-state (e.g., China, France, Iran). This semester-long assignment involves students assessing the state of relations between the two, but from the standpoint of the *other* nation-state. Thus, students are to assume that country's perspective, assess its view of the current relationship with this country, assess its ability to influence the United States, and so on. Course participants may select any country — powerful or not so powerful — that has interactions with the United States, though they must have enough background material and current news coverage to complete a viable analysis. I find *The New York Times* has sufficient coverage of international issues, especially for major world powers such as China, Germany, Japan, and Russia, to permit students to complete this assignment without extensive additional news sources. Often, however, they must use a diversity of current information sources. I always hope some of those sources are from the country being studied.

In a final paper limited to eight typed, double-spaced pages, students must provide (a) a general overview of relations between the chosen country and the United States from the other country's perspective (approximately two to three pages); (b) discussion of major areas and issues of concern between the two countries, noting what the other country would actually want to communicate to the United States and how that country would likely signal those concerns (approximately three pages); and (c) estimation of the future prospects for relations between the chosen country and the United States (approximately two pages). Given this research focus, the paper involves many aspects of international relations that we consider during our class. Students must think about the relative influence of the two countries (e.g., to what extent the chosen country is in a position to influence U.S. foreign policy behavior, and how), issues of common and divergent interest, and issues of perception and signaling. The assignment permits participants to develop their own national case studies, while perusing various news sources — American and foreign — to tap national interests and perspectives. In smaller, seminar-sized classes, students present the results of these semester-long analyses during in-class roundtable panel sessions.

In larger lecture classes, they share the highlights of their research efforts during weekly discussion section meetings. In the smaller classes, I organize roundtable panels in which students share their research results in structured discussions. Panels reflect either regional groupings of countries (e.g., Latin American states or European Union members) or states with similar political or economic issues (e.g., former Marxist-Leninist states). Discussions are intended to permit comparisons both across members of a panel and between panel members and other course participants. The roundtable allows us — as a group — to draw useful cross-national comparisons while being exposed to a tremendous diversity of foreign policy issues and national settings.

Predictably, students tend to analyze the bilateral relations between major powers and the United States. But some of the most creative and insightful studies have involved regional or smaller powers such as the Czech Republic, Mexico, and Sri Lanka. The selection of complex bilateral relationships, as between the United States and Iran, or the United States and Cuba, also yield especially interesting papers. Overall, each introductory class includes a regional and developmental diversity of selected countries, and I find that *The New York Times*, as appropriately augmented with other background and news sources, provides sufficient information for the assignment.

This class assignment is the most satisfying activity of our 15-week introductory course. Students gain a national area of expertise while fine-tuning their understanding of core concepts and theories in a manageable case study. Working with foreign news sources and appreciating divergent national perspectives can be challenging to many course participants, but by the end of the semester most agree that they better appreciate international policy dilemmas and opportunities even as they gain a new perspective on the United States and its place in the post-Cold War world.

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TEACHER EDUCATION

EDUCATION STUDENTS CRITIQUE CROSS-CULTURAL COVERAGE

Sharon A. Hollander

The Institution

Adelphi University is a private institution of approximately 5,000 students located in Garden City, NY. Class size is generally small — between 15 and 45 students who range considerably in age, ability, preparedness, interest, and of course, culture.

Classroom Setting

The instructional strategy described here has been implemented in a three-credit course called Child Development in Diverse Populations, which is available to both undergraduate and graduate students. The class chronicles children's physical, cognitive, and psychological growth from prenatal life through early childhood with an emphasis on similarities and differences across populations.

Instructional Strategy

Teaching future educators about culture is critically important. School-age students, particularly younger children, are exposed to teachers' attitudes and messages about diversity at a critical time. In fact, children start to absorb thoughts and feelings about people, including stereotypes, well before the age of five. Furthermore, although the benefits of parental involvement in a child's education are undisputed, well-intentioned teachers are becoming increasingly baffled by parents' cross-cultural practices, perceptions, and expectations. How can faculty address these issues and broaden the cultural horizons of preservice and in-service teachers? I have found that carefully chosen newspaper articles covering topics such as parenting, schooling, or childhood from different cultural perspectives can be the basis for eye-opening analysis and small group discussion. These articles are easy to find over the course of a few weeks and are usually quite interesting.

At first, I selected and distributed articles with a multicultural theme. Over time, having students choose their own articles has seemed more challenging and compelling. This assignment works well as one of a series of activities that rely on both printed and "real life" information to help students gradually move beyond their own perspectives. In fact, the newspaper article review helps prepare students to evaluate information from textbooks, videos, magazines, journals, and ultimately, their own ideas and practices.

Implementation has shown that this type of assignment has many benefits. It encourages examination and evaluation of information on culture from sources other than those that are traditionally academic. The task reminds students that useful information and ideas are easily accessible and may even be at their doorstep. Furthermore, students build critical thinking skills as they search for, select, read, summarize, assess, and finally discuss the articles.

This method promotes writing, and writing means learning. Through the act of writing, most students genuinely absorb ideas and information. It is important to remember that writing should be assigned in classes other than English. Opportunities for practice, such as the article critique, are beneficial for both strong and weak writers.

The small group discussions are an important part of the learning process as well. Students do most of the thinking and talking in this cooperative learning task. Group work helps build a sense of community in class and offers students a different and more friendly and constructive way to interact with one another and their instructor. In general, small group discussion capitalizes on the social context of learning and makes class more enjoyable for everyone.

The effects of this method can be assessed in many ways. For example, I circulate among the small discussion groups to model appropriate behavior, keep groups on task, hear students' responses, and

determine the effectiveness of the technique. Informal student feedback has been excellent. Formal evaluation at the end of each semester has also indicated that students find this task interesting, enjoyable, and beneficial. Finally, students who select, evaluate, and discuss these articles seem to have a better understanding of culture as evidenced by increasingly sophisticated responses to the assignments that follow, which include interviews, in-class essays, and critiques of journal articles.

Genuine understanding of culture is a crucial part of meeting the educational needs of a diverse society. Evaluation and discussion of relevant newspaper articles can be used to integrate multiculturalism meaningfully into the curriculum and build on future teachers' awareness of and sensitivity to diversity. This activity also strengthens students' thinking and language skills, increases the sense of community in class, and makes use of a resource that, unlike textbooks, they will read long after their formal education is completed.

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USING THE NEWSPAPER TO MODEL A CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS MAJORING IN EDUCATION

Rafael Olivares

The Institution

Queens College, in the borough of Queens, is one of 18 campuses of the City University of New York. Queens is a commuter institution with an ethnically diverse population of approximately 17,000 students.

Rationale

The classical structure of an elementary school lesson — in which the teachers are always in control of the students' classroom activities — has been challenged by a new curricular approach — in which the students are more in control of their own learning. Known as *constructivism*, this approach encourages the student, on the basis of previous knowledge, to discover and construct new knowledge (Burnaford, 1996). In this approach, what the student is learning is more important than the sequence of structured teaching activities. Following this trend, many colleges have begun shifting the focus of their teacher-education programs from teacher-centered to student-centered curricula. However, there are still only a few specific suggestions for modeling at the college level the constructivist performance expected of teachers in the U.S. elementary schools.

The need to model the constructivist learning environment in teacher preparation courses arises because experience shows that elementary school-teachers teach the way they have been taught, and not the way they have been advised to teach. Currently, some faculty members at the School of Education in Queens College, have been modeling the constructivist learning environment in their methodology courses. What follows is a description of the activities developed in those courses to implement the methodology of mathematics, science, and social studies for the elementary school classroom. In these activities, teacher educators use the newspaper to model a constructivist learning environment at the college level.

By the nature of the medium, many activities developed for the use of newspapers in education are, in essence, constructivist activities. Because newspapers as a source of information do not have the structure or the sequence of textbooks, students take ownership of what they are learning and become active participants in building new knowledge. Newspapers used as a source of inquiry invite the students to experience new ways of learning. Students are free to organize the information provided in different angles, and because of that they are challenged to understand the complexities of diverse sources of information (Olivares, 1993). By understanding and discovering the relationships among concepts, processes, and phenomena in a constructivist learning environment, learners are able to make interpretations through their own schema of structures. In this environment, teachers must learn how to interpret student responses in developmental terms, and they must be able to identify those terms (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Instructional Strategy

In a constructivist methodology course to teach mathematics in the elementary school, future educators were exposed to activities that model a constructivist classroom. For example, in one of the classes, students were asked to explore the newspaper and look for raw data that could be represented in graph form. Working in small groups, the future teachers experienced the idea of a constructivist mathematics classroom that is seen as a minisociety, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, and reflection (Fosnot, 1996). The whole

lesson becomes a model of constructivism because the students not only perform the activity itself but also identify the basic principles of constructivism. In this case, they were asked if the lesson with the newspaper was (a) creating meaningful learning opportunities, (b) encouraging their interactions to refine their thinking and deepen their understanding of the numerical relations, (c) advocating hands-on learning to promote interplay between old and new knowledge, and (d) stimulating their natural curiosity to develop further learning and value their prior knowledge (Martin, Sexton, Wagner, & Gerlovich, 1997).

In a methodology course to teach science, faculty asked the future teachers to develop critical thinking skills for a more accurate understanding of the nature of science. To create a learning environment that fosters scientific literacy, the future teachers were asked to use newspapers to develop a conceptual scheme of what is and what is not science. They used articles to construct the meaning of both scientific and pseudoscientific (nonscientific) knowledge. Through group discussions and content analysis of newspaper information, students identified the characteristics and qualities that make something scientific. By developing their own schemata, these students are able to develop a language of science, which allows them to recognize, identify, and articulate the differences between science and nonscience. Here again, a college course in education, by using a newspaper, is modeling not only the learning methodology that elementary schoolteachers should use later but also the relationship between the learner and the content of science. This is an important element in the new national standards for science education.

In a course in methodology to teach social studies, a professor of education engaged the future educators in newspaper-based projects that required them to work in the three areas of social studies education: factual, reflective, and affective knowledge. Students were asked to look for articles about people from different ethnic backgrounds. With that information, they created a chart that identifies differences and similarities among those groups. Using the categories of the chart as a reference, they interviewed members of ethnic groups at the college. With that data they completed the chart, testing the validity of its categories. Adding more information from other sources, including the ethnic newspapers of the communities listed in the chart, students discussed and identified the three kinds of social knowledge involved in the process. Some of the questions were: Which information listed in the categories can be recognized as factual, reflective, or affective knowledge? Which are the parameters used to identify that kind of knowledge? Is there any information from the newspaper that fits in more than one kind of knowledge? Is there any that does not fit in any kind? What can we do about it?

As these activities demonstrate, the newspaper is a versatile resource to model constructivism in teacher education programs. Creating a learning environment that leads to discovery of knowledge requires a deep understanding of the constructivist learning process, and this understanding can be achieved only through personal experience.

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