

Optimizing Cooperation in University-based vs. Industry-based Journalism Education

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Six Recommendations to Help Unite University and Industry Journalism Education

1) Expand the topic to include the wide range of journalism training programs and how they affect one another and the industry.

Professional development programs in journalism include:

- (a) university programs;
- (b) vocational/technical training focused on skills instead of liberal education;
- (c) formal, on-the-job programs offered by journalism companies;
- (d) informal training programs, including internships;
- (e) joint efforts by universities and media companies;
- (f) mid-career fellowship programs; and
- (g) media institutes.

This array can provide rich training opportunities, but it can also raise concerns. What are the standards set by various educational offerings? Are they addressing the needs of industry? Do they prepare students for the field?

2) Industry and research institutions could partner to translate academic research for the industry.

A long-standing gap remains between academic research and use of the findings in journalism practices. Conversely, some of the most pressing questions of the industry are not addressed by academic researchers. Clearly the research agendas of each group are not always in sync, nor should they be since the academy is not the research arm of the industry. Valuable academic findings could serve the industry,

however, and too often the findings never reach those in the industry who could benefit.

Those who have undertaken efforts to provide this connecting service should be commended, but greater efforts are needed. Maybe news associations could take on the task of providing web sites to provide regular reports on the practical findings of academic research.

3) Universities and the Industry can work together on action research, a form of research that develops theory from the workplace and tests it in the workplace.

The most common example of this form of research is observation. Skilled observers document behavior in the workplace and draw hypotheses, which are then tested. An example of this type of research question: How can newspapers maintain quality with reduced staffs?

This form of action research is used in business schools and other disciplines. The purpose is to reveal new and useful information. But this type of research can also help break down walls between academics and industry. It also has a certain democratizing force since it finds the knowledge in people's experiences. New theories evolve and provide information for teaching.

4) Academics can take the approach of appreciative inquiry – a positive approach that shows what is working and uses studies to illustrate what needs work.

Some bodies of research can produce the overall effect of nitpicking, providing a barrage of critical reviews of news industry practices and outcomes. Areas that fall short should certainly be noted, but there is also much to discover and learn from what is working. Academics can find valuable research in this area and build industry confidence along the way.

5) Members of the academy and the industry must tend to local relationships.

Leadership at all levels should encourage contacts, including guest lecturers, external examiners for program feedback and involvement in recruitment, opportunities for faculty to work in industry, fellowships for journalists in the university and memberships in organizations that bring the groups together. Encourage a wide range of exchanges while recognizing the related yet different missions of the newsroom and classroom.

6) Stay alert to industry changes and training needs.

Prepare students for various forms of journalism, including tabloids, community journalism and ever-evolving new media. Prepare them for business aspects of journalism. Promote an entrepreneurial spirit that will help them work as freelancers and start new ventures. Continue to teach the values of

journalism. Help students understand how to make wise, ethical decisions in the midst of journalistic transformation. Engage with industry professionals and help them do the same.

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