

The Ultimate Journalism Education

**World Journalism Education Congress
July 5-7, 2010, Grahamstown, South Africa**

By Sonia Virginia Moreira, Syndicate Chair
Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil

With Michael Bromley, Syndicate Expert
University of Queensland, Australia

With Joseph M. Fernandez, Mintues Recorder
Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia

*And Syndicate Participants (below)

Ten Tips to Creating/Maintaining the Ultimate Journalism Education

1. Journalism education needs to define the discipline and encourage people to define it and write about it. We must do this if we are going to survive and become respected as journalism scholars, not mass media scholars.
2. Journalism, on its own, does not constitute enough substance to make up a full three or four-year degree program. Journalism education needs to draw on, interact with and contribute to other forms of knowledge in the university.
3. Journalism is essentially post-disciplinary. The question of the balance between practical skills and the theoretical foundation in journalism education needs to be more clearly spelled out.

Journalism as a *culture* is lacking in journalism education. Journalism education should incorporate adequate readings and critiquing of the readings to achieve adequate integration between theory and practice.

Journalism education should consider incorporating *journalology/journography* – the study of journalism – as a particular social and cultural practice. This approach must incorporate a study of comparative approaches, of which there is a dearth at the present time.

4. What mechanisms might we use to achieve this integrated theory/practice approach? One question: How do we get students to read when they generally don't have a reading tradition? What do we do beyond bolting *reflexivity* to the course? How do we harness reflexivity to our teaching?

Reflective teaching/learning is a pedagogical issue. We can have the interventions occurring while we're teaching rather than introducing them at the end, as has been the practice when teaching nursing, fine arts, etc.

5. How is the “practice element” in journalism education delivered? It seems that journalism has its own notions of practice, and it doesn't draw on laboratory/studio/field/clinical work. There is still debate about what practice-oriented work is.
6. Is what we as journalism educators do *teaching or learning*? Journalism education is about teaching **and** learning. As journalism educators we need to show that we are focused on the students and how they develop as practitioners. We have gotten past the stage when we have a professor saying: *this is how you write a lead*. The learning imperative must apply not just to students, but also to educators.
7. Journalism technology and curriculum must keep pace of each other. For example, in one university a new and more modern journalism teaching space is being built, but the curriculum does not fit that space. This university is moving away from lectures in the final year and instituting practical activity in place of conventional teaching. This creates challenges against the present backdrop where course delivery is especially influenced by lectures and timetables.
8. We need to address the tension between industry and the academy. One of the key ways to do so is via service learning, so that journalism education engages with the community in which it is based. We need to think about how to manage the relationship among the journalism academy, the industrial location of the practice of journalism and community aspirations. We must work out the priorities.

We need to be cautious about training journalists solely to meet our industry's needs. Are our journalism graduates going to go into industry and keep reproducing the flaws in our industry, or are they going to be equipped to effect change? Journalism is no longer totally defined by employment.

We have the opportunity as educators to define “journalism by practice” rather than leave industry to dictate it. We should seize this opportunity during this moment of crisis, and amidst the digital revolution, and reaffirm journalism's usefulness to the community.

We must continue to attempt to define journalism. The key difference about the study of journalism is the important issue of how cultural aspects create such messages. The ideological formation of journalists occurs over a lifetime and we need to understand the journalistic formation of ideology. Journalism is not just about production, but about texts that are produced.

9. Participatory journalism is becoming more prominent. Journalism is a mode of participatory communication, and it draws on a broad sense of practice-based communication. Journalism's objective is to explain to the world what is going on around it. In response to what we do, communities can react.

Journalism needs to be defined not just for the benefit of educators, but also for students. Journalism is about:

- being responsible for neighbors;
- being a public intellectual and giving relevant meaning to complex issues;
- empowering communities and individuals;
- performing an educational service to communities by providing knowledge beyond their schooling;
- afflicting the comfortable and comforting the afflicted;
- advocating freedom of expression to deal with abuse of power by all who wield it; and
- correcting the imbalance of power in favor of ordinary people.

10. Journalism is a public, service-oriented profession. Its practice involves the application of informed yet skeptical inquiry, in the pursuit of expository, clarifying and useful information. It involves the broad sharing of that information in accessible and participatory forms. Essential to the health of the journalism profession is the consistent advocacy of freedom of expression and the holding of those wielding power to accountability.

***Syndicate Participants** included: Ale' Smith, Joseph M. Fernandez, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Carlos Alexandre, Maija saari, Martin Hirst, Violet Valdez, Corina Cepoi, M. Hanna, Andrea Rubenacker, Megawati Wijaya, Jeanne du Toit, Simphiwe Sesanti, Bevelyn Dube, Effendi Gazali, Deddy Mulyawa, Sonia Virginia Moreira and Michael Bromley.