

Diversity in Journalism Education

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Defining Diversity – needs to be a wide definition, including race, ethnicity, gender, religion, language, disability, geography (ie rural), along with specific conditions, such as HIV status. This broad definition is necessary so as to not to confine the issue to simply one of race or gender. Also, a wide definition allows for local particularities to be paid attention to.

Attitude Toward Diversity – needs to be one of possibility and openness to enrichment rather than seeing the issue as a “problem” to be solved. Also, diversity in the North is often seen as a “minority” issue, while diversity in the South can often be a situation involving a “majority.” For example, global-scale majorities, such as the global poor, are disregarded in mainstream journalism and texts.

Political Reality – differences are not equal. Dealing with diversity is also dealing realistically with inequality and structural change.

Challenges and Recommendations:

- **Staff and students** – Depending on where we are situated, we have different amounts of control and power about how to affect the composition of staff and student bodies. However, a diverse staff and diversity in students is an absolutely necessary component of engaging in diversity in journalism education. The challenge in classrooms is then to allow those who are different from the previous homogeneous situation to have voice and say and what transpires. This is not about incorporation into the status quo, but about change, growth and learning.
- **Curriculum** is definitely within the control of journalism educators.
 1. Both **What** and **How** we teach is critical to embedding diversity in the curriculum. This involves thought and input about content of courses, activities undertaken and various efforts to expose students to diverse people, languages, cultures and situations.
 2. **Languages** should be highlighted as particular vehicles not just to create fluency and functionality in journalism practice but as a means to engage with cultures beyond the homogeneous.
 3. We should be alert to **struggles and blind spots** within classes and have strategies for how to deal critically with both these situations.

4. Universities are **unique environments** for critique and debate, and we should lean on this feature.
 5. **Journalism itself as a practice** is implicated in the perpetuation of inequality, and we should therefore expose students to types of journalism that engage with different ways of doing journalism and other journalistic paradigms – subaltern journalism, culture journalism, development journalism, citizen journalism, public journalism , etc.
- **Capacity building** and skills for educators and students in order to address the issue of diversity is critical within tertiary institutions.
 - **Mainstream media institutions and the texts they produce** – We have less power over the production of texts and the way they are produced than over curriculum. However, this syndicate felt that engagement whenever possible with editors, managers and mainstream journalists to discuss diversity issues is a very necessary task.

Conclusion

If diversity issues are to be taken seriously, the knowledge base on which journalism as a practice rests and the practice of journalism itself must be dramatically changed.

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