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Amid all the challenges and doubts facing newspapers and journalism in the 21st century, one thing is certain: We simply need to be better at what we do. Journalists today know more than ever, and our newspapers are better than ever. But it is not enough, as our readers and potential readers keep telling us and as we certainly know. The world is an increasingly complex place, and it is we who are responsible for reporting, interpreting, explaining it.

This book is the product of important recent research in organizational learning and some fresh thinking in journalism learning. Perhaps most important, it throws a challenge at newspapers and their publishers and owners: Listen to your journalists, accept their deep desire to learn, and wisely invest in the knowledge capital of your newspapers. ASNE and other journalism organizations are planning to establish and advance that agenda over the next few years.

This work will be helpful to an editor who simply wants to figure out how to improve the capabilities of his or her staff. But it will be most valuable to the editor who is willing to consider transforming that staff into a true learning newsroom, in which formal, informal and situated learning occurs constantly — and allows the organization and its people to achieve their potential.

We suggest you read the first five chapters sequentially. Chapter 1 makes the case for human potential and newsroom learning and challenges newspapers, whose investments in training and development always have been woefully weak. Don't miss Bob Giles' eloquent indictment of industry commitment to learning. Chapter 2 proposes the learning newsroom, based on the principles of the learning organization that are transforming some other kinds of companies — and offer great potential for newspapers. Chapter 3 explores how journalists develop over their careers, and Chapter 4 lays out training programs for various sizes of newspapers — at different levels of quality. Publishers especially should read that one. In Chapter 5, training needs are identified for several of the current initiatives and imperatives facing newspaper journalism.

The remaining four chapters offer very practical help: resources available in Chapter 6, advice on evaluation and feedback in Chapter 7 and David Shadden's excellent bibliography of books, videos and web sites that will be useful in your newsroom's training and development. Finally, Chapter 9 comprises three Freedom Forum reports of the best advice of top newsroom training editors for newspapers that want to design and build their own programs.

This book is in a binder so that you will use it. Read it for the theory and ideas. Keep it handy as a reference. Add your own pages and notes — as you become the designer of your own learning newsroom.

Frank M. Denius
Chair
ASNE Craft Development Committee
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Jason Klein of the Wisconsin State Journal designed and produced this book, with assistance from Laura Sparks. Klein designed the cover.

Finally, ASNE thanks the Freedom Forum for granting permission to reprint the valuable material in Chapter 9.

Frank M. Denton
TRAINING, LEARNING AND THE NEWSPAPER
TRAINING, LEARNING
AND THE NEWSPAPER

By Frank M. Denton

People learn every day of their lives. Even the youngest children are knowledge sponges from the start, perhaps even in the womb, and at the other extreme of age, significant reductions in learning ability do not occur in most people until their 80s or 90s.

In the productive years between, a working adult should be seen not merely as a functional in the organization, part of the overhead, but rather as an asset continuously offering more and more value – if properly nurtured through learning.

That is true in manufacturing, service and professional endeavors, and it is an absolutely essential understanding for knowledge organizations – like newspaper journalism.

"Modern organizations ignore learning at the cost of their present and future success," David Boud and John Garrick wrote in their 1999 book, Understanding Learning at Work. "In the complex enterprises of the new millennium, learning has moved from the periphery – from something which prepared people for employment – to the lifeblood which sustains them."

"'Work' and 'learning' are concepts which used to belong in separate categories,” they wrote, but the two “are no longer polarized. Each feeds the other.”

In today’s world, according to Boud and Garrick, "learning has become too important to be left to educational institutions and in-house training departments. It cannot just be bought in or developed through initial training programs; it is too intimately connected with productivity and the operation of contemporary enterprises.

"Understanding of workplace learning is required at all levels and in more diverse ways than ever before. Workplace learning is concerned not only with immediate work competencies, but about future competencies. It is about investment in the general capabilities of employees as well as the specific and technical. And it is about the utilization of their knowledge and capabilities wherever they might be needed in place and time."

Beyond the specific job, Irwin L. Goldstein and J. Kevin Ford wrote in their best-selling text, Training in Organizations, "The success of new learning initiatives such as team-based work systems relies on the development of individuals, the coordinated efforts of team members, and the support across organizational levels and stakeholders."

THE STATE OF NEWSPAPER TRAINING

And still, most newspapers don’t get it.

Typically, smaller papers hire reporters, photographers, copyeditors and artists right out of college with the vague assurance they have some skills but mostly with the hope that they will learn on the job, by error, observation or maybe osmosis. Mid-sized newspapers
expect their new hires to be journeymen, already trained, and the big papers can skim off the mid-career cream. There is training, but commonly it is sporadic, shallow, grudgingly granted to keep peace.

You know how we look at training: If they need it, why would we hire them in the first place? ... Our budget can't even cover essential skills training. ... It's a tough year, and training was the easiest thing to cut first. ... We can't spare the time to go off training. ... Oh sure, "training" in Florida in January. ... They'll move on anyway; why invest in training?

Ten years ago, The Freedom Forum surveyed American newspaper journalists and found an intense hunger for professional training but an appalling lack of opportunity. Eric Newton summarized the findings:

- Almost all journalists want professional training. Although they prefer outside training, more than 9 in 10 say they would attend in-house seminars. At least 44 percent would go to seminars weekly or monthly, a demand that is triple the supply. Eight in 10 journalists want writing training, demand that is double the supply.

- Regular training doesn't reach most journalists. From the day a journalist enters the newspaper business, the training glass is mostly empty. Only 14 percent of the survey respondents say regular weekly or monthly seminars are available at their newspapers. Only four percent of the newspapers offer training in each of the seven basic skills surveyed.

- The training gap hurts newspapers. At least three industrywide problems—newspaper quality, morale and employee retention—can be linked to the shortage of professional training. Nearly half the journalists surveyed admit they are sometimes ill-equipped to fully develop stories. Many feel training opportunities are unfairly awarded. Some who value training are so frustrated they may leave the business.

The report, titled "No Train, No Gain," was much discussed across the industry, with many editors finding a way to put a copy in front of their publishers.

In 2002, the study was replicated and expanded by the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations and the Knight Foundation. Those findings, in a report titled "Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment?" found significant progress:

"... (W)here one in 10 journalists said they got regular training a decade ago, that figure is now closer to three in 10," Beverly Kees wrote. "So those who claim that today's journalists are the best-educated and trained in history are absolutely right. Still ill-equipped to cover the complexity of modern life, but better equipped than before."

Kees pointed to the trend of other technologically advanced companies' increasingly investing in training as a way to increase quality and profits. "Curiously, news companies are exceptions to this trend, lagging behind other knowledge-based companies and generally failing to meet professional development needs. As one newsroom training editor put it, training in the news business is still too often thought of as an isolated frill."

Across 11 categories of news media, the study found:

- A lack of training is journalists' biggest source of job dissatisfaction, even ahead of pay and benefits.

"Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment?" is available from the Knight Foundation by contacting publications@knightfdn.org or by writing the Knight Foundation, One Biscayne Tower, Suite 3800, 2 S. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33131-1803. Survey results can be found online by typing "newsroom training survey" in the Nelson search engine at www.Poynter.org.
More than two-thirds of journalists receive no regular training.

Overall, news companies have not increased their training budgets since “No Train, No Gain” in 1993.

News executives acknowledge they should provide more training, but blame money and time for their failure to do so. There is no trend toward improvement.

Most news organizations have no one assigned to organize editorial training. Fewer than one in 10 have someone devoting all or most of his or her time to that.

Most news executives favor quicker, cheaper training and give their organizations a grade of

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**GREAT DEMAND, WEAK SUPPLY**

*By Eric Newton*

The main findings of last year's multimedia national survey, *Newsroom Training: Where's The Investment?*, hold true for daily newspapers. At dailies, training demand far exceeds supply, executives say they can't spare the money or the time to provide training, and the lack of training is the number one newsroom gripe.

Still, daily newspapers are doing better than the average sink-or-swimmers in the multimedia soup that is journalism in America today. Thirty percent of the nation's journalists surveyed said they get regular skills training; at daily newspapers, it's 37 percent. Fourteen percent of the journalism population said it gets regular beat training; at dailies, it's 16 percent. Thirty-nine percent of journalists generally said they get regular ethics, values or legal training; at dailies, 50 percent said they do.

That said, let's take a look at what "regular" means. Most journalists consider regular training sitting in on a seminar a few times a year, or once a year, or even once every other year. Only one in 10 journalists surveyed said "regular" training means weekly or monthly training, the kind of training people working in a learning organization might expect.

Journalists working at daily newspapers agreed they would benefit from more training (87 percent). They consider all forms of training - ethics and values training, skills and content and beat training - important. But they said they have no regular training in ethics (50 percent), in writing (65 percent), reporting (65 percent), news judgment and decision-making (73 percent) or editing (74 percent) or beat or content specialties (usually more than 90 percent).

News executives at dailies want more training than their journalists. Ninety-six percent felt news managers could benefit from additional professional development. The executives say training is most limited by budget (40 percent) or by the amount of time people are away from work (11 percent). Even so, the number of executives at dailies saying they spend more than they did 10 years ago on training (42 percent) outnumber those who say they've cut back (25 percent), with another batch staying even (21 percent) and still another not knowing (12 percent).

To journalists who follow newsroom training issues, the most revealing finding is not the lack or training. It's the way many have accepted the unacceptable. Despite all of their other answers in the survey, 63 percent of the news executives at daily newspapers gave themselves a good grade - an A or a B - in providing training and professional development. Forty-seven percent of their journalists agree.
of A or B for training. Most working journalists favor longer, off-site training and give their organizations a C, D or F on training.

The national study surveyed 1,964 working journalists and news executives in daily, weekly and ethnic newspapers, television and radio networks and stations, wire and Internet news services and news magazines. In the sidebar on page 9, Newton breaks out the data just for daily newspapers.

In “Where’s the Investment,” Kees cites a national survey of 367 non-journalism companies showing they spent an average of 2 percent of payroll on training. By comparison, Inland Press Association says newspapers spent an average 0.7 percent of payroll.

The National Association of Manufacturers suggests firms should spend 3 percent of payroll, and Workforce magazine said true learning organizations should spend 3-6 percent.

The state of newsroom training is such that mere measurements are difficult. The massive Impact study of 100 newspapers, by the industry-supported Readership Institute at Northwestern University, tried to assess the impact of training on readership and business outcomes but found it could not. “... (N)eas-"papar e fa fr of what oth other inu slies and businesse do on training and development,” Mary Nesbitt, managing director of the institute, reported. “While this varies from paper to property, that the variation is not great and the overall commitment is small. This makes it difficult to detect differences that, in turn, can be statistically linked with outcomes.”

However, the said the analysis did show an effect on some subjective measures: “The Impact data show that employees who are satisfied with the training they receive are also more satisfied with their jobs, more motivated to work and less likely to leave. Moreover, the data show that the more satisfied employees are with training, the more customers are satisfied with the newspaper.”

In a speech condensed beginning on page 18, Robert H. Giles, a former editor and now curator of the Nieman Foundation, wonders why news organizations do not place a higher premium on training their workers. He asks: “Can you imagine another industry that so depends on charity to pay for the education of its workforce?”

Pathetically, much of that charity comes from the journalists personally. People who work in journalism training will find this scene familiar: At a Midwest regional Investigative Reporters and Editors workshop on a Saturday in April 2002, a speaker asked how many people were there on their own money or time. Of the approximately 130 journalists crowded into the donated meeting room, perhaps a third raised their hands.

LEARNING IS A BASIC HUMAN NEED

In their popular 2002 book, Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices, Paul H. Lawrence and Nitin Nohria identified four primal drives: to acquire, to bond, to defend and to learn. Of the last, the two organizational-behavior researchers said: “Humans have an innate drive to satisfy their curiosity, to know, to comprehend, to believe, to appreciate, to develop understandings or representa-tions of their environment and of themselves through a reflective process; the drive to learn.”

They merely were agreeing with what psychologists have long believed, Abraham Maslow’s famous hierarchy of human needs peaks with “self-actualization,” the realization of one’s potential, through learning and growing. H.A. Murray identified “understanding” as a manifest need, and Clayton Alderfer proposed “growth” as one of three categories of basic needs. Carl Rogers wrote about “significant learning” for a mature self open to “new people, new situations, new problems.”

As busy and time-constrained as they are, people pursue their hunger to learn on their
own, outside formal education and the workplace. U.S. Department of Education surveys show that adult education increased from 10 percent in 1969 to 40 percent in 1995. Other studies have found that 80 to 90 percent of American adults report being involved in independent learning projects. Participation in adult learning is pretty consistent over life, in the 40-plus percentiles until after 55, when it falls to 26 percent.

The possible fear of employers that training and education might be wasted on older workers is groundless. Learning in Adulthood, by Sharan Merriam and Rosemary Caffarella, refutes the “powerful myth” that adults lose their ability to learn as they get older. Age often has been cited as the measurement of cognitive declines, but some research suggests a major life event such as retirement could lead to a decline in cognitive functioning—more evidence for the notion of use-it-or-lose-it.

In fact, after surveying the research, Merriam and Caffarella concluded that intelligence does not diminish over early to middle adulthood, and in fact, some intellectual functions seem to increase. Most experts agree there is some decline in older adults between age 60 and the early 70s, but not necessarily with any practical effect on learning ability. Significant reductions do not occur in most people until their 80s or 90s and then not in all abilities or for all individuals. One study found “rich late-life learning experiences” in people between 100 and 106.

In fact, older learners have an advantage. As they live longer, they accumulate more and more diverse experiences. Malcolm Knowles, a pioneer researcher in adult education, said adults “accumulate an increasing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning.”

“And so,” L.J. Bischof wrote in Adult Psychology, “we come to the general conclusion the old dog can learn new tricks, but the answer is not a direct and simple one... He is less likely to gamble on the results, particularly when he is not convinced that the new trick is any better than the old tricks which served him so well in the past. He may not learn the new trick as rapidly as he did in the past, but learn it he does. Further, the best evidence seems to indicate that, if he starts out as a clever young pup, he is very likely to end up as a wise old hound.”

As these realizations about adult learning capabilities have taken root, so has “training,” necessarily or even enthusiastically in some firms, but slowly, grudgingly, half-heartedly in most, including the typical newspaper. Organized training appeared during the Industrial Revolution and became widespread among many firms after World War I. There was virtually no training of newspaper people outside their own workplace until the founding of the Nieman Fellowships in 1938 and the American Press Institute in 1946.

While newspapers and newspaper companies are commonly, and appropriately, criticized for a lack of commitment to training, a look back more than a half-century shows how far we have come. In 1947, in response to a widely perceived national, even constitutional crisis, the historic Commission on Freedom of the Press, known as the Hutchins Commission, issued 13 wide-ranging recommendations for the government, the press and the public. Two of them specifically addressed education and training of journalists:

- We recommend the creation of academic-professional centers of advanced study, research and publication in the field of communications. We recommend further that existing schools of journalism exploit the total resources of their universities to the end that their students may obtain the broadest and most liberal training.
- We recommend that the press use every means that can be devised to increase the competence, independence, and effectiveness of its staff.

On the latter, the eminent commission recognized the enduring problem by adding:
The press can do a good deal to improve the quality of its staff by promoting an intelligent educational program, both for young people and for men and women who are already at work in the field. The type of education experience provided for working journalists by the Nieman Fellowships at Harvard means to us to deserve extension, if not through private philanthropy, then with the financial assistance of the press itself.

A half century later, through better journalism schools, more philanthropy and a few enlightened newspaper companies, working journalists are much better educated today—nine of 10 are college graduates—and have access to considerably more training and development.

The improvements, however, have not kept up with a much more complicated world.

**COMPLEXITY AND SUPERCOMPLEXITY**

It likely is no coincidence that, in business generally, the increased importance of training has followed the increase in complexity of most jobs in our increasingly complex world.

In *Learning in Adulthood*, Merriam and Caffarella cite estimates that the amount of information in the world doubles every seven years and soon will double every 20 months. Some estimates are that half of what most professionals know when they finish their formal training will be outdated in less than five years.

Even allowing for hyperbole, such projections greatly raise the stakes for the journalists who must understand the knowledge in so many fields if they are to report it well. It used to be who, what, when and where; now it's also how, why and so what.

And beyond the complexity of the issues we must cover, there is supercomplexity. Ronald Barnett, an English professor of professional development, defines supercomplexity as "a situation in which different frameworks present themselves, frameworks through which we understand the world and ourselves and our actions within it." For our purposes, that means that newsworthy events or situations usually are framed by, or nested within, greater, more complicated contexts. Life was simpler not too long ago, and so were reader needs; now our readers, and potential readers, are demanding answers and explanations for the swirls of news all around, every day.

As examples in journalism: Covering 9/11 was difficult enough, but over the following months, good journalism required that the event be examined through such dimensions as terrorism, global and national politics, culture, religion, psychology, economics, technology, and even architecture and engineering.

Covering abortion? Understand stem cells, as well as the reproductive system. On a college sports beat? Have the historical perspective of Title IX, and be able to dissect the athletic department's financial reports. "Farm news?" Now it's agribusiness laced with genetic engineering. Enron? Why wasn't it a newspaper journalist who understood that story and broke it before so much damage was done?

A quick and local skills workshop or on-the-job-learning-by-experience won't help much in these areas of supercomplexity.

"The structures of journalists' careers, as well as the difficulties of acquiring conceptual learning by 'doing' on the job or through emulation, create the substantial need for mid-career education," said a study on business and economic journalism for the Foundation for American Communications and the Ford Foundation. "Journalists reveal high interest in business and especially economics mid-career education. They want short term programs which teach economic principles through the examination of current public policy issues."

Another national FACS study surveyed reporters who covered the environment and found that only 3 percent of them considered overall environmental coverage to be "very good."

"As the job becomes more complex," the report said, "72 percent of the reporters told
us they believe that, in general, reporters lack the training and background to cover stories on technical environmental issues." Nine out of 10 of the reporters were college graduates, but only 2 percent had studied the sciences.

Again, the researchers recommended more mid-career training: "The study clearly shows that even reporters who specialize in environmental reporting believe they can benefit from better education and better understanding of technical, economic and public policy issues."

"The idea of supercomplexity compels us to take a particular view of the relationship between learning and work," Barnett wrote. "In an age of supercomplexity, work and learning cannot be two distinct sets of activity ... Work is becoming learning ... But learning is also becoming work through the expanded challenges that supercomplexity presents. Learning is no longer just a matter of inward experience and challenge but is a matter of confronting multiplying expectations, standards and evaluations which stand outside of oneself and which -- as with work itself -- cannot, to a significant degree, be anticipated in advance.

"This intertwining of work and learning itself presents opportunities and challenges ... Just as work can be demotivating, overburdening and even threatening, so too can learning, especially if 'learning' is imposed on individuals and if they are poorly supported -- in personal as much as in resource terms -- as they are struggling to learn. Learning, therefore, whether it arises intentionally or unintentionally, requires support if it is to be undertaken successfully."

POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE LEARNING?

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, people learn every day, and when they are working, they learn about their work. But what are they learning? Is it beneficial, or negative -- "Yeah, the editors once issued an edict saying is important to our readers, but there wasn't much more about it, so most of us here just sort of do it our own way."

"Management must be responsible for training." Paul M. Muchinsky of Iowa State University wrote in Psychology Applied to Work, "Employees learn in many ways. They learn something about their work (workflow, operating procedures and the like) simply by being on the job. They pick up this information just by watching or asking a few questions. The effectiveness of this kind of learning can be contrasted with the more formal and structured approach a personnel-training program would provide. The opposite of formal training is not the complete absence of training but, rather, the acquisition of skills on an unstructured basis.

"While not all companies have formal training, all employees do indeed learn on the job. The question is, would they learn better, more, faster, and sooner as a result of a formal training program? If the answer is yes (as it invariably is), management must develop and staff such a program."

One theme of this book is the value of formal development plans, both organizational (Chapters 2 and 4) and personal (Chapter 3), so the danger of negative learning also must be recognized at the level of the entire newsroom.

"All organizations learn, whether they consciously choose to or not -- it is a fundamental requirement for their sustained existence," Daniel H. Kim wrote in Sloan Management Review. "Some firms deliberately advance organizational learning, developing capabilities that are consistent with their objectives; others take no focused effort and, therefore, acquire habits that are counterproductive. Nonetheless, all organizations learn."

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Traditional newspaper people may have some discomfort in making the conceptual leap from individual learning, which we accept as "training," to organizational learning, which may sound suspiciously buzzworthy.
Consider how work has changed, from the agricultural era, when land and labor were the sources of wealth, to the industrial era, when capital and machinery were the source of wealth, to the current era—when knowledge is the source.

"The nature of work in the knowledge era, or 'knowledge work,' is fundamentally different from what we have traditionally known, and hence requires a different order of thinking," Judith H. Matthews and Philip C. Candy wrote in *Understanding Learning at Work*.

"One outcome of this shift from traditional to knowledge work has been the growing recognition that an organization's wealth exists principally in the heads of its employees and, moreover, that it effectively 'walks out the gates' every day. This understanding fundamentally changes priorities, work processes and employee relations."

The emergence of the knowledge era has meant major changes in strategic planning, organizational structure, culture, work processes, communication and relationships.

"More flexible organizational forms designed to maximize knowledge development have replaced bureaucratic structures and relationships," Matthews and Candy wrote, "and there has been a move from command and control to more participative and collaborative management, often through teams.

"At the heart of these changed practices is the increased valuing of the organization's intangible assets—its people—along with the recognition that the important factor is not so much the static 'stock' of knowledge which employees and others have, as the dynamic process through which that knowledge is enhanced and renewed. In fact, the rapid rate of change in most occupational areas, the explosion of knowledge in many fields, the increasingly widespread impact of technology, and the issue of both geographic and occupational mobility, mean that few if any can escape the need for continuing work-based learning."

Shoshana Zuboff wrote in her book *In the Age of the Smart Machine*: "Learning is not something that requires time out from productive activity; learning is the heart of productive activity. To put it simply, learning is the new form of labor."

While the newspaper industry's big presses always have been considered our advantage over other media, Ray Stata, chairman of Analog Devices Inc., argued in *Sloan Management Review* that "the rate at which individuals and organizations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage, especially in knowledge-intensive industries... Organizations can learn only as fast as the slowest link learns."

**ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING**

People who work in newsrooms will not be surprised at the suggestion of Matthews and Candy that organizations can be viewed "almost as living entities, which are more than the sum of their parts.

So, they wrote, "learning takes place in communities of practice, through sharing knowledge, and through conversations. Workplaces must be structured and managed in such a way that individuals and groups can act as research and development alliances, and can generate knowledge as well as apply it."

Interestingly, and importantly, Matthews and Candy wrote, "rather than being consciously planned, it is now recognized that by far the greatest proportion—perhaps as much as 90 percent—of organizational learning actually occurs incidentally or adventitiously, including through exposure to the opinions and practices of others also working in the same context."

"This kind of learning is called "organic" or "situated learning," that is, the idea that learning is a process of participation in a community of practice or other social context.

In a typical newsroom: A reporter working with an editor over time learns what the editor
expects. Editors who represent their departments at news meetings gradually learn the standards and priorities for making Page One. Cross-functional story-project teams learn how to work together. Columnists come to understand what they can get away with. Junior photographers learn from senior photographers. In drabs and drabs, lunch conversations and brainstorming sessions, everyone absorbs the culture, for better or worse.

Editors learn even from the organization and environment scanning and prioritizing that usually occurs during budgeting. Arie de Geus wrote in the *Harvard Business Review* that the benefits accruing from planning are not just the objectives and strategies that emerge, but the learning that occurs during the planning process.

**THE ROLE OF THE EDITOR**

The most important implication for top editors is that they must be aware of the cultures and environments they are passively allowing and tolerating or actively nurturing and creating. That is quite a different vision of the manager's job than the traditional functions of plan-organize-coordinate-control that many of us were taught in Management 101 -- and that were first defined by Henri Fayol in 1916.

"Historically leaders were referred to as 'captains of the ship' to denote their role in operating the vessel entrusted to their care," Stata wrote. "But future leaders must be both designers and operators. Their principal contribution will be to shape the design of the organization -- the structure and policies so as to best fulfill the corporate mission. Expertise in organization design will be a critical skill -- a skill that will require considerable technical knowledge about how to analyze, modify and simulate the behavior of complex human systems."

This intriguing idea of the editor as organizational designer will be explored more fully in Chapter 2.

In *Driven*, Lawrence and Nohria emphasized "the importance of creating working conditions that have the potential for satisfying the intrinsic human drive to learn."

An important first step for editors is accepting the difference between "training" and "learning."

While experts say training must be in a systematic and organized framework, that is only one kind of learning. "A learning organization perspective... focuses on any activity that might help the individual, team and organization to continuously improve and develop," Goldstein and Ford wrote in *Training in Organizations*. "Thus the goal of a learning organization is to encourage everyone in the organization... to become actively engaged in expanding their skills and improving organizational effectiveness. Learning becomes an everyday part of the job rather than being confined to formal training sessions in classrooms. Employees learn skills of others in their work unit, teach other employees in areas of expertise and learn from one another on a day-to-day basis. Thus, while learning and development are clearly rooted in individuals, organizations can attempt to create a positive learning environment."

So what is the "learning environment" in your newsroom? Chapter 2 provides a tool for measuring it.

In the journal *Human Resource Management* in 1997, S.I. Tannenbaum proposed that, among other things, an organization with a successful learning environment:

- Provides people with opportunities to learn new things.
- Assigns people to positions to stretch them.
- Tolerates mistakes when someone is first learning a new task or skill.
- Views new problems and work challenges as opportunities to develop people's skills.
- Monitors to see that people continue to develop and learn throughout their careers.
- Expects everyone, not just management, to solve problems and offer solutions.
• Provides paid release time for employee development purposes.
• Rewards employees for using what they have learned in training on their job.

In such an enlightened organization:
• Supervisors and co-workers help reschedule work so that employees can attend training.
• Supervisors provide constructive feedback when someone tries something new on the job.
• Supervisors offer people opportunities to use new skills they learned in training.
• Training is considered an important part of career development.
• The successful people go to training.
• It is acceptable to question others about why things are done a certain way.

David Beckett, in *Understanding Learning at Work*, makes 10 suggestions on how managers can support organic learning in their organizations:
• Implement policies for specific strategies to make corporate work experiences tangible, such as mentoring and coaching, including stating dedicated time to engage these . . .
• Develop policies (that) acknowledge development of workers’ individual strategies: career planning; input into annual appraisal; initiatives with particular assignments, projects or work problems; acquisition of competencies and new skills . . .
• Restructure for peer collaboration through occupational teams, natural work groups . . . and off-site shared experiences, and reflection and review of all these in the light of productivity, both personally and organizationally.
• Provide amenable workplace conditions such that access to the above is maximized (child care, flexible work practices such as rotation, opportunities for leadership development).
• Institute incentives to learn which are tangible: promotion, articulation with formal study, study leave.

• Articulate the need for strategically significant workplace learning and use this to shape program design and structures . . .
• Articulate clear expectations of legal and ethical accountability.
• Manage the work environment more collaboratively than consultatively, surfacing the ‘people’ competencies of conflict resolution, team building, communicability and so on.
• In particular, collaboratively establish a workplace ‘mission,’ detailed in achievable and equitable objectives.
• Link these to evidence of learning ( . . . project reports, presentations to peers, simulations, appraisals, formal study pathways).

Where to start? Maybe at the end, the desired end. An excellent way of beginning to think about, create and implement organizational learning, as Beckett and others suggest, is sincere development of a vision or mission statement. These may be ridiculed or derided by people who don’t want to think about where they are going, and others may just be uncomfortable with such a process. But the process forces people to think beyond the doing here and now, to serious consideration of why the newspaper exists and what it wants to accomplish. (More on the value of vision in Chapter 2.)

For one example, the *Wisconsin State Journal*’s mission statement, developed through unanimous participation of the newsroom, is on page 17. A cynic could say that it, and those from other newspapers, comes across like a collection of vague bromides. But it includes concepts that some other newspapers could or would not accept. Each is different in some ways. If a vision or mission statement is developed truly collaboratively then embraced and used as a tool in the newsroom, it can be a first step toward organizational learning – which, if successful, evolves into the learning newsroom.
Wisconsin State Journal

MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin State Journal strives to be the leading source of news and information for Madison and south central and southwestern Wisconsin. To earn that stature, we must be authoritative, aggressive, essential, caring and creative.

To be authoritative, above all else we will seek truth. We are committed to accuracy, fairness and balance, impartiality and good judgment. We will listen and be open, responsive and accountable for our work.

We will be aggressive and thorough in our pursuit of those stories that matter most to our readers. We are responsible for being an independent watchdog of government and other public and private institutions, insisting on accountability, honesty and responsiveness. We will respect personal privacy, contravened only when outweighed by our other responsibilities. We will champion open records, open meetings and the First Amendment.

To be essential, we will be useful in helping people live better. We will strive to inspire and help citizens to participate in their democratic processes. We will seek to frame our journalism through the eyes of citizens, as well as newsmakers, reflecting a wide range of ideas, opinions and perspectives. While we have a fundamental responsibility to explore problems, we also will offer a range of solutions.

As a caring part of the community, we will have a special interest in journalism about the most vulnerable people in society, particularly those such as children who cannot speak for themselves. We will celebrate good things and good people. We want to reflect and improve quality of life for everyone.

We will strive to be interesting, entertaining and surprising. Our journalism will be well organized and well designed.

As members of a team with these common purposes, we will work together, support each other and share constructive criticism.
THE LEARNING CURVE: ARE NEWS ORGANIZATIONS FAILING THEIR BEST AND BRIGHTEST?

By Robert H. Giles
Curator, Nieman Foundation

The following is a condensation of the Reed Serratt Lecture at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Nov. 11, 2002.

A recent study by the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations identified 191 organizations that now provide training and education for journalists. To a considerable extent, this broad landscape is misleading. The training and education programs many of these organizations offer are modest, and collectively, they fall far short of the meeting the need.

Most of the money for their programs comes from foundations, or from their own fund-raising efforts, rather than from the news organizations' educational programs ultimately serve.

Can you imagine another industry that so depends on charity to pay for the education of its workforce?

Companies like General Motors and General Electric believe it is in the best interests of their companies, and their shareholders, to invest in the knowledge base of their employees. They understand that brainpower is an imperative in creating new products and sustaining market share in their industries. These companies are fully committed to investing in training and education across the breadth of the workforce. Lifelong learning is part of the culture.

In 1993, at the start of an extraordinary period of economic prosperity, the Freedom Forum published a seminal study called "No Train, No Gain." It documented the universal need for training among journalists that existed 10 years ago. No Train, No Gain reported then that one journalist in 10 got regular training.

Today the number is three in 10. Such a comparison enables news industry leaders to claim that their journalists are the best-educated and trained in history. But the facts are somewhat different. "No Train, No Gain" documented three problems that can be linked to a shortage of professional training: newspaper quality, morale and employee retention.

Nearly half of the 650 journalists in the survey acknowledged they are sometimes ill-equipped to develop stories fully.

Many said they felt that limited training opportunities were unfairly awarded. And some, who valued training and weren't getting it, were so frustrated they said they may leave the business.

To establish a fresh benchmark on training and to see what had been achieved since the publication of "No Train, No Gain," the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations initiated a study, just completed, with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The study, entitled "Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment?", drew these conclusions:

The nation's journalists say a lack of training is their major source of job dissatisfaction.

More than two-thirds of working journalists say they receive no regular skills training.

News companies have not increased their training budgets in the past decade, and during the recent economic slump, money for training was among the first items to be slashed from newsroom budgets.

News executives acknowledge they should provide more training for their journalists, but
say time and insufficient budgets are the main reasons they don't.

I encountered this budgetary obstacle just recently, in a way that gave me a snapshot of what the Knight Foundation study is telling us. Last year, the Nieman Foundation established a program in narrative journalism, putting the Nieman brand behind the belief that narrative is an under-used and not well-understood asset in the hard job of keeping the news engaging and down-to-earth.

In addition to providing instruction in narrative for the Nieman Fellows, we hold an annual conference on narrative in Cambridge that sells out to an audience of 900-plus.

The conference offers journalists an intensive and high-quality weekend of learning from and talking with the best narrative journalists we can assemble.

Many of the editors who attend the conference tell us they are working on narrative stories, but are flying by instinct over ground they wished were more familiar. In an effort to expand the circle of editors who are conversant with narrative theory and techniques and who can become useful teachers at their own papers, the Nieman Narrative Program is organizing for next spring a small seminar on editing narrative.

I wanted to test the market for such a seminar, I phoned several editors around the country, inquiring whether they would support the attendance of an editor from their staff. I explained the purpose of the workshop, the selective nature of the group in which their paper would participate and that the Nieman Foundation would pay most of the cost.

The response was cautious interest that quickly dissipated when I said their newspapers would be expected to share in the cost: travel and two nights in a hotel.

"Sounds like a good program. But budgets are going to be lean in 2003 and there is little money for travel and training." That was the response to each phone inquiry.

These conversations echoed the experience during the past two years at the Poynter Institute and the American Press Institute, two leading journalism training centers. Each has felt the impact of tight newsroom spending. Poynter has attempted to counter declining attendance by cutting tuition and offering free hotel rooms. API was forced to cancel classes last year.

The evidence reinforces a troubling paradox about the news business: Newspapers and local television news organizations are rich and profitable. They are well able to afford substantial investments in training and education.

Corporate executives surely must understand that a well-trained, well-educated newsroom workforce is essential in sustaining their economic viability. Most would agree with the late Katherine Graham's observation that "journalistic excellence and profitability go hand in hand."

A culture that values training and education does more than improve the quality of news coverage. It contributes to higher levels of satisfaction on the job and to lower turnover—not to mention the prospect of increased trust among readers and viewers.

So here's the paradox: a rich industry that has not made the sustained, long-term investment in developing its best and brightest and keeping them on the payroll, in the interest of good journalism and good profits.

This industry is not likely to do so, unless, perhaps, it can be persuaded that there is a direct link between training and education and higher profits.

Many of the editors whose training budgets are being squeezed work for publicly traded newspaper companies with annual returns that range from 17 to 25 percent. And many local television broadcast outlets enjoy earnings in the 30-40 percent range.

Even during the current downturn in the U.S. economy, which has caused a slippage in classified and retail advertising, newspapers have remained a robust business.
The operating margin of daily newspapers during 2001 was about 17 percent. That was down from 22.5 percent for the year 2000, but a healthy return by any standard. This year, media companies are reporting strong gains, year-over-year. By almost any measures of profitability, these numbers are impressive, clearly at the high end.

Compared to other industry sectors, however, the share of operating budgets news organizations commit to training, education and professional development is at the low end of the scale.

Investment in formal training, as opposed to informal on-the-job training or noon-hour brown bag discussions, can be tracked as a percentage of payroll. According to the Readership Institute at the Media Management Center at Northwestern University, the average newspaper industry expenditure on formal training is 0.7 per cent of payroll.

The national average for companies that have been tracked on this scale is 2 percent, or nearly three times what newspapers spend on training.

The National Association of Manufacturers recommends that companies spend 3 percent of payroll on training.

Workforce magazine has a general guideline of 3 to 6 percent for "true learning organizations," in whose company news organizations would be included.

The American Society for Training and Development, in a study of 367 non-journalism firms, found that, on average, these companies managed to increase training by 10 percent between 2000 and 2001, in spite of the economic recession.

The Society also provides evidence to support the idea that training helps the bottom line. In a second study, it identified 575 publicly traded companies in the United States that ranked high in training and had significantly higher shareholder return than companies ranking lower on the training scale.

Firms in the top half of the listing had a shareholder return that was 86 percent higher than those in the bottom half, and 43 percent higher than the market average.

Fortune magazine's list of "10 best companies to work for" average 67 hours of training per employee per year.

The report by the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations was based on telephone interviews with 1,964 news executives and news staffers in March 2002. Eight of 10 news executives interviewed said that training in their newsrooms was limited by a lack of money.

Many of these executives said that $500 was the most they could afford to spend per year on training per journalist on their staff.

These numbers and these comparisons deepen the contradiction of a $100 billion business – which ranks high in profits and which enjoys a Constitutional protection as a public trust – but does not make training, education, professional development part of its journalistic culture in a more meaningful way.

Much has been said and much has been written in the past 18 months about the nature of newspaper company profits and the need to strike a better balance between the bottom line and good journalism.

The point about newspaper profits is not that margins of 20 percent and higher are exorbitant – although some would argue that they are – but that the long-term health of newspaper companies requires them to invest greater amounts in such gathering resources as newshole, staff and training.

Investments in training are investments in survival that should be part of a strategy to help determine whether the local newspaper franchise will remain the dominant provider of news in the community and whether the profits newspaper companies have enjoyed will continue into the coming decades.

During the present downturn, many – perhaps most – newspaper companies reacted by shrinking their gathering resources: cut-
ting newshouses, reducing the number of working journalists through layoffs, buyouts and hiring freezes, and reducing their investment in training, professional development and education.

Dean Singleton, publisher of the Denver Post and CEO of MediaNews Group, told an appreciative audience of editors at the Associated Press Managing Editors conference recently that "newsgroup cutbacks have gone far enough, maybe too far." This critical connection between investment and success may be further confirmed in a series of research projects now underway.

Phil Meyer of your faculty is engaged in one such study—funded by the Knight Foundation—seeking to demonstrate that good journalism is good business and that investment in the newsroom has a meaningful benefit on the bottom line.

Another study, by the Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Poynter Institute, is attempting to identify and define measurements of newsroom abilities that are useful in building a culture that drives successful newspaper companies.

Training comes in many forms, of course. Journalists identify four distinct areas of training they want and need: training in journalistic skills, education in ethics, values and legal issues, education about the content of the news, and professional development.

The type of training most often available in newsrooms is in journalistic skills—reporting, writing, editing, photography, graphics, computer-assisted reporting—as well as discussions about ethics, values and legal issues.

Such training sessions typically occur in-house, even though the journalists responding to the Council of Presidents' survey voiced a strong preference for training opportunities that would take them away from the newsroom for extended periods.

The other two forms of training—education in news content and professional development—are less often available, with clear consequences for the credibility of news organizations and for management and leadership in the newsroom.

Dr. Gary Becker, a 1992 Nobel laureate in economics from the University of Chicago, observes that "any modern economy is marked by the amount of money it spends on human capital, rather than physical capital. Today, it's brainpower that counts."

Carroll D. Stevens, director of the Knight Foundation Fellowships for Journalists in Law at the Yale Law School, says that "almost more than any other profession, journalism depends on intellectually versatile practitioners—people skilled in the immediate tasks of the craft, to be sure, but also fluent in the purposes and function of civil society. "Such nimbleness of mind and technique can only be achieved—wish quality journalism as its result—through a process of continuous learning."

Dr. Becker and Carroll Stevens remind us that we live in complicated times. As journalists, we face daily demands to explain, clarify and interpret for our readers and viewers issues that are complex and, more often than not, contain elements of science, technology, medicine, economics and engineering, as well as human emotion and political or ideological conflict.

As early as 1919, Walter Lippmann, the most influential newspaper columnist of the first half of the last century, recognized that as stories become more and more complex and more specialized, there was a greater and greater need for reporters and editors to develop special areas of expertise in which they could do their work in a highly informed and authoritative way.

The solution Lippmann suggested was for journalists to acquire more of a "scientific spirit..." and aspire to a "common intellectual method and common area of valid fact. The field should make as its cornerstone the study of evidence and verification."

Years later, Lippmann impressed these ideas on the president of Harvard University, and
they took root in the Nieman idea of mid-career education for journalists when the fellowships were established in 1938. More than two generations of journalists have come to Harvard to study as Nieman Fellows. A few thousand others have enjoyed similar privileged experiences in mid-career programs at Stanford, Michigan, Columbia, Maryland, and MIT.

It is interesting to note that none of these programs draws much support from the news organizations that so benefit from the knowledge their journalists acquire during a year away from the newsroom.

Rather, they exist because visionaries at the Knight Foundation, the Ford Foundation and other institutions of charitable giving have created and sustained these educational opportunities of lasting value to the news industry.

The limitation of the Nieman Fellowships and other elite programs, of course, is that they are available to a relatively few journalists each year.

For continuing education to have a broader reach, a more substantial impact on journalism, news organizations themselves must take the lead.

Few news organizations are making this investment, even though private companies in the United States are a major source of investment in knowledge. Each year, $43 billion is invested in professional education, an amount second only to what we spend on health care.

Jack Fuller, president of the Chicago Tribune Co., in his widely acclaimed book, News Values, argues that even the generalists among reporters “must be capable for dealing with experts from a position of strength.”

This, he suggests, “requires journalists to become more comfortable with technology, to have a rigorous education in a specialized discipline and to understand that they are expected to produce work in complex fields that holds up against the examination of practitioners in these fields.

“We cannot accept the kind of ignorance of basic statistical methods that so often leads to preposterous reporting of scientific claims,” he wrote.

William Damon of Stanford University conducted lengthy interviews with journalists for a book called Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet, which examines the culture of journalism. Damon found that the typical strategies journalists used for verifying information were learned by trial and error rather than in more formal ways from teachers or editors.

These journalistic behaviors, as often as not, lead to what Neil Rudenstein, former president of Harvard, once characterized as “uninformed” reporting.

My final thought about the value of growing brainpower in the newsroom is the significance of professional development. This is an important dimension in any journalist's life, for it conveys to the journalist the interest of the news organization in his or her professional growth and advancement.

Failure to provide opportunities for professional development often is a consequence of the way journalists become editors. They do as well as reporters and are thrust into positions of authority and command without adequate training and education.

On-the-job training for newsroom supervisors does not always lead to managerial competence. Lack of effective supervisory skills can contribute to difficulties of the kind newspapers have experienced in building multicultural news staffs.

Since 1978, the American Society of Newspaper Editors and its member newspapers have been struggling with the challenge of diversifying their newsrooms. The original ASNE goal, as you may remember, was to bring the percentage of journalists of color in U.S. newspaper newsrooms to parity with the population of racial and ethnic groups in the country by the year 2000.

Newspapers made progress against the goal. The population of journalists of color rose
from 3 percent in 1978 to more than 11 percent in 2000, but well below the national figure of 26 percent.

As editors and their news organizations initiated creative, aggressive recruitment efforts to hire more journalists of color, they didn’t recognize, until just recently, the sobering reality that for every five journalists of color they hired, four were leaving the business.

Last year, in a study for ASNE, retention was identified as a greater challenge than hiring in improving the percentage of journalists of color in newspaper newsrooms. Lack of professional challenge and opportunity for advancement were the reasons journalists of color gave most often for decisions to leave newspaper jobs.

We know that a factor is how journalists of color are supervised. The newsroom is, after all, still a place that is dominated by white males who, by and large, have defined the ethos and traditions of the journalistic workplace.

The message to newspapers from the research was that professional development training for mid-level editors is a key to addressing the retention problem.

ASNE is pursuing model programs beginning with a handbook on retention that would provide a curriculum outlining the necessary managerial skills for effective mentoring, nurturing and supervising journalists in a diverse newsroom.

Educational programs in multicultural management can help white editors, particularly, develop an awareness of differences represented by journalists of color. They can learn how to work smartly with these differences in carrying forward their responsibilities for coaching and directing newsgathering activities.

Dori Maynard, president of the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, which over the past 30 years has become the leading organization for training journalists of color, notes that nearly all of the graduates of the Maynard Institute are still in the newspaper business because “there is a direct and undeniable link between training and retention.”

The lessons of retention are reaffirmed in a recent study conducted for the American Press Institute by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism that examined female leadership in U.S. newsrooms. The study concluded that there is a great divide between two distinct subsets of women who register notably different aspirations, concerns and career paths.

Fifty-five percent of the women in the survey identified themselves as confident about their career paths. They said they have the benefit of mentors and access to their bosses, a situation that appears to have helped them set and achieve career goals.

Forty-five percent of the women said they were conflicted about their careers. They may want to move up, but they have concerns about advancement, including sexism and the lack of opportunity.

In the concluding interpretations to the study, the concerns about career-conflicted women signaled a need for training and coaching.

News organizations are struggling to improve their standing with the public. Trust and credibility are important concerns being discussed at every level of our newsrooms and our news companies.

Press performance and public attitudes toward it have been exhaustively studied. From these examinations, the public has made clear that it needs and wants a credible, knowledgeable, accurate press.

Yet journalistic performance too often merits only public distrust, as witnessed by public reaction to coverage of such stories as Princess Diana’s death to the OJ trial to the Clinton scandals to Gary Condit.

During my years at the Freedom Forum’s Media Studies Center, I directed a three-year study of fairness in the news media. One of the important findings in our work was that the public respects the professional and technical
skills journalists bring to their craft, but fears that journalists don't know enough. Specifically, the public thinks journalists don't have an authoritative understanding of the complicated world they try to explain to the public.

If the robust nature of the U.S. economy is powered by the idea that people and organizations have an almost unlimited power to improve themselves through education; if journalistic excellence and profitability go hand in hand, as the late Katherine Graham has said; if investment in human capital is the soundest strategy in a modern economy, as Nobel laureate Gary Becker argues; if both excellence and profitability are enhanced by an intelligent, highly educated, alert, resourceful news staff, as the evidence indicates, it remains a mystery why news organizations don't put a higher premium on training and education.

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THE LEARNING NEWSROOM
CHAPTER 2

THE LEARNING NEWSROOM

By Frank M. Denton

Imagine your newsroom.
The journalists function smoothly and enthusiastically toward a common vision. They regularly, and sincerely, discuss their work with outside experts and members of the public, who inform their decisions. Wonderful, important ideas emerge from every corner of the newsroom, and then are executed, systematically, with great effectiveness. People learn and grow. They love their journalism, and they even love their jobs.

Silos have disappeared. Negative competition between people has been replaced by constructive collaboration. Hierarchy looks more like teamwork.

Your newspaper is smarter, better informed, more in touch. Readership is growing. Errors are rare. Surprises are serendipitous. Staff complaints about pigeonholing, poor communication and lack of training and opportunity are just memories, like paste pots and Ludlows.

Interested? Consider evolving your operation into a learning newsroom.

Don't stop reading. What sounds like just another buzzword inviting you to spend a lot of time and money on a radical experiment that will only amuse or anger your staff, derail your journalism and make you an object of peer derision is nothing of the sort. It is about some smart thinking based on how effective organizations with involved people work.

The learning newsroom is a constructive, common-sense evolution. The concept, as developed by the ASNE Craft Development Committee for this book, invites you to:

* Step back from your hectic, pressurized, sometimes demoralized daily grind and begin to design a future.
* Make connections, with those you serve but, as important, among your colleagues in the newsroom.
* Identify destructive competition among your journalists and use communication to turn it into collaboration.
* Open your journalistic processes to all of your staff . . . and your readers.
* Help your journalists grow.
* Help your newspaper grow.

The Daily Miracle becomes a rational system. And you may love your job again.

The learning newsroom is more than an operation in which training, education and personal development routinely and universally occur.

It is that, but it also is a newsroom with an organizational-development plan, where the above occur within an environment designed to learn, improve and succeed collectively because you and your journalists improve individually. Most of this book is about individual training and development; this chapter proposes that true organizational learning can be more than the sum of the personal learning.
There is one catch. This chapter, with supporting references and sources of help, will provide information, ideas and tools. But there is no plug-and-play model that will instantly transform your newsroom. In the end, you and your colleagues have to do your own design work.

Your medium will be learning – about why your newsroom exists, your role in it, your colleagues and their jobs, your community and how you all can work together toward better journalism.

**THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION**

But first, some theory. Despite its dismal reputation among journalists, theory really and essentially should be defined as “how things work.” Here, it is the big picture of why and how your newsroom functions and how that might need to change.

The lens for this reconsideration of the newspaper newsroom is what has come to be called the “learning organization,” a body of knowledge and ideas about how people and organizations work best. On its face, the learning organization and its components and their lexicon are maddening for us literalist journalists because the definitions are vague at best and jargon-obscured at worst.

Many people have done research and thinking about learning organizations over the past 30 years or so. Peter M. Senge, the best known writer on the subject, acknowledges the learning organization is more a vision than an actual model: “Organizations can accelerate their capacities to adapt and continually reinvigorate only by tapping the capacities of their people. There are no magic formulas or technical fixes for organizational learning. It is a deeply human activity that reflects human communities functioning at their best rather than their worst, which seems to happen so often in today’s organizations.”

Actual definitions of a learning organization are many and frustratingly imprecise. Senge says it is an organization “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”

More formally, David A. Garvin wrote in *Harvard Business Review* in 1993, “A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.”

In their book, *Sculpting the Learning Organization: Lessons in the Art and Science of Systemic Change*, C.E. Watkins and V.J. Marsick define the learning organization as “one that learns continuously and transforms itself. Learning takes place in individuals, teams, the organization, and even in the communities.”

The concepts presented here emerged from the ideas and work of many people. Please see the bibliography at the end of this chapter.

*The Fifth Discipline*, by Peter M. Senge (Doubleday, 1990), incorporated decades of thinking, experimentation and research on organizational and individual workplace learning and popularized it into the learning organization. A sequel, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (Doubleday, 1994), by Senge and others, provides more specific strategies, tools and examples from many industries, including one newspaper, the *Calgary Herald*. (That example spanned the entire firm, as a true learning organization should. But that process, as the *Herald* defined it, is outside the scope of this work; an interested publisher should consult *The Fifth Discipline* or, better, because it is more down to earth, *The Fieldbook*.)
with which the organizations interact.
Learning is a continuous, strategically used process — integrated with, and running parallel to (the organization's) work."

Others emphasize that, in a learning organization, the people are continuously stretching and growing and doing something that matters to them. They understand the entire operation and how their work affects others', and they treat each other as trusted colleagues. The staff members understand that, as a group, they are smarter than they are separately. They talk openly and often about each other's assumptions and beliefs, without sacred cows. People feel free to try things, make mistakes and learn from them. As for the organization, it understands, appreciates and nurtures its knowledge base, which resides, perhaps quietly, in its people. The vision emerges from all parts of the organization, and management's job is to allow, encourage and facilitate that process so that the organizational vision and mission are shaped.

Sounds terrific, management heaven, but what does the learning organization have to do with a book about newspaper training and development? The "learning" in Senge's thinking is more about organizational and individual growth than about training and education. But the learning newsroom is about learning in all of its forms, including organizational development.

Imagine a newsroom quite the opposite of the one at the beginning of this chapter. It is full of good people within a traditional newsroom organization, functioning as most newspapers have for decades, at least. There is only a vague common vision and little non-essential communication about work. The journalists work inside function boxes, connected only by the assembly line, and receive no real training. Fresh ideas are discouraged because they consume time. Suddenly, a reporter gets a grant for a week's worth of training in reporting and writing. The editor says he can't spare her for so long, so she puts it off until she can take a week vacation, then goes. When she returns, her editor points out she's behind on her beat and hands her a stack of assignments. As she turns them in, her direct editor rolls his eyes at the new narrative writing style she learned at the seminar and has her rewrite it into the familiar inverted pyramid. The copy desk, conditioned to simpleness and brevity above all,

In their book, Training in Organizations, Irwin L. Goldstein and J. Kevin Ford wrote that companies traditionally have considered "learning" to be just skills training:

"A learning organization perspective, though, focuses on any activity that might help the individual, team and organization to continuously improve and develop. Thus, the goal of a learning organization is to encourage everyone in the organization... to become actively engaged in expanding their skills and improving organizational effectiveness. Learning becomes an everyday part of the job rather than being confined to formal training sessions in classrooms. Employees learn skills of others in their work unit, teach other employees in areas of expertise and learn from one another on a day-to-day basis.

"Thus, while learning and development are clearly rooted in individuals, organisations can attempt to create a positive learning environment. A positive learning environment occurs when individuals know how their job fits in the larger system. Individuals are assigned tasks that stretch and challenge them, mistakes are tolerated during learning, constraints to learning are minimized, new ideas are valued and encouraged, and policies and procedures support the effective use of training."
deletes her more descriptive adjectives and adverbs. Errors are edited in. The resulting story, now very much like the ones she had been writing for years, grinds through the assembly line into the newspaper. The reporter, frustrated and discouraged and, now, doubting, wonders why she wasted her vacation.

The point is that newspaper journalism is a team activity. An individual does not produce a daily newspaper; an organization does. The newspaper might be incrementally better if a reporter or copyeditor learns, but it can't be substantially better unless the organization learns.

An individual's personal growth can be stunted, or even subverted, in an organization that does not nurture that growth, share it, allow it to flower. One estimate is that only 10 to 15 percent of training-program participants consistently can apply what they learned back in the workplace. A key theme of learning organizations is that individuals will not learn to their potentials without a supportive environment. Conversely, the organization itself is unlikely to grow or improve if it does not encourage and capitalize on the growth of its people.

So individual learning and organizational learning are not only complementary, they are interdependent.

DO YOU NEED A LEARNING NEWSROOM?

Editors have lived so long with newsroom pathologies that they may not recognize them. Some may even have been surprised at the findings of the Readership Institute's Impact study that newsrooms commonly have extremely defensive cultures, akin to hospitals and the military (more on that in Chapter 5).

In 1997, an ASNE survey of journalists by Paul S. Voakes found that “working conditions” and “stress” were among the main reasons people were thinking of leaving journalism. They respected their editors but felt they were weakest in leadership and in “encouraging people and giving helpful feedback.” Their biggest complaints, in addition to pay and working hours, were not having enough opportunity to be creative and having too little impact. Almost one-fourth thought improving communication should be the top priority. Fifty-seven percent would value in-house seminars for the most direct team learning, but only 12 percent got them regularly.

That's likely a reflection of the reasons that the new thinking about learning organizations emerged. Short-term thinking and priorities and reaction to events pushes managers to “take charge” and make decisions without understanding long-term implications and without staff involvement. People define themselves by their jobs and spend a lot of energy defending their turf and perks. Then when things go wrong, they blame others or outside forces, rather than focusing on opportunities.

Peter Senge may never have been in a newspaper newsroom, but see if you find anything familiar in what he describes as “areas of cultural dysfunction” in organizations:

Reactivity. In traditional organizations, activity tends to focus on dealing with threats or reacting in some way to external events or forces. Newsrooms, of course, react largely, and appropriately, to outside events - news - but institutionally, they may change only grudgingly, and not very profoundly, in reaction to undeniable threats, such as readership losses, credibility studies, budget cuts.

“Reactivity is a bare of continuous learning,” Senge has written. “The attitude ‘If it ain’t broke don’t fix it’ prevents the steady improvement of products and processes. Moreover, when something is broken, the immediate reaction is to call an expert - a specialist - to fix it. Regardless of the specialist's success, his intervention will create a black-box mentality that prevents the organization from developing its own capacities for continual learning. . . .

“The reactive stance in management is evident in the fixation on problem-solving. But problem-solving is fundamentally different
from creating. The problem-solver tries to make something go away. A creator tries to bring something new into being.”

If you would like to assess whether you have, or need, a learning newsroom, please use or adapt the survey on page 39.

**Competition.** Competitiveness is almost an American character trait, and it is so prevalent in the workplace that people often end up competing, almost mindlessly, against colleagues with whom they could, and should, be mutually supportive.

Newspapers probably benefit when reporters compete for assignments or front-page play. But does the reader or the organization benefit when editors compete for newshole, when an assigning desk and the copydesk compete for the fixed amount of deadline time, when the city editor, the photo editor and the graphics editor compete for display of their common story?

Collaboration in some organizations can be seen as a weakness. In the newsroom, an editor who considers and respects other editors’ needs or contributions may be seen as disloyal to her own team. (“Yes,” said the fictional city editor, “I can see why that photo is so important to the overall report, so let’s make room for it by trimming the story 12 inches.”)

**Fragmentation.** Such competition is a natural outgrowth of our tendency to break complex problems or situations into what appear to be more manageable parts. People who deal with those parts become the specialists we so value. In a traditional newsroom, department editors think primarily about their own departments, leaving only the editor or managing editor to consider the newspaper as a whole. And that often is only the newspaper itself, not the total customer experience – service, delivery, interactivity, convergence, relationship with other aspects of the reader’s life, including community.

When people see themselves as specialists working only their pieces of the system, their efforts go off in different, often conflicting directions, and the overall goal is undermined or even lost. Some organizations, including newspapers, have tried to attack this problem through reorganizations or physical restructuring of the workplace. These efforts may fall short because the changes are only superficial; they miss what really needs to change: people’s beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

**FOUNDATION OF THE LEARNING NEWSROOM**

The dynamics of the learning organization have functional parts that are not physical nor structural, but rather exist in the minds of the people, individually and collectively. Understanding them and then using them as tools is the key to creating a learning newsroom.

One is called mental models. Psychologists call them schema or, if they involve a sequence, scripts. They are our internal pictures of how and why things work as they do. They exist on personal scale, as stereotypes for example, and at the social and institutional level, as conspiracy theories or assumptions about organizational motives or requirements. They can be positive or negative, but since most of an organization’s knowledge resides in the heads of its employees, they affect how we behave. Within the context of the newsroom, these can be beliefs about ominous forces, inside and outside the newspaper, that impede good journalism.

Daniel H. Kim calls shared mental models the “transfer mechanism” between individual and organizational learning. “The parts of an organization’s memory that are relevant for organizational learning are those that constitute active memory – those that define what an organization pays attention to, how it chooses to act and what it chooses to remember from its experience – that is, individual and shared mental models. They may be explicit or
implicit, tacit or widely recognized, but they have the capacity to affect the way an individual or organization views the world and takes action. Organizational learning is dependent on individuals improving their mental models; making those mental models explicit is crucial to developing new shared mental models. This process allows organizational learning to be independent of any specific individual.

Learning, as an organizational dynamic, must be seen at both the individual and group levels. Certainly in the context of this book, individuals should be able to learn continuously in their work, both skills and knowledge, so they can pursue their personal visions and goals. An organization that values individual learning will create an environment in which personal visions and learning are allowed and nurtured. Kim suggests "surfacing individual mental models and making them explicit can accelerate individual learning. As mental models are made explicit and actively shared, the base of shared meaning in an organization expands, and the organization's capacity for effective coordinated action increases."

At the organizational level, team learning may be the most difficult concept for the learning newsmroom, given many journalists' iconoclasm, independence, cynicism and general contrariness. But Senge says it is "vital because teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations."

Team learning might be defined as learning and thinking together so that their group knowledge and ability is greater than the sum of the members' individual assets. It is a skill, which must be learned and practiced. Senge suggests that team members learn how to suspend their assumptions, see each other as colleagues who honestly share vision and learn how to openly explore difficult issues and to discuss and resolve them. Team learning also requires learning how to confront and control contrary behaviors, particularly the defensiveness for which newsrooms are well known.

Developing shared vision, as a tool for the learning organization, is where journalists live, or should live. This is not just an idea or concept; it is a commitment based on principle and passion. Senge calls it "a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. . . . It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision." A truly shared vision cannot be imposed from a management strategic-planning process or be dictated by the boss, though the boss has to buy in. It must emerge from the personal visions of the people in the organization. Learning, personal and team, can occur most effectively when it is built on the shared vision. For a newsmroom, our vision is built on our journalistic values and goals; more on that later.

Systems thinking is Senge's biggest conceptual contribution to the learning organization. He calls it the "fifth discipline" because it integrates the others and makes them, collectively, more than just a collection of buzzwords. This discipline, in Senge's view, is "the cornerstone of the learning organization." Systems thinking is understanding that the world, and the organization, are not the product of a set of randomly operating forces. Rather, they are systems that, if understood, can be changed and leveraged to achieve visions. "At the heart of a learning organization," Senge writes in The Fifth Discipline, "is a shift of mind — from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something 'out there' to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience. A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. And how they can change it."

An excellent application of systems thinking to the newspaper newsmroom would be what is called the "tragedy of the commons," that is, the pain of different interests' slurring, or competing for, a common resource. In the newsmroom, two of our four most valuable resources
are time and space in the paper. A systems approach, rather than competition, should provide the optimum allocation of both.

"Ultimately," Senge writes, "the payoff from integrating systems thinking and mental models will be not only improving our mental models (what we think) but altering our ways of thinking: shifting from mental models dominated by events to mental models that recognize longer-term patterns of change and the underlying structures producing those patterns."

If those tools for organizational development are themselves put into a sort of system, what might a learning newsroom look like? People who have researched and thought about learning organizations talk about a three-legged stool of capabilities.

The first is being able to develop a vision, or aspiration. People and teams need to be able to figure out what is truly important to them, what they want to create or accomplish long-term, and then to commit to it.

The second leg is whether the organization and its people understand and appreciate the complexity of the system and its interdependencies, as opposed to merely attacking localized problems.

And the third capability is the quality of the relationships among the people, whether they are able to communicate forthrightly, deeply and effectively, particularly about their mental models and their personal and shared visions.

Senge wrote that, without any one of the legs, the stool would collapse: "Without aspiration, there is no real reason for learning, especially if the learning is difficult, such as when we must 'unlearn' habits of thought and action that we have acquired over a lifetime. Without aspiration, what learning occurs happens only when there is a crisis, when we have no choice but to change. Without reflectiveness and the capacity for real conversation, there is no mutuality, there is no fiber that connects people changing together. Without conversation, there may be lots of visions, but there will be no shared vision. Without a collective capability for conversation, even brilliant strategic insights will end up creating polarization as people try to impose their ideas on another. Without the capability to understand complexity, there is no insight into the deeper causes of problems, quick-fix solutions dominate, and even powerful visions become connected to dangerously oversimplified views of reality."

Others who have written about the learning organization have been more specific about the necessary components. In Sculpting the Learning Organization: Lessons in the Art and Science of Systemic Change, Watkins and Marsick identified six "action imperatives" necessary to create and maintain learning organizations: Create continuous learning opportunities at all levels of the organization. Build inquiry and dialog. Make collaboration and team learning routine. Establish systems to capture and share learning, "new thinking." Empower people toward a collective vision. Connect the organization to its environment, especially its customers.

**DESIGNING A LEARNING NEWSROOM**

Newsrooms, like most organizations, function at three levels. One is the working level of individual and work-group skills - essentially reporting, writing, editing, photography, graphics and design. Most of this book is about improving these skills.

A higher level of organizational function is structure and process - how people are organized and work together. This includes, for example, the organization of the city desk, the operation of news meetings, how editors integrate text and visuals, critique and feedback mechanisms, how the newsroom relates to the community.

The highest level is culture - how we think and talk about our work.

This chapter is about those latter two levels, which the learning newsroom must encompass. If you accept the notion of the "personal
development plan" as part of individual performance evaluations (see Chapter 3), consider the notion of an "organizational development plan" for your newsroom. The two types of development plan are interdependent and should be in alignment.

You can take comfort in one thing: A learning newsroom can be developed incrementally, as you and your journalists gather ideas from this chapter and other sources and develop your own design. "Start small," Senge suggests; "grow steadily." Committee member Jeff Cowart said, "You don't have to blow up your newsroom."

When the ASNE Craft Development Committee explored the notion of a learning newsroom, we began with the "learning-doing cycle," which is a self-reinforcing loop from an organization's reflecting on its purpose, then deciding what to do, making plans and taking action. The results of the action feed into further reflection, and the cycle repeats, with continuous learning via the reflection.

Newsrooms tend to leap from decide directly to act, with hardly any planning and usually no reflection. "We don't even decide."

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Though she had not worked with journalists before, her consulting practice, as described in The Dance of Change, has focused on "organizations with lots of inspiration, tough choices, little capital, and virtually no discretionary time."

Our concept for the learning newsroom focuses at the most important part of the learning-doing cycle, the reflection stage, which ultimately controls everything else.

We developed a prototype in three stages: vision, structure and communication. You may perceive a rough parallelism with the learning cornerstones or capabilities discussed above.

**VISION OR MISSION**

Every newsroom has some guiding ideas, though they may be inadvertent, unspoken and negative ("All they care about here is story count." "________ is a sacred cow around here." "This is a (editors/reporters/graphics/etc.) newspaper.")

A learning newsroom must know, and agree with, why it exists. The journalists must be committed, collectively and individually, to a set of clear, well thought-out principles. These begin with the organization's highest purposes, usually embodied in vision and mission statements. It includes core values. But it also should include some understandings about
how the people intend to work together, the most important things about relationships, attitudes and priorities. If your team agrees that it is not as good as it wants to be, in ways big and small, the guiding ideas should include those goals.

You may have some difficulty getting this conversation started, because for some reason journalists are reluctant to talk about their core values and mission. This phenomenon is commonly ascribed to cynicism or iconoclasm that may be inherent in good journalists. It could be mistrust or misunderstanding growing out of the dual role of newspapers as profit-seeking businesses and as independent, public-serving critics and reformers. And it might just as well be social pressure among colleagues who see themselves as individualists. Whatever the reason or reasons, the editor may have to be creative and persistent to get the staff to talk seriously and deeply about their guiding ideas.

This can be a newsroom-only process, and the publisher needn't lead the charge. Some organizations have achieved significant, long-term change without executive leadership. It does require committed local leaders, in this case editors, and people who network well and build organizational community. So the publisher is not essential; the copydesk chief is. Leadership comes from many directions, including in very localized and routine activities, such as discussion in news, planning and critique meetings.

Need some concepts to prime the pump? In The Fieldbook, Rick Ross suggests a modest approach to developing a vision, by convening your team and, with a flipchart, exploring these questions:

- Have you ever been part of a really great team?
- What was different about that team?
- How can we, as a team, create those kinds of feelings here?
- What would we commit ourselves to?

For a newsroom, the process should be easy, because journalists, whatever they say at first, share some high ideals. “You lead journalists out of the wilderness with journalism,” committee member Jeff Cowart said.

An excellent discussion-starter could be our core values as defined in ASNE’s Journalism Values Handbook: balance/fairness/wholeness, accuracy/authenticity, leadership, accessibility, credibility and news judgment. (That book, plus videos on the subject and an earlier report, Timeless Values: Staying True to Journalistic Principles in the Age of New Media, are available from ASNE.)

In its discussions on the learning newsroom, the Craft Development Committee concluded there are pockets of “latent energy” in most newsrooms, meaning it shouldn't be too difficult to get conversations started about journalism quality, aspirations, relationships with the community and with readers, rewards and leadership.

The Fieldbook offers some tools and techniques for developing these guiding ideas. One of its intriguing suggestions is to ask your staff members to design their own process.

**STRUCTURE**

After your collective aspiration is clearly defined, the next step is to figure out how your newsroom needs to be organized or structured to achieve those ideals. There are two extremes. One likely is the current situation, that the current structure of your organization is inhibiting the development of the new capabilities you want. The other is the tendency of some senior leaders to radically restructure just to get people’s attention or because it is trendy.

Structural changes are likely to be most effective if they emerge from, and are created to support, the vision or aspiration.

Just as the guiding ideas must be identified and developed by the newsroom staff, and not just the bosses, so should the structural changes, if they are to be meaningful, effective.
and accepted. This architecture of change may be social or physical or both. In a newsroom, it likely will include such matters as planning processes, news meetings, information sharing, recognition and rewards, feedback mechanisms and, in general, inclusion in decisions about the journalism. It will be an unusual newsroom that will not hear about elements of the “maestro” concept; visual people – photographers, graphic artists and designers and their editors – still feel marginalized, as afterthoughts, in planning and production.

Remember the tale of the reporter whose training was negated by entrenched newsroom attitudes, beliefs, practices and processes? This rethinking of structure should identify ways of ensuring that training, as well as new ideas, are respected and embraced. There should be ways for newly trained people to extend their training to others, so they too may benefit but also so the new skills are accepted through the process.

Structural changes also can be physical. Janis Dutton, managing editor of The Fieldbook, points out that physical environment can affect an organization’s values and relationships. "When an organization creates a new building or retrofits an old one," she wrote, "there is a terrific opportunity to manifest support for the organization’s purpose and learning, in both the process of creating the building and the form of the building itself."

In a newsroom, physical changes usually would seek to serve communication. How do distance or other physical barriers impede “maestro” conversations? In a newspaper with assigning editors in one department and designers and copyeditors in another, or even two others, would their working relationship – and pursuit of their guiding ideas – be enhanced by a closer physical relationship?

Newsroom processes tend to center on the daily news meetings, which typically are held in separate rooms or areas. While anyone officially may be welcome, in fact only editors usually attend, with others feeling excluded, intimidated or offput by the physical isolation or setting of the meeting. What if the news meetings were held in the middle of the newsroom, easily accessible to other staff members? Might reporters be asked to pitch their own stories? And who chairs the meeting and proposes the page-one lineup? If it’s the senior editor, how good and challenging is the discussion? How might the news meeting be redesigned to achieve the relevant guiding ideas?

Identifying these structural changes can be very difficult, because it will require some honest conversation about highly sensitive relationships. But discussions built around aspiration have a good chance of being productive. The Fieldbook and The Dance of Change offer helpful advice and experiences.

Senge says structural changes may offer more potential than grand reorganizations or training programs. Learning is “not an ‘add on,’ to be done when we have some free time or at training sessions,” Senge wrote in article on academic change. “Some of the most significant innovations have been in infrastructures and day-to-day practices, allowing teams and intact work groups to integrate working and learning.”

COMMUNICATION

As we commonly, and wryly, point out to each other, for people in the communication business, we sure do communicate poorly. In fact, it may be that we communicate better with our thousands of distant readers than we do with our colleagues before and after us in the newsroom processes.

True, honest, open and sincere communication is the fuel of the learning newsroom. After we establish great goals and a structure to make them possible, they will not be achieved unless the people in the newsroom truly communicate day in and day out, in their work and in their learning.
Chris Argyris, a Harvard theorist, says people tend to trap themselves in “defensive routines” to protect their mental models, and they develop “skilled incompetence,” that is, they become “highly skillful at protecting themselves from pain and threat posed by learning situations.”

Argyris says mental models—what we might call attitudes—can be formed by a “ladder of inference,” a common psychological process of increasing abstraction, culminating in strongly held personal, and often erroneous, beliefs. A person:

- Observes information and experiences
- Selects some of that to retain
- Adds personal and cultural meaning
- Makes assumptions based on those meanings
- Draws conclusions based on those assumptions
- Develops beliefs
- Takes actions based on those beliefs

Such individualized mental models can have great personal and, often, negative power within the organization, so people in a learning newsroom must have ways of revealing and controlling them.

The literature of learning organizations offers a wide variety of devices to improve communication within an organization. The Fieldbook says two types of skills are useful: “reflection (slow down our thinking processes to become more aware of how we form our mental models) and inquiry (holding conversations where we openly share views and develop knowledge about each other’s assumptions).

In The Fieldbook, Rick Ross suggests using the ladder of inference constructively in three ways:

- Becoming more aware of your own thinking and reasoning.
- And those beliefs influence what information and experiences are selected to retain next time.
- Making your thinking and reasoning more visible to others.
- Inquiring into others' thinking and reasoning.

Then, Ross says, when people in a discussion understand how their beliefs are formed on selected information, meanings and assumptions, they can try to agree on common interpretations.

“The discipline of team learning,” Senge wrote in The Fifth Discipline, “involves mastering the practices of dialogue and discussion, the two distinct ways that teams converse. In dialogue, there is the free and creative exploration of complex subtlety issues, a deep ‘listening’ to one another and suspending of one’s own views. By contrast, in discussion different views are presented and defended, and there is a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at this time. Dialogue and discussion are potentially complementary, but most teams lack the ability to distinguish between the two and to move consciously between them.”

In The Fieldbook, William Isaacs wrote, “During the dialogue process, people learn how to think together—not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating new pieces of shared knowledge, but in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility in which the thoughts, emotions and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.”

The Fieldbook offers a number of techniques for developing discussion and dialogue.

For example, Isaacs wrote about the importance of suspending assumptions: “This does not mean laying your assumptions aside, even temporarily, to see what your attitudes would be if you felt differently. It means exploring your assumptions from new angles: bringing them forward, making them explicit, giving them considerable weight, and trying to understand where they came from. You literally suspend them in front of the group so that
the entire team can understand them collectively."

Bryan J. Smith says this is difficult: "Your assumptions are tied closely to your deepest beliefs and values; if anyone challenges them, he is challenging the feelings closest to your heart. Normally, you protect your assumptions from inquiry, instead of saying, for example, 'Go on, can you help me see something else about my deepest beliefs that I'm not now seeing?' Implicit in the willingness to suspend assumptions is a sense of confidence that if your deepest beliefs are worthwhile, they'll withstand inquiry from others, and if they're not, you'll be strong enough, and open enough, to reconsider them."

A newsroom can become a learning newsroom if it develops the ability to overcome preconceptions and communicate openly, honestly and continuously about its goals and the means to achieve them.

**THE ROLE OF THE EDITOR**

As the Craft Development Committee came to understand the idea of the learning newsroom, the role of the editor emerged as seemingly contradictory.

In one way, by opening the goals and operations of the newsroom to staff deliberation, the editor seems to be surrendering power, giving the staff responsibility for their growth.

"There's no way in hell a top-down newsroom can be a learning newsroom," said ASNE President Diane McFarlin.

However, the editor has to recognize that the newsroom is a design that can be changed and he or she is the "chief architect of journalism," as Jeff Cowart said. So the editor, for example, may have to create the process that drives aspiration or build in time for reflection.

Immediately, the consultant, said the two roles can be reconciled by accepting that "The leader is a learner like anyone else." That suggests that the editor need not always stand as the font of all journalistic values and expertise, but rather as the chief designer who will help all the journalists create the journalism they want.

The editor should be the first to say that the learning newsroom is not a concept for just "them" out in the newsroom. "There is no substitute for genuine commitment, and commitment starts 'at home,'" Senge cautions.

"No one should be told to change their beliefs, or to adopt new values, or to change deeply habitual ways of doing things; efforts to employ coercive power to bring about deep change invariably backfire. Those who lead must be prepared to change themselves first, rather than focusing on how others must change."

**EXAMPLES OF CHANGE**

After your newsroom identifies its guiding ideas and the structure and processes necessary to achieve them, what specifically might change? The editor should consider an organizational development plan — which clearly should be in alignment with the personal development plans suggested in Chapter 3.

The Craft Development Committee discussed breaking the guiding ideas down into "principles," that is, specific operations goals, and "practices," ways of pursuing those goals. While they will vary greatly in different newsrooms with different aspirations, a few examples the committee identified are on the facing page.

**ISSUES WITH CHANGE**

As the ideas of the learning organization have gone into practice over the past 20 or 30 years, naturally issues and barriers emerged.

"Among the most critical," write Sharam Merriam and Rosemary Caffarella in *Learning in Adulthood*, "are the inability of organizational members to recognize and change their existing mental models, the lingering power of individualism in organizations versus the spirit of collaboration and team learning, the lack of
skills and developmental readiness” for such learning, and the “ghosts” of previous attempts at organizational change.

The Dance of Change describes some of these issues and suggests ways of addressing them (discussed in greater depth in the book). Four major challenges were identified in the early stages of learning-organization development. They will sound familiar to newspaper people:

- Not enough time. Solutions might be scheduling time for focus and intensive work on the changes, trusting people to control their own time, figuring out how to eliminate busywork, minimizing political game-
playing, declining non-essential demands and experimenting with time.

* No help, particularly expert coaching. If there is a need for coaching, it could be very targeted and early. Coaching can be built into the jobs of line managers. Within the cultural and structural changes, make it socially acceptable to seek help.

* Irrelevant to the newspaper’s purpose. One solution is thorough conversation about relevance among key leaders, including informal ones. Make a lot of information available. Be sure training is tightly targeted at the envisioned results. Talk, often and openly, about the vision.

* Walking the talk, a perceived gap between guiding ideas and actions. Personally and visibly show the changes, and don’t just tell about them. More than normally, be clued into what is really going on throughout the newsroom. Build more communication vertically, to keep the gap as closed as possible.

After the first year or two of change, other issues may arise. The new openness and candor may cause anxiety in some part of the newsroom. A social gap may appear between the true believers and the inevitable non-believers on the staff. And there may be concern about the pace and amount of change.

By now, since you’ve gotten this far, you may be overcome by concepts, issues, ideas and touchy-feelyness. Please take comfort in some final thoughts, of Peter Senge and APIs Carol Ann Riordan. Senge wrote, in the latter-day *Dance of Change*, that the sweeping call to arms for the learning organization can start at your own scale:

* While nothing happens without commitment, initial commitment is almost always limited to a handful of people.
* Start small, grow steadily.
* Intended results and useful tools are more important than a detailed plan.
* If you’re short of time and you’re up against the wall, fix the crisis first.

* Remember that leverage lies in identifying the limits of organizational change and lessening them.

And after two days of the Craft Development Committee’s brainstorming about learning newsroom, Riordan said: “Boy, I want to work at a place like that.”
LEARNING NEWSROOM SURVEY

The 35 questions in this survey list many of the defining characteristics of a learning newsroom. The results of this survey will enable you and your newsroom to assess your progress as a learning organization and target areas you would like to address collectively.

We encourage you to be as candid as possible. Please answer each statement. Your perceptions are important even if you do not have hard evidence to support them. Individual responses will be kept anonymous; group results will be reported back to the newsroom.

**Your Instructions:**

On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the extent to which the newsroom operates as a learning organization. Note: 5 represents a great extent (High); 1 represents to little or no extent (Low).

Please answer each question twice. First, next to “now,” circle the number that best describes how you see the situation NOW. Then, next to “want,” put a circle around the number that describes how you WANT it to be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Little or No Extent</th>
<th>To a Great Extent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>Want</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. When something goes wrong, our first response is to learn from it rather than looking for someone or something to blame.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

2. Most problems we have in our newsroom we are able to fix.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

3. Understanding how my work affects others and finding ways to make the whole system work better are encouraged and supported.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

4. When changes are instituted, we plan realistically for the time delay before positive results will be seen.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

5. When planning a project or other changes, we assess how our activity might affect other parts of the newspaper.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

6. When something goes wrong, we attempt to look at the big picture rather than only solving the immediate problem with a quick fix.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

7. Our newspaper has a clear vision for the future.

   Now: 1 2 3 4 5
   Want: 1 2 3 4 5

Based on assessment tools developed by Innovation Associates (www.innovationassociates.com) for use with teams and corporations. Used with permission.
8. People here share the newspaper’s vision and are committed to carrying it out.
   Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
   Now  1  2  3  4  5
   Want 1  2  3  4  5

9. The newspaper’s vision guides decisions about how resources (time, staff, money) are allocated.
   Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
   Now  1  2  3  4  5
   Want 1  2  3  4  5

10. When we talk about the quality and impact of our work, we pretty much “tell it like it is” – neither over nor understating our strengths or weaknesses.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

11. In our team, differences and conflicts are aired openly rather than avoided or smoothed over.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

12. Teams are recognized and rewarded for their collective results.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

13. In our team meetings, we actively challenge and test each other’s ideas and beliefs.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

14. When our team gets together, there’s a climate of openness and equality as we discuss issues and make decisions.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

15. Members of our team initiate and anticipate problems rather than waiting for the leader to raise them.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

16. The right people are consulted when decisions are made.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

17. People at all levels have ready access to the information they need to fully contribute to the newspaper.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

18. We operate fluidly across organizational barriers, both functional and hierarchical.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

19. Departments in this newspaper work closely together rather than operating as separate fiefdoms.
    Little or No Extent   To a Great Extent
    Now  1  2  3  4  5
    Want 1  2  3  4  5

Based on assessment tools developed by Innovation Associates (www.innovationassociates.com) for use with teams and corporations. Used with permission.
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<th>Little or No Extent</th>
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<tr>
<td>20. We do not tolerate procedures that we know hinder our ability to meet (internal or external) customer needs.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>21. When allocating resources, the needs of the whole newspaper take precedence over the special interests of individual groups or departments.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>22. Developing people is considered on an equal plane with circulation and financial goals.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>23. People who demonstrate mastery of an area of expertise are recognized and respected.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>24. People are expected to develop themselves as a regular and ongoing part of their jobs.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>25. People who mentor others are respected and recognized.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>26. In our organization, if we don’t know the answer, it’s okay to say “I don’t know” rather than making something up or avoiding the issue.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>27. We challenge/test our assumptions about readers, competitors, technology and/or the community.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>28. Important decisions are based as much as possible on facts rather than opinion.</td>
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<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>29. When disagreements occur, we actively seek to understand each other’s reasoning, rather than simply advocating our own position.</td>
<td><strong>Now</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>30. People at all levels invite feedback about what or how they’re doing.</td>
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<td><strong>Want</strong> 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>31. People are encouraged to ask “why” and “why not” about existing newsroom policies and practices— to challenge the status quo.</td>
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Based on assessment tools developed by Innovation Associates (www.innovationassociates.com) for use with teams and corporations. Used with permission.
32. Editors are active as mentors and coaches.

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33. Our editors are good role models for what we say we stand for.

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34. Leadership is consistent in its message. We do not get mixed messages about where the newspaper is going or what we need to do to get there.

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35. You can tell our editors the truth, without fear of repercussions.

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LEARNING ORGANIZATION RESOURCES

Websites

www.solonline.org
www.fieldbook.com
www.pegasuscom.com

pegasuscom.com offers a free monthly e-letter called Leverage Points and an excellent annual conference.

Books


GROWTH OF A JOURNALIST

By Terry Greenberg and Ellen Foley

David Broder "didn't know anything" when he started working at The Pantagraph in Central Illinois.

"I worked on a college paper and an Army paper. But everything I learned, I learned at The Pantagraph. They had a core of editors and senior reporters who had a lifetime commitment to the paper and community and insisted on us meeting their high standards. They took young punks like me, drilled us and corrected us," he said.

"They had stringer correspondents in small towns who would send in hand-written notes. It was a shame ... all about individuals and you didn't want to get it screwed up. We'd turn them into useable items ... typing them in, correcting the grammar and checking the spelling of names if we couldn't make it out.

"The guy who ran the photo staff gave me a starting course in photo ... "This is where you screwed up here and what to do next time,"" Broder said he was told. "It was wonderful. I'd gone to a college where you couldn't take a journalism class if you wanted. I was about as green as you could get. It was learning on the job every day.

"It's a craft ... I tell young people size of the paper doesn't matter; the quality of the paper does matter. They will teach you the right way to do the job," he said.

A young reporter joined a midwestern daily newspaper in 2002. She graduated from a journalism program and had an internship covering a statehouse.

But on her first real job, she felt alone.

"In the professional world, no one holds your hand — you are out fending for yourself. When they say a 'self-starter,' they really mean it. Often there's no one to bounce ideas, sentences or leads off of until the story is in the editors' hands. In school, it was easy to go into the professor's office, ask questions or show a rough draft. In the real world, editors are not always available to spend time with you, massaging your product to make it better. You have to do it on your own, making sure the copy you send over to be edited is the best it can be. I think school could have catered to that aspect a little bit more."

Decades past, our newsrooms were filled with people who didn't come from journalism school. They learned a craft, a skill. They were not expected to master those skills the first day. Like David Broder, they learned on the job - an apprenticeship - even if it wasn't formally called that.

We didn't know it then, but David Broder - who went on to the Washington Post, won the Pulitzer Prize and is regarded as one of the best reporters in the nation - learned his craft in a learning newspaper, part of a learning organization.

We didn't know what we had.

As journalism schools began to grow, an expectation grew with editors. The people who joined our newsrooms should know as much as an "old school" reporter with a few years' experience.
Some do. Some don't. Most are somewhere
between.

Not everyone comes to our newspapers from journalism school. Not everyone who
comes from journalism school has the same
training, experience and internships.

Not every paper has the same training pro-
gram.

Sharon Peters is editor and vice president of
The Gazette in Colorado Springs. Before going
to Colorado Springs, she used her Ph.D. in
organizational development to set up a con-
sulting business, working primarily with news
organizations. She also did research for several
organizations, including ASNE and the Media
Management Center.

"The idea that any journalism school can
serve the full quotient of skills is crazy," Peters
said. "They cannot teach all the things in all
the same ways and manage to meet the needs
of every would-be journalist and every newspa-
per where each might eventually wind up.

"We can't possibly expect a journalism
school or even an editor to be able to predict
all the skills needed that first year. We need to
be much more hands-on. We need more edi-
tors, not fewer, to monitor skills and provide
instruction as needed. Who knew 15 years ago,
for example, that copyeditors would now have
to do pagination and design ... along with
writing good leads, finding holes in stories
and choosing what bites the dust when it
doesn't fit?" she asked.

"I don't know what the ratio of editors to
reporters was, say, 50 years ago. Maybe it was
lower than the average today. But the fact is,
reporters went off and wrote a story. Now they
have to do sidebars and breakout boxes, coor-
dinate with others who are doing related sto-
ries, call in a quick one for the Web site and be
available for TV interviews. I don't necessarily
believe that means the job is tougher, but it is
certainly more complicated and definitely
more multi-functional.

"So we — all managers — should be prepared
to provide more hour-by-hour guidance and
coaching, not just for the most inexperienced
but also journalists of all experience levels. But
we do not, because we are more involved now
in advertising and marketing initiatives,
engaged with others in our chains to do joint
projects, plus stuff for the industry as a whole,
plus research or other projects for corporate,"
Peters said.

A learning newsroom — as opposed to the
way most newspapers have done things in
recent years — includes comprehensive, ongo-
ing training throughout a journalist's career, as
well as the kind of learning David Broder
experienced — on the job every day.

Newspaper newsrooms should consider a
more formal, multi-layered approach to teach-
ing that touches on the old ways and embraces
new methods of training, education and develop-
ment. Instead of thinking training is some-
thing you send someone to, or a couple of days
with another staff member to "get you up to
speed," we must regard personal development
as something that's the responsibility of the
journalist, his or her peers and newsroom
leader and the top editors through daily,
weekly, monthly and annual efforts.

"Clearly journalists learn every day at
work," Peters said. "They learn new word
usage and new coding and new beats and new
technology. Those, I would argue, are force-
fed survival skills. Learn 'em or be gone. So it
doesn't always feel like a positive experience ...
something you can embrace in your own time
on your own terms. Some of learning has to be
that way."

But equally potent is learning that prompts
a person to view things through a different
prism, or improves critical thinking, or adds to
a journalist's depth of knowledge, Peters said.
"That kind of learning has to be voluntary and
broad reaching and sometimes unrelated to the
work we're doing for tomorrow. Otherwise
we're creating the very strong message that
only new job skills are valuable learning. And
that, of course, does not encourage a 'learning
organization' culture."
STAGES OF A JOURNALIST’S CAREER

The idea of a learning newsroom sounds good — but how? First, let’s set the “stage” — later we’ll suggest a plan.

There are four stages to a typical journalist’s career:

• **First stage:** The first few years after college, when most of the basic skills are learned.
• **Second stage:** The years after the basic skills are learned, and the journalist is able to master most situations.
• **Third, or divergence, stage:** When the journalist either moves into management or starts tackling advanced projects or mentors others in the first or second stages.
• **Final stage:** Those last years before retirement, when the staff member either becomes a valued senior journalist, doing sophisticated work and teaching juniors — or becomes a “road” worker (retired on active duty).

What do journalists need to know in each stage? How do we help them learn and grow through those stages?

We’ve compiled a list of skills, abilities and attributes. The following is a detailed and extensive list — but don’t be put off by its length. As promised, we’ll later offer a suggestion on actually building these capabilities in your newsroom.

If nothing else, this compendium should impress publishers and owners with the breadth and depth of learnable skills and knowledge required to be an effective journalist today, in any capacity. It should be noted that the list does not include the general education, knowledge and attributes required to become a journalist in the first place, nor does it include beat-specific knowledge discussed in Chapter 1.

This list of skills and abilities was compiled from a number of sources — including a survey of editors done by ASNE’s 2001-02 Craft Development Committee.

Peters cautions that these are absolute minimum standards. “They do not and cannot take into account that every newspaper is different, in terms of overall resources, competition, readership and other factors,” she said, “and each newspaper must custom-craft some standards based on its own set of circumstances and strategic demands and needs.”

Because every job in every newsroom is constantly evolving (as emphasized in Chapter 1), these standards should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Finally, Peters said these standards do not take into account that each journalist is different, with widely varying needs for additional challenge and growth. “One thing we know for sure is that every person must have a sense of progression in his/her worklife, whether s/he is a high or low challenge-need person. It therefore behooves editors to not merely dump these standards into the laps of people and say ‘Have at ‘em.’ It’s important to discuss these things and, months later, help employees understand that there has, indeed, been progression in terms of skills building, less they conclude, as so many of us do, that ‘after five years, I’m still doing the same beat and that means I’m in a rut and probably on a straight course to a dead end.’ Newsroom people are sort of hot-wired to draw that kind of conclusion, and it is important for them to regularly be forced to acknowledge the progress they’ve made and how that has contributed to better journalism or a more healthy newspaper.”

Peters said this challenge is even greater in dealing with high-performance people, who need to know they’re progressing and contributing even more than others. “They need, and deserve, even more attention from their editors, and they always get far less.”
First stage

SKILLS:

Reporting/news judgment:
• Instinct to spot a story.
• Knows where to get information.
• Knows how to interview.
• Knows the right questions to ask.
• Knows how to approach someone who’s in a stressful situation.
• Knows how to work with hostile sources.
• Can conduct effective interviews with a wide variety of people to gather factual information, narrative accounts and responses to controversial situations.
• Understands and applies basic math skills required for effective news stories.
• Identifies and uses a variety of reference and research tools.
• Can set up and manage a simple, ongoing database that contributes to good beat coverage.
• Applies basic critical thinking skills to evaluate and analyze information to establish facts, inaccuracies and summary conclusions.

Writing:
• Writes leads crisp and to the point.
• Can write a good news story utilizing the 5Ws and H with clear, concise prose that adheres to style guidelines.
• Uses clear, everyday language, avoiding jargon and technical and bureaucratic terminology, as well as clichés.
• Writes to length.
• Knows and meets deadlines.
• Has ability to organize thoughts and notes quickly, digests complex material and arranges elements in a logical progression with a clearly defined beginning, middle and end.
• Can produce a more advanced story utilizing approaches such as the first-five-graphs concept.

Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:
• Knows style and usage.
• Knows spelling, grammar and punctuation.
• Makes sure stories are read and spell-checked.
• Work is unassailably accurate and fair and tells the whole story. Performance reflects understanding of those values as the highest in newspaper journalism. Goes to whatever lengths necessary in pursuit of them.
• Sees potential problems in stories and consults with editors on sensitive stories. Knows what treatment is appropriate in handling a variety of stories.
• When mistakes are made, fixes and avoids repeating them.
• Represents the paper effectively and constructively to the public.
• Responds appropriately to complaints and makes effort not to be defensive, seeing interaction with readers as valuable opportunities rather than an imposition or something to be tolerated in order to keep from getting into hot water with the publisher.

Libel/legal/FOI:
• Knowledge of laws regarding access, invasion of privacy, libel, defamation and copyright.
• Understand and apply state and federal laws that pertain to newsgathering.

BEYOND SKILLS:

Teamwork/miscellaneous:
• Effectively interacts with an editor to manage a story in distinct stages.
• Argues constructively for quality.
• Proposes solutions instead of complaining.
• Displays candor and tact in communicating with peers, subordinates and supervisors and other departments.
• Tells people what they need to know, when they need to know it.
• Seeks feedback and responds positively to criticism.
• Open to ideas and suggestions.
• Says yes as often as possible.
• Understands daily journalism demands many routine stories and responds professionally.
• Keeps editors informed of routine or necessary stories coming up.
• Seeks and uses, when appropriate, fresh approaches to such stories.
• Looks for additional information and unusual or offbeat elements that will make routine stories interesting.
• Actively seeks out opportunities to learn new skills.

**Thinking of diversity:**
• Gets sources/voices into stories that give all groups – racial, gender, age and socioeconomic standing – into the paper.

**Competitive:**
• Consistently beats competing media on beat – especially on significant stories.
• Always looks for ways to be ahead of stories.

**Thinking visually:**
• Uses breakouts/lists that help readers by layering information into easier-to-read formats.
• Conceives and helps manage news packages that include stories, sidebars, infographics, photographs and other design components. Initiates opportunities to use both and consults with editors, photographers and graphic artists about use.

**Community:**
• Is aware of what real people are talking about – in the grocery line, the school car pool or the church social.
• Displays knowledge of the community, including demographics, government structure, culture and leadership.

**Convergence:**
• Has a basic knowledge of convergence efforts and wants to learn more.

**Second stage**

**Reporting/news judgment:**
• Finds news: A reporter makes the leap from waiting for news to break to planning news coverage. It's a major sign of initiative that should come early in the career.
• Working sources: When a reporter evolves from calling sources for a comment, to working the phones routinely and systematically, whether there's an obvious story on the table or not. Great reporters resist pack thinking and jealously guard their source relationships, while governing themselves against becoming anyone's pal. They show an interest in the source's field of expertise, perhaps even their family life or personal interests, while maintaining appropriate ethical boundaries. They get tipped to stories, rather than respond to official pronouncements, because they talk to their sources on days when there's no story.
• Develops sources to ensure swift and accurate completion of assignments, access to difficult-to-obtain material, background information and potential story ideas. Builds deeper list of sources to make sure to use real people and are not always depending on the usual suspects. For example, if covering education, we don't speak just to administrators and school board members, but also to teachers, parents and students.
• Develops ideas for stories that are exclusive, offer the reader insightful analysis of the news or are creative in approach or high in impact.
• What does this mean to people? When a government reporter can break away from the steps in the process and think instead of an initiative's impact on people.
• Ability to frame: Reporting from different views.
• Follows stories and reports new developments. Knows when important developments
are expected and pursues them. Aware of new angles and questions that should be answered. Routinely looks at previous stories to determine whether an update is necessary. Knows the status of important issues, proposals.

• What does it mean here? When a reporter begins to anticipate local implications of state, national or regional news developments.

• Enterprise every day. Identifies and frames enterprise ideas off daily news, making enterprise a daily thought process, versus just an occasional “big story” proposition.

Writing:
• Goes beyond basic writing to produce more compelling, interesting stories. Selects the right style for the content and tone of the story. Provides good description, detail, anecdotes and quotes. Can impart a visual sense to stories through depiction of scenes. Blends various elements smoothly with good transitions. Identifies and conveys details that enhance storytelling. Sustains reader interest in long, complex stories.
• Identifies and applies a variety of story forms for long-form enterprise.

Technology:
• Learns how to use spreadsheets.

Teamwork/miscellaneous:
• Aware of developments in journalism and the newspaper industry.

Community:
• Understands local history.

Convergence:
• Adapts material from the print environment for the online environment.

Divergence stage
• Moving into more advanced work: narrative writing, computer-assisted reporting, investigative projects, civic journalism.
• Convergence: Writing stories on multiple platforms.
• Moving into management, or...
• If not moving into management, serving as a mentor for reporters in first and second stages.

Final stage
To keep veterans engaged and vital, consider:
• Changing beats.
• Doing stories off their beats.
• Giving them a chance to learn new skills.
• Putting them in charge of a project, such as leading a reporting team, planning a special section, setting up in-house training.
• Reminding them they set the water level for staff performance.
• Paying for classes for computer skills, language training and other growth opportunities.

An editor who wants to learn more about understanding and motivating top reporters over age 40 should read “In Their Prime: Motivating Senior Reporters,” by Sharon L. Peters for the Media Management Center, Northwestern University, 1007 Church Street, Suite 500, Evanston, Ill. 60201, phone 847-491-4900, e-mail: contact@MediaManagementCenter.org
COPY EDITOR

First stage

SKILLS:

News judgment:
• Makes good decisions on picking, placing and packaging stories.

Editing:
• Identifies and corrects problems with stories' content and organization.
• Tightens writing, deleting excess verbiage, redundancies and jargon. Rewrites only when necessary. Makes accurate and appropriate trims in stories, headlines and cutlines.
• Finds creative solutions to such problems as changes in story length and importance and changes in size, shape and importance of pictures and graphics.
• Knows how to find information through traditional reference materials and online sources.
• Maintains calm demeanor under pressure.

Headline/cutline writing:
• Produces basic headlines that are clear, crisp, easy to understand, factually correct and spelled correctly, avoiding cliches and accurately reflecting a story's tone.
• Writes headlines that explain to readers what the story means to them.
• Crafts effective cutlines.

Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:
• Has a command of style, usage, spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation.
• Makes sure stories and pages are read and spell-checked.
• Work is unfailingly accurate and fair and tells the whole story. Reflects understanding of those values as the highest in newspaper journalism. Goes to whatever lengths necessary in pursuit of them.

• Sees potential problems in stories and consults with editors on sensitive stories.
• Knows what treatment is appropriate in handling a variety of stories.
• When mistakes are made, fixes and avoids repeating them.
• Represents the paper effectively and constructively to the public.
• Responds appropriately to complaints and avoids being defensive, seeing interaction with readers as valuable opportunities rather than an imposition or something to be tolerated in order to keep from getting into hot water with the publisher.
• Says yes as often as possible.

Design:
• Can edit, paginate and produce basic modular pages with strong lead art, nice diversity in head sizes and lengths, and good use of secondary art.
• Learns how to develop strong visual centers on section fronts. Integrates stories with breakouts, quotes, and art. Uses refers whenever possible to help guide readers.
• Produces varied layouts. Within the paper's style, values creativity and tries fresh approaches and new ideas.
• Takes care in choosing photos, using news and artistic judgment. Is sensitive to the power of photographs. Crops with care to improve the picture. Advocates use of mugs germane to the story. Consults with photographers whenever possible.

Technology:
• Understands production process. Meets page and copy deadlines. Follows procedures for handling copy, photos and page dummies. Avoids unnecessary remakes. Has mastered style sheets. Formats stories rapidly and accurately. Understands complex formats to achieve typographical effects.
• Internet proficiency.

Libel/legal/FOI:
• Recognizes and catches potential legal problems in stories.
Beyond Skills:

Teamwork/miscellaneous:

- Knowledge of current events and a broad base of general knowledge.
- Knows how to work with reporters, photographers, artists and editors.
- Cares to argue constructively for quality.
- Proposes solutions instead of complaining.
- Displays candor and tact in communicating with peers, subordinates and supervisors and other departments.
- Tells people what they need to know, when they need to know it.
- Seeks feedback and responds positively to criticism.
- Open to ideas and suggestions.

Technology:

- Uses the Internet facilely.

Thinking of diversity:

- Gets all groups – racial, gender, age and socioeconomic standing – into the paper.

Competitive:

- Gets the latest news into the paper.

Thinking visually:

- Uses breakouts/lists that help readers by layering information into easier-to-read formats.
- Understands value of photographs and graphics in adding to a package. Initiates opportunities to use both and consults with editors, photographers and graphic artists about use.

Community:

- Is aware of what real people are talking about – in the grocery line, the school pool or the church social.
- Knows the community, including demographics, government structure, culture and leadership.

Convergence:

- Has a basic knowledge of convergence efforts and wants to learn more.

Second stage

Editing:

- Ability to process a large amount of copy in a short time.
- Has good ear for nuances of language, shades of meaning and a writer’s style.
- Knows when to break or bend rules, such as dictionary entries that fly in the face of contemporary usage. Knows how to apply style principles in unfamiliar situations.

Headline writing:

- Ability to write all kinds of compelling, inviting heads and knows when to use them, with respect to hard news, feature, wordplay, etc.

Design:

- Layouts indicate knowledge of newsmakers, issues and events. Knows importance of each story, as well as the interest readers will have in it and its impact upon them. Makes play decisions based on knowledge and content of stories. Knows topics of interest and importance to the readership.

Teamwork/miscellaneous:

- Aware of developments in journalism and the newspaper industry.

Community:

- Understands local history.

Convergence:

- More involved in paper’s convergence efforts.

Divergence stage

- Moving into management or...
• If not moving into management, serving as a mentor for copy editors in first and second stages.

Final stage

To keep veterans engaged and vital, consider:
• Changing assignments.
• Giving them a chance to learn new skills.
• Putting them in charge of a project – planning a special section, setting up in-house training.
• Paying for classes for computer skills, language training and other growth opportunities.

PHOTOJOURNALIST

First stage

SKILLS:

Pre-assignment:
• Understands the story concept.
• Identifies likely sources to photograph.
• Develops a strategy to obtain visually interesting photographs before assignment.
• Ability to recognize, research and develop a story idea.

On assignment:
• Arrives early to assignment to evaluate scene-setting visuals.
• Ability to tell a story visually in a single photo or multiple photos in keeping with original story line.
• Ability to make storytelling portraits.
• Goes beyond original story line by looking for unimagined moments that may tell the story in a fresher, more revealing way.
• Strong interpersonal verbal communication skills for interviewing and connecting with sources, subjects, reporters, editors and the general public.
• Knows how to make photographs without interrupting the flow of action during assignment.
• Collects identifications and basic information for captions.
• Knows where to get information.
• Knows the right questions to ask.
• Knows how to approach someone who’s in a stressful situation.
• Knows how to work with hostile sources.
• A set of basic survival skills for covering any kind of news event.

Post assignment:
• Reviews photos with writer and editor, suggesting way to include more interesting material in story presentation.
Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:
- Shows a strong sense of journalistic ethics and an appreciation of community standards.
- Makes photographs that are fair to the subject.
- Edits work to present the most accurate and fair story possible.
- Knows style and usage in preparing accurate and complete cutlines.
- Recognizes potential problems on sensitive or difficult assignments and consults with editor for guidance.
- When mistakes are made, fixes them.
- Represents the paper in a professional manner.
- Responds to suggestions from editors or reporters. Makes suggestions without being offensive and looks for ways to touch the community and contribute to its betterment.

Technology:
- Is prepared to deal with assignment — batteries charged, flash cards formatted, equipment works. Knowledge of cameras, lenses and strobe equipment.
- Can produce quality work with either natural or artificial lighting.
- Understands limitations of digital imaging.
- Uses photographic techniques in keeping with the story line.
- Understands use of image editing tools and computer technology.
- Can work with transmitting equipment.
- Archives appropriate imagery from assignment along with usable text background.
- Corrects tonality and color balance to accurately reflect the reality of situation photographed.
- Has page design skills.
- Keeps up with technological advances.

Libel/legal/FOI:
- Has knowledge of laws regarding access, invasion of privacy, libel, defamation and copyright, especially local and regional ordinances.

Beyond Skills:

Teamwork/miscellaneous:
- Shows teamwork skills and a global understanding of and respect for the different editorial roles in the newsroom.
- Takes the time to talk to reporters and editors to lobby tactfully for better visuals.
- Understands tact and applies it in all communication.
- Seeks feedback and puts it to work.
- Says yes as often as possible.
- Has ability to use research tools within and outside newsroom.

Thinking of Diversity:
- Works to develop images that reflect the diversity of community.

Competitive:
- Works to create images that stand out from photographs in competing publications.
- Keeps informed about issues in community before an assignment lands on one's desk.

Community:
- Is aware of what real people are talking about — in the grocery line, the school car pool or the church social.
- Has knowledge of the community, including demographics, government structure, culture and leadership.

Convergence:
- Works to improve convergence by submitting material reworked for easy inclusion in other media.

Second stage

Teamwork/miscellaneous:
- Steps beyond role of basic photojournalist by suggesting stories.
- Works to develop long-term photojournalism projects.
- Familiar with shooting and storytelling trends in other newsrooms.
- Works to develop new strategies for visual storytelling.
- Aware of developments in journalism and the newspaper industry.

Community:
- Understands local history.

Convergence:
- Familiar with digital video techniques (Platypus concept) and works to create opportunities to include digital video in Web outlet.

Divergence stage
- Works to improve basic writing skills.
- Learns layout and suggests ways in which photographs can enhance story presentation.
- Becomes cognizant of artistic developments outside profession.
- Moving into more advanced projects.
- Convergence: Working on multiple platforms.
- Moving into management or ... 
- If not moving into management, serving as a mentor for photographers in first and second stages.

Final stage

To keep veterans engaged and vital, consider:
- Altering shifts to prevent staff from falling into a routine.
- Making sure everyone on the staff has a shot at interesting assignments.
- Rewarding senior staff with time to develop and work on long-term projects—and making it clear that you expect performance for that special time.
NEWS ARTIST

First stage

SKILLS:

Technology:
* Productively uses Photoshop, Quark or layout software, Freehand or illustrator software and Excel.
* Knows how to merge all of these together and how they print.

Information gathering:
* Knows where to get information, works sources and understands what one can and cannot use off the Internet.

Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:
* Makes sure graphics accurately reflect story.
* Knows style and usage.
* Knows spelling, grammar and punctuation.
* Makes sure graphics are read and spell-checked.
* Work is unfailingly accurate, fair and tells the whole story. Performance reflects understanding of those values as the highest in newspaper journalism. Goes to whatever lengths necessary in pursuit of them.
* Sees potential problems in graphics and consults with editors on sensitive stories. Knows what treatment is appropriate in handling a variety of graphics.
* When mistakes are made, fixes them and avoids repeating them.
* Represents the paper effectively and constructively to the public.
* Responds appropriately to complaints and makes effort not to be defensive, seeing interaction with readers as valuable opportunities rather than an imposition or something to be tolerated in order to keep from getting into hot water with the publisher.
* Says yes as often as possible.

Libel/legal/FOI:
* Has knowledge of laws regarding access, invasion of privacy, libel, defamation and copyright, especially local and regional ordinances.

BEYOND SKILLS:

Teamwork/miscellaneous:
* Work with reporter to understand the story and make sure work is accurate.
* Knows work has to fit within larger parameters. Appreciates that news hole is limited. Displays ability to think within the space available.
* Cares to argue constructively for quality.
* Proposes solutions instead of complaining.
* Displays candor and tact in communicating with peers, subordinates and supervisors and other departments.
* Tells people what they need to know, when they need to know it.
* Seeks feedback and responds positively to criticism.
* Open to ideas and suggestions.
* Understands that daily journalism demands many routine assignments and responds professionally. Keeps editors informed of routine or necessary assignments coming up. Seeks and uses, when appropriate, fresh approaches to such assignments. Looks for additional information and unusual or offbeat elements that will make routine assignments interesting.

Thinking of diversity:
* Uses sources/voices that get all groups – racial, gender, age and socioeconomic standing – into the newspaper.

Community:
* Is aware of what real people are talking about – in the grocery line, the school cafeteria or the church social.
Convergence:
* Has basic knowledge of convergence efforts and desire to learn more.

**Second stage**

Teamwork/miscellaneous:
* Be aware of developments in journalism and the newspaper industry.

Community:
* Understands local history.

Convergence:
* Works effectively on the newspaper’s convergence efforts.

**Divergence stage**

* Moves into more advanced projects.
* Convergence: Works easily on multiple platforms.
* Moving into management or
* If not moving into management, serving as a mentor for artists in first and second stages.

**Final stage**

To keep veterans engaged and vital, consider:
* Changing assignments.
* Giving them a chance to learn new skills.
* Putting them in charge of a project, such as leading a team, planning a special section, setting up in-house training.
* Paying for classes for computer skills, language training and other growth opportunities.

**LEADER EDITORS**

Someone moving into one of these jobs – assigning editor, team leader, news editor, assistant photo editor, assistant graphics editor, etc. – would have mastered all or most of the skills for the job he or she would be leading.

**First stage**

**SKILLS:**

**News judgment:**
* Has instinct to spot a story and use the right amount of resources to address it and makes good decisions on packing, placing and packaging stories.
* Constantly leads staff to tell readers what this story means to them.

**Editing:**
* Can guide reporters to produce a basic news story utilizing the 5Ws and H and guide them to better stories that go beyond the 5Ws and H.
* Ability to organize thoughts. Digests complex material and arranges elements in a logical progression with a clearly defined beginning, middle and end.

**Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:**
* Acts as role model for staff in these areas.
* Flags controversial stories and language and visuals for newsroom leader.

**Libel/legal/FOI:**
* Makes good judgments in dealing with lawyers and the law.

**BEYOND SKILLS:**

**Leadership:**
* Is decisive.
* Conceives and proposes initiatives.
* Implements initiatives set by senior editors.
* Develops coaching skills to help staff develop their skills.
* Can resolve conflicts.
* Sets boundaries with staff.
* Adapts easily to meet demands of news and to changing priorities.
* Accepts new methods and changes readily.
* Develops ability to say no (on stories and assignments) and accept the repercussions.
* Can make tough calls and handle the pressure that may follow.
* Apologizes when wrong.
* Learns the basics of managing up.
* Communicates effectively, verbally, through memos, using the news budget and with other tools.
* Works on mood management; a centered leader helps the troops during tough times and can stop fear-mongering.
* Displays a sense of humor when appropriate.
* Gives positive and negative feedback daily, making sure it is consistent with other editors’.
* Regularly expresses appreciation of staff.
* Sets priorities.
* Can run a meeting, with etiquette.
* Masters brainstorming techniques.
* Gets and provides training for staff.
* Is accessible and “present” to staff.

**Teamwork:**

* Supports team efforts and contributes to departmental goals.
* Builds coalitions in department.
* Treats co-workers and supervisors with respect.
* Works as both a team member and a leader.

**Administration:**

* Schedules, assigns people and resources in humane but fair way.
* Learns progressive discipline system.
* Is familiar with labor contract or work policies.
* Learns how to prepare and deliver job evaluations.
* Participates in hiring and firing.
* Maintains confidentiality.
* Basic understanding of budget (although may not run one).

**Thinking of diversity**

* Works to recruit and retain diverse employees.

**Technology:**

* Learns how to use computer systems and appropriate software, including spreadsheets.
* Takes leadership role in improving the newsroom’s technology.

**Convergence:**

* Understands value and power of journalism across media.
* Effectively directs multimedia reporting.

**Community:**

* Understands local history, community culture and how it affects news coverage.
* Knows how to handle critical feedback from community.
* Begins to develop profile outside office.

**Second stage**

**News judgment:**

* Develops ability to see the real story behind the obvious story, that is, larger forces at work.
* Plans and directs large investigative or project reporting projects.

**Editing:**

* Organizes packages, drawing on resources beyond his or her staff.

**Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:**

* Sets and observes high standards.
* Makes good decisions at appropriate level.
* Teaches staff.
An editor who wants to learn more about understanding and motivating middle managers should read “Caught in the Middle: How to improve the lives and performance of newspaper middle managers,” by Sharon L. Peters for the Media Management Center, Northwestern University, 1007 Church Street, Suite 500, Evanston, Ill. 60201, phone 847-491-4900, e-mail: contact@MediaManagementCenter.org

Leadership:
- Enhances ability to work with creative people by embracing ambiguity, encouraging appropriate playfulness and supporting risks that may fail.
- Manages, encourages and accepts change.
- Masters conflict resolution, including knowing when to leave a conflict alone.
- Develops personal communication style, but adapts to the culture.
- Hones sense of humor.
- Develops range of leadership platforms from alpha dog to follower, learns which situation requires a style outside the comfort zone.

Teamwork:
- Solidifies relationships.
- Develops or supports constructive coalitions within newsroom, other divisions.

Administration:
- Deals effectively with other divisions, especially the publisher, advertising, production and the business office.

Miscellaneous:
- Has a feasible career plan.
- Participates in professional organizations or stays aware of developments in journalism and the newspaper industry and other newsrooms.
- Learns to delegate.

- Finds a special project of newsroom effort to stretch skills without stepping on toes.
- Builds business literacy.
- Understands the job now includes business, as well as journalism.

Thinking of diversity:
- Sets standards for diversity of staff and news and feature coverage.
- Develops systems for increasing or maintaining diversity.

Technology:
- Stays technologically literate.
- Thinks of technology in terms of systems, interfaces and practical applications.

Convergence:
- Conceives ways to improve and extend overall journalism by using multimedia.

Community:
- Builds and profile in community.
- Maintains high-level contacts and communication.
- Become part of the newspaper’s face to the community.

Third stage

The editor may start preparing for the top leadership job.

News judgment:
- Understands a breadth of coverage areas beyond traditional, institutional news, e.g., the dimensions explored in The Local News Handbook.
- Develops background for making good news judgments in all parts of the newspaper, e.g., sports, features, business, etc.

Editing skill:
- Ability to teach primary editing to less experienced or skilled leader editors.
Credibility/ethics/accuracy/fairness:
• Evaluates factors and alternatives and recommends policies.
• Makes good decisions.
• Teaches editors.

Leadership:
• Leads leaders.
• Ability to lead across departments.
• Mentors or develops less experienced editors.
• Communicates broadly.
• Liaison between the top editor and departmental editors and assistant editors.
• Develops personal leadership and editorial style and priorities, while still championing the top editor’s.
• Learns principles of strategic planning.

Teamwork:
• Coalesces and leads the editor team daily.
• Works effectively laterally with leaders in other divisions.

Administrative:
• Learns to build departmental budget and stay within it.

Miscellaneous:
• Assesses career aspirations realistically.
• Becomes more knowledgeable about and involved in business-side issues.
• Learns personal and organizational pacing. Improves effectiveness through delegating.
• Uses professional organizations to work on breadth and leadership style.
• Casts the web of peer relationships and coalitions beyond the newsroom.
• Develops willingness to consider the views of people, life or the world from outside the newsroom.
• Partners with editor in planning new initiatives, budgeting process.

Thinking of diversity:
• Develop community and professional relationships that nurture diversity.

Technology:
• Stays technologically literate.

Convergence:
• Sets or helps set organizational policy, with considerations of journalism, marketing and technology.

Community:
• Constantly builds productive community relationships.
• Develops newsroom strategy in part based on community and its needs, as outlined in The Local News Tool Kit.
TOP EDITOR

This job includes many skills and attributes, including those of other leader editors, but the top editor also should understand and accept these responsibilities.

- Understands that everyone learns, whatever their age, rank or experience.
- Learns to be the newsroom's designer, as opposed to director.
- Learns to build shared vision for the organization.
- Understands systems thinking.
- Builds a system to ensure continuous organizational learning.
- Communicates across divisions and through levels.
- Constantly finds ways to reinforce, reinstate newsroom mission and values.
- Develops peer relationships at top of company and across companies.
- Focuses on strategic thinking.
- Develops profile in community and profession.
- Becomes leader in professional organization.
- Maintains updated succession plan.
- Learns how to deal with external media coverage.
- Learns to instill and reinforce idealism, courage, passion and creativity among other editors.
- Accepts role as community leader.

THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

We promised you a reasonable way to build these capabilities in your newsroom. The key is a system to help staff members grow, by their standards as well as yours. Each person should take the lead role in his or her growth.

People should become career strategists, according to an article in *The Futurist*.

That does not imply overweening personal ambition. Career strategists realize they have to take the initiative in charting the direction and speed of their own lives and careers. Instead of job security, career strategists will seek job resiliency – developing the skills and flexibility needed to quickly respond to shifting employer requirements.

As Sharon Peters said, people come into our newsrooms with some skills, but not all. A hot-shot reporter out of one of the country’s best journalism schools may get onto a larger paper and already have most of the “first stage” skills mastered. But another reporter starting at a tiny daily may need a few years to master those skills.

Either as part of the annual evaluation, or as needed, have the staff member look over the skill list that fits her job and stage of career. (In fact, this personal development plan could be the annual evaluation.)

The staff member should prioritize 5-10 skills she needs to improve and specify what she will or would do to make it happen. (No one should use the whole list as some type of personnel checklist.) Give her a time frame. If the plan is done as part of the annual review, the time frame becomes easy – the two of you will review it a year later.

Remember the role of the editor is designer of the learning newsroom, so the organizational development plan is built on, and supportive of, the collective personal development plans. So have a support system ready – getting back to the idea that a learning newsroom is a group effort.
• Have other staff members who will serve as mentors.
• Have the employee’s direct leader (or another editor) schedule weekly or monthly meetings to review her work and progress in those targeted areas.
• Your newsroom’s training and development program (see Chapter 4) should be built to serve your organizational development plan and your staff members’ personal development plans.

It’s the employee’s responsibility to follow up; it’s the leaders’ responsibility to create and maintain the learning environment.

Here’s an example of a very basic personal development plan:

**What?**
In what areas would you like to grow?

**Why?**
In what ways will this help you be smarter, broader, better rounded and/or do your job better?

**Where?**
Where will this take you in your career, short- and long-term?

**Who?**
Whom will you involve, how, why?
How can the newspaper help?

**When?**
What’s your timetable for meeting your goals?

**How?**
How will you measure success – and how will we celebrate it?
THE COMMITTED NEWSPAPER
THE COMMITTED NEWSPAPER

By Jeffery Cowart, Dennis R. Hetzel and Stephen A. Trosley

Almost every editor in American newsrooms recognizes the need for ongoing professional development for journalists. But in all but the largest newspapers, almost all agree that limitations of time and money are the most common barriers to achieving the desired levels of training and education necessary to create and sustain the optimum learning newsroom.

And even in the largest newspapers, there is widespread belief among editors that publishers should be investing more money — and among publishers that editors must be more innovative and creative to find new ways to invest more time.

Studies by Training magazine and the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) show that U.S. companies on average spend between 2 percent and 2.6 percent of annual payroll and invest about 24 hours per year per employee on professional development. Training’s Top 50 companies spend an average of 3.9 percent of payroll and 66 hours per employee per year.

Our informal survey suggests that newsrooms and newspaper companies don’t compare favorably in terms of investment.

Yet, editors generally agree that a newspaper committed to accurate, fair and authentic journalism depends on professional development to improve the knowledge of its staff, its professional skills and its ability consistently to focus those two dimensions on depth and context in news coverage and presentation.

In 1997, ASNE published its Journalism Values Handbook, the result of several years of work within the Journalism Values Institute (JVI) among journalists around the country. Six core values were identified:

Balance/Fairness/Wholeness — to reflect the “wholeness” of communities. Coverage needs to capture diverse voices and viewpoints, solutions and problems, the profoundly ordinary as well as the unusual, the good with the bad.

Accuracy/Authenticity — to get the facts right but also to get the “right facts.” Coverage needs to provide background, context and perspective and it must capture the tone, language, experiences and emotions of people.

Leadership — to frame and illuminate important issues in the communities a newspaper serves. Coverage needs to stimulate discussion about public concerns and help people see possibilities for moving forward.

Accessibility — to connect the public to important community issues. Coverage needs to create give-and-take between the newspaper and its communities, and connect citizens to one another.
Credibility - to consistently fulfill journalistic values over time and convey a deep understanding of the communities a newspaper serves.

Judgment - to act as the regulator of the other journalistic values by selecting, shaping and bringing definition to what is important, interesting and meaningful in a community.

To achieve the highest level of commitment, to truly embrace these core values and produce the most authentic journalism, requires a systematic approach and more investment in professional development of the staff. Lou Ureneck of the Portland (Maine) Press Herald noted during the JVI discussions that "we need to bring the same kind of fervor and attention and energy to the examination of our own problems and processes for improvement that we would to anybody else."

The same systematic process is true for achieving the highest levels of professional development. Editors must find a way to bring the same passion to learning in the newsroom that journalists bring to the work of creating and producing the newspaper. That is what the concept of the learning newsroom is all about.

A critical factor in moving toward higher levels of commitment, quality and learning in the newsroom rests with the newspaper and newspaper leadership. Too often, as reflected in conversations with editors and publishers, there is a sense of resignation that we just cannot find the time or the money to do what we would like to get done.

But, Peter Senge in The Fifth Discipline says that out is too convenient. The first step for anyone in a leadership position is to change their mind about potential, possibilities and solutions to what may seem like insurmountable barriers.

"At the heart of the learning organization is a shift of mind," says Senge, "...from seeing problems as caused by someone or something "out there" to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience." Senge says a learning organization is continually discovering how to create a better reality "and now they can change it."

Studies have shown that all entrepreneurs almost universally work with limited resources in building their enterprises. One driving force of those who achieve the highest levels of success is the ability to continually evaluate and identify resources allocated to low yield and to find creative and innovative ways to shift those resources to positions of higher yield.

That idea is a key factor for editors in working toward a higher level of authentic journalism in a learning newsroom. A stronger commitment to professional development is at the center of the idea.

Reaching the highest level of authentic journalism requires consistency in two fundamental professional development tracks:

- Skills-based training to improve and maintain journalistic craft skills.
- Educational programs to deepen topical knowledge and broaden perspectives.

LEVELS OF COMMITMENT

Based on surveys with editors and publishers, and using investment data from comprehensive surveys of U.S. companies and organization conducted by Training magazine and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), the following grid proposes three alternative commitments to professional development - based on the level of quality a newspaper is willing to support:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMITMENT/QUALITY LEVEL</th>
<th>&quot;A&quot; LEVEL</th>
<th>&quot;B&quot; LEVEL</th>
<th>&quot;C&quot; LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Committed</strong></td>
<td>The best and most desirable level of investment; strongest consistent journalism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper</strong></td>
<td><strong>&quot;B&quot; LEVEL</strong></td>
<td>The level of investment to which all newspapers should aspire; strong consistent journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;C&quot; LEVEL</strong></td>
<td>The absolute minimum level of investment to maintain acceptable journalistic integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td>- High level of financial investment, more than 2 percent of annual newsroom payroll</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>- High level of time invested, more than 30 hours per employee per year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>- Equal emphasis on skills training and educational programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Formal professional development planning and strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Frequency and consistency in learning opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strongly committed to professional development as a core value</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Moderate level of financial investment, between 1 and 2 percent of annual payroll</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Moderate level of time invested, 20-30 hours per employee per year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Skills training emphasized over educational programs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Less formal professional development planning and strategy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some frequency and consistency of learning opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Actively seeking professional development improvement</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Low level of financial investment, under 1 percent of annual payroll</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Low level of time invested, under 20 hours per employee per year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Almost exclusively skills training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No formal professional development planning and strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Learning opportunities infrequent and inconsistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Inconsistent bursts of professional development activity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When asked to assess the current level of professional development investment at their newspapers, our unscientific sample of editors and publishers tended to rank even what might be considered as the best and most comprehensive efforts in newsrooms as a "B" level of commitment — meaning that they could clearly identify goals and initiatives that were still needed to take them to a higher "A" level of professional development investment.

Most, though, saw their efforts as "C" levels of commitment or lower, meaning that their newsrooms were only minimally engaged with professional development activities. This statement tended to become more true the smaller the market size.

The reasons were certainly not related to a lack of desire to do more. Rather, the reasons always seemed to come back to issues of time and money. In smaller markets, even if there is commitment, small staff size limits learning opportunities, and a budget line item for professional development is generally hard to find.

"I have four reporters," says Managing Editor Joe Centers of the Norwalk (Ohio) Reflector, with a circulation of just under 9,000. "If two go to a workshop during the week, I've lost 50 percent of my staff."

**THE SMALL MARKET CHALLENGE**

At the "B" level in the 50,000-circulation-and-under market, it's all about dedication. Sometimes it comes in the form of a publisher who understands the need for investment in continuous learning. Sometimes it's an editor
who organizes brown-bag lunch sessions and does a lot of one-on-one coaching. These newspapers depend heavily on closest-to-home press association programs and local colleges and universities. In most of these cases, the goal is to train, but there’s been little thought put into achieving a certain performance level, developing a progressive plan or even measuring the effectiveness of the training.

At the “C” level, training may just get lost in the daily demand of getting out a newspaper with a limited staff. When there is training at this level, it’s by accident. Often, the goal is simply to assuage the feeling that doing something, anything, is at least a symbolic statement of the importance of professional development.

In the view of newsroom professionals, ownership of newspapers in these smaller markets often want a clear demonstration that there is a direct connection between investment in professional development and greater profitability. The operational – and sometimes survival – focus tends to be on month-to-month margins. Owners and publishers need to be convinced that the efforts include short-term and well as long-term return on investment.

“We expect our editors to produce the best newspapers their communities can afford,” said one now-retired executive of the old Donrey Media Group.

When budget line items for professional development are incorporated in smaller-market newspaper budgets, which is rarely, the allocations are predictably cautious. Dan Smith, a group publisher in the 21st Century Newspapers group in Michigan, said that when he was vice president for community newspapers at Morris Communications, he mandated that his publishers earmark one-fourth of one percent of projected revenue to training. He is bringing that same philosophy to Heritage Newspapers, the group he manages within 21st Century.

But such allocations are the exception rather than the rule in smaller market newspapers.

Chad Killebrew, managing editor of the Lexington (N.C.) Dispatch (circulation 12,504), which is owned by New York Times Community Newspapers, says he has no formal professional development program, no budget allocation of dollars, and little time to invest in training. “Our interest is sending someone to a seminar or workshop is supported depending on where it’s being held,” Killebrew said. “If it’s close by, the money is usually found.”

For editors, the challenge of professional development is a constant struggle to balance trade-offs in resources. Steve Trosley, the former editor of the Daily Bulletin in Ontario, Calif., and now publisher of the Norwalk Reflector, recalls that he once delayed hiring for an open reporter position for six weeks and spent the savings to send 20 staffers to an investigative reporting workshop in Santa Clara.

“Our program at Ontario was ambitious at times and ignored at others,” said Trosley. “There was never really a plan. Here in Norwalk, there is no written plan, but there is an urgency to train in the face of a dramatically changing market.”

THE MID-MARKET CHALLENGE

In newspaper markets of 50,000 to 150,000 circulation, larger staff sizes and larger newsroom budgets begin to translate into efforts to formalize professional development activities and work toward a higher consistency in opportunities for learning. But strained resources still take a toll on the best intentions.

Editors in these markets agree that successfully increasing levels of professional development requires more targeted funding and more staff, both of which tend to be hit hard in times of economic downturn. With tight resources, the priority for editors is producing
the daily newspaper. When staff members are “taken away” for training, either as teachers or students, more responsibility falls on the already stretched staff remaining to produce the news.

This pervasive tendency that professional development activities, even in times of tight resources, are seen as “taking away” is part of the challenge for editors in all markets to address. Finding ways to allocate more days per year for individual staffers to grow more efficient and effective in their jobs is essential to producing a higher quality newspaper. As Amanda Bennett, editor of the Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader, puts it, editors, publishers and owners must work to create “breathing space for learning” and see that as part of the successful business model as well as critical to the journalistic mission.

Among those surveyed in mid-market newspapers, a key part of their strategy in meeting this challenge is to focus on learning opportunities that are closest to home and cost-effective. The preferences include in-house workshops and seminars drawing heavily on in-house talent and statewide or regional programs that are within driving distance. Opportunities are always evaluated through a lens of achieving maximum professional development impact for the most staffers at the lowest cost.

Sharon Peters, editor of The Gazette in Colorado Springs, said when budget allocations for training and development were reduced, she made a commitment to the staff that there would be “one in-house training opportunity every week through the end of year.”

“T’im a strong believer in the virtues of in-house training in the best of times,” Peters said. “But, the unspeakably lean training budget jazzed us into fifth gear.”

The professional development activities included: journalism skills and craft discussions led mostly by staff managers; management training led by managers themselves and “unusually strong” human resources department on topics such as conflict resolution; community experts on diverse topics, most of whom came for no fees, and computer-assisted reporting training led by a staff member with high expertise.

For Peters, achieving the “A” level of commitment would involve more time than money. She would have a full-time training editor “whose full-time job is not only to set up internal and external training opportunities, but to be the reinforcer and knower-of-all-things-learned.” The program would include general topical education as well as journalism education, including critical thinking skills, business literacy, community awareness and even customer service and total newspaper operations.

At the highest level of achievement, she sees herself and her top editors spending at least 20 hours a week coaching others.

THE LARGE-MARKET CHALLENGE

In larger markets, those over 150,000 circulation, professional development tends to be much more institutionalized into the fabric of operations. Many larger newspapers have development or training editors or other professionals to manage regular learning opportunities for the staff and often to oversee the pursuit of individual or departmental goals in professional development.

Many of the efforts at larger newspapers are built on a sophisticated in-house system of knowledge sharing such as “the university,” which provides a regular series of opportunities taught by both staff and outside experts. These newspapers are better able to invest time in learning, but still face issues of reduced or inadequate budgets to extend the reach of learning as far as they would like it their newsrooms.

Primarily on the basis of funding, most editors from the larger markets grade their professional development efforts as “B,” with
some reporting at least a trend toward "A." That comes about more from creative and innovative use of resources rather than overall increased resources.

"For us, reaching the next level would require $100,000 more a year with the balance about 50-50 internal and external. We'll make the time," said Gil Thelen, executive editor of The Tampa Tribune. "The highest level would require at least $250,000 more a year, a full-time news trainer (now split with recruiting) and an absolutely full staff authorization to allow for additional training time."

In general, larger market newspapers are more capable of taking advantage of higher-cost, distant training opportunities such as those offered by the Poynter Institute or the American Press Institute, though there are smaller-market newspapers like the York (Pa.) Daily Record that work hard to maintain those types of experiences as part of their professional development regimens. But, even in the larger markets, financial pressures create a trend toward stronger in-house professional development programming and lower-cost opportunities closer to home.

"We bring in two or more nationally known consultants-coaches a year, send numerous staffers to excellent offerings by the Virginia Press Association and watch like hawks for other low-cost or free opportunities, such as the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association visiting campus programs," said Louise Seals, managing editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

"We watch the annual calendars of skill-specific national organizations such as the Society of Newspaper Design, Investigative Reporters and Editors, American Copy Editors Society and the National Press Photographers Association for training opportunities in a city we can drive to," she said. "We also push content-specific training such as the sessions sponsored by the Knight Center, CASE and the Foundation for American Communications (FACS), especially when we won't have to pay all the costs."

Peter Bhatia, executive editor of The Oregonian, says tight budgets have pushed his newspaper toward development of internal strategies. Particular energy has been spent on creating and delivering learning through "Oregonian U.," with a varied course offering taught by in-house experts on such subjects as Spanish language and management.

"Our strategy has been to focus more internally - given the tough economic times - and create learning opportunities for our staff that take advantage of local expertise and staff expertise, and be able to do it relatively inexpensively," said Bhatia. "The newspaper does invest in opportunities like the National Writers' Workshop, Poynter and API, but the bulk of our focus in the past year has been doing things in the newsroom so the greatest number of people could take advantage of it."

One of the distinctions of professional development initiatives in larger markets is the frequency with which personal development goals are routinely incorporated into performance evaluations and expectations. This is a strategic point that is often mentioned by editors in all market sizes as a must in creating a true learning newsroom and promoting ongoing learning as part of the job definition of journalist.

While this is an effective and smart approach, the problem is the synchronization of setting performance goals and the newsroom being able to consistently make relevant learning opportunities available in pursuit of those goals.

**MOVING TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Overall, there is almost no way definitively to calculate just how much time or money represents an "A", "B" or "C" level of commitment, regardless of market size. Editors and publishers interviewed for this project, in almost all cases, had trouble identifying the financial
commitments they currently make, even though dollars and cents are trackable and better systems need to be developed in newsrooms for the future.

The trouble came both in figuring out how much money is spent annually on professional development, but moreso in trying to calculate what standard of measurement to use in tracking that spending. Should the standard be companywide professional development spending as a percent of annual gross or net company revenues, with a measure of what is allocated to the newsroom? Should the measurement simply be a percentage of the overall newsroom budget or salary budget? Or should it be the amount spent based on newsroom budget allocated just to human resources?

There seems to be no generally accepted standard of measurement on spending or time for professional development in newsrooms. Different newsrooms calculate investment in different ways, and many don’t think about the ratio at all – they simply try to “find” money when opportunities for training and education arise.

"When we come in over budget, we use some of the surplus for training," says Michael Hengel, publisher of The Holland (Mich.) Sentinel (circulation 18,369). Like many small and mid-market newspapers, it has no formal budget for training and development.

And, when it comes to measuring results:

"We just sort of figure that if you throw some mud up on the wall, some of it is going to stick," said Hengel, who shares a lack of formal measurement with many newspapers in all market sizes. Hengel does have a straightforward but sophisticated inventory that keeps track of each employee’s participation in any educational program so he can determine who might need more training and who has reached a desired level of training.

OTHER INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Each year, Training magazine does an extensive survey in determining its list of the top 100 training organizations in the U.S. The top organizations demonstrate an organic, integrated approach to professional development. In arriving at its conclusions, the magazine uses the following qualitative and quantitative benchmarks:

Qualitative:

Goals. How is training strategically linked to your organization’s business goals and objectives?

Evaluation. Describe the processes and mechanisms you use to evaluate the effectiveness of training in your organization.

Measurement. Which of the following metrics do you track and tie to training? (Metrics include retention, internal promotions, customer loyalty, and market share.)

Workplace Surveys. Describe how your company uses employee satisfaction and climate surveys; explain the results of the most recent survey; and describe how you have used the feedback. (For example, changes made or training programs introduced.)

Formal Programs. Which of the following formal programs does your company use? Describe your approach. (Programs include succession planning, leadership development, mentoring, and job rotation.)

Outstanding Initiative. Describe an outstanding training and development initiative that your company has undertaken in the past 12 months that could serve as a benchmark for others.
Culture. How are you using training to align internal culture with your external corporate mission?

Quantitative:

Training Professionals. What is the total number of training professionals in your company (excluding occasional or part-time trainers)?

Tuition Reimbursement. What is the maximum tuition reimbursement your company has established for the current year?

Total budget. What is your company’s training budget for the current year?

Percentage of payroll. What does your training budget represent as a percentage of payroll?

Hours. Excluding orientation, currently how many hours of formal, planned training do your employees receive annually?

From its 2002 survey, Training reports that the total dollars budgeted for formal training and professional development programs for organizations in the United States was $74 billion.

In 2001, the Top 50 organizations spent more than $53.3 billion on training and professional development initiatives. On average, these companies annually provided 66 hours of training per employee and spent an average 3.9 percent of payroll on that development.

In the Training survey, the industry average spending for other than the top 50 companies surveyed was 2.6 percent of payroll.

These findings are mirrored by an annual survey of 270 U.S. companies by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). On average, it found in 2001, spending on professional development was 1.9 percent of payroll, down slightly from 2 percent the previous year. Professional development expenditures per employee averaged $761, up 8 percent from the previous year. An average of 78 percent of employees received training or professional development, with an average of 23.7 hours of training per employee.

BUILDING THE LEARNING NEWSROOM IN THE COMMITTED NEWSPAPER

If individual and organizational development are to take root in the newspaper industry, a generally accepted formula for investment should be developed.

Using the two credible and comprehensive benchmark studies from Training magazine and ASTD suggests that newsrooms — and media companies in general — should spend between 2 percent and 2.6 percent of annual payroll on professional development.

That range serves as a good “B” level target in the A-B-C range suggested in this chapter.

Exceeding that range would move the newspaper toward “A” level of investment, and investing below the average range moves toward the paper toward the “C” level of commitment.

Using the data from the two studies, the same logic can be applied in establishing measurements of investment of time. Training found that the Top 50 companies invest 66 hours annually per employee in professional development. ASTD finds the average organization invests 23.7 hours annually per employee.

A good “B” level target for investment of time might be 20-30 hours of professional development per employee annually. Less than 20 hours per employee would move the newspaper toward the “C” level, and more than 30 hours of professional development per employee annually would take the paper toward the “A” level.

One of the first and most important steps for any newspaper in working to improve its investment — regardless of the measurement standards adopted — is to undertake a self-assessment to determine where you and your
team see your current level of commitment. Most editors and publishers interviewed could easily rate their own newsroom investment based on their own subjective factors.

From there, each newsroom can set goals for what it would take to reach the next level for them and determine how and over what period of time to measure progress toward these goals.

The suggestions here serve as guidelines for discussion and for setting targets within individual newsrooms and newspapers. These ideas provide a good dialogue starter between publishers and editors trying to reach agreements on commitment, investment and measuring return on investment.

What kind of improvement in efficiency, effectiveness and professional work would you expect for an investment of 66 hours a year per employee? How do you currently assess whether investment of time and money in professional development makes any difference in quality or in the bottom line?

Motorola believes that for every $1 spent on training and professional development, it gets back $33 in benefits. Is that a good return on investment in your newsroom and newspaper?

Clearly, discussions and goals should be framed in the context of historical patterns of investment and setting new goals and patterns for development.

For example, Dan Smith of Heritage Newspapers knows he will budget one-fourth of one percent of projected revenues for professional development. In terms of financial investment and new goals, achieving the next level in professional development might be aspiring to grow investment to one-third to one-half of one percent of revenues within three years. To go along with increased investment, Smith and his staff will need to establish agreed-upon standards for what types of professional development to invest in, the purpose or goals for the increased investment, and how to measure the outcomes of increased investment.

This same kind of exercise can be undertaken to define and set goals for time investment; for internal and external training and education opportunities; for increasing the amount of time someone in the newsroom spends on coaching for specific topics. An editor can keep time logs to get a real handle of time investment, then set goals on how to increase that investment.

The other aspect of working measurement is to tie investment goals to specific outcomes desired. While everyone would like to say a higher level of investment leads to increased circulation, those kinds of direct ties are harder to prove, though some identifiable correlations do seem to be emerging to support the premise.

One editor suggested that it is quite possible to imagine linking professional development initiatives to the work of the Readership Institute at Northwestern University, which is being embraced by many newspapers. Using the Reader Behavior Scores as a measurement tool, specific professional development strategies might be developed as part of the newsroom effort to move the needle in a positive way among readers.

For editors in the newsroom, professional development has payoffs in a variety of measurable ways — in everything from staff improvement in hitting deadlines, to improved contextual storytelling skills, to improvements in collaborative working. All of the professional development goals should be directly tied to individual performance evaluation systems to achieve the most impact.

Newsrooms can set goals and outcomes that are right for them, and craft professional development strategies to support movement toward those goals and outcomes, with the overall goal of moving from the current level of commitment to the next.

John Robinson, editor of the Greensboro (N.C.) News & Record, says he believes his newspaper and the industry itself could significantly improve the way they measure impact of pro-
Professional development, primarily because most assessment attempts are "action-oriented" as opposed to results-oriented.

"We count the number of people who attend organized training or the number of fellowships we get," he said. "We don't measure how what is learned in training is translated into better journalism or a better newspaper."

As an example of a next-level strategy for his newspaper, Robinson says he would reduce, not increase, the number of improvement areas being addressed. That way, the focus on those areas would be more intense. He would begin a daily critique to assess how well the paper did in the identified areas.

He would create a system that measures the times one of the new trainers helps or works with a staff member and set up a self-evaluation system "in which staff members give regular, subjective feedback to themselves and me" on how they're improving.

The final step would be development of an outside-the-newsroom critique system that uses citizens to give direct feedback on the targeted improvement areas.

Working toward the highest level, Robinson says, "I would hire an in-house trainer who would conduct one-on-one training as well as coordinate the actual training program, giving it structure and discipline. I would devote about $40,000 to training programs, which is more than twice what it is now, to bring more people in and send more people out. I would put most of the effort — say 80 percent — into in-house programs because I think they are more effective."

At the highest level, he would hire four trainers: one for the copy desk, one for editors and two for reporters. Then he would hire "at least one person who worked with the staff on positive thinking, creative thinking, new ideas and collaboration." He would hire a full-time hiring/recruitment coordinator "to get the right people in here in the first place." He would hire additional staff to plug holes created by all the cross training.

**CONCLUSION**

Generally, editors accept that there is a real payoff for building commitment to professional development and working toward the next level. And general studies and surveys, such as those conducted by Training Magazine, draw strong correlations between investment in professional development and desired results and outcomes for organizational and individual performance.

Steven Tallman, vice president of global services for Bain & Company, writing in Training, says the best companies to work for demonstrate a strong commitment to "training, training and more training." But, he says, too often missing are commitments to "a holistic approach to training, for the simple reason that few businesses think or act that way. They should. The usual narrow view hurts an organization's chances of reaching its full potential because training is unlikely to mesh well with the business strategy."

In other words, investment in professional development and training in a strategic way can be and should be a business strategy: Tallman writes that most chief executives "have little idea of which programs will most effectively propel the company's business strategy."

The best executives make the connection between professional development investment and results.

Hank McKinnell, CEO of Pfizer, which invests 14 percent of its payroll in workforce development programs and is cited by Training as the No. 1 company in its 2002 survey, says, "We don't have the time or resources to train people in general; we have to focus on the critical knowledge and skills that are needed to be successful."

Sharon Peters of Colorado Springs says she knows by her own analysis that, after investment in professional development, newsrooms run more smoothly, deficiencies are improved, and the journalism is "better."
“Results will be measured,” she says. “Some will be content-related. Some will be management or efficiency or customer satisfaction related.”

The bottom-line payoff for investment in professional development, says Mark Bowden, editor of The Gazette in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is quality and an overall higher level of performance, both in the newsroom and elsewhere in the newspaper.

“Professional maturity is what we are talking about,” he says.

FRESH IDEAS FOR THE LEARNING NEWSROOM

By Dennis Hetzel

Most of us are in similar circumstances when it comes to training, and most of us are doing similar things.

You probably take advantage of low-cost local or regional seminars. You have a schedule of “brown baggers” or “NAME OF YOUR NEWSPAPER University.” You require staff members to share what they learn when they go to outside training. You bring community members to the newsroom.

What follows is a list of interesting, outside-the-box ideas from our peers, collected by Jeff Cowart, Steve Trosley and Dennis Hetzel for the learning newsroom project. There are many more in Chapter 9. Feel free to adopt and adapt any of these ideas:

Use The Flagship: If you’re part of a larger newspaper group, others in your group know a lot. Forum Communications Group, owner of The Forum in Fargo, N.D., uses an editor of its flagship paper with a training background to build a one-day program for the group’s smaller newspapers.

Use The Boss: Even at the smallest papers, the publisher or executive editor often has some laps around the journalistic track. Get them to think of the roles they can play as coaches and teachers. They surely have unusual expertise in some area that would be important, even critical, to the newsroom.

Get The Tools: Steve Trosley was surprised by how many newspapers were unfamiliar with resources such as ASNE’s Local News Tool Kit. There are outstanding resources out there. Identify them. Use them. Tell your friends about them. Trosley’s Norwalk (Ohio) Reflector
(circulation 8,822) uses the Kir as well as the Readership Institute's material in training. A lot of material is free on the Web at sites such as poynter.org and readership.org.

Quantify: If you're committed to training, you can measure much of what you do. The News & Advance in Lynchburg, Va., has a commitment for all reporters and editors to attend at least two seminars a year. The paper asks people who go to training what they learned and specifically how they're going to apply it.

Identify The Champions: Bob Morgan, Lynchburg's associate managing editor, suggests that key supervisors and other willing leaders should be in your first training groups when you're doing extended programs. "Pick those who seek success in the concept," he says. "The beginning is not the time to try and create converts."

Ask What They Want: To craft a training plan, the Austin American-Statesman starts by asking newsroom people what training they want. The survey results are combined with areas identified by key editors. ("Time management" often pops up as a desired topic, adds the Statesman's Maria Henson.)

Use The Buddy System: Austin's Henson suggests that, once you've developed a list of newsroom speakers, assign a staff member to handle the logistics of the visit. The staff member gets one-on-one time with a valuable resource, and the training leader doesn't have to do all the work.

Find Fresh Topics: Obvious journalism topics such as lead-writing and grammar reviews make sense, but you can surprise and delight people with fresh ideas. Topics in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's "Cox Academy" program include "Writing for ajc.com" and "Palm Pilot Primer."

Make It Matter: At the Greensboro, N.C., News & Record, training goals become a specific part of everyone's individualized annual developmental plan.

Have Fun: Rich Archbold, editor of the Long Beach, Calif., Press-Telegram, has a "reader creature" in his office. The big dragon symbolizes the need to feed the creature by improving readership. Archbold says staff members submitted more than 400 ideas to improve the paper.

Find The Value: When staff members go away on special assignments, they enrich themselves and the newsroom when they return. Amanda Bennett, editor of the Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader, had to send two people to Knight Ridder's Washington bureau to help with post-Sept. 11 coverage. At first, she saw it as a loss of needed people. Later, she realized it was an extraordinary training opportunity.

Do Clever Hiring: Lexington's Bennett scouts for editors with special professional experiences who make them good teachers, coaches and mentors. She notes that many journalists are taking early retirement packages from larger papers. However, they aren't ready to retire, and they enjoy working with young journalists.

Support The Circle: The Gazette in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has had a monthly "writer's circle" for more than 17 years. The company buys lunch, and staff writers manage the agenda. Reporters also can volunteer their work for a critique by Editor Mark Bowden. The reporter gives Bowden three to five stories, including copies of what they sent to the desk and what actually appeared in the paper. Bowden's critique is used as a starting point for open discussion in the circle.

Send Quick Hits: Nothing reinforces the importance of learning more than a daily
nugget. E-mail makes it easy and saves trees. In Cedar Rapids, daily tips from the editor and copy desk chief to all or parts of the newsroom are regular staples.

Play Host: Rex Smith, editor of the Albany, N.Y., Times Union, says a good way to train more people at a price break is to volunteer the paper as a host of a regional conference by a state press association or other journalism group.

Share The Load: Albany’s Smith also has attracted outside experts to do training by sharing expenses with neighboring papers or press associations. For example, the Albany and Burlington, Vt., papers jointly brought in Bill Marimow, editor of The Sun in Baltimore, to do training.

Get Out Of The Office: Schedule and take tours of your local places in the news such as schools, libraries, museums, etc. Allow time to talk to people there — the rank-and-file workers as well as the top managers. It gets the desk-bound out of the office and inevitably results in fresh story ideas.

Set The Tone From The Top: The publisher should set a tone for the learning newsroom by making sure he or she is getting new training on a regular basis. That’s what happens at Hearst newspapers. “If the company requires a 61-year-old publisher to go through training, it sends a strong signal,” says Albany’s Smith.

FIVE CASE STUDIES

By Dennis Hetzel

When it comes to training and development, there are a lot of editors doing a lot of things right. Here is a glimpse inside five such newsrooms:

Austin American-Statesman

In 1999, editors formed a training committee that started by surveying other newspapers such as USA Today, The News & Observer in Raleigh, N.C., and the Los Angeles Times.

“We were starting from scratch and without their impressive budgets,” said the Statesman’s Maria Henson. “But we wanted to model as best we could an exciting program ... I’d say we are still building the program but we can be proud of how far we’ve come and how senior editors have maintained the commitment to the program in budget-cutting times.”

The newsroom training committee gets a distinct budget — a bit more than $20,000 annually — and senior editors budget separately for individual outside training.

The key strategy involves what Henson calls “grassroots participation.” She seeks committee volunteers from throughout the newsroom. The team brainstorms, using a newsroom-wide training survey as a tool.

“I ask them to think big: Who would they love to see come to the Statesman? Go after that person. Find out if he or she would be willing to come here, ask about fees and availability,” she said.

This year’s training goals include Internet writing, help in writing shorter stories and improved editing skills.

Each committee member is assigned a speaker to host, meaning Henson doesn’t do all the logistics, and committee members get the experience of extended time with the guest. Often, small dinners are held to meet with the guest on an informal basis.

Raising the bar would involve a full-time training editor and writing coach, something the Statesman lacks, she said.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Michael Schwartz, newsroom training manager, speaks proudly about the array of training and education initiatives in Atlanta. The paper
offers a mix of in-house and off-site programs that cover a wide variety of topics and use many different instructors.

The A7C, a Cox newspaper, uses the “Cox Academy” as the training centerpiece with an extensive array of sessions on everything from doing high-impact news projects to understanding how to use a Palm Pilot. Instructors include A7C staffers, college professors and editors from other newspapers. Talented college students interested in journalism also are invited to attend Cox Academy sessions.

The paper also has a full-time writing coach, who is one of two managers assigned full-time to staff development activities. A third is involved in such programs on a part-time basis, Schwartz said.

Schwartz oversees the training budget, and a newsroom administration committee solicits information twice a year on the development needs of “high-potential, high-performing staff members.” Individual staff members also are welcome to request off-site training.

What would the next level of training and development look like? Schwartz would invest more money to develop “nearby off-site, multi-day training programs to address specific staff needs.” He’d also like to develop more trainers in the entire paper and create more partnerships with training providers.

3. Conducting other types of in-house training.

4. Making a training component a part of annual developmental goals for each individual.

Robinson said he preaches that “people come in every day trying to improve what they do, whether it is dissecting their story that ran that day, reworking some headline, reading a book or journal about their craft, or asking an editor or co-worker for some feedback.”

The newsroom has a specific training focus each year. In 2002, those skills were computer-assisted reporting, design, visual thinking, accuracy, coaching and “doing more with less.”

He also has some definite ideas about what he would do if he had more training resources available. “I would hire an in-house trainer who would conduct one-on-one training as well as coordinate the actual training program, giving it structure and discipline,” he said. “I would devote about $40,000 to training programs, which is more than twice what it is now, to bring more people in and more people out. I would put most of the effort – say 80 percent – into in-house programs because I think they are more effective.”

In Greensboro, assessment of the success of training is typical of many newsrooms, and not as informative as it could be. Robinson describes it as “action-oriented.”

“We count the number of people who attend organized training, or the number of fellowships we get,” he said. “We don’t measure how what is learned in training is translated into better journalism or a better newspaper.”

Greensboro, N.C., News-Record

Editor John Robinson cited several initiatives in the News-Record training program:

1. Sending people outside to seminars, workshops and classes. People who attend share their knowledge upon return through brown-bag lunches, handouts and other means.

2. Having speakers in the newsroom. Often these are professionals on a speaking tour of sorts or those shared with other Landmark papers. The paper also draws upon the journalism school at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Every Tuesday is “School Day” at The Gazette, which Editor Mark Bowden said is one of many internal and external training programs at the Iowa Daily.
Classes are offered two to three times daily for up to an hour on topics such as how to run a fax machine, grammar and the basics of common software such as Word and Excel. The librarian led a session on Internet surfing. Curriculum is posted in advance to address real or perceived needs. Leaders come from the staff.

The Gazette has a newsroom trainer who deals mainly with technical issues such as software and computer systems, Bowden said. This trainer also is their production coordinator, and works with new hires on these issues. She also teaches classes at the paper on how to use laptops, preparing reporters to use the machines in the Gazette's equipment pool.

The trainer did a department inventory of skills, including a test given to newsroom staff members of computer proficiency on four software programs, identifying where help was needed.

The Gazette's copy desk chief conducts "Grammar University." These are very short sessions, fitting the time-stressed environment of many news operations. The goal is for these to be 15 minutes, conducted weekly, focusing on issues that have been specifically identified by editors and staff.

For more than 17 years, the Gazette has had a monthly "Writers' Circle." The writers manage this, and the company pays lunch. Reporters pick the group leaders. Reporting and writing issues are discussed. Reporters also can volunteer their work for a critique by Bowden. They submit three to five stories to him, including the version they sent to the desk and how the story appeared after editing. In return, they have to agree to an open discussion of the work in the circle.

Bowden tries to generate a quick, daily tip on being better, often directed at supervisors. And the copy desk chief does a daily tip that goes to the entire newsroom, and he has done so for about 14 years. He sends it via e-mail, often tied to something in that day's paper.

Company-wide, internal training is offered in conversational Spanish.

As is the case at most papers, staff members who attend outside training are expected to share key findings with their peers after returning.

Bowden notes that many of these efforts are not budget-driven but are a product of "coordinating and having a culture that people are expected to keep growing."

Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader

Editor Amanda Bennett's newsroom is doing a lot and hopes to do even more.

Bennett herself does training of assigning editors on topics such as "how you run a beat." Plus, she said, as someone who only has been at the paper for about a year, serving as a trainer has helped her get to know staff members better. She also does training for reporters on beat management issues. (One tip: Two notebooks. One is for everyday beat work, and one is for enterprise.)

The Herald-Leader in recent months has had training sessions with a design consultant and the Readership Institute. The paper was host to the Knight-Ridder intern boot camp. The Casey Center from the University of Maryland offered training on handling sensitive issues such as child abuse cases. A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter from The Wall Street Journal talked about sourcing. Someone who had been held in solitary confinement for 16 years talked about that experience.

The training sessions "are open to as many as possible," she said, adding that editors shouldn't be afraid to work their connections inside and outside the business to get good speakers.

There are regular Tuesday brown baggers in which staff members share experiences. Topics emerge from staff nominations. For example, the government editor did an overview on the Kentucky governor's race. A
reporter did one on how he got a story about the state cooking its statistical books to show more people getting off welfare.

Bennett has a staff member who spends three days a week on training and development, scouting potential opportunities for external training. This position also involves recruiting and the paper's internship program.

Then there was the paper's response to the demand's Knight-Ridder placed on the paper to send staff to Washington to help cover post-Sept. 11 issues. At the time, it was hard to handle the loss of bodies. Looking back, Bennett said, she sees the two-week stints as extraordinary training opportunities for those who went.

The newsroom also considers training capabilities when hiring leaders.

Bennett filled one opening with a senior editor who had experience at The Wall Street Journal and Dallas Morning News. This person had taken an early retirement package but wasn't really ready to retire, and he enjoyed working with young journalists.

That, she said, can be a perfect match for a smaller paper. The senior editor's emphasis is on working with reporters on the front-end of stories, not after-the-fact.

1. Lack of alignment with business needs
   A training program's payoff comes from the business measures that drive it. Simply put, if a training program is not aligned or connected to a business measure, no improvement can be linked to the program. Too often, training is implemented for the wrong reasons—a trend, desire or perceived need that may not be connected to a business measure.

2. Failure to recognize nontraining solutions
   If the wrong solution is implemented, little or no payoff will result. Too often, training is perceived as a solution for a variety of performance problems when training may not be an issue at all.

3. Lack of objectives to provide direction and focus
   Training and development should be a focused process that allows stakeholders to concentrate on desired results.

4. The solution is too expensive
   A training and development program's ROI might ultimately fail to recoup its high costs. It's important to note, however, that a negative ROI is not always a sign of failure. Many programs might add enough perceived value through intangibles and significant short-term behavior change to overcome negative ROI.

5. Regarding training as an event
   A positive business impact must come from an individual participant's behavior change, and such change does not come easily. When training is considered a single event, such as attending a two-day workshop for example, the odds of changing behavior are slim. Without behavior change, training fails to generate business results.

WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS FAIL

During their more than 10 years as consultants to some of the world's largest organizations, Jack and Patti Phillips have developed a unique vantage point within the training and development community. They have identified 11 reasons why training and development fails and provide a prescription for change.
6. Participants are not held accountable for results

For training programs to be successful, participants must individually drive performance change. When pressed for reasons for not changing behavior, participants are quick to blame others, usually the boss. But that may not be the real issue. Of individuals most likely to be held responsible for results—including managers, trainers, developers, and senior executives—the overlooked participant deserves more attention. Participants often don't see changing their behavior as their responsibility. Historically, when results are few, the training and development staff, along with immediate managers, comes under fire. But, we often fail to focus on the participant's role in the process.

7. Failure to prepare the job environment for transfer

Regardless of what participants learn from a training program, without transferring it to the job, performance will not change and the training program will fail. This training-transfer problem has been an important issue in training and development for decades. Unfortunately, studies continue to show that between 60 and 90 percent of what is learned isn’t applied on the job.

8. Lack of management reinforcement and support

Without management support, participants will rarely implement new skills and knowledge in the workplace. The manager's role, therefore, is critical in the learning process. Most studies have shown that the two most powerful opportunities for managerial input occur during the interaction with the learner prior to the training solution and after the training has been completed.

It’s clear that managers usually don’t realize their influence. This disconnect is most frequently identified in follow-up surveys conducted as part of an impact study. More action must be taken to ensure managers understand their impact and how they can make changes.

9. Failure to isolate the effects of training

Too often, training programs are conducted, business measures are monitored and improvements are credited to the training process alone. The assumption is the training program improved the business. Actually, other influences and processes may have influenced the business measure. The challenge is to isolate the improvement directly related to training.

Failure to attempt to isolate training’s contribution might cause some training programs to be discarded as irrelevant. Such programs may actually bolster the bottom line, but if there is no attempt to isolate their impact, executives and sponsors are puzzled about the actual connection to business improvement.

10. Lack of commitment and involvement from executives

Without top executive commitment and involvement, training and development will be ineffective and major programs will fall short of expectations. Commitment is critical, which equates to resources being allocated to the training and development function and its specific programs. Involvement includes the actual presence and actions of individual executives in the process.

11. Failure to provide feedback and use information about results

All stakeholders need feedback. Employees require feedback on their progress, developers and designers need feedback on program design, facilitators need feedback to see if adjustments should be made to delivery, and clients need feedback on a program’s success. Without such feedback, a program may not reach expectations.
Jack J. Phillips is with the Jack Phillips Center for Research, a division of the FranklinCovey Company. Phillips developed and pioneered the use of the ROI process and has provided consulting services to some of the world’s largest and most admired organizations. Patti P. Phillips is chairman and CEO of The Chelsea Group Inc., an international consulting company focused on the implementation of the ROI process. A full version of this article first appeared in *Training* magazine. Reprinted with permission.
LEARNING FOR
OUR IMPERATIVES
LEARNING FOR OUR IMPERATIVES

Many of the new ideas and research we've developed in the last decade or so offer great promise for newspaper journalism—and present new training needs. As we implement strategies to help our newsrooms apply these innovations and imperatives, we are creating models and challenges for the learning newsroom.
Lots of training and retraining will be needed as the newspaper industry works to combat declining readership. To succeed, newspapers are going to have to change the way things are normally done and the way they normally think about things. That kind of major culture change — in an industry that is remarkable for the extent to which it is change-averse — will require reconditioning reflexes that have been honed and perfected over a very long period of time.

But before newspapers can design meaningful training plans, their leaders first need to engage in a rigorous readership learning plan. They need to immerse themselves in a whole new framework of thinking that has emerged from the groundbreaking work of the Readership Institute at Northwestern University. They need to become able to think differently about the readership challenge. They need to find ways to turn their newspapers into eager learning organizations — capable of experimenting with the findings of RI's work and finding out what works and what doesn't and adjusting based on the results.

Mary Nesbitt, managing director of the Readership Institute, notes that in the newsroom, the first order of business is for the top editor to become thoroughly educated — and then to get key lieutenants educated as well. Once the leaders are completely grounded, they'll be in better position to develop and implement meaningful readership action plans — and to expertly lead the learning of others. And they'll be better able to pick the areas on which they will focus in the first round of readership experiments.

The two best resources for editors will be the Readership Institute website, www.readership.org, and the series of readership training sessions being conducted by ASNE. To learn more about the ASNE sessions, which are funded by McCormick Tribune Foundation, go to http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?id=4171. Nesbitt also urges editors to get in contact with her and other staff members at RI.

Nesbitt suggests that editors start their self-education process by focusing on these five critical learning needs:

**LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT READERSHIP**

Before doing anything else, really master the findings of the many massive studies RI conducted. You may have heard a short presentation at the ASNE convention; that's not enough. Get immersed in RI's findings. First, download and read "The Power to Grow Readership" from http://www.readership.org/consumers/building/imperatives/data/revised%20Report.pdf. Learn what the researchers learned about readers, newspapers and newspaper organizations, about opportunities for growth and impediments to progress. Get a practical idea of what RI's findings might look
like if you translated them into real practice at your newspaper by viewing RIs “galleries” of best practices from newspapers already experimenting with RI, at http://www.readership.org/content/editorial/gallery/main.htm. Learn about branding by reading the Q & A at http://www.readership.org/brand/calder-lavine_Q&A.htm. Then really come to understand, deep down, why change is needed in the first place—because you’re going to have to explain it to many, many other people, over and over again. If you can’t explain it, or really don’t believe it, you probably are not going to be able to make it happen.

LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR OWN NEWSPAPER

Use RI’s methodologies to get a thorough understanding of your own market, the contents of your own paper and the way your organization really works. Learn all you can about who is in your market, what makes them tick, how they get information, what they do, how they live, what they want, how they think. Assess rigorously what you put in the paper and why. Don’t just talk about what your paper thinks is news and what is not. Measure it, count it, using RI’s methodology. Start learning about RI’s new measurement tool, the Reader Behavior Score (RBS) and how it can be used by reading the 2002 national RBS report at http://www.readership.org/consumers/rbs/data/2002-RBS-summary.doc. It explains how you can use RBS to see who is reading, how often, how much and for how long—and track it over time. And if your newspaper is focusing on building readership in a particular segment, you can see if you are having any effect. After that, learn how to use RI’s assessment tools to gauge, at an individual story level, what readers think and what insiders think about your content. They are at http://www.readership.org/content/editorial/rating_satisfaction.htm ASNE’s Local News Handbook and Tool Kit can also help.

LEARN ALL ABOUT CONSTRUCTIVE CULTURES

Significant studies in other businesses have established that companies that succeed in times of change have adaptive, constructive cultures—cultures that are largely the opposite of the ones at almost all news organizations. RI’s work has confirmed that constructive newspapers tend to have higher readership. To learn about constructive cultures, start with the Q & A on culture at http://www.readership.org/culture_management/culture/conversation.htm. Then read the culture overview at http://www.readership.org/culture_management/culture/inside_culture.htm. Get to where you really understand what a constructive culture is and how it might look in your organization. Then survey your own organization’s culture to find out how your paper does things; map the biggest gaps between the ideal and the reality, and start work on the gaps.

LEARN ALL ABOUT CUSTOMER FOCUS AND READER ORIENTATION

Being truly reader- and customer-oriented is one of the most important keys to readership success, according to RI. Yet most newspapers are the opposite—focused on themselves, their internal needs, standards and constraints. Learn what it means to become reader-oriented by reading the full report on reader-orientation at http://www.readership.org/culture_management/reader_orientation/data/final_RO_report.pdf. Then learn how to hire for reader orientation at http://www.readership.org/culture_management/reader_orientation/hiring_reader-oriented.htm. As you read about customer-focused companies, envision how you might apply those principles and practices to your news organization in a way that is compatible with journalistic standards. Nesbitt said this is one of the things that newspapers have the hardest time with as they seek
to implement RI's findings, and yet it is critical. "Newspapers," she said, "find it very hard to achieve that external focus - to concentrate on who it is we're here to serve."

LEARN HOW TO INNOVATE, AND HOW TO LEARN FROM IT

One of the most critical needs is for newspapers to develop new ideas, based on RI's work, to try them, to observe what happens, to tweak them - or, if they're flops, abandon them and try again. This has been hard for newspapers to do. Figure out a way to get some space and a place in which to try things. Learn all you can about how to stimulate innovation. Absorb all you can about how truly innovative creative operations work, then start trying things yourself. For that to be an effective method for learning, you're probably going to have to learn, along the way, how to measure things and assess the results.

Once you and your senior teams master these five core topics, you can start helping the rest of your news organizations learn.

In her travels across the country, Nepbitt has found that newspapers that have burrowed into the findings with an eye to making readership-building changes almost always find that they have big training issues. "This is not a surprise," she said, "because the Impact study showed that, as an industry, newspapers devote an infinitesimal amount of resources to training and development; and training and development is one of the primary 'levers for change' identified in the study to support readership-growth efforts and to concurrently change culture... The training need is there, and newspapers know the need is there."

She has found that people have a hard time figuring out how to implement the Readership Institute results. They need help figuring out what this would look like in action, how to coach their staffs, how to reinforce and reward, and do all the other things called for.

"We believe it is not because they cannot implement or cannot figure it out, but that there needs to be some kind of a process that helps them work through it," she said. "This is true of all areas - content, service, brand and culture. The opportunity for education/training about culture change is enormous, and of course, it is probably the most tricksome area.

"We prefer a cross-departmental approach to training because it enhances and supports the readership study findings that readership is a whole-paper issue that needs to be tackled jointly. Of course, for logistical and other reasons, this is not always possible. We would suggest that, at the very least, the content and the nature of the training be cross-departmental. For instance, although the content findings would seem to be most germane to editors/reporters, in fact brand, service and, of course, culture are also highly relevant."

Among the many specific skills for which newspapers may need to offer training are:

**How to teach and coach**
"I'm so convinced, the more I see, that this is a critical need," she said. "I see many very intelligent people who see and understand a lot but have no skill in making it happen."

**How to be a follower**
To innovate, people with ideas need people who are willing to try them. But too often, news people have a hard time suspending judgment and going along with something that's different."I'm not suggesting that followers need to roll over every time something is suggested. We want to maintain that questioning environment in the newsroom. At the same time, we need to learn to be able to be a member of an organization too," she said.

**How to hear people who aren't addicted to newspapers**
"Some people have a great deal of difficulty trying to really put themselves into the shoes of people for whom they might feel contempt because they aren't addicted to newspapers the way we are," she said. "We're very quick to judge and dismiss them. We need to learn how to hear their views so we can learn how to better meet their needs."
* How to target without angst

Neshitt noted that it makes many journalists very uncomfortable to talk about targeting a particular segment of readers; it seems contrary to the newspaper's identity mission of serving the whole community. But journalists need to understand that focusing on target groups doesn't mean abandoning coverage of the community as a whole or ceasing to report on the issues, concerns and experiences of people outside the target group. It does mean concentrating effort where it's going to make the most difference and making sure to meet the information needs of those who read the paper or might read the paper – the people upon whom the future of newspapers depends. It means acknowledging that not all members of a community are likely to become newspaper readers.
DIVERSITY

By Dori J. Maynard

When it comes to a subject as prickly and persistent as diversity, it helps to remember that not everyone learns the same way—and that not all lessons are learned swiftly.

David Yarnold, executive editor of the San Jose Mercury News, has spent more than a decade working to ensure that his staff understands that, in today's increasingly multicultural world, diversity is good journalism.

At the Mercury News, the first step, taken in the early 1990s, was to diversify the staff. At around the same time, the paper began to do content audits with the goal of seeing how closely the paper's coverage reflected the community.

"The earliest steps had to do with hiring and understanding how a diverse staff began to change content," Yarnold said.

It is also important, he said, to make sure you build a framework around your goals so that everybody understands the whys and whats of the common goal. At the Mercury News, that framework revolves around Yarnold's mantra: "Diversity equals accuracy."

He also made sure the staff understood this was going to be an enduring goal, not just the flavor of the month. That kind of focus, Yarnold says, is particularly important in newsrooms where, at times, management can become enthralled with a number of initiatives that soon dissipate for lack of follow through.

"To drive the point home, Yarnold tied diversity to merit pay and other rewards. "They hear it all the time," he says. "Diversity is always in the (daily) critique. It's in the performance evaluations, and it's in the quarterly awards. It's in the annual awards."

A race and demographic team established in 1998 was promoted to department status. That department also has reporters who work in every other department in order to help them see their beats through more diverse lenses.

Last year the newspaper also gave every reporter a week in which they could go out into the community in order to diversify their source lists.

Most recently, he asked Kochman Mavrelia Associates of Chicago to help his staff understand cultural archetypes through a series of small-group meetings. That training led a sports writer to take a look at a local high school where the demographics meant that badminton, not football, was the major sport.

The diverse staff and the focus on diversity have led to other success stories. Yarnold points to the story of a local NAACP official who agreed to help broker the surrender of a young man accused of killing a police officer. When the alleged murderer did not turn himself in as promised, the paper did not run the typical "Fugitive bamboozles local black leader." Instead, it looked at why an NAACP official would involve himself in such a deal.
and why a young black man accused of killing a cop might fear turning himself in.

*The Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk started with a content audit and went on to learn a language around diversity that continues to serve the newspaper to this day.

Before beginning the audit in 2000, the paper brought in the Maynard Institute to do Fault Lines training. The training, which looks at diversity through the lens of race, class, gender, generation and geography, reminds journalists that everyone has blind spots and that it is natural for everyone to see issues from his or her perspective. As a result, the staff has created language that allows them to more easily talk about potentially contentious issues without raising hackles.

“If we think someone isn’t getting it, we’ll say I think there’s a fault line there and it’s easier to get another idea across,” said former Deputy Managing Editor Debra Adams Simmons, shortly before she left the paper.

Once the staff looked at the results of the audit, they chose to concentrate on the fault lines of race and gender, said Simmons. Each team was then asked to come up with a work plan outlining how the journalists were going to increase the representation of people of color and women in their stories.

Strategies differed. Some teams worked on their source list. The education team realized it needed to get more young people in its stories. The business team looked at the type of stories it covered and worked to include more stories on small businesses and minority-owned businesses.

“The beauty and success is that many of the work groups have embraced it and are creating their own language about the needs and the steps to address those needs,” said Simmons.
HELP ON DIVERSITY

By Keith Woods
The Poynter Institute

How often do editors get as far as committing to diversity, having been sold on the goals and ideals of the effort, only to be sabotaged by a dearth of strategic ideas and available resources?

What works? Where is it working? What ideas need retooling? Who’s doing it well? Where can I go for ideas? To whom can I turn for help?

There are a number of resources, depending upon which part of “diversity” you’re working on:

- Reporting strategies? Are you trying to find new approaches to connecting with under-covered communities? Are you interested in thinking through ideas for including those communities more thoroughly in your coverage? Are you looking for new ways of framing the news?
- Newsroom training? Are you hoping to read more about contemporary diversity issues? Do you need to bring someone in to work with the staff on any of the above issues?

Here are selected resources:

Hiring

The easiest access to journalists of color is through journalism groups such as the Asian American Journalists Association (http://www.aja.org/html/news.html/news.html), the National Association of Black Journalists (http://www.nabj.org/), the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (http://www.nahj.org/) and the Native American Journalists Association (http://www.naja.com/). Visit the website or convention job fairs, join listservs, and connect with the local and regional chapters in your area.

Also, check in with graduates of programs aimed at journalists of color in the media such as the Chips Quinn fellowship (http://www.chipsquinn.org/chipswatch/011019CW.html), the job bank hosted by the Florida Times-Union (http://www.newstips.com/) or The Freedom Forum’s Diversity Directory (http://www.freedomforum.org/public/diversity/default.asp). The National Association of Minority Media Executives has an impressive database and combines with the McCormick Foundation on a fellowship program (http://www.rmmf.org/journalism/mecfellowships.htm) that boosts the talents of media leaders.

Reporting strategies/story ideas

Look for critiques of the way the industry is handling reporting and writing of undercovered communities and groups. You can find such things at the San Francisco State University Newswatch site (http://newswatch.sfsu.edu/aboutus/), Richard Prince’s “Journal-isms” on the Maynard Institute website (http://www.maynardijoe.org/columns/dickprince/030503_prince/), or the Columbia University program that rewards achievement in writing about race and diversity (http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/).
Other resources:
http://www.progressive.org/pmpabout.html
http://www.unityjournalists.org/News/Presskit/race/race.html

Newsroom training:
That might take the form of provocative reading or in-house workshops. Some organizations that have worked with print newsrooms on diversity:

Aly Colón, Director of Diversity Programs, The Poynter Institute, Acolon@poynter.org
Dori Maynard, President, the Maynard Institute, djm@maynardije.org
Kochman Communications Consultants (800-723-7640)
Elsie Y. Cross, CEO, Elsie Y. Cross & Associates, eyca@eyca.com
Linda Wallace, President, LSW Communications, Lswalla@aol.com

For other reading and contacts, try these sites:
http://www.spj.org/diversity.asp
http://www.africana.com/
http://www.cjr.org/year/02/3/lloyd.asp
http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/videos/toolbar.html
http://www.yforum.com/
http://www.ncdj.org/
http://www.journalism.org/resources/tools/newsroom/diversity/online.asp
http://www.childrennow.org/
http://www.poynter.org/profile/profile.asp?user=1683
http://www.poynter.org/profile/profile.asp?user=1809
CREDIBILITY

By Michael E. Phillips

When we train journalists in craft skills, we define what's good and what's not. When we train around credibility issues, we have millions of partners in setting the standards: our readers. Underneath all credibility training lies the connection with readers.

Readers defined credibility for Chris Urban in her 1999 report for ASNE, "Examining Our Credibility: Perspectives of the Public and the Press." Urban broke their responses into six parts. For purposes of developing training strategies, the study breaks better into seven parts:

• Spelling and grammar
• Errors of fact
• Respect for and knowledge of readers and their communities
• Bias
• Fascination with conflict and "hot" stories
• News values versus society's values
• The sausage factory — perceptions of people who've been exposed to the process

"Training," though, may be the wrong word. A subjective, complex subject like credibility calls for exercises that are more like collaborative learning. For example:

SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

Blame it on the schools or blame it on changing newsroom technology, but few editors would disagree that the mechanics of language are getting short shrift in today's newsrooms. What editor, though, has the time or the temperament to teach what should have been taught before the 8th grade?

Here are two strategies that are more proactive:

1. Foster your newsroom's love of language. People who love the language make fewer mistakes. Try newsroom book clubs and brown-bagging with local writers. Elevate non-management language experts to guru status. Give them the time and permission to become go-to people. Keep the newsroom talking about language.

2. Front-load the editing process. This can be done only in newsrooms that plan well. Build time into the story cycle for pre-reporting discussions. Ask reporters to come back with outlines before they start writing. Use the outline discussion as an opportunity to touch on every issue that will affect story quality — including language mechanics. Build in another discussion after the story has been drafted. Discuss weaknesses and give the reporter time to correct them. There will be three results: better stories, better learning and happier reporters.

ERRORS OF FACT

You can't fix what you can't see. An aggressive policy of prominently displayed corrections for every error, no matter how small or what the source, will encourage readers to point out errors.
A rigorous policy of sending daily credibility surveys to a random sample of people in the news will bring a shocking flow of error alerts into the newsroom.

You can’t fix the causes of factual errors one at a time. Most of them sort into clusters. If errors are carefully entered into a database and analyzed once a month for newsroom discussion, errors will fall dramatically as the newsroom shifts out of blame mode and into problem-solving mode. One newsroom’s database revealed that a fifth of all errors were in obits and that virtually all of them were being transmitted from funeral homes. The solution was a series of soul-searching discussions with funeral directors.

Another common class of errors might be called arcane local knowledge – odd spellings and local lore that could take a new reporter a year or two to master. Strategies range from local stylebooks and other local background information on the newspaper’s intranet to setting aside a few days to help each new hire explore and learn about the community before taking on the first assignment.

RESPECT FOR AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE READERS’ COMMUNITIES

A newsroom that is connected with its community through a web of diverse, human-to-human contacts is more likely to know and respect the community than one whose culture is aloof.

Strategies for tending the newsroom-community connection fall into two categories: formal exploration and news assignments.

Formal exploration: Many editors confronting this issue form community advisory boards, hold call-in nights or organize neighborhood meet-the-newspaper forums. A creative twist on this approach is the Corpus Christi Caller-Times’ occasional bus tours of neighborhoods or surrounding communities. At each stop, residents board the bus, meet staffers and lead that segment of the tour.

News assignments: The news process itself, if thoughtfully managed, can build the newsroom-community tie. Regular features like unsung-hero stories, neighborhood profiles and 20-question profiles of non-newsmakers enrich the local report and build the staff’s connection. A just-say-yes attitude toward chicken dinner news overcomes the perception of disrespect. The Redding, Calif., Record Searchlight goes so far as to call its small events calendar team the “Yes Desk.”

ASNE’s Local News Tool Kit offers many more ideas and strategies for understanding your community.

BIAS

What editor hasn’t hung up the phone after hearing an accusation of bias and thought, “They just don’t understand”? But such accusations can’t be ignored. The Urban study found that about three-fourths of Americans see bias in the news, and about one-fourth of journalists agree.

Though the permutations of bias are infinite, the Urban study found four inflection points in Americans’ attitudes that could be starting points for a bias-fighting editor.

1. Shaping the news to fit an agenda. Every thinking newsroom has an agenda: a list of topics or issues that it considers most worthy of its resources. The greatest risk of agenda-related bias comes when the newsroom’s agenda is out of line with the community’s. Many editors are leading their newsrooms through formal examinations of ongoing news priorities – including the community in the discussion – every year or two. Follow-through is important. Beat structure, news play and expense budgets should be influenced by the exercise.

2. Favoritism. Many Americans read the newspaper with a non-prescriptiveness, weighing both the bulk and friendliness of coverage as the newspaper touches (or ignores) the community’s many segments. The score-keeping usually is perceptual, not literal. But literal score-keeping is an effective response to the problem. A
regular, rigorous content analysis is the only way an editor can be sure - and tell the community with authority - that coverage really is balanced.

3. Fact versus opinion. Overwhelmingly, the public wants its news straight up: “just the facts.” Yet American journalism is substantially committed to the depth that we associate with interpretive reporting. This doesn’t have to be a conflict, but we have much to learn about how readers perceive the facts/opinion spectrum.

Presentation strategies would be a good starting point for any newsroom confronting the issue. Non-narrative textual devices like pro-con lists or dueling quotes, combined with informational graphics, can shift the perceived tone of an interpretive piece toward the factual end of the spectrum. Limited paraphrasing and use of unnamed sources also can make a difference in how a story is perceived.

Particularly in newsrooms where editorial board takes strong stands on hot-button issues, editorial page balance and labeling should be re-examined. Should editors be signed? Should opposing views be published side by side with the newspaper’s views? Should a schedule of liberal and conservative columnists be published daily to emphasize the breadth of opinion in a given week? Are letters to the editor displayed as prominently as other opinions, and does the newspaper provide generous space for them?

Ongoing reader feedback should be part of the learning strategy.

4. Outside influence. Most Americans think powerful political or business leaders or advertisers can influence whether and how stories are written. Many editors attempt to counter this widespread belief by writing columns that, they hope, demystify the journalistic process.

Another approach might be collaborative learning between the newsroom and the community. Some editors are starting to recruit community members for terms on the editorial boards. They report that the resulting interchange teaches everyone involved. Others invite community members to sit in on daily budget meetings and help shape the news report.

FASCINATION WITH CONFLICT AND “HOT” STORIES

If sensational news is so bad, why does it sell so well? Why do people criticize what any single-copy manager will tell you is what they really want? We might never learn the answer to that puzzle, but newsrooms could start by examining the gulf between their collective view of sensationalism and the public’s.

Urban reports that some 85 percent of Americans think newspapers “frequently over-dramatize some news stories just to sell more papers.” Only 46 percent of journalists agree. Some 73 percent of Americans think a newspaper should hold the story of a controversy if it can reach only one side for comment. Just four percent of journalists agree.

Again, collaborative learning between the newsroom and the community is the most promising strategy for addressing this issue.

OUR NEWS VALUES VERSUS SOCIETY’S

Our ethic is to nail down every detail of every story, do it fast, and do it without fear or favor. Society’s ethic says not so fast - and not so single-mindedly. We say the right to know is paramount. Society says the right to privacy, the moral obligation to protect the innocent and our professional obligation to double-check the facts are just as important.

Urban calls this the strongest conflict between the public and journalists.

Engaging the newsroom and the community in ongoing discussion about news values is the only hope of finding common ground in this conflict. Besides the techniques mentioned earlier - community editorial board members, open budget meetings, focus groups, neighborhood forums and so forth - here are more to consider: Conduct group study of the materials developed for ASNE’s Journalism Values Institute. Participate in the National Credibility Roundtables project. Participate in
the Committee of Concerned Journalists’ traveling curriculum.

THE SAUSAGE FACTORY

Nobody is more critical of media credibility than someone who’s been in the news—almost a third of Americans interviewed by Urban. About a fourth of people interviewed by a newspaper reporter said they were misquoted, and 31 percent found other errors in the story. Do the math: If each of them has told the story of this unhappy experience a dozen times or so, word of mouth has spread first-hand testimony against media credibility to every corner of the nation.

That makes people who have experienced the news-gathering process potentially the greatest external threat to newspaper credibility. It also makes them especially rich sources for newsrooms that want to overcome credibility issues.

Many newsrooms send out credibility surveys to people quoted in the newspaper. Just a few a day, sent at random, yield a steady flow of valuable lessons.

Whatever the technique, the strategy of learning from our most potent critics has the added benefit of countering negative word of mouth with the positive message that the newsroom is open to criticism and eager to build its credibility.

- Read about the ASNE credibility project at: http://www.asne.org/kiosk/reports/99reports/1999examiningourneycredibility/index.htm
- Learn more about the National Credibility Roundtables at: http://www.apme.com/credibility/
- Get information on the Committee of Concerned Journalists traveling curriculum at http://www.apme.com/credibility/
CIVIC JOURNALISM

By Jan Schaffer

When Steve Smith saw a Los Angeles Times story in fall 2002 on the difficulty newspapers have connecting with readers, it became one component of his learning newsroom.

Smith, editor of the The Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Wash., used it to launch a critique of how well the Sunday paper connected with everyday lives of readers.

It was a simple way to introduce a learning opportunity and train the staff in civic goals and expectations. "My goal is to develop a civic sensibility in our daily report," Smith says.

For Smith, a civic journalism pioneer who recently assumed leadership of his third newsroom in eight years, training a staff in civic coverage is less about skills training and more about changing the newsroom's culture, values, routines and reflexes.

"I've begun to ask questions in our morning critiques: What value do we embody in this story?"

He, like other civic editors, is largely training his staff in-house by building in daily learning opportunities.

Very little of this training involves sending a few star reporters or editors away to professional workshops. Far more useful, he says, is creating internal conversations about goals, craft values and community values. And creating lots of opportunities to listen to the community.

Many of these approaches may be precursors to the ultimate learning newsroom.

"The best trainers for a civic newsroom are your readers," Smith asserts. "If you talk to your readers, they will train you to produce."

So, with his $12,000 to $15,000 training budget, Smith chooses to:

• Buy books he wants the staff to read.
• Subscribe to newspapers he wants his reporters and editors to emulate.
• Develop a catalog of best practices.
• Launch staff reassessments of six major sections.
• Convene focus groups with readers.
• Open up news meetings to the public.
• Talk a lot — about values.
• And challenge old practices in a way that will help develop new routines that "get our values onto the page."

"If I've got money to spend, I'll spend it on face time with readers," he says.

The Orange County Register is taking the idea of a learning newsroom in a new direction. It, too, is doing a lot of listening.

It's a critical exercise, because in Santa Ana, Calif., a largely Hispanic and younger community that much prefers watching Spanish-language television, is rapidly replacing an older, white community that patronized the Register.

Former ombudsman Dennis Foley is spearheading a unique learning newsroom undertaking: a three-tiered civic-mapping effort. It is
made up of a cultural study of Santa Ana’s Latino community and a Spanish-language survey, both done with California State University-Fullerton. Accompanying these are so-called “deep interviews” by a team of staffers. The resulting information is being entered into an interactive database that the entire staff is being trained to use — and to update.

The initiative so far has debunked a lot of stereotypes, so it’s critical to share the new knowledge with the rest of the newsroom.

“The thing that sort of surprised us is that if you use (Bowling Alone author Robert) Putnam’s model of community as traditionally based on people joining associations, that’s not how Latinos see it,” Foley says. “They see it as family and neighborhoods — and the neighborhoods usually include their relatives.”

The new data dynamited any typecasting of Latinos as working a couple of jobs and being paid under the table: Nearly two-thirds work one 40-hour-a-week job.

Importantly, the mapping feedback identified some community concerns that can offer some reporting roadmaps. Among them are crime, particularly gang-related incidents; neighborhood quality of life, which encompasses graffiti and speeding; after-school programs; and race relations.

A notable appetite surfaced for more information on homework issues, schools, job opportunities and housing.

Foley said the initiative started with editor Ken Brusic and then-editor Tannie Karr, recognizing that the newsroom needed to do a better job not only of covering the people who live in the community, but also helping the rest of the community better understand the growing Latino community.

“The newsroom goals were not hitting the mark,” Foley says.

At the same time, he says, the company is reorienting itself as an “information company, not a newspaper company.” It needs to figure our ways to serve the information needs of its community.

The most hands-on training involved the deep interviewing, “what in the old days, we’d call ‘beat development,’” says Foley.

A team of reporters and editors went into the community and interviewed people who had never appeared in the newspaper. They asked who these people talked to and what they talked about. They traced the social networks that enabled, for instance, the Delhi Center to be the only neighborhood center built with government funds that is not controlled by the government.

The outcome is a database or online “map” that seeks to be a one-stop tool for reporters. It started with 80 names and 40 organizations. Reporters can quickly search the database by issue, then go to the deep interviews to see what a person says about that issue. The Register envisions using the database to help jumpstart new beat reporters on their work.

“The big problem with these databases is that they decay very quickly. Our goal is to add one new person a month,” Foley says. And they aim to give reporters a half day a month to update the database with more deep interviews.

The resulting list of story ideas is one testament to its potential for training journalists in meaningful stories.

Moreover, notes Foley, it helps train the news staff in understanding that civic journalism is more than big project stories. “It has to be part of your everyday job.”

**Civic Journalism Resources:**

- For a guide to civic journalism techniques and best practices, visit [www.pewcenter.org](http://www.pewcenter.org), which archives civic journalism publications, speeches and award winners collected by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism.
- For a step-by-step guide to civic mapping, see “Tapping Civic Life: How to Report First, and Best, What’s Happening in Your Community.” Available online at...
* For case studies, see "Don't Stop There! Five Adventures in Civic Journalism." Available online at: http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/pubs/index.html.
* Hard copies of the training books and videos listed above can also be ordered online through 2003, as long as supplies last. Click on the order form at: http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/pubs/orderpubs.html. Mailing costs apply.
* For more on the philosophy of civic journalism, see *What are Journalists For?* by Jay Rosen, 1999, Yale University Press.
CONVERGENCE

By Ellen Shearer

Convergence has many meanings, from media mergers to cooperative newsgathering by jointly owned TV, newspaper, radio and Web outlets to information sharing and cross-promotions by separately owned TV stations and newspapers in the same markets. But within the newspaper newsroom, convergence generally means expanding the reach of the newspaper by using multiple platforms.

Or, as George Rodrigue, vice president of news for the Belo Corp., in Washington, puts it: A converged newsroom makes the most of every story in every medium.

In learning newsrooms, the approach to convergence is an integrated one, with the main focus on inculcating in everyone the values associated with convergence—teamwork, innovation, telling the story to as wide an audience as possible. At some point, skills training usually is added, but it shouldn't be the main focus.

Will Kennedy, executive editor of the Topeka Capital-Journal, says constant awareness is key to successful convergence: "Just keep mentioning it. Have the online person in all news meetings and ... at all project meetings to figure out how to do the stories for online. ... It's constant talking."

The paper owns a radio station and feeds news to it regularly; there's a broadcast studio off the newsroom so reporters can quickly provide news updates on the air. The paper also partners with KSNT-TV, sharing stories and occasionally undertaking joint projects. The paper's Web site was named the best newspaper Web site in its circulation size in 2002 by Editor & Publisher magazine.

"My philosophy is that I want our newsroom to be looked at as a newsgathering operation—online, on TV and radio and in the paper," Kennedy says.

To achieve convergence in a learning newsroom, he says, the focus has to be on the news, with reporters picking up how to write and speak for radio and TV as needed. Editors offer suggestions, and reporters going on the air are given some coaching, but most reporters are able to adapt easily to the different media, he says. The county government reporter regularly tapes segments for radio at the end of meetings, and the political reporters file constant updates to the Web site during legislative sessions.

"Because they're in a converged environment, they've adapted," Kennedy says. "For newsroom managers, what's important is to make it clear that it's wanted."

At the Belo Corp., Rodrigue arrived in the Washington bureau in 2001 with convergence as one of his main goals.

He started with skills-training sessions to give newspaper reporters basic on-air TV coaching and to get print and TV reporters minimally proficient in getting stories to the Web site quickly. Jim Fry, a reporter for WFAA-TV in Dallas, has written stories...
Both Thelen and Weaver say reporters’ contributions to a converged newsroom are part of their performance reviews and development plans. High performers in convergence are often rewarded through merit raises and promotions.

They and the other editors also note that reporters soon realize that multiple platforms allow them to get their stories to more people and that TV appearances can help them with sources.

Sarasota runs a 24-hour local cable news channel and a Web site from its newsroom, relying on the newspaper reporters to provide content for both. All journalists report to Weaver.

Sarasota created formal training for print reporters to learn about TV, vocabulary sheets to acquaint everyone with the different terminology each media uses and “just-in-time training” for staff who want to work on an online project so they put the skills to immediate use.

Like the others, Weaver believes creating a converged learning newsroom starts with “training that teaches people how to work together. The barriers to successful convergence tend to be much more in the way people interact with each other than in the technology. I would encourage people to aim early training efforts at learning how to set goals, how to communicate across the media boundaries, how to build teamwork. Early convergence is really a change process.”

**CONVERGENCE RESOURCES:**

Poynter.org “Case Studies in Convergence”
http://www.poynter.org/centerpiece/043002_intro.htm

USC’s Annenberg School:
OJR.org “TBO.com: Faces of Convergence”
http://www.ojr.org/ojr/wurplace/1017858783.php

Poynter’s “Convergence Chaser” e-newsletter
http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=56

Examples of multimedia journalism on the Web:
www.digitaljournalist.org
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/photo/
http://www.cjoonline.com/ (The Topeka Courier-Journal)
http://www.sun-sentinel.com/extras/graphics/ (South Florida Sun-Sentinel)

The best place to get training on convergence is at the Media Center at API, Andrew Nachison is the director. Several times a year, it sponsors a “convergence tour” for participating journalists to visit Tampa, St. Petersburg and Orlando to see converged operations and talk to people who have been doing it. More information is available at www.americanpressinstitute.org/mediacenter

“Extending the Brand,” a 2000 publication from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, uses lessons and case studies from around the nation to showcase convergence and extending the newspaper’s brands — onto the Web, into TV partnerships, even into book publishing. $15 ($25 outside the United States)
RESOURCES AVAILABLE
Effective newsroom training programs must operate at several levels. Options run the gamut from national and regional programs to out-of-town coaches, from local colleges and programs provided by professional associations to internal resources featuring a do-it-yourself approach.

Over time, a learning newsroom will tap all of these resources.

Training needs are as varied as the individuals who make up a news staff and the community they serve. To ensure an effective program, it's important to assess what training tools will best meet those needs. (For more about needs assessment, see Chapters 4, 7 and 9.)

One overarching tool that promises to enhance the industry's training arsenal is being launched in fall 2003 by the Society of Professional Journalists.

"It will be an easy to use, searchable database of journalism training opportunities across the country," said Eric Newton, director of journalism initiatives for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which is funding the effort. "You'll be able to search by zip code, topic or date" or a combination of criteria.

The database — at journalismtraining.org — is being organized by SPJ, under deputy executive director Julie F. Grimes. SPJ, with its many members across the nation and regional offices, is ideally positioned to round up this information, Newton said.

And since the database is being organized in conjunction with the Council of Presidents of Journalism Organizations, comprising 40 associations and organizations, it should reduce scheduling conflicts for specific training programs.

For more information about journalismtraining.org, call Grimes at 317/927-8000, extension 216.

Some of the best training programs are focused and simple. In fact, simplicity appears to be a key to sustaining these efforts.

First, we'll offer some advice on developing local resources and finding a writing coach, followed by some examples of good newsroom training programs. Then we'll provide an extensive directory of resources available to help your newsroom training.

LOCATING LOCAL RESOURCES

As these examples show, a big investment of dollars or hours is not always necessary to have an ongoing training program. But the most effective training programs are multidimensional.

To build a solid base for training, look to local resources inside and outside your newspaper.
Here are some ideas on how to begin:

**Start with the staff:** Ask a reporter who's knowledgeable on Freedom of Information laws to give a primer on submitting FOIA requests. A reporter who is a particularly good interviewer could provide a presentation on difficult interviews and how to prepare for them. A photo editor can discuss the ingredients of good photos and photo assignments. Ask the copy desk chief to share tips and tricks on editing stories and writing headlines. A veteran reporter or longtime librarian may be able to offer insight on the history of a community that helps put news developments in perspective.

**Involve other departments:** A controller or publisher may be a good choice for a presentation on dissecting a budget or reading an earnings report. A circulation manager can tell a staff what front pages triggered high single-copy sales and, thus, increased readership. Or the best receptionist in the building may offer some valuable techniques on how to handle complaints.

**Tap talent in the company:** Smaller newspapers may be able to look to larger sister papers for expert advice from veteran reporters and editors. But don't relegate a search to newsrooms alone. A computer division may provide an excellent resource for timesaving tricks in computer use. Or a human resources department may be able to provide the best workshop on dealing with difficult personnel situations.

**Seek expertise in the community:** The obvious place to look for expertise is the nearest college or university. Journalism schools can provide helpful programs in the craft of writing and reporting. But don't look just to the J-schools. Shape a seminar on science and technology, medicine, economics, religion or social issues, and a variety of other topics, in conjunction with a local institution of higher learning. Plug into programs that are being offered on nearby college campuses. Or create your own in cooperation with local educators.

If institutions of higher learning aren't an option, narrow the search for local sources by topic area. Health care? Try a local hospital or a specific physician with expertise in the area you've identified. Research? The reference desk at the public library may be tapped to offer a seminar on how to track down information and what tools are particularly useful at the library and on the Internet. Societal issues? Community foundations and charitable organizations make it their business to assess changing needs in the community. A representative from a local foundation may help educate a news staff about community trends. A representative from the local museum may be able to offer historical insight on how the community has changed.

Associations exist for virtually every profession: lawyers, doctors, accountants and judges, just to name a few. These associations have regular meetings and often request speakers from the newspaper. Turn the tables and bring in the head of one or more of these professional associations to address your staff. Try judges on issues pertaining to criminal justice, accountants on ethics, doctors and lawyers on tort law and medical malpractice.

The best training programs cover a variety of topics that are relevant to the news staff and the community it covers. If programs are tightly focused so they can be presented in about 90 minutes, they will be doable even for a busy staff.

Add a field trip or two: Try to take staffers who are tied to their desks on an occasional "field trip." Pick a facility in the news. Problems at the juvenile home? Jail overcrowding? Arrange a tour for your editors.

Invest in a good video. There are videos available from a variety of sources on aspects of reporting and copyediting. Find one you like and offer your staff a chance to view it over their lunch hour. You provide the popcorn.

**FINDING A COACH**

Do-it-yourself training programs reap benefits over time. But, for the most immediate staffwide impact, nothing comes close to a writing coach. It is one of the most visible and
memorable signs of a newspaper’s commitment to training.

At small dailies, with the least experienced reporters and the most overworked line editors, a writing coach brought in for group and one-on-one sessions with the staff can be a low-cost way to improve news and feature writing.

Newspapers have hired retired editors as coaches, recruited from professional organizations and academic settings, and also developed in-house coaches using senior staff members who write well and have the personality and skills to teach others.

Coaching costs can vary, depending on the newspaper’s goals and the length and extent of the training. It need not be expensive, however. Editors at small newspapers have borrowed in-house writing coaches from larger newspapers nearby just for the cost of travel expenses. Retired editors often are willing to pitch in for a modest reimbursement. For some former journalists turned academics, a return to the newsroom has its own rewards.

The time commitment to a writing coach may actually be a bigger concern than the cost of hiring one. But there are many ways to incorporate the services of a coach that won’t infringe on daily demands. And what the staff gains from the experience may end up easing the stress level while improving the quality of the work being done.

The key to a coaching program, editors and coaches agree, is that it must be developed collaboratively, with the coach, editor and staff agreeing on the goals and how to accomplish them.

Jane Harrigan, a former newspaper editor, journalism professor and author of The Editorial Eye, once introduced herself to the news staff of a small New England daily this way: “I am not galloping in here as Joe Writing Savior. I don’t plan to lecture or teach. I know some things about writing and editing. So do you. We’ll pool our knowledge and work to create an atmosphere where good writing is not only valued but encouraged.”

Those who have coached in a newsroom say their work is not about “fixing” reporters. Instead, a good coaching program works with line editors to improve communication between reporters and editors. The Poynter Institute’s Roy Peter Clark has written and spoken about what he calls the “human side of editing” and the need to create a dynamic between reporters and editors that supports and encourages great work every day.

Clark and others argue that the rise of the writing coach in our industry is a sign that editors are spending too much time tending to management chores and not enough time developing the craft. But time pressures are not the only reason to seek the services of a writing coach. In conversations with coaches and editors, a couple of key points emerge:

* A coaching program, even if it is for a limited time, sends a strong message to the newsroom on the importance the editor places on writing. Barbara King, who served for many years as a writing coach and director of newsroom training for Ottaway Newspapers, once described the value of a coaching program as creating an atmosphere that encourages conversation about good writing.

* Unlike the editor, a coach can devote exclusive blocks of time and attention to writing issues with an outsider/reader perspective. The coach brings a different and fresh set of eyes to the work.

* A coach can be an economical investment. (It is typically less expensive to hire a coach to work with a newsroom staff than to send individual reporters long distances to writing workshops.) It also enables the editor to better structure the coach’s work to meet the newspaper’s specific needs.

* In one-on-one sessions, the coach is able to offer honest, unconstrained criticism. Jim Stasiowski, a former reporter and now a full-time writing coach based in Baltimore, says, because he is not involved in personnel decisions or the politics of a newsroom, he can be candid. He also finds that writers and line editors are less defensive and more open to his suggestions.
There are many resources for finding a coach and getting a program started. American Press Institute and Poynter Institute have online sites that are helpful. State and regional press associations, as well as journalism schools at colleges and universities are also good places to seek referrals.

It is best to find a coach with newspaper experience, who understands newspaper style and the daily constraints and pressures of news writing. Beyond writing skills, a coach needs to have a passion for teaching and the ability to work collaboratively with the editor to help the staff look honestly and critically at this most important aspect of their work: telling stories fairly, accurately and well.

"NOONERS"

"Nooners" have been a staple at the Detroit Free Press since 1990. These 90-minute lunchtime enrichment sessions, a small part of the overall training picture, have become an easy way to provide frequent, convenient and inexpensive in-house training.

The Free Press offers 30 to 50 Nooners a year, addressing subjects from skills to information to sensitivities, which draw on a variety of sources including in-house experts, the Knight Ridder Talent Bank, community representatives, visiting authors, movies and field trips.

Joe Grimm, Free Press recruiting and development editor, offers these tips on building a successful Nooners program:

- Choose a time and day of the week that works for most people. Part of the program's success was because people knew when and where to find Tuesday Nooners. Try to stage Nooners at more than one time of day if you have people working different shifts or in different locations.
- Line up a couple of meeting rooms. You may need more than one to get around conflicts with other meetings, and you'll learn which sessions attract large numbers and which draw smaller groups. You want the room to fit the size of the group.
- Ask whether the company wants to spring for lunch. If it does, have someone line up a group of caterers you can rotate. If the budget won't cover the cost of lunch, encourage participants to brown-bag it.
- Publicize your Nooners early and often. Talk them up. Even after you've sent out computer messages and posted bright-orange flyers, some will say they never heard about it.
- At each session, plan to introduce your speaker or panel, introduce new hires in the room and tell people when and where the next Nooners will occur. Try to generate repeat visits by the staff.
- Encourage speakers to do more than talk. Handouts, graphics and participation are all helpful for adult learners. Make sure speakers let the staff ask questions.

Try these 'Nooners' topics

- Community groups needing to address the newspaper
- Refresher on how to use e-mail, databases, the Internet
- Staff members' reports from off-site seminars
- "How I Wrote That Story," "Got That Photo," "Caught That Error"
- Focus on domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse
- Host authors, local professors and resource people
- Bring in government experts on taxation, criminal investigations and court procedure
• Go for quality. Good speakers, timely topics, a little controversy can all heighten interest in the series.
• Get top managers to attend. Seeing the publisher or another top executive at the session sends the signal that Nooers are useful and gives staffers another opportunity to get to know the bosses.
• Don’t be afraid to miss weeks, especially around holidays, vacation seasons or heavy work times, such as election weeks. It’s hard to do this every week — so don’t even try.
• Don’t get discouraged if you have a session with a small turnout. Try to figure out where you missed the mark — the topic, the timing or the publicity — and keep going.

TACKLING TRAINING AT A MIDSIZED NEWSPAPER
By Kathy Spurlock

In our newsroom, The 40,000 Monroe, La., News-Star, we accomplish several thousand hours of formal training annually on a minimum budget. And that’s in addition to the daily quality discussions and mentoring we expect our editors to deliver.

Getting there hasn’t been easy. After several years of substantial investment in training, we realized we were just tossing training on the wall to see what would stick. We weren’t making a dent in our quest for quality journalism.

We had to change our approach. We decided to do four things:
• Create an environment where everyone is expected to grow, and performance-related growth is rewarded.
• Accept that, at a newspaper our size, we would always be in a basic-training mode for early-career employees.
• Annually identify needs and focus on training that helps the newsroom achieve the newspaper’s “audience development” goals.
• Develop a succession plan within the newsroom to assure future leadership.

The performance appraisal process highlights areas for employees to focus on to achieve career growth. And a pattern of needs emerges from this process that maps out our training year. Our human resources director helps us to set priorities and identify low-cost or no-cost opportunities to meet our training goals.

Our focus includes basic development, a “finishing school” for early career employees; audience development, explanatory sessions about our newspaper-wide goals such as Generation X and diversity, geographic targets, multimedia and online; beat expertise development for individual writers; midlevel development, enhancing skill sets and developing leadership skills, and management development.

Each year, we identify key players — the people who are the most likely candidates for higher-level, more expensive training opportunities.

Basic, audience and midlevel development are primarily handled through in-house, local, regional, computer-based and online resources at minimal cost. We structure this through our “Newsroom University.” A class schedule is published every six months, and employees sign up for instruction on topics such as ethics, public records/open meetings laws, libel, headline writing, writing for online, regional tours and computer skills. Presentations also tap the talents of the controller and publisher as well as market development, circulation and advertising directors.

Other training sessions build on the Newsroom University concept. Our company, Gannett, provides a selection of online training, and we coordinate with four other Gannett newspapers within a reasonable driving distance to maximize the available resources. A tuition reimbursement program also encourages employees to seek advanced degrees at one of three regional universities.

Community experts, state and regional professional associations provide inexpensive training opportunities throughout the year.
And the way we use online information supports that message. Points of wisdom from Web sites are shared with staff members every day to sustain an environment where we are always thinking about our craft. Local experts and leadership development programs come into play, and we apply regularly for national seminars that require minimal investment. The short-term Knight, Casey, Pew, FACS and Southern Newspaper Publishers Association fellowships have proven beneficial. We annually budget one or two American Press Institute or Poynter Institute sessions and at least one major internal program with an outside consultant or coach. In addition, we developed a "farm team" to provide a pool of recruits for consideration when midlevel editor vacancies occur. This is accomplished on two levels: A regional succession plan with other Gannett newspapers focuses resources on pro-

Top 20 tips for training . . .

1. Purpose — direct message to audience needs
2. Preparation — research, organize, prepare
4. Picking — focused, appropriate material, not canned
5. Power — be an expert, use timely data, stats
6. Punctuality — start, finish on time
7. Profile — tell them what to expect, what they'll hear
8. Punny — open with humor, a lighthearted start
9. Poise — relax, be confident, exude expertise
10. Passion — enthusiasm, motivated, driven
11. Philosophy — say what you believe, why you believe
12. Project — bold voice projection, can they hear you?
13. Persuasive — give them reason to agree, respond
14. Profit — how can they use you or your message/data
15. Positive — emphasize "can" message, not "can't"
16. Praise — salute them, their success, their purpose
17. People — get real, use war stories, real life examples
18. Presidential — be a leader, give them reason to respect
19. Package — summarize presentation, offer to help
20. Provide — handouts, background, articles, leave your business card

...and 20 keys to a successful session

1. Good trainers don't wear two left shoes.
2. Provide audience with a focused outline.
3. Handouts include 10 Commandments of Communication and Listening.
4. Get audience involved with participation.
5. Use a powerful, catchy opening.
6. Use powerful stories.
7. Use strong examples.
8. Don't tell jokes, but use funny stories, examples.
10. Be motivational.
11. Be inspiring.
12. Teach newsroom, company team-building.
13. Be positive, not negative.
14. Resolve, don't complain.
15. Use highlight points, not long graphs.
16. Do training in work groups, have each group make recommendation reports.
17. Use video movie examples.
18. Challenge audience for solutions.
19. Do training on company time, not personal time.
20. Have each participant share benefits of training.

Ted Findley, the Findley Management Group
notable employees, and an internal management development program focuses resources on basic skills an employee will need to enter an editing slot or move up to the next level.

Our midlevel editors also participate in internal and online core management classes as part of our Newsroom University program.

We can quantify the results of these training efforts. We've seen improvements in circulation and online numbers, internal promotions and promotions to sister newspapers in our company, staff retention and our ability to recruit higher-caliber candidates for open positions.

At our newspaper, tight economic times provided more, not less, incentive to create a learning environment — and that effort is already paying off.

Books on Training

Active Training, Mel Silberman
Pfeiffer & Company, June 1998

The Consultant's Toolkit, Mel Silberman
McGraw-Hill Trade, September 2000

Training for Impact, Dana Gaines Robinson and James C. Robinson
Jossey-Bass, June 1989

Performance Consulting: Moving Beyond Training, Dana Gaines Robinson and James C. Robinson
Berrett-Koehler, April 1995

Telling Ain't Training, Harold D. Stolovitch and Erica J. Keeps
American Society for Training & Development, May 2002

The Performance Consultant's Fieldbook, Judith Hale

Flawless Consulting, Peter Block
Jossey-Bass, September 1999

Managers as Mentors, Chip R. Bell
Berrett-Koehler, January 2002

The Accelerated Learning Handbook, Dave Nieder
McGraw Hill Trade, June 2000

The Action Learning Guidebook, Willam J. Rothwell
Jossey-Bass, July 1999

Handbook of Training Evaluation and Measurement Methods, Jack J. Phillips
Butterworth-Heinemann, September 1997

Return on Investment Is Training and Performance Improvement Programs, Jack J. Phillips
Butterworth-Heinemann, July 1997

Helpful Web sites on training

Big Dog's Bowl of Biscuits
(http://www.uwlink.com/~donclark/)
A free site of training background information and resources from consultant Don Clark.

American Society of Training and Development (ASTD)
(http://www.astd.org/index_IE.html)
The national association for professional trainers maintains a large Web site of resources, books and other materials. Some are free, most are available for purchase. Local chapters hold monthly meetings that provide programs and a chance to network with other trainers.

Web sites for human resources development/training professionals
(http://www.xavier.edu/hrd/related_sites.html)
A directory of Web sites for human resources development and training professionals maintained by the masters program in human resources development and training at Xavier University.

Compiled by Michael Roberts
TRAINING RESOURCES

Here is an extensive directory of resources for newsroom training, assembled by Beverly Kees, with assists from Kathy Spurlock, American Press Institute and SPJ. In addition, Chapter 9 includes many resources available for newsroom training. The forthcoming SPJ project, journalismtraining.org, should offer a more comprehensive and constantly updated directory.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Copy Editors Society
John McIntyre, president
The Sun
P.O. Box 1377
Baltimore, Md. 21278-0001
800-829-8000 x 6206
JohnMcIntyre@copydesk.org;
www.copydesk.org
Pam Robinson
LATWP, Newsday
235 Pinelawn Road
Melville, N.Y. 11747
631-843-2751

Comprehensive, helpful Web site with online editing guides and extensive resource materials.

American Press Institute
William L. Winter, director
11690 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Va. 22091
703-620-3611; fax 703-620-5814
www.americanpressinstitute.org

One of the best resources available, with seminars and a tremendous amount of information online. API also has reintroduced online learning in its suite of training activities. API's Seminars Online initiative integrates Web-based presentations and readings with Web discussion. The learning process is monitored and guided by expert facilitators.

American Society of Newspaper Editors
11690B Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, Va. 20191-1409
703-453-1120; fax 703-453-1133
Scott Bosley, executive director
sbosley@asne.org
American Editor magazine
scj@asne.org
www.asne.org

ASNE's Web site contains a members-only section that offers tips and ideas in addition to subscription-based e-mail tip sheets. The organization also maintains a program of work that focuses on major initiatives.
APME is a valuable resource for helping editors improve news coverage and newsgroup operations. An annual report, now provided on CD, offers editors training materials in key subject areas. Major initiatives of the organization include Credibility Roundtables and the annual Time Out for Diversity and Accuracy. At its annual meeting, APME offers free critiques and small newspaper workshops.

Casey Journalism Center for Children and Families
4321 Hartwick Road, Suite 320
College Park, Md. 20740
301-699-5133; fax 301-699-9755
info@casey.umd.edu
http://casey.umd.edu/home.nsf

The Casey Journalism Center is part of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. The center offers journalists, without cost:
- Story and source assistance, using an indexed databases of experts, organizations, publications and news articles on a variety of children’s issues.
- National and regional conferences, customized newsgroup seminars, providing in-house briefings on a range of child and family topics.

Center for Community Journalism
SUNY at Oswego Lamigan Hall
Oswego, N.Y. 13126
315-312-5427; fax 315-312-5658
ccj@oswego.edu
www.oswego.edu/ccj/

Offers workshops, on-site training and an informational Web site for community newspaper editors.

Center for Creative Leadership
Attn: Client Services
P.O. Box 26300
Greensboro, N.C. 27438-6300
336-286-4480; fax 336-282-3284
info@leaders.ccl.org
www.ccl.org

CCL offers open-enrollment programs at four campuses and affiliate locations. Some 20,000 participants attend these programs each year. In addition to this training, CCL offers customized training solutions for approximately 200 client organizations each year. Leaders from more than two-thirds of the Fortune 100 companies took part last year. In the 1970s, CCL pioneered the use of 360-degree assessment. Today, the Center offers a wide array of assessments and performance support tools that identify behaviors and provide increased self-awareness for development.

Foundation for American Communications
85 South Grand Avenue
Pasadena, Calif. 91105
626-584-0010; fax 626-584-0627
facs@facsnet.org
www.facsnet.org

A valuable online resource, FACS conducts educational programs for journalists and their sources, publishes primers and guides on a variety of topics important in the news reporting process, and maintains online resources designed to help journalists find information they need to understand the subjects upon which they report.

Freedom Forum
The Freedom Forum
World Center
1101 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Va. 22209
703-528-0800; fax 703-522-4831
news@freedomforum.org
www.freedomforum.org

The Freedom Forum provides online resources and PDF copies of publications, including a section on newsgroup training.
Investigative Reporters and Editors
Brant Houston, executive director
University of Missouri School of Journalism
138 Neff Annex
Columbia, Mo. 65211
573-882-2042, fax 573-882-5431
brant@ire.org
www.ire.org
IRE was formed in 1975 to create a forum in
which journalists throughout the world could help
each other by sharing story ideas, newsgathering
techniques and news sources. The Web site today is
an incredible resource that includes substantial
public access and a members-only area.

Maynard Institute for Journalism Education
409 Thirteenth Street, 9th Floor
Oakland, Calif. 94612
510-891-9202; fax 510-891-9565
mije@maynardiejf.org
www.maynardiejf.org

For 25 years, the Robert C. Maynard Institute for
Journalism Education has helped the nation's
news media reflect America's diversity in staffing,
content and business operations. Through its profes-
sional development programs, the Institute prepares
managers for careers in both business- and news-
sides of the journalism industry. Through its Total
Community Coverage direct service programs, the
Institute helps news organizations better reflect
their diverse communities, improve communication
with the public and uncover new business oppor-
tunities.

Media Management Center
Northwestern University
Michael P. Smith, managing director
1007 Church Street, Ste. 500
Evanston, Ill. 60208-5619
847-491-4900; fax 847-491-5619
j-lavine@northwestern.edu
m-smith3@northwestern.edu
www.mediamangementcenter.org
www.readership.org

The Media Management Center is affiliated
with Northwestern University's renowned Kellogg
School of Management and Medill School of
Journalism. The Center conducts executive educa-
tion programs, projects, and research on the media's
most pressing problems. The Center's executive edu-
cation programs include training for top executives
in newspapers, magazines and broadcast television,
as well as tailored programs for media companies.
Publications also are available online in PDF
format.

The Readership Institute is a division of the
Media Management Center that focuses on action-
able research, field-testing of readership-building
ideas and measurement of their success, and educa-
tion and training for the newspaper industry on
readership-building best practices. Complete reports
and a resource library are available online.

National Association of Minority Media
Executives
Jeannie Fox-Alston, executive director
NAMME
1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600
Vienna, Va. 22182-3900
703-893-2410 or 888-968-7658; fax 703-893-
2414
nammeexecutivedirector@att.net
www.namme.org

NAMME is an organization of media man-
agers and executives of color working in newspa-
pers, magazines, broadcasting and new media in
torial and on the business side. NAMME exists
to encourage more diversity among the senior ranks
of the media industry, as well as more informed
discussion of how to better serve multi-cultural
communities. NAMME also serves as a resource to
the media industry on diversity issues.
National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting

IRE Membership Coordinator
138 Neff Annex
Missouri School of Journalism
Columbia, Mo. 65211
info@ire.org
www.nicar.org

NICAR is a program of Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. and the Missouri School of Journalism. Founded in 1989, NICAR has trained thousands of journalists in the practical skills of finding, prying loose and analyzing electronic information. NICAR provides training, tapes and tips and an extensive online database collection.

National Press Foundation

Bob Meyers, president
1211 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-663-7280; fax 202-530-2855
bob@nationalpress.org
www.nationalpress.org

The National Press Foundation’s goal is to help journalists better understand the issues about which they write and broadcast. The heart of NPF’s professional development program is a series of issue-oriented seminars held throughout the year in Washington, D.C., in cities across the country, and all over the world.

The programs are balanced and non-partisan, and are presented by leading authorities, experts, and policy makers. Seminars are always on the record.

NewsLab

1900 M Street NW Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-969-2536; fax 202-969-2543
mail@newslab.org
www.newslab.org

NewsLab’s goal is to help television newsrooms better inform viewers about substantive and complex issues that affect their lives. NewsLab holds workshops for journalists, and produces resources — including tipsheets and tapes — for use in training sessions. The Web site features an extensive collection of resources and tip sheets.

Newspaper Association of America
David Brown, vice president
1921 Gallows Road Suite 600
Vienna, Va. 22182
703-902-1600; fax 703-917-0636
webmaster@naa.org www.naa.org

NAA is a nonprofit organization representing the newspaper industry. NAA members account for nearly 90 percent of the daily circulation in the United States and a wide range of nondaily U.S. newspapers. NAA also has many Canadian and International members. Educators, university newspapers, press associations and suppliers/vendors also are members. The Association focuses on six key strategic priorities that collectively affect the newspaper industry: marketing, public policy, diversity, industry development, newspaper operations and readership.

Publications and research are available online, as well as a comprehensive calendar of meetings and training opportunities.

Pew Center for Civic Journalism

7100 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 101
College Park, MD 20740-3637
301-985-4020; fax: 301-985-4021
news@pccj.org
http://www.pewcenter.org/index.php

The Pew Center’s goal is to report on various civic journalism experiments around the country, sharing the lessons learned with the rest of the profession and tracking how these experiments are evolving.

The Center does this through its quarterly newsletters, through training publications and videos, through conferences and workshops for journalists and academics, through research and through public speaking.

The Web site includes numerous publications and examples of civic journalism from throughout the country, available in PDF format.
The Poynter Institute is a school for journalists, future journalists, and teachers of journalism. Poynter conducts more than 50 seminars annually in the areas of leadership and management, reporting and writing, broadcast, ethics and diversity, and visual journalism. Seminar calendars and applications are available online.

The Poynter Web site is one of the top five resources in the industry. Daily e-mail newsletters and tip sheets are available, and you can personalize your Poynter Web page to your interests.

Society of Professional Journalists
Terrence G. Harper, executive director
Society of Professional Journalists
3909 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, Ind. 46208
317-927-8000; fax 317-920-4789
tharper@spj.org
www.spj.org

The Society of Professional Journalists works to improve and protect journalism. The organization is the nation’s most broad-based journalism organization, dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior. Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry; works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press. The Web site includes public and members-only areas.

SPJ publishes Quill magazine, Freedom of Information alert, PressNotes and a Diversity Sourcebook.

Western Knight Center for Specialized Journalism
Vikki Porter, director
Western Knight Center for Specialized Journalism
Annenberg School for Communication
University of Southern California
3502 Watt Way
Los Angeles, Calif. 90089-0281
213-821-1277; fax 213-740-8624
vporter@usc.edu
www.WKConline.org

The Western Knight Center for Specialized Journalism offers competitive fellowships to mid-career journalists for short, intense seminars on timely topics that are critical to the interests of the western United States and beyond, including but not limited to the environment, the Pacific Rim, entertainment and immigration issues. In addition to enhancing journalists’ expertise on complex issues, each seminar provides opportunities to develop new media skills.

STATE AND REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Information about workshops, resources and regional training seminars is available from these organizations. Some contain online reporter resources and links, newsletters, tip sheets and training materials to purchase.

Alabama Press Association
Felicia Mason, executive director
3324 Independence Drive, Suite 200
Birmingham, Ala. 35209
205-871-7737; fax 205-871-7740
www.alabamapress.org

Arizona Newspaper Association
John Fearing, executive director
1001 N. Central Ave., Suite 670
Phoenix, Ariz. 85004
602-261-7655; fax 602-261-7525
office@ananews.com
www.ANANews.com
Arkansas Press Association
Dennis Schick, executive director
411 South Victory
Little Rock, Ark. 72201
501-374-1500; fax 501-374-7509
apamail@arkansaspress.org
www.arkansaspress.org

California Newspaper Publishers Association
1225 Eighth St., Suite 260
Sacramento, Calif. 95814
916-288-6000; fax 916-288-6002
www.cnpa.com

California Chicano News Media Association
Julio Moran, executive director
3800 S. Figueroa St.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90037
213-743-4960; fax 213-743-4989
info@ccnma.org
www.ccnma.org

Florida Press Association
Carl Cannon, president
122 South Calhoun Street
Tallahassee, Fla. 32301
850-224-3790; fax 850-224-6012
www.flpres.com

Georgia Press Association
Robin Rhodes, executive director
3066 Mercer University Drive, Suite 200
Atlanta, Ga. 30341
770-454-6776; fax 770-454-6778
mail@gapress.org
www.gapress.org

Hoosier State Press Association
David Stamps, executive director
One Virginia Ave., Suite 701
Indianapolis, Ind. 46204
317-804-4772; 317-624-4428
dstamps@hspa.com
www.indianapublisher.com

Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media
Gloria Freeland, director
huckboyd@ksu.edu
Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media
105 Kedzie Hall, Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kan. 66506-1501
785-532-3958 or 785-532-0721; fax 785-532-5484
http://huckboyd.jmc.ksu.edu

Idaho Newspaper Association
Bob C. Hall, executive director
6560 Emerald, Suite 124
Boise, Idaho 83704
208-375-0733; fax 208-375-0914
BobcHall@aol.com
www.idahopapers.com

Illinois Press Association
David L. Bennett, executive director
Community Drive
Springfield, Ill. 62703
217-241-1300, fax 217-241-1301
Blbennett@il-press.com
www.il-press.com

Inland Press Association
Ray Carben, executive director
Inland Press Foundation
2360 E. Devon Ave. Suite 3011
Des Plaines, Ill. 60018
847-795-0380; fax 847-795-0385
lnaldnerl@inlandpress.org
www.inlandpress.org
Iowa Newspaper Association  
Avid Hisman, director  
319 E. 5th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309  
515-244-2145; fax 515-244-4855  
www.inanews.com

Kansas Press Association  
Jeff Burkhead, executive director  
5423 S.W. 7th Street  
Topeka, Kan. 66606  
785-271-5304; fax 785-271-7341  
www.kspress.com

Kentucky Press Association  
David T. Thompson  
101 Consumer Lane  
Frankfort, Ky. 40601  
502-223-8821; fax 502-226-3867  
www.kypress.com/main

Louisiana Press Association  
Pam Mitchell-Wagner, executive director  
404 Europe St.  
Baton Rouge, La. 70802  
225-344-9309  
http://www.lapress.com

Maryland-Delaware-DC Press Association  
2191 Defense Highway, Suite 300  
Crofton, Md. 21114  
410-721-4000; fax 410-721-4557  
mddcpress@aol.com  
www.mddcpress.com

Media Alliance  
Jeff Perstein, executive director  
834 Mission St. #205  
San Francisco, Calif. 94103  
415-546-6334; 415-546-6218  
info@media-alliance.org  
http://www.media-alliance.org

Michigan Press Association  
Michael MacLaren, executive director  
827 N, Washington Ave.  
Lansing, Mich. 48906  
517-372-2424; fax 517-372-2429  
mark@michiganpress.org  
www.michiganpress.org

Minnesota Journalism Center  
Kathleen A. Hansen, director  
University of Minnesota Murphy Hall - SJMC  
206 Church St. SE.  
Minneapolis, Minn. 55455-0418  
612-625-8095; fax 612-626-7543  
mnjncr@umn.edu  
www.mjc.umn.edu/about.htm

Minnesota Newspaper Association  
Linda Falkman, executive director  
12 S. 6th St., Suite 1120  
Minneapolis, Minn. 55402  
612-332-8844; fax 612-342-2958  
mna@mna.org  
www.mnnewspapernet.org

Mississippi Press Association  
Carolyn Wilson, executive director  
351 Edgewood Terrace  
Jackson, Miss. 39206  
601-981-3060; 601-981-3676  
mps@mspress.org  
www.mspress.org

Missouri Press Association  
Doug Crews, executive director  
802 Locust St.  
Columbia, Mo. 65201-7799  
573-449-4167; fax 573-874-3894  
http://www.media-alliance.org

RESOURCES AVAILABLE
Montana Newspaper Association
Jim Fall, executive director
Expedition Block
825 Great Northern Blvd. - Suite 202
Helena, Mont. 59601
406-443-2850; fax 406-443-2860
http://www.mtnewspapers.com

Nebraska Press Association
Allen Beermana, executive director
845 "S" St.
Lincoln, Neb. 68508
402-476-2851; 800-369-2850; fax 402-476-2942
nebpress@nelpress.com
www.nebpress.com

New England Newspaper Association
George Geers
70 Washington St.
Salem, Mass. 01970
978-744-8940; fax 978-744-0333
NENA@nenews.org
www.nenews.org

New York Newspaper Publishers Association
120 Washington Avenue
Albany, N.Y. 12210
518-449-1667; fax 518-449-5053
www.nynpa.com

New York Press Association
1681 Western Avenue
Albany, N.Y. 12203
518-464-6483; fax 518-464-6489
www.nynewspapers.com

North Carolina Press Association
5171 Glenwood Ave. Suite 364
Raleigh, N.C. 27612
heather@ncpress.com
http://www.ncpress.com

North Dakota Newspaper Association
Roger Bailey, executive director
1435 Interstate Loop
Bismarck, N.D. 58501
701-223-6397; fax 701-223-8185
www.ndna.com

Northern Illinois Newspaper Association
Jim Killam, communications coordinator
Northern Star, Northern Illinois University
Campus Life Building, Suite 130
DeKalb, Ill. 60115
815-753-4239
jkillam@niu.edu
http://www.star.niu.edu/nina

Ohio Newspaper Association
Frank Deane, executive director
1335 Dublin Rd, Suite 216 B Columbus,
Ohio 43215
614-486-6677; fax 614-486-4940
http://ohionews.org

Oklahoma Press Association
3601 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105-5499
405-524-4421; fax 405-524-2201
http://www.okpress.com

Pacific Northwest Newspaper Association
Rowland Thompson, executive director
3838 Stone Way North
Seattle, Wash. 98103
206-632-7913; fax 206-634-3842
www.pnna.com

Pennsylvania Newspaper Association
3899 N. Front St.
Harrisburg, Penn. 17110
717-703-3000; fax 717-703-3001
Foundation fax: 717-703-3008
Send comments to Cathy Ennis: cathy@penn-news.org
http://pa-newspaper.org
South Carolina Press Association  
Bill Rogers, executive director  
P.O. Box 11429  
Columbia, S.C. 29118-03-750-9561  
http://www.scpa.org

South Dakota Newspaper Association  
527 Main Ave., Suite 202  
PO Box 8100  
Brookings, S.D. 57006-8100  
800-658-3697; fax 605-692-6388  
sdna@sdna.com  
http://www.sdna.com

Southern Newspaper Publishers Association  
Edward VanHorn, executive director  
P.O. Box 28875  
Atlanta, Ga. 30358  
404-256-0444; fax 404-252-9135  
http://www.snpa.org

Tennessee Press Association  
Office Park Circle  
Knoxville, Tenn. 37909  
865-584-5761; fax 865-584-8687  
grgentile@tnpress.com  
http://www.tntoday.com

Texas Press Association  
Michael Hodges, executive director  
718 W. Fifth St. Austin, Texas 78701  
512-477-6755; fax 512-477-6759  
webmaster@texaspress.com  
http://www.texaspress.com

Utah Press Association  
307 West 200 South Suite 4006  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101  
801-328-8678; fax 801-328-2226  
http://www.utahpress.com

Virginia Press Association  
Lawrence McConnell, president  
11006 Lakeridge Parkway  
Ashland, Va. 23005  
804-550-2361; fax 804-550-2407  
www.vpa.net

Wisconsin Newspaper Association  
Sandra George, executive director  
3822 Mineral Point Road  
P.O. Box 5580  
Madison, Wis. 53705  
608-238-7171 or 1-800-261-4242 (in Wisconsin); fax 608-238-4771  
www.wisnnews.com

INFORMATION WEB SITES

The following sites include some devoted to training and others that offer information and tools for journalists and may be useful in setting up newsroom training programs.

AssignmentEditor.com  
400 N. Noble Suite 102 Chicago, Ill. 60022  
312-432-9911; fax 312-432-9944 mail@assignmenteditor.comwww.AssignmentEditor.com

Links to every resource and topic imaginable for reporters and editors. Portions are accessed for free.

Babel Fish  
http://world.altavista.com

 Translates Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish to and from English.

Brechner Center  
PO Box 118400  
3208 Weimer Hall  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Fla. 32611-8400  
352-392-2273; fax: 352-392-3919  
or 352-392-9173  
http://www.jou.ufl.edu/brechner/index.htm
Freedom of Information, libel, First Amendment issues

CJR Journalism Resources
Columbia Journalism Review
Journalism Building
Columbia University
New York, N.Y. 10027
212-854-1881; fax 212-854-8580
cjr@columbia.edu www.cjr.org

Cyber Journalist.net
editor@CyberJournalist.net
http://www.cyberjournalist.net
Resource for online journalists.

Dictionary of Computing Terms
Denis Howe
http://foldoc.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/template.cgi?post.html&R=babies

Editor & Publisher Interactive
770 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10003-9595
Editorial Phone: 646 654-5270
Editorial Fax: 646 654-5370
Online Editorial Phone: 646 654-5274
http://www.editorandpublisher.com

Elements of Style
webmaster@bartleby.com

ExpertSource
esource@bizwire.com
http://www.businesswire.com/expertsoure/
Access to authoritative academic and industry sources.

Finding Data Online: A Journalist's Guide
http://nilesonline.com/email.cfm

FindLaw
Steve Noel
(650) 210-1940
snoel@findlaw.com
http://www.findlaw.com
Legal information for journalists doing research.

First Amendment Center
info@fac.org
www.freedomforum.org/first/default.asp
Up-to-date information about First Amendment issues around the country.

Freedom of Information Center
127 Neff Annex
University of Missouri
Columbia, Mo. 65211
573-882-4856; fax 573-882-9002 edwardsm@missouri.edu
http://web.missouri.edu/~foiwww/
Focuses on access to government documents and information.

HR-esorce (HR resources)
customerservice@westgroup.com
1-800-328-4880 ext. 66470
www.hr-esorce.com
Provide legal and regulatory information to legal, human resource, business and other professionals.

International Journalists' Network
1616 H Street, NW, Third Floor
Washington, D.C. 20006
USATel: 202-737-3700 Fax: 202-737-0530
ijnet@icfj.org www.ijnet.org
Media-assistance news, journalism training opportunities, reports on the state of the media around the world, media directories.
Journal of Mass Media Ethics
Deni Elliott, professor of ethics
Practical Ethics Center, University of Montana
Missoula, Mont. 59812
406-243-5744
deni@selway.umt.edu
http://jmme.byu.edu

Journalism & Mass Communication Educator
James A. Crook
School of Journalism
University of Tennessee
E-mail: Jim-Crook@utk.edu
http://excellent.com.utk.edu/JMCF

JournalismNet
Julian Sher
jscher@journalismnet.com
888-Excite2 (1-888-392-4832); fax 707-215-6077; 1-514-555-555
Leave a 30-second message
http://www.journalismnet.com
A search tool for journalists in all areas of media.

Journalistic Resources Page
http://www.markovits.com/journalism/
Resource guide for journalists.

Journalist's Guide to the Internet
Christopher Callahan, associate dean
University of Maryland College of Journalism
ccallahan@jmail.umd.edu
http://reporter.umd.edu

Journalist's Toolbox
Mike Reilley
mikereilley@hotmail.com
http://www.journaliststoolbox.com/newswriting/onlineindex.html
Resources to the media and researchers

Kennedy School of Government
Abadie, Alberto
617-496-4547
http://sparky.harvard.edu/research.shtml
Research directory for journalists.

The Media Institute
1000 Potomac St., N.W., Suite 301
Washington, D.C. 20007
202-298-7512; fax 202-337-7092
http://www.medainst.org
Specializing in communications policy and the First Amendment.

Newspaper Design: Design with Reason
design@ronreason.com
http://www.ronreason.com/index.html

NewsPlace for News and Sources
Professor Avi Bass
(abiass@niu.edu)
http://www.niu.edu/newsplace
Journalists' research tool for news and news sources.

Nieman Reports
Bob Giles, curator
617-495-2237
http://www.nieman.harvard.edu

No Train, No Gain
Dolf Els
dels@media24.com
http://www.notrain-nogain.org/
Newspaper training editors' exercises and ideas.

Paperboy
ian@thepaperboy.com
http://www.thepaperboy.com
Journalists' guide to other journalists' work from around the world.
PC Mike
Mike Wendland
mike@pcmike.com
http://www.pcmike.com

Journalists resource guide to PCs and current technology
Pew Research Center
1150 18th Street, NW Suite 975
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-293-3126; fax 202-293-2569
mailprc@aol.com
http://people-press.org

Power Reporting Resources
Bill Dedman at 773-329-7682 or 800-798-6144
Bill@PowerReporting.com
http://powerreporting.com

Thousands of free research tools for journalists, annotated and updated daily in partnership with Columbia Journalism Review.

PressTime
Terry Polkack
polt@nna.org
http://www.nna.org/presstime

Selected articles from PressTime, the magazine of the Newspaper Association of America. Also supplementary material.

Project for Excellence in Journalism
Pew Charitable Trusts
1900 M Street NW Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-293-7394; fax 202-293-6946
mail@journalism.org
http://www.journalism.org/

Quill
Society of Professional Journalists
Improving & Protecting Journalism
3909 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, Ind. 46208
317-927-8000; fax 317-920-4789
quill@spj.org
http://spj.org/quill

Reportor.org
webmaster@reportor.org
http://reportor.org

A variety of resources for journalists, journalism educators and the public.

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press
1615 N. Ft. Myer Dr., Suite 900,
Arlington, Va. 22209
800-336-4243 or 703-807-2100
rcfp@rcfp.org
http://www.rcfp.org

First Amendment Handbook
http://www.rcfp.org/handbook/viewpage.cgi

Free legal help to journalists and news organizations.

Seminar Information Service
17752 Skypark Circle,
Suite 210 Irvine, Calif. 92614
949-261-9104; fax 949-261-1963
info@seminarinformation.com
http://www.seminarinformation.com

Comprehensive guide to business and technical seminars worldwide.

Shorenstein Center
79 JFK Street 2nd Floor Taubman
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
617-495-8269
http://ksgwww.harvard.edu/shorenstein

Research center dedicated to exploring the intersection of press, politics and public policy.
Sources and Experts
Kitty Bennett
bennett@stptimes.com
http://www.libibio.org/slanews/internet/experts.html

A listing of think tanks and organizations with particular expertise.

Stateline.org
c/o Pew Center on the States
1101 36th Street, NW Suite 301
Washington, D.C. 20007
202-963-5035; fax 202-339-6153
editor@stateline.org
http://www.stateline.org/index.djosectionid=9z
8a3n.png

Reference for development of major issues on the public agenda in a number of states.

Statistics Every Writer Should Know
http://nilesonline.com/email.cfm

Student Press Law Center
1815 N. Fort Myer Drive Suite 900
Arlington, Va. 22209
703-897-190+
splc@splc.org
http://www.splc.org

Legal-assistance agency devoted exclusively to educating high school and college journalists about the rights and responsibilities contained in the First Amendment.

Suburban Newspapers of America
401 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60611-4267
312-644-6610; fax 312-527-6658
sna@sba.com
http://www.suburban-news.org

The Trainers Warehouse
89 Washington Ave.
Natick, Mass. 01760
1-800-299-3770
http://www.trainerswarehouse.com

Resource of hard-to-find products for presenters; also a resource that develops and markets products designed to help presenters of all kinds.

The Training Registry
919-847-0331
training@trainingregistry.com
http://www.trainingregistry.com

Directory of training courses, trainers, training products, classroom and training facility rental, business and consulting service, professional speakers and books.

The Training Supersite
http://www.trainingsupersite.com

Information on learning, training/staffing resources, relevant editorial and other business tools and networking opportunities.

Training & Development Community Center
http://www.tcm.com/feedback.htm

Gateway to a "virtual" gold mine of resources for the training and development and human resources area.

USUS Internet Guide
Florence Le Bihan
fobih@hotmail.com
http://www.usus.org

This site is directed to beginning journalists who are starting to use the Internet for research.

Web Journal of Mass Communication Research
Guido Stempel, editor
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EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK
CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

By Rick Sayers, Carol Ann Riordan and Kathleen Carroll

So training and development are important components of today's newsrooms. How do you decide where to start? How can you tell if the training you've been offering is paying off? And how, when resources are tight, do you find or create the programs that will meet your needs?

There are as many answers as there are newsrooms. This chapter will help you sort through them and find the right training for your newsroom. And to demonstrate the value of that training to your publisher.

First, you have to know your goals. What big things are you trying to accomplish in your newsroom? And what does your newsroom need to get there? Knowing the answers to those two big questions can identify some critical places to put your training efforts.

Next you have to find the right program, with the help of Chapters 6 and 9. Many editors make their dollars stretch by finding partners or by creating their own sessions. And the number of resources and opportunities for training is growing; you just have to know where to look.

Finally, you have to follow through. This may be the most important part, reinforcing what you and your staffers learned by talking about it, having them train some of their colleagues and changing the training to account for their improving skills.

So you're ready to try this, but you have loads of questions. No problem. Let's take those questions to some people who've made training work for their newsrooms. First, some introductions, then some Q&A.

The doctors on call:

Joseph Grimm, Recruiting and Development editor, Detroit Free Press. Since 1990, Grimm has been responsible for newsroom recruiting, orientation and training, including organizing weekly in-house staff development sessions and publishing training bulletins. He also co-directs Knight Ridder's specialty program for minority journalists. Grimm joined the Free Press in 1983 and worked as a copy editor, news editor, deputy executive news editor and weekend editor. In 1987, he became the nation's youngest newspaper ombudsman. Earlier in his career, he worked for the Oakland Press in Pontiac, Mich., as a copy editor, wire editor, news editor, regional editor and associate editor. He attended the University of Michigan where he earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in journalism, and a teaching certificate.

Michael Roberts, deputy managing editor/staff development, The Arizona Republic, Phoenix. Before assuming his new position in March 2003, Roberts served as training editor of The Cincinnati Enquirer, where he was responsible for all newsroom training and served as writing coach since 1993. He also
provides training at Gannett newspapers around the country. Earlier, Roberts was AME/features-business and features editor at The Enquirer. He also worked at the Midland (Mich.) Daily News and Detroit Free Press, and as a senior editor at two magazines. He taught feature writing at the University of Cincinnati. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and holds a master's degree in training and human resource development from Xavier University.

Michael Schwartz, training editor, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Cox Newspapers. Schwartz has been involved in newsroom training since 1995, when he was named training editor at the AJC. The centerpiece of his training activity is Cox Academy, a learning program that is conducted at the AJC, as well as taken on the road to other Cox Newspapers.

"You need to have somebody accountable for training just as you have somebody accountable for the quality of photography or writing in the newspaper. I think that too many newsrooms pay more attention to sports agate than the quality of training. ... The easiest way to figure out how committed a newsroom is to training is to find out (1) who's responsible for staff development and training, and (2) how much do you spend on training. Otherwise, it's just an amorphous thing."  

Michael Schwartz.

and the Cox Washington Bureau. The Academy has added a distance-learning program component, which enables participants from several Cox Newspapers to learn in a virtual classroom. During his 30 years in the journalism profession, Schwartz has held reporting and editing positions at the Detroit Free Press, St. Petersburg Times, The Charlotte Observer, Dayton Daily News, The Atlanta Journal, Long Beach (CA) Press-Telegram and The Atlanta Constitution.

Steve Buttry, writing coach and national correspondent for the Omaha World-Herald. Buttry has been a reporter and editor for the past 31 years for the World-Herald, Des Moines Register, The Kansas City Star and Times, Minot Daily News and Shenandoah (Iowa) Evening Sentinel. He has presented writing and editing workshops for newsrooms and journalism conferences in 13 states plus British Columbia and Alberta.

Q: How do you determine the overall training needs of your newsroom?

Roberts: "A combination of things. Basically, I circulate through the newsroom, asking a lot of questions and listening a lot." Roberts attends most of the regular news and enterprise-planning meetings. He routinely checks with department heads and staff about their problems and goals. And Roberts also works with the editor and managing editor to make sure training supports overall newsroom goals. Roberts also asks for ideas on follow-up topics after every training program.

"I'm not a big believer in sending around long topic lists as training surveys. You learn about interests but not necessarily real performance needs. You need to be part of the day-to-day process to be relevant and timely. If the newsroom wants training focused on strategic goals, someone in the daily life of the newsroom has to be a filter and driver of that. Being involved also helps maintain the important support needed from department heads."

An example: Like many newspapers, The Enquirer is trying to improve enterprise projects. So Roberts developed sessions on improving enterprise. One session is on framing good ideas and involves a critical thinking technique known as "the ladder of abstraction." Roberts said each session is designed to
provide reporters and line editors with specific tools or skills they can use to improve the development and delivery of enterprise projects. These sessions came out of Roberts’ involvement in the newsroom, both in setting the goal of better enterprise and identifying the needs training could address. Roberts sometimes serves as an editor or co-editor on projects and uses that experience to identify training needs.

“Training that’s just informational or inspirational has its place. But my goal most of the time is to make sure people can walk out of a session and immediately apply some technique or new skill to their work. People willingly embrace training that is practical and helps them do a better job. And their managers are more likely to talk about and reinforce practical skills, which leads to better results.”

Schwartz: “It’s a multi-layered process. At the highest level, we look at overall newsroom objectives — broad goals, which would include improving the writing in the newsroom or beat development. Then we begin to identify specific areas and individuals, matching up the appropriate development opportunities.”

Like Roberts, Schwartz also seeks continuous feedback from the staff. Those who attend Cox Academy, an ongoing series of training programs for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and other Cox newspapers, complete a survey, which asks for other training topics that would be of interest.

Twice a year, department heads identify individuals — top-performing, high-potential employees who represent roughly 15-25% of the staff — for off-site training. They list the candidates, what’s available and then determine who should be selected.

And ideas naturally percolate in. For example, the newspaper had done an open records FOI, so Cox Academy created a program on accessibility of information from law enforcement. Staff members aren’t shy about recommending great speakers they’ve encountered —

“The continued growth in training is encouraging. It illustrates that companies are beginning to understand the importance of investing in their people.” Training expenditures for many organizations did not decline with the economic downturn; in fact, companies expected spending on training to grow a healthy 10 percent between 2001 and 2002. “Savvy leaders realize the importance of linking their training investment to the strategic business goals of an organization. A learning plan is as important to an organization as a marketing or financial plan.”

Tina Sang, President &
CEO American Society for Training
and Development

an author, an expert — who are willing to share their expertise.

Grimm: “We do a lot of training here, so we gauge our training needs by responses to the training we do and requests from the staff. Crises often point to training needs. We take some of our cues from our mission and goals. We have not done a staff-wide survey in years. Individual training needs pop up in appraisals, and we often take advantage of unique training opportunities that may not be in line with our top two or three goals, but that are useful and very cost effective.”

Buttry: “Seek suggestions, either informally or through a survey, from three different perspectives: Ask staff members what sort of training they want. Ask top managers what sort of training they want for their staff. For management training, you would seek a third perspective: What sort of training do staff members think their editors need? Before starting a management training program at the World-Herald last year, we surveyed the staff and
supervisors about training needs for supervisors.” (See questionnaire on page 137.)

Q: Do you tie the newsroom’s newspaper’s annual strategic goals into your training plans?

Roberts: “Yes, absolutely.” Roberts said his job as a training editor is “start with a goal and work backwards, as in reverse engineering” to develop the right training. He looks at the goals of the overall newspaper, the newsroom, newsroom departments and groups within those departments to identify “standards, defined outcomes and the skills needed to achieve those outcomes. That’s how training is focused to achieve specific things.”

For example, a number of years ago The Enquirer developed a newspaper-wide goal of increasing readership in Cincinnati’s booming suburbs. To help achieve that, the newsroom set a goal of increasing the number and quality of A1 enterprise pieces from its suburban bureaus about life in the suburbs.

Roberts “broke down” what it would take to achieve that newsroom goal into different skill sets: enterprise story-framing devices, reporting and source development, project management, and community orientation. “These were the skills we needed to develop to get to know the community in a different way and then to write about what we found. We had to get beyond the familiar meetings and the courthouse, and beyond the typical 10-inch meeting or crime story.”

As part of this undertaking, Roberts visited the bureaus each week, conducting training sessions and coaching, all of it geared to the newsroom goal of increasing suburban readership. “I was there to help with skills, and I was also reinforcing the overall goal. People took it to heart and saw the bigger picture. I wasn’t just dropping in with training that was ‘interesting’ but not relevant to their jobs. It was all part of a specific effort.” The suburban staff had set an initial goal of three A1-quality pieces a week, and ended up exceeding that goal the first year.

“It’s important that the newspaper and the newsroom have strategic goals that are clear and meaningful. Without them, what are you training for?”

Grimm: The newsroom goals of the Free Press provide the framework for its newsroom training: accuracy and fairness; news and new ideas; Children First, a 10-year-old campaign that “offers solutions and helps in the effort to improve the lives of Michigan’s children,” diversity, growth, and new technology.

“Retention is best when the learner is involved.”

Edward Scannell, co-author, “The Complete Gamer Trainers Play

For example, Detroit has the highest Arab-American population in the United States. As part of its commitment to diversity, “100 Questions and Answers About Arab Americans: A Journalist’s Guide” was posted online on the Free Press’ “Jobs Page,” which provides articles, ideas, tips and strategies to help journalists grow professionally. But this was long before 9-11 – seven years earlier. “On Sept. 12, 2001, everybody wanted it,” says Grimm.

The Free Press did a “Nooner” (see Page 104) on bioterrorism in March 2001, “and people asked, ‘Why are you doing this?’ Our medical reporter suggested the topic, and we invited an expert from the University of Michigan,” says Grimm. “We were ahead of the curve.”

Grimm encourages staff members to champion topics for training: “The test is: Is it relevant?”
Buttry: “Yes, absolutely. At the World-Herald, we have decided we need to make our newspaper more relevant to readers, to help address our declining circulation and readership. I am developing a workshop for next year that will address ways to make stories more relevant to readers."

Q: Do staff members complete an evaluation after going through a training session?

Grimm: “We give evaluation forms to staff members who attend off-site training. We don’t have them fill out surveys after each in-house experience because there are so many of them. However, I frequently do ask people how the training went for them. Was it worth your time? How can you use that? Would you like more training along those lines?” See the Free Press’ evaluation form on page 138.

Roberts: In assessing in-house training programs, Roberts asks attendees three questions: What was valuable or practical? What was difficult to understand that you’d like to learn more about? What related subjects would you like to learn about? Sometimes these questions appear on a form, but most of the time the exchange is verbal.

Roberts also makes sure the training allows time to practice new skills. “Adult training needs to be active training in order to be effective. You have to have people do what you want them to learn.” Allowing for practice time also means a session must be tightly focused. “For example, if you get a session down to one or two specific concepts, people will learn them and are much more likely to apply them to their work. On the other hand, if the session is just sitting there listening to the Top 29 Tips for Sparkling Writing, people tune out around tip #12 and no one takes any of it back to the job.”

Buttry: “Yes.” See the evaluation form his paper uses for its management-training program on page 139.

Schwartz: See a Cox Academy evaluation form on page 140.

Q: How is the evaluation of a training program used to gauge the person’s progress in his/her job performance?

Roberts: When staff members come back from training, Roberts said, supervisors need to reinforce the skills conveyed in the training and then gauge whether or not the performance expectations are met.

“Practice does not make perfect, only perfect practice makes perfect.”
Vince Lombardi

Confucius
"It is no longer possible to solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions."
Roger von Oech, founder and president of Creative Think, and author of A Whack on the Side of the Head and A Kick in the Seat of the Pants

"The measuring stick for training is the defined outcome, the performance standards used back at the beginning to frame the training session. If you want people to do better, you have to tell them what you want them to do. If you don't give them clear expectations, including clear statements of quality and frequency in their performance, how can you hold them accountable?"

So to gauge the effectiveness of a training program, that evaluation has to be conducted within the larger performance management system. If there are clear expectations, and a good system for coaching and reinforcing performance back on the job, then you are in a position to tell whether or not the training program was effective.

"It all starts with top editors giving clear expectations," Roberts said. "Without clear expectations, training doesn't have a clear mission. It becomes a diversion, an entertainment, a vague reward. And people don't take it very seriously. Bad training can involve poor curriculum design and poor delivery. Bad training can also simply be irrelevant material. Neither the training nor the performance of the staff goes anywhere. Training that is not strategic is generally irrelevant."

Grimm: "You never want training to be something that leads to punishment: 'Go to this seminar and come back fixed.'
It's critical to reinforce the message that "training is supposed to result in improvement, to do something differently now," says Grimm. "Some editors try to use training as a reward, but it's not a travel opportunity or a reward."
The starting point is the performance evaluation, he says. During that process, a supervisor should define a staff member's development needs, find and select a training opportunity, and then ask "What did you learn?" and "How will you improve your performance?" The loop is closed during the next performance evaluation when the supervisor gauges the employee's level of improvement.

TRAINING PAYS OFF

"All the research I have seen and everything I have heard and seen anecdotally says that training pays off," he said. "Sometimes the payoff is direct and noticeable: You train people in writing tighter, and you get tighter stories. You train people in digital photography, and you convert successfully from film to digital. You train a reporter in CAR, and she produces stories grounded in data analysis. Often the payoff is less clear: You train in storytelling, and some of your best writers who already were doing good storytelling seem a bit better. Some younger reporters who are pretty good try some storytelling approaches, but you wonder whether they would have done that anyway. And your dull writers are still dull. The training probably paid off, but you can't be sure whether or how much. Training, whether in-house or on the road, has three primary ways of paying off: It teaches skills, it inspires and it increases staff members' appreciation for their employer. All three payoffs are important."

Steve Burtzy
"If you think training is expensive, try ignorance."

Tom Peters

But Grimm also feels that employees must be proactive in charting their own professional development. "I want people to say, 'I want to read this book, go to this training session.' I don't want them to say, 'When is the Free Press going to train us?'"

Schwartz: In the surveys they complete after a training session, staff members are asked, "Do you feel you have a better understanding of X as a result of this training course?" If they answer "yes," they're asked what one or two things they'll be able to use on the job.

Training and development as a performance management system is where Cox Newspapers is headed in the next year or two, says Schwartz. "Training is going to have an even more significant impact on our culture. It's setting standards and providing tools so that people can get better."

Q: Is training more effective when people return from training sessions and share some or all of what they've learned with their colleagues?

Grimm: "Coming back and sharing is very effective. In fact, I tell them ahead of time to prepare to do just that. It helps them focus during the training if they're going to have to report on what they learned.

For example, Grimm asked three reporters who attended a writers' conference, to prepare a 60- to 90-minute lunchtime session when they returned, and provided them with a checklist for organizing the program.

Buttry: "One of the dilemmas all newsroom managers face in spending limited training dollars is deciding whether to send one person (or a few) off to a Poynter, API, IRE (or whatever) conference or to bring someone in to provide training for more people in the newsroom. (I'll admit to selfish interests in both directions. I like the World-Herald to send me off to conferences, and I like other newspapers to pay me to come in and present workshops for their staffs.) I think you heighten the bene-

FOLLOW UP — AND FAST

The best way to increase the payoff of a training program, I believe, is through immediate follow-up. For instance, the World-Herald sent me in 1995 to an IRE program on CAR. Then I came back and my editors immediately to a story with limited CAR application (at least to my inexperienced eye). I was able to use some Internet searching skills in the story, and I quickly improved in that aspect of CAR, but quickly forgot most of what I had learned about obtaining and analyzing data, because I didn't put it to immediate use. I have relearned some of it, but we failed to maximize that investment in learning because we failed to follow up. My editors should have assigned me (or I should have insisted that they allow me) to come up with a story proposal involving data analysis immediately. As I'm writing this, I am thinking that I should make follow-up a part of my coaching visits. Rather than hit-and-run coaching, I should always make my last session of the visit a sit-down with editors, discussing with them how to follow up and maximize the training. Then I should follow up myself.

Steve Buttry

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK
fit of road training by asking those who have
gone to share what they've learned with their
colleagues. But the primary benefit is with the
people who have gone. You really need to
make the decision based on the primary ben-
fit: Do we gain more CAR firepower by send-
ing one person to NICAR's boot camp for a
week or by bringing someone from NICAR
into the newsroom for a day or two of training
for the whole staff? I think the answer varies
by the situation. Whichever way you decide to
go, you then seek to heighten the effectiveness
of the training. When you send people away
for training, one way to heighten the effective-
ness is by asking them to share what they've
learned with colleagues."

Schwartz: "It's common sense that if someone
is sharing and teaching what they've learned -
instead of coming back and merely feeling
good about it - you're going to get more bang
for your buck. This extends the benefits of
training and gives it more legs. It's also a syn-
thetizing effort" because they tend to share the
cream of their training experience.

Staff members who benefit from training
outside the organization are expected to write
detailed memos about their experiences,
noting speakers who were particularly good.
In addition to sharing their newfound expertise,
they also write stories filled with tips and tech-
niques for the "Inside Scoop," the newsroom
newsletter.

"Learning is like rowing upstream; not
to advance is to drop back."
Chinese proverb

The Journal-Constitution uses a fair number of
in-house experts for training sessions. "It's
proven to be a great benefit for the presenters
and their colleagues," says Schwartz. "They
find that going through the process of what
they do and how they do it forces them to
think more deeply about their jobs." Schwartz
looks for people "who can share and are
respected by the staff. No one has ever turned
me down."

Q: How do you measure the ROI
(return on investment) of training at
your newspaper?

Roberts: "This is difficult in a newsroom.
ROI basically involves putting a monetary
value on various "defined outcomes." In manu-
facturing, this is a bit easier when you can
measure productivity in concrete terms: Make
more widgets per hour for less money and you
are successful.

"How do you measure the value of
improved enterprise stories when it comes to
driving readership? Sometimes you have train-
ing that can reduce overtime, reduce turnover,
and improve reproduction quality or make gains in
some areas where there are concrete measure-
ments in the newsroom. We once did some
training that cut the amount of wasted film in
the production room in half. That's a pretty
specific ROI. But in other cases you are deal-
ing with more indirect cause-and-effect issues.

"In the newsroom, again, you have to stick
to your goals and strategies. What is the news-
room's role in improving circulation? What are
the skills needed to meet those goals? If the
newsroom can deliver on its role, you then
turn to circulation and advertising to build on
that for newspaper gains."

Schwartz: "We measure cost savings and cost
benefits, a per-person cost. We compare the
total cost of putting on an in-house training
program with what it would cost in travel,
room and meals, and tuition to send a large
group to a training program." He also utilizes
other lower-cost delivery methods, including
online training and conference calls.
The less-than-favorable economy "forced
me to get better at looking for low-cost or no-
cost opportunities for development," says
Schwartz: “And we’ve been pleased with our discoveries.”

Grimm: “We measure the return on training in the content of our newspaper, the ability to use technology, and by the way people manage others.”

Buttry: “I don’t know how to measure the return on the investment of training. And I would be suspicious of most efforts to measure the return. So much of what we do in this business defies measurement. For instance, byline counting does not reflect quality at all (and I’ve seen it drive newspapers to slap bylines on briefs). You could measure the effectiveness of an accuracy program by counting corrections, but would you know whether staff members (aware that you were counting) were less likely to correct mistakes? I encourage you to read this research paper:

Q: How does training change culture or morale of a newsroom? Has it increased staff retention?

Roberts: “Training can change the newsroom culture. If learning and new things are valued, people develop a confidence and can-do attitude instead of a cover-your-butt attitude. There’s more of a collegial feel, rather than an ‘us and them’ mentality.”

Pagination is a significant example, says Roberts. “We invested a tremendous amount of time into training, practicing and preparing staff members for pagination. The majority of them tackled it with energy and commitment because it was training that was well defined. We heard over and over again positive comments that the company was doing the right thing – and doing it right. Staff members learned more than we could teach them, and they shared their learning with others.

“Adults come to work to do a good job. Anything you can do to help them succeed will be well received. Training creates a more positive, collegial ‘learning atmosphere’ because they know they’re going to get help.”

Buttry: “The Knight Foundation study found that the lack of training was the leading cause of dissatisfaction in newsrooms. Honestly, sometimes training also causes departures. You train someone in management, and she leaves to become metro editor somewhere because your metro editor is well entrenched. You train someone in CAR, and he takes his skills to greener pastures. On balance, though, I think training opportunities increase loyalty and job satisfaction and thus improve morale and retention.”

Schwartz: “A smart newsroom has an incredible tool to use in recruiting – and we have done that. We want to be known as a ‘learning organization’ where staff development is a high priority year-in and year-out. From the highest level of our division in Cox, the message was very clear: ‘We may not be able to do things the way we have done them before, but we’re going to continue to do it.’

“It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.”

John Wooden, basketball coach

“Training is a selling point, or should be – we feel it’s important and here’s what we do. You can show them your newsletter and list of classes. You can’t just say ‘we believe in training’ you need to back it up if it’s going to be a recruiting tool.”

Training demonstrates to high-potential employees that you’re committed to their professional development, says Schwartz. “That is how the company steps up and says, ‘Yes, we value you, it’s going to benefit you, it’s going
to benefit the organization." That's a pretty strong message."

It's also a powerful tool to keep key staff members from leaving: "Ask them, 'Are the papers you're looking at as invested in training as we are? Will you have the same opportunities for professional development that you have here?'"

Grimm: "I know retention helps keep people. They get excited about using what they've learned, and they feel obligated to use it at the paper that provided them the opportunity.

"Learning without thinking is labor lost; thinking without learning is dangerous."

*Chinese proverb*

"More than once, as a recruiter, I have approached someone who has said, 'I'm sorry, but I wouldn't dream of leaving right now. My paper just gave me a big development opportunity, and I need to stick around here for a while.'"

"Training can be a big morale booster, so newspapers need to be conscious of that and take advantage of it. Talk it up. Stir up the excitement. In effect, market it, and that means more than just getting out the word."
OMAHA WORLD-HERALD
TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDITORS

We are developing a training program for editors that will cover a few months next year and will involve trainers from our own staff as well as some outside speakers. Some sessions will be geared specifically for assigning editors who deal with reporters. Some will deal with general management issues that any supervising editor would face. We would like your help in designing the program. Please answer the following questionnaire and return it to Steve Butler by the end of November.

Rate the following issues in terms of importance for you in such a training program, with 1 being very insignificant and 5 being crucial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivating staff members</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing performance problems with staff</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addressing behavior problems with staff</td>
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<td>Listening skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching young staff members</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching experienced staff members</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading staff in difficult economic times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping staff members set and pursue goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping mediocre staff members become good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping good staff members become better</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valuing staff members' individuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing your boss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing a diverse news staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinating words, graphics, photo, design</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>World-Herald policies and practices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching reporters in generating story ideas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching reporters in gathering information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching reporters in beat development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching reporters in writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping reporters improve their writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing copy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please add any specific areas you think we should cover in the training program, or elaborate on any of the issues above. Your suggestions are appreciated, either on this form or in person.
DETROIT FREE PRESS EVALUATION FORM

Your comments will help us evaluate specific seminars and help other staff members make the most of them. Thank you. (please respond at all asterisked points; please take as much space as you need):

Your name: *

Seminar name and provider: *

Location: *

Dates held: *

Intent of the seminar: *

Your expectations going in: *

What did you get out of the seminar? *

Please describe the seminar’s best program or speaker: *

What should others know about this seminar to get the most out of it? *

What about accommodations, arrangements and local attractions? *

Additional comments: *

Answers to the following questions will not be shown to other staffers but will be used to see how the seminar might benefit you and the Free Press.

Your name: *

Seminar name and provider: *

Location: *

Dates held: *

What immediate changes in yourself or your work do you see as a result of this seminar? *

What long-term changes do you see? *
OMAHA WORLD-HERALD
TRAINING PROGRAM EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions about last Tuesday's workshop. Your answers will help us in planning the rest of this training program. You can print this out and write your answers by hand or fill them in electronically and print it out or e-mail back to me.
Thanks, Steve Buttry

What did you find most helpful about this workshop?

What did you find least helpful about this workshop?

Was the material presented effectively?

How could it have been presented more effectively?

Were you well prepared for the workshop? If not, how could we have helped you prepare better?

Were the handouts helpful?

How do you plan to apply the techniques that were presented in this workshop in your current job?

If the techniques presented in this workshop are not applicable to your current job, how do you plan to apply them in the future?

How can we help you in applying the techniques that were presented in this workshop?

What suggestions do you have for topics or presentation methods for future workshops in this series?

Could you see and hear the presentation well? If not, what audio, visual or room arrangement changes would you suggest?

Was the room set up effectively for the presentation? If not, how could we improve the setup?

Was the time workable for you (recognizing that no time is perfect)? Would you rather see future workshops presented earlier or later, longer or shorter, etc.?

How can we improve future workshops in terms of logistics?
COX ACADEMY EVALUATION FORM

Course title:

Presenter:

Date:

How useful was this training overall? (Circle one)
  Very       Somewhat       Not very

How effective was the instructor in presenting the information? (Circle one)
  Very       Somewhat       Not very

Was the training (Circle one)
  Too long    About right    Not long enough

Was the size of the group (Circle one)
  Too large   About right    Not large enough

Was the time available for group discussion and questions (Circle one)
  Too much    About right    Not enough

Do you feel you have a better understanding of Excel and Access as a result of this training course? (Circle one)
  Yes         No.

If so, what one or two things will you be able to use in your job?

If you could suggest one thing to improve this session overall, what would it be?

What other training course, or area of training would you like to participate in?
MEASURING TRAINING RESULTS: VIEWS FROM PUBLISHERS

Publishers say they look to their editors to drive newsroom training and to be creative about finding or designing initiatives that have broad impact. It’s one way to stretch tight dollars.

Many publishers recognize the importance of newsroom training as a tool for rewarding and retaining staffers - “All of the best journalists want to get better,” said one publisher - but they recognize that it’s hard to measure results of craft and leadership training.

Still, a number said they expect editors to identify the newsroom’s training needs, propose solutions and be bullish about fighting for what they believe they need.

Here’s what some of them have to say about newsroom training:

Tim Kelly, president and publisher of the Lexington Herald-Leader in Kentucky, values “broad impact for your training dollars ... getting as much training for as many people as you can. It takes a lot of creativity these days because the first things that get cut are travel and training. It’s regrettable, but you’ve got to pay for” other fixed costs, like rent and wire services.

Kelly suggests working with human resources departments to find out what's available, making sure you're taking full advantage of any programs your corporate parent offers and organizing local, state or regional training with educators or other journalists in your area.

“You’ve got to look at the effectiveness,” Kelly said. If, for example, you are considering sending one person off to a training session, make sure that person comes back ready to pass along that learning to colleagues. And then make sure that pass-along happens.

Heath Meriwether, publisher of the Detroit Free Press, is among the publishers who believe training is an important retention tool.

“If you don’t have an aggressive training program in your newsroom ... I’d bet you’d have a lot more people leaving your fold,” he said.

Training tells employees that you’re “making an investment in their professional growth, expanding their world and their viewpoints. It’s extremely valuable.”

He, too, believes in broad training that reaches many people in the newsroom - copy editor boot camps, for example. But he also believes deep investments in high-performance individuals can be worthwhile if they are potential newsroom leaders.

Henry B. Hantz III, president and publisher of the Centre Daily Times in State College, Pa., came up through the business side and is used to measuring tangible results. Newsroom training may not offer those same measures, but is “very important,” he said, because it is part of what

“The cost of training is really a bargain compared to the incredible cost of losing your entire investment.”

Heath Meriwether

“How do I measure it? I count on my editor to know the right stuff to do and to evaluate the impact of training on his newsroom.”

Henry Hantz III
makes an employee feel valued and rewarded. “For the newsroom, you can’t say ‘If we do this, in three months we’re going to make more money,’ Hartz said. “You have to be able to say, we are training because we care about the people and how they do their jobs. And if we’re not doing that, then the paper’s not getting any better.”

Lou Heldman, president and publisher of The Wichita Eagle in Kansas, believes training is vital to newsrooms because “it costs so much in goodwill and resources to bring in new people.”

“If we have fewer resources, they’d better be stronger,” he said.

He also believes training doesn’t have to be expensive. “We’ve worked with IRE (Investigative Reporters and Editors) to set up a regional session and then sent 23 people to it,” he said.

“There’s more and more regional training, done all in one day or just one night. For us, that’s better than sending someone to the East Coast or the West Coast.”

The Eagle also has been successful bringing someone into the newsroom to do targeted group training or a series of one-on-one sessions.

Heldman can point to measurable results from training in at least one case. The paper held some sessions on narrative writing, and during the course of a big local trial, the newsroom decided to produce a regular Sunday story that captured everything that went on at the trial that week into a weekly narrative.

“Sunday circulation increased,” Heldman said, “and we probably made every dollar we spent in training.”
A LEARNING LIBRARY
CHAPTER 8

A LEARNING LIBRARY

By David Shedden
Library Director, Poynter Institute

Twenty-eight years of training and research at the Poynter Institute have brought to the surface wonderful resources for learning among journalists. What follows is an annotated selection of the best books, videos and websites you can use in your learning newsroom.

REPORTING & WRITING

Websites:

American Copy Editors Society.
http://www.copydesk.org/
ACES is a professional journalism organization for copy editors.

American Society of Newspaper Editors.
http://www.asne.org/
ASNE is the nation’s oldest and largest newspaper editors group.

Associated Press Managing Editors.
http://www.apme.com/
APME is an association of editors whose newspapers are members of the Associated Press.

Beginning Reporting.
http://www.courses.vcu.edu/ENJ-212/BeginningReporting/
A website for students and beginning reporters.

CyberJournalist.net.
http://www.cyberjournalist.net/
This journalism resource website is maintained by Jonathan Dube.

FACSNET.
http://www.facsnet.org/
The nonprofit FACS provides resources to help “improve the quality of information reaching the public through the news.”

Investigative Reporters and Editors.
http://www.ire.org/
IRE is “dedicated to improving the quality of investigative reporting.”

The Narrative Newspaper.
http://www.inkstain.net/narrative/
A collection of links to literary journalism published in newspapers around the country.

National Conference of Editorial Writers.
http://www.ncew.org/
The goal of NCEW is to help improve the quality of editorials.

Newsthinking.com.
http://www.newsthinking.com/
Reporting and writing resources from the Los Angeles Times’ Bob Baker.
Power of Words.
http://www.projo.com/words/
This collection of writing tips is maintained by The Providence Journal.

Poynter Online.
http://www.poynteronline.org
The Poynter Institute is dedicated to teaching and inspiring journalists and media leaders. Its website offers journalism resources, personal pages, custom news feeds, and more.

The Pulitzer Prizes.
http://www.pulitzer.org/
Included on the website is a Pulitzer award timeline that begins in 1917.

Slipup.com.
http://www.slipup.com/
Examples of newspaper corrections and policies.

The Slot.
http://www.theslot.com/
Copy editing resources from Bill Walsh, a copy editor at The Washington Post.

The Tongue Untied.
http://grammar.uoregon.edu/intro.html
"A guide to grammar, punctuation and style for journalists."

Writers Write: The Write Resource.
http://www.writerswrite.com/
Information about books, writing, and publishing

Books And Other Resources:

America's Best Newspaper Writing.
By Roy Peter Clark and Christopher Scanlan, editors.
Poynter Institute faculty members Clark and Scanlan have included 36 ASNE Distinguished Writing Award winning stories and eight classic news reports in their book.

The Art and Craft of Feature Writing.
By William E. Blundell.
A guide to feature writing from a former Wall Street Journal writer and editor.

The Art of Editing. 7th ed.
By Floyd K. Baskette, Jack Z. Sissors and Brian S. Brooks.
Traditional newspaper editing techniques are stressed along with examples from other news mediums.

By Rene J. Cappon.
The essentials of good writing are covered in this practical guide.

Best Newspaper Writing.
By Keith Woods, Christopher Scanlan, Karen Brown, Don Fry and Roy Peter Clark, editors.
The Best Newspaper Writing series honors the work of the winners of the ASNE Distinguished Writing Awards.
AN ESSENTIAL LIBRARY FOR EVERY NEWSROOM

- American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.
- The Art and Craft of Feature Writing.
- Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.
- Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations.
- Best of Newspaper Design.
- Best Newspaper Writing.
- The Best of Photojournalism.
- A Call To Leadership.
- Chicago Manual of Style.
- The Editor’s Toolbox: A Reference Guide for Beginners and Professionals.
- Editor & Publisher International Yearbook.
- The Effective Editor.
- The Elements of Journalism.
- The Elements of Style.
- The Investigative Reporter’s Handbook.
- Leading by Example.
- Local News Tool Kit.
- The New York Public Library Desk Reference.
- The Newspaper Designer’s Handbook.
- On Writing Well.
- Pure Design.
- Respecting All Cultures.
- Webster’s New World Dictionary and Thesaurus.
- World Almanac and Book of Facts.
- Writing for Story.

Beyond the Inverted Pyramid. 2nd ed.
By George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly.
A guide to feature and magazine writing.

Championship Writing.
By Paula LaRouque.
Advice and examples from an experienced writing coach.

Coaching Writers: The Essential Guide for Editors and Reporters. 2nd ed.
By Roy Peter Clark and Don Fry.

This new edition includes updated coaching guidelines on how to improve communication between editors and reporters.

Coaching Writers: The Human Side of Editing. (VIDEO)
St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1993.
The fundamentals of coaching are presented by Roy Peter Clark, Don Fry, and others.

The Copy Editing and Headline Handbook.
By Barbara G. Ellis.
A guidebook for newspaper and magazine copy editors.
Copy Editor's Handbook for Newspapers, 2nd ed.
By Anthony R. Fellow and Thomas N. Clasín.
Areas covered include grammar, writing headlines, and using and editing pictures.

The Editorial Eye, 2nd ed.
By Jane Harrigan and Karen F. Dunlap.
This updated book deals with both the technical and management sides of professional editing.

The Editor's Toolbox: A Reference Guide for Beginners and Professionals.
By Buck Ryan, Michael O'Donnell and Leland B. Ryan.
An editing resource guide for the newsroom.

Follow the Story: How to Write Successful Nonfiction.
By James B. Stewart.
The author illustrates the techniques of compelling narrative writing.

Interviewing for Journalists.
By Sally Adams.
A guide to various types of interviewing.

By Brant Houston, Len Bruzzese and Steve Weinberg.
Valuable advice and tools for investigative reporters.

By Dennis Jackson and John Sweeney, editors.
A collection of 19 essays from veteran news writers.

Lapsing Into a Comma.
By Bill Walsh.
An informal look at writing and grammar issues.

News Reporting and Writing, 9th ed.
By Melvin Mencher.
The 9th edition of Mel Mencher's classic journalism textbook.

Newsthinking: The Secret of Making Your Facts Fall Into Place.
By Bob Baker.
Bob Baker offers useful advice on the writing process.

By William Zinsser.
The 25th anniversary edition of a respected writing guide.

Reporting and Writing: Basics for the 21st Century.
By Christopher Scanlan.
Journalist and writing coach Chip Scanlan teaches the essentials for good reporting.

Shoptalk and War Stories.
By Janice Winburn.
Practical advice from working journalists.

Ways With Words.
By the ASNE Literacy Committee.
"Researchers and editors tested four different styles of news writing with more than 1,000 readers. One finding: It's time to topple the inverted pyramid. The narrative style is more appealing and easier to understand."
Working with Words: A Handbook for Media Writers and Editors. 5th ed.
By Brian S. Brooks, James Pinson and Jean Gaddy Wilson.
Grammar fundamentals are covered as well as the importance of objectivity and accuracy.

Writing About Business.
By Terri Thompson, editor.
The Columbia Knight-Bagebot guide to economics and business journalism.

Writing as Craft and Magic.
By Carl Sessions Stepp.
The author explores how journalists can turn their ordinary writing into excellence.

Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work.
By Donald M. Murray.
Don Murray helps journalists understand the writing process.

By Carole Rich.
Journalism fundamentals and new media skills.

Writing for Story.
By Jon Franklin.
Craft secrets of dramatic nonfiction.

VISUAL JOURNALISM

Websites:

The American Editor; April 2000 Design Issue.
http://www.asne.org/kiosk/editor/00.april/toe.htm
This special issue of the American Editor was prepared by a team of designers and editors.

Color Matters.
http://www.colormatters.com/entercolormatters.html
A resource site created and maintained by J.L. Morton.

Design with Reason.
http://www.runreason.com/
The website for newspaper designer and educator Ron Reason.

The Digital Journalist.
http://digitaljournalist.org/
A multimedia magazine for photojournalism in the digital age.

The Font Bureau.
http://www.fontbureau.com/
An independent type foundry.

Garcia Media.
http://www.mariogarcia.com/
Mario Garcia's information design firm.

Interactive Color Experience.
http://www.poynteronline.org (QuickLink: A2711)
This interactive project on color theory was written by Poynter's Pegie Stark Adam and designed by Anne Conneen.
http://www.nppa.org/
NPPA is dedicated to the advancement of photographic journalism.

News Page Designer.
http://www.newspagedesigner.com/
Visual journalism tips are shared at this website.

Pictures of the Year International.
http://www.poy.org/
The POY International competition is conducted annually to recognize excellence in photojournalism.

Pulitzer Prize Photos.
http://www.newseum.org/pulitzer/
The Newseum has posted examples of Pulitzer Prize winning photographs on their website.

Society for News Design.
http://www.snd.org/
SND is an international professional news design organization.

Society of Publication Designers.
http://wwwspd.org/
SPD addresses the concerns of editorial art directors.

Stanford-Poynter Project.
http://www.poynter.org/ (QuickLink: A1676)
Online news eyetracking research from Poynter and Stanford University, 2000.

Typographic.
http://www.rsub.com/typographic/
The Typographic website "aims to illustrate the depth and import of type."

Visual Edge.
http://www.visualedge.org/
This annual workshop is a joint effort of NPPA and Poynter.

Books And Other Resources:

By Brian Horton.
Brian Horton’s book is based on his own experiences with the Associated Press.

Best of Newspaper Design.
By the Society for News Design.
Baltimore: SND, Annual.
The winners of the Society of News Design’s competition are presented in this annual series.

The Best of Photojournalism.
By the National Press Photographers Association.
NPPA’s yearly retrospective of the best in photojournalism.

Color, Contrast, and Dimension in News Design (Poynter Paper: No. 6).
By Pegie Stark Adam.
St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1995.
A primer on the use of color with dozens of helpful newspaper design tips.

Contemporary Newspaper Design.
By Mario R. Garcia.
Although the 3rd edition was published in 1993, it still offers many important lessons for newspaper designers.

Design 2020.
By the American Press Institute.
Visions of the newspaper of the future presented by 26 leading designers.
Designing with Type.
By James Craig.
*An overview of the field of typography.*

Digital Diagrams.
By Trevor Bourne and Alastair Campbell.
*How to design and present statistical information effectively.*

Eyes on the News.
By Mario R. Garcia and Peggie Stark.
St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1991.
The 1990 Poynter Institute color research EyeTest study is summarized in this book.

By James Glen Stovall.
*An in-depth look at information graphics.*

Information Graphics.
By Robert L. Harris.
*A comprehensive illustrated reference.*

Moment of Impact. (VIDEO)
*A documentary about six Pulitzer Prize winning photographers.*

Moments: The Pulitzer Prize Photographs.
By Hal Buell.
*Examples of prize-winning photographs and the stories of how they were made.*

The Newspaper Designer's Handbook.
By Tim Harrower.
*A practical look at the basics of newspaper design.*

Newspaper Evolutions.
By Mario R. Garcia.
St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1996.
*In this 1996 book Mario Garcia chronicled 16 of his newspaper redesign projects.*

Newspaper Layout and Design: A Team Approach.
By Daryl R. Moen.
*An introduction to the overall context of design in journalism.*

Photojournalism, An Introduction.
By Fred S. Parrish.
*Contemporary and historical examples are included in this overview of photojournalism.*

Photojournalism, The Professionals' Approach.
By Kenneth Kohre and Betsy Brill.
The 20th anniversary edition features case studies and interviews with leading professionals.

Phototrust or Photofiction?
By Thomas H. Wheller.
*Ethics and media imagery in the digital age.*

Picture Editing.
By Tom Ang.
*A guide to the art and discipline of picture editing.*

Publication Design for Editors.
By Robert Bohle.
The author focuses on the relationship between editing and design.
Pure Design.
By Mario R. García.
Practical design solutions and case studies.

Technology & Pagination: Integrating the New into Your Newsroom.
By the Society for News Design and the American Society of Newspaper Editors.
"This detailed report takes editors step by step through pagination, from choosing a vendor to setting agate."

By Christopher R. Harris and Paul Martin Lester.
Harris and Lester's book addresses a wide-range of visual journalism related topics.

LEADERSHIP

Websites:

American Society of Newspaper Editors.
http://www.asne.org/
ASNE is the nation's oldest and largest newspaper editors group.

Associated Press Managing Editors.
http://www.apme.com/
APME is a group of editors whose newspapers are members of the Associated Press.

Edited excerpts from 20 interviews with news-business leaders.

A handbook for reporters, editors, photographers and others on journalistic fairness.

Credibility in Action.
By Carol Nunnellay, APME, 2002.
This report was prepared for the APME National Credibility Roundtables Project.

Diversity Resources.
http://www.asne.org/dioslc/diversity/index.htm
ASNE maintains this collection of diversity materials.

Diversity Toolbox.
http://www.spj.org/diversity_toolbox.asp
Diversity resources from the Society for Professional Journalists.
Do We Check It At the Door?
http://www.namme.org/pdfs/
FinalReporttotheIND.pdf
By Keith Woods.
A McCormick Fellowship Initiative report on media executives of color.

Ethics Codes Collection.
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ASNE has posted these ethics codes on their website.

Freedom Forum.
http://www.freedomforum.org/
“The Freedom Forum is a nonpartisan foundation dedicated to free press, free speech and free spirit for all people.”

Freep Academy.
http://www.freep.com/jobspage/academy/
Newspaper training resources from the Detroit Free Press’ Joe Grimm.

The Great Divide.
A 2002 API and Pew Center for Civic Journalism report on female leadership in U.S. newsrooms.

Journalism Ethics Cases Online.
http://www.journalism.indiana.edu/Ethics/Ethics_cases_from_the_Indiana_University_School_of_Journalism.

Leading Lines.
http://www.poynteronline.org/column.asp?id=34
Coaching and management advice from Poynter’s leadership faculty.

Maynard Institute.
http://www.maynardije.org/
The Institute is dedicated to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in news coverage, staffing and business operations.

Media Management Center.
http://www.mediamanagementcenter.org/
Northwestern University’s media research and education center.

Newspaper Association of America.
http://www.naa.org
NAA focuses on the strategic priorities that affect the newspaper industry.

The Newspaper Credibility Handbook.
http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?id=3886
Michelle McLellan’s 2001 ASNE handbook on newspaper credibility.

Newspaper Training Editors Guide.
A handbook on setting up training programs in newsrooms.

Newsroom Training: Where’s the Investment?
http://www.poynteronline.org/QuickLink: A10841

No Train, No Gain Website.
http://www.notrain-nogain.org/
Newspaper training editors present their favorite exercises and ideas to improve newsroom training.

Reflections on Leadership.
http://www.newsroomleadership.com/
Reflections/
Edward Miller’s archive for his “Reflections on Leadership” essays.
Route 66.

"Newsroom training editors offer 66 steps to greatness."

Top 40.

"Tips and advice to improve and expand newsroom training."

UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc.
http://www.unifyjournalists.org/

"A strategic alliance of journalists of color acting as a force for positive change in the news industry."

Books And Other Resources:

A Call To Leadership.
By the ASNE Leadership Committee.

"A product of the 2000-01 ASNE Leadership Committee, this report offers insights from some of America's top educators, researchers and practitioners of leadership."

Doing Ethics in Journalism. (VIDEO)
St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1994.
The process approach to ethical decision-making is featured in this videotape. Bob Steele anchors the discussion for several of the tape's case studies.

The Effective Editor.
By Foster Davis and Karen E. Dunlap.

How to lead your staff to better writing and better teamwork.

The Elements of Journalism: What Newspapers Should Know and the Public Should Expect.
By Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel.

An important book that synthesizes work from the Committee of Concerned Journalists.

Essential Skills & Values.
By Jill Geisler, editor.
St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 2002.
The first volume in the Poynter Leadership Series of booklets.

Examining Our Credibility: (VIDEO)
By the ASNE Journalism Credibility Project.

"This discussion among well-known editors, thinkers and critics probes journalism credibility."

Examining Our Credibility: Building Reader Trust.
By the ASNE Journalism Credibility Project.

In this report the ASNE Journalism Credibility Project "examines initiatives undertaken by test-site newspapers in the areas of accuracy, connecting with communities and bias and sensational average."

Examining Our Credibility: Building Reader Trust. (VIDEO)
By the ASNE Journalism Credibility Project.

Videotape companion to the ASNE report of the same name.

Examining Our Credibility: Perspectives of the Public and the Press.
By the ASNE Journalism Credibility Project.

"This national survey, undertaken as part of the Journalism Credibility Project, helps editors better understand the fault lines in journalism credibility."
Examining Our Credibility: Perspectives of the Public and the Press. (VIDEO)
By the ASNE Journalism Credibility Project.
*Videotape companion to the ASNE report of the same name.*

Groping for Ethics in Journalism.
By Ron F. Smith.
Iowa State University Press, 1999.
*The author uses hundreds of examples from large and small newsrooms.*

By Elliot D. Cohen.
*A guide to contemporary ethical issues.*

Journalism Values Institute Handbook.
By the ASNE Ethics & Values Committee.
*Editors examined the basic tenets of journalism and developed this 96-page booklet, which explores ways to cover news and relate to readers.*

Journalistic Values, What Do They Mean? (VIDEO)
By the ASNE Ethics & Values Committee.
*The videotape companion to the ASNE values handbook shows journalists and non-journalists discussing journalism values.*

Leading by Example.
By Pam Johnson, editor, and Paul Tash, ASNE Leadership Committee.
*How leaders make a difference in their newsrooms and communities. With 35 stories from across the country about the challenges and the opportunities for leading newspapers today.*

Leaving Readers Behind: The Age of Corporate Newspapering.
By Gene Roberts, editor.
*The essays in this book were originally written for the Project on the State of the American Newspaper.*

Local News Handbook.
By the ASNE Readership Issues Committee.
*Although most editors know local news when they see it, this extensive, hands-on report attempts to define it more completely. Full of research and great concepts—some from outside newspapers—the handbook asks what readers want and what is essential.*

Local News Tool Kit.
By the ASNE Readership Issues Committee.
*A companion to the 1999 Local News Handbook. The Tool Kit is a how-to for broadening, deepening, sharpening and enriching your newspaper’s local report.*

Media Ethics: Issues and Cases.
By Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins.
*Case studies are used to describe the ethical decision-making process.*

The News about the News.
By Leonard Downie, Jr. and Robert G. Kaiser.
*Downie and Kaiser look at the state of journalism and examine the values that drive the business of news gathering.*

News Values: Ideas for an Information Age.
By Jack Fuller.
*Fuller’s book deals with “the underlying public values a newspaper serves and the implications of those values for journalists’ behavior.”*
Newsroom Management.
By Robert H. Giles.
This practical and theoretical book is for students, publishers, editors, and other practitioners.

Profiles in Journalistic Courage.
By Robert H. Giles, Robert W. Snyder and Liss DeLisle.
A collection of historical and contemporary stories about journalistic courage.

Respecting All Cultures.
By Joann Byrd, ASNE Ethics and Values Committee.
"Designed to give journalists practical ethical guidelines in covering news across cultures."

She Says: Women in News. (VIDEO)
By Joan Konner, executive producer.
This documentary examines the role of women in the newsroom.

The Values and Craft of American Journalism.
By Roy Peter Clark and Cole C. Campbell, editors.
These essays from the Poynter Institute cover some of the most important issues facing journalists today.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH

Websites:

AnyWho.
http://www.anywho.com
Find phone numbers, addresses, maps and directions.

Bureau of Justice Statistics.
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJI/
Government statistics about crime and the justice system.

Facts about Newspapers.
http://www.naa.org/info/facts02/
NAA maintains this annual list of statistics about the newspaper industry.

FedStats.
http://www.fedstats.gov/
Statistics from over 100 federal agencies.

FindLaw.
http://www.findlaw.com
Legal resources on the Internet.

First Amendment Handbook.
http://www.rcfp.org/handbook/viewpage.cgi
Published by The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

FirstGov.gov.
http://www.firstgov.gov
The official gateway to online government information.

Healthfinder.gov.
http://www.healthfinder.gov
Links to government and nonprofit health and human services information.

The Journalist's Toolbox.
http://www.journaliststoolbox.com/
Online resources for reporters and editors.
Map Collection (Perry Castaneda Library).
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/
A large map collection at the University of Texas at Austin.

MapQuest.
http://www.mapquest.com
Online maps and travel directions.

Merriam-Webster OnLine.
http://www.m-w.com
Search their dictionary, thesaurus, and other resources.

National Center for Education Statistics.
http://nces.ed.gov/
NCES collects U.S. education data.

Navigator.
This list of links is maintained by Rich Meistrit at The New York Times.

http://www.ibiblio.org/planews/
Resources from news researchers and journalism librarians.

Newspaper Links.
http://www.newspaperlinks.com/
This collection of newspaper links is a service of the Newspaper Association of America.

Power Reporting.
http://www.powerreporting.com/
Online resources for journalists.

Statistics Every Writer Should Know.
http://www.robertniles.com/stats/
“A journalist’s guide to using basic math to understand data and statistical research.”

Thomas.
http://thomas.loc.gov/
Legislative information on the Internet. The Library of Congress maintains this site.

U.S. Census Bureau.
http://www.census.gov/
Population, housing, economic and geographic data.

WhitePages.com.
http://www.whitepages.com/
An online residential and business directory service.

The World Factbook.
http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/Data, maps, and country profiles from the CIA.

Books And Other Resources:

By American Heritage editors.
The latest edition includes 10,000 new words and 4000 illustrations.

The Associated Press Guide to Internet Research and Reporting.
By Frank Bass.
Advice on how to do journalism research on the Internet.

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.
By Norm Goldstein, editor.
AP’s rules on grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation, word usage and more.
Bartlett's Familiar Quotations. 17th ed.
By John Bartlett and Justin Kaplan, editor.
"A collection of passages, phrases, and proverbs traced to their sources in ancient and modern literature."

Chase's Calendar of Events.
By William Chase and Helen Chase.
"The day-by-day directory to special days, weeks and months."

By John Grossman, editor.
"One of the oldest and most respected style manuals available."

By Paul Lagasse, editor.
"The largest one-volume encyclopedia has recently been updated with 1,500 new entries."

Editor & Publisher International Yearbook.
By David Maddux, editor.
New York: Editor & Publisher, Annual.
"Hundreds of thousands of facts about the newspaper industry in a three-volume set."

The Elements of Style. 4th ed.
By William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White.
"The classic reference book on the rules of usage and the principles of composition."

Find It Online. 3rd ed.
By Alan M. Schlein.
"Advice on how to do online research."

The Internet Handbook for Writers, Researchers, and Journalists.
By Mary McGuire, Linda Stilborne, Melinda McAdams and Laurel Hyatt.
"A guide to specialized resources on the Internet."

A Journalist's Guide to Civil Procedure. (VIDEO)
"This video examines the key elements of civil procedure."

"In their video the ABA provides an overview of federal criminal case procedures."

The New York Public Library Desk Reference.
By Paul Fargis, editor.
"Hundreds of frequently asked reference questions."

By Allan M. Siegal and William G. Connolly.
"The official style guide used by the writers and editors of The New York Times."

News & Numbers.
By Victor Cohn and Lewis Cope.
"Information about how to report statistical claims and controversies."

By Sarah Cohen.
"This guide focuses on putting numbers into perspective for stories."
Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. 5th ed.
By Elizabeth Knowles, editor.
*More than 20,000 quotations from more than 3,000 sources.*

Rand McNally Road Atlas.
By Rand McNally.
*Maps for the United States, Canada and Mexico.*

Roget's International Thesaurus. 6th ed.
By Barbara Ann Kipfer, editor.
*This well-known reference book dates back more than 150 years.*

Stedman's Medical Dictionary. 27th ed.
By Maureen Barlow Pugh, editor.
Baltimore: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2000.
*An authoritative medical reference.*

Washington Information Directory.
By Congressional Quarterly.
*Background and contact information about key government officials, agencies and groups.*

Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus.
By Michael Agnes, editor.
*Two popular reference sources have been combined into one book.*

Who's Who in America.
By Fred Marks, editorial director.
*A major source of biographical information.*

World Almanac and Book of Facts.
By Ken Park, editor.
*Quick access to thousands of facts and figures.*
Chapter 9

Newspaper Training Editors Guide

After the landmark "No Train, No Gain" study (described in Chapter 1) was released in 1993, newspaper training editors began holding annual conferences led by The Freedom Forum's Brian Buchanan and, later, Beverly Kees. The core of each conference was sharing ideas, advice and training exercises. Those conferences eventually led to the publication of three reports by the Freedom Forum: "Newspaper Editors Training Guide" in 1998, "Top 40" in 1999 and "Route 66" in 2000.

Because those reports contained so much practical information and so many creative ideas about setting up and maintaining newspaper training programs, they are condensed here, with the permission of The Freedom Forum.

To obtain copies of the original full reports, contact Brian Buchanan at The Freedom Forum, bbuchanan@fac.org

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Newspaper training editors are hard-working, committed, inventive and generous with their ideas.

"There is no other group like the training editors," said Tom Silvestri, director of news synergy and newswrap editor for Media General, Inc. "Where else could you find a group of competitive, analytical people who encourage their colleagues to steal their ideas—actually feel bad if you don't."

So we stole their ideas to bring you this report.

The ideas came from a series of conferences that grew out of the 1992-1993 Freedom Forum survey of American newspaper journalists reported in "No Train, No Gain: Continuing Training for Newspaper Journalists in the 1990s." It was not a happy picture. Nearly all journalists said they wanted training. Only 14 percent said their newsrooms offered training on a regular basis.

Traditional newsroom training was on-the-job and sink-or-swim. Formal training programs were slow to develop, although other businesses were recognizing the importance of regular training to meet a faster-changing world.

Jay Rosen, New York University associate professor of journalism, provided the text for the 1998 gathering of training editors—a talk he had made to a committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. After working with and observing newspaper people for several years, he offered six observations:

1. You have trouble changing. Perhaps my most obvious lesson.
2. You have taught yourselves not to learn. In a variety of interesting ways.
3. You resist challenge from the outside. Having been "resisted" myself, I know what this is like.
4. You decline to challenge yourselves and your elite.
5. You've become a herd of independent minds. A pattern we need to analyze.
6. You're losing the thing you love, which is journalism.

"There's nothing in the Constitution that says journalism must endure. It's entirely possible for the thing as we know it to disappear, even as 'freedom of the press' remains secure. And while that prospect is floated now and again, the weight of it is not, I think, fully appreciated," Rosen said.

A training editor's lot is not an easy one.

To assist editors in meeting some of the goals outlined in "No Train, No Gain," the first training editors conference met in Arlington, Va., in 1994, led by The Freedom Forum's Brian Buchanan. Buchanan also led the 1995 conference in the First Amendment Center in Nashville and the 1996 conference in Oakland. In 1997, the conference moved to The Freedom Forum Pacific Coast Center in
San Francisco, where it has continued to be held each year. The core of each conference has been training editors sharing ideas, advice and training exercises with each other.

The Freedom Forum also launched a list-serv for newspaper training editors so they could swap advice and counsel throughout the year. One of the remarkable things about the group, said Dick Hughes of the Salem Statesman-Journal, is "they are collegial rather than competitive." Like the Internet pioneers who worked almost in isolation, training editors, who usually work alone on training in their newsrooms, create a synergism when they combine forces.

For most training editors, the preparation for the job is a memo from the editor saying: "You are now in charge of the newsroom training program." In the following pages, Jim Clark has pulled together ideas from the conferences to help training editors devise programs that aid the newsroom in achieving its goals and staff members in improving basic skills, learning new ones and preparing for the next steps in their careers. We hope you find the information useful.

**SETTING UP A TRAINING PROGRAM**

There's no magic way to establish a training program, and no formula that will guarantee success. But there are some basics. Successful programs have four basic requirements.

1. **Target**: They advance the goals and mission of the newspaper.

2. **Support**: They have the support of the top editors and budgets. They are built into the structure and the culture of the newsroom.

3. **Transactions**: They focus on creating new training transactions.

4. **Success**: They improve the people, the process and the product. A good program, like a good journalist, constantly grows and learns.

Here's a checklist of the things that fall under those four categories. See how many your newsroom can claim and figure out how to accomplish the rest.

**Target**

_(the vision)_

- Mission statement
- Goals
- Annual plan
- Standards
- Stylebook

**Support**

_(the buy-in)_

- Top editors
- Coordinator
- Best journalists
- Training budget
- Evaluations by employees

**Transactions**

_(the teaching)_

- One-on-one
- Coaching
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Newsletters
- Training libraries
- Brown bags

**Success**

_(the learning)_

- Lifelong learning
- Better newspaper
- Community support
- Fun, prizes
- Staff retention up
- Program that gets better

The aim is not just to offer classes that the local community college can offer, but to create a learning system that delivers results, namely a better paper produced by people who continue to grow.
The keys: Have a target, get support, focus on the teaching and you'll have a good chance of success.

**A 12-STEP PROGRAM**

"Great training programs do more than teach journalists the latest computer codes," said Eric Newton, co-author of "No Train, No Gain," who devised this 12-step program.

"They help us discover the stream of creativity deep inside. Great training encourages leadership, communication, hard work and enthusiasm. When those same qualities are used to establish a training program, its success is guaranteed."

"Leadership, openness, diligence and enthusiasm create great training. So loosen up.
Write a song or a skit. Have a little fun. Tap your own potential."

1. **Get ideas early and often**

What does the staff need to know? What are the newsroom goals for the coming year? What new equipment is coming? And that's just the beginning. Here's the most important part: What do the journalists want to know? The most popular topics are ethics, writing, privacy, libel, management, reporting, editing, computer-assisted reporting, government/politics, freedom of information and the environment. But interests vary from job to job, place to place, person to person. Send out a questionnaire. Do it well in advance, in February, for example, for a seminar series that summer. A 20 percent response on a voluntary questionnaire is good; 50 percent is great. Filling out a form is as much fun as cleaning out the refrigerator. So do something nice for the first person who turns it in.

2. **More research**

Who is doing state-of-the-art work in your region — or in the nation, if money is no object? It's important to find trainers who are not only good at what they do, but real students of the craft. A pecking order that worked for one newspaper with a tight budget: national figures who happen to be in town; regional experts from outside the paper; retired former greats; professors who recently have worked in newsrooms, and in-house experts. It can be a worthwhile exercise for the editor or publisher to give a seminar on the market if nothing else. Poynter, API, IJE, IJE and others are offering more and more traveling training in writing, computers, diversity. Be alert.

3. **Now, design the program**

Make sure your boss supports the plan, and gives you a budget, even if it's only for sodas and cookies. Schedule the seminars in a regular rhythm — no more than one a week, no fewer than one a month. Try to set them up for the same day, same time, same place. Good times are Fridays at lunch, or paydays. Nail a training bulletin board to the wall.

Take sign-ups for all events all the time. Make sure the room is big enough. And cool enough.

4. **Prepare the presenters**

Tell them about your market, your staff, your plans. Send them free newspapers from the day they agree to do the seminar until they tell you to stop. Encourage them to bring detailed handouts. Tip sheets — like "The 12 steps of setting up a training program" — are hoarded. Reading lists are popular. Give your on-staff presenters enough company time to prepare. Distribute some material in advance. The more visual the presentations, the better. The more interactive, the better. Advocate fun.

5. **Advertise**

Promote the seminar-of-the-week with wild, Mac-generated signs on all the newsroom doors. Put the schedule in newsletters and on bulletin boards. Talk about it at the news meetings. If your seminars are voluntary, make sure key people know which ones you hope they will attend.
6. Invite folks from outside the newsroom

Ask some of your production people to come to the photography seminar. Ask the advertising folks to come to the ethics seminar. Invite the newspaper’s circulation managers to the deadline writing seminar. Ask students and professors from local colleges to come to some of your seminars. Invite a few radio and TV folks. Be the hub of a local training network.

7. Go yourself

If you don’t attend seminars, you set a bad example—and miss a chance to learn. You won’t know what was said, what was asked, whether it was a good session. When you go, though, behave yourself. A. Give the speaker an enthusiastic introduction. B. Don’t interrupt the presentation. C. Ask only one question. D. Step out during part of the Q&A so staff members can ask questions when you aren’t there. E. Return to lead a round of applause at the end. In other words, don’t dominate.

8. Tape them

Video is best. Cassettes are next-best. Put the tapes together into a new training library. Assign one person at each seminar—an editorial writer or one of the newspaper’s music or film critics—to write a synopsis of the presentation. Put these blurbs together into a catalogue to advertise your new training library. Add seminar handouts to the library, as well as books, magazines and databases. Find a quiet reading room to put it all in. Promote it ruthlessly. Walk in there from time to time and surprise the studious journalist there with baseball or opera tickets.

9. Ask for critiques

Don’t trust only your trusted advisers. Listen to the staff. Do a closing questionnaire. The results may surprise you. Remember how people felt when thinking about return visits or new presenters. Bring people back by popu-

lar demand. Post the results of the before and after questionnaires. Talk about it at the water cooler.

10. Thank people

Send each presenter a copy of the session video. Thank the staff for attending. Give bonuses to the staff member who attended the most seminars—like a year’s free subscription to America On-Line, where motivated staff members can learn so much they are self-training.

11. Use the new knowledge

Encourage seminar-goers to use what they’ve learned. An example: Give everyone who attended the freedom of information seminar two days within the following month to prepare and file a request for public records. Keep the momentum going. Start in-house awards for good work. Schedule follow-up training seminars. Training is not a oneshot deal.

12. Track the results

It can be hard to measure how seminars help people. That’s why many newspapers don’t do them. Each year, ask people how they have used the information from last year’s seminars. Be aware of subtle changes in quality, morale, leadership and self-confidence. Get some testimonials. Tell people, for example, how many of those public records requests resulted in good stories. Let the staff know how the seminars helped them succeed. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done. Smile, soak it all in and then go back to Step One.
NEWSROOM MANAGERS SURVEY

1. Did you have any management training before becoming a newsroom supervisor?
   YES _ NO _

2. If the answer to Question 1 is yes, what kind of training did you have?

3. Have you had any management training since becoming a newsroom manager?
   YES _ NO _

4. If the answer to Question 3 is yes, what kind of training have you had?

5. How much interest do you have in training and development sessions on the following topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level (check one)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building leadership skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance evaluations</td>
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<td>Problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working as a management team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. How much interest do you have in training in the following technical topics?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Level (check one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Moderate Low None Project story editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing on deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching before writing begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing during writing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo/graphics planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. How often would you like to participate in in-house training/development sessions if they were available?
   Weekly____ Monthly____ Twice a month____ Not interested____

8. When is the best time of day for training for you?
   Mornings____ Afternoons_____ Evenings____

9. What day of the week is the best day for training for you?
   Monday____ Tuesday____ Wednesday____ Thursday____ Friday____ Saturday____ Sunday____

10. As a manager, how often, if ever, have you felt ill-equipped to handle a situation with a subordinate?
    Often____ Seldom____ Sometimes____ Never____

11. Your gender: Male____ Female____

12. How long have you been a manager?
    Under one year____ 1 to 5 years____ 6 to 10 years____ 11 or more____

13. Were you a manager before you came to this paper?
    Yes____ No____

14. What part of being a manager have you found most difficult?

15. Would you be interested in being part of a newsroom managers discussion group, where newsroom supervisors could bounce problems and ideas off each other?
    Yes____ No____

16. What other areas of training would be helpful for you?

17. What other areas of training do you think would be helpful for others in the newsroom?

18. Please feel free to add any additional comments.
TOPICS FOR TRAINING SEMINARS

Before starting a training program, survey staffers to find out what they want.
(please check 10 subjects)

- Writing leads
- Story organization
- Interview techniques
- Confrontational interviews
and crisis interviews
- Phone techniques
- Libel law, plagiarism, privacy, copyright
- Using FOIA
- Understanding the nut graf
- Centerpieces
- What you should know about graphics
- What you should know about photos
- Pitching stories for other sections
- Getting and using quotes
- Deadline awareness and responsibility
- Ethics
- Going off-the-record: why? when? pratfalls
- Developing sources
- Fairness
- Getting the most out of a tagline
- Transitions
- Metaphors
- Writing descriptively
- Carpal tunnel and other typing injuries
- Using the data base
- Taking full advantage of our library
- Getting your stories on the wires
- Working with the news desk
- Career development
- Writing short
- Making the most of your beat
- Generating story ideas
- Attribution
- Covering:
  Politics
  Courts
  Cops
  Environment
- Business
- Sports
- Rewrites
- Accepting good editing
- Understanding the business and production departments
- Team reporting
- Literary devices
- News judgment
- Working the data base
- Self-editing
- Strong verbs
- Excessive words, phrases
- Writing without bias
- Story lengths
- Significant details
- Narrative style
- Writing with the senses
- Taking readers to the scene
- Enriching your vocabulary
- Writing news features
- Elements of feature writing
- Elements of hard news
- Avoiding cliches, stereotypes
- Profiles
- A touch of humor
- Writing a column
- Making technical things clear
- How to write reviews
- Specialty writing
- How to package a story/idea
- OTHER [be specific]

THE PROPOSAL

To sell the program, you need a training proposal. Here is a sample:

Recommendation

Establish a newsroom education program, with emphasis on developing journalism skills, expertise in key subjects and knowledge about our readers.
What we want to achieve
Continuous learning as a newsroom ethic, more front-line expertise, opportunities for people to develop.

What we'll do
+ Create a full-time newsroom trainer to teach and coordinate education programs.
+ Ensure that the trainer is an accomplished journalist, teacher and administrator.
+ Develop a newsroom orientation program that includes training on teamwork, the newspaper's mission, reader needs and interests, and regional and community knowledge.
+ Require all full-time professionals to attend at least one continuing-education program each year.
+ Establish training programs linked to each of the newsroom's goals for the year.
+ Set annual training goals for individuals and teams.
+ Establish a culture of feedback and critiques, both written and informal.

Transition training
To ensure a smooth transition to our new culture, newsroom people will need training in teamwork, coaching, leadership and dealing with change. That training will include the following:
• A seminar for everyone on the dynamics and pressures of change, how to ease the transition.
• Start-up training for top-level managers in teamwork, coaching, leadership and reader awareness.
• Education for team leaders and design coordinators on the integration of visual and verbal content.
• A seminar for team leaders on coaching.
• Training for pilot teams.
• Training for people in the reader- and customer-service department.

THE QUESTIONS
After the program has been sold to management, it's just as important to sell it to the staff. Their support is vital. Here are some questions you can anticipate. Some papers have distributed memos answering the questions in advance.

• Why are we starting a training program?
• Who is it for?
• Is this some sort of remedial thing for people who are weak or have problems in certain areas?
• How many seminars are being offered?
• Who determined what the seminars would be?
• When do the sessions start?
• How were instructors chosen?
• Most of us know the instructors. Won't that get boring?
• Are the seminars elective or mandatory?
• How often will seminars be offered and when?
• What if I have a task to do at the time of my seminar?
• Who might be in a seminar with me?
• So, just what can I expect from a typical seminar?
• How do I sign up?
• How will I know if I got into the sessions I wanted?
• How will you rate the success of the seminar?

PLANNING A TRAINING SESSION
There's no way to guarantee that your training session will be a success, but here are some basics that will put it on the right track.

1. Outline the course content.
2. State the overall goal of the course and relate it to journalism. Use examples that have meaning for the people in the current class.
3. Give examples of how each skill learned is useful to journalists.
4. If there are key concepts that must be learned, make sure they are repeated several times during the session.
5. Interact by asking questions.
6. Have exercises for staffers to do.
7. Give examples of how other staffers are using the information in their jobs.
8. Provide sources for further independent learning.
9. Provide a handout that can be used for future reference.
Follow up after the session to see if staffers are using the information.

TRaining Seminar Checklist
Seminar Title/Date ____________

- Reserve conference room
- Arrange for refreshments
- Select/confirm presenters
- Meet in advance with presenters
- Send out electronic notices
- Send out voicemail notices
- Post notices on newsroom bulletin boards
- FAX/distribute seminar notices to bureaus
- Create list of seminar applicants
- Send confirmation notices to applicants
- Send advance query to applicants
- Arrange audio visual aids
- Research/copy/distribute supporting materials
- Prepare feedback form
- Distribute feedback form at end of training session
- Evaluate and distribute feedback
- Thank you notes to presenters

ROUTE 66

The 66 best ideas we’ve heard for getting your training program on the road.

1. Survey the staff. Find out what the folks in the newsroom want to learn. Make the survey as broad as possible. Then, try to meet all the needs.
2. Roll the cameras. Make sure to videotape all speakers for future use. You will build a library of great speakers.
3. Share the knowledge. When a staffer goes to a seminar, workshop or conference, invite him/her to give a brown-bag talk to staffers. Also, duplicate any handouts and share them with others.
4. Get it on tape. Make audio tapes of speakers to give to staffers. They are great for playing in the car while out on stories.
5. Start a library. Start a library of writers and editors. You can start by asking for contributions from staffers. Put it in the middle of the newsroom so that everyone can use it.
6. Read newsletters. Get on the mailing list for newspaper newsletters. They provide a stream of great ideas. The Freedom Forum can provide more information.
7. Look for skills at home. Conduct a skills assessment of the staff. It’s a way to find a wealth of talented teachers for newsroom training.
8. Get a commitment. Ask managers to commit a certain number of hours for newsroom training. See it as a form of tithing for newsroom training.
9. Hunting for gerunds. Try a grammar scavenger hunt. Create teams from the copy desk and launch a scavenger hunt to find the correct answers to grammar problems. Give prizes to the winning team.
10. Building teamwork. Create teams to create a front-page layout. Combine photographers, reporters, line editors and copy editors to design a front page. It shows everyone how tough the job is, the balance required to turn out a good page and the art requirements. Try it with all departments.
11. Create a newspaper. Using a wide range of staffers, come up with a new newspaper. Decide what you would cover, how extensive the coverage would be and the play of stories. Then compare it with what you are doing now and see how coverage could be improved.
12. Give copy editors a turn. A session for reporters by copy editors. Let the copy editors discuss the problems they see most frequently and how reporters can prevent them. It also gives the reporters a chance to learn some of the problems of the copy desk.
13. Ethics of photo editing. Conduct a seminar on the ethics of editing photographs in the computer age. Make sure it is open to all staffers to let everyone know what is permissible and what is not.

14. Pass the pop corn. One of the best ways to draw staffers is to offer entertainment. Newspapers have found that showing clips from newspaper movies (The Front Page, All the President’s Men) not only entertains but gives a great starting point for discussions on newspaper ethics and rules of coverage.

15. What are the rules here? At nearly all newspapers, reporters and editors believe there are both written and unwritten rules about what gets covered, what doesn’t get covered and how it gets covered. Have top editors meet with staffers to set the record straight.

16. Not that mistake again! The world’s greatest errors. Copy desk staffers talk with reporters and line editors about the grammar and style mistakes they see time after time.

17. Learn a new language. Have an expert in body language meet with reporters and editors. Usually the police department has someone who is good at this, or a psychologist.

18. My mother reads my stories. Of course everyone is reading your story. Well, perhaps not. Have the marketing department conduct a session for staffers on who is reading, what they are reading and what they want.

19. Here’s the story. Editors can turn off reporters before the reporting begins by dictating what the story should be. Hold a seminar for editors on how to provide initial direction for reporters.

20. That’s not my job. Many reporters believe that the graphics and art to accompany stories magically appear. Hold a session on how reporters can help artists and photographers and turn out a great package.

21. Getting organized. Editors discuss how to stay focused while reporting and writing the story.

22. How do you turn this thing on? Too often reporters and editors are assigned a computer terminal and not given any training. Make sure they know how it works.

23. That job looks easy. Let staffers spend a day or two working in another area of the newspaper. It can be within editorial, or a totally separate area. Spending a night putting plates on a press, or riding on a circulation truck will give any reporter or editor a new perspective.

24. Taking a trip. Why not write a piece for the travel section. Newspapers have travel sections and they always need copy. A brown bag lunch by the travel editor may just provide the encouragement for some great stories.

25. Number crunching. The world of high finance is a mystery to most reporters and editors. Sessions are offered on reading financial statements, figuring out government budgets and obligation bonds.

26. It’s in there somewhere. Searching the Internet to make your story better. How to find what you really need and fast. A good course will include explanations of user groups, search terms, available directories and ways to figure out the reliability of what you are reading.

27. Computer-assisted reporting. There’s lots of information on the computer; the trick is finding it. Most newspapers divide this into two courses: beginning and advanced. Topics include finding people, downloading and searching databases.

28. Spreadsheets [Excel] for beat reporters. Setting up and using spreadsheets isn’t just for projects anymore. The course can show how to use spreadsheets to organize notes and sources in addition to math-related functions.

29. Asking for FOIA material. Starting with the form letter and including what kinds of things to ask for. The course includes how to handle requests for computer-generated data.

30. Quark. An intensive introduction to this advanced graphics program.

31. Adobe Photoshop. An introduction to show you how it can help you.

32. Introduction to Bloomberg. Find out how to use the Bloomberg computer in preparing stories.
33. Story budgeting. A course designed for editors. Learn how to prepare budgets, calculate newswise space and package stories, graphics and photos.

34. Basic Old Math. If percentages confuse you and any math more advanced confounds you, you need a review of basic math. Includes averaging [how to figure batting averages], median and mean numbers.

35. Introduction to Internet and Cyberspace. An introduction to e-mail, gopher, mailing lists and the World Wide Web. Plus some special web sites just for journalists.

36. Writing about music. If you are interested in writing music reviews, or just in knowing more about the subject, this course is for you. The course will examine good music writing and the various music genres.

37. Cultivating and keeping sources. How to create and maintain a source bank. Plus tips on keeping sources on your side and the right way and the wrong way to maintain solid contacts on your beat.


39. Planning and editing projects. Basic issues involved in doing both short-term and long-term projects. The session begins with turning daily stories into in-depth reports and includes a discussion of planning and scheduling major projects.

40. Coaching. Starting with a discussion of how to work with people, the course includes getting and giving honest feedback and how to motivate people.

41. Probing financial institutions. Designed to provide an overview of public and other records dealing with financial institutions. The course shows who has the information and how to get it.

42. Everything you wanted to know about guns. A local police official will explain how guns work and demonstrate their power. Also a detailed explanation of terms involving guns. The course is held at a local shooting range.

43. Municipal finance. How to read municipal budgets, a bond prospectus and a look at key players in municipal finance.

44. Introduction to public records. What is out there and what is the law about availability. Examines both state and federal open records laws.

45. The market tour. A three-hour tour of the area looking at the area from a business perspective. The tour includes large companies, shopping centers, sites of future development and a discussion of what is likely to happen. Led by someone from the marketing department.

46. The neighborhood tour. A bus tour of the city. Make sure reporters know every area of the city, whether it's part of their beat or not. Have someone from the local historical society lead the way. The tour is especially valuable for copy desk folks who may be called upon to write about an area in a cutline or headline.

47. Turn over a new Leaf. An introduction to using the Leaf photo system. Designed for non-photo types who work with photographs.

48. Libel. A local attorney specializing in libel discusses the current status of the law. All newspapers it is part of the orientation process for reporters and editors.

49. Explanatory writing. How to deal with stories that are long and complicated. Write stories to hold readers until the end.

50. Narrative writing on deadline. Don't let a daily deadline stop you from being a great storyteller. How to create vivid scenes, write compelling dialogue and created provocative characters.

51. Time management. It's crucial for those who need to get far too much done in the day. How to juggle a dozen things and stay on top of your job while meeting deadlines and keeping your desk from being cited by the health department.

52. Myers Briggs. How you like to look at things and how you like to go about making decisions help determine who you are. Knowing your preferences can help you understand your strengths. The course discusses personality differences and how people interact.
53. The visual journalist. Photographs should not mirror the story, but should enhance and provide an added dimension for the story. Photographers discuss how to look at the story through their eyes.

54. Performance reviews. What they are, why we need them and how to do them. Vital for new managers.

55. Spend the day as a photographer. Check out the radical changes in news photography by working with a photographer for a day. And you can learn how the photographers view reporters and editors.

56. Finding experts on the Internet. A look at some of the more popular sources of information including ProNet, [www.pronet.com] which provides sources from academia and Ask an Expert [www.askanexpert.com/askanexpert] with information from both academia and business. It's designed to show reporters and editors how to find fast, reliable information.

57. Horror stories. A roundtable discussion of the worse mistakes senior reporters have made and what they have learned from them. A good program for young journalists.

58. Covering a disaster. Is the newsroom prepared for the once-in-a-lifetime storm? A plane crash, violent weather or fire could send the paper reeling. Have top editors discuss their plans for disaster coverage and how it will affect the staff.

59. Telephone interviewing. It's becoming more commonplace. How do you prepare for a telephone interview and get the most out of it.

60. Profile writing. A workshop on how to research and write the perfect profile.

61. How I wrote the story. Brown-bag luncheons with reporters explaining how they wrote major stories.

62. Local history/newspaper history. Have someone from the local historical society and someone from the newspaper discuss the history of the area and the newspaper. You should be amazed at how little staffers know about the background of their city and newspaper.

63. Living with your laptop. How to make sure reporters know how to use laptops on the road, communicate effectively with the office and call up information.

64. How to shop for a computer. Answer staffers' questions about buying, maintaining and upgrading computers.

65. Check with the editorial board. It's usually the editorial board that draws the big names: The governor, the senator, the bank president. Coordinate with the editorial page editor to see if any of them can stick around to do a brown-bag session with the staff.

66. Get plenty of feedback. Make sure you ask staffers and managers for their ideas for new sessions and thoughts on past sessions.

SETTING UP BROWN BAGS

1. Start small. Hold one luncheon and then step back and evaluate the results.

2. Pick a time and place that is convenient for the most staffers.

3. Decide what the company will provide. There are no rules. Some papers provide a full lunch, others provide just beverages, some charge a reduced fee for a lunch and others provide nothing.

4. Decide on a length and stick to it. If the program drags, or runs longer than scheduled, reporters will start to leave.

5. Ask the staff for ideas for brown-bag sessions. Check the daily newspaper for interesting people and stories, then consider if they could be turned into brown bag luncheons.

6. Check the staff for experts. A reporter who has published a book can be a great source for a brown bag on getting published. Someone who has been to a conference or seminar can do a debriefing for the staff.

7. Promote, promote, promote. Make sure everybody knows about the brown bag. Send flyers to everyone, post notices in the newsroom and use the electronic messaging system. Then, do it all again. On brown-bag day, talk it up in the newsroom.
8. Make sure the bureaus are included. It's tougher for bureau staffers to attend, so make it as easy as possible for them. See if there are days when bureau staffers are going to be in the main office for another meeting.

9. Some sessions will draw, others won't. Don't worry about it. Do make sure that key managers attend. Their presence will help draw others.

10. Mix up the sessions. Try a field trip.
   Change the time. To help draw people to a session on math, one newspaper gave away inexpensive calculators.

11. Make audio and video tapes of all sessions.

12. Don't forget programs for those working at night. Try to hold some late afternoon sessions to catch folk coming to work.

BROWN-BAG IDEAS THAT WORK

Here they are, two dozen road-tested brown bag lunch programs.

1. Build your memory.
2. Newspapers and survey research methods.
3. Publish your book (using staffers to talk about their experiences).
4. Using the Better Business Bureau to find story ideas.
5. Reaching younger readers.
7. The state's United States senator or congressman on what is happening in Washington.
10. Math for the ignorant.
11. Stress management.
12. Page one decision-making.
15. Ethics and journalism.
16. High school students talk about what they want from the newspaper.
17. How to use electronic databases.
18. Lunch with the editor.
19. Lunch with the publisher.

21. Meeting with representatives of ethnic communities.
22. Open luncheon with the summer interns.

TRAINING: ONE PAPER'S STORY

By Steven Smith

Steven A. Smith, then editor of The Gazette in Colorado Springs, Colo., delivered the opening remarks at the 1998 Training Editors Conference at The Freedom Forum Pacific Coast Center.

This summer I celebrate 25 years as a news professional. I began my career at the end of the hot lead/hot type era and learned the craft from editors whose concept of training and development grew out of their World War II military experience.

My first managing editor was an ex-Marine, a veteran of Iwo Jima and a half-dozen other South Pacific campaigns. In my first months on the job, his training goals were simple — learn the language of journalism — all the F words, D words, S words and other words I don’t even want to initialize — and the practice of journalism — as in how to duck out of the way of a lead spike hurled in your general direction by a senior editor trying to get your attention.

In the classic Marine tradition, he’d declare that any wet-behind-the-ears reporter who couldn’t duck didn’t deserve to be in the business.

As to the actual practice of daily, mass-market journalism, you were expected to figure that out on your own, sucking up what you could from your colleagues, learning by doing and learning by making mistakes — as long as you never repeated the same mistake twice.

I’d like to say that the “you’re-on-your-own-kid, don’t-screw-up” era is long over.

But in the last five or six years, as I’ve crisscrossed the country, consulting and doing training of my own, I’ve found countless newsrooms where the learning experience hasn’t
changed all that much. Apparently it doesn’t take an ex-Marine drill sergeant to act like one.

That’s why it’s so heartening to be with this group tonight. I know I’m preaching to the choir when I say that considered, measured, well-executed training programs are the key to professional development in the 90s and beyond — almost certainly the key to any industry’s survival as well.

Tonight, I’m going to tell you about The Gazette’s cultural revolution. Think of it as an after-dinner case study in how we applied certain training and development principles to the task of blowing up and rebuilding a traditional metro newsroom.

I present this as a case study rather than as a success story because it would be arrogant of me to claim that we’ve been successful in all that we’ve attempted. We’re a better paper today than we were in 1995, but we’re not a great paper — yet. I very much think of us as a work in progress.

Some of what we’ve done may be of use to you. Some of what we’ve done should not be tried anywhere else as it certainly did us no good. Bottom line, what we’ve done in Colorado Springs, what works for us, may not work for you. Every newsroom has to be built around the particular — maybe peculiar strengths and weaknesses of the paper and of the community it serves.

My goal in Colorado Springs was to move the newsroom from a traditional, hierarchical, white-male-dominated, somewhat sleepy culture to a vibrant civic culture. Our success in making that transformation is measured on the page — by our ability to produce more compelling, relevant, thoughtful and authoritative journalism every day in every department.

The essential goal is to produce a paper, cover-to-cover, that more effectively reflects life in our community in all of its wholeness. And we wanted to create a newsroom culture that would help us achieve that goal.

Here’s how we went about developing our civic culture.

**Step 1: Really something that I didn’t do — a trap far too many new editors fall into. I did not go to war against the old culture. The Gazette may not have been my kind of paper. But its hard working professionals deserved better than a new editor telling them their work was crap.**

My time working in Knight-Ridder newsrooms taught me that you begin this long and laborious process by discovering the good things, building on those, while cutting away at the negatives. Reinforce the new direction, but never insult the past.

**Step 2: A cultural inventory.** We surveyed the newsroom with a written instrument, seeking to understand the existing culture, especially looking at ways we communicated, ways we learned, ways we reinforced or discouraged.

The survey was followed up by personal interviews, conducted by an outside consultant, involving about 50 percent of the news staff. The cultural profile that emerged helped us focus our early efforts on the forest fire issues:

- Communication — or the lack of, between reporters and editors, between departments, between copy editors and everyone else.
- Decision-making — which was closed to all but a handful of newsroom priests.

**Step 3: A re-examination of the foundation of our journalistic enterprise.** We needed to determine exactly what we should be already, right now. Out of that process came the “What we are” list, posted throughout the newsroom. This is what the list says:

**Every day we are:**

- Aggressive in our pursuit of news. First and foremost, we are a daily newspaper.
- A watchdog of government and public institutions, a champion for open records and open meetings.
- The essential provider of information for citizens of Colorado Springs, Central and Southern Colorado.
get younger voices to the table at the time when we're framing the day's news.

We blew up the hierarchy, flattened the organization and diversified the management team.

Step 6: We developed a language to describe the culture we wanted to create and the kind of journalism we wanted to produce. With the help of The Harwood Group, we created a handbook for all newsroom staff that we could use on deadline to transform our on-the-page journalism. The handbook includes sections on story framing, civic conversations, third-place reporting, open-ended interviewing and so on.

Step 7: We changed the reward system. Our "how did we do today" standards and aspirations created new criteria for Page 1 and section front stories. As the criteria for making Page 1 changed, reporters and editors began to produce stories that were new and different.

We set up a monthly newsroom reward program - certificates and cash for up to 20 newsroom associates in categories ranging from best breaking news story to best failed experiment. The awards are presented at a monthly staff-wide meeting amid much hoopla and applause. And, of course, we changed our performance appraisal and compensation policies and procedures to encourage quality work within the new culture.

Step 8: We physically remodeled the newsroom, lowering barriers between individuals and departments, creating casual meeting areas, opening up windows and easing movement between work areas. Our goal was to facilitate and encourage little meetings, casual conversations between colleagues who just happened to be in the vicinity when something interesting was happening.

Step 9: We set up a "fun" committee charged with making sure newsroom life had its lighter moments. We put toys on the huddle table. The Slinky was my contribution. We held a sock hop around the news desk - dubbed the "Death Star" because of its dominating presence in the newsroom. During a particularly stress-filled period, we had the Humane Society bring by its traveling puppy-mobile.
Now, there is a big challenge for training managers - learn how to teach fun.

Step 10: We changed our hiring practices and procedures, making sure that new hires, especially young journalists, understood the culture they were trying to join. The hiring interview, for me, at least, is more of a conversation as I try to determine the applicant’s ability to cope with change and ambiguity.

Step 11: We played hardball with the stragglers. After two years, we told those who simply couldn’t move forward that the time had come to fish or cut bait. We weren’t going to set up tables in the back of the room for people who wanted to play the old way of doing business. While our cultural transformation was and is certainly not complete (and never will be), we were far enough removed from the sleepy old days to insist that everyone come aboard or rethink their place in our newsroom. Some rethought themselves to other newspapers where they’ll almost certainly be happier.

Now some of you may be wondering why I’ve bothered to recite these 11 steps, some of which may seem pretty far removed from the topic of training and development. But, from my perspective, this is all about training.

The challenge in contemporary newspapering is teaching our newsrooms at an institutional level how to produce a newspaper that is more compelling and relevant than ever before - to develop the capacity within the room to produce such a newspaper.

It is no longer enough for the training and development managers to think in terms of teaching discrete journalistic skills. There is a gestalt here that has to be recognized.

Training and development managers, I believe, need to see the big picture. In addition to teaching fine writing and quality editing, they need to understand how to teach innovation and experimentation and flexibility, and communication and team building and quality hiring practices and so on down the list.

And they need to learn ways to explain, foster and reinforce the powerful values that separate journalism from what [New York University Professor] Jay Rosen describes as “practitioners of media.”

And in newsrooms where the commitment to change is lukewarm, it may be the training editor who is the essential catalyst for change - the editor who makes the case for and then teaches others how to turn up the heat. Here are a few conclusions I’ve drawn in the last few years about training and development. I hope they are not all old news for you.

• **First**, even if a news organization has a training editor or coordinator, training and development is everybody’s responsibility. Nearly everyone in the newsroom has some bit of expertise worth sharing. At The Gazette, we encourage informal writing support groups, casual editing teams and veteran-rookie mentoring relationships. People who are blessed with the opportunity to experience special training - a trip to Poynter or API, for example - are expected to share their newfound knowledge with the room in seminars and brownbags.

• **Second**, while training must embody topics other than the craft issues of writing and editing, you have to start there. I don’t need to tell you that all of our colleagues, but younger journalists in general, are too often woefully short on some of the most basic skills.

• **Third**, the training has to have some connection - meaningful connection - to readers. In our newsroom, conversations with readers are critical to our progress at every step. And through a program called “ombud” by the staff, everyone in the room is required to speak with readers on a regular basis. It sounds glib, but readers can be among our best training partners.

They’ll tell you what they want and what they need - and what you need to do that you’re not doing. Training that leaves out readers - their interests and needs - is, potentially, irrelevant. How many of you have development programs or exercises that include face-time with readers?

• **Fourth**, training has to be ongoing and programmatic. We do journalism every day, 365 days a year, and we do our journalism around a set of firm copy flow procedures and deadlines. Training needs to be pursued with equal rigor. Spot training here and there won’t cut it.
* Fifth, training needs to be in-house. I love sending people to the Cadillac seminars – the Pointers, API and Peers. But some of that big-conference money can go a lot further spent on effective in-house programs. At The Gazette, we have a building-wide training program called GTU (Gazette Training University) that offers everything from basic skills coaching to lessons in meeting facilitation to Toastmasters.

* Sixth, we have to develop and teach processes for revolutionary innovation. Too much of our inter-departmental team-based product development work – so common in our newsrooms today – produces only modest, incremental improvement. We need to take a lesson from the hi-tech world and create processes that produce real, transformational innovation.

* Seventh, we have to develop a commitment to continuous learning, for all our newsroom colleagues as well as a short-course sensibility for new employees who have to catch up with everyone else very quickly.

* Eighth and last, we have to learn how to teach the intangibles – attitude, flexibility, an appreciation for ambivalence and fog. Most important, we have to train a staff to be comfortable with ceaseless, rapid and discomfiting change.

In describing how we went about pushing cultural change in The Gazette newsroom, I have not mentioned that we carved out of our staff – utilizing a reporter FTE – a full-time training and development editor. It was a gamble for a paper our size. But Kathryn Soksa, who has filled that role, has been instrumental in moving us forward. I wanted to both recognize her, by name, and also recognize the value of such a position, especially in a mid-size to smaller newsroom where training has to be continuous.

Let me close with this last personal thought and observation. Like you, I’ve gone through the tough times of the late 1980s and early 1990s. I went through my period of depression and angst. But I got tired of the endless negativity, the pessimism and the doubt.

I reached a point in the mid-1990s where it was time get past that or time to get out. I stayed. And, as was the case with so many editors working in the civic journalism/newsroom change arena, I abandoned the can’t-do attitude in favor of a why-not attitude.

I followed Columbia University J-professor Jim Carey’s advice – bring back the spirit of experimentation and innovation, do the unexpected, teach for the future and have fun.

Throw out the templates, Carey says, encourage risk, eliminate fear and innovate.

So this is your challenge – train for optimism, foster enthusiasm and teach against negativity.

Develop a capacity in people for thinking about what we do and why we do it in a new way. Take some of that back to your newsrooms and you’ll have a powerful force behind your training and development efforts.

Will that produce a great American newspaper? You tell me.
Newspaper training editors present their favorite exercises and ideas, with tips and advice to improve and expand newsroom training.

1. The Name Game
by Rosalie Steiner, The Stamford Advocate
rsteiner@yahoo.com

As I prepare a workshop, I try to number the topics I’ll be working with, and use that number in announcing the session: “Ten Tips for Successful Headlines,” or “Four Essential Components of Feature Captions,” or “Eight Steps to Brighten a Dull Story.” It gives staffers the sense that they will come away with concrete ideas, rather than a fuzzy discussion.

2. I’m Going to Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter
by John Wicklein, writing and editing coach
jwicklein@erols.com

Often, local reporters think the Freedom of Information Act can be used only on national stories and don’t realize that, in the best of circumstances, it can prove to be a gold mine for digging out information on local corporations or local branches of federal agencies. Have an FOIA expert on your staff hold a seminar for community reporters to explain the process and pitfalls of filing a FOIA request. Each reporter should be required to file three FOIA requests for information on a story on which they have a lead.

3. Maybe I’m Amazed
by Nancy Conner, St. Paul Pioneer Press
nconner@pioneerpress.com

We offer a full-day training program for new and veteran employees from all departments to help them understand the complex process involved in generating news and advertising content and producing the daily newspaper. The sessions include a plant tour, lunch with the publisher and division directors, and a look at advertising, marketing, production and circulation.

4. Time Is on My Side
by Sue Burzynski, The Detroit News
sburzynski@demain.lcps.com

Hold a one-hour brainstorming session in time management for newsroom supervisors. Ask them to talk about how they spend their days. Each is asked to keep a time log. The result: We started meetings on time, rather than waiting for the tardy few. Time limits were set on meetings to keep people from digressing. We also scheduled administrative days for editors to do everything from reviews to touring a beat coverage area with a reporter.

5. I’ve Been Searchin’ So Long
by Carl Schierhorn, Kent State University
cschierh@kent.edu

Here are eight Web sites every reporter should know:
1. www.555-1212.com. It's a reverse phone directory, area code finder and links to maps of any address you find.
8. www.mapquest.com can provide maps and directions to just about anywhere.

6. You Showed Me
by Jane Harrigan, University of New Hampshire
janeh@hopper.unh.edu

As you read the paper, cut out the copy-editing errors you see in grammar, accuracy, spelling, punctuation and style. After you've done this for a while, you'll notice that the paper is not actually making a zillion errors, but, rather, making the same five or 10 types of errors over and over. Sort them by type of error, then meet with staffers to discuss them.

7. The Twist
by Ted Olese, Utah State University
tcase@cc.usu.edu

Challenge good writers by having them do something different. Have the music writer cover a baseball game, or let the reporter who covers schools cover a football game. The idea is to get reporters out of their comfort zone and out of a rut.

8. The Same Old Song
by Kate Long, The Charleston Gazette, N.C.
kate_long@home.com

Be on the lookout for hidden assumptions that keep reporters from doing their best work. Talk to reporters to make sure they aren't harboring any of these assumptions:
1. "They" want me to do it this way.
2. You can't do that kind of story.
3. This is how you're supposed to write this kind of story.
4. Storytelling is only for feature stories.
5. I have to stick to what happened at the meeting, so it's bound to be boring.
6. If I put a person in at the top, people are in the story.
7. I'd like to write that way, but they will take it out.
8. If I don't turn out a story a day, they'll think I'm not writing enough stuff.
9. I should have a style, so I'm trying to have one.
10. I have to stick with the original story idea, even if it doesn't fit, because it's on the budget that way.

9. A Thousand Stars
by Joe Grimm, Detroit Free Press
grimm@freepress.com

The Free Press holds an annual Festival of Copy Editing. The weeklong conference runs from noon to 4 p.m. each day, with three sessions each day. The topics included:
1. Power journalism: How do we hit home with readers? How do we preserve and enhance creativity?
2. Alternatives: How do other newspapers edit?
3. The Net: Verifying the accuracy and relevance of online sources.
5. Fresh headlines: How can they be accurate and lively?
6. Better captions: Lots of tips on a craft whose potential often goes unfulfilled.
7. Stress? A discussion of pressure and perfectionism vs. being human.
10. Reach Out, I'll be There
by Arlene Morgan, The Philadelphia Inquirer
amorgan@phillynews.com

Getting in touch with the readers is always difficult. Here are some ideas:

1. Get your staff out. How often do your editors — everyone from the top editor to copy editors and reporters — get the chance to see the public in their own environment, no strings attached? Visit educational, civic, religious, arts and government leaders at work.

2. Create a speakers' bureau. Offer a lineup of reporters, photographers, artists and editors to speak to local groups. Post the list online and let the organizations pick their own speakers.

3. Tours of the newsroom and printing plant. An open door policy for anyone who wants to visit the newsroom and the printing plant. Tours include a video on producing the paper and history of the paper.

4. Let people attend news meetings to see the decision-making process.

5. On the radio. Find venues to get your staff on drive-in morning radio shows. Develop a relationship with local NPR talk shows by sending the news director a list of newspaper beat experts.

6. Teaching the student. Hold journalism workshops for high school and middle school journalism students and don't forget their teachers.

11. Try It Baby
by Ana Estela de Souza Pinto, Folha de Sao Paulo
anaestela@folhasp.com.br

Hold layout training sessions for copy editors. The sessions include typography, color and design and examples of good and bad pages. Then, the editors are given pictures and text, and asked to design pages.

12. Help!
by Bill Ruberry, Richmond Times-Dispatch
wruberry@timesdispatch.com

Create a one-stop Internet page with links to anything reporters and editors might need.

The Times-Dispatch site contains a list of staffers, maps of the building, job postings, staff news, dictionaries, encyclopedias, stylebooks and beat resources.

13. Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah, Here I am at Camp Granada
by Debbie Wolfe, St. Petersburg Times
dpwolfe@sptimes.com

Create a five-day camp for computer training. Campers have to go through a stiff admission process, including writing a letter stating why they want to attend and how it will benefit their work. Campers can choose three, four or five days. Topics covered in the camp include searching techniques, evaluating electronic information, spreadsheets, database design and electronic data requests.

14. Dream A Little Dream
by Charles Kelly, The Arizona Republic
pulpn0ir22@msn.com

Good writing comes from the right state of mind. Getting in the right frame of mind is vital. Try relaxing your mind by sitting in your chair and letting your eyeballs roll back so that you are looking slightly upward. Sounds funny, but it works. Or try monotonous physical activity, such as tapping a pencil, or rocking back and forth in your chair.

15. I Heard It Through the Grapevine
by Jennifer Small, San Antonio Express-News
jsmall@express-news.net

Create an online site to show how reporters use the Internet to get stories. The site contains a picture of the reporter, a copy of the story and an explanation of how the Internet was used. For example, reporter Kate Hunger used the homepage of "Dr. Driving" for a story about road rage, and reporters John Todesco and Jennifer Walsh used Lexis-Nexis Public Records to track down airplane information for a story about an airplane crash.
16. Tunnel of Love
by Walter Johns, Houston Chronicle
waltjohns@chron.com

The paper has cut down its cases of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome with extensive ergonomics training. The paper holds classes a couple of times a year for editorial staff members, and created an ergonomics committee to do workstation evaluations and corrections. Cases dropped from 26 in 1993 to 5 in 1998.

17. It Takes Two, Baby
by Dick Hughes, Statesman Journal, Salem, Oregon
dhughes@statesmanjournal.com

All staffers are required to complete at least two, one-hour training sessions each quarter to achieve a satisfactory rating on the training portion of their annual review. To keep track, editors created a training notebook that reporters use to sign up. At the same time, the paper created 20-minute training sessions for those who complain they don't have time for training.

18. We've Only Just Begun
by Janie Nelson, Tallahassee Democrat
jnelson@tall.com

The paper had some beginning copy editors who needed help. The answer was two daily grammar classes—one for assigning editors, the other for copy editors. At the same time, the managing editor posted a “Grammar Index” on his window to rate the day’s performance. The index was marked: Elated, Not Bad, Needs Work and Depressed.

19. Downtown
by Paul Salsini, writing and editing coach
74044.1351@compuserve.com

Newcomers are often expected to know the city as if they were lifelong residents. The Milwaukee Journal set aside a day for new staffers to drive around the city. They were given a map with seven different spots marked. The staffers had to go to each spot. The paper also brought in a former mayor to talk about the history of the town.

20. The Rain, The Park and Other Things
by Beverly Dominick, The State, Columbia, S.C.
bdominick@thestate.com

New staffers are told to purchase a map of Columbia at the Capital City News Stand and locate/do 15 of the following 18 items, and return with proof. Staffers have six weeks to finish the assignment.

1. A snapshot of yourself at the carousel at Columbiana Center.
2. A ticket stub from the State Museum.
3. What is the first image you see when you access “TheState.com” web site?
4. What section of the South Carolina State Code spells out the penalty for failing to transfer an out of state driver's license?
5. A snapshot of yourself at the State Capital.
6. A brochure from the Cultural Council of Richland & Lexington Counties.
7. A postcard from the Riverbanks Zoo/Botanical Gardens.
8. A two-pound bag of milled flour from Adlum Flour.
9. A snapshot of you with a subscriber holding up a copy of The State.
10. A token from Frankie's Fun Park.
11. Access the Richland County Public Library's database and list two upcoming events.
12. A napkin from Maurice Bessinger's.
13. A schedule of activities from a local bookstore.
15. A sports schedule from the University of South Carolina.
16. A brochure from the Congaree Swamp.
17. A snapshot of the mural by Blue Sky.
18. A snapshot of sunset at Lake Murray.

21. The Name Game Part II
by Dolf Els, Nasionale Media Beperk, Capetown, South Africa
dels@naspers.com

As part of a training exercise on research, staffers are given a list of names and asked to find out what they have in common. The list
usually has five to 10 names. Here’s one of the lists the paper uses:

Graham Swift, Califizha Buyala, David Sumner, David Leavitt, Joseph Biden, Ruth Shalit, Alex Haley, Professor Jack Vester, Martin Luther King and Orlando Figes.

The answer: each was accused of plagiarism.

22. A Minute of Your Time
pagedavis@aol.com

The metro department starts every weekly meeting with 20 minutes of training. Sometimes the focus is on a successful story, or using the computer, or a refresher on fact checking.

23. Top of the World
by John Voskuhl, Lexingon Herald-Leader
jvoskuhl@herald-leader.com

Stage a news conference involving the publisher at a brown-bag lunch. Conduct the first half of the lunch with the publisher answering questions from staffers. Tell the reporters that their “assignment” is to prepare a business profile of the company. Then, turn the tables and let the publisher critique the session. Did the reporters probe hard enough? How were the follow-up questions?

24. Respect
by Melissa McCoy, Los Angeles Times
melissa.mccoy@latimes.com

Ten things you can do to improve the lives of copy editors:

1. Offer rewards for good work, even if it’s just $50 for the best headline of the month or a pat on the back in public. Copy editors want to be recognized.

2. Identify your newsroom leaders on the copy desk. Let everyone know who is considered the grammar expert and who has what skills. Then, reporters and assignment editors can seek them out and ask questions.

3. Encourage senior editors who do not work nights to spend a week on the copy desk. It gives both sides a feel for what the other does.

4. Impress upon senior editors the importance of knowing the names of copy editors. Even in small papers, the desk is often ignored.

5. Encourage the desk to air its problems—and offer solutions.

6. Bring in food. It’s an old favorite, but it works. It can be a reward for a job well done or a thank you for working yet another holiday.

7. Make a commitment to sending copy editors to seminars where they can get training.

8. Submit copy editors’ headlines in contests.

9. Find out what special skills your copy editors have. Do they have some expertise unknown to you and your colleagues? Keep records on language skills and interests.

10. Demand parity in your newsroom for copy editors. Make certain that they are well represented on committees.

25. Liar, Liar
by Bayles Brewster, The Virginian-Pilot
bbrewste@pilotonline.com

The paper holds day-long training on libel. They start by giving reporters a 25-question true-false quiz on libel. The rest of the 3-hour session is spent in going over the answers and a case study.

26. Start Me Up
by Kevin McGrath, The Wichita Eagle
kmcgrath@wichitaeagle.com

In every story, the editors look for ten things:

1. Information: Detail, detail, detail: Good stories are driven by thorough reporting.

2. Significance: Good stories affect the reader, and say why.

3. Tension: A sense of forces headed for a collision or exploding in opposite directions.

4. Focus: The meaning of the story is clarity. It must be tight and well defined.

5. Context: Good stories put events and people into perspective. They explain where the story has come from, where it is going and how widespread or typical it is.
6. Faces: People experiencing change, or bringing it about, give the story the most legitimacy with readers because they can communicate motive, meaning, emotion, etc.

7. Form: An effective story has a shape that both contains and expresses the story.

8. Voice: The music of the text, a conversation with the reader. The human voice tuned to the purpose of its message, the ear of the reader.

9. Sense of Place: The boundaries of the story. The where of the five Ws. Captured through revealing detail.

10. Sense of Time: Let the reader sense a clock ticking with clues that are seen or heard in the mind.

27. The Candy Man
by Bill Lnenuing, The Kansas City Star
blenuing@kcstar.com

Hold a copy editing competition. Give tests covering redundancies, journalism and wordiness. Each correct answer gets a piece of candy. It also works with teams of editors, with the winning team getting a gift certificate.

28. Open Arms
by Ev Landers, Asbury Park Press
CPChief@ad.com

The newsroom holds a three-hour seminar for non-news personnel to increase understanding about how the newsroom operates. The program includes a discussion of the definitions of news, how it is gathered and presented, and the First Amendment. There is also a discussion of ethical issues and a “You’re the Editor” segment. The group is broken into smaller groups and each is given budgets and pictures and asked to make news decisions.

29. Every Day
by Bob Woesten, Green Bay Press-Gazette
pgnews3@me.net

A daily writing tip can help. Be brief, be positive, but make sure there is a daily reminder that good writing is important.

30. What Now My Love?
by Michael Schwartz, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
mschwartz@ajc.com

After every training session, staffers are asked to fill out an evaluation form. It includes the question: What other training course or area of training would you like to participate in? The feedback provides valuable information about the type of courses people would like to see.

31. Getaway
by Diane Graham, The Des Moines Register
dgraham@dmreg.com

It's impossible for all of the copy editors to get away at the same time. In Des Moines, the copy editors held a one-day retreat. To fill the huge gap, the paper's top editors and some others stepped in. It sent a signal about how much the copy editors were appreciated.

32. Beat It
by Steve Silberman, The (Boise) Idaho Statesman
ssilberman@boise.gannett.com

Here are some tips to help make beat reporters better.

1. Get out of the office. Go some place you don't usually go on your beat.
2. Learn something new every day. Go to a new place or talk to a new person.
3. Ask questions for more than one story. Don't limit yourself to sticking to the day's story. Ask other questions.
4. Gain people's trust. Be honest, but get to know the people on your beat better. Spend time listening to them and getting to know them.
5. Never assume that people are disinterested in the obvious. Ask questions about things people see every day. You may assume that someone has done the story before, or that nobody is interested, but you could be wrong.
6. Go to the mid-level bureaucrat. Rarely is the big cheese the best source, although obviously you should cultivate that person. Try the mid-level person who is usually
overlooked and may know more about the situation.

7. Develop a list of sources and ongoing stories and call down that list. Make sure you call everyone on the list on a regular basis. Some people will get a call twice a week, others once every other week, but stay on top of it.

8. Call everybody back. Messages pile up, but call folks back. You never know if the person you think is a kook is actually calling to give you a prize-winning story.

9. Train sources to call you. Pass out your business card everywhere and let people know that you are on the lookout for a good story.

10. Know that you are but one person. The workload can seem to loom large. Learn to lean on your fellow reporters. Be ready to help out someone who is overwhelmed and expect the same help in return.

33. You’ve Got a Friend
by Tiffany Montgomery and Dana Point,
The (Boise) Idaho Statesman
stilberrn@boise.gannett.com

Cultivating sources is vital. Here are some tips for getting them and keeping them:

1. Be genuine. People love to talk about themselves and matters that are important to them. Find out about their lives.

2. Be honest. If you are not going to run something, tell people why. Be straight with sources.

3. Go slow. Don’t show up in town guns blazing. Once sources are used to you, the information will flow naturally.

4. Show you care about the community. If people know you push to get the little stuff in the paper, they will be more apt to call you when something happens.

5. First-person columns. Let the community know you care, without having to waste precious time. A first-person column can do just that.

34. Breaking Up is Hard to Do
by Joe Adams, The Florida Times-Union
yforum@yforum.com

Hold a breaking news seminar for editors, reporters, photographers and designers.

Brainstorm on the various types of breaking news situations and how challenges differ in covering them. Break the participants into groups and present them with a breaking news situation and ask them to come up with coverage ideas. Hand out a list of relevant phone numbers and checklists for reporters, editors and photographers.

35. Heartaches by the Numbers
by Phil Meyer, University of North Carolina
phil_meyer@unc.edu

The university School of Journal and Mass Communication developed a math/numbers test for journalists. There are 25 questions on the test and the answers are multiple choice.

Here are samples of the questions:

1. Joe Smith wants builder Seeb Forthgo to build a 2,500 square-foot house for him. Forthgo tells him it will cost $65 a square foot to build. How much will the house cost?

2. The probability that you will be late to work is 50 percent. The probability that your boss will notice your tardiness, if you are tardy, is 50 percent. What is the probability that you will be late and be noticed?

3. When is it midnight in Los Angeles, what time is it in St. Petersburg, Florida?

4. Reporters at the Goochville Gazette earn the following salaries: $10,000, $12,500, $5,890, $16,453, $14,000. What is the median reporter salary?

5. Minnie Moore owns a house and a lot with a taxable valuation of $127,500. Last year, she paid $1,466.25 in property taxes. What was the tax rate, per $100 of valuation?

(The answers: 1. $162,500; 2. 25 percent; 3. 3 a.m.; 4. $12,500; 5. $14,000.)

36. Getting to Know You
by Tony Ratliff, Bellingham (Wash.) Herald
ratliff@bellingham.gannett.com

Turnover was high one year and a lot of news staffers weren’t familiar with the area.

We brought in speakers once a month to speak
on different issues. The topics included a history of the Lummi Indian tribe, the county’s fishing industry, the local university, city government and how the city was incorporated.

37. I Can See Clearly Now
by Michael Roberts, The Cincinnati Enquirer
mroberts@enquirer

Examine your training program to increase its impact. Before training, identify real need, obtain support from the editor and provide information and choices. During training, make sure the content is focused with opportunities to practice and group participation. After training, recognize good work and make sure there is on-the-job coaching.

38. Hit the Road, Jack
by Larry Welborn, The Orange County Register
larry_welborn@link.freedom.com

Take 12 of your fresher reporters and split them into three groups.

Send one group with your veteran court reporter, who demonstrates how to pull court records. Assign each reporter a recently concluded murder case. Have them identify the charging document, the verdict and the probation report.

Send the second group to the Registrar of Voters with your veteran politics reporter, who demonstrates how to research campaign contribution forms. Have each reporter pull campaign documents for the city council candidates in their coverage area.

Send the third group to the assessor’s office with your veteran county government reporter, who shows how to pull land records. Have them identify the properties owned by a county official.

One week later, send the three groups to different locations.

39. It’s All in the Game
by Bill Ruberry, Richmond Times-Dispatch
wruberry@timesdispatch.com

Create an online grammar test. Give a grammar lesson, followed by test questions.

The staffer clicks an answer and is informed whether it is right or wrong. They also get a brief explanation on the grammar rule.

40. Hit Me With Your Best Shot
by Dick Weiss, St. Louis Post-Dispatch
rweiss@pdpinstnet.com

We don’t just celebrate our best work, we take it apart. Each week, we take a story and highlight what makes it sing. It flatters the writer and helps the staff see the thinking that goes into great pieces. Rather than write an essay, I annotate the story and make it available through our web site. A computer program can make it easy to highlight material in the story.

GREAT ADVICE FROM THE TRAINING PANTHEON

1. Merv Aubespín
The (Louisville) Courier-Journal
maubespín@louisville.com

For a session with interns: Take a disaster story covered by your newspaper. Get the clips and pictures together. Have the interns take different roles, from reporter, to photographer to layout editor. Then, produce a real newspaper.

2. Mary Lynn Martin
American Press Institute
marylynn@APIreston.org

Hold a mock news meeting with copy editors. A better understanding of the editor’s role; experiencing conflict and clarity in decision-making; making story choices that are relevant to the newspaper’s community.

3. Julie Cryser
The Clarksburg (W.V.) Exponent-Telegram
juliec@hotmaile.com

All reporters must come up with a set of writing goals for the year. We revisit those goals every two months or so during one-on-ones.
4. Jim Slusher
The Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Ill.
Jslusher@dailyherald.com

This exercise can be used to show the importance to supervisors of teaching reporters to do better work rather than simply fixing their copy under the heat of deadline. We used it in an in-house training session for front-line supervisors that stressed the importance of coaching in a production environment. We use pressman's hats as our product. During the workshop, leaders are given five minutes in which to instruct the members of their teams in the art of making pressman's hats. Written instructions are provided as well. Then, races to construct pressman's hats are held. Afterwards, points are awarded for quality and speed.

5. Thomas Berner
The Pennsylvania State University

Turn your staff into peer mentors or peer writing coaches. At a brown-bag lunch, introduce the idea of peer mentoring/coaching. See if reporters are willing to work with each other. It doesn't have to be time consuming. Sometimes it merely requires good listening.

6. Debbie Wolfe
St. Petersburg Times
dpwole@sptribune.com

There's a recipe for success for newsroom training:
1. Outline course content.
2. State the overall goal of the course and relate it to journalism. Use examples that have meaning for the people in the current class.
3. Organize skills needed to reach the goal in a progressive order from easy to more difficult.
4. Give examples of how each skill learned is useful to journalists. Compare the new skills being acquired to the old skills.
5. Select 3-5 key concepts you want them to learn 100 percent.

7. Nancy Sharkey
The New York Times,
nsharkey@nytimes.com

From Stephen C. Miller, The New York Times,
scmiller@nytimes.com

Minimum computer skills for the modern reporter:
1. Know the basics of using a mouse.
2. File management: Navigating folders, creating files and folders, moving and deleting files and folders.
3. Starting programs: The start menu, desktop shortcuts.
4. Understand how to move information via the clipboard: Highlight, copy and cut, paste.
5. Know the basics of a word processor: Create a file, enter text, edit text, save text to a file, retrieve text from a file, print text, saving file as an ASCII file.
6. Know the basics of a spreadsheet:
Navigating cell addresses, creating labels, creating formulas, using icons as shortcuts, sorting and filtering.
7. Know the basics of a database: Fields, records, files, tables, relational, queries, reports.
8. Know the basics of communications: Hyper terminal, dialing via a modem, login procedures, telecom troubleshooting.

8. Diane Weeks
The Washington Post
weeksd@washingtonpost.com

The Post created a technology committee with reporters, editors, graphics people, researchers, photographers and newsroom trainers. The committee came up with dozens of recommendations. Among them were:
1. Develop a newsroom intranet to be used as the primary vehicle for online information gathering and sharing.
2. Provide a reliable e-mail system.
3. Provide adequate training and support.
4. Establish a database management team.
5. Provide better access to electronic information.
6. Standardize and upgrade technical resources.

9. Alice Klement
The Associated Press
aklement@ap.org

To mark UNESCO’s annual International Literacy Day (in September) the Associated Press asked staffers to write about their own reading: how reading has opened new worlds to them. The best of the lot were assembled for inhouse publication.

10. Ann and Carl Schierhorn
Kent State University
eschierh@kent.edu

Ann and Carl Schierhorn conducted a detailed study of newsroom teams. They found that newspapers are running about 10 years behind other U.S. corporations in adopting teams. Seventy percent of the Fortune 1000 companies said they had teams. Editors recommended a team of 4 to 8 and the study found that most newspapers have five or fewer teams. An e-mail request will bring a complete copy of the study.

11. Cindy Stiff
Creative Consultants
cindystiff@aol.com

Set up a skit by selecting two people. Give them separate directions. The man plays the role of husband, the woman the wife. Give them a situation leading to a dispute. Let the two people act out the scene for about five minutes, then ask the group which one had the most power.

FOCUSING ON THE IDEALS OF JOURNALISM: WHAT GOT US INTO THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE

Butch Ward, managing editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer, weary of endless conferences in which journalists beat themselves over the head for all their sins, wondered if there was a way in which we could focus on the ideals of journalism — what got us into this line of work in the first place.

So he created one.

Ward tried this exercise on small groups at The Inquirer, then at a conference with 22 journalists and journalism educators in March 1999 at The Freedom Forum Pacific Coast Center.

The exercise:
This is best done in round-table format with perhaps 10 to 12 people.

Go around the table and ask each person to answer two questions: What is the best thing you ever did in journalism and why? What is the worst thing you ever did in journalism and why?

When everyone has answered, discuss the similarities and differences in the stories.
Participants usually discover that, no matter what budget or staffing or morale problems they face, they still can have an important and satisfying impact on their readers.
1. Alice Klement
Associated Press
aklement@ap.org

Re-create a successful profile to encourage inexperienced writers to move beyond the basics and be bold. Start with a good profile that can serve as a model. Debrief the reporter who wrote it and assemble the material used to write the story. That would include the reporter’s notes, audio tapes, photographs, anything that the reporter used to develop the story. Gather your staff – including the writer – and discuss how the story came together.

2. Mike Schwartz
Atlanta Journal Constitution
mschwartz@ajc.com

Develop a class to teach management to managers. The course, called “Newsroom Leaders,” consists of nine staffers from different areas of the newsroom. They are broken into three teams of three. Participants are interviewed about their goals, previous training and development needs. The six-week program includes exercises in communication, time management, running effective meetings, project management, interviewing job candidates, feedback and motivation. As part of the class, the participants tackle a project and develop a plan. At the end of the term, they present their report to the editor. The participants also develop short-term, mid-term and long-term development plans for themselves.

3. Sue Burzynski
The Detroit News
Sburzynski@detmain1.igns.com

Hold a training session to bridge the gap between copy editors and reporters. Called “Reporters Are from Mars, Copy Editors Are from Venus,” the session began with a question: What one thing would you like the others in the room to know about your job? It led to a thoughtful discussion about what it’s like in the other person’s shoes. The upshot: Some myths were destroyed. And the reporters and copy editors talked about common concerns and looked for solutions to problems together.

4. Yvonne Chua
Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism
bunchua@pcij.org

A lot of journalists hate math and can’t make heads or tails of financial statements. We created balance sheets to illustrate different corporate conditions. There is an insolvent corporation, one solvent but unsound and one solvent. The journalists are broken into groups and asked to figure out the statements. The winning group gets the “I Eat Financial Statements for Breakfast” award.
5. **Julie Cryser**  
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review  
jcryser@tribweb.com

Reporters are often frustrated by being unable to answer what seem like simple questions when readers call. We had clerks develop a content guide. It contained basic information about what types of information go into briefs and whom to contact for letters to the editors and obituaries. We added a table of contents so reporters could find the information quickly. And we included deadlines.

6. **Laszlo Domjan**  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
ldomjan@poston.com

Computer literacy was vital, but finding trainers was a problem. We developed a pass-it-on system. One person from the newsroom gets intensive training and then passes it on to others. The course takes three days and includes Internet searching, online databases, the intranet, e-mail management and the paper’s electronic library. A separate computer-aided reporting track takes about six weeks and a digital journalism course takes two weeks.

7. **Dick Hughes**  
Statesman Journal  
dhughes@statesmanjournal.com

Get staff members to read the paper’s Web site. Help staff members to think more about how to integrate their stories into the Web.

8. **Beverly Dominick**  
Gannett Company  
bdominic@gci.gannett.com

Six months after staffers start, have a luncheon with the top editors. (Make it a dinner for nightside staffers.) The conversation should include a discussion of the following questions:

1. Has the job that was presented to you when you were interviewed turned out to be a true representation of your current job?
   2. Are there any issues or concerns that you have now since you have been in the position for a while?
   3. Was the company represented fairly?
   4. What about training? Are you getting what you need to be productive?
   5. What can we do to make you a better staffer?
   6. Were there any surprises?
   7. What could have been done differently?

9. **Dana Eagles**  
The Orlando Sentinel  
d eagles@orlandosentinel.com

During every election season, reporters who are unfamiliar with politics are drafted to cover the hundreds of elections in the paper’s circulation area. Before the qualifying deadline, we held a three-hour workshop called “Election 2000: See How They Run.” The session was led by the paper’s political reporter, with national editor. It featured three parts:

The “Ego” section offered advice on how to report and write campaign profiles, including how to conduct background checks using online resources, how to spot exaggerated claims and financial disclosures.

The “Power” section on how to identify key issues in the race and to explain the rules of polling and consultants.

The “Money” section explained the rules of campaign finance laws and how to track contributions and expenditures online. It also included a discussion of soft money.

10. **Diane Graham**  
The Des Moines Register  
dgraham@dmreg.com

Send reporters on an “Internet Scavenger Hunt.” Give them 30 minutes to find information on the Internet. This one is tailored for Iowa, but it can easily be adapted for any state.

1. What was the estimated population of Dallas County in 1998?
   2. What is the home phone number of Iowa Attorney General Thomas J. Miller?
3. How much money today would you need to have what was worth $10,000 in 1990 dollars?

4. What percentages of the vote did George W. Bush and John McCain win in the Iowa caucuses?

5. What is the current temperature in Des Moines?

6. What does Senate File 2150 propose for the State Code of Iowa?

7. Who lives at the phone number 515-274-0161?

8. If it's 12 degrees Fahrenheit, what's the temperature in Celsius?

9. How many air miles is it from Des Moines to Chicago?

10. What was the official estimate for the number of farms with hogs in Cherokee County, as part of the 1997 Census of Agriculture?

11. Joe Hight
The Oklahoman
jhight@oklahoman.com

Hold a seminar on how to deal with victims.
Emphasize the following points:
1. Teach reporters and editors how to approach and interview victims.
2. Victims and their relatives must be treated with dignity and respect.
3. Victims should be approached but allowed to say no. If the answer is no, the reporter should leave a card or number so victims can call back later.
4. Each victim is an individual and must be treated that way, not just as part of an overall number.
5. Little things count. Call victims back to verify facts and quotes. Return photos immediately, even if it means hiring a runner.
6. Emphasize writing "Profiles of Life" about the victims, instead of the usual stories about how they died.
7. Use funeral homes as a go-between between the newspaper and the victim's family.
8. Hold mock sessions in which reporters play victims or relatives of victims to show what it is like to be on the receiving end.

12. Dolf Els
Naspers Cape Town, South Africa
dels@naspers.com

We created a web page on the company intranet where reporters can share their experiences and tips with colleagues. Ours is called Scoop.Net. Update it once or twice a month. Reporters can tell what led them to the big story and what obstacles they had to overcome. We made the page accessible to all the newspapers in our group.

13. Leslie Guevarra
San Francisco Chronicle
guevarra@sfgate.com

Make brown bag sessions as accessible as possible. Hold "Evening Editions" for those who work nights, or who can't make the noon session. Look at your own staffers as possible speakers. Some of our most popular brown bag sessions have involved the library director discussing databases and research tools.

14. Walter Johns
Houston Chronicle
Walter.Johns@Chron.Com

The Chronicle's news desk began conducting regular staff meetings two years ago with three goals in mind:
1. To help staff members improve their editing skills.
2. To keep staff members up to date on developments around the newspaper.
3. To give staff members a forum in which to share ideas and concerns.

Meetings are held about once every four weeks and begin with a session on winners and sinners, an update on what is going on at the newspaper and upcoming projects. Then, staff members who have attended training sessions share their knowledge. There is also plenty of time for discussion of problems and to answer questions.
15. Nancy Sharkey
The New York Times
nsharkey@nytimes.com

Questions from an editor
1. Does the lead work?
   Is it supported by the story?
   If it is an anecdote, does it illustrate the main point?
   If it is a scene lead, does it draw in readers quickly?
2. What is the point of the story?
   Is the point clear?
   Is a context graf needed?
   Does the context graf capture the context clearly and concisely, simply without oversimplifying?
3. Does the story make sense?
   Does it flow logically from one section to the next?
   Are the sections in the right order?
   Does it see saw?
   Are there significant holes? Or conversely, does it descend to the intelligent reader?
4. Do the numbers add up?
   Does it compare apples to apples, oranges to oranges?
   Does it give the numbers in context, or is the use of numbers selective, stacking the deck to prove a point?
5. Is it fair?
   Are the relevant arguments represented adequately?
   In an article with a point of view, like a feature, column or news analysis, does it stay within the bounds of news coverage, not veer into editorializing?
6. Are references to race, sexual orientation, religion and ethnic background relevant?
   Is the relevance clearly established?
   In describing someone, are other identifying details used beyond these?
7. How’s the GSPS? (Grammar, spelling, punctuation and style.)

And for editors only:
8. In a well-written story, is the writer’s voice left intact? Does the editing fall into renovating or rewriting?
   Would the writer recognize the story in the morning?

16. Rene Kaluza
St. Cloud Times
rikaluza@stcloud.gannett.com

We created a “Pony Training” course that produced weekly flyers on troublesome style issues. The flyers were posted in the bathrooms because we found that is the one place where everyone sees and reads notices. The messages were short and relatively clever.

17. David Green
The Tennessean
dgreen@tennessean.com

Much of our in-house training program has employed the WOW presentation strategy. It stands for Word of Wisdom. We identify a problem we want to solve and we ask staffers who want to help solve the problem to take part in a seminar. For example, we held a recent seminar on how to get real people into stories.

18. Lynn Kalber
The Palm Beach Post
lkalber@pbpost.com

For a discussion about ethics, show the part of the movie “The Front Page” that deals with the reporter hiding an escaped convict in a desk so that he can interview him before the other reporters find him. Discuss where the fine line between being aggressive and being unethical begins and ends.

19. Richard Kipling
Times Mirror
richard.kipling@latimes.com

Look around your company: If you work for a firm that owns other newspapers, check out the talent there. Then, bring in the best for training sessions. The Los Angeles Times brought in a CAR expert, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter and a top features editor from other newspapers in the group. Not only is it a learning experience, it also brings the papers in a group closer together.
20. Ann Schierhorn  
Kent State University  
aschi@gmail.com

Have a reporter who wrote an outstanding story that involved a lot of reporting hold a session with other reporters to discuss how the sources were selected and what tools were used to find them. Include people, public documents and reporting from databases.

21. Ev Landers  
Asbury Park Press  
dechief@aol.com

Create a targeted, four-month training program for new and some not so new reporters and editors. Limit the group to seven and hold monthly sessions on enterprise reporting, interviewing, covering a beat, narrative writing and computer-assisted reporting.

Here is the schedule:

Month One: The Basics of Enterprise Reporting. Developing the strategies and attitudes necessary to produce daily, weekend and long-range enterprise. This focuses heavily on story development. Each student begins work on an enterprise story that will be published.

Month Two: Developing Interview Skills and Covering a Beat. The training involves four weekly sessions.

Month Three: Narrative Writing: A hands-on, how-to program that focuses on improving narrative writing skills. Two senior reporters run four weekly sessions.

Month Four: Computer-Assisted Reporting.

22. Robbie Morganfield  
Fort Worth Star-Telegram  
rnmorganfield@star-telegram.com

The goal of the exercise is two-fold. First, it would seek to expand the understanding and perspective of non-minority managers. Second, it would seek to create an avenue for producing future minority managers. Rotate editors through the minority-affairs reporting slot for a one-week stint. It will give them new per-

spectives on the beat and the minority community. Let the minority affairs reporter fill in for the editors during this period. After a number of editors have gone through the rotation, have them meet with the minority-affairs reporter for a discussion of what they learned and what the paper needs to do to improve coverage of the minority community.

23. Michael Roberts  
The Cincinnati Enquirer  
mrobets@enquirer.com

One source of poor performance can be vague or non-existent standards. A way to help improve performance can be a training session that revolves around setting and applying standards. Select an area of concern and ask the staffers involved to save examples of poor work. Get the staffers involved and ask them to write a standard for the task. For example, we tried cutlines with a group of copy editors. We wrote a detailed definition of what cutlines were supposed to do and not do. We then discussed how to overcome obstacles to writing good cutlines (lack of information, limited space) and distributed the new standards.

24. Paul Salsini  
Writing coach  
p.salsini@execpc.com

If you are having trouble getting reporters to write real stories, try having them tell their story to you starting off with “When.” For example, “When the city council wanted to rezone....” The use of “when” invariably leads to a story just like “once upon a time.” It helps the writer see the story within the story.

25. Glenn Proctor  
Star-Ledger  
gproctor@starledger.com

Web Sites to Know  
• Public records: www.pac-info.com  
• Newspaper archives: www.sunsite.unc.edu/pubhtml/ 
internet/archives.html
26. Rosalie Sterner
Stamford Advocate
rsterner@yahoo.com

Whenever I meet a reporter in a one-on-one workshop, I ask, “What would you like to change about your writing?” The response gives me a framework in which to point out strengths and weaknesses I have observed. At our next session, we evaluate the reporter’s new work against the goals and look at progress that has been made. Only one reporter has ever told me she didn’t want to change anything about her writing.

27. Renee McGivern
Minnesota Newspaper Foundation
mcgivern@mnfoundation.org

The Minnesota Newspaper Foundation created an ambitious CD to help journalists learn grammar. The interactive training tool combines 75 lessons and 250 exercises aimed at helping with grammar problems journalists encounter every day. Lessons last five minutes to as long as 25 minutes. In all, the CD has three hours of material concentrating on the most common newspaper errors in grammar, style and punctuation. It operates on both PCs and Macs. It costs $70.50, including postage. A newspaper can place the CD on the intranet or newsroom network. The CD has won an award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

28. Diane Weeks
The Washington Post
weeksdlwashpost.com

During the last year we’ve created beat pages and made them available on our intranet. These pages contain information about a beat and can help someone get up to speed quickly in that area. They are aimed at reporters or editors who are new to their beats or whose reporting takes them outside their normal territory into these areas. Topics include Courthouse, Congress, Metro, Foreign, Wall Street, Education, Health and Medicine, Immigration and Sports.

29. Michael Weinstein
The Charlotte Observer
mweinstein@charlotteobserver.com

To help new editors we provide them with an editor’s toolkit. Here’s what is in it:

1. Introduction: What we’re trying to do here at The Observer.
2. Expectations for Editors by Managing Editor Frank Barrows.
3. How People Read and Writing for Readers from the Poynter Institute’s Eyes on the News.
4. 10 Steps to Better Editing by Jack Hart and Richard Zahler.
5. The Good Editor: Observer Reporters List the Qualities of a Good Editor.
7. Working With Reporters (and everyone else) by Michael Weinstein.
8. The Elements of a Front Page Story by Cindy Montgomery, page one editor.
9. Editing for the Front Page by Brian Melton, former page one editor.
10. Reading list.

30. Larry Welborn
The Orange County Register
Larry_welborn@link.freedom.com

To take advantage of the National Writers’ Workshop, the newspaper assigned staffers to
cover each of the speakers. We wanted to find a way to preserve some of the knowledge being dispensed from the podiums. The staffers wrote one-page synopses and the 26 reports were assembled into a booklet and distributed to the staff.

31. John Wicklein
Writing coach
jfwicklein@erols.com

The most common fault I find in stories is failure to fill the holes. Find a story with lots of holes (preferably from another newspaper). Assemble a group of staffers and have them identify the holes. It should lead to a broader discussion about how they would fill the holes and problems with holes in stories.

32. Denise Williams
Virginia Press Association
denisew@vpa.net

Review the demographics of your circulation area from 1980, 1990 and updated census data released in the last decade. Put the numbers side by side and use them as the basis for a discussion about how the area has changed. Consider the implications for coverage. What changes are taking place in your schools, in issues of public safety and public health? What about the labor force? Don't think of it as a "special project," but rather as a learning tool for the staff.

33. Bob Woessner
Green Bay Press-Gazette
Forum@greenbaygazette.com

We made training a priority by making an Individual Training Plan an attachment to each employee's self-appraisal that is part of the annual evaluation. It says, "It's the responsibility of every PG staff member to undertake training to improve performance and keep job skills current. In turn, it's the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that appropriate training opportunities are provided. Completion of training that improves job performance or enhances knowledge of a beat or the community will be considered as part of annual appraisals." Staffers are asked four questions:

1. What training did you participate in during the past year?
2. What training would be most useful in the next year to improve performance in your current job?
3. Are you interested in any cross-training opportunities to learn about a different job at the Press-Gazette? Please describe them.
4. Is there any general journalism or workplace-issues training that you would find useful?

34. Sue Burzynski
The Detroit News
sburzynski@detmain1.dnps.com

I look for books about writing: At brown bag sessions, I hold a raffle, giving everyone a ticket. The book on writing is the prize for the one with the winning ticket.

35. Ev Landers
Asbury Park Press
cpchief@aol.com

Create a special task force whose mission it is to develop a news coverage plan for the Middletimes, a new newspaper. The paper will be published seven days a week. You will be supplied with information on the coverage area, staffing community demographics and the competitive situation. The plan must be completed in four hours. Start with the demographics of your own town and the number of staffers the news budget will allow. Then develop a newsroom structure. You can stay within the traditional departments, or reshuffle them. How many editors, reporters, clerks will work in each department. What type of stories will they cover. Consider the competition in coming up with the plan. At the end of four hours, have the participants make a report and explain their decisions. See how the structure they come up with differs from the existing structure.
36. Gail Bulfin
Sun Sentinel
gbulfin@sun-sentinel.com

The newspaper prepares a glossy brochure of newsroom winners. The brochure lists every staffer who has won an award, ranging from monthly newsroom awards to national prizes. Nearly 200 staffers are mentioned in the brochure.

37. Dick Hughes
Statesman Journal
dhughes@statesmanjournal.com

Each day, e-mail a brief tip to newsroom staff members about a specific aspect of writing, editing, ethics or other skills. You can use the tips to remind staffers of recurring problems.

38. Steve Silberman
The Idaho Statesman
ssilberman@boise.gannett.com

Create Accuracy University. Hold sessions for staffers to emphasize accuracy. Talk about errors in the newspaper and solutions. Give brief spelling and editing tests and talk about the paper's commitment to accuracy. Require every staffer to attend one session. But anyone who has three corrections within a three-month period will have to take the course again.

39. Barbara King
The Associated Press
bking@ap.org

Here are 11 things to being a good writing coach.
2. Take a manageable bit. No, you can’t talk about every story, every day. What can you do? And when is it important?
3. Clean the glue off your chair. Get up and talk to each other. Walk over to the other person instead of sending a message.

4. Stop temptations to veer. Newsrooms brim over with excuses to avoid meaningful potentially difficult conversations. Stick to your priorities.
5. Know you won’t be a savior. Have reasonable expectations, and understand that a meaningful conversation about a story has implications for the next one and the one after that.
6. Know what you’re trying to say. This speaks to the lack of a common language about writing. Until your reporters and editors share that language, they need to take time to explain what they’re meaning.
7. Use constructive authority. While some editors shy away from direct criticism, many reporters say they don’t hear enough of it, especially when it is directed at making the story better.
8. Give the story a life. What is it about a particular story that makes it special? Play it to the hilt.
9. Give writers their voice. Good editors do not simply wring the writer’s voice out of the story and replace it with their own — or the newspaper’s.
10. Show. Do not tell. Stories that show readers what is happening work better than those that only tell. The same can be said of editing.
11. THINK READER.

40. Sheila Solomon
Daily Press
ssolomon@dailypress.com

The Daily Press of Newport News has created a program called “Painless Publicity” to help people create their own press releases. The paper created a Web site with a fill-in-the blank format. Those who want to publicize an event fill out the form and e-mail it. The categories ask for a description of the event, whether it is free or paid, who can come, contact person, where the reader can go for more information, the location, when and the purpose of the event. The form can be found at www.dailypress.com/aboutus/painless.htm.
41. John Wilckein
Writing coach
jwilklein@erols.com

Use the following "Top Ten" as a discussion leader at a brown-bag luncheon or in-house seminar. I have found it is good for getting reporters to open up on some of their own top concerns in doing the job.

1. Is the story accurate?
2. Is it crystal-clear and interesting?
3. Is it complete? No holes, all questions answered?
4. Is it logical and well organized? Have I outlined it, on paper, or in my mind?
5. Is the writing imaginative and graceful; does it avoid jargonese?
6. Is the lede bright, sharp and relevant, pulling the reader into the story?
7. Did I get good quotes and anecdotes to add human interest?
8. Did I show the readers why they should care about this particular story?
9. Is the story well-documented and sourced, primarily with named sources? Did I nail it down from a number of sources, not just a single source?
10. Did I report and write the story ethically? Is it fair to all sides?

R is for rewrite yourself. Rewrite your stories and reports as many times as possible. Double check facts and names. Trim your prepositions, adjectives and adverbs. Limit your clichés and trim or explain the jargon. Get rid of quotes that don’t add to your stories.

B is for be specific. Find the details that will help the reader see, taste, smell or hear your story. Look for details that will help you show the scene to the reader.

S is for simplify to seek clarity. If you seek clarity, you want the reader to understand your writing. It means simplicity. Remembering that the best sentences are subject, verb, object. It means focus, avoiding sentences with long backed-in clauses that are unnecessary or delay the subject.

42. Joe Hight
The Oklahoman
jhight@oklahoman.com

Usually, acronyms drag down a story and confuse a reader. But here is one that can help writing: V.E.R.B.S.

V is for vigor. Strengthen your verbs by using ones that are specific, descriptive, show mood and are active, plunge, dive, decide, kick. Avoid the passive voice. Trim weak linking verbs such as is, has and make.

E is for enthusiasm, the drive to want to learn more, the desire to get the interview that no one else can get and the attitude to check all names and facts one last time. Enthusiasm can drive an average writer to become a good writer and a good writer to become an outstanding writer.

43. Jim Slusher
The Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Ill.
jslusher@dailyherald.com

Use this exercise to help determine how well a draft or completed story has established a theme and developed it. First, write what you see as the theme of the story — not the theme you would like or that you were hoping for, but the theme of the piece as you see it before you. Then, see how well you have created main points and supported them. Under the Outline column, write a phrase of sentence on each Roman number line that describes a main point supporting or developing the theme. Beneath it, write the phrases that show support for this point. Repeat this process for as many points as you see in each story. Do this in order, so you can see how the story progresses. Under the Broken Threads column, write phrases or sentences within the area of a main point that do not directly relate to that point or to the overall theme. These threads are ideas that distract readers or take them in different directions than the writer intended. Careful writers will either eliminate them from their final draft or find a new way to include them that better supports their ideas.

Here’s a sample of the outline:
44. Adell Crowe
USA Today
acrowe@usatoday.com

Realize that there are six types of journalists who will be involved in training:

1. Name: Gray-flecked Grackle.
   Distinguishing characteristic: Experience.
   To attract: Draw on this bird’s experience as part of the training. Involve in the design and execution of the training.
   To scare away: Treat like a baby bird who is just starting out and doesn’t know anything.

2. Name: Tweedy Needy Bird.
   Distinguishing characteristic: Practical needs.
   To attract: Design training around what this bird needs to know to do its job better and get ahead.
   To scare away: Fail to establish a connection between training and real job needs.

3. Name: Restless Raven.
   Distinguishing characteristic: Self-directed; seeks value.
   To attract: Allow choices about training focus, objectives and learning activities. Invite feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training.
   To scare away: Allow no self-direction. Seek no comment or input.

4. Name: Cautious Canary
   Distinguishing characteristic: Self-esteem.
   To attract: Provide a training environment where it is safe to try new things and share frank discussion.
   To scare away: Allow a training environment where one can lose face with co-workers or get in trouble with their supervisor.

5. Name: Anticipatory Anulet
   Distinguishing characteristic: Expectations.
   To attract: Preview what is going to happen in the training and expectations for participants.
   Provide surprise and different, enjoyable training experiences.
   To scare away: Do not preview the program or the expectations. Deliver the expected: BORING.

   Distinguishing characteristics: Varied learning styles.
   To attract: Recognize and provide activities that serve different learning styles.
   To scare away: Only offer the kind of training activities you like to lead.

45. Cindy Stiff
Creative Consultants
cindy.stiff@aol.com

If reporters and editors don’t lobby for the First Amendment, who will? With that responsibility in mind, this exercise reminds reporters and editors of the importance of open records and open meetings for our readers (and us). This exercise is a good starting point for a review of our rights under state laws and the federal FOI Act. Assemble clusters of three participants. Ask each group to examine a different edition of the newspaper to find a story published because of the public’s right to know. Also find stories with actions that have
impeded the public’s right to know. Ask each group to report on what it found and give examples of the best stories. Review information on open records laws. Ask for suggestions on how your newspaper can help readers better understand the importance of freedom of information in their lives.

46. Rene Kaluza
St. Cloud Times
rkaluza@stcloud.gannett.com

We divided the AP Stylebook into 10-page sections and assigned a section to each person. They are responsible for teaching the others the primary style points of their 10-page section. We urged people to be creative and we’ve had everything from crossword puzzles to trivia contests with prizes.

47. Tom Silvestri
Media General
tsilvestri@media-general.com

We follow something called the Broken Window Theory to make sure people pay attention to the basics. The theory works this way: Ten years ago, New York City was rotten to its core. Tourists were afraid to come and residents who could afford it headed to the suburbs. How did the city turn it around?

The city’s brass took an unconventional route and started with the little stuff. New York rounded up the window-breakers, petty thieves, squeegee-guys and tumtule jumpers. The Broken Window Theory holds that we indeed have to sweat the small things before... Here are some of the ways to fix broken windows.

Keep sentences short.

Keep to one idea per sentence.

Avoid backing into sentences with long dependent clauses.

Avoid having more than three numbers in one sentence.

Avoid partial quotes.

Avoid clichés – even in quotes.

Avoid jargon, formula.

Avoid vague qualifiers. Choose precise words.

Choose concrete over abstract terms.

Use single active verbs instead of several weak words.

Cut deadwood and redundancy.

Change long and difficult words to short, simple ones.

Prune lousy quotes by paraphrasing.

Put nut graphs up high.

Show effect in leads.

Talk directly to readers.

Don’t promote the disorganized.

Put a priority on captions.

Row in the same direction.

48. Janie Nelson
Tallahassee Democrat
jnelson@talgem.com

To show how important grammar is, we give a weekly grammar quiz. Here’s a sample.

1. Which of the following are NOT correct? (A) spinal chord; (B) vocal cords; (C) vocal chords; (D) Alex Cord.

2. Which of the following words or phrases should set off alarms because of their potential for creating problems in sentences? (A) couple; (B) trio; (C) claimed; (D) bail; (E) begs the question; (F) comprise; (G) whom.

3. If the members of a family are named Jones, and you want to keep up with them, you’ll write “Keeping up with the. . . .”: (A) Jones; (B) Jones’s; (C) Joneses; (D) Smiths.

4. If those Jones people have a car, you’ll refer to it as the: (A) Jones; (B) Joneses; (C) Jones’s; (D) Jonesmobile.
5. Which version is (or which versions are) correct? (A) Thank you to whomever negotiated the agreement with Northwest Airlines; (B) Thank you to whoever negotiated the agreement with Northwest Airlines; (C) Thanks a lot.

6. Check out this punctuation: "He could—and once in a moment of irritating self-amusement — did run circles around me." You have an overpowering urge to: (A) Change those dashes to commas; (B) Put the second dash after "did; (C) Insert commas after "once" and "self-amusement"; (D) Run away.

7. Optional essay question! If you are reincarnated as a punctuation mark, which one will you want to be and why?

Answers: 1, A, C; 2, A, B, C, E, F, G; 3, C; 4, B, 5, B; 6, B, C.

49. Gene Policinski
The Freedom Forum
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Realize that there is no off season for sports anymore and training sports reporters can be very difficult. Here are some ideas to make it easier.

1. Try the end of June for training sessions.
2. Make every participant mark-up their own sports section and not just the writing, but layout, photo, graphics, story placement — the works.
3. Have participants submit features and deadline material for review.
4. Do written mark-ups of stories. Ask young writers to re-write and re-submit them.
5. Require editors to keep original copies of stories.
6. Be on the lookout for stupid quotes from players, coaches, fans, trainers and parents, such as “We came to play.”

50. Yvette Walker
The Kansas City Star
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We have tried to create a culture of training in the newsroom. We believe that starts with

an employee’s initial experiences at the paper. When we make a new hire, we send them a “Welcome Kit.” It is a large white box (shaped like a pizza box) that contains a newspaper, a Star umbrella, a Star badge holder and pen, a “Welcome to Kansas City” magazine and a sheet that outlines what they will be doing their first day on the job.

51. Michael Roberts
The Cincinnati Enquirer
mroberts@enquirer.com

Make training active by involving the participants.

1. Exercises, games and simulations allow participants to practice skills in a structured experience. The experience must be centered on the learning objective.
2. A dramatic situation in which participants experience situations or problems similar to their on-the-job training. The role playing can be improvised, partially scripted or entirely scripted.
3. In an observation, participants watch an exercise, role playing, video or demonstration and then discuss what they saw.
4. A case study presents a written account of a situation or problem. Participants read the material and then discuss or try to solve the problem.
5. A variety of writing tasks can be used to practice or apply new skills. Worksheets, descriptions, participants’ own case studies, plans of action are examples.

52. Katee Neal
Columbia Daily Tribune
kneal@tribmail.com

Here are some Web sites to help staffers with Freedom of Information issues.

The Freedom of Information Center:
web.Missouri.edu/~foiwww

American Civil Liberties Union FOIA Guide:
www.aclu.org/library/foia.html

The Freedom of Information Clearinghouse:
on Public Citizen: www.citizen.org
The United States Department of Justice:
www.usdoj.gov

The National Security Archives:
www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/efoiaecom.html

U.S. Supreme Court decisions: superlaw.cornell.edu/super

53. Tse Ming-Chong
The Sun, Hong Kong
tse@hkstar.com

The exercise is for photographers and cutline writers. The object is to examine how the caption changes the meaning of the photo. Assemble a series of pictures taken of a speaker at a meeting. Then, choose one photo and write down the caption. Discuss the cutline. Then, take another pose and write another cutline. See how the different pose of the same person at the same meeting affects the cutline.

54. Debbie Wolfe
St. Petersburg Times
dpwolfe@sptimes.com

The goal was to create the ideal math class for journalists. Dozens of Times editors and reporters were asked to submit a checklist of topics they thought the ideal math class for journalists should cover. This group was also asked to specifically identify “local” math mistakes. The copy editors were given a gold mine for providing a variety of examples. From their suggestions, a set of six “survival cards” were developed (see appendix). The entire set can easily be added to an intranet site. The cards cover such topics as fractions, percent, equations, ratio and math terminology. The detailed cards are available to newspapers from The Times, Another site to check is www.saab.org/mathdrills/attack/html, which contains math quizzes. The course lasts one hour.

55. Michael Roberts
The Cincinnati Enquirer
mroberts@enquirer.com

The first step in designing effective training is to determine one or more learning objectives. Training can be a response to two problems. One is sub-standard performance, where people have fallen below standards of performance. The second is the need to learn a new skill and achieve a new level of performance. In either case, the problem is only the starting point in figuring out the focus of your training. Effective training focuses on attitudes, knowledge or skills that will solve the problem. Consider a problem you want to solve. Restate the problem as a standard or goal you want to achieve. The next step is to think of all the skills required to achieve that standard or goal. List them. Then select one or two to focus on in a one-hour training program. Complete this sentence as a way of framing your individual learning objective: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

56. Baylies Brewster
The Virginian Pilot
bbrewster@pilotonline.com

The paper produces two publications to encourage better writing. First, the managing editor and deputy managing editor produce a weekly “Hits and Misses” column and post it on the intranet. And the writing coach writes a monthly column called “Write This Way.”

57. Kevin McGrath
Wichita Eagle
kmcrath@wichitaeagle.com

Your task: Build Mr. Potato Head

Ingredients: One Mr. Potato Head doll, disassembled.

Three news stories: One deadline story, a storytelling news feature and a straight news story.

Cookies to nibble on.
Directions: Read through stories one by one, starting with the straight news story. After finishing each one, hand out the Spudster's parts. Tell the assembled writers/editors that each part stands for one of the senses and ask them to spot sensory clues in the story. Have them put a piece on Mr. Potato Head for each clue. The parts' meanings are pretty self-evident:

- **Eyes:** visual
- **Ears:** sounds
- **Nose:** smells
- **Mouth:** taste
- **Hands:** tactile clues or how things feel to the touch.
- **Feet:** for going to the scene.

You will find parts missing for each story.

Discussion: Compare the level of sensory clues in each story. What's missing from the deadline story? Does the storytelling feature have any tactile clues? Why or why not? Does the straight story lack feet and does that indicate poor reporting or deadline constraints? Discuss when the use of these clues is desirable in each story or form. Discuss their meaning for the reader in each form. Listen for the person who says, "Our editors won't let us write that way" and discuss whether it's true. If it is, develop an action plan for addressing such editing "rules."

58. Mark Coast
The Arizona Republic
Mark.coast@arizonarepublic.com

Many journalists are curious about civic journalism but hesitant as well, confused by the range of debate over it. Try this exercise:

1. Ask participants to explain why they got into journalism and why they stayed. Write the answers on a board.
2. Pass around the following handout.
3. Launch a group discussion looking for differences and similarities between the goals and the handout.

What do readers look for from a newspaper?

1. Convey a deep understanding of the community.
2. Uncover knowledge, not just information.
3. Create wholeness and coherence.
4. Make complex issues clear.
5. Tap aspirations rather than demands.
6. Show connections.
7. Open things up rather than close them down.
8. Bridge the gaps between groups, institutions and layers of the community.
9. Our watchdog role.

59. Leslie Ansley
The News & Observer
leansley@nando.com

We created two writing programs. Power Tools: From Press Releases to Pulitzer is taught by newsroom veterans to a group of eight reporters. The sessions are held one morning a week for six weeks and include the secrets of great reporting; getting deep on your beat; information at your fingertips; public records and open meetings; math and numbers for reporters, managing yourself and others. The second class is Pen 2 Paper, which also lasts for six weeks and meets for three hours a week. The subjects include keeping a journal; how to take an idea and dream with it and things that kill ideas; the difference between telling what happened and telling a story; writing with authority; writing with a distinctive voice and how to write with all of our senses.

60. Paula LaRocque
The Dallas Morning News
Plarocque@dallasmorning.com

Have staffers play the roles of Hack and Frack and read the exchange before a brown bag group to show staffers that journalists don't speak as they write. Hack: How were things at your vacation facility? Frack: We had wide-ranging weather all season. One storm dumped more than seven inches of rain on our densely wooded lot.
spawning hurricane-force winds and golfball-sized hail. Plus an unprecedented number of visitors arrived amid the facility restoration.

Hack: My, that must have sparked burgeoning confusion and decimated your plans for restoring your vacation site to a state-of-the-art facility. Was it sort of a defining moment?

Frack: It spurred a major shift in sleeping arrangements, triggered sweeping changes in the menu, and fueled a personal economic crunch.

Hack: What a chilling effect! How long were you beleaguered by this worst-case scenario?

Frack: The visitors left early, actually, but not before offending everyone, including a close friend and lifelong politician who hails from New York City and has close ethnic ties.

Hack: You say your friend is from delegaterich New York?

Frack: Right. Anyway, yet another politician friend, D-Dallas, weighed in on the issue by calling for the visitors' immediate withdrawal from my vacation site. And that provoked a firestorm of criticism.

Hack: Awesome. Did that level the playing field and cause the visitors to leave your strikethorn facility?

Frack: Heck, no. That was just the cutting edge. Next, they targeted my housekeeper, 45, and launched an unprovoked attack.

Hack: You mean they fired a broadside at her, too? Did a heated debate ensue? Did they hurl verbal insults at each other?

Frack: Too true. In effect, they unleashed a new round of difficulty, and the whole matter escalated to what some called "critical mass."

Hack: Which side blinked finally?

Frack: Well, in a bizarre twist, our embattled housekeeper resigned amid allegations of wrongdoing.

Hack: Too bad! Your guests actually cited instances of infractions?

Frack: Oh, a litany. Even a laundry list. But we're in the midst of negotiations and may be able to reinstate the popular employee.

Hack: Is the bottom line that there's a thin line between a soft and a hard line?

Frack: So it seems. In the wake of the controversy, there was a sharp decrease in the number of visitors to the summer facility.

Hack: A sudden downturn, a free fall, or a steep decline, I guess. Should we call it a sea change or a ground swell? Anyway, looks like you've won a stunning victory. Better than a staggering defeat any day!

Frack: I'm cautiously optimistic. But the same scenario could repeat itself all over again next year.

Hack: Déjà vu!

61. Paula LaRocque
The Dallas Morning News
Plarocque@dallasnews.com

Editors who work directly with writers often seek ways of making their editing sessions with writers more productive, constructive and amiable. Here are some tips for creating a climate for healthy writer/editor negotiations.

1. Begin with a sincere and specific review of what the writers do well—not as a sop, but to help them recognize and build on their strengths.

2. Ask writers if they are satisfied with their story or approach before advancing your own opinion. The answers can be revealing.

3. Launch into the critical portion of the session quickly and courageously, with candor and directness. Constantly gauge the writer's reaction to your words to avoid plunging heedlessly past a rough moment.

4. Treat writers as equals—don't operate from a position of authority.

5. Be concrete. Keep focused on the writer's work. Don't generalize or wander.

6. Feel free to use humor if that's your style, but don't say anything that can be construed as making fun.
62. Nancy Sharkey
The New York Times
nsharkey@nytimes.com

Here are some editing guidelines we have found effective:

1. Content editing is a collaborative process. Your job is to help others, particularly reporters, realize the full potential of their work, not to do their work for them.

2. Trust the reporter. Assume that the reporter knows the situation better than the editor does and that he or she sat down to write the best story possible.

3. Talking through a story with a reporter – when it is assigned, before it is written, when a summary lands – can save editing after it is finished. When stories do need to be rewritten, the reporter should have the first opportunity, whenever possible.

4. From the time a story is filed until it is published, a single content editor should be responsible for it. Make that editor the point of contact for all editing queries and suggestions.

5. There is no “right” way to edit a particular story. There are just different ways. Some may be better than others generally, and some may be better for a particular story, but no one is ever going to agree on everything.

6. When in doubt, let it alone! It’s the reporter’s story, not yours. Have a good explanation for changing it.

7. Communicate. Tell reporters what is expected of them, including deadlines. Tell the copy desk if you reslug or hold a piece. Keep other content editors and other desks in the loop.

8. Listen, listen, listen. If a reporter wants to think out loud, the best thing you can do is encourage him or her to talk, and just listen.

9. Practice teamwork, show leadership, assume responsibility and delegate authority.

10. Respect the copy desk. Know the difference between your job and the copy editor’s responsibilities. And realize that your responsibility is not just to close pages on time, but also to ensure a copy flow that allows thorough, professional work at all stages of editing.

11. Praise – with sincerity and candor – is not unwelcome. The most productive conversations start with the good things that have been accomplished. An editor’s enthusiasm can be contagious.

12. People make mistakes. Learn from them.

63. Katee Neal
Columbia Daily Tribune
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Ten ways to have great meetings:

1. Minimize the number of meetings. Always ask, is this meeting really necessary?

2. Keep participants to a minimum.

3. Keep meetings short. Normally one hour should be the maximum.

4. Choose a time and place that will maximize attendance.

5. Have specific objectives for each meeting.

6. Have a detailed agenda with specified times and assigned responsibilities for each item.

7. Distribute agenda and other relevant material in advance. Motivate others to do their homework.

8. Start and end meetings on time.

9. Make the participants stick to the point.

10. Circulate a written set of minutes which includes all responsibilities, action steps and deadlines established during the meeting.

Ten books to help you organize your life:


64. Yvonne Shinhoster Lamb
The Washington Post
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Create an in-house university for assignment editors. The first step is conducting a needs assessment to determine what is needed. The program lasts three to five days for assignment editors nominated by top management. The curriculum covers managing people, editing copy, traversing culture, collaboration and coaching, and time management. The session is held at least once a year.

65. John Kroll
The Plain Dealer
jkroll@plain.com

Ten Ways to Lose Great Staffers

1. Continue to tell yourselves that it's impossible for assigning editors to take more than five minutes to coach. Refuse to consider limiting the workload, even if only for six months at a time, of those editors who care about good writing. If anyone suggests a way to free that time, shout "Budget!" at them until they flee.

2. Smile widely as you schedule appointments with your reporters that regularly get broken. Fail to let reporters know when you are detained, so they can waste time waiting for you. Remember, any disorganization, forgetfulness or chronic tardiness on your part can always be excused because you meant well.

3. Make no distinction in your treatment of those who work for you. If you want to dictate every step they take, do it even for those who are capable of independent thought. If you like to let reporters control their own output, do that even for those who clearly don't have a clue. (It'll pay big dividends by frustrating the hard workers who have to clean up the messes that ensue.)

4. Pretend that brown-bag lunch talks and weekly newsletters are a substitute for one-on-one, long-term work.

5. Make improving the writing and editing of your paper a job for the training editor or some other designated subaltern, but then make it clear -- by the absence of top editors from seminars, for example -- that management doesn't really care.

6. Focus your efforts on a few special stories. Ignore the little tasks that make up so much of the paper, like briefs or obits. If you're lucky, the sloppiness that can overtake those jobs if they're treated as garbage will leak over into everything your paper does.

7. Keep the jobs of editor and writer clearly separate, so those who move into editing lose all contact with the role that attracted them to the business in the first place, and they forget how hard writing is. Make sure editing is as pressured as possible (three words: meetings, meetings, meetings). If you find an editor who is able to cope, give her more tasks. All this has a double benefit: You not only produce grouchy editors who mistreat reporters, but you also make the job of editing seem so awful that reporters give up hope of improving their lot with a promotion.

8. Welcome creative attempts to improve the way you treat reporters -- as long as they are imposed from above without consultation. Bombard the newsroom with new initiatives.
Just don’t let any of them lead to real change.

9. Establish newsroom pets. Promote stunningly mediocre editors. Give the best display to single-sourced stories by weak writers. Accept an editor’s arrogant treatment of co-workers. Talk about the value of “creative tension.” Realize that such actions, while common in all businesses, will be most effective in a newsroom, since workers think they are practicing a craft, rather than just punching out widgets.

10. Let each project fail at least one way. If your reporters are doing a good job, saddle them with a graphics department that turns out crude, inaccurate charts. If the photographers have talent, use the photos too small and fill your page-design staff with untrained retreads as copy editors. If all else succeeds, turn the stories over to a copy desk where the choices are young people who have a lot to learn or older folks who don’t care anymore.

66. 30 Ways to Keep Great Staffers
By The Newsroom Trainers

1. Don’t settle for just an annual evaluation. In addition to the one major evaluation, do two or three more during the year to make sure the lines of communication are kept open. Use the evaluations to develop a training program to meet the goals set out in the evaluation.

2. Say thanks and well done as often as possible and make sure it is done in public.

3. Involve everyone in newspaper improvement campaigns, whether it is building stronger community ties or training programs.

4. Communicate with the staff, even if it has to be through a weekly computer message. Silence breeds confusion and despair.

5. Don’t let salaries lag behind your competitors. Money may not buy happiness, but it’s a start.

6. Work with human resources to make sure that holiday schedules are fair and that no one feels dumped on.

7. Realize that staffers have lives outside the newsroom. Newspapers cut into family time.

The more editors can do to respect and encourage family and social lives, the happier they will be.

8. Work with a local university to offer fellowships. Staffers get several weeks to undertake studies related to their work or interests. The Detroit Free Press has established a relationship with Michigan State University.

9. Make sure managers are well-trained in basic management skills. Run a two-hour training program once a month dealing with such topics as conflict, coaching, managing stress, recruiting and interviewing, motivating employees and time management.

10. When a valued employee leaves the newspaper, give him or her a boomerang with the paper’s logo printed on it. It sends a message that the employee is welcome to return.

11. Provide employees with college tuition reimbursement. Staffers who enroll in an advanced degree program will want to stick around.

12. Give longevity bonuses. Present them with a moderate amount of hoopla in the newsroom to let staffers know they are appreciated.

13. Be careful how you communicate with employees. A letter or Christmas card from the editor or other newspaper executive addressed “Dear Augustus” can be a real turnoff for an employee who hasn’t been called that since elementary school.

14. Take advantage of vacations. When a staffer is away, give a junior staffer the chance to take over the beat.

15. Reward the little things. Don’t wait for a Pulitzer to come your way before celebrating. Keep in mind the unsung heroes who make your newspaper better each day.

16. Look for ways to give staffers credit in the newspaper. An editor who compiles the briefs or the police log, a clerk who does an unusually good obit, or a copy editor who labored on a major project are perfect candidates for a tag line.

17. Listen to people. Ask them what THEY think.
18. Editors often talk among themselves about how well staffers are doing but don’t tell the staffer.

19. Get off your butt and see staffers on their turf. Spend time traveling with reporters as they go on their beats. Spend nights on the copy desk and the city desk.

20. Make a list of perks enjoyed by the paper’s top executives. Maybe it’s a ski box, membership in an exclusive city club or golf club. Now, use them to reward staffers. Sending a valued staffer and his family for dinner at the club can work wonders.

21. Develop career paths for reporters, copy editors, artists and support staff. Show them what the future holds.

22. Periodically do a talent and workload audit to make sure staffers have manageable workloads.

23. Hold all supervisors accountable for staff development. Make it part of their job description and performance review.

24. Make sure everyone understands the corporation and its goals. Key executives should not be strangers to editorial staffers. Organize a two-day session that includes meetings with top executives, an explanation of both company values and objectives. Make the staffers feel as if they are a partner in the company rather than just a cog.

25. Protect and translate. Try to let your reporters report and your editors edit.

26. Set the tone the first day in the new newsroom. Give the new hire the time and means to begin to know the workplace and personnel. Orientation should include computer training, a two-day scavenger hunt that provides an overview of the region.

27. Make sure each staffer knows his or her importance to the paper, personally and professionally. Praise at least one person anywhere at the paper once a day.

28. Be ready to do unconventional things. The publisher of the Lexington (NC) Dispatch once bought a reporter a pair of shoes saying he had been “wearing out the leather.”

29. Ask staffers what they want to be and enable them to develop the skills needed to reach their stars. Offer folks challenging work in an environment where they can contribute to a mission greater than their own.

30. Involve staffers in planning training.