



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Do you have a “teaching hospital”?

The author promotes the value of the “teaching hospital” model for college-level journalism education. It’s a model of learning by doing that includes students, teachers, scholars and professionals working together under one “digital roof” to produce news that informs and engages a community. Students learn about journalism as they do it, and researchers study their experiments.

But will that model work everywhere? Can you afford an entire hospital? Should you run a teaching clinic, with students filling a community news niche? Or just do one story as a class project? The answer may depend largely on the curriculum structure of your school— your way of defining and applying journalism.

Examples:

Journalism as electives: In colleges with this level of journalism education, there may be only a few journalism classes. Doing “actual journalism” can be an extracurricular activity, perhaps even a campus public relations activity. You might see newspaper or media clubs on those campuses. High school journalism can function this way.

Journalism as a concentration, or a minor: This is a common alternative at liberal arts schools. You may major in “English” or “Communication” but you can build a concentration in journalism. There are additional classes to fill out more of what a student would need to do more meaningful journalism in a laboratory setting.

Journalism as a major: At this level, schools often have people with professional experience on the staff, though in some cases it may not be current experience. There are a range of different classes (journalism history, law, ethics, media management, etc.) designed to delve deeper into the intellectual foundation of the field. These are the schools with the largest spectrum of “live news” options -- from a campus-focused newspaper to ownership of a commercial community news outlet.

Journalism as a double-major or customized degree: A few leading schools are now experimenting with joint journalism-computer science or

journalism-business degrees. New rules adopted in 2012 by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications programs allow schools to more easily develop double-majors and customized degrees involving journalism and technology, business or other subjects. These schools often have greater capacity for innovation and new product creation because of partnerships with the rest of the university.

Questions for a class discussion:

- Do you produce journalism for classes that is not posted online or used in student media? Is that a waste?
- At your school, do you have “unused local news capacity” -- such as an FM station that plays only music and offers no local news?
- In what ways would the concepts of a “teaching hospital” be useful to your school’s journalism education efforts?
- Do you agree with the author’s argument that journalism education is better when it involves students, teachers, professionals and scholars working on the same live-news efforts?

Consider these case studies: The University of Colorado is discussing creating a [College of Media](#), Indiana University is [merging its independent school of journalism with the College of Arts and Sciences](#) and the [University of South Florida dropped out of accreditation](#) and replaced its school of mass communications director with the leader of the School of Information.

Because of these changes, do you think the schools are more or less likely to be able to create a “teaching hospital” model? If not, in what direction are the schools moving?