



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Are student media already “teaching hospitals”?

Do traditional student media serve their communities in a “teaching hospital” model of journalism education?

The author defines the “teaching hospital” model as a news organization populated by students, teachers, professionals and professors that engages deeply with the community it serves. It supports a culture of continuous change and experimentation in news technology and technique. Scholars both inform and study the experiments. This means the news organization provides not just news for the community but knowledge to the field of journalism.

Discuss with students the question of whether student media already fit that definition. If not, where do they fall short? Some argue that including professionals and scholars in student media takes away from the learning students get when they run their own newsrooms. Could a student-run “teaching hospital” still work if the scholars and professors were “consulting physicians” and the students make the decisions?

For students, assignments on several levels:

Flashlight: Look at the [Associated Collegiate Press](#) site as well as their [College Media Matters](#) site. What is the purpose of these two portals? Do they address the innovation issues raised by the author? Would you join them? In an online outlet of any type, answer this question: Do the contests supported by these organizations, as well as those under [the high-school focused Journalism Education Association](#), encourage digital research and storytelling as well as social and mobile media use? Do they encourage change?

Spotlight: In 2012, student journalists participating in the national Carnegie-Knight News21 program produced a major investigation into voting rights. “[Who Can Vote?](#)” was the work of 24 students from 11 universities under professional direction. Take a fresh look at the [News21](#) program. Divide the class into groups to research four questions for discussion:

1. What impact can you find from News21 investigations?
2. Are the students innovating; if so, how?

3. Does News21 engage a community; if so, how?
4. What knowledge does News21 provide to the field of journalism? Have the class discuss ways to improve News21, including future story ideas. Write a class letter to the program's director.

Searchlight: Have students pick a topic to localize from the community-based studies on the [Journalist's Resource](#). Ask each student to contribute one relevant fact, drawn from this [list of free references and resources](#) or elsewhere. Map the story: What interviewing and reporting still needs to be done?

Now, have the class set that aside and question everything. Why did they choose that topic? How do they know the community is interested? Did they ask any experts? Did they ask any community members? Are there better ways to choose stories than journalists picking them on instinct?

Extra credit: Thinking about the story chosen above, how would you turn it into a “teaching hospital” experiment? Would the story be done differently? What might the experiment teach the field of journalism?