



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

All local news is not equal

Americans increasingly treat their news consumption like a visit to a cafeteria, picking their information from different news sources to create their news diet. Locally, their choices vary not only according to the type of news but also according to the type of medium used. Local news is changing, and so is the way people consume it.

Activities:

Flashlight: Lead a discussion in which students list the types of news they consume, its source and the medium used. Ask the class to imagine a cafeteria tray with limited slots for news. If they had only three choices from their news menu, which would they choose and why? Does social media make it easier to get news from more sources or not?

Spotlight: For students, are different types of news better consumed in particular forms of media? Looking at types of news: weather, arts, education, civic affairs, community events, crime, traffic, health, sports, business and so forth, lead a discussion or assign a paper answering these questions: Where do you get information in these different categories? From newspapers? TV? Radio? Websites? Social media? Word-of-mouth? Are there types of news you prefer to get from only one type of medium?

Searchlight: Students choose a piece of research from the following list and do a paper on this question: If events like these happened today, in the era of mobile and social media, would the results of the studies be the same? Explain why.

* Sutton, J., Palen, L., & Shklovski, I. (2008, May). *Backchannels on the front lines: Emergent uses of social media in the 2007 southern California wildfires. In Proceedings of the 5th International ISCRAM Conference (pp. 624-632). Washington, DC.*

* Wicke, T., & Silver, R. C. (2009). *A community responds to collective trauma: An ecological analysis of the James Byrd murder in Jasper, Texas. American journal of Community Psychology, 44(3-4), 233-248.*

* McLeod, J. M., Scheufele, D. A., & Moy, P. (1999). *Community,*

communication, and participation: The role of mass media and interpersonal discussion in local political participation. Political Communication, 16(3), 315-336.