

The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way

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Attestation of authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree of diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Ruth Thomas

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Abstract

This study is a first of its kind for New Zealand journalism education, following 20 students at two different schools throughout a year-long training programme. It used two methods to gain a deeper understanding: a discourse analysis of their news stories written at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the year, and retrospective protocol analysis, to provide insight into their thinking processes, through their taped reflections.

The research found that journalism education controlled by the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation still resembles that of 20 years ago, despite increasing numbers of students learning journalism as part of degree programmes. Students are trained for the media industry through learning by doing. They receive basic instruction and then are expected to perfect their skills by practising their writing and to learn the conventions and routines of the media industry through socialisation and work experience.

In the first half of the year, the students developed some skills in writing the traditional inverted-pyramid news stories. However, by the end of the year, their news writing showed technical signs of regression. Firstly, they were not writing in a succinct, clear fashion, emphasising news values. Secondly, they had been inadequately trained to write outside of the inverted-pyramid news story or to use popular “soft” lead sentences, so that their writing tended towards being promotional. Thirdly, journalism institutions strongly favour subediting by tutors and this detracted from the students gaining understanding of their own writing and being able to self-monitor and evaluate it. Lastly, they failed to show the critical thinking skills and independence necessary for a professional journalist so that they could research thoroughly, reflect deeply and write entertaining, informative and important news stories with flair.

Their reflections confirmed these findings, suggesting some stress and disillusionment. The students could “declare” what they knew about writing a news story but could not put it into practice. They blamed their failure to write high quality news stories on the pressures of the course, the deadlines and high volumes of stories. The gaps in their journalism education were also revealed through what was not mentioned in their taped reflections: in particular, they failed to mention the importance of news values in

making their stories more appealing. The major influence at first was the students' tutors, followed by work experience and the "real world" of the media industry.

The concentration on job skills and gaining a job coupled with a lack of knowledge and discussion provided the students with an incomplete understanding of the pressures of the media industry they were entering. The study recommends more debate about journalism education and more research, as well as a change away from "learning by doing" to a more critical, reflective approach.

PART 1 THE CONTEXT

1 Starting the Debate: New Zealand Journalism Education

The scientific investigation of social matters is perfectly compatible with committed and ‘opinionated’ investigators (there are no others!) and being committed does not excuse you from arguing rationally or producing evidence for your statements (Fairclough, 1980, p.5).

1.1 Introduction: From journalist to researcher

For 20 years, I worked in New Zealand community newspapers as a journalist, editor and managing editor. During those years, I often worked with young journalists turning rough copy into news stories, appropriate for publication. Community newspapers serve as a first job for many young people placed as they are near the bottom of the media hierarchy and often regarded as the “local rag”. I was also a council member of the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO), representing community newspapers. This organisation, funded and controlled by representatives of newspapers, television, radio and magazines, has the authority through the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to accredit journalism schools. It sets competence-based standards for the training of journalism students, known as unit standards (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997). I was a strong supporter of these unit standards, believing that the writing of news stories was a skill like any other, which could be judged as competent or non-competent. I also sat on selection panels and advisory boards for the journalism schools, provided opportunities for work experience and gave guest lectures to the students. The system appeared to work well and I considered the media industry exerted a strong, beneficial influence on young journalism students.

I knew that students in New Zealand journalism schools are taught the skills of news writing using similar methods to those that I had employed with young journalists. Students emulate journalists by writing news “stories”, using a format described as an “inverted pyramid” (van Dijk, 1986, 1988), because the most important information is

placed at the top. In the newsroom, journalists' stories are "subbed", or brought to publication standard through correction, revision and sometimes rewriting by a subeditor, so that they conform to the standards and style required by the newspaper. In the journalism school, tutors act as subeditors and correct the grammar, change the lead sentence and the structure and generally make suggestions so that the story follows the style required for a local newspaper. This system has many educational advantages, the primary one being that students receive individual attention and is widely supported by New Zealand journalism educators, all of whom are former journalists. Emphasis is also placed on emulating the media industry in as many other ways as possible. Computer rooms are seen as "newsrooms", students write their stories not as class exercises but directed to local newspapers, go on "field" trips to others, and spend at least two weeks experiencing work in the media industry. Work experience, widely known as cooperative education, has become increasingly popular since the 1970s, as a link between the "real world" and tertiary study. A key factor is that students gain "authentic tools" and are enculturated into their workplace (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

It was not until some years later when I joined the staff of a large journalism school that I began to have some doubt about the benefits of this system. Because of my background as a manager, I felt some concern about the high costs of providing individual attention for all students as this was contrary to trends in New Zealand education. To fulfil requirements for funding, the emphasis was on competition and increasing the number of students¹. I was also troubled about the reproduction of many industry practices, with little question or debate and realised there must be other ways of teaching students to write for the media. For some years, the New Zealand news media have been in a state of crisis, with falling audiences, facing criticism about their standards and excessive interest in entertainment and lack of in-depth coverage of important issues. The media are now owned by a few transnational groups and "convergence" is the new buzz word: journalists are increasingly expected to be able to work in different platforms such as broadcast, print and internet, leading to the merging of jobs and to subsequent job losses. So, I wondered, what were the causes of these problems and why were we not encouraging more critical thinking, discussion and

debate about the state of the media industry and where was journalism education headed in the future?

Doing a Master of Education (M.Ed) degree, specialising in adult and tertiary learning, opened my mind to a whole new world of different ideas. Courses in educational pedagogy, research methodology and critical theories of education seemed to confirm some of my doubts. I read Australian educationalist David Boud, who sees as an essential part of work experience the need for critical awareness through reflection (Boud & Feletti, 1991; Boud & Walker, 1990, 1993; Boud, Walker, & Moreno, 1998). I also read Freire (1985, 1993a, 1993b), one of the most well-known of the advocates of critical awareness in education. He argues that the educational system is primarily an agency of social control, that it is oppressive and supports the capitalist system of class discrimination. The means for changing this is what Freire calls “critical consciousness” (Freire, 1993a). This could be defined as actively exploring the experiential meaning of abstract concepts, through dialogue among equals.

As a result of doing these M.Ed courses, I gained considerable knowledge of critical pedagogy and theory which raised my own political consciousness and awareness. I became aware of the growing dissatisfaction with the media industry and how the press performs. However, students still flock to enrol for communication and journalism courses, attracted by what they see as glamorous careers as television presenters or investigative reporters. These students will be educated to become media professionals. Professionalism in journalism is seen as conferring a similar status to professionalism in medicine or law. Journalists view being “professional” as equating to being young, fearless, investigative reporters working independently to uncover government or big business scandals. But, in fact, there is no evidence to prove that this situation exists. Modern-day professional journalists work under a series of constraints (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003; Sparks & Splichal, 1989), both in the nature of their occupation and in the increasing surveillance, with diminishing independence.

¹ This educational trend encouraged increasing numbers by funding tertiary institutes through what was commonly called “bums on seats”. From 2008, this will be replaced by funding in three-yearly cycles based on the value of the educational programme.

I also read and was influenced by some of the literature about how people learn to write. Twenty years earlier, the writing model of Flower and Hayes (1980) shifted traditional writing instruction from the final product to the process. Instead of instruction concentrating on such things as grammar and the completed written item, the writing model studied the way that people arrived at the final product and their thought patterns, which were considered important in teaching methods (Flower, 1985; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Flower, Hayes, Carey, Schriver, & Stratman, 1986). However, journalism education has continued to be taught in the traditional fashion, concentrating not on the process but on the written product.

For my previous thesis (Thomas, 1999), I tested out what I had learnt. I researched two groups of students, one learning news writing using the process method and the other the traditional one-to-one subbing method. Rather than having their work subedited on an individual basis, the process group learnt self-regulation strategies, peer collaboration and how to reflect on their experiences. The process or workshop method had been established in English composition classes some 20 years earlier, so it was not new or untried. However, it was novel and considered radical for journalism. This is reflected in the literature about journalism education which in New Zealand is sparse. I found the findings of this earlier study fascinating. This study found that news writing could be taught successfully by the workshop method, reducing the time it took for students to learn and also teaching the students important strategies about evaluating and editing their own work. I became “hooked” on research and wanted to find out more about how students learn to write for the news media.

I considered the various ways I could analyse the students’ writing to find this out. As Zelizer (2004) argues, there are many different ways of studying journalism: as an institution, as sociological inquiry, through political science, cultural analysis, through its language, as text or as history. Each is valid and has an important role to play in understanding the media. There has also been considerable debate over what journalism education should cover in the academy, especially in the United States and Australia. On one side, there are those who believe journalism students should study a broad programme based on communication studies and politics, the “liberal arts” as it is often termed. On the other are those who advocate following a single focus of teaching the vocational skills required for journalism. New Zealand journalism educators see a clear

divide between the liberal arts programmes and the teaching of “media theories” and what they see as journalism education teaching the skills required for a journalist. While this was not my view (see Chapters 2 and 10), it was important for this thesis to reflect the way journalism education is today. The result was this current research which I have called *The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way*.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The next section will detail how the research developed and the theorists who informed its structure. Section 1.3 provides a rationale for this research, whilst Section 1.4 will discuss the basic research questions it seeks to answer. How do students learn to become journalists? What are the major influences on their learning? Is reform of journalism education necessary? It also looks further at the additional questions that have arisen focusing on the nature of learning, the importance of news values, different genres and whether the students gain critical thinking, reflective abilities from their training. Section 1.5 will describe the organisation of this thesis, providing an overview of the nine chapters that will follow.

1.2 How the present research evolved

The history of journalism education has demonstrated a struggle over control and power between the academy and the media industry, which has often constrained useful educational debate about methods of teaching (Reese, 1999; Reese & Cohen, 2000; G. Turner, 2000). This remains evident in western countries around the world where, on the one hand the media industry favour journalism students learning practical skills and support standards-based training, while on the other the academy esteems the teaching of general contextual skills and liberal arts courses. The balance is delicate, the scales tipping in some countries one way for the industry, or the other for the academy (Deuze, 2001). In England and New Zealand the media industry exert the stronger influence, while in Australia and the United States the academy has the upper hand (Oakham & Tidey, 2000).

There are indications that a gradual change in journalism education in New Zealand might be about to occur. The influence of the media and the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation are slowly declining. A number of factors are impacting on this, many relating to the changing environment. The first journalism education in New

Zealand was at a university almost 100 years ago. However, its development since then has been much slower and mainly focused in polytechnics in their role as “trade schools”. Journalists have traditionally viewed the idea of university education with suspicion: they had learnt on the job and wanted to see this continue (Thomas, 1999). This related to the conflict between the industry and the academy or to put it another way, a debate over whether journalism education should be modelled on the “trade-school approach”, teaching primarily reporting and editing skills or an approach which advocated a liberal arts or social sciences model (Elsaka, 2004).

Over the last 20 years, the New Zealand education system has been largely reformed. This reform has led to greater competition between tertiary institutions, as well as the desire to increase their status and become universities. One polytechnic merged with a larger university as part of the process of rationalisation, while another gained full university status. Other polytechnics have expanded and started to teach to degree level. But as yet, this has not changed the mode of teaching news writing and the emphasis on skills, although there are signs that this may happen.

Firstly, universities now require a higher level of qualifications in their staff, rather than only industry experience. A number of journalism educators are gaining higher degrees and are exploring the growing literature in journalism studies and journalism education (Ettema & Glasser, 1984; Glasser & Ettema, 1989; Matheson, 2005; Niblock, 2007; Machin & Niblock, 2007; Zelizer, 2004) and are thus becoming more aware of the limited nature of skills-based training. Secondly, links with Australian journalism educators are also expanding. Over the last few years, there has also been a growing volume of Australian research into journalism education (Bowman, 2005; K. Green, 2003, 2005; Griffin, 2002; Meadows, 1997; O'Donnell, 2006; Pearson, 2001; Sheridan Burns, 1997, 2001, 2002). In addition, the annual conference of journalism educators from the two countries was held in New Zealand in 2006, for the first time in 10 years, further opening the way to the spread of different ideas. Recent initiatives such as an academic journal of Pacific media commentary, *Pacific Journalism Review*, based in Auckland also signal an increasing interest in research. While New Zealand is still lacking a body of relevant recent research, as the number of educators holding higher qualifications increases, it is only a question of time before this too changes.

Thirdly, there have been several attempts in this country over the last few years at opening up the debate about the appropriateness of an industrial training organisation being in the role of gatekeeper and standard-setter for the content of academic programmes (Sligo, 2004; Tucker, 2007) and some signs of resistance to industry demands on the part of universities. One journalism school, situated in a university, refused to take part in the journalism training organisation's moderation process, while a second university was involved in a very public spat with the training organisation over employment of a tutor who did not have the required industry experience. The unit standards have also been criticised and described as being in "extraordinary, reductionist detail" and contrary to academic freedom (Sligo, 2004).

Influenced by this changing environment, I became aware I had only scratched the surface of what I knew about news writing and wanted to continue doing research. The time was not right for my earlier study's finding to be widely accepted by my colleagues, who required more convincing that there were other ways to learn journalism, echoing a widely held belief in journalism schools throughout the country. As recently as March, 2007, the then executive director of the NZJTO, Jim Tucker, applauded the traditional method of one-to-one subediting, but publicly decried the "inadequate staffing" in journalism schools because it could not fully support it. "In effect, some of our journalism schools have existed on the goodwill and willingness to bear huge workloads of mostly female sole-charge teachers" because of the "the level of one-to-one sub-editing required," he stated (Tucker, 2007).

It seemed to me that the question was not only whether the tertiary institutions could fully support one-to-one subediting but also whether this method was producing the desired effects: were students in completing their journalism programmes trained fully to work as professional journalists and were their other ways? I decided to research this. A first step was to do a formal interview with the heads of all the New Zealand journalism schools to see exactly what they were teaching and how. Because of my own experience, I knew approximately what was being taught but wanted more precise details about other schools in other areas. I found that the methods of teaching throughout the country were characterised by a degree of uniformity. In general, the basis of journalism education is the teaching of how to write a news story in the inverted-pyramid format. All students learn the rules and constraints of the inverted

pyramid first. They are then expected to perfect their skills by practising their writing. These news stories are aimed at publication, generally in community newspapers. The students' stories are "subbed", that is corrected, revised or rewritten by journalism educators on a one-to-one basis. They are expected to gain the skills and attributes necessary to be a journalist through socialisation – experiencing the media industry.

I planned to take a group of students and study the development of their news writing throughout the year. In order to track their progress, I decided to ask a professional journalist to use the students' original versions and produce news stories appropriate for publication. I would then be able to consider the differences using discourse analysis methods, and measure what the students' journalism education was teaching them and how far they needed to progress to become professional journalists. The work of van Dijk (1986, 1988), Bell (1983, 1984, 1991, 1995, 1998) and Fairclough (1994, 1995) had a strong influence on the model I established for the discourse analysis.

Like many journalists of my generation, I had not received formal training and had learnt on the job. On a personal level, I found that I learnt a lot from these theorists about how to write an inverted pyramid story. I learnt not only the "how to" but also the "why". The inverted-pyramid format is based on a series of rules. Bell (1991, 1998), whose work is developed from van Dijk (1986, 1988), analyses the component parts of an inverted-pyramid news story and notes their complexity. He finds that most lead sentences begin with the actors and are comprised of two events linked by "as" or "after". I learnt that journalists use standard strategies to enhance or elaborate the claims found within their news stories, facts being better understood if they arouse strong emotions (van Dijk, 1988). I also learnt that a news story must emphasise the realistic nature of an event, for example, by inserting such specifics as exact ages, distances and how many people were involved. News stories are selected as newsworthy because of their appeal to an audience through a series of elements, including negativity, immediacy, meaningfulness and elite people (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). I also realised that other journalism educators were experienced journalists, as I was, who wrote "automatically", without reflecting or questioning why. So how much of the "why" were the students learning? Were they just writing "by rote" following the way they had been taught or were they thinking about what they were doing and why?

In order to consider their thought processes, I needed to use a different method. A protocol analysis is a procedure to identify psychological processes in problem-solving tasks (Newell & Simon, 1972). It is a description of the activities, ordered in time, which a subject engages in while performing a task (Flower & Hayes, 1980). In protocol studies, the researcher's interests lie not just in a solution to a sequence of actions, but in the processes, underlying the sequence itself. However, I believed that for a student still learning to write, reflecting about their experience while they were writing would be very difficult. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the process, I was attracted by retrospective protocol analysis (Boren & Ramey, 2000; Greene & Higgins, 1994), or “thinking aloud” after the event allowing the student the time to focus on what they had written.

Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework was useful in linking the various influences on the students’ texts and the different methods. He argues that discourse analysis should do more than just look at text, as changing practices relate to wider processes of social and cultural change (Fairclough, 1995). Textual analysis concentrates on the formal features of vocabulary, grammar and syntax. However, I was aiming to add knowledge of the learning environment or “discourse practice” of how the students produced these texts and also to see how the wider influences of society influenced their writing. Retrospective protocol analysis would provide some insight into how the students produced the texts and my experience, both in the industry and as a journalism educator, would flesh out the picture. In this way I would be able to supplement my findings with the wider social practice which both shape the texts and is shaped through its relationship with the discursive practice (Fairclough, 1992, 1995).

1.3 Rationale for the research

Because I knew there was little research on New Zealand journalism education, I decided to do a formal study of the training used today, in the hope that it would inform journalism educators about teaching methods and the effects of the media industry. It is also hoped that this research will make a significant contribution in several domains drawing on the four areas outlined by Marshall and Rossman (2006, pp. 35-38):

1. It will be potentially significant for theory, by adding to the limited literature on this topic, particularly in New Zealand.
2. It will be possibly significant for policy development, by providing new insights and data on journalism education. Furthermore, it provides an historical and contemporary analysis of journalism education in two institutions.
3. It will be particularly significant for the practice of journalism education, in providing data for improvement by responding to the changing needs of institutions and staff.
4. It will be of significance for social issues and action, as it raises and chronicles the experiences of journalism students and the current constraints they face and will, I hope, provide avenues for further awareness and action in terms of further research.

1.4 Questions posed by this research

Much is written about journalists and journalism and the effects of their writing. However, my intention was to study the learning process and to pose these questions:

How do students learn to become journalists? It is generally accepted that writing a news story in the inverted-pyramid form is the basis of all journalism and this skill is necessary for a professional journalist. Students learn by doing it: that is the students learn the basics, then they practise the skills. But how well does this method inform them about the requirements of the inverted pyramid and how it works? Do they, for example, understand the importance of news values in shaping and enhancing their news stories?

What are the main influences on their learning? Students work closely with their tutors and receive one-to-one subediting of their stories. What influence does this have on their learning? Does it mean that they develop into independent learners who can self-evaluate their own work? Is one-to-one attention useful, or under difficult conditions and a shortage of time will it lead to a concentration on surface areas such as spelling and grammar, and a reliance on the superior judgement of a tutor or editor?

In “learning by doing”, students are expected to write up to 20 news stories² during their one-year programme. They work closely with the media industry, in particular at community newspapers. They are thus exposed to their conventions and practices and see different forms of writing such as “soft” news stories and human interest stories, which could be termed hybrid texts. The students are expected to attempt to write in these styles, but what training do they receive? Are they able to recognise whether news articles should be written in the style of hard news and the inverted pyramid or as soft news? What other effects does this have? Socialisation is considered a fundamental element in learning, but does this lead to the reproduction of the industry routines and conventions and lack of critical thinking which could lead to change?

And what of the attributes required of a journalist? Journalists are expected to be critical thinkers, able to work independently to identify news, to gather and evaluate information. Do students gain these attributes by learning the skills of journalism? Can they not only uncover and recognise important stories but also write them in a compelling fashion so that they both inform and appeal to the reader?

There is a difference between being able to *declare* how to do it and being able to *do* the task. Sheridan Burns (2002) cites Ryle (1960) who describes knowledge as developing in three stages. The first stage is “knowing what” referring to the ability to recognise, for example, the inverted pyramid form in the newspaper. Next comes “knowing how” which refers to the ability to repeat the procedures and skills. The third stage is “being able to do” which in journalism relates to the use of critical intellectual processes required to identify news, to gather and evaluate the information and write in a competent and attractive fashion so that the story informs and entertains (p.32). The act of writing and the acting of learning are also different. The writing process has a material aim, producing a text, while the learning process has a cognitive aim, acquiring knowledge, as well as having the skill to produce the text (Couzijn, 1999).

Journalism programmes throughout New Zealand are accredited or approved by the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO) which sets the criteria for

² The New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation unit standards (2008) are now proposing to stipulate that all students must write at least 20 news stories.

teaching news writing. What are the influences on students of the framework of the NZJTO unit standards? Do the unit standards cover all aspects of journalism? And do they cover such subjects as the history of the media industry so that the students not only learn the skills but receive a critical, theoretical education about the media?

The final question I posed was: *Is change in journalism education necessary?* This is a difficult time to be a professional journalist. Newspaper readership is ageing and declining while the issue of the credibility of the media is increasingly important. Many young, aspiring journalists think they are entering a career where they will be independent, critical thinkers, able to initiate and investigate important issues and question the power in society (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003). However, there is no evidence to show that this is the reality. Staff numbers are being cut in various branches of the media, as ownership becomes concentrated in large transnational corporations. New methods are being introduced, with the increased development of the internet. The media industry is evolving rapidly and much of the change is driven by digital technology and convergence. So what does this mean for journalism education? Are the students of today being educated to critically evaluate and withstand these changes? Does this mean that reform is necessary?

New Zealand journalism education has been little debated and little researched. Study of the way students learn to write is equally in its infancy. The aim of this research is to provide a basis for constructive discussion by adding new knowledge to a field that has so far seen little change. *The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way* explores how students learn to write and tracks the major influences on their writing as they move from being novice writers to entering the profession of journalism.

1.5 The organisation of the thesis

This chapter has summarised the study, detailing my own interest and involvement in the research and situating it in a setting of the continuing struggle for control and power between the media industry and the academy. Chapter 2 reviews the literature, placing the study in a wider context of journalism in the western world. The second chapter is

also designed as a lens through which to view the rest of this study. It will discuss the history of New Zealand journalism education from its early beginnings in Britain and training on the job, through development in the United States in universities to its present form today. Touching on the profession of journalism, it will also consider whether the image of independence today is a myth, because of declining numbers and the increasing control by transnational groups.

Chapter 3 will detail the findings of the preliminary study, describing the methods used to teach news writing in the 11 New Zealand journalism schools in 2002. It will discuss the strong emphasis journalism educators place on socialising the students so that they know, understand and can follow the dictates of the media industry. Chapter 4 will look at the design, implementation and analytical procedures of the main study, covering the methodology, methods used and the participants.

The next five chapters discuss the findings of this study. Two students talk about their experiences in Chapter 5, providing a preview of the chapters that follow, combining discourse analysis with the reflections recorded immediately after writing. The merging of the two methods allows the “human face” of the study to be presented: not only are the students’ news stories analysed but their reflections show what they were thinking when they wrote each sentence. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 contain detailed discourse analyses of the students’ news writing. Every news story was given to a journalist who wrote a “professional version” which was used to consider the differences. Chapter 6 explores the students’ news stories at the beginning of the year, focusing on the differences between their early attempts and the experienced journalist’s versions. Chapter 7 discusses the progress in the students’ news stories in the middle of the year and the influence of time spent on work experience in the industry, mainly in community newspapers. It will also consider the students’ ability to write “hybrid” news stories, often written in both a different style and form than the inverted pyramid. Chapter 8 looks at the students’ news stories at the end of the year, assessing whether they could be judged as professional journalists and notes how their education has failed to provide them with the necessary skills. Chapter 9 concludes the five findings chapters, by considering the students’ reflections throughout the year and what they reveal, while Chapter 10 will conclude this study with some recommendations for change.

Chapter 2 follows, placing journalism education in its historical context through the literature which has informed this study. It looks at the early beginnings of journalism and how a “professional” education was seen as a tool to improve the occupation’s status. Journalism education in New Zealand is traced through its development in polytechnics to the modern day where, despite it being increasingly taught in universities, it still follows the traditional skills-based form. The chapter concludes by considering some of the literature on what is called “journalism studies” and some suggestions for reform of journalism education which might enable students to understand more fully the meaning of being a journalist.

2 A Review of the Literature: Placing Journalism Education in an Historical Setting

Time walks beside us and flings back shutters as we advance; but the light thus given often dazzles us, and deepens the darkness which is in front ... (Butler, 1872, p. 191).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature surrounding the research topic: *The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way*. There are many different ways of studying journalism: as an institution, a set of practices, as sociological inquiry, through political science, cultural analysis, through its language, as text, or as history (Zelizer, 2004). It is integral to understanding both the concept of professionalism and its relationship with New Zealand journalism education to explore its history as a first step, in order to comprehend more fully the present-day model. The following chapter should also be seen in the same vein as a journalist's lead sentence. A journalist's lead sentence is not merely a summary of the story to follow, but is also directional, "a lens through which the point of the story is focused" (Bell, 1991, p. 183). This chapter provides a lens through which to view the rest of this study by expounding the fundamental theme which I intend to investigate in the chapters that follow. It will show that in New Zealand, as elsewhere in the Anglo-American world, journalism education faces many areas of conflict and is characterised by the struggle for control and power between the media industry and the academy. In New Zealand, it is the media industry that dominates.

The next section traces the origins of New Zealand journalism education from Britain where journalists were trained on the job to the beginnings of university education in the United States. It then follows its development in this country's polytechnics where, under the influence of the industry training body, it was taught as a craft, to the present day, where it is more popularly taught in universities. However, despite the change to university-style qualifications, New Zealand journalism education remains directed largely by the media industry and is based on the teaching of skills necessary for that industry. Section 2.3 covers the concept of professionalism, linking this to journalism

education. Once the students have completed a journalism programme, they aspire to be seen as professional journalists. Journalists in New Zealand, as in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, enthusiastically embrace the concept of being “professional,” because of the status that surrounds it. The desire to attain this status is often associated with education and the need for qualifications as a journalist, better working conditions and increased remuneration (Reese & Cohen, 2000). However, journalists do not recognise that the professionalism they aspire to is not realistic. Journalists’ independence is declining as the media become increasingly concentrated in a few transnational corporate groups. Section 2.4 explores whether university education has changed the craft model of journalism education by encouraging critical thinking and considers some of the scholarly debate on the topic. It is argued that in New Zealand any change of direction is not marked, as yet. The next section calls for more debate on the journalism curriculum. It proposes a new student-centred model for journalism education combining the professional skills of journalism with an understanding of communication theories, and encouraging critical thinking (Atton, 2003; Macdonald, 2006; Skinner, Gasher, & Compton, 2001). Section 2.6 concludes this chapter, reiterating its central theme.

2.2 The beginnings of journalism education

In the early days, the only education for journalists was to learn on the job and anything else was regarded with suspicion. Britain established the model for the colonies, the United States, Australia and New Zealand to follow. Being a journalist in Britain in those times was not seen as an entirely credible occupation. Writers were described as authors, curranters, mercurists, newsmen, newsmongers, diurnalists, gazetteers and, eventually, journalists. Ben Jonson, in the early seventeenth century, described news as “tattling” (Conboy, 2004). By Queen Victoria’s time, it was still not viewed as an entirely reputable calling. It smacked of bohemianism and adventurism: respectable people, following the Queen’s lead, were not inclined to receive journalists socially (Raudsepp, 1989).

From these beginnings, British journalism practitioners have strived to attain the social standing and financial rewards associated with being regarded as a profession. In 1907, this resulted in the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) breaking away from the

Chartered Institute of Journalists (IoJ). The IoJ believed that journalism was already firmly established as a profession and little further action was needed, while the NUJ expressed the sentiment that too much attention was being paid to social status and the feelings of the owners, and not enough to journalists' poor pay and working conditions (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003).

As in Britain, journalists were not highly regarded in the United States. Carey (2000) describes early journalists:

....reporters were not educated individuals, most assuredly they were not literary people. They were an unlikely collection of itinerant scribblers, aspiring or more often failed novelists, ne'er-do-well children of established families, and most importantly, the upwardly mobile children of immigrants with an inherited rather than an educated gift of language, without much education and certainly without much refinement (Carey, 2000, p. 16).

Late in the nineteenth century, American newspapers were expanding rapidly, driven by commercial interests. Along with this growth, the role of the reporter/journalist became more important and there was an increased call from those associated with newspapers for journalists to be recognised as professionals. With no recognised means of entry into their field, journalists turned to the university to provide courses of training (Starck, 2000). In 1892, multimillionaire publisher Joseph Pulitzer sought to establish journalism in the United States as an "intellectual profession". His idea was to raise the status of journalism by linking it to the concept of a professional organisation whose aim was to perform public service (Raudsepp, 1989):

My idea is to recognize that journalism is, or ought to be, one of the great and intellectual professions; to encourage, elevate and educate in a practical way the present and still more, future members of that profession, exactly as if it were the profession of law or medicine (Dennis, 1988, p. 11).

Carey (2000) argues that the much-idealised Columbia School of Journalism was started with an ulterior motive. Pulitzer offered to endow such a programme with \$2 million but the wealthy newspaper publisher had a doubtful reputation himself as one instigator of the lively and provocative "yellow press" (Campbell, 2001). He contends that Pulitzer was motivated by the concept of co-opting an undisciplined and contentious group and aligning them more closely with the aims of business enterprise. Journalists attracted low wages, lived in working-class neighbourhoods and were not averse to

joining trade unions. Carey claims that Pulitzer felt a university education might turn them into disciplined workers and end their trade union and socialist attitudes.

Columbia was not the first United States journalism school. Four years earlier in 1908, the University of Missouri had opened its school. It was followed by a number of early journalism training courses in the mid-west which were the outcome of smaller newspapers seeking to gain more prestige for their businesses (Carey, 2000).

British journalism education, however, remained “piecemeal, disputed, frequently under-funded, lacking in strategic vision and shaped neither by practitioners nor employers for nearly a hundred years” (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003, p. 554). It was not until after World War I in 1919 that the first university course was established at London University. Almost 50 years later in 1970, the University of Wales began a postgraduate course and it took another 20 years until the 1990s for journalism education to “take off” in Britain, in tandem with the increased popularity of university education (Herbert, 2000).

While journalism education in the United States is generally regarded as the model to follow, it is little different today from Britain in that its main focus is on the attainment of professional skills (Macdonald, 2006). The Columbia School of Journalism has attained iconic status with its reputation based on an imitation newsroom, specialising in writing tightly for a deadline (Kunkel, 2003). And, in Britain, the traditional provider, the National Council of Training for Journalists (NCTJ), continues to be strongly influential, accrediting about 38 institutions running 66 degree programmes, aiming to prepare students for work in local and national newsrooms (National Council of Training for Journalists, 2007).

2.2.1 Early beginnings in New Zealand

As in Britain, in the early days in New Zealand the only education for journalists was to learn in the newsroom as the usefulness of training was not highly regarded and on-the-job and apprenticeship training was preferred. Some believed the newsroom was the only place to learn to be a journalist, while others argued the ability to ask questions and write was a natural disposition or “a gift”, an attitude that remained prevalent until the 1970s (Herbert, 2000).

The catalyst for formal education was the establishment of the New Zealand Institute of Journalists in 1891. The members of the institute included both newspaper owners and reporters who wanted to increase the social and professional status of journalists by controlling entry to journalism through the formal testing of qualifications (Elsaka, 2005). The university, where professionals such as doctors and lawyers were educated, was seen as the proper place for any formal education to take place. In 1908 the first formal discussion about a university course for New Zealand journalists was held. A well-known Canterbury academic, Sir James Hight, wrote a memorandum to the board of governors of Canterbury University College, proposing a university course to culminate in a Diploma of Journalism be introduced (Newth, 1997).

While both journalists and newspaper proprietors appeared to support the proposal, the few students expressing an interest were not sufficient to start the course until 1911, and it was another 10 years before the first graduate (Elsaka, 2004). The preferred place for journalism training remained the newsroom. Mistrust for anything else is evidenced by the small number of university graduates during this period. In 1916 the *Australasian Journalist* recorded that in 1914-1915 one person sat the diploma and failed. It also recorded the comprehensive range of subjects available for the 1916 Diploma in Journalism. The diploma consisted of mainly practical journalism skills, including the meaning of news, the value of facts as news, reporting, interviews, economy of words, preparation of copy, proof-reading but English language and literature, modern history, economics, statistical method and psychology were also on the list, very similar to a present-day university programme for journalists (Anonymous, 1916). It was not until 1919 that the first journalist to graduate from a New Zealand university was recorded. The Reverend Albert Bygrave Chappell graduated from Auckland University College. He and Canterbury University College graduate Oliver Duff both worked as journalists and appear to have gained the requirements for the Diploma of Journalism without any formal university supervision (Newth, 1997). In 1923, Auckland University established a journalism course which ran for only a short time, while a similar proposal for Victoria University College in Wellington never gained favour (Elsaka, 2004).

Dissatisfaction with the Canterbury course did not diminish but increased over the years. Newth quotes a 1928 Canterbury graduate who found preference was given to juniors who trained on the job. Well-known writer, publisher and early journalism

educator Christine Cole-Catley attended Canterbury University College in the 1940s and did the diploma course. She recalls it as “not much chop” and she did not bother sitting the examinations (C. Cole-Catley, personal communication, October 28, 1999). Times of crisis for the Canterbury course occurred when it failed to meet the needs of the media employers (Newth, 1997). This theme will occur frequently in New Zealand journalism education, indicating the power and control of the media industry.

2.2.2 The industry dominates with “trade schools”

Despite its early start, university education for New Zealand journalists did not become as popular as its proponents might have wished for another 90 years. In 1956, the Newspapers Publishers Association (NPA) expressed strong reservations about the standards of journalism training at Canterbury University College. The New Zealand Journalists Association (NZJA), the body that had replaced the old institute, was also unhappy and, facing this combined opposition, the diploma course was closed (Elsaka, 2004).

The failure of the Diploma in Journalism led to the establishment of “trade schools” in the polytechnics or technical institutes in the 1960s and 1970s. The first year-long polytechnic programme was established at Wellington Polytechnic in 1964. Then, during the 1970s, a six-month programme started at the Auckland Technical Institute. The late Geoff Black was the tutor who was in charge and his imprint set the foundation for what exists today in many journalism courses in New Zealand. In the early days the Auckland journalism programme ran like an independent unit. It had its own budget and its own rented building. It was solely influenced by the industry it served, training journalists using methods which Black brought from that industry. Many employers would employ only his graduates as they knew they would get the kind of “well-trained, well-skilled young journalists they wanted” (Thomas, 1999, p. 51).

In 1971, the New Zealand Journalists Training Committee (NZJTC), the body that was soon to be the most influential force in journalism training, was set up, funded by newspaper editors through the Commonwealth Press Association. It was supported by the NZJA as part of its strategy to establish a nationwide system for journalism training, to control entry into journalism, elevate its status and also sharpen journalists’ industrial bargaining power (Elsaka, 2004). The training committee’s first foray into formal

journalism training was to introduce a two-year, in-house course for young cadets that included a version of what is known today as distance learning. The aim was to provide training kit-sets for young people to equip them with the professional, technical and other skills required in journalism, as well as giving them a respect for accuracy, clear writing and personal and professional integrity. In 1972, 294 trainees, working for 41 newspapers, were issued with these kit-sets (Milne, 1988). In 1973 the committee was reconstituted as a vocational training board, the New Zealand Journalists Training Board (NZJTB). The members of the training board and the ensuing organisation, the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO) have predominantly represented various media companies, mainly newspapers, with a token delegate from journalism educators and the union of journalists. The training board's first job was to oversee the three journalism courses in operation at the time: at Auckland Technical Institute, the reopened Canterbury University course and Wellington Polytechnic. During the 1980s and 1990s, the training board was also fully supportive of an additional seven journalism programmes throughout the country.

In the late 1980s, the influence of the employers in journalism training was strengthened by a government initiative. The government of the time reduced the available funds for vocational training, thus placing pressure on employers to provide more money. In 1987, Patrick Greene, then executive director of the NPA, called a meeting of media industry representatives to discuss the situation. His memo is an indication of the further struggle between the academy and the industry to gain control. He describes the increasing concern in the industry about journalists' training, including the proliferation of polytechnic "media training" courses, the standard of the established polytechnic courses and the role and function of the training board (P. Greene, personal communication, September 10, 1999). More than 70 high-ranking industry representatives met, representing all branches of the media including radio and television, and pledged support for a joint training organisation. They also agreed to a levy to be paid per journalist which would support the board once government funding ceased (D. Milne, personal communication, September 5, 1999).

While this promised financial support has varied over the years, the input of at least some parts of the media industry has remained constant. It has also meant that a degree of uniformity exists in institutions teaching journalism in New Zealand (see Chapter 3),

unlike in neighbouring Australia. Over the years, this has varied little and was the context in which this research was undertaken.

Since 1989, New Zealand has seen major reform in its education system as well as the health and welfare systems. This was part of an agenda encompassing rapid change, typified by education institutions being able to manage themselves, plus a greater emphasis on specifying outputs and increased accountability. As part of this reform movement, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was established. A major plank of the reform document proposed a national qualifications framework that would incorporate all nationally recognised qualifications. These are the unit standards that are the dominant force in New Zealand journalism education (Codd, 1995). Unit standards derive from a behaviourist philosophy called competence-based training that was popular in industrial training circles in the early 1980s. Universities have rejected them generally as reductionist and a curb on academic freedom (Sligo, 2004). They opposed their introduction, arguing that they were incompatible with the notion of excellence and would have a disruptive effect on the coherence and integrity of university degrees. They would fragment knowledge and would also emphasise measurable behaviours at the expense of problem-solving and higher-level thinking (Thomas, 2000).

The concept of unit standards was not new as the industry training body had earlier attempted to produce some basic criteria to measure the training of journalists. Some years before, it had employed a Wellington consultant to compile a document to describe the minimum standards that a student should have achieved on day one in the industry. There had been wide consultation with the media industry on these standards but there had been no apparent action in implementing them. The Minimum Standards Document provided an easy transition for the training board to establish unit standards. The new qualifications authority had just set up an office in Wellington and one of the first industry customers on its doorstep was the then chief executive of the training board, Joan Isaac. This put the training board, soon to become an incorporated industry training organisation, at the forefront of those introducing the unit standards (J. Isaac, personal communication, September 10, 1999).

While there were often heated words over the implementation of the journalism unit standards, the degree of opposition from the polytechnics never went any further. The

Polytechnics, unlike the universities, had a history of cooperating with industry as well as a tradition of providing skills-based training. It should also be noted that most journalism schools were established after the unit standards were introduced in the early 1990s, and were often staffed by a single over-worked tutor who was grateful for the guidance the unit standards and the NZJTO provided³.

Isaac saw the unit standards providing a benchmark for good practice. She also saw them as a method of getting the tertiary institutions to teach what the media industry wanted, rather than what they wanted. She believed that in the main the polytechnics accepted the substance of the units. The problems occurred with what they saw as “interference” and they did not want to see the media industry as a partner (J. Isaac, personal communication, September 10, 1999). But once these problems were overcome, they met little resistance and, with one review in 1997, they remain the major influence on New Zealand journalism. Newly reviewed unit standards will be introduced in 2008 and, though there have been some modifications, the criteria remain similar to the earlier ones. Chapter 4 describes the 10 New Zealand journalism courses in 2003, which were accredited or approved by the NZJTO to teach the unit standards and the course at Canterbury University. This course was never accredited, because of the university’s opposition, but in a neat compromise, was “approved” by the NZJTO (Thomas, 1999). This little-publicised compromise was indicative of the degree of co-operation between the media industry and the teaching institutions and meant that the Canterbury University programme, while appearing to adhere to the university practice, taught journalism to basically unit standard requirements.

It was not surprising that the influence of the media industry remained dominant in New Zealand. In a small population, close relationships exist between the journalism schools and employers. Industry members not only serve on advisory committees for all journalism institutions but also are part of the panels where suitable students are selected. They present lectures on specialist subjects and provide work experience for the students. On graduation, over 90 per cent of all students are employed in the industry compared with about 30 per cent in Australia (Oakham & Tidey, 2000).

³ The author represented community newspapers on the NZJTO from 1988 to 1994.

The NZJTO unit standards set detailed criteria for the skills to be taught to journalism students. They are a list of the professional skills and cover essentially news writing and other skills considered essential for a journalist including news gathering, reporting public affairs, local bodies and court proceedings, shorthand, broadcasting and television skills, public affairs reporting, editing and design, defamation and ethics.. What is not spelt out is also noteworthy: missing from the unit standards is the concept that students might find critical thought or media criticism useful skills to develop. The organisation sets strict standards as to what is to be taught. The teaching programme is expected to mirror the working environment appropriate to the unit standards being assessed. Another requirement is that all journalism educators must have spent at least five years working in the media industry (*Journalism schools, New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation website*, 2002). Thus journalism education is expected to reproduce the occupation, routines and constraints of journalism. Teaching to these criteria leads to “learning by doing” being seen as the best method for students to learn journalism. Right from the start, students learn to interview, research and write news stories, taught by former journalists. Computer rooms are set up as newsrooms, tutors act as subeditors and students write news stories for publication usually in community newspapers (see Chapter 3). Work experience, mirroring on-the-job training in the media industry, is seen as a vital ingredient.

2.2.3 The ultimate socialising experience – work experience

Traditionally, work experience has been seen in New Zealand as the core of journalism training, an essential step in continuing with a new form of on-the-job training. Work experience is based in the wider field of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning joins education, work and personal development and emphasises the linkages that can be developed between the classroom and the “real world”. A major factor is socialisation, or enculturation. Students are expected to adopt the cultural context of their workplace and are socialised to follow its values and ideology. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) consider that all authentic learning is a process of enculturation. Experiential learning is also known as situated learning or situated cognition (Brown et al., 1989; Dunlap & Grabinger, 1994), internships, work/study programmes, field projects, field education (Fletcher, 1991) and cooperative education (Ricks, Cutt, Branton, Loken, & Van Gyn, 1993; Van Gyn, 1994; Van Gyn, Cutt, Loken, & Ricks,

1997; Wilson, 1988, 1989). Cooperative education became recognised as a useful educational strategy in tertiary education in the 1970s, in order to bring more “real world” and practical vocational training to previously theoretically based programmes.

New Zealand journalism students spend at least two weeks during their journalism programme on work experience, except at one institution where both the course and the internship period are much longer (see Chapter 3). Both students and journalism educators find it beneficial. For the students, it is generally an enjoyable, exciting and worthwhile time. Journalism educators see it as a crucial experience for students, disproportionate to its length, reinforcing the importance of socialisation as integral in journalism education. Students spend this time in non-daily newspapers though a smaller number work in radio, magazines, television or on-line. In non-daily newspapers often centred on communities of interest, lack of staff and stretched resources mean that loftier ideals of journalism often give way to the more practical issues of finding enough stories (Cafarella, 2001). Non-daily newspapers cover community, suburban and country newspapers and are generally seen as the “poor relation” to their daily counterparts. They usually have no cover charge, relying solely on advertising to fund all branches of their activities and are largely produced by a young and lowly paid workforce that turns over fairly rapidly before it moves on to the metropolitan media or to more highly regarded jobs (Morgan, 2001). Thus non-daily newspapers provide fruitful ground for journalism students who are willing to work for them, in return for experience and publication of their stories, and also as the first step in a hierarchical process leading to employment in more highly regarded and prestigious national papers.

For cooperative education to provide an experience that is more than merely workforce reproduction through socialisation, it must encourage students not only to learn about the industry but to judge the practices of the “real world” for themselves. One of the essential features necessary to learn from experience is that of reflection. Reflection can mean the act of thinking but in educational terms it has come to mean the act of articulating those thoughts in some way, whether verbally or in writing. Reflection allows critical thoughts to be enunciated and formalised, and in a secure environment, leads to debate. Reflection is not straightforward and can create unforeseen difficulties for both the learner and the teacher. Sometimes the conventional role of the teacher as

the authority is challenged. Sometimes the newspaper may do something that the learner sees as morally wrong or unethical and sometimes the learner cannot handle the emotions produced (see Chapter 9). Reflection may also lead to serious questioning of the chosen vocation and throw up ethical dilemmas related to the practice of experienced professionals (Boud et al., 1998).

The philosophy of John Dewey has been adopted by the cooperative education movement as its own. Early in the twentieth century, this great proponent of experiential learning worried that too much stress on the importance of work experience put the emphasis on practice, when it was the concepts and analytic work that must be predominant. In discussing teacher education, Dewey believed that students learn to teach appropriately by imitation and subservience to a supervising teacher. Thus intellectual assertiveness and creativity could be lost (Berliner, 1984). This criticism may equally be directed at New Zealand journalism education, where evaluation, critical thinking and reflection about work experience are often neglected or “sanitized and scientized and students are left with little opportunity to critically appraise the meaning and value of [how] professionals come to know what they know” (Glasser & Ettema, 1989, p.3). Without this vital aspect, work experience should be seen as the ultimate socialising step in becoming a professional journalist, as another form of on-the-job training.

This section began with New Zealand journalism education’s growth from its British origins and on the job training. While the numbers of students and institutions providing training has grown, what is being taught appears to have changed little from the predominantly skills-based learning of earlier years. This results from the control of the media industry and the role of the unit standards in journalism education, as well as the unusual degree of cooperation between the media industry and the journalism institutions. The next section will consider the concept of professionalism, linking this to the need for higher qualifications and the desire for social status.

2.3 The concept of professionalism

In a study into the training of 1820 journalists in 22 countries, Sparks and Splichal (1989) found the most important theme was the uncertain status of journalism and the

question of professionalism. While most journalists aspire to be seen as professionals, “professionalism” is a problematic concept. The definition and the occupations described as professions have changed over time, while members have promoted their own definitions of what they do and why they are entitled to be called a profession. Being professional is not one but many related concepts. This allows different parties with different goals to use the same term without fully acknowledging what is happening (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003). The *Oxford Compact English Dictionary* (Soanes, 2000) gives as one definition of a profession: “a paid vocation or calling, involving training and a formal qualification” (p.903). However, this ignores the question of social status which the term has come to encompass. This section argues that journalists aspire to be professionals, because to them professionalism represents social status and higher pay. Journalism education at a university is seen as one way of gaining this status. Aldridge and Evetts (2003) see professionalism as a discourse as it is how journalists see themselves. Journalists see “professionalism” equating to a young, fearless investigative journalist working independently to uncover government or big-business scandals. But in fact this is a myth. Modern-day professional journalists work under a series of constraints (Sparks & Splichal, 1989), both in the nature of their occupation and with diminishing independence as more and more media outlets are owned by transnational corporate groups.

2.3.1 Historical development of professionalism in New Zealand

For over 100 years, journalists have strived to be seen as professionals, because of the way the occupation began. The first British journalists were not seen as entirely reputable (Raudsepp, 1989), American journalists were undisciplined and contentious (Carey, 2000) and, in Australia, the popular tradition was of an undisciplined, drunken larrikin (Cryle, 1997; Sheridan Burns, 2001). As noted previously, Carey (2000) argues that Pulitzer’s goal in establishing the prestigious Columbia School of Journalism was to create from this unruly group a well-disciplined, non-unionised work force through fostering a professional education.

New Zealand journalists, however, were of a different “breed” than their British, Australian and American counterparts. From the time the country was settled in 1840, journalists in this country were viewed as respectable and of a relatively high social

status. This was the result of two factors. Firstly, the early New Zealand newspapers were set up by politicians, who saw them as a tool in promoting a successful political career. Thus the association of the New Zealand press with the elite of the colony automatically conferred respectability. Secondly, the comparatively late date of settlement in New Zealand, and its small population and geographic isolation meant that it was relatively free from overseas influences. Although the popularity of the working-class press in Britain and the “yellow press” in the United States tarnished the overall reputation of newspapers in those countries, the New Zealand equivalent, *NZ Truth*, seen as the “champion of the little person and the scourge of corruption and scandal in high places”, did not have the same effect. In the late nineteenth century in New Zealand, it was taken for granted that journalism was a profession (Day, 1990).

Elsaka details the efforts of successive journalist organisations in New Zealand to maintain this professional status from the nineteenth century through to the end of the twentieth century. Throughout this period, there was little difference in their aims and aspirations. They wanted improved status gained through higher qualifications and occupational closure. The establishment of the New Zealand Institute of Journalists (NZIJ) in 1891 represented the first formal attempt to define journalism as an occupation (Elsaka 2005). This organisation was made up not only of journalists but also of owners of newspapers and editors who saw themselves as a unified occupational grouping (Verry, 1985). Modelled on the British Chartered Institute of Journalists, Elsaka notes the organisation viewed itself as a “select body” and did not function as a trade union but was concerned with maintaining a high standard of honour among its members, befitting their professional status. Many of its objectives were also borrowed from the British institute. The members had a long-term goal to devise criteria and qualifications to test whether candidates were suitable to join the organisation, aiming to promote the status of journalists through occupational closure. They also planned to maintain their standards by expelling members involved in misconduct. A recurring theme was that journalism was just as important – if not more so – to the public than the professions of medicine and law (Elsaka, 2005).

But the NZIJ’s plans foundered when New Zealand journalists began to question, like their British and American counterparts, why the importance of journalism to the public was not recognised in its economic rewards. Elsaka contends that the “ethos of

professionalism that surrounded journalistic work was at odds with the reality of journalists' wages and working conditions" (p.76). In 1912, the New Zealand Journalists Association (NZJA) was established as an attempt to reconcile the two views: It was sympathetic to the economic plight of journalists but also in favour of social status gained through being seen as a professional. It avoided disquiet about being described as a union by calling itself an "association" but at the same time worked to gain higher wages and better working conditions and also aimed to secure a social status for journalists, comparable to doctors and lawyers. In the 1930s, its plans were to gain this status by making the registration of all journalists compulsory. This proposal failed to come to fruition as did their plans 20 years later. In 1951, the NZJA proposed to establish an institute of journalism to improve professional and ethical standards and preserve the freedom of the press. The institute would establish training for journalists and organise examinations to restrict entry into the profession. These ambitious plans were also abandoned after a conflict which at its core was about journalism's status: whether it was a trade or a profession and whether it should be organised along professional lines or as a trade union. During the 1950s, the NZJA remained active in proposing journalism courses at Victoria and Otago university colleges, later supporting the establishment of the first polytechnic programme in Wellington, believing that formal university qualifications and better training for journalists would improve the quality of journalism as a whole, as well as add to their goal of achieving professionalism (Elsaka, 2004).

After the 1970s, the appeal of professionalism declined both as an occupational identity and as a strategy to advance journalists' interests, to be replaced by economic concerns and industrial action. In 1973, the NZJA changed its name to the journalists' union as a further illustration of this change in emphasis. Hirst (2007) argues that the "debate about professionalising journalism is hamstrung by the economic realities of news production: While news proprietors may observe the "rhetoric of professionalism" they have a keen financial interest in keeping wages low" (p.10). These economic concerns, coupled with the growth of industrialisation, also led to the formation of journalists' unions in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003; Elsaka, 2004; Hirst, 2007).

2.3.2 The professionals of today

Different approaches have been applied to the study of professionalism. This diversity of approach is reflected in sociological literature on the topic, dominated by three strands: the phenomenological approach, the power-relations approach and the traits approach (Elsaka, 2004).

The phenomenological approach is the least formalised (Beam, 1990). It rejects strict, formal definitions as artificial and instead advocates studying the way ordinary members of a profession see the term. Many analyses of professionalism in journalism view it essentially as a phenomenon. For example, Tuchman (1978) studies objectivity as a work practice and Schudson (1978) sees professionalism as an ideological commitment to objectivity and truth. The power-relations approach dominated in the 1960s and 1970s, and was an evolutionary stage uniting those who saw professionalism as an elite conspiracy of powerful occupational workers (Elsaka, 2004). The third approach catalogues the traits or attributes shared by occupations commonly identified as professions. Beam lists these attributes: professions are organised around a systematic body of knowledge or technique, feature broad occupational autonomy and authority, emphasise public service over economic gain, socialise members into a common culture and produce non-standardised occupational products. Membership is typically life-long. Though this approach has been criticised and is seen as outdated, it is interesting to consider how journalism can be measured against these attributes where it can only be regarded as in the lower tier of professions, a semi-profession based on the premise that the occupation is moving in the direction of established professions by acquiring more and more characteristics, such as a formal system of education and self-regulatory structures including a code of ethics (Beam, 1990). Reese (1999), however, argues that journalism, rather than moving in the direction of established professions, is sliding backwards with the rise in corporate oversight and editorial formulae, coupled with a decline in salaries.

While there is a lack of consensus about what professionalism means, today most journalists view themselves as “professionals” (de Bruin, 2000). Throughout the Anglo-American world, journalists see themselves as “the fourth estate”, independent of state, political parties and interest groups. They perceive they are responsible for keeping a check on government and the power of big business. And they pride themselves on their

independence. Employers also add to this self-image. Today the concept of being a professional, coupled with a university education, is used as part of a slogan in recruitment campaigns. It is also used in conjunction with organisational aims and objectives to motivate employees where it is appealing and attractive for “workers” to see themselves as professionals and this has been embodied in managerial literature such as training manuals (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003).

This self-belief is reinforced through images in film and television. Many young people aspire to become journalists after seeing American television programmes featuring the roving investigative reporter who has the independence to expose scandals such as Watergate, or the overbearing but charismatic gruff editor with a heart of gold and an unswerving belief in truth and the freedom of the press (Delano, 2000). Youth are also beguiled by the thought of entering a top “profession” and becoming a celebrity newsreader or anchorperson with all the glamour of a movie star. This public view is reinforced by the media through columns, newspaper stories and television items about themselves. As Aldridge and Evetts argue: “[A]s professional story tellers it is hardly surprising that journalists have an unusually elaborate and frequently paraded occupational belief ...” (p. 560). Journalists’ flawed self-identity is strengthened because the reality of the occupation is very different.

Journalists cling to and embellish these images because much of their work is fundamentally routine and constrained. Strict rules apply to how to write. Van Dijk (1986) describes the basic form of writing employed by all young journalists as the “inverted-pyramid format”. The production of news written in this format, because of tight deadlines, is further constrained by the professional routines and values, types of sources used and the nature of inputting texts. Journalists use standard strategies to promote the assertions found within the story, emphasising their factual nature but also having emotional appeal. Specific scripts or attitude schemata are adopted: facts are inserted into well-known situation models that mean they are familiar to readers even if they include new information. News stories are direct descriptions and include close, concrete details with numbers, including the exact age, while cost, distances and measurements are used often to enhance the credibility. To emphasise their factual nature, official, well-known and credible sources (for example, police and public officials) are selected to provide an ideologically coherent perspective.

News values are an important element and provide the key to how news stories are selected. Developed and applied to foreign news in the Scandinavian press by social scientists Galtung and Ruge (1965) 40 years ago, they relate to 12 factors still considered integral today. “Negativity” is the basic stuff of news, involving concepts such as death, injury and conflict between people, political parties or nations. The more clear-cut a story is, the more it is favoured as a news story. There is “frequency”, described as “recency” (Bell, 1983), where the best news is something that has only just happened. It is also described as “timeliness” (Morrison, 1999) or “immediacy” (Masterton, 1998). “Threshold” means the more people killed, the larger the headline. “Meaningfulness” could also be described as both cultural and geographic relevance, while “consonance” covers how compatible the story is with common preconceptions about the social group or nation from which the news actors come, and the stereotypes that are expressed. “Predictability” is the concept that what one expects to happen, usually happens. “Unexpectedness”, “continuity”, and “composition” are three more news values. “Elite people”, such as politicians and, increasingly, celebrities such as television stars or sports stars, make news out of things that are generally ignored if ordinary people did them, while “elite nations” are western nations. Finally, there is “personification”, about people. Two additional factors add to the list of news values. Firstly, the more events satisfy the criteria, the more likely that they will be registered as news. This is described as “selection”. Secondly, once a news item has been selected as news, what makes it newsworthy will need to be written in such a way as to accentuate these factors. Galtung and Ruge argue that this is “distortion” (p. 71). Both these processes will take place at all steps from the event happening to the final story being written, so the more material there is to select, the more the facts will be “distorted” (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

These news values have been updated and added to over the years. Bell argues for adding three additional values: “competition” or the desire for a scoop; “co-option” where a story that is only tangentially related can be presented in terms of a high profile, continuing story; and “prefabrication”, the existence of ready-made texts, such as press releases, cuttings and agency copy that journalists can process rapidly, will greatly increase the likelihood of something appearing in the news (Bell, 1991). Harcup and O’Neill combine two of Galtung and Ruge’s original values, “meaningfulness” and “proximity”, replacing them with the concept of “relevance”. Their list also includes

“celebrity”, stories concerning people who are already famous; “entertainment”, stories concerning sex and show business; and “human interest”, covering stories about animals, unfolding drama or opportunities for humorous treatment, entertaining photos, or a witty headline (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001).

While the volume of academic writing on the nature of news is vast, journalists do not necessarily find it valid. They think that they know by experience and intuition what makes news and the criteria only reinforce that knowledge (Masterton, 1998). But news values are not an objective notion. They are a process of judgement, dictated to by the demands of the news industry and the habit of the public for a daily diet of news (Morrison, 1999). They have also been described as “common sense”(Glasser & Ettema, 1989) – not just a shared cognitive facility that enables people to perceive the world in similar ways but a “learned and considered response to the world” (p2). Taking this concept further, Niblock (2007) describes how news has become market-driven, particularly in radio, through the careful selection of language to ensure that the news is accessible and engaging to different lifestyle groups in the community.

Journalism is also characterised by occupational protections such as objectivity. Objectivity is tied to fairness and accuracy as important tenets of a journalist's creed. It is the separation of news and comment, of facts and opinion. The traditional principled claim is that good journalism is the disinterested search for and weighing of evidence in the public interest, in just the same way that a doctor acts in a patient's interests. Various reasons are put forward for the development of objectivity. While earlier newspapers were partisan, arguing for one political view (Day, 1990), newspapers as we know them today grew up as an increasingly literate society wanted mass-produced news. Profitability rather than politics became the key to selling newspapers. Technology changes also influenced their growth. When paper was able to be developed from wood pulp rather than rags, newspapers could be produced more cheaply. The invention of the telegraph is also credited with the rise of objectivity. It allowed journalists to report from distant places, but was unreliable so journalists had to transmit only the bare essentials, the facts. Narrative and opinion followed by post so that news and comment became separated.

Schudson (2001) argues that it was not only these commercial and technological factors that were responsible: he believes that when journalism developed its own occupational

culture in the 1920s, objectivity became the norm. Newspaper editors formed their own national professional association, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, at this time and adopted a Code of Ethics that included the principles of sincerity, truthfulness, accuracy and impartiality (Pratte, 1995, as cited in Schudson, 2001, p.163). Several forces combined to add to this. The new norm of objectivity was a form of industrial discipline enabling editors to keep reporters in check. It also provided a point of difference from the growing number of publicity agents and propagandists. At the same time the promotion of the norm fitted with the realism movement of the time. The journalists' commitment to reporting the world "as it is" aligned them with that thinking as they constructed the notion of "hard" facts which could be reported without shaping, slanting or colouring (Morrison, 2002). Neutrality and impartiality became institutionalised as a journalistic ideology, the concept of objectivity, which Tuchman (1978) describes as a strategic workplace ritual.

Despite their self-belief, the occupation of journalists does not have high socio-economic status in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia in 2000, newspaper journalists were rated 27th out of the 28 occupational groups studied in terms of perceived ethics and honesty. The only occupation to score lower than newspapers journalists was used-car salesmen (Roy Morgan, 2000, as cited by K. Green, 2003, p 162). Journalists have also consistently ranked poorly in the *Reader's Digest* annual poll of public trust in professions in various countries, including New Zealand. In the most recent poll published in *The New Zealand Herald* in 2002, journalists were rated at 21st out of 25 professions with only marketers, car salespeople and politicians ranking below them (as cited in Elsaka, 2004).

Journalists have therefore created a belief about their occupation which is far from the reality. In some respects, twenty-first century journalists face similar problems to those that confronted them at the beginning of the last century. There are divided views on how journalism should be regulated and organised and they also have little power to influence the increasing concentration of the media that employs them (Delano, 2000). Aldridge and Everts (2003) also argue that journalists' self-image is hiding a fundamental occupational change in journalism, which has not been strongly resisted. And the situation is deteriorating. The market is increasingly dominated by a small number of corporate groups. In New Zealand, prior to the 1990s, newspapers were

owned by a number of large and medium-sized groups and private families. Today, both newspapers and radio are owned by two powerful, transnational groups. More news is being produced by the same number of people and for the new corporate owners of the media, part of the attraction is the potential for reducing staffing levels while holding advertising revenues. Tunstall (1996) contends that by the mid-1990s, newspaper journalists in the United Kingdom were producing two to three times the output required from colleagues in the 1960s. While there are no comparable figures to support this in New Zealand, the trend of cutting large numbers of staff from both newspapers and television has been widely publicised. At the time of writing, agreement had been reached between the major television channels and the union which would see TVNZ reduce its workforce by up to 160 jobs, including 58 news and current affairs journalists (Greenslade, 2007).

This threat to New Zealand journalism coincides with redundancies at another main news provider, APN, which is also proposing cuts to its editorial department. APN News and Media has announced it is to “outsource” 70 sub-editing and design jobs at New Zealand’s largest newspaper *The New Zealand Herald* from July, 2007, and is evaluating a plan to buy production services for its other newspapers, spread throughout the country (Greenslade, 2007). Greenslade argues this is the first major trial reflecting major shareholder Tony O'Reilly's own belief that newspaper production can be centralised and outsourced, and he is also planning to do the same at his Irish newspapers. This latest move to outsourcing is not only O'Reilly's initiative: it has been facilitated by digital technology and the trend towards “multi-skilling”. Journalists have been “entering” – that is, subediting – their own stories for some years now and it has become commonplace in many smaller newspapers to pool the overall design of pages at regional hubs, as well as the printing. It is thus a natural step to the “convergence” of jobs, intensification and to “outsource” production services.

The resulting sparse numbers of staff, combined with new electronic technology, allow for dramatically increased management surveillance. While newsrooms have always been open plan, now journalists spend much less time out of the office and more time speaking to sources or gathering material by phone and they use internet-based material more. Senior staff can also access their work easily through computer networking. This

not only increases productivity but results in diminishing independence and a lack of autonomy to follow up the news stories of their choice (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003).

This quiet, controlled picture of a modern newsroom resembles a “Foucauldian panopticon” (Foucault, 1977). Foucault’s well-known theory is that the disciplinary powers of the panopticon can be adapted and used by any institution, from penitentiaries to schools to offices. The panopticon, consisting of a central tower surrounded by a ring-shaped building composed of cells, allowed for the continuous observation of the inmates. It relied on “surveillance” and the internal training this produced to create a state of docility, which Foucault saw as a part of the process of “normalisation” of individuals.

This section has shown that students, learning to become journalists, are not only trained in the skills of their occupation but they are socialised to accept the norms of their occupation. The result is there is little resistance to the kind of occupational changes that are occurring. The “professional journalist” of today is a long way from being the type of independent investigative journalist, ruggedly individualistic of the occupational myth (Aldridge & Evetts, 2003).

2.4 Is the academy challenging the old ways?

Many academics have called for change, generally focusing on improving university journalism education (Adam, 1988, 2001; Bowman, 2005; Deuze, 2005, 2006; K. Green, 2003; Macdonald, 2006; Meadows, 1997; Raudsepp, 1989; Reese, 1999, 2001; Reese & Cohen, 2000; Skinner et al., 2001).

However, New Zealand, because of the historic control of the media industry through the NZJTO and its small size, has had little debate. Research and journalism criticism is largely missing. Until the last 10 years, there has been widespread acceptance that journalism education should be predominantly carried out to the requirements of the unit standards, at accredited polytechnics (Thomas, 1999). As Sligo (2004) argues:

One indicator of health in any field of human endeavour is the extent and quality of debate that occurs on how its new and developing practitioners should be educated... [I]n recent times there appears to have been little professional debate about the appropriateness of an ITO [government-mandated industrial training

organisation] being in the role of gatekeeper and standard-setter of academic programmes... (p. 191).

Some changes are beginning to occur. Two of the largest institutions in New Zealand teaching journalism in Auckland and Wellington have now joined Canterbury as universities, casting some doubts on the future dominance of the NZJTO. In 2000, the Auckland Institute of Technology, New Zealand's largest journalism school, graduating up to 70 students a year, became the country's newest university. At the same time, approaching conflict was highlighted by a senior member of staff at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) who publicly stated that the university would soon do away with industry-set training standards (Thomas, 2000). While this did not eventuate at the time, there have been other signs of some resistance to industry demands. In 2006, journalism staff at AUT refused to take part in a proposal to enrol students selected by Fairfax, New Zealand's largest newspaper company, on the grounds that this was industry interference in their selection procedure. Although this has since been resolved, there are other signs of change. The university has recently varied the subjects it teaches so that not all students fulfil the criteria for the unit standards and are eligible to receive the NZJTO's Diploma of Journalism. It is currently considering a substantial review of the journalism programme which may move it even further away.

Auckland University of Technology was not alone in conflict with the NZJTO. After Wellington Polytechnic merged with Massey University, it became involved in a very public controversy over the appointment of a new member of staff who did not meet the NZJTO requirements of having worked in the media industry for five years. The person has since left the university. In addition, in 2004, the only published journal article criticising the unit standards was written by the head of the department of communication and journalism at Massey University, Frank Sligo (Sligo, 2004). The Massey journalism course has since established a degree in communications, halved the number of journalism students and is also reviewing its adherence to journalism unit standards. Canterbury University maintains its independent journalism school, although it too has established a popular communications course.

The NZJTO is also planning a merger with Print NZ, the training arm of part of the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union. This move would mean that the NZJTO would no longer have a full-time employee solely concentrating on journalism

interests, potentially reducing surveillance of the journalism schools. As yet, none of these moves go far enough to facilitate wholesale reform of journalism education. Various factors impede any change in direction. Firstly, while the degree programmes at the various universities may combine the teaching of journalism skills with liberal arts subjects, the National Diploma of Journalism is a full one-year programme. Students do this in the last year of their degree and the critical thinking which may have been encouraged earlier with liberal arts subjects can be all but forgotten when they are learning the skills of journalism. Secondly, Macdonald (2006) suggests another issue, very relevant in New Zealand journalism education. She claims that the close relationship that develops between the media industry and the universities can negate truly independent thought and criticism. The NZJTO-imposed criterion that journalism educators must have spent at least five years in the industry also works against critical debate as educators themselves have already been socialised to accept the norms of the industry.

2.5 Into the future

With the concept of professionalism so firmly entrenched, the move to university education will not in itself resolve the basic conflicts in journalism education. Deuze (2006) sees the challenge as not just affecting one country but as a global challenge, the same themes of professional skills, versus the academy and the teaching of critical thinking skills, predominating. Today “convergence” has become one of the most hotly debated topics. In the journalism schools, it would involve teaching students to report and write across print, broadcast and online platforms as well as recording and voicing news stories and numerous courses have been introduced, mainly across the United States, to feed the industry. While some educators strongly believe that teaching in more than one medium will better prepare them for the future, others argue that journalism schools should put a stronger emphasis on critical thinking (Castenada, Murphy, & Hether, 2005). Most of the literature on journalism education starts at the curriculum, drawing a clear line between the practical and contextual knowledge (Deuze, 2006). It generally covers content (Adam, 2001; de Burgh, 2003; Henningham, 1994; Macdonald, 2006; Skinner et al., 2001; G. Turner, 2000), but rarely how this content will be taught except for a small number of Australian academics writing in the late

twentieth and early twenty-first century (Meadows, 1998; Pearson, 2001; Sheridan Burns, 2001).

Programmes generally conform to what is described as the “professional model” concentrating on the teaching of skills required for journalism, with a range of liberal arts subjects such as history, sociology and political science to develop critical thinking taught separately. Recently, in the wake of a “crisis” in journalism (Bollinger, 2003; Casselman, 2003; Macdonald, 2006), educators in the United States, Canada, England and Australia have argued that journalism schools should imbue future journalists even more strongly with professional values. The recent push for the accreditation of Australian journalism institutions is part of the continuing desire to attain professionalism (K. Green, 2003). Unlike New Zealand, Australian journalism education institutions are not controlled by the media industry. University programmes are very varied, ranging from the “professional model” to approaches that reject the contemporary journalism practice and aim to teach critical awareness (O'Donnell, 2001 - 2002). The latter approaches include institutions concentrating on problem-based learning where students learn individual decision-making or problem-solving as well as conventional journalism skills (Meadows, 1997; Sheridan Burns, 1997, 2001, 2002) and those teaching reflective practice to prepare students for a rapidly changing environment (Morgan, 2003; Pearson, 2001). However, in the last few years, there has been a concerted drive to introduce an accreditation system similar to that of New Zealand which in the words of former Journalism Education Association president Kerry Green would “increase the status of journalism education … and enhance job success rates” (K. Green, 2003, p. 160). Proponents support this on the grounds that “it is for the future professionalisation of the industry” (Herbert, 2002, p. 173). Dunn (2004) also argues that the lack of a unified professional body and coherent standards makes journalism a quasi-professional occupation.

However, Bowman (2005) does not see the idea as necessarily productive because it encourages journalism programmes to focus on the technical aspects of “training” and stymies, rather than enhances, theoretical debate. Reese (1999) also argues against the need for more professional values, claiming that professional journalism education provides students with not only a set of skills but “habits of mind” (p.76). He questions why media organisations do not teach these skills on the job to promising recruits where

training could be carefully monitored by working professionals. The answer, he argues, lies in the economic self-interest of large corporations which encourage universities to subsidise the cost of training and then provide them with talented prospects to employ. The journalism job market also contributes to this. Students start their careers working for free in the smaller, local media on work experience (see Chapter 3, for the New Zealand experience) where they move up to paying jobs, on the proviso that they perform successfully. Thus job advancement is dependent on successful socialisation. Unlike graduates in law and business, young journalists generally must fulfil this period of socialisation before being hired by the large prestigious newspapers or by television (Reese, 1999).

Macdonald (2006) also opposes an increasingly professional approach. The professional approach does not adequately address the organisational, structural and economic roots of the problem, she argues, and it places the onus for reform on journalists themselves, without encouraging the development of critical thinking. She believes that approaches to journalism education based on fostering students' critical understanding of the role of the media industries, such as Skinner et al (2001) and Atton (2003), are better positioned to address the challenges facing contemporary journalism. She also argues that a professional model of journalism education cannot succeed in encouraging a truly free press as it prioritises profit ahead of public service because of the close relationship that develops between the journalism schools and the media industry.

Alternative media that challenge the “professionalized and institutionalized practices of the mainstream media” are discussed by Atton (2003, p. 267). In alternative media, the traditional ideas of journalistic objectivity are abandoned and replaced by an advocacy approach. Instead of relying on the usual official sources, emphasis is placed on eyewitness accounts by participants. Atton believes that in general, journalism educators ignore the practices of alternative journalism and that a rethink is long overdue, using as an example the argument that the rote learning of news values has led to news being seen as purely craft-based and its relationship to social power is denied.

A new and growing branch of journalism literature also centres round an attempt to bridge journalism theory and practice (Glasser & Ettema, 1989; Machin & Niblock 2007; Niblock, 2007, Sheridan Burns, 2002, Zelizer, 2004) through what is called “journalism studies”. Journalists often say they act out of instinct and experience, but

there is a need to reconcile this with academic discussions of the effects of ownership, advertising, news frames and other institutional and cultural constraints on the production of news. These academics recognise the gap and attempt to reconcile the two. Sheridan Burns investigates the ways that journalists work through considering news events that are commonly reported throughout the world, advocating for reflective practice. She argues that while the context in which the journalism is produced is defined by the culture of the society, the questions faced in making a journalistic decision are the same (p.13). Machin and Niblock also cast new light on practices of news journalists by comparing real-life case studies with theories of journalism. They assess sociological theories of journalism and changes to news production through case studies of news production settings and interviews with journalists. They also describe the kind of instant decisions that journalists must make that combine experience with intuition as “reflection-in-action” and the debriefing after the event as “reflection-on-action” (p.45) and see reflection as a way to reveal new insights into journalism and journalism education.

Skinner and colleagues (Skinner et al., 2001) provide very thoughtful coverage of what journalism education could be like, positioning journalism as an “institutional practice of representation with its own historical, political, economic, and cultural conditions of existence” (p. 342), providing a thoughtful coverage of what journalism education should be like. They argue that what this means for a journalism curriculum is that students require not only a particular skill set and broad social knowledge, but they also need to understand how journalism participates in the production and circulation of meaning in society. While liberal arts courses may produce well-rounded graduates, questions remain as to whether the students can bridge the gap between the academic and vocational elements of the programme. This has led to the fragmentation of the journalism curriculum into a set of discontinuous fields. In developing this perspective, the authors draw on critical communication studies and disciplines such as discourse analysis, semiotics, ethnography and the political economy of communication to enable students to grasp the practice of journalism. By learning communication theory, journalism students will gain insight into the process of communication and will see how their craft is part of a larger process of social communication. This will illustrate how the organisation of work routines, including the selection of sources and the pattern of ownership, impact on news reports. It will assist students in asking the question

“why”, to offset the “how” that is gained through learning skills and will provide an understanding of how various functions such as objectivity and news values are based on larger issues of social power. Students will then have the tools to negotiate a link between skills-based and liberal arts courses, the practical and more abstract elements of their studies and to develop a conscious understanding of the practical elements of their craft (Skinner et al., 2001).

More than 10 years ago, Australian academic Mark Pearson (1994) called for journalism educators to think more closely about “learning about learning”. This call could not have been more opportune. Despite the growing debate on the journalism curriculum, there has been little emphasis on the question of how students learn to become journalists. A search of journalism educational literature on learning in Australia and New Zealand reveals an almost empty field. As mentioned earlier, articles written by Pearson (1994, 2001), Sheridan Burns (2001), and Meadows (1997) are among the few to be found. More recently, O’Donnell (2006) usefully moves the debate to focus on the students, arguing that research should include the viewpoints of journalism students as key stakeholders in journalism’s future.

In this study, I have placed the focus on the students, following O’Donnell’s example, but have followed a different path. In the late 1970s, there was a major paradigm shift in the teaching of composition writing. At about this time the work of Flower and Hayes – in particular their writing model – started to influence research design, moving the emphasis from the writing product to the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1980). Researchers studying the writing processes of students discovered that it involved a complex set of goals and strategies. Learning to write requires a multi-faceted and difficult set of processes that include considerable cognitive pressure. Gathering and selecting the news, isolating the message of the story, deciding on vocabulary and style, reading and revising are all complex processes (Pitts, 1982, 1988, 1989). Journalism education, however, shows few signs of any change in method, yet writing is the core subject of most journalism courses (see Chapter 4).

In a previous study I explored a different method of teaching students to write using the workshop method, which introduced self-regulation into the writing process (Thomas, 1999, 2001), drawing on the work of Pintrich (1995), Garcia (1995), Zimmerman & Bandura (1994) and Bandura (1991). My findings indicated that a change in method

would be beneficial for the students, both for their learning of professional skills and for their ability to think critically. Journalism is about making decisions, whether about news judgement, who to interview, what questions to ask. Learning about decision-making requires critical reflection or thinking about what you are doing as well as doing it (Sheridan Burns, 2001). But more research was necessary on the present methods. This study, *The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way* was the result.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has considered journalism education and professionalism, through a historical perspective. It has traced the history of journalism from its early beginnings, when it was seen as “tattling” and was not highly reputable, to the modern day. The development of newspapers as we know them today started in Britain, providing the United States and colonies such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand with a model to follow. However, the British generally distrusted the concept of educating journalists, preferring on the job and apprenticeship training, so that young people learnt the required skills and through a process of socialisation developed into working journalists. In the late nineteenth century, in the United States, there was an increased call for journalism as an occupation to be seen as more respectable. The call led to the establishment of journalism schools in the university, following in the footsteps of other high-status occupational groupings like law and medicine. Despite this, the atmosphere of the newsroom and the teaching of skills continued to dominate in journalism schools.

Journalism education is often characterised by conflict, between the media industry and the academy. The media industry believes journalism should be taught as a craft, while the academy favours the teaching of liberal arts. In New Zealand, journalism education did not generally become established in universities until the twenty-first century. Instead a number of journalism schools were established in tertiary institutions known as polytechnics, which had evolved from trade schools. The teaching of journalism was guided by the requirements of the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation. The organisation has established unit standards, and requires that the discipline is taught mirroring the working environment by educators with at least five years’ industry experience. While there are some signs of resisting industry demands because journalism education is taught increasingly in the universities, as yet, any debate as to

whether to teach to the professional model or to follow the academy and widen the teaching to include reflective practices and critical thinking skills has been lacking. Sligo (2004) argues that debate about education is important as a sign of health in any occupation. Until this happens, New Zealand journalism education has not yet fully come of age.

Today most journalists see themselves as professionals, reinforced by their own occupational self-belief, developed through socialisation and the acceptance of the normative. But the reality is very different from the image that encourages many young people to become journalists. All over the western world, a small number of corporate groups dominate the media and staffing levels are being reduced while the ratio of advertising to editorial increases. At the same time, electronic technology and the sparse number of staff have increased management control.

Traditionally, journalism education has attracted most attention at times of crisis in the media industry. With transnational control of the media and the numbers of journalists reducing through intensification and digital technology, journalism has again come under the spotlight. In the United States at Columbia School of Journalism, there have been calls for journalism education to strengthen the teaching of moral and ethical standards of professional behaviour. Macdonald (2006) criticises this professional model of journalism education in that it does not analyse power, most notably the power of the employer, and fails to equip students with the tools to examine their own role in the media industries. This model, Macdonald argues, concentrates on journalism skills, rather than developing wider critical thinking ability. Brennen is of the same view. She believes the role journalists play is never questioned in many American journalism textbooks and there is no commentary on the increasing concentration of ownership. These textbooks underpin the problem of the unquestioning “belief in the morality and righteousness of journalism” and, thus, the capacity of American journalism to serve the needs of society (p.107). The same attitude can be seen in journalism education where criticism of any kind is often discounted, and many journalism educators work under the belief that what they teach and how they do it must be the best way. This has opened journalists up to criticism from all sides, from sociologists to media critics (Brennen, 2000).

This review of the literature not only establishes the need for more debate in New Zealand but also for more research into the journalism curriculum – what is taught and journalism pedagogy – how it is taught. While most journalism educators have distinguished careers as working journalists, they have not studied new methods of education nor why they should be introduced. This means that they continue to teach to the professional model they know so well, while thought about exactly what they are teaching is often lacking. As Skinner, Gasher and Compton (2001) argue, students need to understand how journalism is a form of communication and how it functions. Students need to know not only “how” to do it, but “why” it is such a successful mode of communication.

This study discusses the students at two tertiary institutions, starting at the beginning of a one-year journalism programme, and traces their progress throughout the course. As a first step, in Chapter 3, I describe a preliminary study undertaken to find out how journalism is taught in New Zealand. The study found that the emphasis is on practising writing to develop skills. The highlight is a short spell of work experience.

3 The Preliminary Study: Setting the Scene

Felicity Ferret once sneered that the now-defunct *Auckland Star* would cover the “second coming of Christ” with an eight paragraph news story ... Yet ... the biggest employers of journalism graduates all insist the key attribute they seek in young job seekers is an ability to write tight, accurate, basic news stories ... (Tucker, 1999b, p. 87).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the journalism education scene in New Zealand, discussing the findings of a preliminary study covering the 11 journalism schools⁴. Its aim was to gather data about New Zealand journalism education and the place of work experience. At the time of embarking on the preliminary research, the proposal was to focus the major study on work experience and its role in socialising journalism students in the production of the news genre. The journalism educators’ enthusiasm for work experience showed it was integral to the teaching of journalism in New Zealand, but the short period of time the students spent working in the media industry made it unsuitable for a full-scale study. Therefore the focus was altered to: *The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way*.

The findings of this chapter are similar to those of Chapter 2, which considered the history of journalism education in Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, through a review of the literature. Journalism education covers practical skills and standards-based training on the one hand, and a general contextual education and the development of critical thinking on the other. There is often a delicate balance between the two (Deuze, 2001; Raudsepp, 1989), the scales tipping one way for the industry and the teaching of practical skills, the other for the academy. Chapter 2 argued that, despite the increasing numbers of students receiving their journalism education through Zealand.

⁴ In 2003, there were 11 New Zealand journalism schools. In 2008, there are 10, and funding for them is at present under review, because of new requirements set by the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

This chapter first describes the methods used in the preliminary study in section 3.2. It then looks closely at New Zealand journalism education in the light of the late eighties reform of education, the dominance of the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO) and the role the unit standards play in section 3.3. The characteristics of New Zealand journalism schools are discussed next in section 3.4. These journalism schools were found to have a high level of uniformity in their size, numbers of staff and methods of teaching. Section 3.5 discusses the nature of New Zealand journalism education including work experience, while section 3.6 looks at an evaluation of work experience. The last section suggests points that will be explored more fully in later chapters: in particular it asks what the effects of work experience will be.

3.2 Methods

A quantitative and a qualitative approach were combined in this preliminary study, because of the nature of the data that was required. The first approach uses numbers to explain what the researcher has learned, while the second uses description and words (Merriam, 1998). A semi-structured questionnaire was designed in four sections. The first section collected basic data on New Zealand journalism programmes, including the numbers of students, numbers of staff and the qualifications of the students and staff. The second section gathered information on the journalism curriculum, subjects and modules taught and how the students learned news writing. The third section considered work placement and how it was experienced. The fourth section evaluated this work experience.⁵

The study was carried out in June-July, 2002 and the questionnaire is attached in Appendix I. Journalism schools listed on the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation website were approached for an interview (*Journalism schools, New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation website, 2002*) In 2002, 11 tertiary institutions were teaching journalism at the time of the study. Nine of these were print

⁵ Ethics approval, AUTEC Reference No 02/66 was received from Auckland University of Technology ethics committee for the preliminary study. The main research study gained later ethics approval AUTEC Reference 03/24.

journalism courses or a mixture of mainly print with some broadcast journalism, while two were solely broadcast journalism courses. The 11 institutions are listed below..

All agreed to be interviewed, subject to anonymity. They received a letter explaining the study and were invited to participate. The letter stated that the project was entitled *Cooperative education: Its role in socialising journalism students in the production of the news genre* and its aim was to compile data on the kinds and length of workplace experience undertaken by journalism students throughout New Zealand. Those invited to take part were heads of schools or staff in a senior management position who, prior to the interview, received a consent form and additional information about the study. They were phoned at an agreed time and their responses to the interview schedule were tape recorded. Interviews took from 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

The 11 institutions providing journalism education are listed from the north of New Zealand to the south, and when they were established. The qualifications that students now receive are also listed in brackets:

1. Auckland: Auckland University of Technology: (*Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Bachelor of Communication Studies*). Established 1972.
2. Hamilton: Waikato Institute of Technology: (*National Diploma in Journalism and Bachelor of Media Arts*). Established 1996.
3. Rotorua: Waiariki Institute of Technology (*National Diploma in Journalism*). Established 2000.
4. New Plymouth: Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (*National Diploma in Journalism*). Established 1997.
5. Porirua: Whitireia Polytechnic (*National Diploma in Journalism*). Established 2000.
6. Wellington: Massey University (*Graduate Diploma in Journalism*). Established 1967.
7. Christchurch: New Zealand Broadcasting School, Christchurch Institute of Technology (*Bachelor of Broadcasting Communications: Journalism and Diploma of Broadcasting Communications*, Level 5 and 6). Established 1980s.
8. Christchurch: Canterbury University (*Graduate Diploma in Journalism*). Established 1910.

9. Timaru: Aoraki Polytechnic (*National Diploma in Journalism*). Established 1989.
10. Dunedin: Aoraki Polytechnic; Dunedin Campus (National Diploma in Journalism: Television or Radio). Established 2002.⁶
11. Invercargill: Southland Institute of Technology (*National Diploma in Journalism*). Established 1993.

3.3 Reform plays a major role

Table 3.1 Year bands when journalism courses established

| Year | No | Names of institutions |
|--------------|-----------|---|
| 1910 | 1 | Canterbury University |
| 1960-1988 | 3 | Auckland University of Technology, N.Z.Broadcasting School, Massey University. |
| 1989-1994 | 3 | Aoraki Polytechnic, Waikato Institute of Technology, Southland Institute of Technology. |
| 1995-1999 | 1 | Western Institute of Technology. |
| 2000- | 3 | Waiariki Institute of Technology, Whitireia Polytechnic, Aoraki Polytechnic, Dunedin. |
| Total | 11 | |

Table 3.1 shows that in the main centres prior to 1989, there were only four journalism training schools. The other seven journalism schools have been established since 1989, a year characterised by education reform. Today, for a tertiary institution to train journalists in New Zealand, it must be registered by the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO). The NZJTO is one of 40 industry training organisations established under the Industry Training Act 1992 to set and monitor the national skill standards for their industry. For a course to be registered or accredited, the NZJTO sets strict requirements, relating to the curriculum, the industry experience of the teachers and the resources available for the students. The curriculum is specified through a set of 120 unit standards that are part of the national qualifications framework, established under the government agency, the New Zealand Qualifications

⁶ This school has since closed.

Authority (NZQA). The unit standards cover all aspects of journalism training that are required for writing a story from reporting on the local government section to using shorthand for journalism in precise detail. A criterion for registration stipulates that all staff should have spent a minimum of five years in a newsroom while another demands that “the teaching programme should mirror the working environment” (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997 p.8). Another requirement states: “[T]he nature of journalism teaching and assessment requires a high level of one-to-one teaching” (p.9), while yet another lists a full page of resources required by all schools including the number of computers and radio cassette recorders per student, the number of telephones and even stopwatches and video cassettes. These regulations make it clear exactly what programmes should be defined as journalism education programmes in New Zealand, unlike in neighbouring Australia where there is little agreement as to what constitutes journalism education or even a journalism course and anyone may call himself or herself or be called by their employer, a journalism educator (Oakham & Tidey, 2000).

Since the late 1980s, New Zealand has seen widespread reform in the education, health and welfare systems, following the economic crises of the mid-1980s. A new intellectual climate, known as New Right thinking, became commonplace in the late 1980s and 1990s. New Right thinking encompasses a view of human motivation and social purpose that emphasises competition in the marketplace to decide the merit of ideas and actions. The government’s blueprint for post-school education *Learning for life, two* (Goff, 1989) established the parameters of the reform that followed. It ensured that learning in polytechnics would have a vocational focus by expecting them to contribute directly to economic development. To facilitate this focus, they were given the right to offer degrees (Zepke, 1996). In 1989, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was established with two central purposes: to set up a national framework of defined standards and to ensure the quality of delivery of those standards (Codd, 1995). These ideas were enshrined in the Education Amendment Act (1990).

The reforms were characterised by greater self-management in education institutions, plus a greater emphasis on specifying outputs and increased accountability. In the years that followed, Government funding became tighter and tertiary institutions were forced to enrol more students, increase teaching loads, establish larger classes and introduce

user charges. As well, a direct correlation between funding and equivalent full-time students (EFTs) was established by law. From this time on, the financial success of a tertiary institution centred round the concept of attracting students in a competitive market place (Peters, 1994). Popular courses such as journalism attracted large numbers of students and it followed that the tertiary institutions took advantage of this. Table 3.1 (above) shows the effect of these reforms: since 1989, seven schools of journalism have been established, all at polytechnics.

Many polytechnics found that the new reforms gave them opportunities they had been long hoping for. Before 1989, the polytechnics had been frustrated by the power and status of the universities. They had a vision, based on the Australian and United Kingdom models, where non-universities could offer degrees. *Learning for life*, two finally gave the polytechnics the opening to offer degrees (Zepke, 1996). My preliminary study found that students at Waikato Institute of Technology were able to achieve a Bachelor of Media Arts degree while at the New Zealand Broadcasting School a Bachelor of Broadcasting was on offer. Auckland Institute of Technology also established a Bachelor of Communication Studies degree plus a Graduate Diploma in Journalism. Wellington Polytechnic established a Graduate Diploma in Journalism. There was also some restructuring of the entire tertiary field through institutions merging, encouraged by the need to increase student numbers. Later, Wellington Polytechnic became a university through a merger with Massey University. Auckland Institute of Technology became the only polytechnic to be granted university status and continues to explore mergers and “strategic partnerships” with other polytechnics, to increase its size and economic viability.

The quest for university status placed New Zealand journalism education in an odd position. Traditionally, New Zealand journalists were trained on the job and other forms of training did not appeal either to journalists or employers. This could be seen in the difficulties Canterbury University College had in establishing a journalism programme and the slow pace for a university education for journalists to become popular (see Chapter 2).

Old-style journalists remained suspicious of a university education and only gradually accepted the need to change. The study showed that in 2002, 265 students were enrolled in programmes leading to the National Diploma in Journalism. The same 120 unit

standards making up the national diploma can either be achieved in one year at a stand-alone programme or as part of a three-year tertiary degree. Of these students, 151 students or 56 per cent were studying at a university, doing a tertiary degree at a polytechnic, or were completing a programme for graduates. The remainder, 114 students, 44 per cent were studying for the national diploma at a one-year course at a polytechnic. By 2005, the figures had changed only slightly with 255 students being enrolled, with 53 per cent studying for a tertiary degree while 47 per cent studied for the national diploma (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005).

These figures are particularly interesting in light of a deep controversy between the NZQA and the universities over the philosophy of unit standards. The differences between the academy and the industry can be summarised as the distinction between the philosophies surrounding “training” and “education”. A university education prepares people for relatively undifferentiated roles, positions and work settings. However, people engage in training to improve their performance in specific job-related tasks (Findsen, 1996). Zepke (1996) argues that the NZQA unit standards enforce vocational training as that organisation has been unable to withstand the pressure from the business section for control of national certification and qualifications while Sligo (2004) asserts that universities have rejected competency-based unit standards as reducing a complex system to simple components, as well as a curb on academic freedom. Canterbury University, for example, has refused to register or be “accredited” by the NZJTO.

However, the close relationship between the New Zealand media and journalism schools has led to compromises on both sides. Canterbury maintains a good relationship with the NZJTO and is listed on its website as an “approved school of journalism”. Massey University continues to teach the unit standards, even though the head of the Department of Communication and Journalism has to date been the chief critic of the unit standards, seeing it as a question of academic freedom for the journalism staff to make their own choice (Sligo, 2004) And, at present Auckland University of Technology wavers between supporting the industry standards and rejecting them (see Chapter 2).

In 2007, the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) released a discussion paper, *Investing in a Plan*, to introduce new parameters for government interventions and investment in tertiary education from 2008 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2007).

It signalled an important philosophical shift away from demand-driven investment towards a more strategic focus, particularly on regional and national needs of the industry. Former NZJTO executive director Jim Tucker suggests that many small journalism schools are already struggling to survive on current funding models (Tucker, 2007). Given the strong emphasis on rationalisation and efficiency underpinning the TEC discussion paper, there is a possibility that the smaller training programmes may lose their funding to run journalism courses or that institutions may decide they are no longer viable.

3.4 Characteristics of New Zealand journalism schools

Table 3.2 Size of journalism schools

| Size of schools | No. of schools | No. of students |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1-12 students | 1 | 12 |
| 13-20 students | 6 | 101 |
| 21-30 students | 2 | 46 |
| 31-50 students | 1 | 48 |
| 51-60 students | 1 | 58 |
| Total | 11 | 265 |

At the time of the study, 265 students were receiving journalism training in 11 journalism schools. It can be seen from Table 3.2 that most journalism schools in New Zealand have fewer than 20 students on the roll. The median number of students per school is 18. The number of students roughly approximates the size of the urban centre the journalism school is situated in. The largest school is in Auckland which has a population of 1.3 million while Wellington with a population of 295,500 (including the Hutt Valley) has the second-biggest school. Christchurch with a population of 324,000 has two schools, one teaching broadcasting only. Excluding these larger population areas, other journalism schools are scattered throughout the country from Hamilton in the north to Invercargill in the south (Statistics NZ, 2006).

Table 3.3 Average age of students per school

| Average age | No. of schools. |
|----------------|-----------------|
| About 20 years | 2 |
| 21-25 years | 5 |
| 26-30 years | 3 |
| Over 30 years | 1 |
| Total | 11 |

Table 3.3 shows the average age of the students studying journalism. It reveals a comparative lack of mature-age students entering journalism when, arguably, this is the kind of student who is most needed with plenty of life experience and who has experienced multiple social and work roles. While there were a few students who were older than 30 and one school gave this as the average age of their students, at the other end of the scale two schools claimed the average age of their students was 20 years old. The median age of a journalism student was 25 years.

Table 3.4 Ethnicity of students per journalism school

| Ethnicity | No. of schools |
|--|----------------|
| Predominantly European students | 5 |
| Predominantly Māori students | 1 |
| Mixed ethnicities (Māori, Japanese, Pacific Island, others) | 5 |
| Total | 11 |

Five journalism schools stated they had mainly European students or all European students, while five specified the number of Māori students they had plus other ethnicities (see Table 3.4). This ranged from four Māori students at one school, three at two schools and fewer than two at two schools. These five schools also claimed they had other ethnicities ranging from Indian to Japanese to the Pacific Islands. One school had all Māori students except for one European. While the answers to this question were not totally reliable because of their generalised nature, it appeared that out of a total of 265 students, about 27 were Māori and about 10 students were of other ethnicities.

The small size of most journalism schools affected the number of staff employed. Table 3.5 shows the number of staff in schools at the time of the study.

Table 3.5 Number of full-time staff

| Staff in schools | No. of schools | No. of staff |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| No full-time staff | 1 | - |
| One full-time | 5 | 5 |
| Two full-time staff | 3 | 6 |
| Three full-time staff | 1 | 3 |
| Seven full-time staff | 1 | 7 |
| Total staff numbers | 11 | 21 |

Staff employed full-time in the 11 journalism schools numbered 21, ranging from seven in one school to no full-time staff in another. Five schools had only one staff member which made it difficult for them to operate efficiently and cover the variety of subjects demanded. This led to the employment of many part-time staff, teaching a wide variety of subjects, from shorthand to court reporting to Māoritanga and photography. The hours they were employed made up another 10.7 full-time equivalents, as the next table, Table 3.6 shows.

Table 3.6 Additional staff employed to make full-time equivalents

| No. of Schools | Full-time equivalents |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 4 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 1.6 |
| 1 | 1.4 |
| 1 | .7 |
| Total: 11 | 10.7 |

Thus, the total number of full-time staff was recorded as 21 (Table 3.5), plus an additional 10.7 full-time equivalents in Table 3.6, making a total of 31.7 staff. This

provides a ratio of 8.35 students per staff member. The NZJTO stipulates that the staff-student ratio should be 12 students to one staff member, to allow for the one-on-one nature of the teaching of journalism. A 2005 study by the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation recorded 22 full-time staff working in journalism schools (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005) compared with 21 in this study. However, the numbers of part-time staff working equivalent hours to one full-time staff member varied considerably between the findings of the two studies. My study found part-timers employed were equivalent to 10.7 full-time staff while the 2005 study states that part-time journalism tutors totalled about 30. Without exploring these figures more precisely, it was not possible to judge the correct number. My study indicated that most schools had a satisfactory ratio of staff to students, at fewer than nine students to one staff member.

The restrictions placed by the NZJTO on the people who can teach future journalists also had an effect. The training organisation requires a journalism educator to have worked in the media industry for at least five years but does not require any similar amount of teaching experience. This meant that journalism educators were usually far better qualified as industry practitioners than as teachers when they entered the field. However, this is beginning to change. New Zealand polytechnics now strongly encourage staff to gain a Certificate in Adult Teaching. In New Zealand universities, the establishment of Centres for Professional Development or their equivalents has triggered more opportunities for academics to develop greater teacher expertise.

Table 3.7 Teaching qualifications of journalism educators

| Qualification | No. |
|--|------------|
| Masters degree in education | 1 |
| Diploma in sec/primary teaching | 2 |
| Advanced cert/diploma in adult teaching | 3 |
| Certificate in adult teaching | 5 |
| Incomplete certificate in adult teaching | 5 |
| No teaching qualification | 3 |
| Not known | 2 |
| Total staff | 21 |

Of the 21 full-time staff, 11 staff members had a teaching qualification, while five were working towards one. Three staff members did not have a teaching qualification and the status of two more was not known. The qualifications ranged from a Masters degree in education and one with a primary school teaching diploma, another with secondary school teacher training, to five staff members who held certificates in adult teaching.

3.5 New Zealand journalism education

While section 3.4 provided details about the characteristics of New Zealand journalism schools quantitatively, the remainder of the data was assembled from open-ended questioning and did not lend itself to tabular analysis. As comparative literature in the New Zealand journalism education field is scant, my aim in this section is to fill in some details of how journalism is taught, drawn from the answers given by the educators taking part in the study, supplemented by the standard New Zealand textbook and the journalism unit standards.

The dominating factor in New Zealand journalism education is the unit standards, which set out in precise detail what journalism students are expected to learn. They list the basic journalism skills from Identify and advocate news for publication or broadcast, Unit No. 10355, Write a variety of news stories for print and for broadcast, Unit No.10367, Work in a newsroom, Unit No 10375, to Use shorthand for journalism, Unit No. 10372, to name just some of the modules⁷. The unit standards have proved to be very useful for the small journalism schools that are characteristic of New Zealand and have been generally accepted with only minor exceptions. In spelling out in detail exactly how to conduct interviews or write a variety of news stories, exactly what shorthand speed should be achieved and how many computers and tape recorders are necessary, they provide support for struggling journalism educators. To gain a National Diploma in Journalism, a student must be judged competent in a total of 120 credits, the average unit being worth 20 credits or 200 hours of work. As an example, eight credits are awarded for identifying and advocating the news, 25 credits for writing a variety of

⁷ New unit standards are proposed for 2008. The main change is to encourage more basic training in a variety of skills, print, broadcast and internet writing rather than any major shift away from skills-based training.

news stories and 15 credits for shorthand (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997).

The unit standards represent the media industry's view of what should be taught to journalism students. They place strong emphasis on work experience and socialisation into the culture and routines of the media industry, with little weight on the development of reflective practitioners capable of working independently and thinking critically. The unit standards also gloss over factors which others consider intrinsic to writing news stories, paying scant attention to the importance of news values in making a story newsworthy, for example. Later chapters will show that the key element in writing a newsworthy story is to enhance the news values, in order that a dull story becomes interesting and appeals to the reader, through its lead sentence, the words used and its structure (Bell, 1991).

Though the NZJTO has set very detailed descriptors in the unit standards of what journalism students are expected to learn, "they do not go as far as telling any institution how they must teach". This comment is often made when the unit standards are being discussed. But this does not appear to be correct. The NZJTO's requirements state: "The teaching programme should mirror the working environment appropriate to the unit standards being assessed (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997, p. 7). The study found that all journalism schools used very similar methods to teach their students.

The following discussion, for example, will show how journalism educators see the unit standard, 10375, Work in a newsroom, as the key factor in the training of journalism students. This unit standard requires students to "demonstrate knowledge of the management structure of a news organisation", "demonstrate knowledge of newsroom work practices", "monitor or use newsroom equipment and resources" and "maintain standards of professional practice while working in the newsroom" (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997, p. 99). It represents only two credits or 20 hours of work. This small amount of time was remarked on by four of the journalism educators, including School "C" who remarked "Two credits for working in a newsroom is a nonsense." School "D" also felt strongly about the small allocation of credits:

I've been pushing for more hours for this unit standard but I didn't get anywhere. We do three whole weeks of the stuff, excluding the field trip and all for two credits. The unit standards don't recognise the practical elements enough.

Formal teaching in New Zealand journalism schools also appeared to be minimal, focusing on the inverted-pyramid model. Most journalism textbooks state that the inverted-pyramid format is the “best” type of news story to learn to write because it is economical of space and gains the attention of the reader right from the start (Grundy, 2007; Sissons, 2006; Tucker, 1992, 1999a). Tucker argues that it is very difficult to find a perfectly structured inverted pyramid today, although it is considered the correct form to teach all beginning journalism students. The 534-page standard text book *Intro* (Tucker, 1999a) is heavily relied on as the “bible” by both students and staff as the basis, for the teaching of the “eight-paragraph” news story (Tucker, 1999b, p. 87). Despite its length, the book, like the unit standards, does not attempt to explore news values in any depth. Instead it concentrates on teaching a simplified version of the basic skills. It describes the news stories’ structure, the inverted pyramid, with its “base” on the top and the “apex” on the bottom. The pyramid comprises the “intro”⁸, an introductory paragraph which is a summary and the next paragraph supports the intro angle with details. The third paragraph develops the intro angle and paragraph four develops the intro. Paragraph five and six are other angles, and paragraph seven is “history”. The textbook reflects the unit standards: students learn that news stories are written objectively, and the importance of news values, rather than being intrinsic to the inverted pyramid, are not seen as fundamental. This explanation fails to provide the students with any insight into the theories of communication and the role the inverted pyramid plays, or to cover its deeper meanings including the commercial and ethical decisions involved.

Later chapters will also show that many of the students’ news stories varied from the inverted-pyramid form, emulating the “hybrid” form often found in community newspapers, composed of a mix of “soft” news and promotional material.

⁸ While in New Zealand, the first sentence in a news story is usually described as an intro, the American term, the “lead”, is used in this thesis.

Yet, they are not often aware they are doing so, believing they are writing in the inverted pyramid. *Intro* encourages the use of hybrid texts, stating the inverted pyramid may be the able workhorse of information organisation in spot news but reporters wanting to escape the title of “hack” must remain open to other ways of story telling” (Riddle, 1999, p. 143). It then provides the students with advice about how to write a lead sentence which sounds exactly like the inverted pyramid: “You need an attention-grabbing introduction, which must tell something new and give an indication of what the story is about. It must lead somewhere so you can weave the theme through your story” (p.145). However, neither the textbook nor the journalism unit standards give any clear direction about other genres, when they are appropriate to use and when they are not. In contrast, Fairclough (1995) describes different structural forms found in news stories with more precision than this. He finds three distinct forms, the inverted pyramid; news stories containing a variety of social purposes, from objective writing, to entertainment, to promotional writing in sequential sentences or paragraphs in the same news story (van Leeuwen, 1987); and a more complex mixture where the different genres are hard to identify.

At the time of the study, all institutions employed the same methods of bringing these stories to a publishable level: they were corrected by a tutor in a method called one-to-one “subbing” or “vetting”. The tutor looked at every story and suggested, or made corrections on an individual basis. The intensive nature of journalism teaching is reflected here and can also be seen in the students-to-staff ratio recorded in Tables 3.5 and 3.6.

The journalism schools described how they started to teach their students how to write news stories. “One to one” between a tutor and a student was very important to instil the skills of a journalist, as School “G” explained:

We run a crash course in the first weeks. We have ongoing workshops and lectures. All stories are vetted by a lecturer or tutor. Students are mostly taught through one-to-one discussion.

Although in the years after the study, on-line subediting has been introduced, many schools still follow this traditional method (New Zealand Journalists Training

Organisation, 2005). This method of producing stories of publishable standard has both advantages and disadvantages. At its best, it can lead to a more meaningful consideration of the students' news stories. However, frequently the pressures of time and the numbers of stories a journalism educator must subedit, may lead to them only doing a perfunctory job, concentrating on surface corrections such as spelling and grammar. It also encourages students to believe that they cannot evaluate their own work and that their tutors' opinion is always the better way. This is explored in more depth in later chapters, through the students' reflections.

The aim of journalism education was to encourage students to write "real stories" for publication as soon as possible, as School "A" explained:

... the more we can make the situation as real as possible, the more quickly they learn. Writing for a real publication...that's the important part.

School "C" also mentioned going out and getting "real" stories. There was little time to encourage deeper thinking about these real stories:

They learn the basics for the first term and then they go out and get real stories. We get them working as journalists in a simulated way. We treat the classroom as a newsroom with an integrated approach to news writing... You can't learn to write news until you can interview and gather news.

School "I" repeated a similar sentiment, mentioning considerable writing, setting up the classroom as a newsroom and making everything "real":

The students have a lot of different classes, on structure, language, economical writing style. Then we put it altogether. They just actually do lots of writing and everything is for real. We have a classroom set up as a newsroom from week 7 onwards ...We encourage the students to write and write ... The students really hate being in the classroom.

The NZJTO requires journalism schools to have "a permanent room equipped as a newsroom with access to a fax machine and access to dedicated journalism programme telephones at a ratio of one to six students and one word processor per student with a printer (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997, p. 9). Broadcast schools also have equipment requirements where one broadcast quality cassette tape recorder and microphone per student, is stipulated, amongst many other similar items. This led to an environment that simulated the media industry, as School "J" explained "We run a

radio and television newsroom, closely simulated to industry, contributing to local television and radio campus channels. School “H” described the same phenomenon:

When they get out to the coal face, they find out what it’s like out there. It’s not too dissimilar to our newsroom ...

The students were learning by doing and the setting was as close to an authentic setting as possible, with the importance of real world situations being stressed. School “D” used the phrase “learning by doing”:

It’s learning by doing. They need to do 25 stories, plus a couple of features, and five field trip stories. They submit their stories to the local newspaper or the community one ... 95-98 per cent are published. They also have a geographic round ... getting published in the newspaper – that’s what counts.

School “A” called it “learning by their mistakes”.

They learn by their mistakes ... if you are writing the perfect story under perfect conditions, from a fact sheet, that’s easy but when you are writing for a real publication and make a mistake, the public may turn round and criticise you roundly ... always potential to be found out.

One school had its own newspaper, although even this experience was not regarded as “real” life as School “F” explained:

I don’t really see it as a real workplace experience though it fulfils some of the same roles ... they have an editor, journalists etc. The students don’t see the newsroom hierarchy operating and it is not assessed though some people put a lot of work into it. Students do get to provide leadership and get experience through this...it was my students’ turn to do the newspaper recently and it was the holidays. The editor etc ended up doing it all themselves.

Publication of their news stories was stressed, as School “K” described:

Writing their own stories, important they do that as soon as possible ... that is what sinks in.

The number of stories published was also regarded as very important. School “F” described expecting their students to get 50 stories published during the year while School “E” also mentioned the achieving students with pride:

They continually write stories throughout the year, and those get subbed and then rewritten. This unit is writing a variety of news stories. They have to write 26 publishable stories, they don’t get them all published but one student last term was up to 50 and a lot of them had been published.

School “I” was proud of how hard working some students were:

Some students are amazing. They write five to six stories a week. They are still in the newsroom until 10 or 11 at night. Others might write one story a week or a fortnight. Once you get the culture right, it really works.

While other unit standards cover subjects such as the media law or how to write a court story or a local body one, the majority relate to the same common theme. They are focused on providing the necessary skills so that the students learn to write for the print or broadcast media. It is the quantity that is stressed, rather than the quality. The average news story would take at a minimum of five hours to research and write (Thomas, 1999). This would mean for a student to write 50 stories, it would take about 250 hours, forming the basis of New Zealand students’ learning of journalism.

The publishing of these news stories is considered as a mark of industry approval. As another head of school at School “C” commented: “... [S]ome of our students are in the paper every night”:

A lot are printed in the local newspapers. It’s wonderful. Some of our students are in the paper every night ... it’s just great to get so much of our work printed.

3.6 Experience of the “real” world

Kolb (1984) is one of the foremost academics in the field of experiential learning. Experiential learning links education, work and personal development and emphasises the critical linkages that can be developed between the classroom and the “real world”. The tools for this can involve traditional methods, as well as more recent educational programmes including apprenticeships, internships, work placements, work/study programmes, cooperative education, laboratory studies and field projects. In all these methods, learning is experiential in the sense that the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. Various modes of workplace experience exist at different schools. I identified four different modes:

1. Students are placed in various workplaces one day a week but remain under the supervision of the journalism school.
2. Tutors travel to various workplaces with students for field trips from one day through to four weeks.

3. Students at a broadcasting school do a six-month internship.
4. Students are placed alone to work in a variety of work outlets; newspapers, radio stations, magazines, on-line workplaces, television for short periods from two weeks to four weeks.

Reflection is considered the essential ingredient in experiential learning as it encourages students to think critically about their experience and how they performed (Boud, Walker & Moreno, 1998). It also encourages debate about the routines and constraints of their workplace and leads to deeper thinking about the media in general, aiding the development of other attributes, particularly being an independent and self-regulated learner (Pintrich, 1995; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991). But the pressures of a newsroom do not encourage such reflection and neither does the deadline-driven regime of New Zealand journalism schools. Reflection, as a component of journalism education, is not mentioned in the journalism unit standards. Nor is it mentioned in the standard textbook or mentioned as important by any of the journalism educators. Thus the students were not supported or assisted in improving their writing by self-evaluation techniques or peer editing (Boud et al., 1998; Buehl, 1996; Pintrich, 1995).

3.6.1 Work placement

All schools except one described the first mode, work placement. Students from School “K” had a range of experiences:

Every Monday all year the students do stories for a campus page or the regional page in the daily newspaper. First we take them as a whole class to a small town. They have to find a story that could be published and then they research it and write it. I sub it and select what stories will be sent back to the newspaper. Then in groups of four they go to other small towns on a rostered basis. This is for the newspaper’s regional page, a whole page that comes out every Friday and deals with towns throughout the province. The group of four must collect enough stories to fill the page. Again they come back to me after they have written a story, they are subbed and when they are ready they go to Frank at the paper.

School “D” had a regular arrangement, where for two afternoons a week, students wrote for the city’s newspaper:

Every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from the fourth week to the end of the year they write stories for the daily paper and the community paper. The papers publish about 95 per cent of them.

Another school, School “G”, also had an arrangement with the daily newspaper where the students were rostered each month to write for the secondary school page in the daily newspaper.

3.6.2 Supervised field trips

The second type is for the students to experience an established newsroom by taking time out from the classroom, with the tutor present to supervise them. This is commonly called a “field trip”. A field trip is defined as developing social responsibility in participants by placing them in real life situations (Fletcher, 1991). However, in the journalism setting, the tutor is always there to assist and provide individual support. At six of the schools, students travelled to a newsroom with a tutor for a period of one day to eight days, while a seventh school had not yet done so, but was keen to organise a similar experience. Field trips were set up in various ways, so that the students could be accommodated in newsrooms. School “B” went very early on in the school year:

We go at Easter each year. It’s really early in the year, so we don’t aim for the students to write for the newspaper. I go with them, take them in groups...

The tutor acted as “chief sub”, as School “A” explained:

We take the students to the newspaper in groups of seven for four and a half days. We can’t take any more than seven because they won’t fit into newsrooms. We go about half way through the course. The way it works is the tutor is the chief sub, students pass their stories to the tutor first, rather than a member of the newspaper’s staff and once the tutor is satisfied they then go to the paper’s sub-editor and hopefully they are published. The students get quite a thrill seeing their names in the paper.

Students at School “F” also went on a field trip for a longer period, accompanied by a tutor:

They go for five days, about midway through the year. They are expected to spend 40 hours working for the various newspapers, but I go too to make sure their stories are up to scratch.

3.6.3 Longer term internships

Only one school of journalism, a broadcasting school used the third mode, a six-month internship. It places a strong emphasis on work experience, after two years on campus. School “H” described the internship:

We see the six-month experience as an easy transition to the workplace, a three-way partnership between students, school and employer. We have a lot of industry employers in broadcast newsrooms who want students and we post the opportunity. The students apply as in a job, and the employer selects the students they want. The students can gain 84 credits from this.

An internship manager visits all students two or three times during the six months and can call on journalism tutors if any advice is needed. The employer provides constant feedback on the students' performance as well as formally assessing them in a number of aptitude concepts, their grooming and general performance. Students would not gain a degree if they failed. Employers view the scheme positively and can select their own students, paying the students at a higher rate than the \$140 for normal work experience. As the head of this school commented: "Employers can look and pick and at \$350 a week, that's cheap labour."

The head of School "H" also found the internship very beneficial for the school as well as for the students: "We take pride in the relationship we build with our employers."

He did not see it as "work experience":

It's not work experience in the unit standard meaning of the word, a lot of the output and working is like an employee. It's a structured monitoring of students and a very good training programme. It is such a powerful platform, virtually all students get employed after it, and it's a very effective transition to the workplace.

3.6.4 Work experience

Placing the students alone in a media workplace is seen as the highlight of the year – the chance for the students to see what the media industry is really like, and for the industry to assess their future employees. The cognitive research literature describes this kind of learning as situated learning or situated cognition (Brown et al., 1989). In the 1970s, situated learning became popular as a way of linking the economy and higher education and providing relevant and useful education. It rests on the concept that students should learn how to use or apply information through anchored instruction, information anchored in the real world that is also appealing and meaningful to students. This method of learning also emphasises the idea that much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned and does not readily transfer from the classroom to the real world. This would suggest that news-writing skills are best learned in the

newsroom rather than the classroom. Brown, Collins and Duguid argue for “cognitive apprenticeships” which enculturate students into authentic practices through activity and social interaction in a way similar to the old method of apprenticeships (p. 32). But just having an experience does not necessarily mean that learning has occurred. The important factor which may convert experience into learning is the process of reflection (Boud & Walker, 1990).

Workplace experience varied from two weeks to four weeks, with two weeks being the most common length of time. Students at 10 schools went on work experience with five schools going for two weeks, two schools going for three weeks and four schools going for four weeks.

Placement in the media industry worked in a similar fashion throughout these 10 New Zealand schools of journalism. Students were mainly sent to daily and community newspapers, and broadcast newsrooms, although they may go to a wider variety of places, including trade magazines, public relations firms and on-line media. School “F” described the range and the benefits:

They go to daily newspapers, community newspapers, public relations firms, on-line media, television, radio. It not only gives students experience in the place of their choice, but they can also use it to get an understanding of the range of jobs that are out there. For instance, a student can go to a public relations firm to see what it’s like. Some places are not set up for students, like large television channels and radio stations. The students find it technically difficult, but we know the good placements and steer them there.

It was easy for the older established schools like School “F” and School “G” to place their students because they knew the employers and the workplace. School “G” sent students to places with which they had a long association:

We send them off for news experience to daily or community newspapers and radio stations. We’ve had a long association with these places.

Local knowledge was often a consideration, as School “B” stated:

We have a particular arrangement with particular places. Some editors prefer students with local knowledge so the students go back to their home town. We always send our very best students to our local daily. It’s horses for courses really.

However, it was not always as easy, particularly for the newer or smaller institutions. Four of the newer schools mentioned this. School “E” explained:

Sometimes a bit of juggling is needed to fit them into newsrooms, other polytechnics have students there.

Students have a choice where they want to be sent but, in reality, the tutors have the final say, as School “I” indicated:

I consult with the students, talk about where they want to go, but in reality I place them.

Most schools regard the timing of work experience as an important factor, as School “B” stated:

You shouldn’t send them out too soon, too early in the course. We also always check their media law is up to speed before they can go.

School “D” regarded work experience as having passed a test, also mentioning the importance of students’ knowledge of media law:

Students choose where they want to go but not if they are struggling too much. They must pass media law and have written a certain number of stories first and have appropriate note-taking skills. If they want to go to the *NZ Herald*, we say it’s not appropriate, if they’re struggling. It enables you to keep a hand on their progress. It’s an important filter for us. We have some who fail the course, one or two students a year. If they have reached the standard they can go [on work experience]. If they haven’t they don’t go.

It was also seen as a “test” by several other schools, including School “A”:

It’s the first real test of what they’ve learnt on the course. They’re completely on their own and stand and fall on their own. It highlights the likelihood of being employed, and way of placing themselves to get a job and testing the reality of the job.

School “G” saw it as “workplace readiness”:

It’s the students’ opportunity to confirm their skill level is ready for the workplace and gain more intense experiences.

Some students might get a permanent job from the experience. School “G” commented:

The students change after work experience, take it seriously and look forward to it, know its part of what they are going to do. It is also important in getting a job. Some students are offered full job opportunities.

Before students went on work experience, they all received some form of instruction. It varied slightly but was concentrated on the students’ behaviour, dress and the need to

conform to workplace standards. At School “I” and School “K” it was mainly verbal instruction. School “I” described how the students were told about work experience:

I talk to them about social behaviour and how to dress. The students brainstorm and put together a huge list of story ideas to take with them, as a lot of papers expect the students to have their own ideas. It’s mainly verbal instruction.

The head of School “K” instructed them about her expectations:

I talk about my personal expectations of the students. I tell them this school hasn’t yet struck the front page lead but I expect a lot. We have several classes on what to expect. The students learn how to take messages, how to behave, being on time, down to what they wear. We also get chief reporters in from daily and community papers and some students from last year to tell them what it’s like.

Most school had some form of a written contract between the students and the employer. School “B” explained the formal agreement:

They have to sign a contract that notes exactly where they are going and when and what time they are expected to start and finish. The students fill in their aims and objectives and the specific tasks they expect to do. The employer also fills in a description of the job and the students’ duties.

Students were encouraged to keep in contact with their tutors while they were working, though there was a division of opinion about the benefits of this. Half of the schools kept in touch regularly by visiting or phoning to make sure everything was going well and the student and the employer had no particular problems. At other schools, students were encouraged to phone or email the school while they were on work experience, but it was left up to the student to decide whether they did so. School “D” described what happened:

We don’t insist or put any formal contact in place though sometimes it happens occasionally when there are problems.

And School “K”:

I give them my contact details but I don’t ring them. I’ve found they email me or phone me, they feel comfortable enough to contact me if they have to but I don’t mother hen them too much.

All schools assessed students’ work experience although they might or might not gain credits towards their course fulfilment. The workplace supervisor, whether it was the editor, or chief reporter, was usually asked to fill in a form giving feedback about the

students' performance. Six schools did not ask the supervisor to grade a student, relying on the comments they made instead.

The method of assessment was very similar in all cases. Schools required the supervisor to fill in a feedback form and provide comments, as School "E" described:

Chief reporters or editors are sent an assessment form, asked to tick a box ranking their performance. I then give the students a pass or fail for the module. They get a pass if they are reasonable.

Schools preferred to steer well clear of the difficulties caused by students failing the module. School "F" worked hard not to fail students:

We have surprisingly few difficulties, though standards do vary. We know daily newspapers are tougher on the students but we take that into account. We used to fail them, and then students would appeal and we had to have resits. We had a guy who was an alcoholic once. We didn't really want to place him anywhere else. Fortunately he dropped out. Now we tell the students they have to pass or they will fail the whole course and we aim to be very careful where we send them. We warn the editor in advance or send the student to a place we know is quite flexible. It seems to work.

There were a few examples of students being encouraged to reflect on their experience. Instead of relying on the assessment of the editor or chief reporter, some schools required students to present a seminar on the experience and hand in a portfolio of stories which could be graded in-house, as School "B" explained:

We just don't see it as appropriate to only rely on the industry supervisor because they have different standards. We get them [the students] to give a seminar and produce stories for assessment. They can get a complete pass or an incomplete one, and need to do more stories.

School "G" aimed for work experience to enhance what was done in the classroom:

We state their final portfolio will not suffer from what happens on work experience but be enhanced by their clippings.

The journalism schools found that most employers were very helpful but there were some that were not. Most schools had some negative stories to relate. School "D" described his experiences:

Sometimes employers have strange attitudes but this is very rare. I've found one city paper very difficult. It treats the students so seriously and makes a fuss about small mistakes.

School "K" also described some employers as not being encouraging, as did School "C":

Employers are pretty good at best but it does vary. Sometimes the students are left to sink ... they are not given enough encouragement. Employers forget they're only students.

"Little" problems were not uncommon. School "I" explained about these difficulties:

While work experience runs reasonably smoothly in the best places, there are little difficulties, especially in orientating the students. One student wasn't introduced to other staff members, another didn't know when she could take a lunch break or find the toilet.

However, sometimes the difficulties were larger ones:

A photographer at one newspaper made some really inappropriate remarks to a student. Usually I can sort things out with a call to the paper but I agonised over this problem. In the end I discussed it at length with my advisory committee and wrote a general letter to all the newspapers about inappropriate talk. I got a good response ... a lot of papers wanted to know if it was their newsroom.

Payment of the students was another problem. Students received a non-taxable industry allowance of \$140, if they were paid at all. Some organisations, particularly broadcast ones, refuse to pay, believing they are providing a service. School "A" described what happens:

Payment of the students is a problem. The amount recommended by the NZJTO hasn't changed since 1987, I think. It is quite a financial hurdle for the students who have to give up part-time jobs for \$140 a week – if they're lucky.

Finally, the questionnaire asked whether students found workplace experience useful. The answers were overwhelming about how useful the experience was. School "A" commented:

I really can't think of anything more useful [than work experience]. It shows the students the reality of the industry. Sometimes it shows them it is not what they want. It's a way of testing the reality of the job and they're completely on their own.

School "B" had a similar opinion:

In my view, it's absolutely vital. It is another pair of eyes assessing their work. They begin to understand the culture of the newsroom and how it operates and they are beginning to see what it is really like out there.

School “J” agreed:

The students find it extremely useful. They get out to the coal face and find out what it’s like out there. They get different opportunities, make contacts. They get to see their employability. It gives them a taste of the real world.

And School “D” enthused:

The students often say it is one of the best things on the course. It enables them to make up their minds about being a journalist and the relevance of the course.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how students learn to become journalists, based on the findings of a study of the 11 New Zealand journalism schools. Journalism in New Zealand was traditionally learnt on the job. Since 1989, the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO) has been the dominant influence on journalism education, supported by government reforms. Seven journalism schools have been established since then. These schools are small in size with fewer than 20 students and are taught by one tutor. The study found that all New Zealand schools follow the NZJTO’s unit standards which set strict requirements for all skills-based journalism training. They stipulate that students should be judged competent in 120 credits covering everything from shorthand to news writing. They require classrooms to be set up like newsrooms and all journalism educators to have worked in the media for at least five years. The learning of the basic skills of journalism as required by the unit standards is reinforced by the use of the standard textbook which also encourages an emphasis on skills-based learning. Because of the close relationship with the media industry, all journalism schools follow the unit standards even though increasingly students are being educated in universities.

Evidence is provided from journalism educators that the students learn the skills of journalism through a method that is described as learning by doing. Students receive a crash course on how to research a news story, gather all facts and then to write it. They are expected to learn by practising their writing and each news story is subedited by a journalism tutor, generally individually. The best students’ stories are then published in local newspapers. This method centres on “real-world” experience, through work placement, field trips and work experience. Work experience is seen as the ultimate test

because the students are working on their own in the media industry without the direction of a journalism tutor. It can be two, three or four weeks, except at one broadcasting school where students take part in an internship scheme for six months. Most students only have two weeks of work experience. This was considered too short a period to justify a full-scale study to consider the role work experience plays in socialising journalism students in the production of the news genre, although the integral role that it plays was recognised. I decided to refocus my study to consider the development and the influences on journalism students as they moved towards becoming journalists.

This chapter has set the scene for the study that follows. It points the way to the fundamental features of New Zealand journalism education and the effects that will be explored in more depth later. Learning by doing will be viewed first through focusing on how the students progress in the technical requirements of news writing, both in learning to write in the inverted pyramid model and also in the various hybrid forms that increasing numbers of students were found to use. Secondly, the methods of learning will be examined as to whether the students understood not only the technical requirements but the deeper reasons for the genres they were using. For example, do they understand that the inverted pyramid's role is to introduce and enhance news values that are critical to the appeal and newsworthiness of a story? Thirdly, it will consider whether learning by doing encouraged the students to become reflective learners who could evaluate their own work so that they could develop and improve their own writing and become independent. Lastly, it will examine whether the method of journalism education encourages the students to debate the higher ideals of journalism and become critical thinkers about the media industry.

The methods used in this main study and the methodology that underpins them are considered in the next chapter.

4 Designing the Study

Research is, after all, producing knowledge about the world ... the world of educational practice (Merriam, 1998, p. 3).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the design of the study of 20 students during a year-long journalism training programme, and the methodology which informs it. There have been few previous investigations into New Zealand journalism education so therefore it was driven primarily by original research. It was conceived in two stages, a preliminary study, followed by the major study.

The first stage, the preliminary study, involved interviews with journalism educators at each of the 11 tertiary institutions, in order to gather basic data about New Zealand journalism education, and was discussed in Chapter 3. It found that journalism education in New Zealand was based around “learning by doing”, where students learnt the inverted-pyramid format and practised their writing skills under the guidance of tutors experienced in the media industry. With this method, there was little encouragement for reflection, with work experience seen as the prime component.

Its findings inspired this more in-depth study, extended by research into a group of students, which sought to provide a deeper view of the nature and success of New Zealand journalism education. Its aims were two-fold. Firstly, it sought to test further whether the focus remained on the inverted pyramid and learning by doing. Secondly, it aimed to investigate whether this was a successful method of preparing students to write news stories to a professional standard and to gain a deeper and critical understanding of the news media or whether some reform was necessary.

A qualitative case study was designed to assess the education and achievements of the 20 journalism students from two representative journalism schools, one a university in a major city and the other a polytechnic in a regional centre, during their year-long training programme. Case studies, especially qualitative ones, are prevalent in a number of fields, including education, although there is little consensus as to what exactly constitutes a case. Merriam's (1998) definition is useful. She defines the major

characteristics of case-study research as a “single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). Miles and Huberman (1994) use a similar definition, describing a case as a “phenomenon of some sort, occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). A case study could focus on one person, such as a student or a teacher, a group or class of students, or an entire programme.

The journalism students, 10 studying at a polytechnic and 10 at a university, volunteered to take part in the study. I understood that the use of 20 students was too small a number to be able to generalise the findings widely in New Zealand journalism education. However, it was considered an appropriate number to provide a broad picture of New Zealand journalism education as a whole, while small enough to allow for in-depth study of the students’ writing achievements and how their training impacted on them. A close analysis of their news stories and reflections on their writing was carried out at three points during the year, the beginning, middle and the end. The news stories they had written were collected and compared with the version a professional journalist produced, using discourse analysis methods. The students also tape-recorded their reflections, known as retrospective protocols, reflecting on the decisions they had taken in writing their news stories. The methodology and the design that informed this study are discussed in the chapter that follows, while the insights it produced on the education of New Zealand journalism students make up the rest of this thesis.

Case-study research can use any number of methods of data collection or data analysis. For example, Chin (1994) uses ethnographic interviews in researching how graduate students in a one-year’s masters programme learned to become journalists. Van den Bergh and Rijlaarsdam (2001) draw on concurrent protocols to investigate the writing processes in novice writers while Crowhurst (1991) employs text analysis to identify patterns in students’ writing. I chose a multi-method approach, using discourse analysis and retrospective protocol analysis, to help draw a detailed picture of journalism education in New Zealand.

The use of multi-methods or triangulation has the advantage of gathering data in different ways and allowing for multiple perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Discourse analysis (Bell, 1991, 1998; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1986, 1988) has emerged from the humanities and social sciences such as linguistics and anthropology while protocol analysis is rooted in the sciences in cognitive psychology. Discourse

analysis helps to provide a detailed analysis of both the text and the context of the students' writing, while retrospective protocol analysis, "thinking aloud" (Boren & Ramey, 2000; Greene & Higgins, 1994), adds the flavour of the students' own words and thoughts, also allowing insight into how their training impacts on their achievements. The two methods combine to provide a fuller interpretation of the social worlds the students inhabit (Fairclough, 1995).

This chapter is divided into five sections: the next section, 4.2, describes the different theoretical perspectives involved in drawing a three-dimensional picture of New Zealand journalism education. Section 4.3 explores the design in greater detail, discussing the implementation of the study, including the selection of participants, the gathering of the data and the analysis of the data that was gathered. Section 4.4 concludes this chapter by discussing the validity and reliability of the research.

4.2 Theoretical perspectives

This section considers the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The extensive work of van Dijk (1986, 1988, 1991) and Bell (1991, 1998) has established the criteria for the inverted-pyramid model of news writing. These categories are discussed in 4.2.1 and form the basis of the analysis of the students' news stories. However, news is a relatively unstable form, which can no longer be defined solely by the inverted pyramid. "Hybrid" news stories are a result of changing times and are discussed in 4.2.2. Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework is discussed in 4.2.3 as a way to look beyond the text to the wider influences on the students' news writing. Section 4.2.4 considers the second method used in the study, retrospective protocol analysis or "thinking aloud" and what it will contribute to the cognitive aspect of the analysis, described by Fairclough as "interpretative processes" (p. 59).

4.2.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis has become a common research tool and is often used to criticise the performance and motivation of the news media (d'Haenens, 2005; Fairclough, 1995; Fowler, 1991; R. Holt, 2000; Teo, 2000). My objective was to use discourse analysis for a less common purpose: to research journalism education and to explore whether

changes should be made in the way journalism is learnt in New Zealand. Discourse analysis provided a careful deconstruction of the students' writing at three points during their year of training to evaluate the development of the students' writing and the influences on their education.

The term "discourse" is widely used in various disciplines, although its meaning varies widely depending upon its context. The term has been used widely by scholars since the 1980s, often in a vague way. It is used in the sense that social theorist Michel Foucault uses it as a set of complex multi-layered texts that determine and limit what can be said or known about certain subjects, therefore serving particular interests in the power structure of society. Foucault (2002) sees discourse as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge. His view of discourse claims that language used about a particular practice in turn forms the objects of which it speaks. He focuses on questions of power and knowledge. It is also used to describe analysis of language above the sentence. Benveniste (1972) provides an appropriate definition: discourse is "every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker, the intention of influencing the other in some way" (as cited in Seiter, 1992, p. 61). A second definition of discourse and discourse analysis is predominant in language studies: discourse is "social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations" (Fairclough, 1995, p.18). Fairclough combines the various definitions to provide a useful framework for the analysis used in this study. "A discourse is the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view. Discourses appertain broadly to knowledge and knowledge construction" (p. 56).

4.2.2 The inverted pyramid

The requirements of the inverted-pyramid are first and most commonly taught to New Zealand journalism students because it closely resembles the form taken by vast numbers of media stories. Its great advantage is that "its simple formula gives an understanding of the tenets of all news writing" (Tucker, 1999a, p. 106). It reduces a story to a number of categories which are obligatory and occur in a fixed or partially fixed order.

The most extensive analysis of the inverted pyramid is provided by Teun van Dijk. In a series of studies, van Dijk (1986, 1988, 1991) developed a framework for analysing

news as discourse which considers not only the sentence but the language structure of the whole. He sees two kinds of structures: macrostructures and microstructures. The macrostructure of a text is its overall organisation, its theme or topic which can usually be summed up by one single proposition. A news report is typically made up of a headline, a lead, the main events, verbal reactions to the story and “comments”. These are the microstructures or schematic structure of the news report, each element relating to or elaborating on the theme or topic. The elements are hierarchically organised: general information comes first, followed by more details. Microanalysis also identifies other features of newspaper style, such as those which increase the factual quality of news reports. The production of news, because of its tight deadlines, is constrained by various professional routines and values. News stories are direct descriptions and include concrete details, such as numbers, distances and measurements which are used often to provide credibility. To emphasise the factual nature of a news story, official, well known and credible sources (for example, police and public officials) are often selected. They also provide an ideologically coherent perspective, enhance the story line and play down any incompatible propositions (see also Chapter 2).

The framework developed by van Dijk formed the basis for the analysis of the students’ news stories, with Bell (1991, 1998) adding to the criteria used for analysis. He contends that the non-chronological order is the most striking characteristic of the inverted pyramid news story. Additionally, a news story must be seen as newsworthy, judged by the “value” of the news. Events and actors are selected because of their news value with negativity or conflict regarded as the basic element. Bell uses the news factors of Galtung and Ruge (1965) as a basis and also adds others. Galtung and Ruge describe the news values of recency, proximity, consonance, unambiguity, unexpectedness, superlativeness, relevance, personalisation, elite nations and people, continuity and composition (see Chapter 2). Bell contributes “attribution”, the eliteness of a story’s sources and “facticity”, the degree to which it contains facts and figures (Tuchman, 1978), as other important contributing factors in the value of a news story. These factors are not independent, but cumulative, that is the more newsworthy a story is, the more news values it has. In a news story, the lack of one factor can be compensated by possessing another. He cites others such as continuity, meaning once something is in the news it remains news and competition, referring to a “scoop”, relating to the news-gathering process and the desirability of being first to publish.

There are also elements in the style of the news text, including clarity, brevity and colour which affect its newsworthiness, particularly in the lead sentence. Bell argues that the most important factor in enlivening news stories is to maximise or enhance the news values.

He also relates the categories in news stories to the journalist's short list of what should be in a story, the "five W's and an H": who, where, what, when, why and how. A news story normally begins with the lead or "intro" as it is called in New Zealand. The lead is the most important sentence in the story, covering the main event and sometimes a secondary event. The actors and place involved in the event are also described so that the lead answers the journalist's "who", "what" and "where". The lead sentence also concentrates the news values of the story. It begins to tell the story as well as summarising it. It is "a directional summary, a lens through which the point of the story is focused and its news values magnified" (p. 183).

The body of the story comprises one or more episodes, consisting of one or more events or clusters of events that share a common setting or news actors. In addition, stories may contain background, commentary and follow-up. Any event prior to the current action is termed "background" while "commentary" provides comments on the action often detailing how they happened, evaluation and verbal reaction. "Follow-up" covers any action subsequent to the main action of an event (Bell, 1998).

These models of the inverted-pyramid method are vital in understanding the formula that most news stories follow. The education of New Zealand journalism students focuses primarily around teaching this method of news writing and the majority of texts produced by the students attempt to replicate this formula. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 will examine how successfully New Zealand journalism students are taught this method and whether the method of teaching enables them to understand and replicate it.

4.2.3 Hybrid news stories

Most New Zealand journalism training and many stories written by the students revolve around the inverted-pyramid model. The inverted pyramid concepts of van Dijk and Bell emphasise news as a relatively stable form of communication. However, as Fairclough (1995) argues, the news media today is "fluid, unstable and shifting" (p. 60).

The media reflects and stimulates these processes of change. Its practices are in a state of some flux and the description, the “inverted pyramid” is no longer appropriate to define the variety of forms of news stories produced by the media.

There is an increasing call for students and journalists to write what can be termed “hybrid” stories (see Chapters 7 and 8). “Hybrid stories” are an amalgam of different styles and different genres with different social purposes in sequential paragraphs (van Leeuwen, 1987) and are marked by “soft” lead sentences, not bound by immediacy (Bell, 1991). Hybrid stories include the “soft” news of “human interest” stories (Ostman, 1997) about people. They also comprise the more complex mix of genres that Fairclough (1995) sees, where, for example, scientific discourse is merged with conversational language.

Ostman (1997) describes a human interest story, where the news interest or “gold nugget” (p. 87), as she refers to it, is not placed at the beginning but is contained elsewhere in the body. She sees this pattern as being more common in tabloid newspapers that publish soft news stories, where readers regard human interest stories as a recognisable form of story-telling. In New Zealand human interest stories usually about people in the community fill a substantial part of suburban or community newspapers.

Another type of hybrid news story increasingly found in the media is promotional news (Wernick, 1991), where information favourable to an organisation, its products or services, is encoded into a promotional message or text in the hope that this will lead the reader to buy or use the service. Fairclough (1994) sees the use of promotional news as the result of the increasing “marketization” of news and the construction of the audience as consumers while Ungerer (2004) describes a cross-genre, where the formulae for advertisement and news texts are merged. Promotional news stories, while not unique to community newspapers, are increasingly common in them as the line between advertising and editorial is often blurred (Cafarella, 2001), and many of the students add an occasional persuasive or promotional sentence or tone to their news stories.

Hybrid texts are particularly common on radio, television and in less formal newspapers such as community newspapers. However, they are less common in more respectable newspapers and perhaps for that reason, they form only a small part of journalism education. New Zealand journalism educators, in my experience, seldom teach ways of writing hybrid texts in any depth and seem to have a somewhat confused view of their acceptability. Nevertheless, as later chapters will show, journalism students are producing articles that can be described as hybrid texts, often characterised by a conversational, almost colloquial style of writing and promotional statements.

4.2.4 The three-dimensional framework

The theories of Fairclough (1995) provide a way of considering other factors in news writing, rather than the text alone. His approach has a significant advantage. Unlike many analytical approaches, it does not focus only on the specific situation and the immediate context while ignoring the wider social and cultural influences. Rather, Fairclough advocates discourse analysis as a method of alternating between three complementary focuses: the text, the discourse practices and the socio-cultural context. He sees discourse analysis as concerned with understanding an event, and the way that other practices relate to the text and in turn are influenced by it.

His framework is designed for the interpretation of any communicative event. It is particularly useful for this study as it advocates not only analysing the text of the students' news stories, but also considering the three dimensions of practices and processes that influence and shape it. In Fairclough's original diagram (see Figure 4.1), he shows how socio-cultural practices influence the discourse practice, which covers both how a text is produced and consumed, and the influence on the text itself.

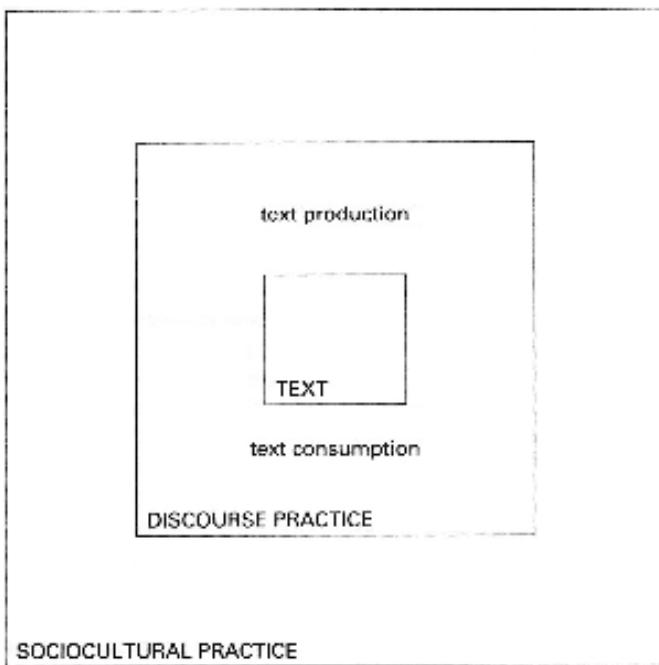


Figure 4.1 Three-dimensional framework for discourse analysis of a communicative event (Fairclough, 1995, p.59)

This approach towards discourse analysis is relevant to the study of New Zealand journalism education as it goes beyond textual analysis to look also at the forces that impact upon the texts written by New Zealand journalism students. As Fairclough points out, wider forces are critical to shaping the news-making process. Indeed, as he states, the news-making process is a “sensitive barometer of cultural change” (p. 60). The news process is therefore changing or in Fairclough’s words is “fluid, unstable and shifting” (p. 60), because it reflects the radical and continuous changes in society and culture.

The framework shown in Figure 4.2 is neither intended to be comprehensive nor fixed, as it shows the impact of society upon the media and journalism education. It suggests some of the effect of “fluid, unstable and shifting influences” upon the way students write news stories. In this diagram, I have categorised only aspects specific to New Zealand journalism education, which are discussed in greater detail in this thesis. Figure 4.2 (below) shows how socio-cultural factors have influenced the students’ news stories. Changes in the economy have reshaped the structure of the New Zealand media industry, especially the trend towards larger media groups. These large transnational groups have a greater focus on commercialisation, so that the pattern of introducing entertainment and maintaining audiences is accentuated. The government reforms of the

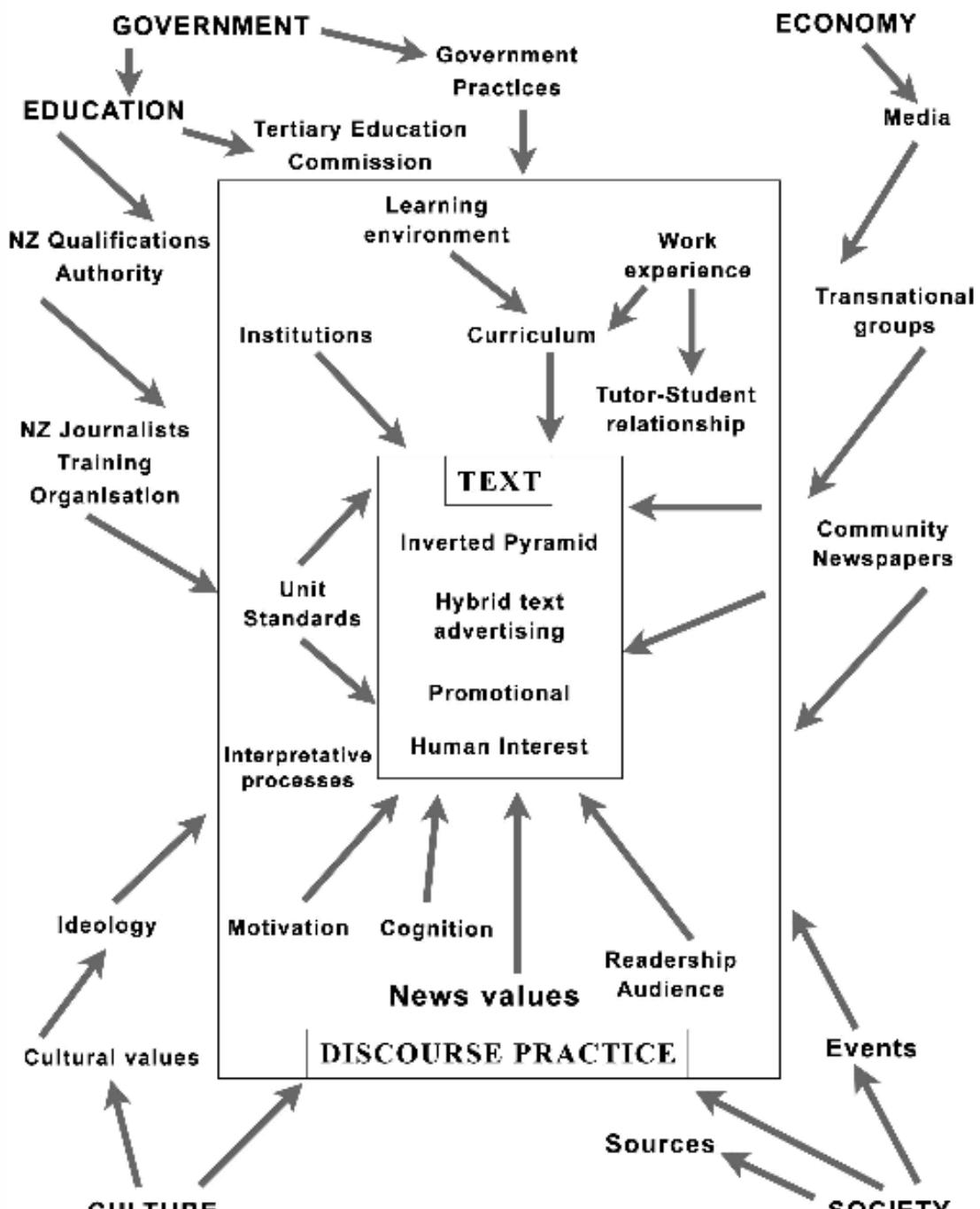
1980s were another socio-cultural change of considerable importance leading to the education reforms at the end of the decade. As part of this reform movement, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) was established. NZQA in turn set up a national qualifications framework and a series of industry training organisations to oversee all industry training (Codd, 1995). The industry training organisation, the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO) remains the dominant force in journalism education today.

It plays a major role in the shaping of the second dimension, the discourse practice or learning environment. The NZJTO specifies the ratio of tutors to students, the media experience of journalism educators and even specifies the numbers of computers necessary in the training of journalists (see Chapter 3). The emphasis on work experience in the training of journalism students is another factor attributable to the role of the NZJTO.

Other processes also influence the discourse practice. Fairclough (1995) describes these as “interpretative processes” (p. 59), although he does not include them in his diagram (Figure 4.1). The third element of the three-dimensional approach is the text itself, and more particularly the forms of news writing taught to journalism students. The most common and important method taught in New Zealand journalism schools is what is commonly called the “inverted pyramid” or what Fairclough describes as the “schematic” view (p. 85).

Discourse analysis proved to be crucial in analysing the texts of the students while empirical research and my own experiences of teaching journalism helped draw a picture of the institutional processes and effects on journalism education in New Zealand. Fairclough also identified another critical element in understanding journalism education – the cognitive aspect or what Figure 4.2 describes as the interpretative processes. These interpretative processes derive from the impact of the ideological assumptions of society on news stories. Particularly relevant to this study is the tendency of both New Zealand journalism educators and their students to accept rather than to challenge or even contemplate the values which define what is accepted as news, such as the emphasis on conflict (see Chapters 2, 6).

SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE



SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE

Figure 4.2 A modified diagram of the influences on the students' texts, based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for the discourse analysis of a students' news story

To learn more about the quality and effect of New Zealand journalism education, and, in particular, the influences on the writing of journalism students, questions needed to be posed about the cognition, the thinking and perceptions that shaped how the students wrote their stories. For instance, did the students plan their stories or did they just write? Did they consciously construct their stories based on lessons taught in class, such as the inverted- pyramid model, or were they following stories they had read? What kinds of difficulties did they find in writing and researching their news stories? What are the effects on the students and the news stories they write of the deadlines set by tutors in imitation of the deadlines that shape the media? What effect does the tutor acting as subeditor on their stories have on the journalism students? In short, I wanted to know not just “how” journalism students write news stories but “why” they write them in the manner they do. Retrospective protocol analysis helped answer these questions and understand the cognitive aspects shaping the writing processes of the students (see Chapter 9).

4.2.5 Retrospective protocol analysis

This section will discuss the second method used in this study, retrospective protocol analysis, including how it developed. Using this approach, the students’ thoughts are gathered on tape, as they think aloud, immediately after writing their news stories. This method shaped my investigation into the cognitive aspects of journalism students’ news writing and helped me understand why and how they wrote the stories in the manner they did. It also provided the “human face” for this study, completing the picture of individual students, their words and actions.

Before the 1980s, writing researchers were mainly interested in the quality of written texts. At about this time, the work of Flower and Hayes and their writing model started to influence research, moving the emphasis away from the final written product to the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1980). They introduced methods, known as protocol analysis taken from social science and cognitive psychology into writing research. The technique requires subjects to verbalise their thought processes and strategies they are using while tackling a specific problem-solving situation, or to reflect aloud about how to solve the problem.

Since then a great many studies relevant to writing have been carried out using this methodology and there has been considerable discussion about the processes that shape writing (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Kaufer, Hayes, & Flower, 1986; Pitts, 1982, 1989). There has also been debate and some controversy about the use of protocol analyses as a method, mainly because the guidelines prescribed for the relatively narrow field of cognitive psychology have been adapted for use in a number of other fields from computer technology (Yang, 2003) to composition writing (Greene & Higgins, 1994) to usability testing (Boren & Ramey, 2000).

Protocol analysis is one of the few methods available in cognitive psychology to gather data of second-by-second behaviour in the writing process. Its original form, concurrent protocol analysis, involves the subject writing and at the same time recording his or her thoughts (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). In order to achieve validity, Ericsson and Simon contend that the subject should be talking, without expending any extra effort to communicate their thoughts. They argue that the subject should not be directed to give particular or “reactive” information or to make inferences about their own cognition.

This method of using these protocols in my research to investigate the interpretative processes of journalism students writing news stories was not adopted for a number of reasons. News writing is a cognitively demanding task, involving simultaneous subtasks such as planning, generating text and revising. Generating thinking-aloud protocols at the same time as writing could mean cognitive “overload” (Ransdell, 1995), especially for students who are novices at news writing, and might prove overly difficult and distracting.

Moreover, studies using concurrent protocol analysis are better suited because of their in-depth nature and the large amount of data they produce to studies of the cognitive aspects shaping the writing of only one participant (Greene & Higgins, 1994; Smagorinsky, 1997), while my research was aimed at a broader picture of New Zealand journalism education using a group of 20 students. More important still, concurrent protocol analysis with its moment-by-moment approach is designed to produce data about “how” the subject is writing and is therefore not appropriate for a qualitative study. Because of its precise nature and its prohibition on prompting comments on the cognitive state of those involved, it cannot provide much insight into “why” the student is writing in a particular manner.

To address these shortcomings, variations of Ericsson and Simon's thinking-aloud protocols have been developed by a number of researchers over the last 20 years. The methodology, known as retrospective protocol analysis, focuses more on decision outcomes rather than on the decision-making process itself. Retrospective protocols are collected immediately after the problem has been solved or a piece of writing is completed, while the information is still freshly remembered. Despite Ericsson and Simon's (1993) misgivings about reactivity, Kuusela and Pallab (2000) found that these protocols are more rational and more thorough than concurrent protocols.

Retrospective protocols allow the interviewer to pose questions and prompt the subject to reveal more insight into the writing process. While Ericsson and Simon insist that the listener be entirely passive or even non-existent, so that subjects should be able to temporarily suspend their awareness of anyone listening, Boren and Ramey (2000) argue for the advantages of both parties being aware of and reacting to each other so that more in-depth data can be gathered.

Retrospective accounts can take many forms, including face-to-face interviews with writers to prompt them for information about techniques they used or factors they considered, when writing. Taped reflections and the keeping of a diary or log are also forms of retrospective protocols. All these approaches are constructions based on a writer's selective evaluations and inferences of what occurred during a previous episode of composing (Greene & Higgins, 1994).

I provided a tape-recorder for the students whose written news stories were to be studied, and asked them to "think-aloud", immediately after writing. They received an instruction sheet with various questions prompting them to discuss the lead sentence, the structure and the words selected (see Appendix I). In this way I hoped to be able to start filling in some details of the interpretative processes associated with the discourse practice of a journalism student and to gather cognitive aspects of the influences on the students, unobtainable in any other way. At the same time, I bore in mind Greene and Higgins' (1994) caution that it is important to use other converging methods in conjunction with retrospective protocol analyses: retrospective accounts may reveal only part of the process of composing, rather than an entire picture. Therefore, this study coupled the retrospective protocol analysis with discourse analysis to produce a picture of journalism education in New Zealand.

This section has described the theoretical perspectives behind the design of this study. It has considered discourse analysis and retrospective protocol analysis and how the two methods mesh to produce a three-dimensional picture of New Zealand journalism education. The next step was to implement the study.

4.3 Implementation of the study

This section describes in detail how the study was implemented. It will first discuss the ethical considerations involved in the main study. Section 4.3.2 describes the pilot study carried out to check the design. Section 4.3.3 considers the group of 20 students, selected from two institutions and discusses whether they can be seen as typical of all New Zealand journalism students. In 4.3.4, the characteristics, including their age, gender and educational qualifications of the 20 students are described. Section 4.3.5 introduces the 20 students who participated in the study, including some personal details. The fieldwork of the study is the subject for 4.3.6, while 4.3.7 details how data was collected.

4.3.1 Ethical considerations

Before beginning, I needed to take into account the participants and whether there were particular aspects of cultural sensitivity to consider. As the preliminary study (see Chapter 3) had found, most journalism students are European and there were no outstanding areas that needed particular care. Nevertheless, I designed the study with attention to all details, including commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The main consideration was whether the students and their studies would be affected, particularly whether this research might disrupt or harm their journalism education in any way. There were three main aspects to this: firstly, the relationship of the researcher to the students needed to be considered; secondly, the issue of safeguarding the students' privacy; and thirdly, the time-consuming nature of the study also required further deliberation.

The first question to be resolved related to the fact that I am a professional journalism educator who had already formed close relationships with some of the students in the study, particularly those located at the institution where I normally worked as a teacher. This could potentially have caused ethical problems, biased the findings and produced dilemmas associated with “insider” research (Mercer, 2007). It placed me in a situation of power, raising issues such as role conflict and a potential lack of objectivity because of personal knowledge that I might have (Mutch, 2005). There was also a challenge for the students who could be potentially less than honest in their participation in the study, out of concern for their grades. I avoided this dilemma by not teaching journalism while the study was being carried out and therefore distanced myself from being involved with the news-writing programme, from where potential participants were drawn.

Some potential ethical and observational problems remained, however, because I had a close rapport with some of the students in the study. One example of the effect of this rapport was that all 10 students at the university where I was normally a full-time member of staff completed all three stages of the study. This may in part have been out of a sense of personal commitment to me. For instance, one student commented in her reflections: “I hated [recording reflections] and I only did it for you.” By contrast, only five of the 10 students at the second site for the research, the polytechnic, completed the study, perhaps reflecting I had a more distant relationship with the students and the institution.

Lidz (1989) suggests rapport involves a bond between the two parties in an exchange, implying there is an obligation to reciprocate the bond in some way. This bond also involves a diffuse sense of trust that develops. “The existence of rapport not only means that the informant is committed to open up a private world to an observer but also that the observer is diffusely committed to view the world in a sympathetic light,” (Johnson, 1975, cited in Lidz, 1989, p. 49). Ethical problems can result if the researcher starts to see the participants in a study as her friends, downplaying their faults and highlighting their virtues. However, Lidz (1989) argues that the relationship between a researcher and a participant parallels that of the psychoanalyst and the client. Like a psychoanalyst, I prided myself on the detachment with which I could analyse the information provided.

A preliminary testing of the design had also revealed the length of time the study would take, as it required the students to write news stories and record their reflections at three

separate points during the year. I sought to minimise this by using news stories written as part of their class requirements. I also believed this would assure the authenticity of the study's findings as being typical of journalism training. The two heads of the journalism schools selected for the study were also informed in writing, the letter stating there would be little disruption to normal journalism classes. All students were instructed about the study and were also given participant information sheets informing them of the research. Taking part would require putting aside three to four hours spread throughout the year, in addition to class time required to write the news stories. They were invited to ask questions and also informed they could withdraw at any time. The students also signed forms consenting to participate in the research (see Appendix I).

Another issue involved the students' privacy. In a relatively small population such as New Zealand, extra care needed to be taken to keep the identity of individuals confidential. I used letters of the alphabet to conceal the identity of the different schools in Chapter 3. The identity of individual students was also hidden when they themselves selected a pseudonym⁹. Names of tutors, people and places used in the students' news stories were also changed, although easily identifiable or relevant names were left unchanged when their status had some relevance to the discourse analysis of the story. Despite these precautions, I was aware that it would be difficult in journalism circles to totally safeguard the privacy of the schools taking part. I justified this by reference to the aim of this study: my aim was not to concentrate on individual students or individual schools but to draw a picture of New Zealand journalism education. Finally, I was satisfied I had tried to remove any ethical problems and applied for approval which was obtained, AUTEC Reference No. 03/24 (see Appendix I).

4.3.2 The pilot study

The study was piloted using students beginning the one-year university programme, to test the design, the time it would take and whether the instruction sheets were adequate to provide the information required.

⁹ As the participants chose their own pseudonyms some selected unusual names with novel spellings. I have honoured them by keeping with the original misspelling rather than using the convention, *sic*.

The four students, who were aged 23 and 24 years and were all university graduates, volunteered to take part. Their previous degrees ranged from law and science to the arts. Their previous writing experience was varied. One had worked in the communications department at a large local government organisation and had written more than 40 news stories previously. The other three had not written a news story before, though one had worked as a copy editor for an English language newspaper in Japan.

The pilot study previewed what was planned for the main study. The four students first answered a short questionnaire (see Appendix I) that provided background information and then took part in a training session, designed to make them feel at ease with the process. They were given a fact sheet and asked to write a news story. After writing, they recorded their reflections using a tape recorder.

An instruction sheet provided prompts about how they wrote their lead sentence and structured the story etc. Once they had completed the training session, the students also researched and wrote a news story and again recorded their reflections.

This pilot revealed that the amount of time involved in taking part in a year-long intensive study requiring the writing of three additional news stories and taping reflections might be disruptive. This was minimised by using news stories written as part of class requirements, also serving to increase the authenticity of the study's findings as the texts analysed were intended for course work and publication, rather than tailored specially for this thesis. The results from the pilot session also prompted some changes in the instruction sheet to clarify the process for the main study. It appeared that the students' reflections after their news story had been influenced by what they had recorded in the training session. Greene and Higgins (1994) contend that one concern about the use of retrospective protocols involves the constructive nature of working memory. Remembering is an act of reconstruction that sometimes requires the subject to simplify, compress or generalise in order to make the experience understandable. When the participant cannot remember exactly what happened, he or she may make general assumptions from past experience or leave out information, which may distort the recollection. For example, a student indicated in a training session reflection that she always checked her lead sentence for answers to the journalists' "who", "what", "why", "when", "where" and "how". But when she came to writing her news story, there was no indication that she was following the same routine. I was unsure whether she did not

repeat the same information because she thought it was simply repetitious or had abandoned checking their stories for “who”, “what” “where” and so on.

Therefore I varied the prompts to cover this contingency as Greene and Higgins suggest. I modified the instruction sheet slightly so that it would contain specific instructions about earlier difficulties as well as current ones by adding a prompt:

I am interested in why you made particular choices in writing – that is the process of writing. This may vary, depending on factors like what you know about news writing, how much you have written before, the way you plan a story, etc. Please remember I do not know this so tell me as you reflect.

This meant that not only information about the current news story but also past experiences about writing in general might emerge. The instruction sheets were also varied slightly at each of the three stages of the research to contain prompts relevant for the stage of the year the students were at (see Appendix I). The next task was to select the participants.

4.3.3 The design

The main factor in deciding on a research design was to establish that the findings would be seen as trustworthy (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Quantitative research requires external validity meaning that the findings can be replicated or generalised to other studies but the aim in qualitative research such as this study is to be regarded as internally valid or matching the realities (Merriam, 1998).

In 2002, at the time of the preliminary study, 265 students were being trained in 11 journalism schools throughout New Zealand (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005). From these students, I selected two schools for the study, the first a polytechnic in a regional centre and the other a university in an urban centre. From these students, I invited volunteers to participate in the study. I thus had a non-probabilistic or purposeful sample for this research (Merriam, 1998). Purposeful sampling, prevalent in qualitative research, is based on the intention that the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. The logic of purposeful sampling lies in selecting a case for study which is rich in information, where a great deal about the issues of central importance can be understood (Patton, 1990). The preliminary study had revealed a strong degree of

uniformity in New Zealand journalism education with students undertaking the requirements of the National Diploma in Journalism and essentially learning journalism in the same way (see Chapter 3), so that I was satisfied that the students would be fairly representative of all others. The aim was to discover through this case study what occurred during a year of journalism education and the implications of what occurred.

The reason for choosing to study 20 students was to ensure that an adequate number completed the study. Previous studies of this sort have found, because of the demanding nature of the method, that the number of subjects decreased markedly so that in one case only one student remained (Smagorinsky, 1997). The students were all instructed that they could withdraw from the study. Moreover, if students dropped out of the journalism course altogether, they would cease to be a part of this study. However, by the end of the year, three-quarters of the students were still in the study or 15 of the original group of 20. Of the five who did not complete all three stages of the research, three students left their journalism programme before it finished and without qualifying for a National Diploma in Journalism. The other two did not complete this specific study for health and personal reasons. All five students who did not complete the study were polytechnic students, as opposed to the often older, and arguably more committed, university students. The many pressures facing journalism students, particularly at the end of the year when most are actively seeking employment meant that it often took patience and sensitivity to their circumstances to ensure that the students fulfilled all parts of my study. Overall, 15 students proved to be a large enough number to gain a valuable insight into New Zealand journalism education.

Qualitative findings are often criticised because they cannot necessarily be replicated nor can inferences be drawn beyond the individual case. Merriam (1998) argues that carrying out the research at two different sites enhances its ability to be generalised more widely. She suggests multi-site designs and using several sites, especially those that show diversity in the field. This was my goal in selecting the two schools for the study.

The students who volunteered ranged from those who were mature university graduates to younger ones whose highest qualification was gained at school. The students in the university group came from all over New Zealand, attracted by the prestige of the school. Selection was highly competitive, with only a quarter of those who applied

being selected. These students were older, most already had a university degree or previous experience in the media, and their programme was regarded as more advanced, as they were studying for a one-year graduate diploma in journalism, which encompassed the unit standards required for the National Diploma. Though there was no direct evidence, the polytechnic was believed to struggle to fill all its vacancies. The polytechnic students were younger and in their final year of a three-year predominantly arts and communications degree majoring in journalism. They were also undertaking the one-year programme for the National Diploma in Journalism and at the same time completing their degree.

There are two pathways to gaining the National Diploma in Journalism: students can either be judged competent in the prescribed journalism skills covered by the 120 unit standards at a polytechnic or attend a university or polytechnic and achieve the same unit standards as part of a degree, graduate or postgraduate diploma programme. Since the education reforms of the late 1980s, polytechnics have been able to offer degree programmes and a number have taken advantage of this. Thus there are an increasing number of journalism students opting for the second pathway. According to figures from the NZJTO, 53 per cent of all journalism students were either studying for a degree or were already university graduates at the time of the study (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005).

Neither of the institutions selected represented the predominantly smaller one-tutor journalism programmes teaching only the National Diploma that are scattered throughout the country, in order to make it easier to travel to the journalism schools three times during the year. However these two schools encompass the realities of the New Zealand situation where smaller schools have difficulties gaining enough suitable students and entry to the larger ones is more competitive.

4.3.4 The characteristics of the participants

All of the students at the university were instructed about the aims of the study. Out of a total enrolment of 26, 10 students volunteered to take part. This group is identified as “university” in the tables and analysis that follow. The entire class of 10 students at the second institution, the polytechnic, also agreed to take part. These students are

identified as “polytechnic”. An additional four students at the university had earlier volunteered to take part in a pilot study to test the study design (see 4.3.2).

Table 4.1 shows the different age groups of the students in the study. The students at the university were considerably older than those at the polytechnic who were doing a three-year degree, often starting it straight from school. The average age of the students at the university course was 28 years old, while the average age of the students at the polytechnic was 22 years old. This factor also influenced other findings: the older students had had more education and had achieved higher educational qualifications.

Table 4.1 Age of students

| Age | University | Polytechnic |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 20 years and under | - | 5 |
| 21-25 years old | 4 | 4 |
| 26-30 years old | 4 | - |
| 31-40 years old | 1 | - |
| Over 40 years old | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 10 | 10 |

The next table (Table 4.2) shows that female students taking part in the study outnumbered male students. In general, students studying journalism in New Zealand follow a world-wide trend and are predominantly female. In a 2005 study, it was found that in some New Zealand journalism schools the ratio was as high as seven females to one male (Densem, 2006).

Table 4.2 Gender of students

| Gender | University | Polytechnic |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Female | 6 | 8 |
| Male | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 10 | 10 |

The students' highest qualification (Table 4.3, below) also showed considerable variance between the two groups. The students at the polytechnic had received fewer years of education with a one-year tertiary certificate or diploma being the highest qualification recorded, while seven of the students at the university were university graduates, including some having attained degrees that took four or more years to complete. In contrast, the younger students at the polytechnic had achieved their highest educational qualification at secondary school, gaining university entrance or sixth form certificate, the equivalent of four years of secondary education.

Table 4.3 Highest qualification of students

| Qualification | University | Polytechnic |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| Master of Arts | 1 | - |
| Bachelor of Arts (Hons) | 1 | - |
| Bachelor of Arts/Media Arts | 3 | - |
| Bachelor of Arts/Laws | 2 | - |
| Tertiary Diploma or Certificate | - | 2 |
| At school: Higher School Certificate ¹⁰ | 1 | - |
| A/B Bursary | 1 | 3 |
| UE/ Sixth Form Certificate | 1 | 4 |
| School Certificate | - | 1 |
| Total students | 10 | 10 |

The next section introduces the 20 students.

¹⁰ At the time of the study, higher school certificate was achieved after five years of secondary education, sixth form certificate after four years, and school certificate after three years. The basic requirement for entering a New Zealand university was university entrance (UE). A and B bursaries were awarded to the highest achieving students in special pre-university examinations,

4.3.5 Introducing the participants

This section introduces the students who were the participants, providing some personal details. Twenty students aged 19 years to 44 took part in the study. Five students were aged 20 and under:

Alison had left school with an A Bursary in the seventh form. This qualification would have given her automatic entry into most New Zealand journalism programmes. She hoped to work after finishing her training as a news journalist and in 10 years time, wanted to be working on an architectural or design magazine.

Henreitta, 20, had previously completed a one-year diploma course in communications, considered to give students a “taster” for a bachelor’s degree in arts and communications. She also wanted to be a news journalist.

Jamima had wanted to be a news journalist ever since she was about 11-years-old. Now 19, she hoped to start as a reporter and in 10 years’ time planned to be an investigative or court reporter.

Samdog, 20, had done some writing at school and was aiming for broadcast journalism with aspirations to be a foreign correspondent in the future.

Vin, 20, also wanted to be a news journalist and planned “somewhere down the track” to work for the BBC. Her writing development is outlined in Chapter 5.

The largest group comprised eight students who were over 20 and under 25 years of age.

Agnes, having not enjoyed a degree course in social science, had transferred to a degree in arts and communications, majoring in journalism. She planned to start her career as a news journalist on a “little paper” and would like later to work on a women’s magazine.

Anastacia did not plan to be a news journalist. She knew she wanted to write but was not sure where or what. English was always her favourite subject and she had done a little writing while still at school. Ultimately she hoped to be the editor of a magazine.

Betty was sure she did not want to be a news journalist and was unsure where she was headed.

Brendan, 23, had completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in geography and politics. He described his writing as “pretty passionate”. His previous background in writing included a few stories for a table tennis magazine. He hoped to be a news journalist.

Katie, also 23, had a law and arts degree. She had strong ideas where she was heading: into fashion writing. The height of her ambition was to be the editor of Vogue in Britain.

Kino was also following a set path: she had already done quite a bit of writing both at high school and for the local newspaper and was planning to be a film and music writer, doing reviews and features.

Mavis, 23, had a bachelor’s degree and had spent two months before the course working on a newspaper. She had lost interest in ultimately writing news stories and aimed to specialise in feature writing.

Ramstein, even at the beginning of the year, was already feeling stressed and was not particularly interested in news writing. “I’d like to be a bar manager,” she said, answering the question about her future plans.

Four students, aged 26 to 30, were doing the one-year programme in journalism at the university.

Casper, who is the second of the case studies (see Chapter 5), had never written before but at 26 had both a law degree and a Bachelor of Arts. He wanted to be a television presenter or work in corporate communications.

Mongo, aged 27, had spent two years at university and had left to do a host of different jobs. He had worked as a builder, barman and a sales representative. His last job had been working in customer services for a large magazine group. He was not interested in news and wanted to be a feature writer and ultimately a novelist.

Sam, 27, at the start of the year, similarly did not want to be a news journalist. She had a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in film and had previously taught English overseas. She wanted to go into documentary production in film or television.

Miranda aged 30, with a Masters degree in English, had worked in a communications role but hoped to change direction and be a news journalist.

Three of the students were over 30 years of age:

Sully, at 36, had previously been a business analyst. He wanted to change careers and be a news journalist, hopefully in an editorial role later.

Q, aged 43, had a slight physical disability which caused him to withdraw from the study later. He had previously been an architectural draftsman and hoped to be a full-time writer.

Martha, 44, was the oldest of the group. She had two young children and was returning to university. She had done a short news-writing course first and wanted to be a magazine journalist.

Despite the differences in age, experience and previous qualifications gained, this study did not attempt to assess whether journalism students who are older and more experienced exhibit quicker and greater progress than school leavers. Rather, all news stories were analysed using the same criteria and did not take into account whether they came from university or polytechnic students. A number of factors contributed to this decision. All 10 students at the university were still in the study by the end of the year, while half of the polytechnic group failed to complete, making it preferable to treat all students as one group. And more importantly, the aim of this study was not to measure the individual differences that wider socio-cultural factors such as previous education and age may produce in journalism students. It is a study of the effects of journalism education on students. As has been discussed, all New Zealand journalism students, whether at university or polytechnic, essentially receive the same training based on the learning-by-doing method. The study aimed to provide insight into the success, or otherwise, of this method on New Zealand journalism students as a whole.

4.3.6 Fieldwork

The study began in February, 2003, first at the university when all the students beginning the one-year graduate journalism programme were invited to participate in the study. A week later, I travelled to the regional polytechnic to explain the study to the journalism students there and invite their participation. All 10 in the class agreed to be a part of the research. Students received information sheets, setting out the aim of the study: to discover the influences on journalism students' writing and to present a picture of New Zealand journalism education and the progress journalism students made during a year of study (see Appendix I). The five stages of the study were explained. These were:

1. A short background interview
2. A training session

The students who volunteered to take part would receive a tape-recorder and be asked to record their reflections after writing a news story at three separate times during the year:

3. At the start of the programme
4. In the middle of the programme
5. At the end of the programme.

The students in the study first answered a simple questionnaire to provide background information about their age and prior qualifications. They took part in a training session similar to that used in the pilot study. They received a sheet containing information that had been taken from a newspaper story, containing a number of facts. The information on this sheet was not structured in the traditional "inverted pyramid", but it did contain all facts in chronological order that were necessary for the students to be able to write a coherent news report. The use of a "fact sheet" is a standard procedure used in journalism training classrooms, even if removed from the real world experience of news writing (S. Turner, 1998). The students were asked to write a news story using these facts, but no guidance was given to them about how to structure or write the story. There were no restrictions on the time they could take to write the story.

After writing the story, they recorded their reflections using a tape recorder. They received an instruction sheet and were asked to think-aloud about their story. The instruction sheet read: "Immediately after writing your news story, turn on your tape

recorder and think-aloud for about 10 minutes or so, reflecting on the way you wrote this news story.” They were asked to look at each sentence they had written and to account for any decisions they had made as a writer, in the way they structured the story, the facts they selected, the language they used, and who they wrote the story for. “Don’t worry if your reflections are not perfect, if you stumble over words or have difficulty in expressing what you did. Just keep talking,” the sheet concluded. The aim of the training session was to make the students feel more comfortable with the tasks required for the study, particularly taping their reflections about their writing.

The study was designed so that the students would not be expected to write additional news stories. During the course of the year they were required to write up to 20 news stories in order to progress their writing skills. I did not want the news stories analysed for the study to be the result of extra time or effort but to represent the way the students usually wrote news stories. Thus at three points during the year, the beginning of the year, in the middle and at the end of the year, I would collect one news story they had written. Again there were no criteria established as to how long the stories should be, how they should be written or what they should be about. However, they were asked to tape their reflections immediately after writing the news stories for the study and also received the same instruction sheet with questions as prompts.

Apart from tape-recording their reflections, I tried to ensure that the students replicated as closely as possible the method of news writing that was used in the classroom, in order that I gained an authentic picture of journalism education, basing this on the findings from a preliminary study conducted at all journalism schools in 2002 (see Chapter 3). This suggested that all New Zealand journalism schools largely followed the same pattern in teaching news writing. At first, the students are given brief instructions on how to gather a news story and how to write one, using the news-writing techniques associated with the inverted pyramid. The emphasis is then on learning by doing, that is the students find a news story, research it and interview people in order to gain the necessary facts, then write it up, largely using the techniques they have been taught. They then hand it to a tutor for subediting or correcting, before it is appropriate for publication.

I also abandoned as too logically difficult a plan to collect further retrospective reflections from the students after their articles had received feedback from their tutors.

With these small changes, I felt assured that this method would indeed reveal interesting insights about the quality of the students writing and what guided them in the constructing a news story.

4.3.7 Data collection

The main study of the 20 students began immediately after the training session. New Zealand journalism students are expected to write at least one news story a week, to a strictly adhered to deadline. The students in the study understood that they would be fulfilling their class requirements. The only difference was that they were required to tape record their think-aloud protocols immediately after writing their story. All participants received instruction sheets, to prompt their responses as they talked into their tape recorders.

These reflections were made and recorded in various places, with the university students recording them at home or in the newsroom and the polytechnic students in places scattered around the building. While they were asked to record their reflections immediately after writing their story, there was no way of enforcing this and it must be assumed that sometimes there was a delay. This was not considered of any great consequence to the findings which aimed to produce a descriptive rather than exact picture of the writing process of New Zealand journalism students. In the middle of the year and at the end of the year, I followed the same practice. In two cases, I also conducted additional retrospective interviews with students to gain further insights into their writing processes.

The tapes were collected from each student and transcribed by a professional typist. The transcripts were prepared without reference to the accompanying news stories as there was a slight risk that if the two were processed at the same time, the news stories could influence the transcripts. After the tapes were transcribed, I listened to each audio tape and checked the transcript to ensure accuracy.

The data produced by this study was considerable. At the beginning of the year, I gathered 20 news stories and 20 transcripts from the taped retrospective protocols. The protocols varied in length, with the average transcript being about five pages. In the middle of the year, 17 news stories and 17 transcripts were analysed while at the end of

the year there were 15 of each (see Appendix III for samples). The next step was to analyse the data.

4.4 Analysing the data

This section describes the analysis of the data from the study. In 4.4.1, I explain the rationale of using a journalist to rewrite or modify the students' stories in order to create a "professional version". In section 4.4.2, discourse analysis of the students' news stories is discussed while in 4.4.3, the retrospective protocol analysis is covered.

4.4.1 The professional version

It was important to devise a method for analysing the development of the students' writing over the year of the study. I first attempted to create a "standard" by having each news story graded by three journalism educators. However, this was judged problematic given that the three educators varied dramatically in the marks they awarded to the same story. This variance was so wide that it revealed little about the standard of the stories although it did suggest how difficult and subjective such a decision is. This supported Turner's assertion that measuring news writing poses problems for researchers and writing teachers with subjective influences creeping into the assessment (Turner, 1998).

Furthermore, my aim for this project was to see whether the education of the students was succeeding in its central aim: equipping them to write news stories according to the standard and format expected by the media industry. It was decided that a professional, experienced journalist would provide a "model answer" for every story. She would receive all stories written by the students and would rewrite, edit or revise them to the quality required for publication in a community newspaper. She was instructed to use the original words, sentence structure and information, where it was appropriate. While there is always more than one way to write the same news story and different editors will favour different approaches, it was important to accept this as the standard "professional version", using it to gauge how far the students had progressed during the year of the study. The variance between the students' and the journalist's version revealed to what extent the students were able to reach their goal of writing stories ready for publication.

This process can be compared with what occurs in a newspaper office. It is common for news stories written by even experienced journalists to be rewritten or restyled by a copy editor, subeditor or chief reporter. Faced with a confusing story and a deadline approaching, the copy editor will often rewrite the story using the journalist's information, changing the lead, correcting style errors, generally reshaping the product and in some case inserting additional information. "Most copy editing is designed to maximise news value – to make the lead "harder" and more striking, the source's credentials more authoritative, the writing more crisp, the appeal to the audience more compelling" (Bell, 1991, p. 79). Using the framework I had devised mainly from the work of van Dijk (1988) and Bell (1991, 1998), I was then able to assess the differences between the professional journalist's version and those of the students and how their news writing progressed during the year.

4.4.2 Discourse analysis

The majority of the students' stories were attempts to write within the inverted pyramid method that dominates New Zealand news journalism and New Zealand journalism education. Based on Bell's (1991) criteria for inverted-pyramid news stories, I devised six areas in which to test how well the students understood and were able to write news stories in this method in comparison to the professional journalist. The categories were (1) news values, (2) lead sentences, (3) lexical choice, (4) order, (5) background and additional information, and (6) syntax, including deletions and summarisations.

These categories relate to a basic understanding of the inverted-pyramid form of traditional news stories, where the lead, lexical choice, order, background, and syntax enhance the inherent news values. A news story is generally written in a formulaic and often dull way. However the lead and order are perhaps the most important factors in getting the most out of the story through enhancing its news values (Bell, 1991). I analysed each student's news story against the professional version, carefully considering the differences. I paid particular attention to their lead sentences, noting whether the news values were enhanced and in what way. Journalists are expected to write simply and clearly, using words that make their stories appear credible, while enhancing the news values. I looked carefully at the lexical choice and considered how the experienced journalist had made the story more vivid through the use of appropriate

words compared with what the student had achieved. Adding background or additional contextual information is a common method of providing a link with past news stories, thus continuing to emphasise news values and add credibility. I considered the background or contextual material that had been used by the students, in comparison with that of the professional journalist, checking whether its addition was necessary to make the stories understandable. News values also govern the syntax or set of rules to create the sentence structure of news stories. Sentences are shortened or restyled to take out any additional words and make them crisper and clearer, with the news values more in evidence. Deletion is the most common form of shortening the story through excluding information, because it either enhances the story angle or the news values (Bell, 1991).

The professional version of the news stories therefore gave me a standard by which to analyse the students' development in writing inverted-pyramid news stories. As explained in the section on the study's design, despite the emphasis on the importance of the inverted pyramid, many exceptions and varying news formats can now be found in newspapers. Although Fairclough (1995) describes three kinds of basic news stories that are now common, it was not always simple to clearly distinguish the three formats. Many news stories written mainly in the top-down fashion of the inverted pyramid carried sentences belonging to other genres, particularly advertising. These news stories were analysed and considered using the same method as the inverted-pyramid stories. The sentences belonging to other genres were generally unnecessary for the flow of the news story and were often deleted in the professional version.

A number of stories, particularly later in the year, were classified as hybrid stories and covered many mixed formats and styles. These included stories that were purely human interest (Ostman, 1997), promotional stories (Erjavec, 2004; Ungerer, 2004) and others that showed traces of various purposes (van Leeuwen, 1987) and some that had mixed intertextuality (Fairclough, 1995). One factor these hybrid stories had in common was that they all had "soft" lead sentences, more usual in feature stories (Bell, 1991). Analysing these stories was not simple, as while the inverted pyramid provides a formula, there is no formula for hybrid stories (Grundy, 2007). Often these stories were rewritten by the professional journalist using the inverted-pyramid form (see Chapters 7 and 8).

4.4.3 Analysing retrospective protocols

After the students had written their news stories, they recorded their reflections using a tape recorder. The audio tapes were transcribed by the professional typist who had not read the students' stories in order to maintain neutrality. She left gaps where the tape was difficult to hear or the students had not made themselves clear. I attempted to fill in these missing words after listening to the tapes. The average length per transcription was 1300 words, making analysis a formidable task. The next task was to devise a means of also analysing these transcripts.

Green (1998) describes a complex technique for coding and analysing verbal protocol data. The first task is to segment the data into phrases or segments, then to assign unambiguous codes to it. These codes should be checked by a second independent coder or coded twice to ensure reliability. I decided to use a simpler scheme. I coded the material into broad categories, looking for patterns or recurring trends under headings such as "institutional experiences", "work experience", in order to present their views on various issues surrounding journalism education.

There are often doubts about the accuracy of any data collected after the event because of the limited nature of the short-term memory (Greene & Higgins, 1994). Thus these retrospective protocols were not used to provide a detailed analysis of the actual writing process, and its recursive nature (Flower & Hayes, 1980). Neither did I attempt to draw a model of exactly how the students wrote news stories as other researchers (Best, 1993; Elefson, 1989) did, nor did I try to quantify the information in any way. Instead I drew on the strengths of the method to draw a picture of New Zealand journalism education gained from the discourse analysis.

The journalism students were generally articulate and "thought aloud" in an interesting fashion, often telling a story that reflected their personalities and aspirations. They also revealed much about journalism education in New Zealand and their own writing process. I also reported the students' own words to provide authenticity, so that their patterns of speech were reflected in phrases like "really, really". At first, their reflections did not appear to relate to the news stories they had written. For example, they would discuss how they had written their first sentence so that it would be appealing to readers and compel them to read on. However, the discourse analysis of the

story would reveal a lead sentence with many problems. I realised that these inconsistencies formed a pattern which, in itself, was revealing of learning by doing and of the deficiencies in journalism education in New Zealand.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described the study of New Zealand journalism education, including the theoretical perspectives that have informed the design. This research aimed to test the proposition made in Chapter 3 that the focus of New Zealand journalism education is on teaching students traditional methods of writing news stories, in particular the inverted-pyramid method. There was little encouragement for reflection in the nature of this method, rather it is purely learning by doing. The findings of this preliminary study were deepened by the research for the main study involving 20 students, at two journalism schools whose characteristics have been explained in this chapter.

The chapter also details how the students' news stories will be analysed using discourse analysis methods informed by Bell (1991) and van Dijk (1988). Students first learn to write in the inverted pyramid format. However, while the inverted pyramid remains the dominant form, it has been modified by changing times and new hybrid forms of writing, with different purposes such as advertising and promotion (van Leeuwen, 1987) characterise it. The students also used these hybrid forms and the analysis of their stories is influenced by the work of Erjavec (2004) and Ungerer (2004). The three-dimensional framework, proposed by Fairclough (1995), introduced a wider view to this thesis than solely analysing the text. It discusses how socio-cultural factors influence the learning environment. Analysis of the students' retrospective protocols or reflections also added the cognitive aspect to this study of New Zealand journalism education.

All research must respond to criteria against which the credibility of the project can be evaluated. The aim in qualitative research such as this is for the study to be regarded as able to be trusted in that it matches the realities, or is "internally valid". Because New Zealand journalism education has been so under-researched and this study was a first of its kind, it was particularly important to achieve this form of "validity", more commonly referred to in qualitative research as "trustworthiness and rigour" (see Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Mutch, 2005).

Various strategies have been suggested to ensure qualitative research is seen as internally valid (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam, 1998). These include that the study should be designed with care, it should use multiple sources of data, involve long-term observation, all ethical questions are resolved, the respondents and peers should be asked whether the arguments are valid and any biases should be acknowledged.

As a first step, it was necessary that all facets of this study were designed with care so that they would be seen as credible or believable (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I have explained the methodology behind the study (see section 4.2) and the way it was implemented or managed (see section 4.3). I have also described how the collection of data was done, making sure the methods were meticulous (see section 4.3.4).

I used triangulation or multiple methods to confirm the findings that emerged (Mathison, 1988). For this study, as explained in section 4.2, I used two basic methods, retrospective protocol analysis and discourse analysis. The combination of examining closely the students' news reports and comparing them to their reflections on these news stories produced some revealing insights. In addition, I researched the historical, political and socioeconomic issues surrounding journalism education to provide me with knowledge of the three-dimensional framework that Fairclough (1995) advocates for wider understanding of the text (see Chapter 2). Chapter 3 is also based on interviews with 11 journalism educators whose views and attitudes, added to my own experience in the field, gave me considerable knowledge of the wider New Zealand scene. The combination of all these sources of data has provided the picture of New Zealand journalism education.

As well as strengthening the validity of the study, multiple sources of data can bring their own problems. The contradictions between what the retrospective protocol analysis suggested the students thought they were writing and what they actually were doing, revealed from the discourse analysis, was particularly stark. Mathison (1988) argues that triangulation may produce data that is inconsistent or contradictory and suggests shifting the notion of triangulation away from a "technological solution for ensuring validity", instead relying on a "holistic understanding" of the situation to construct "plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied" (p. 17). This enabled me to view the inconsistencies and contradictions of the protocol data as adding to the study, rather than detracting from it. For example, the students, when they were

thinking-aloud, often described how they had structured the article according to the tenets of the inverted pyramid emphasised by their tutors. However, the discourse analysis showed that in many cases the articles did not follow the inverted pyramid model. As Chapter 9 will discuss, this gap suggests important findings about the adequacy of New Zealand journalism education and whether the focus on students learning the inverted pyramid largely “by doing” is equipping them to replicate its basic tenets, or to understand the strengths and weaknesses of this form.

To further increase the internal validity of the findings, gathering data over a period of time is also recommended (Merriam, 1998). This could be long-term observation at the research site or repeated observations of the same phenomenon. During this study, I visited the two research sites on three separate occasions, at the beginning of the year, in the middle and at the end. This meant that each student’s writing could be studied over the course of a year, as an indication of the effectiveness of journalism education.

Merriam (1998) also suggests getting peers involved in the study, for example asking colleagues to comment on the findings. I had hoped to use a variation of this through using three experienced journalism educators to assess the news stories that the students’ wrote for the study. However, for reasons explained earlier, this involvement proved unsuccessful and was dropped. At the time of the study, the concept of learning by doing was very much a part of journalism education. Concepts of collaboration and the need for reflection in teaching (see Chapter 9) were not highly regarded so I did not engage in widespread consultation with other journalism educators (Ransdell, 1995). Instead, I relied on my own considerable experience as a journalism educator and newspaper editor who had previously carried out research in the field to support my claim that the study’s findings match what I believed are the realities (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993).

The validity of this study is particularly important as this study is one of the first sustained investigations into New Zealand journalism education. It is, of course, only a first step and as such indicates many areas for further research which will be discussed in the concluding chapter. The next chapter, Chapter 5 previews the five findings chapters, following the progress of two very different students from two schools, throughout the year of their journalism education.

PART 2 THE FINDINGS

5 The Case-Study Approach: Two Students' Stories

Case studies help us to understand processes of events, projects and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object (Sanders, 1981, p. 44).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of five chapters exploring the findings of this study. It details two case studies following the progress of two students at the start, in the middle and at the end of their year of journalism training, considering the product, their news stories, and the process, as revealed in their tape-recorded reflections about their writing. Analysis of their news stories provides the opportunity to consider whether the students are grasping the fundamentals of the inverted-pyramid model and the in-built mechanisms used by professional journalists. Their reflections offer a close example of the training students receive and insight into how that training shapes their writing.

These case studies pose a fundamental question: Do the students receive adequate training to raise the level of their news writing and their journalism to a professional standard and at the same time encourage mature, critical and informed understanding of the news media? Chapter 3 has shown the importance of the learning-by-doing method in journalism training. These case studies will provide an indication of whether training using this method advances the students' understanding of news writing so that they can write at the level of a journalist, adhering to professional standards and values, and, at the same time, whether it develops the ability to think critically about their own writing and the media industry.

As discussed in Chapter 4, discourse analysis methods (Bell, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1988) provided the tools to study the students' news writing closely, including examining their lexical choice and structure while retrospective protocol analysis

(Boren & Ramey, 2000; Greene & Higgins, 1994) allowed me to consider the cognition or thinking behind what they wrote.

This chapter does not aim to compare the students' skills but to present case studies of two very different students, as a preview to drawing an in-depth picture of the current system of New Zealand journalism education and providing an insight into the variety of experiences students have. It will show that journalism education in this country relies heavily on teaching the skills of the inverted pyramid with little teaching of other forms of writing. At the beginning of the year, the students are taught what the inverted-pyramid format is. In the middle of the year, the importance of work experience is examined. Work experience teaches students about the stresses, culture and standards of the media industry. But two weeks of work experience is too short a time for the students to fully understand all the aspects of news journalism and its various genres, and, as well, to learn the importance of such issues as news values, structure and lexical choice in writing interesting stories that will appeal to readers. Their stories and reflections reinforce this: the students are not encouraged to show initiative, critical thinking and independence, combined with the professional skills of news writing. This chapter will also reveal the disparity between the students' aims to write professional news stories and their struggle to do so in practice.

The next three chapters will consider the students' stories using discourse analysis methods. Chapter 6 will provide a detailed discourse analysis of all the students' early news stories adding further evidence of the results of learning by doing. Chapters 7 and 8 will continue to explore the points made in the case studies, especially what the students learn and do not learn. Chapter 9 will consider the students' thinking-aloud protocols contrasting them with the findings of the discourse analyses, to conclude the five findings chapters. The separation of the discourse analysis and protocol analysis in these chapters allows the focus to be on two separate aims. Firstly, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 show the strengths and weaknesses of learning by doing as a method to learn news writing. Secondly, Chapter 9 will provide insights into how training shapes the students' writing through considering their reflections. Importantly, both this chapter and chapter 9 show that the disparity between the intended and actual result does not diminish for the students throughout the course of their studies, raising the question of how effective their training really is and what impact it has on them.

The two students in the case study, one a 26-year-old male from the university and the other a 20-year-old female from the polytechnic group, were selected to represent the variety of ages and educational qualifications of the 20 students in the study. All New Zealand students receive relatively similar journalism training based on the unit standards (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997) but they differ in age, educational qualifications and previous experience. “Casper” was among the more highly qualified students and was studying for a graduate diploma in journalism at the selected university. Previously he had completed a five-year law degree and worked briefly as a lawyer. He had never written a news story, but his legal training had given him a precision with words that was apparent from the start, and he listed this as one of the strengths of his writing. His future plans were uncertain: he hoped to go into public relations or work as a television presenter.

“Vin” represented those who were younger with lower educational qualifications, and was majoring in journalism as part of a three-year degree at a less prestigious regional polytechnic. She could be considered an “average” student. She had previously learnt journalism at secondary school and had written a number of news stories but found it was a “whole different ball game at polytechnic”. She had also done a six-month course in computing but had changed to a three-year media and arts degree. Her news story at the beginning of the year was one of the weaker ones. However, she had high expectations for her future and appeared to be a conscientious student. She wanted to be a news journalist “somewhere down the track for the BBC, nothing tacky … but quality”.

The data for this chapter was gathered through both the methods used in this study and described fully in Chapter 4. The two students wrote news stories for the study as part of their class requirements, at three periods during the year. Their original stories were then given to a professional journalist to modify or rewrite to publication standard. The students’ stories and the professional model were closely analysed to establish how they differed. Also, after the students had written their stories, they tape-recorded their reflections, discussing what they were thinking when they were writing and explaining the order, the words and language they used and some of the difficulties they encountered. These reflections were transcribed (see Chapter 9) and pertinent comments were selected for inclusion. A selection of the excerpts of the transcripts can be seen in

Appendix III. In the chapters that follow, the news stories written by the students are shown in a block, alongside the professional versions. The students' sentences are labelled, with their name in the lead sentence and S1, then S2, S3, S4, while the lead of the professional journalist is marked as P1 and then P2, P3, P4. The name of the student and the date the retrospective protocols were recorded is shown immediately after the reflections at the start and finish of the three periods, the beginning of the year, the middle and the end of the year.

5.2 Vin's story

5.2.1 The beginning of the year

This part of the chapter will discuss Vin's progress during the year to establish whether "learning by doing" has achieved its purpose. Has she acquired the skills necessary for her to be a journalist? How deep an understanding does she have of journalism values and practices? Section 5.2.1 considers her first news story, when Vin was able to theorise about writing a news story but had little real knowledge of how to put these theories into practice. The second section discusses the considerable progress she made through working for two weeks at a community newspaper. The third section describes her end-of-year story, when it was found that she still had some way to go to become a professional journalist. Vin's case study will show that work experience has a major impact because journalism training is largely learning by doing, rather than a critical approach based around the understanding of the inverted pyramid and the place played by news values, lexical choice and structure.

Vin chose to write her first news story (Table 5.1) about a major event in the regional city where she was studying – the graduation ceremonies for the two tertiary institutions. The entire city and many visitors join the celebrations. Before the ceremonies, hundreds of students march through the city wearing their caps, gowns and hoods in bright hues. The ceremonies are an event of note: motels are filled with parents attending the ceremony and restaurants are booked out with students and relatives celebrating. However, Vin's news item was rather dull and certainly too long. The professional version reduced the length from 240 words to 120 words, and made it more

newsworthy by giving a greater sense of the colour and excitement of the occasion. Vin's story and the professional version are shown below.

Table 5.1 Vin's early news story and the professional version

| Vin's story | Professional version |
|--|---|
| <p>S1: It's about a month away until the University of Haworth and Haworth Institute of Technology begin graduation and both parties are on track in organising the events.</p> <p>S2: The University of Haworth begins its graduation ceremonies on April 11th and Haworth Institute of Technology in the week before Easter.</p> <p>S3: Ceremonies are being held in the Heritage Theatre with the exception of Māori students graduating on the institute's maraes in specialised ceremonies.</p> <p>S4: Both institutes have an estimated 1400 students graduating this year and this means huge preparations.</p> <p>S5: Haworth Institute of Technology Graduation coordinator, Patricia Morgan, said that organising the event is a year round effort.</p> <p>S6: "We have to book the venue as far forward as they will let us.</p> <p>S7: "We have to organise banners, photography, caterers and the list just goes on," she said.</p> <p>S8: Both the University and HIT have to get council permission for the procession through town.</p> <p>S9: "The procession is a really important part of the graduation process.</p> <p>S10: "Students seem to love the idea of parading in their regalia," University of Haworth Graduation Coordinator, Yvonne Swain said.</p> <p>S11: One of the more interesting stepping stones in the organisation is that the marquees set up for the Heritage Theatre must get a building permit.</p> <p>S12: Coordinators from both institutes say graduation takes a lot of time and effort to organise but is all worth it in the end.</p> | <p>P1: Up to 3000 students will graduate in Haworth next month at two colourful graduation ceremonies.</p> <p>P2: Motels and restaurants are already well-booked and the city will be filled with parents and friends for the ceremonies, at Haworth University and the Haworth Institute of Technology.</p> <p>P3: University graduation coordinator Yvonne Swain says the procession through the city with the students in gowns, multi-hued hoods and trenchers is an important part of the ceremony.</p> <p>P4: "Students really love the idea of parading in their regalia through the city," she says.</p> <p>P5: The Haworth City Council has given permission to halt the traffic during the parade.</p> <p>P6: The university graduation is planned for April 11 and the institute of technology's for April 16.</p> |

Vin's recorded comments suggest that she had been taught some of the basic requirements of the inverted-pyramid method and was attempting to write the story, according to its dictates. However, she seemed to have a limited understanding of the method as a whole and her story lacked newsworthiness.

As Vin suggested in her taped reflections, her opening sentence was meant to fulfil the requirements for an “intro” or “lead” in the inverted-pyramid format as she had been taught by her tutor. She wrote:

**Vin
S1**

It's about a month away until the University of Haworth and Haworth Institute of Technology begin graduation and both parties are on track in organising the events.

In her tape-recording, she reflected on what she had been taught: that the lead of the inverted-pyramid format should contain the five “Ws” and the “H” of news writing:

The first sentence in my story is basically the intro. We've been told in the intro to include the main facts, like using the five W's and the H – who, what, when, where, why, how (Vin, March 14, 2003).

Despite her comments, Vin's sentence did not contain all of the five W's and the H, although it did contain “when” by writing “it's about a month away” and “where”, the names of the two tertiary institutions. Vin's reflections showed that she was reciting by rote what New Zealand journalism students are taught. The standard textbook, *Intro*, states: “The content of an intro will vary, depending on the approach being taken, but most adhere to that old journalism aphorism – who, what, when, where, why and how?” (Tucker, 1999a, p. 90). This may simplify the inverted-pyramid format for beginners but does not encourage a fuller understanding of the requirements of this basic news form. As Bell (1991) notes, the inverted-pyramid lead sentence both summarises the story and begins to tell it. The subject is the newsworthy event that happens closest to its writing and it also usually describes a second background event, linked by “as” or “after”. News values (see Chapter 2) are an important component to gain the attention and interest of the reader. It is also usual for a news story to start with the actors, the “who” to maintain the active nature of the sentence and the interest.

Vin's lead sentence suggested little understanding of these requirements. In comparison, the professional version was clear and while the sentence was only about one event, it had the strong news values of human interest, was immediate and also had happened

close to home. It thus fulfilled Galtung and Ruge's (1965) descriptions of news values, the values or attributes that make a story newsworthy (see Chapter 2), capturing the readers' attention. It also told the reader who it was about, what it was about, where the event was happening and when.

Vin's opening sentence largely failed to achieve these aims. She started to tell her story in chronological but an imprecise fashion: "It's about a month away...", which is more reminiscent of how stories begin with the fairy tale genre, "Once upon a time". She failed to create a sense of excitement and instead focused on the bureaucratic and faceless institutions behind the events: "both parties are on track in organising the events". By contrast, the modified story written by the professional journalist stressed the size and excitement of the occasion and also its human interest. By deleting the names of the institutions, the professional version established that the students and not institutions were the main actors:

P1

Up to 3000 students will graduate in Haworth next month at two colourful graduation ceremonies.

The professional's lead sentence also created a sense of the size of the occasion by suggesting that "up to 3000" students would attend. This figure was gathered from Vin's fourth sentence that suggested that there would be 2800 graduating students. The professional journalist assumed the possibility that all the graduating students would attend the ceremonies and then rounded the number up. She showed an understanding of the preference of the news media to make events more significant by maximising the number of participants (van Dijk, 1988) or what is described as the news value of amplitude (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Vin, on the other hand, appeared not to have been taught the importance of maximising the numbers. She downgraded the significance by including the information only in her fourth sentence and by focusing on how many students attended the institutions rather than the main issue, how many students might participate in the celebrations. Writing "Both institutions have an estimated 1400 students graduating" created some confusion over whether she was stating that there were 1400 graduates in the two institutions or twice that number, 2800.

Vin's second sentence read:

S2 The University of Haworth begins its graduation ceremonies on April 11th and Haworth Institute of Technology in the week before Easter.

After writing her second sentence, Vin described what she had done:

The second paragraph basically sums up the first one and backs-up some of the information in it, for example in the first paragraph I said that the University of Haworth and the Haworth Institute of Technology are both having graduations so in the second one I followed through to tell them when it's happening.

However, her first sentence had already named the institutions so repeating them in the second sentence was unnecessary. The date of the events was less important information that could have been more effectively placed near the end of the news story. Her second sentence thus reiterated the lack of news values from the first sentence. By contrast, the professional journalist added new information to deepen the theme – that this would be a significant event attended by large numbers:

P2 Motels and restaurants are already well-booked and the city will be filled with parents and friends for the ceremonies, at Haworth University and the Haworth Institute of Technology.

Vin's intention was very explicitly to write a story structured around the inverted pyramid:

Basically the structure of the story was the inverted pyramid as we've been taught here at tech. The main facts at the top, followed by the not-so-important facts in the body and end of the story. The third sentence is basically where it's happening.

She wrote:

S3 Ceremonies are being held in the Heritage Theatre with the exception of Māori students graduating on the institutes' maraes in specialised ceremonies.

While Vin knew in theory about the order of the inverted pyramid, she was unable to prioritise her information. She realised that the information used in the fourth sentence was critical but placed it lower than the professional journalist who used it as the lead sentence:

S4 Both institutes have an estimated 1400 students graduating this year and this means huge preparations.

The fourth paragraph [sentence] is just an interesting fact which I grabbed out of it.

She did understand that it was important to make her story credible and provide the news value of naming an “elite person” and wrote:

S5

Haworth Institute of Technology Graduation Coordinator, Patricia Morgan, said that organising the event is a year round effort.

.... [I] basically used an authoritative figure to like back up your information.

Vin then wrote two largely unnecessary sentences quoting Haworth Institute of Technology’s graduation coordinator:

S6

“We have to book the venue as far forward as they will let us.

S7

“We have to organise banners, photography, caterers and the list just goes on,” she said.

In her eighth sentence, she introduced a new theme – the need for council permission – but failed to elaborate on this in the following two sentences:

S8

Both the University and HIT have to get council permission for the procession through town.

S9

“The procession is a really important part of the graduation process.”

S10

“Students seem to really love the idea of parading in their regalia,” University of Haworth Graduation Coordinator, Yvonne Swanson said.

The article then shifted back to the council planning theme with the following sentence, which also needed further elaboration:

S11

One of the more interesting stepping stones in the organisation is that the marquees set up for the Heritage Theatre must get a building permit.

Once again, Vin was consciously trying to write an article citing newsworthiness according to what she had been taught in class but was finding difficulty in doing so successfully:

We’ve been told to put anything that sounds like maybe off-beat into our story and that was that, the marquees set up at the Heritage site must get like a building permit and that’s quite ... it’s just newsworthy because you wouldn’t think that something so temporary would have to be like have a building permit for it.

She also provided a reason why the order of her information appeared jumbled:

.... [I]t was actually quite difficult because I had all these facts here and I didn't know what ones were more important than the others, so I had to like cut my story and keep cutting it, like we've been taught until it fitted.

Her final sentence was her conclusion:

.... we do that because it basically rounds up the story and concludes with what we've said in the story and just sums it up:

S12

Coordinators from both institutes say graduation takes a lot of time and effort to organise but is all worth it in the end.

However, usually news stories avoid concluding sentences as the inverted-pyramid form means they are written so that they can be shortened before publication from the last sentence upwards to fit the space left on the page.

Comparison with the journalist's modified article revealed the problems with Vin's article. The professional version deleted extraneous information, reordered the story to form one main theme, and showed an understanding of news values by emphasising the size, colour and impact of the event. It also established the credibility of the writer by providing the exact dates of the graduation ceremonies, instead of Vin's vague statement that one would take place "the week before Easter".

Figure 5.1 shows Vin's first story diagrammatically, compared with the professional version. Her original story is on the left side of the diagram, labelled "S1", "S2" while "P1", "P2" on the right side represent the professional journalist's rewritten story. "New" is any material that did not appear in the original. The diagram shows how Vin's S4 predominantly formed the lead sentence in the professional version, although some elements of her first sentence were retained and the total number of students graduating was added as new material. Vin's second sentence, however, was relegated to the end of the professional version as it did not contain the most important information. Thus from S1-S4, marked "A", only two sentences were retained, while two additional pieces of information were added. About 120 words were deleted by cutting six entire sentences, including S5, S6 and S7 (marked "B") and S11 and S12 (marked "D") as they did not add to the theme. New information was added in three places, P1, P2 and P3.

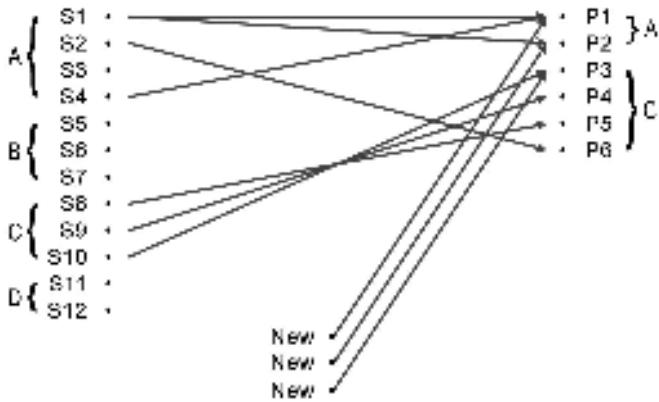


Figure 5.1 Changes to the order of Vin's early story

Vin had obviously been taught some of the fundamental principles of the inverted-pyramid news story and was a conscientious student. She knew what kind of information to place in her lead sentence, and how to make it appear more credible by using authoritative sources. She also knew the importance of using what Kennamer (1988) calls “vivid words”:

I’ve used mostly simple words, except I’ve thrown in a few words like regalia and things like that, which relate specifically to graduation. I did that because it makes it sound like I know more about graduation itself (Vin, March 14, 2003).

But the only two “vivid” words that she “threw” in were “regalia” and “parading” which had little impact in the article as a whole. The professional version removed non-concrete words and indirect phrases like “it’s about”, “parties are on track” “with the exception of”, “process” and “in the week before” and also deleted unnecessary words that were repeated like “graduation”, used eight times, “organisation” or “organise” used four times, and “process” and “procession” also used repetitively. The story also contained a number of other minor errors, including inconsistency of tenses. Vin generally wrote in the present tense, but used the past tense, “said”, as the verb of attribution except in the last sentence where she used “says”. While different newspapers may follow different conventions about the use of the verb of attribution, all agree that consistency is important (V. Holt, 1993).

However, the more important issue was that although Vin appeared to have been taught some of the principles of news writing, she could not put them into practice. The teaching had not been reinforced in any way. Nor had she been told other factors that were necessary in writing the inverted-pyramid format. Moreover, Vin’s news story

required some critical thinking. I would define critical thinking as to think beyond the obvious, to sort through facts, to decide who else to interview in seeking the story, and then to write the story in a compelling and entertaining fashion. It was quite clearly too long and not very interesting but perhaps in her attempt to follow the rules or in her lack of understanding of them, she was unable to see this. Only when her news story was rewritten by the professional journalist did it gain the key elements of a traditional news story according to the inverted-pyramid model and accepted professional norms: the lead sentence is basically a summary of the story but also a directional summary, a lens through which the point of the story is focused and the news values magnified (Bell, 1991). It started with the actors and enhanced the news values of significance, human interest, clarity, proximity and immediacy. The main theme was clarified in as few words as possible, maximising credibility and background information was added to assist understanding. But comparing a student's work near the beginning of her journalism training with the work of a seasoned professional is not a fair summary of the effectiveness of New Zealand journalism education. Vin wrote this story in March while there were still seven months of training left for her to gain the skills of a professional journalist.

5.2.2 The middle of the year

Vin's story (see Table 5.2 below) five months later, as with many of the students, showed some progress in gaining those skills. The changes the professional journalist made to her story were minor compared with those made at the beginning of the year, as this analysis will show. She herself believed that she had learnt a lot. She reflected that learning by doing, and especially her two-week work experience in the media industry, rather than her time in the classroom, were the cause:

Basically we just put into practice what we'd already learnt ... I have to say also that through doing an internship, writing's become quite a lot easier ... I mean you get like given something to do and you have to do it, so it just seems to just flow (Vin, July 17, 2003).

What Vin's story written on work experience showed was a greater ability to write according to the many demands of the inverted pyramid. Her opening sentence revealed she had now learnt some of the fundamentals of writing a news lead sentence. The story

was about a carved Māori talking pole¹¹ which had rotted in the weather and had been taken down and would not be re-erected as it was too badly damaged.

Table 5.2 Vin's mid-year news story and the professional version

| Vin's story | Professional version |
|--|---|
| <p>S1: Tauranga's controversial talking pole will not be resurrected after investigations found it is too badly damaged.</p> <p>S2: Nga Pou Pou was taken down just over 18 months ago after deteriorating badly in the weather.</p> <p>S3: After investigation by council some time ago it was thought that the pole would be able to be replaced but further investigations revealed it couldn't.</p> <p>S4: "Unfortunately we thought the pole could be repaired but it can't."</p> <p>S5: "We have been in discussions with Ngati Rakawa who say they want to carve a new pole," Mayor Gordon Black said.</p> <p>S6: The new pole will be carved in native timber like totara instead of pine so it will stand up to harsh weather conditions.</p> <p>S7: The location of the new pole has not been confirmed but the entrance to Bridge Street may be an option.</p> <p>S8: BOPDC is also working on holding a Talking Pole symposium to be held in March next year.</p> <p>S9: The proposed month long symposium will be held outside Tauranga's swimming pool complex and will include three international and five local artists each carving a unique talking pole to represent Tauranga's diverse culture.</p> <p>S10: Talking Poles working party chair Sue Arthur said that sponsorship and funding is still needed for the event.</p> <p>S11: The event could cost up to \$100,000.</p> | <p>P1: Tauranga's controversial talking pole is so badly damaged, it will not be re-erected.</p> <p>P2: Nga Pou Pou Korero, which stood on the corner of Main St and Blair St, was taken down 18 months ago, after the pine figure had deteriorated badly in the sun and rain.</p> <p>P3: Mayor Gordon Black said the Bay of Plenty District Council had hoped to repair and re-erect the pole, but recent investigations found rot was causing the wood to disintegrate.</p> <p>P4: He said it was unfortunate: "We thought the pole could be repaired but find now that it can't."</p> <p>P5: The Ngati Rakawa gift to the town caused a storm 10 years ago because it featured a two-metre tall Māori figure, holding an erect penis representing the seed of life.</p> <p>P6: The council had talked to the iwi who now wanted to carve a new pole, he said.</p> <p>P7: The new pole will be carved in a native timber, like totara, to withstand harsh weather conditions.</p> <p>P8: One possible site is the Bridge St entrance to town.</p> <p>P9: The council is planning a talking pole symposium next March.</p> <p>P10: Three international and five local artists have been invited to the month-long event to carve talking poles representing the town's diverse population.</p> |

¹¹ A Māori carved ornamental pole which tells a story.

A news story, as Manoff & Schudson (1987) note, is a means of knitting diverse events together. News stories consist of one or more episodes, which in turn consist of one or more events. Vin's lead sentence focused on the last most important event and also linked two related events by the word "after" (Bell, 1991). Her first sentence read:

Vin
S1

Tauranga's famous controversial talking pole Nga Pou Pou will not be resurrected after investigations found it is too badly damaged.

However, this sentence still required some modification to match the standards of the news profession. It used two adjectives "famous" and "controversial" in one sentence. Students are generally taught to avoid adjectives, although in practice "controversial" is commonly found in news stories. The use of "resurrected", more commonly used in a spiritual sense, is inappropriate in this context and the professional version used "re-erected" instead. There is no explanation of why the talking pole was either controversial or famous and the use of the nominalisation, "investigations", means that the reader does not know who was doing the investigating. Overall, however, her lexical choice suggested she was trying to write more graphically and with a greater understanding of the need to gain attention.

The modification of the opening sentence by the professional journalist was, in comparison to Vin's first story, relatively minor. The words "Nga Pou Pou" were deleted to keep the sentence brief and to appeal to a wider audience:

P1

Tauranga's controversial talking pole is so badly damaged, it will not be re-erected.

On certain issues, Vin's story showed she was consciously trying to write according to the direct instructions and values of the community newspaper she had gone to for work experience, rather than the theory of news writing taught to her in class. She remarked:

The reason I structured the story like it was, was basically because we've been taught that way at tech and when we went to the newspaper on our internship, I actually found that the structure actually differed. Like I was in a community paper and basically you ... instead of using all the W's and H, they just really want what happened in the first sentence.

In her second sentence, Vin again repeated the Māori name of the pole. She explained:

That's just backing up the first sentence saying why it was actually taken down and why it was badly damaged.

She did not say whether it was the sun or rain that had caused the damage to the talking pole so rather than elaborating on her first sentence, it was unnecessarily repetitive:

S2

Nga Pou Pou was taken down just over 18 months ago after deteriorating badly in the weather.

The professional made three changes to this sentence. Firstly, she used the correct full Māori name of the talking pole, adding where it had been located, and also explained it was a pine figure. Secondly, she made the story more credible by providing detailed facts (Tuchman, 1978) of where the pole was sited and what material it was made of. Thirdly, she also removed “just over” to add precision:

P2:

Nga Pou Pou Korero, which stood on the corner of Main St and Blair St, was taken down 18 months ago, after the pine figure had deteriorated badly in the sun and rain.

Vin’s third sentence was clumsily written, vague and repetitive. The sentence needed revision, while the fourth sentence repeated the same sentiments again, this time as a direct quotation:

S3

After investigation by council some time ago it was thought that the pole would be able to be replaced but further investigation revealed it couldn’t.

S4

“Unfortunately we thought the pole could be repaired but it can’t.

S5

“We have been in discussions with Ngati Rakawa who say they want to carve a new pole,” Mayor Gordon Black said.

The fifth sentence introduced “Ngati Rakawa”¹² but Vin did not explain who they were. She reflected:

I just dropped in a quote because usually you stick a quote in the third or fourth paragraph, so the quote I’ve got was just from the mayor

The professional journalist used the same information but reordered it. In her third sentence, she attributed the story to the mayor, rather than leaving it to the fifth sentence, as Vin had done. Instead of using the informal “council”, she used the full name, thus increasing its credibility. The following two sentences were also made more explicit:

¹² Ngati Rakawa is a local iwi or tribe.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P3 | Mayor Gordon Black said the Bay of Plenty District Council had hoped to repair and re-erect the pole, but recent investigations had found rot was causing the wood to disintegrate. |
| P4 | He said it was unfortunate: “We thought the pole could be repaired but find now that it can’t.” |

She also added background and contextual information to the story, which were necessary for full understanding:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P5 | The Ngati Rakawa gift to the town caused a storm 10 years ago because it featured a two-metre tall Māori figure, holding an erect penis representing the seed of life. |
|-----------|--|

This contextual information added greatly to Vin’s story. It was noteworthy that Vin did not see it as important to include this information but the professional journalist realised its inherent newsworthiness and the interest and prurient humour it added to the story. It provided the news value of continuity which linked this story with others that had been written on the same topic and gave the story some “spice”, adding negativity and controversy about sex and race. Vin reflected that she found writing some of the Māori terms difficult and had to do some research to find out exactly what the pole was:

.... it was quite hard using some of the Māori terms in the story because I’m not familiar with them, so yeah ... it was quite difficult to write because I’m not from the Tauranga area so I didn’t know the background of the story, I had to do a bit of research into looking at what the pole actually was ...

But she appeared to use her researched material only minimally. There was a delicate balance to be struck with this story. The story needed to be kept short while embedding additional information about Māori customs to add clarity. The professional version achieved this by explaining that Ngati Rakawa was the name of the Māori iwi or tribe who had been responsible for gifting the talking pole and also wanted to be involved in carving a replacement pole. This was done by making what was a quotation in Vin’s story into indirect speech and adding the word “iwi”, in this next sentence:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P6 | The council had talked to the iwi who now wanted to carve a new pole, he said. |
|-----------|--|

Vin had learned about the need to provide facts to increase the credibility of the story but did not use the knowledge consistently, failing to insert the pole’s exact location earlier:

The next sentence was the location and again they can't confirm where it would be located, but you've got to say where things are going to happen or else it's really got no credit in the story.

S6 The new pole will be carved in a native timber like totara instead of pine so it will stand up to harsh weather conditions.

S7 The location of the new pole has not been confirmed but the entrance to Bridge Street may be an option.

While Vin reflected that she had learned while on work experience to cut out any extraneous words, she still had some way to go:

.... Basically half the information you get, you discard it. I learnt you can't just babble ... otherwise you get an editor who cuts it all out for you.

Vin's sixth and seventh sentences used 43 words. The professional journalist's seventh and eighth sentence provided the same facts, but used only 27 words. Her seventh sentence in particular was shortened. Vin seemed to have repeated the words of an official at the district council as she used "location", "confirmed" and "option". The professional journalist rewrote it simply in P8, replacing "location" with "site" and "possible" for "may be an option":

P7 The new pole will be carved in a native timber, like totara, to withstand harsh weather conditions.

P8 One possible site is the Bridge St entrance to town.

Vin's last four sentences moved to a different, though tangentially connected, theme:

And the final sentences that I actually did were just a little bit about something that I thought would fit in there ... it's a talking pole symposium and they're basically just like carving new poles to put around Tauranga ... they've got no relevance to the big story itself but it's just good to have them in the background.

S8 BOPDC is also working on holding a Talking Pole symposium to be held in March next year.

S9 The proposed month long symposium will be held outside Tauranga's swimming pool complex and will include three international and five local artists each carving a unique talking pole to represent Tauranga's diverse culture.

S10 Talking Poles working party chair Sue Arthur said that sponsorship and funding is still needed for the event.

S11 The event could cost up to \$100,000.

The professional journalist made some minor changes to S8 and S9 and deleted S10 and S11, as they would fit better in a “follow-up” story and also introduced a promotional aspect, which was unnecessary. The reason for the symposium was clarified and the language tightened, removing more than 40 words from the end:

| | |
|------------|---|
| P9 | The council is planning a talking pole symposium next March. |
| P10 | Three international and five local artists have been invited to the month-long event to carve talking poles representing the town’s diverse population. |

Figure 5.2 shows in diagram form the nature of the changes made to the order of the story.

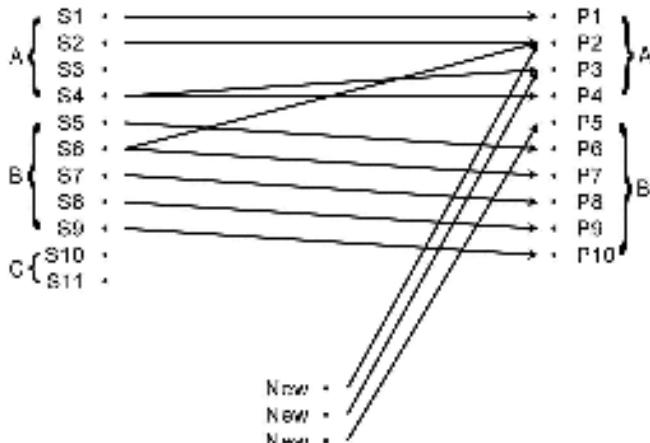


Figure 5.2 Changes to the order of Vin’s mid-year story

To heighten the news values, she moved words and information up the story and also inserted the three additional pieces of information, described as “new”, at P2, P3 and P5. Despite these additions, it still remained 10 words shorter than Vin’s original because of the tightening of the language and the deletion of repetitious material. The last two sentences were also deleted as they were considered unnecessary. Figure 5.2, in comparison to Figure 5.1 for her story at the beginning of the year, is a much less confused diagram. Although some sentences were modified and new material was added, the basic outline remained much the same. The first four sentences in Vin’s story are marked “A” and remained in the same position in the professional story, apart from the addition of S6. Vin’s S5-S9 are marked “B” while the last two sentences marked “C” are deleted. Mid-year, Vin had not included any background information to provide a wider context for the story, though she reflected that she should. She thus missed out contextual information that was intrinsically newsworthy and at the same time would

have added much to the interest of the story. A number of facts, such as the location of the pole were also missing, which would have increased the story's credibility. Work experience can also provide a series of challenges. Thomas and Goc (2004) suggest that some workplaces need to demonstrate tolerance in allowing the student on the job to learn. This would include the possibility of the student making mistakes or performing poorly on certain tasks. Vin described her mistake on work experience:

I wrote something and didn't double check it and it went to print and yeah ... it wasn't my fault but yeah I still looked like really stupid.

But she thought that work experience had taught her a valuable lesson: the need for accuracy:

I learnt that it's really important to double check what you've written for everything because you could get in a bit of trouble (Vin, July 17, 2003).

These reservations aside, her two weeks in the industry had made a big difference to her progress and she seemed to have gained new understanding of the inverted-pyramid model. As discussed earlier, both students and their tutors unanimously approved of work experience in the media industry and saw it as a key element to the whole journalism course (see Chapter 3). The importance of work experience shows that the learning-by-doing method is still essentially in place. There are obviously advantages in such an approach, especially in that students experience writing in the manner that the industry wants of them and are socialised into the media culture. However, Vin's case study seems to reveal that it does not encourage a reflective approach to writing, rather it solidifies a useful but limited way of writing and it does not lend itself to young journalists developing a mature and critical approach to the media industry. Vin seems to have swapped her unthinking and only half-understood ideas of the inverted pyramid for the not radically different dictates of the media industry. The next section will consider her story written at the end of the year, to check whether more practice had increased her skills at news writing.

5.2.3 The end of the year

Vin's story, written at the end of the year, was about a case at the Haworth Coroners Court (see Table 5.3 below). The students write stories from attending various courts to gain experience. The role of a coroner is to hold inquests into sudden unnatural or

violent deaths where there are no suspicious circumstances. The subject of the inquest was Albert McDonald, a 61-year-old man whose death certificate recorded that he had died from heart failure. Just before his death, he had been prescribed morphine and because of a pharmacy error, he was given an incorrect dosage. His widow was disputing the cause of his death.

Vin believed that her professionalism was increasing and that her first sentence was “quite good”:

.... It was quite good because it gave the overview of the story and it had all the hard facts in the first sentence, so the rest of the story is basically leading on from that (Vin, October 31, 2003).

| | |
|------------|--|
| Vin | The death of 61-year-old Albert McDonald in March 2000 raised the |
| S1 | question today over whether or not an overdose of morphine led to his death. |

However, this sentence showed that Vin had still not learned the skill of maximising the news values and of using an authoritative and direct style. She had made her sentence unnecessarily vague by writing “raised the question ... over whether or not” and also repetitive, using the word “death” twice. The professional journalist substantially modified this sentence, as can be seen below, to both clarify and enhance it. She excluded Mr McDonald’s name from the sentence and the date, inserting them lower down in the order while enhancing the human interest by starting with “A 61-year-old man” and elevating “suffering from acute heart problems” from S2. The corrected dosage, “10 times the recommended dose of morphine”, was also added. Vin’s lead sentence had failed to mention where the case was being heard and this information was added, “the Haworth Coroner’s Court heard today”, and in doing so the immediacy was stressed. In the professional version, the lead became a capsule of the entire story:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P1 | A 61-year-old man suffering from acute heart problems was given 10 times the recommended dose of morphine before his death, the Haworth Coroner’s Court heard today. |
|-----------|--|

Table 5.3 Vin's end-of-the-year story and the professional version

| Vin's story | Professional version |
|--|--|
| <p>S1: The death of 61-year old Albert McDonald in March 2000 raised the question today over whether or not an overdose of morphine led to his death.</p> <p>S2: Coroner Gordon Menga heard today how Mr McDonald suffered from acute heart problems leading up to his death in 2000 and how on his death certificate the cause of death was recorded as heart failure.</p> <p>S3: However Mr McDonald's wife disagreed and demanded to know why an autopsy was not performed.</p> <p>S4: Haworth doctor David Maple told the court how he was called out to the McDonald's residence for an emergency visit on February 26, 2000.</p> <p>S5: Doctor Maple explained that Mr McDonald needed pain relief for his condition and the safest way to treat him was to pre-scribe morphine elixir (liquidised morphine).</p> <p>S6: Mr McDonald was prescribed one milligram of morphine per ml of elixir, however a dispensary error through Anglesea pharmacy saw him digest 10 milligrams of elixir, five times the recommended dose.</p> <p>S7: The pharmacy was alerted to the error after Mrs McDonald rung saying her husband was really sleepy.</p> <p>S8: An ambulance was sent to the residence rushing Mr McDonald to hospital only to have him die a few days later.</p> <p>S9: Both Dr Maple and the McDonald's family doctor, Michael Brown agreed that a morphine overdose was the contributing factor in hospitalising Mr McDonald.</p> <p>S10: However Doctor Brown told the court that Mr McDonald was a very sick man who could have died at any time.</p> <p>S11: Haworth Hospital cardiologist Dr Morris Nunes said the morphine was counteracted from Mr McDonald's system very quickly and the morphine overdose was not the cause of death but heart failure was.</p> <p>S12: Coroner Gordon Menga said the court would reconvene at a later date so all the evidence could be heard.</p> | <p>P1: A 61-year old man suffering from acute heart problems was given 10 times the recommended dose of morphine before his death, the Haworth Coroner's Court heard today.</p> <p>P2: Albert McDonald died in March 2000 at Haworth Hospital.</p> <p>P3: Heart failure was recorded as the cause of death on his death certificate, the coroner, Gordon Menga, was told.</p> <p>P4: Mr McDonald's widow disputed this, demanding to know why an autopsy was not performed.</p> <p>P5: Haworth doctor, David Maple told the court he was called out to the McDonalds' residence for an emergency visit on February 26, 2000.</p> <p>P6: Dr Maple said Mr McDonald needed pain relief for his condition and the safest treatment was morphine elixir-liquidised morphine.</p> <p>P7: Mr McDonald was prescribed a dose of 1mg morphine per ml of elixir.</p> <p>P8: However a dispensary error by Anglesea Pharmacy saw him take 10mg of morphine per ml of elixir – 10 times the recommended dose.</p> <p>P9: The pharmacy was alerted to the error when Mrs McDonald rang to say her husband was very sleepy.</p> <p>P10: He was rushed to hospital by ambulance and died a few days later.</p> <p>P11: Both Dr Maple and the family doctor, Michael Brown, agreed a morphine dose was the contributing factor in hospitalising Mr McDonald.</p> <p>P12: But Dr Brown told the court Mr McDonald was a very sick man who could have died at any time.</p> <p>P13: Haworth Hospital cardiologist Morris Nunes said the morphine would have passed from Mr McDonald's system very quickly.</p> <p>P14: He said heart failure was the cause of his death, not a morphine overdose.</p> <p>P15: Coroner Gordon Menga said the court would reconvene at a later date to hear further evidence.</p> |

Vin described writing this story as “quite hard” because it was from the coroner’s court, emphasising the high degree of accuracy needed in court reporting:

.... it's quite hard because it's quite proper – you have to write exactly what you hear. You can't write your own words, you have to write what they say.

She also found it difficult because “everything had to be completely correct”, even though at the court it was hard to hear what was being said:

It was difficult in that you had to get everything correct. You had to make sure you had all the spelling of the names right...When you hear it in court it just sounds to me like a load of...like just spitting out whatever they feel like spitting out, so you had to really listen.

Vin also thought her second sentence was “good”. She recalled what she understood about contempt of court:

The second one [sentence] was basically a lead on from the first ... the second sentence was good because in a coroner’s court story, you have to fit both sides of an argument and to have a balance for it. In court reporting you have to have two sides of the story or you can be found in contempt of court:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| S2 | Coroner Gordon Menga heard today how Mr McDonald suffered from acute heart problems leading up to his death in 2000 and how on his death certificate the cause of death was recorded as heart failure. |
|-----------|--|

This sentence was also repetitive. The year was repeated from the first sentence and it mentioned the words “heart” and “death” twice. There was no explanation anywhere in the story why the case had taken three years to be heard in court. The professional journalist cut Vin’s long sentence in two, named Mr McDonald for the first time and also included when he died and where. In the original story Vin had not mentioned where he had died until the eighth sentence This enabled the cause of death to be emphasised by linking this sentence with P3 and starting with “heart failure”:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P2 | Albert McDonald died in March 2000 at Haworth Hospital. |
| P3 | Heart failure was recorded as the cause of death on his death certificate, the coroner, Gordon Menga, was told. |

In her next sentence, Vin described why the death had been referred to the coroner. She wrote:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| S3 | However Mr McDonald’s wife disagreed and demanded to know why an autopsy was not performed. |
|-----------|---|

The professional enhanced this sentence by deleting “however” and replacing “disagreed” with the stronger word “disputed”. She described the “wife” of the late Mr McDonald as his “widow”, also heightening the human interest by using a term that has connotations of pity:

P4 Mr McDonald’s widow disputed this, demanding to know why an autopsy was not performed.

Vin explained that her story was written in chronological order because she found this less confusing:

.... as I said it was in chronological order and I find coroner’s court and court stories easier to do that because you don’t get confused. You write it how it comes out in court.

Her fourth sentence was unchanged:

S4 Haworth doctor David Maple told the court how he was called out to the McDonalds’ residence for an emergency visit on February 26, 2000.

In her next sentence, Vin described how Mr McDonald had received morphine:

S5 Doctor Maple explained that Mr McDonald needed pain relief for his condition and the safest way to treat him was to prescribe morphine elixir (liquidised morphine).

The professional journalist wrote this sentence more concisely, deleting six words. Vin’s “explained that” became “said”, and “the safest way to treat him” became “the safest treatment”:

P6 Dr Maple said Mr McDonald needed pain relief for his condition, and the safest treatment was morphine elixir-liquidised morphine.

Vin’s next sentence was about the morphine dosage:

It goes on to explain in detail how much milligrams he had and the error the pharmacy made ... they dispensed the wrong amount of morphine and so he basically took five times the recommended dose

S6 Mr McDonald was prescribed one milligram of morphine per ml of elixir, however a dispensary error through Anglesea pharmacy saw him digest 10 milligrams of morphine per mil of elixir, five times the recommended dose.

This sentence displayed a common error made by journalism students. Vin joined two clauses together with “however” rather than writing two sentences. The professional cut the sentence in half and corrected the word, “digest” to the simpler “take”. More seriously, it was here that Vin made a fundamental error about the dosage. The amount of the morphine prescribed was the key fact in this hearing and the reason why Mr McDonald’s death had been referred to the coroner. Vin described him taking five times the recommended dose but this did not equate mathematically to the actual dosage. The professional version read:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P7 | Mr McDonald was prescribed a dose of 1mg morphine per ml of elixir. |
| P8 | However a dispensary error by Anglesea Pharmacy saw him take 10mg of morphine per ml of elixir – 10 times the recommended dose. |

Vin’s reflection explained how difficult it was to get the medical terminology correct:

This was very hard because there was quite a lot of medical talk in the coroner’s court hearing ... they were trying to say that medical misconduct led to this man’s death. The facts I selected were talking about morphine, elixir and the dispensary errors and how many milligrams he got instead of this amount of milligrams and that was very, very hard to write down correctly and then put into words.

Her reflection also cast some doubt on whether it was the amount of morphine in the elixir or the dosage that Mr McDonald was to take that was at fault. However, she continued to tell the story chronologically and wrote:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| S7 | The pharmacy was alerted to the error after Mrs McDonald rang saying her husband was really sleepy. |
| S8 | An ambulance was sent to the residence rushing Mr McDonald to hospital only to have him die a few days later. |

These two sentences were modified slightly. In S7, the journalist corrected Vin’s grammatical error, replacing “rung” with “rang” and removed the conversational “really”. In the next sentence, she removed eight words by starting the sentence with the actor, “he” and enhanced the urgency by using “rushed” in conjunction with the ambulance and removed the wordy “only to have him die”, replacing it with “died”:

| | |
|------------|--|
| P9 | The pharmacy was alerted to the error when Mrs McDonald rang to say her husband was very sleepy. |
| P10 | He was rushed to hospital by ambulance and died a few days later. |

Vin thought her next sentences were “good” because they provided “both sides of the story”. These sentences were only slightly changed by the journalist who deleted the two unnecessary “that’s”, replaced “however” with “but”, removed the repetitive use of the family name, and used the abbreviation “Dr”, to become the 11th and 12th sentences in the professional version:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| S9 | Both Dr Maple and the McDonald’s family doctor, Michael Brown, agreed that a morphine overdose was the contributing factor in hospitalising Mr McDonald. |
| S10 | However Doctor Brown told the court that Mr McDonald was a very sick man who could have died at any time. |

In the next sentence, Vin wrote:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| S11 | Haworth Hospital cardiologist Dr Morris Nunes said that the morphine was counteracted from Mr McDonald’s system very quickly and the morphine overdose was not the cause of death but heart failure was. |
|------------|--|

This again was a long sentence that was divided into two when it was rewritten. “[C]ounteracted” was removed to be replaced by the simpler “passed from”. “Heart failure” was again emphasised as the cause of death, replacing Vin’s tortuous and repetitive wording. The professional wrote:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| P13 | Haworth Hospital cardiologist Morris Nunes said the morphine would have passed from Mr McDonald’s system very quickly. |
| P14 | He said heart failure was the cause of his death, not the morphine overdose. |

Vin finished her story:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| S12 | Coroner Gordon Menga said the court would reconvene at a later date so all the evidence could be heard. |
|------------|---|

The journalist revised this to:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| P15 | Coroner Gordon Menga said the court would reconvene at a later date to hear further evidence. |
|------------|---|

Figure 5.3 shows all of the sentences that Vin had written were used by the professional journalist, indicating some development in her ability to select information. Sentences marked “A”, “B” and “C” in Vin’s story remained in much the same position in the professional version. The amount of new material needed had also diminished.

However, more sentences were reordered than in the middle of the year because Vin did not use her most striking material first. This is shown in Figure 5.3 in the lead sentence and the second sentence, which required substantial modification. The lead sentence was first made to sound more authoritative, starting with the actor, saying what happened and where. Vin had told the story in chronological order so that it was not until S6 that she wrote what had happened. Secondly, the news values were enhanced: the human interest was heightened as was the immediacy. By inserting the cause of death, heart failure, the negativity was maximised and the sentence gained clarity. Vin's writing throughout this story also remained unclear and her syntax required some correction, two sentences being cut in two.

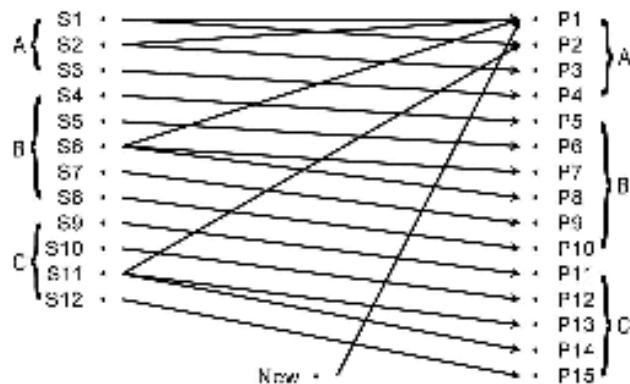


Figure 5.3 Changes to the order of Vin's end-of-year story

During the year, Vin reflected she had learnt by doing:

... we did something called “rounds”¹³ which we got assigned a round every week and we had to write a story about a certain topic every week and everybody without fail had to do one of these and that made you get on the phone and talk to people and make sure you’ve got a story each week.

By the end of the year, Vin believed she had gained considerable confidence and her writing had become more professional. She ascribed this to her brief mid-year work experience at a community newspaper, rather than to her year-long educational course. The public recognition of writing for the media was intensely important to her sense of professionalism:

Before I went on the internship my writing was OK, but after my internship experience I got more confidence and managed to get the writing skills up to a

¹³ Students were assigned to different “rounds” each week. However journalists are assigned to a “round” or topic such as arts or music for a longer period so that they build expertise and contacts.

good standard because I was pushing out so much writing while I was there and it was all going to print. Seeing my name on my work and seeing my name on it actually made me want to write better.

The most useful thing for her learning was work experience, as she had reflected. Vin was clearly a diligent student and willing to learn, but there was no evidence in her reflections that she revised her stories or wanted to think about them once they had been written. The media industry did not encourage reflection and thus she failed to gain an awareness of how to self-evaluate her writing and be an innovative or independent journalist. She complained about having to record her reflections using a tape recorder:

That I have to say I did not enjoy. It was good to reflect what I could do better and that kind of thing ... but I really hated it because it actually made me feel kind of stupid talking to a machine.

While Vin's news writing did show some progression from the beginning of the year, was she ready to become a professional journalist? She thought so:

I think that everything's a learning curve with journalism. You've just got to go out into the real world and practically learn as you go, so yeah, that's about it (Vin, October 31, 2003).

Having carefully considered Vin's writing at three different times during the year, there was no doubt about the improvement that happened in the middle of the year and the importance of experience at a community newspaper to her development. However, at the end of the year, her news writing still required substantial modification. Her writing tended to be repetitious and was not clear. She had difficulty expressing herself without using wordy phrases and had little concept of the importance of news values to her story. The accuracy of her news writing also raised some questions. There were few signs that Vin's journalism training, based largely around learning by doing, had prepared her to be an innovative, independent journalist. Moreover, it was doubtful that she had been trained in or understood the core values and methods of the media industry. For her to keep making significant strides towards professionalism, she would have to continue learning by doing, but this time on the job.

5.3 Casper's story

This section will discuss Casper's news writing throughout the year. It is divided into three parts. Section 5.3.1 considers his first news writing at the beginning of the year, when, despite having no experience, Casper displayed a natural competence and a reflective attitude. The second section looks at his mid-year story, and discusses the self-motivation he showed while also revealing some gaps in his news-writing skills. The third describes his last story and the pitfalls that can hinder progress towards professionalism.

5.3.1 The beginning of the year

Twenty-six-year-old Casper was very excited about his first story, reflecting that this was a “good one”:

I wrote a story which I'd come across when I was researching for an assignment and I knew just instantly ... knew it was a story. I find it a bit difficult to judge whether something is a story ... whether other people want to know about it or whether it's just something I'm interested in or whether it's something that I'm not interested in but other people might be. But I knew this story was a good one – a nice one (Casper, March 17, 2003).

His first story (see Table 5.4) was about a fairly common community event, a fun run that was soon to be held. However, it had a novel twist: the organisers had lost the winners' trophies. He showed curiosity and a sense of what made a story interesting – news values. Part of this can be attributed to his considerable abilities and extensive pre-journalism experience. While the 20 students in this study received similar training in journalism, there was one significant point of difference between the Group A students, those at the university, and Group B students, at the polytechnic. All of the students “learnt by doing”. However, the university journalism students like Casper, were “attached” to various community newspapers in their first semester from the start of the year and wrote 10 to 20 news stories directed to that publication.

Casper's early news story is printed in Table 5.4 (below):

Table 5.4 Casper's early news story and the professional version

| Casper's story | Professional version |
|--|--|
| <p>S1: Winners of this year's King of the Hill may find no treasure at the top of Mt Victoria.</p> <p>S2: Organisers are desperate for the return of trophies awarded when the event was last held.</p> <p>S3: Hundreds of runners, walkers and wheelbarrows are expected to ascend the Penwall landmark when the starter's gun sounds at the end of the month – for the first time in four years.</p> <p>S4: At least six of the race prizes are missing though and a record of the 1999 winners has not been kept by previous organisers.</p> <p>S5: Penwall Commercial Association manager Barbara Meadows has tried every avenue to find the approximately 30cm-high, 8cm-wide silver trophies including tracking down 1996 winners for clues to who won last time.</p> <p>S6: "It would be just great to get any of them back."</p> <p>S7: "The event's been going since 1958 and there's a real history to it."</p> <p>S8: The 2003 King of the Hill will be the team of four who most quickly cover the five kilometers from the Penwall Historic Hotel to the summit and back – by wheelbarrow.</p> <p>S9: Other events are a five or 10 kilometre run or walk round the circuit.</p> <p>S10: Spot prizes include a rugby ball autographed by the Ashwood Blues, gym membership from Lagoon Leisure and Fitness and bar tabs from the Penwall Historic Hotel.</p> <p>S11: Anyone with information about the missing trophies should contact Barbara Meadows at the association on 527 6389.</p> <p>S12: The wheelbarrow race starts at 10.15am on Sunday, March 30.</p> <p>S13: All other events begin at 10am.</p> <p>S14: To enter visit www.enteronline.co.nz.</p> | <p>P1: Winners of this year's King of the Mountain may find no treasure at the top of Mt Victoria.</p> <p>P2: Organisers are desperate for the return of trophies awarded when the event was last held four years ago.</p> <p>P3: Hundreds of runners, walkers and wheelbarrow are expected to ascend the Penwall landmark when the starter's gun sounds on Sunday, March 30.</p> <p>P4: But more than six of the race prizes are missing and previous organisers did not keep a record of the 1999 winners.</p> <p>P5: Penwall Commercial Association manager Barbara Meadows has tried unsuccessfully to find the more than 30cm-tall silver trophies, even tracking down the 1996 winners for clues as to who won last time.</p> <p>P6: "It would be just great to get any of them back."</p> <p>P7: "The event's been going since 1958 and there's a real history to it."</p> <p>P8: The 2003 King of the Mountain will be awarded to the team of four who most quickly cover the five kms from the Penwall Historic Hotel to the summit and back – by wheelbarrow.</p> <p>P9: Other events are a five or 10km run or walk round the circuit.</p> <p>P10: Spot prizes include an autographed Ashwood Blues rugby ball, gym memberships and bar tabs.</p> |

Students from the polytechnic, such as Vin, had little experience of the media industry until later, usually the middle of the year, writing their stories as class exercises. This “real world” experience greatly added to the students’ abilities and to what they often referred to as their “confidence”. “Confidence” was often mentioned by the students, as a key factor. Casper commented:

So I spoke with my newspaper and they said, “yes, yes – that’s great, write the story” ... so I think that gave me real confidence in writing the story and researching the story too. When I went out for the interview, you know I went with a bit more confidence that I wasn’t wasting someone’s time ... it was actually going to get to print.

Casper, like Vin, described how the students were taught very early on in their studies to write in the traditional inverted pyramid:

Yeah ... it’s sort of sunk in already from the first and second weeks of the course, the inverted-pyramid structure and how much easier it is to write that.

Unlike Vin, who had largely tried to implement the rules of journalism without seeming to reflect on or really understand them, Casper showed a deeper concern, not apparently because of any particular teaching but as part of his individual attributes:

I never really thought of that before I came to journalism school ever and when I read news articles, I never analysed it like that. It all seemed quite disjointed to me but at the same time, it seemed to have this great logic and seemed to make sense

Like most students, he realised the emphasis the inverted pyramid placed on the opening sentence and found writing the lead sentence the most difficult part:

I struggled over the first paragraph a bit and sort of was just trying to find something light that tied in nicely and sort of came across the words “king” and “treasure” referring to the trophies.

His first sentence read:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Casper S1 | Winners of this year’s King of the Hill fun run may find no treasure at the top of Mt Victoria. |
|------------------|---|

This lead sentence started with the actors, the “who” of the story, “winners of this year’s King of the Hill fun run”, included the “what” “no treasure”, and also the “where”, “at the top of Mt Victoria”. Three news values were evident: it had prominence because the actors were the elite, the winners, but it also had negativity and significance because of

the novelty value of “no treasure”. Despite his lack of experience, Casper had written a lead sentence that was a directional summary, a lens through which the point of the story was focused and the news values magnified and had achieved this through using colourful detail. The professional version was almost identical except for the correction of an error in the name of the event.

Casper’s second sentence read:

S2

Organisers are desperate for the return of trophies awarded when the event was last held.

In his reflection on this sentence, Casper talked about how he chose the word “desperate” because it “sounded more dramatic”. What he was doing was magnifying the news values in his story and he appeared to be one of the few students who understood the need to enhance the words to achieve this. But he was unsure about this, indicating that he did so, not because of what he had been taught but as something he had discovered for himself:

.... thought twice about using the word “desperate”... well, I do back it up with a quote further down but there’s nothing in the story really where they were really desperate and in tears and making pleas all over the place and even when I interviewed my main source, she was I think “keen” is a probably a better word ... desperate I associate with weakness and a sort of on-your-knees type expression but keen is a more positive way of looking at it. I chose the desperate ... I just thought it sounded, it was more dramatic, but I was a little hesitant, you know as to the validity of using that word.

While students learn some of the rules of writing in the inverted pyramid, this indicates that they do not learn how to enhance the news values and the interest of the story through their lexical choice. This point will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6. Given Casper’s grasp of the inverted pyramid and news values, the professional journalist made only a few minor changes to the story. The first one was to move the “when”, four years ago, from Casper’s third sentence to the second sentence:

P2

Organisers are desperate for the return of trophies awarded when the event was last held four years ago.

This enabled the rather wordy phrase at the end of his third sentence, “at the end of the month for the first time in four years” to be replaced with the precise date taken from S12:

P3 Hundreds of runners, walkers and wheelbarrows are expected to ascend the Penwall landmark when the starter's gun sounds on Sunday, March 30.

Casper also realised the importance of using “strong” or graphic words:

I've taken on board the importance of starting the sentence with a strong word, without making it passive. For example, “Hundreds of runners”, “organisers are desperate”, “winners of this year's king of the hill”, instead of always starting with “the”.

Like Vin, Casper commented on whether he thought his writing was “good” or not, although he was rather more articulate about his reasons. He liked the next sentence:

I like the sentence ... it's the first time I sort of start unfolding what the event's all about ... I'd never really seen Mt Victoria. I didn't really know what it was like, but it really is a landmark. “When the starter's gun sounds”, I thought that was a little bit cheaper but I still liked it.

There were two slight changes made to the next sentence:

S4 At least six of the race prizes are missing though and a record of the 1999 winners has not been kept by previous organisers.

The professional version maximised the number at the beginning of the sentence making it “more than six” and changed the passive ending to an active one:

P4 More than six of the race prizes are missing and previous organisers have not kept a record of the 1999 winners.

Casper's legal training was useful in his next sentence for providing credibility by introducing exact facts. This training had taught him to be precise, while he discovered journalism allowed more flexibility:

I was unsure how to describe the trophies. I really had to put an approximation in there and I felt uncomfortable doing that, I think through my legal training where I have been really trained to present only the truth and the ... just a real, no-stone-unturned approach but with journalism, I'm finding with my stories there is a little bit more room for movement and it's not always possible, as a matter of resources, to be incredibly specific.

He wrote:

S5 Penwall Commercial Association manager Barbara Meadows has tried every avenue to find the approximately 30cm-high, 8cm-wide silver

trophies including tracking down 1996 winners for clues to who won last time.

The professional journalist changed this sentence slightly to make it less cumbersome removing “every avenue”, replacing “approximately” with “more than” and removing the width of trophies:

P5 Penwall Commercial Association manager Barbara Meadows has tried unsuccessfully to find the more than 30cm-tall silver trophies, even tracking down the 1996 winners for clues as to who won last time.

The journalist did not change the next two sentences:

S6 “It would be just great to get any of them back.

S7 “The event’s been going since 1958 and there’s a real history to it.”

S4, S5, S6 and S7 revealed that Casper understood another element of the inverted pyramid: the need to supply contextual or background information so that the story made sense. These sentences embedded the necessary background information into the fabric of the story. It went on to explain the length of the race and its course and other events that would be held that day, which remained substantially the same in the professional version.

The last four sentences were deleted to shorten his story by more than 50 words and remove the advertising content which would not be used in some suburban newspapers. He wrote:

S11 Anyone with information about the missing trophies should contact Barbara Meadows at the association on 5276389.

S12 The wheelbarrow race starts at 10.15am on Sunday, March 30.

S13: All other events begin at 10am.

S14 To enter visit www.enteronline.co.nz

He was reluctant to conclude his story in this way:

The last paragraph I was a bit reluctant to have www.enteronline ... I was sort of unsure about that, because I felt like I might be sort of used to sell the event, rather than to actually objectively write a story, but I thought, well, that's actually probably something people would want to know... It's certainly something I'd think twice before just sticking it there.

The introduction of advertising will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7. While it is appropriate for public relations stories or press releases used to promote an event, it is increasingly found in news stories in some newspapers (Erjavec, 2004).

Casper, like Vin, had made a significant mistake, in misnaming the event. He had emailed his story to a community newspaper but was told it was not “King of the Hill” but “King of the Mountain”. The need for accuracy was certainly something that he and others grasped from learning by doing and especially writing for publication, rather than from his educational institution:

So that was a little bit embarrassing and the person at the newspaper said, “you’ve got to be really careful and check your facts” and of course I had but I hadn’t picked up that. She said, “you can get something into your head and then think that’s accurate without ever questioning it” and that’s absolutely what happened. So yeah, that was a valuable lesson (Casper, March 17, 2003).

Figure 5.4 shows diagrammatically how few changes were made to the order of Casper’s story. Unlike many of the other students’ stories, it was not necessary to add any new information to clarify the story and link it with other stories that had been published on the subject. There was only one place where the journalist moved information up the order of the story and this was a date, which fitted better when combined with Casper’s S3 than at S12. The sentences that had caused Casper some discomfort because of their advertising content were deleted from the end of the story. These sentences are marked “B”:

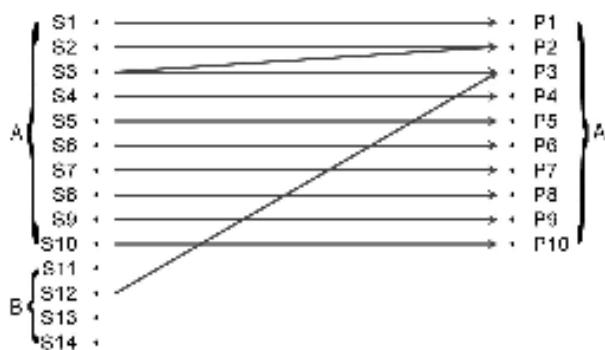


Figure 5.4 Changes to the order of Casper’s early story

Casper’s first story, unlike Vin’s, had followed the principles of the inverted pyramid. His lead sentence was a directional summary and, throughout his story, the news values were enhanced by his choice of vocabulary. He maximised the credibility of the story with his introduction of dates and measurements and added background information to

assist understanding. He also used few words. Only his last four sentences were deleted at the base of the inverted pyramid as they did not add to the story.

Casper's reflections and his early news story showed that while he had been taught the inverted pyramid, in a similar fashion to other New Zealand students, the importance of news values in enhancing or dramatising the interest and excitement was not stressed. Those students, like Casper, with considerable ability had a sense of these values and a more reflective approach but others, like Vin, with less ability, were not encouraged to develop these skills. Moreover, it can be seen that the students' experience writing "real stories" for publication seems to have a greater impact than their journalism training in the classroom. Casper's early news story was written for a community newspaper, whereas Vin was writing her first story as a class exercise. While this stresses the importance of work experience, it also seems to suggest the classroom component has comparatively little impact.

It remained to be seen how Casper would handle more difficult news stories during the coming year. His reflections showed he had achieved this news story because he was thinking carefully about what he was writing and was also evaluating his work.

5.3.2 The middle of the year

Casper's experience in writing his mid-year story was very different from Vin's. Her story was written while working at a community newspaper where she reflected: "You get like given something to do and you have to do it" (Vin, October 31, 2003). Casper's story was totally self-motivated and was written while he was working at two law firms during the inter-semester break from journalism school. On his way home, he saw a number of protesters and decided to write about the incident (see Table 5.5 below) and also to offer the story to the daily newspaper for publication.

News stories do not happen only when required for class, as his reflection showed:

It's the first story I've written since I left journalism school about three weeks ago. I've been working at two law firms so my mind has been focused on things other than story writing and school. I mention this because I noticed my mind took a while to get into gear when I was interviewing people in writing the story (Casper, July 3, 2003).

Casper came across a group protesting against a party the United States ambassador was hosting at a restaurant, to celebrate American Independence Day:

There were about 40 or 50 people outside and they were making quite a racket and there were dignitaries arriving in taxis.

The story is in Table 5.5 (below).

Table 5.5 Casper's mid-year story and the professional version

| Casper's story | Professional version |
|--|---|
| <p>S1: Dozens of anti-war protesters disrupted an independence day party held by the US ambassador for politicians and diplomats at a Wellington restaurant last night.</p> <p>S2: About 50 protesters surrounded Kelburn's Skyline restaurant greeting guests and Cable Car commuters with loud music and chanting over the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.</p> <p>S3: "Why should he be allowed to celebrate independence when America is disrupting other countries' independence?" organiser Mark Eden asked.</p> <p>S4: Tight police security forced many protesters to scramble up a steep 15-foot bank to stand outside windows overlooking the harbour, which had been covered.</p> <p>S5: Protesters held placards reading "Whose independence?" while chanting "US imperialist, number one terrorist."</p> <p>S6: An American who attended the party said he was shocked by the protest when he came off the Cable Car.</p> <p>S7: No one was available from the US Embassy for comment.</p> | <p>P1: Angry anti-war protesters disrupted the United States ambassador's Independence Day party last night.</p> <p>P2: More than 50 protesters surrounded Kelburn's Skyline restaurant, where Ambassador Charles Swindell was hosting a party for politicians and diplomats.</p> <p>P3: Guests including NZ First leader Winston Peters, Karori MP Peter Dunne, Mayor Kerry Prendergast and members of the Indian, Israeli and Swedish diplomatic corps were confronted with loud music, shouting and chanting against US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.</p> <p>P4: Up to 20 police and security men barred the restaurant doors, forcing the protesters to scramble up a steep 5m bank fronting on to the harbour.</p> <p>P5: Protesters held placards reading "Whose independence?" while chanting "US imperialist, number one terrorist."</p> <p>P6: Protest organiser and animal rights activist Mark Eden said the group could see no reason why the ambassador should be allowed to celebrate independence when America was disrupting other countries' independence.</p> <p>P7: United States businessman John Rutter said he was shocked by the protest when he came off the Cable Car.</p> <p>P8: Police said there were no arrests.</p> <p>P9: The United States ambassador was unavailable for comment.</p> |

He recognised that this was potentially a story with strong news values and displayed all the attributes of a self-motivated and self-regulated learner (Garcia, 1995):

It was the end of the day though and my mind really wasn't in a place where I could be really bothered writing a story but I got home and I thought that I hadn't really covered anything like a protest or something that was unfolding before my eyes, so I grabbed my notebook and my camera ... as I say, I had been working at two law firms so it was quite surreal just throwing myself into this protest ... I was quite inspired by the energy of it

The story was about an event where conflict was the prime force, a confrontation between about 50 protesters and police and security:

Most of them [the protesters] were really angry and that anger was quite overpowering.....

Casper's lead sentence read:

Casper S1 Dozens of anti-war protesters disrupted an independence day party held by the US ambassador for politicians and diplomats at a Wellington restaurant last night.

The word “dozens” was a mild exaggeration when Casper had reflected that there were about 50 protesters present. However, the verb “disrupted” was highly appropriate, even though he wondered for some time whether it was correct and showed characteristic concern about the suitability of using it. In his reflections, he related how he had talked to a security guard and asked whether the party was “disrupted” by the noise outside. He had then gone home but returned later to check whether the man was actually a security guard:

I felt much better after getting that clarification to try to find out what he was actually doing and whether he could be relied on to say that the noise was disruptive.

The sentence failed to convey any of the anger that had energised Casper. The professional journalist conveyed this energy by shortening it and removing where the celebration was being held and adding the adjective, “angry”:

P1 Angry anti-war protesters disrupted the United States ambassador's Independence Day party last night.

In his second sentence, Casper described “about 50” protesters who “surrounded” the restaurant, “greeting” guests with loud “music” and “chanting”:

S2 About 50 protesters surrounded Kelburn's Skyline restaurant greeting guests and Cable Car commuters with loud music and chanting over the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The professional journalist inserted the name of the ambassador to provide credibility and maximised the number of protesters, not by using the vague "about" but by using a phrase commonly used by journalists, "more than" (van Dijk, 1988):

P2 More than 50 protesters surrounded Kelburn's Skyline restaurant, where Ambassador Charles Swindell was hosting a party for politicians and diplomats.

In the following sentence, to increase the credibility and heighten the news value, prominence or "elite people" (Galtung & Ruge, 1965), the professional journalist inserted some of the guests' names, whereas Casper had failed to do so, despite his earlier reflection:

P3 Guests including NZ First leader Winston Peters, Karori MP Peter Dunne, Mayor Kerry Prendergast and members of the Indian, Israeli and Swedish diplomatic corps were confronted with loud music, shouting and chanting against US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the professional version, "confronted" also replaced Casper's more positive "greeted", changing the tone of the sentence from neutrality to anger. She also inserted "shouting" and "against" replaced "over" to further enhance the negativity of the sentence, as well as deepen the impression of an angry protest.

This sentence embodied the two major changes made to this story. The journalist heightened the credibility by inserting names and titles and also maximised the news values of negativity and prominence. It is interesting to compare this story with Casper's earlier one (see 5.3.1). In the first story, he both reflected on his choice of words and selected stronger, more emotive words to enhance a lesser story. With this one, he did not give any indication why he had selected particular words and appeared not to think too much about what to use. While some of his words did enhance the story, a number were not particularly appropriate, such as "greeting", in his lead sentence which, when combined with "chanted" and "music", failed to paint a picture of angry protests but depicted something more positive and happy. Casper's one reflection on lexical choice concerned the use of the word "disrupted", but his concern was not over the word's effectiveness but its factual accuracy and whether it was attributed correctly

to a person with authority. This furthers the general impression that journalism students are not specifically taught about the importance of their lexical choice to enhance the news values in a story. Rather they are taught that they should use “neutral” words (Tucker, 1999b) to convey objectivity.

In his third sentence, Casper quoted the protest organiser, Mark Eden.¹⁴ He had some difficulties with his direct quotations, as he explained:

I sort of had to use my initiative and look for people who I could talk to ... the protesters were obviously really happy to have the media talking to them. I actually found a few who just were not credible and just talked on and on. I found myself having to be quite firm and say, “thanks very much for your time” and actually walk away ... so I didn’t miss out on the opportunity to talk to other people ... I tracked down the organiser and he was probably my best source to find out what exactly was going on.

His third sentence read:

S3

“Why should he be allowed to celebrate independence when America is disrupting other countries’ independence?” organiser Mark Eden asked.

The professional journalist turned this question into indirect speech, to make it definite and stronger. She also labelled Mark Eden as “protest organiser and animal rights activist Mark Eden”, inserting new information. This had the effect of enhancing his status by giving him a title (Bell, 1991) but also diminishing his prestige by indicating that he was involved in more than one protest group and might be termed a “professional protester”. She also moved the sentence down in the overall order to allow the “elite” guests to be named first and to lessen Eden’s overall importance:

P5

Protest organiser and animal rights activist Mark Eden said the group could see no reason why the ambassador should be allowed to celebrate independence when America was disrupting other countries’ independence.

There was also an element of danger in the protest. He reflected:

The main part of the protest was centred round the front of the restaurant up a very steep bank. It was about a 15-foot high bank and it was incredibly steep ... and it was reasonably dangerous. I discovered that there were a policemen

¹⁴ Mark Eden is a well-known protester.

standing at the top of the bank guarding the protesters from the windows and there was about a one-foot ledge where the protesters were standing, so if they were knocked or anything, they would fall down the bank and probably seriously injure themselves, so there was a sort of element of danger which was quite exciting.

Casper wrote:

S4

Tight police security forced many protesters to scramble up a steep 15-foot bank to stand outside windows overlooking the harbour, which had been covered.

Casper used “forced”, “scramble”, “tight police security” and “steep 15-foot bank” to heighten the feelings of danger. The professional journalist maximised the news values in this sentence still further by describing the number of police, “up to 20 police and security men”, and adding “barred” to the sentence. She also changed “overlooking”, suggesting a positive view, to “fronting on to”, to continue the negativity of the sentence:

P4

Up to 20 police and security men barred the restaurant doors, forcing the protesters to scramble up a steep 5m bank fronting on to the harbour.

His fifth sentence was not changed. It read:

S5

Protesters held placards reading “Whose independence?” while chanting “US imperialist, number one terrorist.”

Casper’s reflections showed the difficulties he had with this story and the trouble he took to gain impressions from all who attended. He interviewed one woman who was a guest at the function:

The woman was quite defensive and I said to her, “could you hear any noise inside?”, and she was really quite well dressed and didn’t really look as if she would be that impressed by protesters or in fact didn’t really want to talk to me, but I introduced myself as a journalism student, and I kept walking alongside her and she said “those protesters were totally wasting their time and we couldn’t hear them at all”.

He spoke to another man who was also not eager to talk to a journalism student:

I didn’t believe her so I spoke to another guy who said he was really shocked by the noise when he came off the cable car ... then he backed off that when I introduced myself as a journalism student.

However, he persisted:

Then I said, “but you said at the start that you could” and he sort of began to get a bit flustered … he realised obviously that he would be giving the protesters some sort of victory and yeah, it became pretty obvious that people who were at the party were really trying to protect the ambassador.

Casper wrote:

S6 An American who attended the party said he was shocked by the protest when he came off the Cable Car.

The professional version added the American guest’s name and title to increase his authority and the story’s credibility and wrote:

P7 United States businessman John Rutter was attending the party and said he was shocked by the protest when he came off the cable car.

He went home and tried to call the American Embassy:

But no one was there and I put that at the bottom of my story when I sent it to the *Dom-Post*, just because … well I thought at least they knew I tried.

His last sentence read:

S7 No one was available from the US Embassy for comment.

“[N]o one” was removed from this sentence and the “United States ambassador” was used instead, to again enhance the credibility:

P9 The United States ambassador was unavailable for comment.

The professional journalist also inserted this sentence:

P8 Police said there were no arrests.

Checking with the police was something that Casper could easily have done but did not do so. The professional journalist added there were no arrests to indicate the nature of the protest. Although there was a lot of noise, there was no violence.

Casper understood the media liked stories about conflict. He also tied his story to a major one at the time – the Iraq war and anti-American feeling. *The Dominion-Post* the next day did have an article on the party, but it did not include information about the protest. He reflected:

I was a bit surprised that the *Dom-Post* didn't include it maybe ... just even one paragraph that the protest had happened merely because it was reasonably big and a lot of people coming off the cable car would've seen it.

He displayed his natural ability to tailor the length of a news story to its importance:

The actual story that I wrote was quite short. I got a lot more quotes but I just thought they were sort of repetitive and I just wanted to keep it as short as possible because I didn't think it was the sort of story warranting more than sort of six/seven paragraphs.

However, compared with his first story, Casper did not show the same degree of care about his choice of vocabulary. This could be attributed to the difficulties of writing a story that was unfolding. It stresses how reflection and self-evaluation are crucial for beginning journalists who write under deadline pressure. While Casper had done the background work, the essential craft of writing received less attention:

I just think the article I ended up writing showed how difficult it is to write an article about things that are unfolding, because there are so many decisions you have to make on the spot and how much work you need to do to get a decent story out of a protest.

Figure 5.5 indicates the degree of change introduced to Casper's story in the professional version. S1-S7 are marked "A", while two more sentences were added to the story by the journalist, so that P1-P9 were also marked "A". Although the lead was modified only slightly, P2, P3, P4 and P8 required new material added to give the story credibility and there were minor changes to the order:

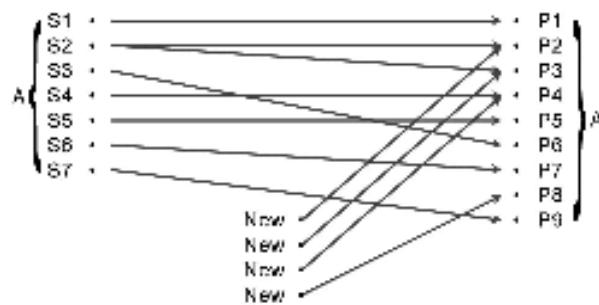


Figure 5.5 Changes to the order of Casper's mid-year story

This section has discussed Casper's mid-year story which he himself felt was a good learning experience. It was particularly commendable in that it came about through self-motivation:

Yeah, looking back on it all, it was a really good learning experience and I'm pleased I've pushed myself (Casper, July 3, 2003).

Unfortunately Casper appeared to have used all his efforts to research this story at the expense of his writing of it and there were important details he did not include, such as the names of the politicians and diplomats attending the celebration. Couzijn (1999) contends that the cognitive load is often so high during writing that novices abandon other activities, such as thinking about exactly what they are writing. While Casper showed a good sense of news values, this seemed to be largely untutored with the result that his article neglected opportunities to strengthen its impact and newsworthiness, for instance by emphasising its credibility. Journalism education also does not encourage students to focus on enhancing the news values through the choice of words and the result is that even gifted writers can neglect this important factor when under pressure. The outcome was that a well-researched and topical article on an issue that attracts news media attention – political protest against America – was not printed in the newspaper. The next section will discuss Casper's story written at the end of the year.

5.3.3 The end of the year

Casper's final story for this study was written for class as a "specialist" story. Unlike the students' earlier stories where there were no set criteria, this was required to be an extended news story of 600 to 800 words on a topic such as arts, business or sport with information derived from more than one person. Casper reflected that he doubted whether the story merited this amount of words and the professional journalist concurred, deleting all of the second part. Because of its length, only the first part of his story is reproduced in Table 5.6 (above), and the modified version derived from it. Casper's full story can be seen in Appendix II. Casper's reflections come from two retrospective protocols recorded after writing the story. The first was recorded immediately after he had written the story on October 25, 2003. A further interview was held with Casper one week later, enabling him to explain some points more fully. These reflections are dated November 7, 2003.

His story was about Sarah Hillary's art exhibition, based on an oil painting by New Zealand artist, Rita Angus. The theme – the exhibition – is contained in the first 18 sentences (see Table 5.6 below) of this 33-sentence story.

Table 5.6 Casper's end-of-the-year story and the professional version

| Casper's story | Professional version |
|--|--|
| <p>S1: Sarah Hillary's art exhibition may be Dunedin's smallest so far this year, but it's got pride of place in one of the city's most public galleries.</p> <p>S2: The exhibition's sole work is based on Rita Angus's 1942 oil painting of Betty Curnow, who was a friend of the artist.</p> <p>S3: The portrait is now in Dunedin Art Gallery's collection – just around the corner from The Small One gallery where Ms Hillary's version of the work is displayed.</p> <p>S4: The gallery's 27.5 x 27.5 x 10 cm space – located on the wall of a public thoroughfare just off Princes St – hold the 24 painted shells making up "Betty".</p> <p>S5: Art dealer Astrid Miller says Ms Hillary has "New Zealandified" Rita Angus's painting.</p> <p>S6: In the original portrait, the subject wears a shirt with palm trees and Mexican people on it.</p> <p>S7: Ms Hillary's version of the shirt features manuka and pohutukawa.</p> <p>S8. The shells the work is painted on are from Whangarei and Mangawhai.</p> <p>S9: "I wanted to make it more New Zealand," says Ms Hillary.</p> <p>S10: Each of the two dozen shells took Ms Hillary about an hour to paint.</p> <p>S11: The work was completed over a two-month period.</p> <p>S12: Within an hour of last Tuesday's opening [ed: 14 October], Ms Hillary had sold nearly half of her work.</p> <p>S13: Separating "Betty" will be difficult for the artist.</p> <p>S14: "I was reluctant to sell [the shells] separately," Ms Hillary says.</p> <p>S15: "I just started doing it for fun and then gradually saw it as an art work."</p> <p>S16: It's the second exhibition in less than six months for Ms Hillary, a senior conservator at Dunedin Art Gallery.</p> <p>S17: The first one took place in May, in her room at Kathmandu's Malla Hotel, while her famous father celebrated the 50th anniversary</p> | <p>P 1: A new art exhibition links two famous New Zealanders, Sir Edmund Hillary and Rita Angus.</p> <p>P 2: Sir Ed's daughter, Sarah Hillary, has based her show "Betty" on renowned artist Angus's oil portrait of her friend, Betty Curnow.</p> <p>P 3: In Rita Angus's 1942 portrait, Betty wears a shirt with palm trees and Mexican people on it.</p> <p>P 4: Sarah Hillary's version consists of 24 painted shells with the shirt featuring manuka and pohutakawa.</p> <p>P 5: "I wanted to make it more New Zealand," she says.</p> <p>P 6: It's the second exhibition in less than six months for Ms Hillary, art conservator at Ashwood Art Gallery.</p> <p>P 7: The first was in May in Kathmandu, while her famous father celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ascent of nearby Mt Everest.</p> <p>P 8: The Kathmandu exhibition featured art by Ms Hillary and other New Zealanders inspired by a recently-completed 19-day trek in the Himalayas.</p> <p>P 9: This exhibition, though small in size, is proving very popular.</p> <p>P 10: The Compact Gallery's 27.5 x 27.5 x 10 cm space, located on the wall of a public thoroughfare just off High St, holds the 24 painted shells making up "Betty".</p> <p>P 11: Within an hour of last Tuesday's opening nearly half the shells had been sold.</p> <p>P 12: Separating "Betty" into pieces is difficult for the artist.</p> <p>P 13: "I was reluctant to sell [the shells] separately.</p> <p>P 14: "I just started doing it for fun and then gradually saw it as an art work," Ms Hillary says.</p> <p>P 15: Each took Ms Hillary about an hour to paint and was completed over a two-month period.</p> |

Continued next page

of his ascent of nearby Mt Everest.

S18: The Kathmandu exhibition featured art by Ms Hillary and other New Zealanders inspired by a recently-completed 19-day trek in the Himalayas.

The next 15 sentences contained the second theme about the small gallery where the exhibition would be held. The first sentence combined the two themes and read:

Casper Sarah Hillary's art exhibition may be Auckland's smallest so far this year,
S1 but it's got pride of place in one of the city's most public galleries.

This lead showed the news values of proximity and also had some significance, because of the small size of the exhibition. His next sentence expanded on the exhibition theme, also providing the news value of prominence because of the mention of arguably New Zealand's best-known artist, Rita Angus:

S2 The exhibition's sole work is based on Rita Angus's 1942 oil painting of Betty Curnow, who was a friend of the artist.

As will be discussed below, Casper made a crucial decision in his opening sentence that deeply affected the news values of the story. He decided not to focus on the fact that the artist was the daughter of one of New Zealand's most famous and admired men – the explorer Sir Edmund Hillary. This is only mentioned in a very oblique fashion near the end of the discussion at S17:

S17 The first one took place in May, in her room at Kathmandu's Malla Hotel while her famous father celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ascent of nearby Mt Everest.

The professional journalist decided that this was the crucial issue in rendering the story newsworthy and inserted it into the lead. She further heightened the news values by using and linking two elite names in the opening sentence:

P1 A new art exhibition links two famous New Zealanders, Sir Edmund Hillary and Rita Angus.

P2 Sir Ed's daughter, Sarah Hillary, has based her show "Betty" on renowned artist Angus's oil portrait of Betty Curnow.

The lead in the professional story came from S1, S2 and predominantly S17, while P2 also came from S17, S2. The third sentence summarised S2 and S6. The sentence

started using information from S2, “Rita Angus’s 1942 painting of Betty” and merged this with part of S6, “wears a shirt with palm trees and Mexican people on it”, so that the professional sentence read:

P3

In Rita Angus’s 1942 portrait, Betty wears a shirt with palm trees and Mexican people on it.

The next sentence combined S4 and S7 following through the theme that Sarah Hillary’s art work comprised painted New Zealand shells:

P4

Sarah Hillary’s version consists of 24 painted shells with the shirt featuring manuka and pohutakawa.

P6, P7 and P8 were taken directly from S16, S17 and S18, with little change:

P6

It’s the second exhibition in less than six months for Ms Hillary, art conservator at Auckland Art Gallery.

P7

The first was in May in Kathmandu, while her famous father celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ascent of nearby Mt Everest.

P8

The Kathmandu exhibition featured art by Ms Hillary and other New Zealanders inspired by a recently-completed 19-day trek in the Himalayas.

The next three sentences were extracted from S1, S4 and S12 about the popularity and small size of the exhibition, while P12 and P13 are direct speech from Sarah Hillary contained originally in S13 and S14. P14 followed this with a further quotation that Casper had included at S15. The last sentence was again summarised from S10 and S11.

Figure 5.6 (below) will show the modifications to the order of Casper’s story and how the second theme was deleted. His original S3 and S4 were deleted because they linked the two themes:

S3

The portrait is now in Auckland Art Gallery collection – just around the corner from the Compact gallery where Ms Hillary’s version of the work is displayed.

S4

The gallery’s 27.5 x 27.5 x 10cm space – located on the wall of a public thoroughfare just off Main Street – holds the 24 painted shells making up “Betty”.

At S19, Casper returned to the gallery theme for the next 13 sentences and these were also deleted:

S19 Ms Hillary's current exhibition coincides with Compact's curator Bill Wright deciding to more openly promote the availability of the Main Street space – which he established in 1999 to break down elitism in the art world.

His last sentences combined the two themes again and were also deleted:

S30 Mr Wright likes Ms Hillary's work.

S31 "I think it's very cool: I never knew she was an artist."

S32 Artists wanting to display work in Compact can contact Bill Wright on xxxxxx or email him at xxxxxxxx.

S33 Ms Hillary's work is on the Kate Sims sidewall, 40 Main Street until November 13.

Overall, the professional journalist considered more than half of Casper's journalism superfluous and reduced his 540 word story to 232 words, by moving some sentences, and summarising others, while deleting 16 sentences in their entirety as Figure 5.6 shows. These deletions reveal that Casper had chosen an article that he himself came to realise could not sustain the requirement that it be an extended news story of considerable length. Neither of his two related topics, the opening of a minor exhibition by a reasonably unknown artist nor the activities of a small art gallery, was highly newsworthy. The professional journalist recognised this by cutting out in total the discussion regarding the art gallery and changing the focus from the artwork to the artist's famous father.

Figure 5.6 shows the complex pattern of changes that resulted. In Casper's original story the block of sentences, S1-S4, marked "A", was about the exhibition being held in a very small gallery. "B" was S5-S9 covering the content of the exhibition while "C" represented S10-S15, discussing the success of the exhibition. "D" encompassed the three sentences, S16, S17 and S18, the most newsworthy part of the story where Sir Edmund Hillary was mentioned. "E", S19-S31, was the second theme in the story, the small gallery. In the professional version, "A" is merged or deleted and the story starts with "D". "B" is next, followed by "D" again, "C" forms the end of the professional story while "E" is totally deleted. Thus "A", "B", "C", "D" and "E" become "D", "B", "D" and "C".

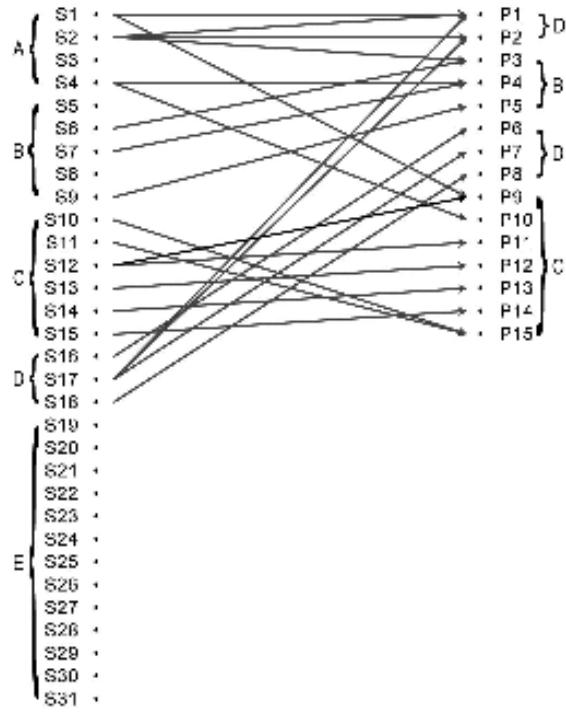


Figure 5.6 Changes to the order of Casper's end-of-year story

Casper was well aware that the story was too long in relation to its newsworthiness:

It is two stories in one in a way ... but I thought it was appropriate in that it sort of wasn't worth dividing up into two stories. I found it difficult because it was on an incredibly small topic which required 600 words and I found it was scraping the bottom of the barrel towards the end There are things I would have left out, (from) "within an hour of last Tuesday's opening" I would've left out the next three paragraphs ... "despite the gallery being in public view", really from there to the end. I probably would've left out "I just started doing it for fun as well" (Casper, October 25, 2003).

In general, he was also very aware that superfluous words and information can damage an article and its newsworthiness. He commented about past stories:

On occasions things have been cut down and that's really fascinating to see how what you think is tight writing can be made incredibly tight and much better for it ... so that's been an incredible way to learn, actually.

His reflection showed that he had understood one of the key principles of news writing: using as few words as possible. He thus deleted considerable elements of the story before submitting it for publication:

I did actually cut those after I had it approved by my tutor. When it came time to send it off, I found it quite easy to select paragraphs, phrases that I didn't want there. Also when I'm typing if I find I'm just getting bogged down, I don't find it really difficult to go no one needs to know that, still ensuring that it's balanced but

not getting bogged down in detail or obliged to put in a source just because I spoke to them (Casper, November 7, 2003).

It is interesting to note that Casper did not link this realisation to what happened to his story when it was handed to a tutor. His tutor accepted the obviously over-long story and did not raise the crucial issue of whether the news values should be heightened by greater attention to the celebrity aspect. Nor did his tutor remove the last two sentences which were an advertisement for the gallery and are generally considered inappropriate in a news article.

The often superficial subediting of students' articles has a far-reaching effect. The subediting of their articles is perhaps the most direct and impactful education the journalism students receive from their year-long programmes. However, learning through subediting has some major intrinsic flaws. A large number of articles facing the tutor contribute, among other factors, to a tendency to do a fairly perfunctory job of subediting. More fundamentally, subediting merely addresses what the student has already written rather than encouraging understanding and reflection of the deeper issues, such as the student's writing style, choice of material or understanding of key news values. Although Casper's story was checked by a tutor, the tutor made no comment on its focus, providing evidence that the nature of learning by doing and individual subediting of news stories often leads to a quick skimming of the surface looking for obvious errors and a failure to see the more major ones.

The lack of discussion and training on news values is particularly important to this case study. Casper seems to have been conscious that the fact the artist was the daughter of New Zealand's most famous man was potentially the main point of interest to readers. In his second sentence, he showed he understood the importance of using name recognition to draw the reader in by highlighting the secondary role of the eminent artist, Rita Angus. But, out of his own ethical and personal considerations he had deliberately not mentioned the family connection of Sarah Hillary until S17 and at no point made it specific who her famous father was.

He reflected:

I was told by two people that she was Sir Edmund Hillary's daughter – two close friends who were both at the opening. I didn't actually confirm that with Sarah Hillary, mainly because I thought that she would ... she might be reluctant for that

to be in the story – that she was Sir Edmund Hillary’s daughter and I decided to put it in to strike a balance, but on the second page. I didn’t see the need to put his name there, I just put “her famous father”. I thought that would be interesting for people.

While Casper’s ethical concerns can be praised, the fact that he did not ask the artist herself whether she objected to the mention of her father again suggests a failure to recognise the importance of news values. Casper reflected he had not asked her opinion because:

It actually didn’t pass my mind. Partly because my strong suspicion was that she wouldn’t be comfortable with that and even if she’d come out and said, “oh yeah, that’s fine,” I don’t think I would’ve been comfortable.

This decision directly impacted upon the story’s newsworthiness. Casper was informed by the editor of the *City Life* newspaper that the paper wanted to publish the story but the focus needed to be changed, similarly to the professional version, to focus on Sarah Hillary as someone made newsworthy not by her art, but her father. The newspaper also wanted to include a photo of her. Casper withdrew the story from publication believing this treatment would turn it into a “celebrity” story:

I said I wasn’t comfortable with that and they said to me, “We’re in the business of journalism and we’ve got to give our readers what they want” and I said, “There was a line of how much you could sex up a story and how much you could turn it into a celebrity story and I thought that making a big deal out of this would be crossing the line.” She responded with “What are they teaching you at journalism school?” I don’t know what she meant by that (Casper, November 7, 2003).

This case study shows how journalists who do take an independent approach can clash with the demands and values of the news industry and their dominant concern over newsworthiness. But it also raised the issue of whether Casper’s journalism education had sufficiently prepared him for these dilemmas or to understand the role of news values. He had chosen a subject with ostensibly low news values, had submitted what he realised himself was a long and not particularly newsworthy story and had downplayed the angle most likely to increase these values. He had not worked seriously on how he could increase its newsworthiness, either by discussing with Sarah Hillary herself what she was comfortable with, or by exploring other possibilities. The result was a story of little publication value.

By the end of his journalism education, Casper's prospects to fulfil his clear potential to be a professional, skilful and innovative journalist remained somewhat unclear. Through his own attributes rather than the training he received, he had demonstrated a talent to write clearly and according to the dictates of the news media tradition while showing initiative and independence. But the lack of explicit consideration of how to deal maturely and innovatively with the news media's understanding of news values suggested that this potentially talented journalist had not been well-prepared to face the realities of life as a professional journalist.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has previewed New Zealand journalism education through the case studies of two students, combining a discourse analysis of their early, mid-year and end-of-year stories and a retrospective protocol analysis based on their reflections regarding their writing. Combining these two methods has allowed a deeper picture of New Zealand journalism education to emerge. These two case studies represent the two poles of students entering journalism training institutions both in terms of age, educational background, previous experience and also in terms of writing ability, independence and innovation and understanding of the news media. Despite this, they received essentially the same training with a focus on learning the mechanical structures of the inverted-pyramid method but not its deeper requirements.

They appeared to have received little encouragement to think critically or come to a deeper understanding of the news media or the news-writing process. The most important part of their formal training revolved around learning by doing, by writing a large number of stories during the year which were then subedited without much comment by their tutors and submitted to news media publications. Particularly lacking was any encouragement to reflect on their writing and lexical choice or on how to be both an innovative and ethical journalist while having a realistic understanding of news values.

It would seem fair to argue that these two journalism students had not been prepared for such a difficult task. Vin's ability to write according to the dictates and structure of the journalism industry had improved considerably but still was short of a professional

standard. Her training had been based around writing according to instruction and rote and was notably lacking in creativity or critical thought. There had been little encouragement of self-regulated learning and self-evaluation strategies to encourage reflection (Pintrich, 1995). Further discussion and teaching on news values and on the need for curiosity and creativity could have been especially beneficial.

Casper's stories suggested the same deficiencies in journalism education seen from a different angle. He was already, at the start of his journalism training, a talented and competent writer, able to independently evaluate his stories, skilled and reflective at choosing his words. However, his progress during the year was not as great as could have been expected or hoped for. The focus on learning by doing and recreating the pressures of the newsroom, including no in-built mechanism for reflection on stories, saw his focus on lexical choice diminish, if anything. His story in the middle of the year showed an impressive sense of journalistic initiative but the pressures and excitement of a breaking story overshadowed his ability to write carefully and enhance its inherent news values.

His story at the end of the year was similarly influenced by a training programme that cast students out to the realities of the news media without first preparing them to think carefully about how they would deal with some of these pressures. Casper was not prepared or assisted to respond successfully to the requirement to write newsworthy stories without sacrificing his own values.

The experiences of Casper and Vin suggest the focus on learning by doing prepares journalism students for a superficial understanding of the inverted- pyramid model but crucial, related issues such as news values are not taught with any rigour. These case studies support Sheridan Burns's (2001) argument that, with the changing nature of media practice, it makes no sense to teach journalism as a set of skills, because the required skills are evolving all the time. Moreover, the research that shows the skills in complex tasks with definite social components, such as writing, are usually best taught through a combination of training procedures, involving both whole tasks and training in individual components (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996), has yet to have much influence in New Zealand journalism education.

The following chapter, Chapter 6, will illustrate in more detail the difficulties the students face at the beginning of their year of journalism education.

6 First Steps

.... almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts (Lamott, 1994, p. 7).

6.1 Prologue: The beginning of the year

Late in February, 2003, 20 students, average age mid-twenties, are beginning a journalism course which they hope will enable them to be employed as professional journalists by December. They receive some lessons on how to gather and write their first news story and learn the story should tell “who”, “what”, “where”, “when”, “why”, and “how”. They pick up journalists’ “jargon” easily and quickly understand they will not be writing a news article but a “story” which will have an “intro” or lead, not a first sentence. They also learn that a news story is structured in an inverted pyramid, starting with an attention-grabbing event in the lead sentence. To provide the facts, they need a “source”, possibly even two sources, and will need to glean a “quote” from this person, usually someone holding a public office. The story is due on Friday. By Thursday, despite their best efforts, the official has not returned their phone calls. Frantic, they then try to call someone else. At the last minute, the call is returned and the second person also phones back. The students ask a few questions, finding they now have a jumble of notes to decipher – their shorthand is not yet good enough to get everything written down. They do the best they can to write in coherent fashion, following the “inverted pyramid” in the time available, so that on the following day they can see their tutor clutching their finished “story”.

6.2 Introduction

This prologue describes how students typically wrote their first news stories, using an approach described as “learning by doing” (see Chapter 3). For this study, the students were not given any specific instructions other than “to write a news story in the usual way”, in order to make these stories as close to others they wrote for class assignments. The philosophy for journalism education adopted by all New Zealand tertiary institutions is that the more stories students write, the greater their progress will be towards becoming competent and employable professional journalists. They are briefly taught the fundamentals of writing a news story according to the journalism unit

standards, with a heavy emphasis on the mechanical requirements of the inverted pyramid, and then practise their skills, writing up to 20 news stories during the year. The feedback they receive on these stories tends to be specific and practical: their tutor “subs” the story according to the expectations of what constitutes a news story and rarely has the time to encourage deeper discussion of broader issues.

In general, the journalism programme, as defined by the unit standards (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997), avoids critical discussion about the issues facing the media industry or about the news-writing genre. Important issues such as the kind of language that should be used and what constitutes a newsworthy story are not discussed in any depth. Nor is there any explicit discussion on how to fulfil some of the loftier ideals of most journalists, such as the desire to be an independent and important teller of the truth, while informing, educating and capturing the attention of the reader. Nor, given that journalists are expected to know how to write, is there much discussion on how they can improve, self-evaluate and understand their own writing.

Chapter 5 served as a preview to this chapter, raising the possibility that there were deficiencies in New Zealand journalism education because of this focus on learning by doing. It discussed two case studies that could be considered as at either end of the spectrum of New Zealand journalism students in terms of age, previous experience, education and ability. One was a 20-year old female studying at a polytechnic and the other a mature 26-year-old male law graduate at a university. Both students, over the course of their year of journalism studies including extensive writing for publication and work experience, showed a growing ability to write stories according to the formula prescribed by the mainstream media. But neither of the students seemed to have been taught much about news values, with serious consequences for the effectiveness of their stories. Methods for contemplating and improving their writing styles were similarly lacking. Most noticeably, the two case-study students did not seem to have been encouraged to reach a mature understanding of how to be independent and innovative journalists while working under the stresses and confines of the media industry.

To explore this further, the following three chapters will investigate whether these case studies represent the wider problems of New Zealand journalism education. Each chapter will examine the news stories submitted by the total group of 20 students at three points during their training. This chapter discusses the students’ news writing as

they began their journalism training while Chapter 7 discusses the middle of the year, after they had been on work experience. Chapter 8 studies the students' stories at the end of the year, when they were about to seek jobs as journalists. Chapter 9 is the last of the chapters presenting the findings of this study. It moves from primarily discussing their news stories to more fully exploring the cognitive process: it analyses the students' reflections or retrospective protocols and then compares their reflections with what they wrote.

A discourse analysis compared their stories with a version written by an experienced journalist to help illustrate whether the students were meeting professional standards and expectations, (see Chapter 4 for a description of the method). It quickly became apparent that the students' stories, written early in their training, bore little resemblance to a news story that a professional journalist would write (see Appendix II for samples of both students' and professional stories). The closer analysis that follows will show their shortcomings in terms of the students' understanding of the requirements and recommendations of the inverted pyramid, despite the fact that this method forms the basis of the education they receive. It will suggest that the students had little grasp at this stage of their training of the importance of news values and how to create a story that grabs the readers' attention. This reflects the tendency of journalism education in New Zealand to avoid explicit discussion on news values and other issues that revolve around gaining a more reflective understanding of the nature of news writing. The analysis suggests that journalism students at an early stage in their education have a long way to go before they reach the standards expected of them by the media industry or fill the broader aims of a professional journalist.

All students selected for themselves a pseudonym to preserve their anonymity, starting with the first letter of their first names. Place names, names of the people they drew their information from and newspaper names have also been changed for the same reason. However, easily identifiable places which are integral to the story, for example, the Kelburn cable car (see Chapter 5) and people, for example, Sir Edmund Hillary (see Chapter 5) are not altered. In the examples in the text, the lead sentence uses the student's name and sentences are referred to as S2, S3, S4. The professional journalist's changes are labelled "Professional version" while the sentences that follow are called P2, P3, P4.

The work of a number of theorists (Bell, 1991, 1998; van Dijk, 1986, 1988; van Leeuwen, 1987) informed the analysis, taking into account the highly structured nature of news writing. News stories are generally about past events of a public nature and often feature well-known political or social actors. To emphasise their factual nature, they use official, well-known and credible sources – for example police and public officials (van Dijk, 1988). Taking into account these theorists, I developed an appropriate model for a close analysis of the students' stories. Their stories were assessed in terms of the following categories:

- News values
- Lead sentences
- Lexical choice
- Order
- Background and additional information
- Syntax.

To fill in the details of what the students were taught, I used information received from a preliminary study of the 11 journalism training programmes in Chapter 5 and from their reflections in Chapter 9, the standard textbook, *Intro* (Tucker, 1999b), the unit standards (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997) and my own experience. For example, while there are numerous possibilities for what events are chosen to become news stories, a set of common values is central (Bell, 1991; van Dijk, 1988). Yet news values did not register as an important component of the students' first stories. The first section discusses this. The next section, 6.4: Lead sentences, describes the importance of the first sentence in a news story in getting the most out of the text by enhancing its news values. Section 6.5 discusses the students' choice of words while 6.6: Order, considers the role that the order or structure plays in enhancing the story. Adding background or additional contextual information is discussed in section 6.7. It is a method of linking the stories with past news stories, again emphasising the inherent news values. In order to write the shortest possible news story with the maximum effect, news stories should be written succinctly and follow a main theme. The way in which the students' news stories were shortened by at least one third is considered in 6.8, syntax. Section 6.9 is the conclusion, summarising the main points. Chapters 7 and 8 will also follow this pattern.

6.3 News values

The most noticeable weakness of the students' stories at this stage of their training was the lack of understanding of news values and their importance in giving a story impact and making it worthy of publication. Chapter 2 discussed more fully the place of news values in theories of journalism, including the essential work of Galtung and Ruge (1965), and the 12 news values that influence the media's selection of news and make a story newsworthy by appealing to the reader. The factors are negativity, unambiguity, frequency, threshold, meaningfulness, consonance, predictability, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, elite people, and elite nations. But not all these values were applicable for this study. The newsworthiness of "elite nations", for example, had little relevance as the students were generally writing for local newspapers about local events.

However, the concept of news values has proven to be a powerful and enduring method of understanding what makes news. More recent academic studies have also continued to apply the concept and have updated and added to what constitutes a news value (Bell, 1991; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Masterton, 1998; McGregor, 2002; Morrison, 1999; Robie, 2001; Vines, 2001). It may be more than 40 years since Galtung and Ruge first argued that the more an event is described through the criteria of news values, the greater its impact on the reader, but news values continue to have a deep relevance to modern journalism and should be a significant part of every journalism student's training.

Yet news values have largely been ignored in New Zealand journalism education. Most journalism educators, who are primarily journalists rather than academics, seem unaware or uninterested in the theoretical underpinning of news values as a subject for their students. There seems to be minimal, discussion on news values. The most important and thorough prescription of what students are expected to learn, the 146-page unit standards document does not contain a single mention of news values (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997). Nor does Morrison (1999) attempt a definition in the textbook widely used by New Zealand students, *Intro*. He does describe such factors as novelty, relevance and conflict but argues that news is "no more than what is printed or broadcast by the news media" (p. 48).

The reason for this lack of education on news values seems to be that New Zealand journalism education is defined by journalists and the media industry who share a common suspicion of the usefulness of “academic theorising”, meaning they are reluctant to accept explicit categorisations of news values. As McGregor (2002) states:

Journalists do not adhere to formal codes of newsworthiness that can be identified and promulgated and therefore “learnt” by the public. Instead the informal codes of what constitutes a good story is (sic) part of newsroom initiation and socialisation (McGregor, 2002, p. 114).

Rather, journalists expect to know by experience and intuition what makes news and criteria only reinforce that knowledge (Masterton, 1998). From a journalist’s viewpoint, this intuitive feeling could be called a “nose for news”, a hunch, a sixth sense or simply, as veteran journalist and journalism educator Geoff Black used to tell his students: “News is what the chief reporter tells you it is” (Tucker, 1992, p. 26).

The lack of explicit discussion on news values has a detrimental effect on the quality of the work produced by New Zealand journalism students and their understanding of the news media. Judging by the students’ comments (see Chapter 9), it would seem that few of them seriously and consciously considered news values when writing their stories. And their early stories reflected this lack of education and understanding. A dominant finding of this chapter focusing on the early stories of the sample group of 20 students was the failure of the students to accentuate the news values in their stories. This was the major reason why most of the students’ early news stories fell short of professional standards, as shown by a comparison with the versions prepared by an experienced journalist. As will be discussed below, this lack of understanding of news values was particularly apparent in specific categories such as lead sentences, lexical choice, order and, to a lesser degree, in syntax and a failure to provide valuable additional or background material.

This chapter will show that the overall result of this misunderstanding about the importance of news values is that many students’ early stories lack impact and appeal for the reader. Many of the subjects chosen were not interesting, reflecting not only the difficulties of writing stories for local newspapers but also that the students were not encouraged to be innovative, ambitious or individual in their choice of subjects. The students also tended not to make the best possible use of the material contained within

their stories, illustrating that, at this stage of their training, they might have been taught the mechanical necessities of the inverted pyramid but they lacked a grasp of the more crucial requirements of how to structure such a story and enhance the news values. The key to writing entertaining, interesting, inverted pyramid news stories is to enhance the news values. The failure to teach students this undermines journalism education.

In this chapter it was found that some news values were more relevant to the news stories that students wrote than others. I therefore merged the various lists of news values produced by theorists and established one list that that was appropriate for students at the beginning of their careers in journalism. These news values are negativity, significance, proximity, immediacy, prominence, human interest, clarity and continuity. This list is not exclusive but these eight elements provide a useful tool for analysing the students' news writing. They are explained below:

- **Negativity:** Negativity is the most predominant news value or element. Negative stories can be about accidents, fires, crime, death, controversy or conflict. The students were not writing for daily newspapers but for non-daily or community newspapers. Vines (2001) contends these newspapers have a different set of news values from the daily media, aimed at communal rites. However, this study found the students' news stories, when rewritten by an experienced journalist, did contain negativity.
- **Significance:** In this study, "significance" included a number of other values which are seen separately by Galtung and Ruge (1965). Firstly, it covers what they describe as "threshold", "superlativeness" or "amplitude". The significance of an event is based on how large or how important it is. "Meaningfulness", which can be defined as both cultural and geographic relevance, is also a part of significance. For example, a terrorist attack in Bali with 192 killed, three of them New Zealanders¹⁵ and many others Australians, is seen in this country as a more newsworthy event than a similar event in Iraq with the same number killed, because it is more significant to the readership. The significance of a story also relates to the readership of the newspaper. A story about a stadium in

¹⁵ One of the students in the study wrote a news story a year after this 2002 event about the long-term effects on the New Zealand former first secretary's health. See Chapter 7.

Haworth has more significance for the residents of that town than anywhere else in the country.

- **Proximity:** The importance of proximity was a concept the students easily related to. “Proximity” refers to where something happened and is an essential part of the journalists’ five “w’s” and an “h”, “where”, “who”, “what”, “when”, “why” and “how”. Increasing globalisation might indicate that the importance of proximity in a news story should be decreasing. Group editor of Auckland’s largest community newspaper chain David Kemeys agrees with this. The word “local” is not used in his newspapers because it is meaningless, when the papers circulate to 100,000 homes (D. Kemeys, personal communication, September 9, 2005). Griffin (2002) argues a contrary view. He contends the importance of “where” has increased, as in a changing world people more easily identify with the local, rather than the national or global.
- **Immediacy:** Immediacy is also an important news value, underlining the “new” in “news”. It also relates to “recency” (Bell, 1983), meaning the best news is something which has only just happened, and “frequency”, how well the story conforms with the news production cycle (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Students generally learn to write in the present tense and use the attribution “he says” to gain immediacy.
- **Prominence:** Writing a news story about an elite nation or an elite person was not usual for the students, so that it was more appropriate to describe this news value as “prominence”, referring to well-known people and events. Because their stories were essentially small-town news, the students rarely tried to talk to anyone who might be described as “elite”. Instead they used well-known persons who had some authority in their community as sources for their stories.
- **Human Interest:** The news value of human interest is also referred to as “personalisation”. Journalism students are taught that people are more interested in reading about other people than they are institutions. Thus a story about a rise in city rates is more interesting if it is about the plight of a person facing increased charges, rather than about the council voting to increase the rates.
- **Clarity:** The more clear-cut or unambiguous a story is, the more it is favoured as a news story. This news value is described as “clarity”.

- **Continuity:** Once something is news, it tends to remain news. The students appeared unaware of this at first as all of the five news stories in Table 6.1 (see below) required background or additional information to provide the context. This is discussed in section 6.7. Inserting this material serves two functions: it gives the story clarity and links it to other stories that have been published. The story then has the advantage of tapping into the news values expressed in the previously published items. One outcome is that the current news story could often be “framed” in the same way as the previous ones. Gitlin (1980) defines frames as “persistent selection, emphasis and exclusion” (p.7). He argues that “frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely [and to] package the information for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980, p.7).

This section has described the importance of news values, as indicative of a story’s newsworthiness. The problems the students had in writing opening or lead sentences with strong news values are discussed next.

6.4 Lead Sentences

The lead sentence is pivotal to enhancing the news values of a story and to fulfilling the requirements of the inverted pyramid. The importance of the lead sentence or “intro” is recognised in New Zealand journalism education. Students learn that if a reader is not interested or “grabbed” by the first sentence it is unlikely they will continue to read on. It would appear that in most journalism institutions in New Zealand, the students are told that the lead sentence should express the most important topic or theme of the story and also at least some of the journalists’ “who”, “what”, “where”, “when”, “why” and “how”. These suggestions are broadly in line with the research by van Dijk (1986, 1988) and Bell (1991, 1998) who have refined the requirements for a lead sentence. Their work has found that lead sentences usually have a dual purpose. Firstly, they act as a summary of the story and also begin to tell the story, acting as a springboard for what follows (van Dijk, 1988). Secondly, they also serve as a lens through which the point of the story is focused or angled, made more colourful and magnified, thus enhancing the news values within. A lead sentence usually contains two events, and starts with the actor (Bell, 1991).

However, most of the students proved unable in their early stories to put into practice these requirements and to write strong opening sentences. The reason was not that they failed to pay any attention to the lead. On the contrary, the students' own comments (see Chapter 9) suggested that they spent a large amount of time working on the opening sentence and found it the biggest hurdle in writing the story. Their problems seemed to stem from two major shortcomings in New Zealand journalism education. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, the students were largely unaware of news values so were unable to infuse their opening sentence with the necessary values. Secondly, the students were not taught how to organise and plan their stories in advance – for instance, by ranking their facts in order of importance, allowing them to more easily identify the critical point that the story should lead with. This deficiency seems to come from the fact that journalism education is dominated by learning by doing and by the traditional practices of journalists. Pitts (1982) has found that most experienced news writers do not plan or organise their stories in advance. Instead they spend a third to a quarter of their time writing their lead sentences. For an experienced journalist, this method may work and once a lead is in place, the structure may become clear. However, for some of the journalism students, their inability to identify a suitable lead had negative ramifications for the rest of their story. An unplanned and inappropriate opening sentence generally resulted in confusion over the focus and order of the rest of the story (see section 6.5: Order).

The problems the students had in writing their opening sentences are shown in Table 6.1 (below), which compares the lead sentences of five selected students and the lead sentences produced by the professional journalist. The five original stories as they were written and the professional version are included in Appendix II. From the left, the first column contains the students' names. In the second column are the students' original lead sentences. The professionally rewritten lead sentences are in the third column. The news values that were enhanced or added by the journalist are listed in the fourth column, starting with the most important one, with a brief description of how these changes were made in the fifth column.

Table 6.1 Changes made to five students' early stories

| Name | Student's lead | Professional lead | New news values | Description of changes |
|-----------|--|---|---|---|
| Brendan | It is that time of the year again, the annual school gala. | More than \$11,000 raised at a Totara school fair on Saturday will go towards replacing resources destroyed in a recent arson attack. | Negativity Significance Proximity Immediacy Clarity Continuity | Narrative start rewritten. Negativity, proximity gained by replacing lead with S16. |
| Henreitta | Haworth Stadium will host its first ever music concert this Saturday when Summer Jam arrives in Haworth. | New Zealand hip hop artists Nesian Mystik will be among the bands performing at the multi-million dollar Haworth Stadium for its first- ever rock festival on Saturday. | Prominence Negativity Significance Human interest Clarity Continuity | Order changed to enhance prominence of artists. Negativity enhanced by referring to cost of stadium. |
| Kathie | Ashwood City Council building inspectors are trying to toughen up on bar safety in the wake of the Rhode Island night club fire. | Building inspectors are clamping down on Ashwood bars, in the wake of the Rhode Island night club fire. | Human interest Negativity Significance Clarity Continuity | Human interest increased through deletion of Ashwood City Council in opening sentence, negativity increased by deleting "trying to". |
| Mavis | Mayfair District Council has issued a pamphlet to households in the Mayfair district in response to recent community concern regarding safety around dogs. | Mayfair children and adults are being warned not to approach strange dogs, as attacks continue. | Negativity Significance Immediacy Proximity Human interest Clarity Continuity | Human interest increased through deletion of Mayfair District Council. Repetition removed. Jargon words "community concern", "safety", deleted. Vivid words added: "warned", "attacks". |
| Sam | A terse new fine (sic) for bus lane drivers has increased bus reliability during peak rush hour traffic. | Up to 70 motorists a day have been caught driving in bus-only lanes, since the start of a new campaign. | Negativity Significance Human interest Clarity Continuity | Order changed. Jargon replaced, "bus reliability". Negativity increased: "caught". |

Four of the five leads required radical changes to add news values and give the stories greater newsworthiness and impact. Even Kathie's lead, the only one of the five to show some appreciation of this key element, still needed its newsworthiness enhanced. Of all the 20 news stories submitted by the students, the professional journalist felt the need to substantially change 16 lead sentences and make minor changes to the other four.

Kathie's lead (see Table 6.1) was an example of a sentence that showed understanding of the requirements of a lead. Her original story and the professional version are attached in Appendix II. She wrote: "Ashwood City Council building inspectors are trying to toughen up on bar safety in the wake of the Rhode Island night club fire."¹⁶ Her sentence started with the actors, the "who" of the story, the council building inspectors, contained the "what", trying to toughen up on bar safety, and "where" it was happening, in Ashwood. As is usual with news stories, the story focused on two events, one caused by the other: the council officers were inspecting bars more regularly to ensure they were safe because of the Rhode Island night club fire. "In the wake of" was used to link the two events, instead of the more usual "as" or "after". The minor changes made in the professional version enhanced the human interest by starting with "Building inspectors" rather than "Ashwood City Council". Kathie also used "trying to toughen up" and this was made more vivid (Kennamer, 1988) by replacing it with the more explicit "clamping down". The vague nominalisation, "bar safety", was also replaced by the simple word, "bars", and the insertion of "Ashwood" emphasised that the story was happening close to home. The professional version read: "Building inspectors are clamping down on Ashwood bars, in the wake of the Rhode Island nightclub fire."

Brendan's news story (see Table 6.1) reflected his failure to understand news values, as well as some confusion over what genre of story he was writing. He thought he was writing a descriptive feature story, without seeming to understand that the subject he had chosen, local school fairs, was unlikely to merit publication and was better suited for a news story in a community newspaper. He talked to three school principals and wrote a story of more than 540 words. His style was also inappropriate for a news story.

¹⁶ In February, 2003, a nightclub fire in West Warwick, Rhode Island in the United States killed more than 100 people. The fire was caused by pyrotechnics which were part of a nightclub act. Illegal flammable foam had been sprayed to cut noise. The nightclub did not have sprinklers installed.

He started his story in typical narrative fashion: “It is that time of the year again, the annual school gala” and continued in the same style: “But behind the happy façade of candy floss and bouncy castles there is often a serious economic agenda. For many West Ashwood schools the success of their galas is vital if they are to fund-raise enough money for necessary developments …” While this opening may be appropriate for a feature story, the most powerful news stories are usually about recent events and written in news language to create a sense of excitement or immediacy.

The professional version showed how an effective lead needs to be based around strong news values. A stronger theme for a lead was found buried within the body of the story. In his 16th sentence Brendan wrote: “Unfortunately all of the \$11,300 raised from the fair is going towards replacing the resources that were destroyed in an arson attack in February” but he did not recognise the inherent newsworthiness of this sentence. The professional version further enhanced the immediacy by inserting when the fair was being held, “Saturday”, and the value of proximity, important for community newspapers, by adding where it would be held, “Totara”. Removing the word “unfortunately” allowed the lead to fulfil the preference in news stories for impersonal and seemingly objective language, while interest was also increased by emphasising the amount of money lost through inserting “more than”. The new lead had other news values such as clarity and continuity as the reference to arson attacks on schools linked it to other newspaper stories. The lead sentence then read: “More than \$11,000 raised at a Totara school fair on Saturday will go towards replacing resources destroyed in a recent arson attack.”

In all, the professional journalist found the alternative lead hidden in the body of the story in eight of the students’ stories. Henreitta’s opening sentence was another example. Her story (see Table 6.1) also reflected her lack of understanding of news values and the failure to carry out a key requirement of the inverted pyramid: the need to highlight the most important information that appealed to the reader in the opening sentence. The story was about the first-ever music concert at the Haworth Stadium and its main news value should have been prominence, the focus on well-known people. However, instead of leading with the fact that popular international and New Zealand bands were performing at the concert, she buried this information at the end of the story. Her lead lacked interest or excitement: “Haworth Stadium will host its first ever music

concert this Saturday when Summer Jam arrives in Haworth.” More education on news values might have inspired a lead similar to that of the professional version, which emphasised the values of prominence while foreshadowing negative factors by describing the stadium as the “multi-million dollar Haworth Stadium”. This alerted the reader to the earlier controversy over the cost over-runs in building the stadium. The professional lead read: “New Zealand hip hop artists Nesian Mystik will be among the bands performing at the multi-million dollar Haworth Stadium for its first-ever rock festival on Saturday.” This also clarified the sentence by removing the unexplained “Summer Jam”.

Lack of education and understanding about news values was also suggested by the failure to include the most common and arguably most important element in news stories: negativity. Most news stories are about negativity, about conflict, controversy, accidents, crime and death. The students were usually writing for non-daily or community newspapers. Vines (2001) argues that these newspapers do not rank negativity as the main news value, because they focus on stories that create a sense of communal cohesion. However, negativity remains a major news value in community papers. The students’ articles were often about negative subjects but their lead sentences did not always reflect this. Instead they used language more appropriate for promotional material, seeking to create desire or praise (Ungerer, 2004). The promotional genre is discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

Three of the students’ lead sentences were classified as having been written not in the news genre but in the promotional genre. Sam’s lead sentence was an example of this. She wrote: “A terse new fine for bus lane drivers has increased bus reliability during peak rush hour traffic”. This sentence praised the “increased bus reliability”. By contrast, the professional journalist, seeking to enhance the news values of negativity and immediacy, wrote: “Up to 70 motorists a day have been caught driving in bus-only lanes, since the start of a new campaign.” Inserting the numbers of motorists at the beginning also increased its significance and human interest (see Table 6.1).

While many of the students seemed insufficiently informed of the importance of news values, at least a few appeared to have made a conscious decision not to embrace those they were unhappy about. In the previous chapter, Casper’s unease with the news value of prominence and the use of celebrities to attract a reader to a more serious subject

could be seen. Mavis (see Table 6.1), as shown by her taped reflections on the decisions that shaped her writing, was aware that the most eye-catching lead for her story would be to focus on the negativity and human interest of dogs attacking local children. She appeared uneasy that a number of published stories had already concentrated, in what she considered to be a sensationalist way, on the series of dog attacks in the area. Instead, she saw her story as a community service and wanted to focus on the educational, rather than the sensational, element.

Her lead read: “Mayfair District Council has issued a pamphlet to households in the Mayfair district in response to recent community concern regarding safety around dogs.” In this way, Mavis was seeking to fulfil a part of the journalist’s ideal: to write stories for the public good rather than from the demands of public interest. New Zealand journalism students receive little or no encouragement to think about how to deal with the tension between the journalist’s vision and the reality of the media industry’s demand for stories. More discussion and critical analysis in their training might have seen Casper and Mavis able to maintain their ideals while still writing interesting, publishable news stories with news values. The lack of this training might have contributed to these two students making somewhat self-defeating choices. In Casper’s case he maintained his principles but failed to write a publishable story. Similarly, Mavis’s lead was lacking in news values and was unnecessarily dull and impersonal in language and subject. Her lead lacked immediacy and was written in the past tense and used official, bureaucratic language with phrases such as the “Mayfair District Council”, “community concern” and “safety around dogs”.

The importance of news values, understanding the news-writing genre and the expectations of the news media are vividly shown by contrasting Mavis’s version with one written by the experienced journalist: “Mayfair children and adults are being warned not to approach strange dogs, as attacks continue.” Certainly, the professional lead enhanced the negative, with its warning to parents about attacks on children by dogs and the replacement of the dry, official discourse with the more evocative, emotional language such as “warned”, “attacks”, and “strange dogs”. This version, compared to Mavis’s, was also more sharply written and its lexical choice more appropriate, not only to the demands of the news industry, but also the need to write strong, interesting leads and stories.

In short, the opening sentences of the students' stories reflected an education lacking sufficient focus on the importance of news values and how to apply them creatively, successfully and with integrity. Moreover, they also revealed a deeper problem affecting New Zealand journalism education and its students – the lack of a mature and critical understanding of the news media and the news genre.

6.5 Lexical choice

In *News Culture*, Allan (1999) argues that journalists do not construct a “neutral reflection of the world” (p. 87). Instead, they create, by using various conventions and rules, a “commonsense” view through which social life is to be interpreted. A newspaper account, far from simply reflecting the reality of a news event, actually works to construct a codified definition of what should count as the reality of the event. The students, rather than being aware of this, showed failure to understand the power of the lexical choices they made. This section discusses the students' choice of words in their news stories, considering particularly the changes the journalist made. Section 6.5.1 discusses news language, considering vivid words and the use of numbers and other strategies for enhancement used by journalists. Section 6.5.2 covers Fairclough's (1995) concept of intertextuality.

6.5.1 News language

Bell (1991) contends that the news media form a “kind of speech community producing their own variety of language” (p. 2). But in analysing the students' first news stories, I found they had little awareness of how the language used by journalists differed from writing for other genres. This was evident from the vocabulary they used in their stories and also from their reflections that followed the writing of these stories. Most of the students said that they had used formal or informal language or were writing for a particular newspaper, but seemed to have no concept what these terms meant. It appeared that in all but a few cases (see Chapter 5), language was not a conscious consideration for them. This seemed to be the result of “learning by doing”. Students are expected to learn the skills of news writing by practising their writing and having it corrected by a tutor. There are so many factors for them to remember when they are

novices that they may suffer from “overload” (Couzijn, 1999) and be more fixed on writing the story and the imminent deadline than on their choice of words.

These problems were accentuated by the fact that New Zealand journalism institutions devoted little time to teaching their students about news language and lexical choice or persuading them to critically ponder the words they used. In particular, it seemed that students were not provided with specific advice on how to advance their news values through lexical choice. According to the standard New Zealand text book, *Intro*, the convention in journalism schools is to use words in an impartial way to help achieve objectivity. It presents a highly arguable and distinctly old-fashioned view of news language, seemingly unaware of and at odds with important academic theories on news language. It calls non-objective words “emotive-diction words” or words that arouse emotion in the minds of the reader and describes how they give a heightened and sometimes “spurious importance to a story” (Tucker, 1999a, p. 118).

It is unnecessary to consult academic theories on how news language creates reality to show the inaccuracy of such a description and how it does not prepares journalism students for the reality of news writing. A study of any newspaper will show how news stories rely on non-objective language not just to tell the story, but to tell it effectively, increase the entertainment value and to sell newspapers. Using a page one story in the *New Zealand Herald*, April 11, 2006, as an example, at least eight non-objective words were found including “high-tech thieves”, “plunder”, “admitted”, “latest scam”, “netted”, “undetected”, “blamed” and “skimmed”.

Using and understanding “vivid” language is central to news writing. As Kennamer (1988) points out, citing cognitive psychologists Nisbet and Ross, some information is by nature more “vivid” and has the ability to attract or demand more attention, than other information (p.109). He argues journalists are in the business of reporting that which is vivid. Their style of writing and presentation is designed to enhance the vividness of the information being processed, by the use of active and punchy verbs, “colour” words and short sentences.

At the beginning of the year, the students clearly did not adequately understand how they could use words to heighten news values and increase the vividness of their stories. Indeed, some might have been labouring under the illusion that news stories should

steer away from such words in favour of a mythical and uninteresting “objectivity”. The lack of understanding of news language can be clearly seen in a comparison between the lexical choice of the students and the professional versions of the same article. The professional consistently used more appropriate news language to enhance the news values such as negativity. For example, she extracted news-weak language and instead replaced it in Brendan’s lead sentence with the words “destroyed” and “arson attack”, in Kathie’s “clamping down” and “night club fire”, in Mavis’s “warned”, “strange dogs” and “attacks” and in Sam’s “caught”(see Table 6.1).

The first three sentences of Jamima’s story clearly illustrate how the students’ lack of understanding of the appropriate lexical choice for news stories contributed to the stories appearing flat and uninteresting. The lack of vivid words in Jamima’s version is compared with the far more powerful use of language in the professional version.

| Jamima | Professional version |
|--|--|
| <p>S1: The end of ‘O Week’ saw police distributing spiking awareness pamphlets in Haworth pubs.</p> <p>S2: The promotion comes after the recent rape cases in Haworth city, where victims had been at bars beforehand.</p> <p>S3: The informative pamphlet entitled ‘Drink Spiking: Watch your friends’ was handed out to women on the drinking-scene on Saturday night.</p> | <p>P1: Police are warning young women to guard against drink-spiking in Haworth pubs after seven complaints of rape and sexual assault in the city.</p> <p>P2: Victims of drink-spiking amongst women aged 13 to 19 have trebled in the city in the last year.</p> <p>P3: Pamphlets were handed out and posters pinned up on pub toilet walls on Saturday night as part of the campaign to alert young women to the danger their drinks could be spiked with drugs such as speed or “p”.</p> |

The use of vivid words turned Jamima’s essentially dull but worthy story into a more gripping and publishable piece strong in news values, especially negativity. By starting the lead sentence with the word “police” and including mention of the rape cases, a greater sense of drama and urgency was added. A similar effect was achieved in the second sentence by starting with the word “victims”. Mentioning the drugs “speed” and “p” added to an imagery of crime and fear and linked the story to the many news reports

at that time regarding the allegedly terrible effects of these drugs¹⁷. Jamima's lexical choice by contrast was noticeable only for its blandness.

The students' early news stories were full of similar examples of news-weak vocabulary. Unnecessary repetition of uninteresting words was common. Both Betty and Martha used the word "programme" four times in their stories. The dull beginning of Martha's story on biscuits sold by Girl Guides was marked by the repetition of both "finance" and "activities" in her first two sentences, with the addition of the word "programme" and "units". She wrote:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Martha | S1: Eltham Girl Guide units sold 500 boxes of biscuits and raised about |
| S1 | \$2750 to finance their activities in this March's annual sale. |
| S2 | All the money they raise is used within the district to finance programmes and activities, says Guide leader Claire Lowe. |

The use of stronger news language by the professional journalist helped make this unpromising topic somewhat more interesting. The professional version read:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P1 | Fifty years ago, girl guides used to bake their own biscuits to sell door-to-door. |
|-----------|--|

The more vivid verb "to fund" replaced "to finance", and the adjective "many" was also added. Although it is sometimes claimed that journalists should avoid adjectives in the interests of objectivity, in practice, they are often used to enhance the news values and enliven the story. The sentence then read:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P5 | Last week 170 Eltham 5 to 18-year-olds sold more than 5000 packets of biscuits to fund their many activities. |
|-----------|---|

The use of numbers was another important part of news language glossed over in New Zealand journalism institutions. High figures can grab attention. Martha had written that the Girl Guides had sold 500 boxes of biscuits in her original sentence. The journalist managed to replace 500 with the far larger number of 5000, by calculating how many packets, rather than boxes, were sold. Numbers are also important in all news stories for another reason: to validate and add a sense of authority to a story. Tuchman (1978)

¹⁷ An early crime associated with the use of "p" occurred in 2003 when a six-year-old girl, Coral Burrows, was murdered by her stepfather. There have been a number of similar crimes since then.

argues it is not sufficient merely to describe what occurred. The journalist must build up a “web of facticity” to validate the story (p.105). The journalist must use “pertinent information gathered by professionally validated methods, specifying what is known and how it is known” (Tuchman, 1978, p. 82). Bell (1991) adds to this: “[A]t the core of facticity are numbers – the most verifiable, quantifiable, undeniable of facts” (p. 202). Jamima’s description of rape victims also lacked this validity. The professional version therefore added the number of rapes and the ages of the victims. The word “trebled” was also used to describe how the incidence of rape had increased. Sam’s story (see Table 6.1) on motorists fined for driving in bus-only lanes also lacked authority because its lead did not feature the numbers caught and the figure was only provided much later and imprecisely as “60 or 70 people”. The professional journalist gave a more convincing and substantial description, “up to 70 motorists a day”, and placed it in the lead.

Numbers also provided additional background information necessary to link stories to others that had been written and heighten the news value of continuity. However, as with many of the shortcomings identified in this and other chapters, New Zealand journalism students appeared not to be taught this so largely failed to achieve it. Stories where numbers failed to be used effectively to provide news values included Henreitta’s story, where, by contrast, the professional journalist inserted this sentence:

P5

The well-appointed stadium, seating up to 27,500 people, opened last year amid controversy over escalating costs.

The stories of Kathie and Mavis also did not use numbers to provide continuity with other news stories and to heighten their credibility (see section 6.7, Background and additional information).

Another way the students revealed their lack of training in news values was their failure to heighten the human interest in the beginning of their lead sentences. Beginning the lead sentence with the name of a company, institution or group of any kind is considered in newspapers to have the effect of “deadening” the story because of the impact of the first few words. There was no indication that the students had been taught this. Rather, Martha’s first sentence started with the name of the Girl Guide unit, Eltham. Henreitta started her story with “Haworth Stadium”, Kathie with “Ashwood City Council”, and Mavis with “Mayfair District Council”. Ramstein also began her

story by writing “The Haworth Institute of Technology”, and Betty with “*The New Zealand Telegraph*”. It would have been more effective to lead, as the professional journalist did, and start with the actual actors: Girl Guides, hip hop artists, building inspectors, children and adults, struggling students and Haworth students.

6.5.2 Intertextuality

Another issue that students were not explicitly or extensively taught about was the problems of transferring inappropriate words into their news stories so that the text was not smoothly integrated. Tucker (1999b) argues that students starting to write news stories need to avoid using specialist diction and the stylistic mannerisms of legal contracts, technical reports and scientific and academic papers, often referred to as “jargon”. While most news stories written by students and new journalists are unlikely to use such documents as a source, a more problematic issue is transferring the kind of words that lawyers, technicians, scientists and academics speak, their “discourse”, into their news stories.

This stems from what Fairclough defines as “intertextuality”. He describes intertextuality as the presence within a text of elements of other texts and therefore potentially other voices than the author’s own. There are three kinds of voices which can be intertextual: direct or reported speech, the reproduction of the actual words that are used, and indirect report where the journalist will summarise and select (Fairclough, 2003, p. 219). The journalist’s text may originally come from a document such as speech notes, a press release, or comments from an official source which have been added to or rewritten before becoming a news story. Particularly common is that a journalist will interview a number of different people and decide which information and quotes of direct speech should be used in the text. The presence of different language from different sources means, as Bell says, that a journalist is “as much a compiler as a creator of language” and a lot of the news consists of “previously composed text reworked into the new text” (Bell, 1991, p. 41).

It takes considerable skill to smoothly integrate all these different sources and language into the news genre. Perhaps because this was not an issue that was explicitly discussed in journalism institutions, most of the students were unable to manage the task, especially at first. One of the most striking factors in news stories at the beginning of

the year was that more than half the students, 12 out of 20, used inappropriate words that had clearly been derived from another person or text. This was another example of where the failure to encourage students to evaluate and monitor their lexical choice and their writing, and the general lack of teaching on what constitutes “news language”, had a negative impact on the students’ progress. At this early stage of their training, the cognitive overload (Couzijn, 1999) of the learning-by-doing method of writing large numbers of stories under deadline pressure was readily apparent.

Examples of poorly incorporated intertextuality in the students’ first news stories were clearly visible. Most of these examples were not found in reported speech, but through the reproduction of the actual words that had been used by the original source. Sam, for example, wrote her news story about a campaign to keep motorists out of new bus-only lanes. She gathered information from a city council official and the marketing manager of the bus company. The kind of discourse used by the two men to put a “promotional spin” on events could be seen throughout, including Sam’s choice of words such as “reliability” and “predictability”, although it was not always clear which official had used them. Her first sentence (see Table 6.1) was about “increased bus reliability”, a term that either source could have used. In her third sentence, she presumably transferred the phrase “respecting the new law enforcement” into her news story from what the city council official told her. Obviously transferred words are underlined below:

S3

The Ashwood City Council (ACC) Parking Services manager Les Hogg said they are getting 60 or 70 people a day on film indicating that most people are respecting the new law enforcement.

Her direct quotations of some of the “spin” of the marketing manager of the bus company deepened this sense that this was more a promotional piece than a news story. The article seemed to be endorsing his view that fines for motorists who drove in specially defined lanes for buses only was about “education”, rather than “enforcement”.

S7

“The campaign has made people aware of the law more than anything and it is more about education than enforcement,” says Turner.

It was common that the type of language and the views of officials directly quoted in the text also influenced the rest of the story, often inappropriately for a news story. Sully quoted the art gallery director as saying:

S12 “If you’re creating, you’re not destroying. It’s the antithesis of war,” she says.

The language or jargon of the art gallery director, language ill-fitting in a news story, was obviously transferred into Sully’s text, as in the sentence below:

S2 The Spiral Gallery at 260 Queen Street becomes a “Depot” facility from April, 2003, and will be used to cultivate emerging artists.

Kathie’s story was another example. In her reflections, she said that she wanted to write a story using student language but she unconsciously also used many words that were transferred from her interview with a city council official who was the supervisor of the council building inspectors, as in this sentence, the second sentence in her story:

S2 Licence (sic) premises are scheduled to undergo monthly checks on emergency alarms and lighting, six-monthly fire drills and full inspections every year which cover emergency power supplied and fire exits.

“Licensed premises” and “scheduled to undergo” would definitely have not been student language and were not easy to integrate into the rest of the text. Neither were other words found in her story, like “consequences”, “non-compliance,” and “deemed”.

The “discourse of the official” also had an effect on what message the story conveyed. Kathie used the official’s words in the sentence below and also angled her story to reflect the “promotional” spin the council used to justify the introduction of surprise bar inspections. She described them as a “safety measure” rather than as a campaign to catch offenders, thus diminishing the number of inspections that were carried out:

S3 However, limited resources mean that only about 3-4 surprise inspections are conducted each month.

The professional changed this to enhance the number:

P2 They will make up to four surprise inspections, after the fire which claimed the lives of more than 100 people, prompted fears of a similar disaster here.

This inappropriate use of intertextual words, and especially the conscious or unconscious use of both the language and views of the officials who served as the main sources for many of the students' stories, contributed to an important feature of the stories as a whole. Most of the news stories were basically promotional in tone and message. There was a marked lack of the language of a news story but also anything that challenged official wisdom. A promotional story is defined as one which publicises a product or a celebrity or supports or encourages an event. The aim of a news story is to be credible, while a promotional story's goal, like that of an advertisement, is to produce desire (Ungerer, 2004). Ungerer describes a hybrid form, a cross-genre where the formulae for advertisements and news texts merge. It is this "creation of desire" that appears to be the goal of many of the students' original texts. Various factors contributed to this tendency to promote. Some students were reluctant to offend the people they talked to by writing negative stories. Also many of these stories were written for community newspapers where the line between advertising and editorial is sometimes blurred (Cafarella, 2001). Especially important were the subjects the students chose to write about and whom they chose to interview. They often wrote about coming events rather than events that had happened and saw their role as promoting the event, giving exact details where and when it was happening, even to using the advertisement form of including names and phone numbers, as Miranda did in her last sentence (brackets are in the original):

| | |
|-----------|--|
| S9 | (Will 'Ilohaia programme "Pacific Pieces" will screen on Triangle TV, Tuesday 18 March at 7.30). |
|-----------|--|

Having decided on a topic lacking in newsworthiness, students often moved into a promotional tone. Betty opened her story with this:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Betty | Young women across the country will soon have an opportunity to take |
| S1 | part in a national choir and vocal training programme. |

Ramstein also chose a promotional opening:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Ramstein | The Haworth Institute of Technology (HIT) is going out of its way this |
| S1 | year to help out its students who are struggling with money. |

But the deepest reason for the promotional tone was the nature of the education the journalists were receiving. The promotional tone in many of their stories was rarely challenged by journalism tutors who saw and subedited these early stories. More

important still, the students had not been taught in any depth about news values and the language and topics best suited to the news genre. Nor had there been any guidance on how to achieve what many take to be the ideal of the journalist: not to just present and accept the views of officials but to delve deeper and allow other viewpoints to be heard. The students had not been encouraged to think about how to write well and appropriately about interesting and important subjects. The result was a tendency towards the bland, the promotional and the use of the jargon of others.

This section has described how the lack of education received on lexical choice had a damaging effect when the students were faced with writing a story, at least early in their training. The students were unaware of the strategies used in news discourse to dramatise and add life to a story, enhance the news values, and increase the authority and credibility of the author. The lack of such knowledge contributed to stories that were often dully and ineffectively written and reflective of the views and language of the bureaucracy who usually served as the sources for their stories.

6.6 Order

As discussed earlier, New Zealand journalist students are from the outset of their education taught to write in the inverted pyramid model (see Chapter 3). The inverted pyramid is one of the few concepts of journalism that students are instructed about both at the early stage of their training and throughout the year. This focus contributed to most of the early news stories being modelled to some degree on the inverted pyramid with the students showing at least some understanding of its more basic formulae. But even in terms of the inverted pyramid, some shortcomings of New Zealand journalism education can also be discerned in the students' early news stories. The students generally appeared to receive a rather simplified tutoring in the inverted pyramid that is reflected in the problems they had structuring their early stories (see Chapter 3).

The successful application of the inverted pyramid is dependent upon a sound grounding in the concepts of news values. The inverted pyramid is premised around the opening sentence establishing the key point and featuring the strongest news values. The order and structure of the rest of the story should emphasise the proposition contained within the lead sentence and enhance its news values (Bell, 1991). This "top-

down” process should also be evident within a sentence, with the information with the strongest news value being placed at the beginning of the sentence (van Dijk, 1986, 1988).

However, as this chapter has detailed, the journalism students were taught little about news values and this lack of knowledge characterised their early stories. As discussed above, virtually all of the students’ lead sentences and stories as a whole were deficient in terms of news values. This failure was reflected in the problematic order and structure of the articles, which often placed key news values in the middle of the text and failed to build a convincing model of the inverted pyramid. Indeed, of the 20 early stories examined by the professional journalist, only one was judged not in need of significant structural changes (see Chapter 5).

As Bell shows, the inverted-pyramid model of news stories has a far more complex structure than is often recognised (Bell, 1991, p. 171). However, the journalism students in this study received a simplified and arguably deficient grounding on how to structure a news story, according to this model. These deficiencies are also indicated by the New Zealand journalism text book, *Intro*, which is designated as essential reading for students in all the New Zealand journalism institutions, with at least some tutors basing their teaching directly upon it. The text has major shortcomings in its description of how to write a story according to the inverted pyramid. Although it devotes more than 17 pages to writing the lead sentence or intro, it has little to say about news values, and also dedicates only three pages to the structure of a news story. Its explanation is too brief, too mechanical and too simplified to be of real value to the students. It asserts that the “intro” is a summary stating what the story is about, and that this information is expanded over the next four paragraphs, each sentence supporting or developing the angle of the introduction. The first source is introduced to confirm the details and provide a quote. Paragraph six introduces a subsidiary theme and the last paragraph is dispensable (Tucker, 1999b).

Tucker also contends that a news story is usually eight paragraphs long, the story length dictated by the prominence and space allotted by the person controlling content and display, usually the news editor. “... [I]f it is destined for the front page, there needs to be sufficient text to hold up the headline and layout” (p. 108). He praises the inverted pyramid-type news stories as the model on which most news writing is based although

argues that a “true” inverted pyramid story is rare in modern journalism, attributing this to the more flexible approach adopted today (Tucker, 1999b, p. 106).

To write a news story using the inverted pyramid is not as simple as *Intro* suggests or most New Zealand journalism students were taught. I will discuss Henreitta’s story in detail to show how most students at this early stage of their training did not understand the complexities of the inverted pyramid. Henreitta’s article fairly closely accorded to the guidelines of the inverted pyramid in the *Intro* textbook. It is featured in Table 6.2 (below) alongside the professional version.

The first sentence in her original story summarised the topic or theme with few details: “Haworth stadium will host its first ever music concert this Saturday when Summer Jam arrives in Haworth”. The second sentence expanded on this theme, stating that last year Summer Jam was held at the Westpac stadium but this year the Haworth stadium manager believed the new stadium would have advantages. The third sentence continued to elaborate on this by appraising the use of the stadium and also provided a quotation from an official source to confirm the details. The fourth sentence explained what Summer Jam was. Henreitta’s story, as shown below, follows Tucker’s guidelines and could have ended after the first four sentences. S5 described the concerts that would be held throughout New Zealand while S6 and S7 described the artists who would be performing. S8 and S9 introduced a subsidiary story line, how many tickets had been sold.

However, a comparison with a professional journalist’s reordering of the story suggests the shortcomings in the method taught to the students in structuring a strong, newsworthy article. In Table 6.2, the way the material was redistributed in the professional version is shown by the brackets after each sentence. It shows that a successful inverted pyramid article often has a more complex pattern than that suggested in *Intro*. Alongside the need for understanding these complexities is the crucial fact that the key to the successful structure of a news story is to understand and put forward the high-level specifics first and then follow with the lower-level details. This is also seen in diagram form in Figure 6.1 (below).

Table 6.2 Henreitta's inverted pyramid compared with the professional version

| Henreitta | Professional version |
|--|--|
| <p>S1: Haworth stadium will host its first-ever music concert this Saturday when Summer Jam arrives in Haworth.</p> <p>S2: Last year Summer Jam was held at Westpac Stadium but this year Haworth Stadium Manager Mark Cox believes the new stadium will benefit the concert scene better.</p> <p>S3: "Haworth Stadium still has the 'wow' factor for people, it has better infrastructure such as drinks and catering and is better amplified," says Mr Cox.</p> <p>S4: Summer Jam is a day/night rock festival sponsored by radio station, "Mostly Music" and features music acts from New Zealand and overseas.</p> <p>S5: There are four concerts on the itinerary this year in Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and in Haworth this Saturday March 15.</p> <p>S6: Headlining the concert this year are American rockers Good Charlotte and Australian band Taxiride.</p> <p>S7: Among the New Zealand contingent this year are rock band Rubicon and hip hop artists Nesian Mystik.</p> <p>S8: Promotions Assistant for "Mostly Music" Lois Watson says tickets have been selling strongly for all New Zealand concerts and that Sounds music store in Haworth have been selling out of tickets daily.</p> <p>S9: "Sounds music stores alone have sold over 1000 tickets so far, the event just keeps getting bigger every year."</p> | <p>P1: New Zealand hip hop artists Nesian Mystik will be among the bands performing at the multi-million dollar Haworth Stadium, for its first-ever rock festival on Saturday (S7, 1, 4, new).</p> <p>P2: Rock band Rubicon will also perform in the day-night rock festival, Summer Jam. (S1, 4, 7).</p> <p>P3: International artists, who will headline the event, are American rockers Good Charlotte and Australian band Taxiride (S4, 6).</p> <p>P4: Last year the festival was held at Westpac Stadium but this year Haworth Stadium manager Mark Cox believes the new stadium will provide more benefits for the concert scene (S2),</p> <p>P5: The well-appointed stadium, seating up to 27,500 people, opened last year amid controversy over escalating costs (new).</p> <p>P6: "Haworth Stadium still has the 'wow' factor for people (S3).</p> <p>P7: "It has better infrastructure such as drinks and catering and is better amplified," Mr Cox says (S3).</p> <p>P8: Promotions assistant for Mostly Music Lois Watson says Haworth music stores have been selling out of tickets daily (S8).</p> <p>P9: "The event just keeps getting bigger every year (S9)."</p> <p>P10: The four-concert tour will start in Haworth and head for Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland (S5).</p> |

The professional version appears more newsworthy because the lead was changed so that it gained the news value of prominence, using information found in S7 and S6. The first sentence starts with the well-known New Zealand hip hop artists who would be at the concert, originally at S7. These well-known artists were merged with material found in Henreitta's original lead which described the event as the first-ever rock festival at the stadium. New information was also added to the lead sentence, "multi-million dollar" to allude to the stadium's controversial past. P2 named the international artists to

build on this theme, again using information that Henreitta had placed far lower in her story. The second sentence of the professional story also contained material originally at S1 and S4 while the third came from S4 and S6 and further backed up this theme.

Van Dijk (1988) describes this as providing specified information in cycles. High-level specifics are given first in a news story, followed by lower-level details. P5 moved to the lower-level specifics, inserting new information to give the story negativity and also to link it to previous coverage about the controversy surrounding the stadium. P6 and 7 were direct speech to back up the first story while P8 and P9 introduced the second theme about ticket sales. P10 stated where and when the rock festival would be held. Thus sentences marked “A”, “B” and “C” were in the order “B”, “A” and C” in the professional version of the story. The complex pattern in Figure 6.1 (below) resulted from enhancing the news values in Henreitta’s story and thus changing the focus and the structure.

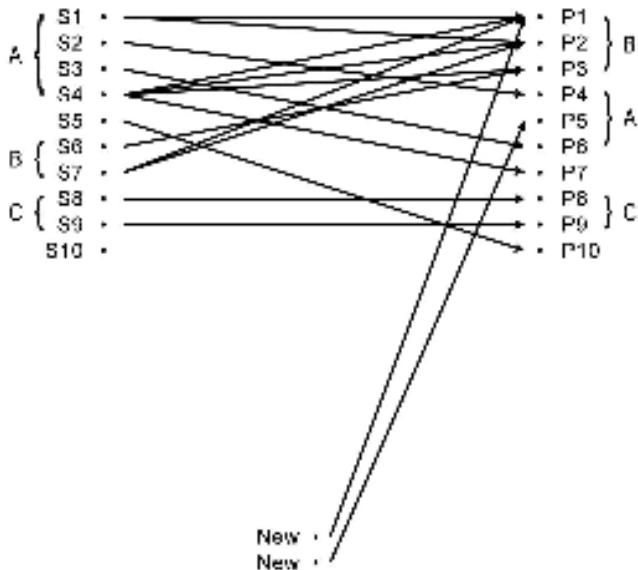


Figure 6.1 Changes to the order of Henreitta’s early story

Henreitta’s story was not the most striking example of how the students’ attempts to structure their stories according to the inverted pyramid were affected by the shortcomings of their understanding of the model and what constitutes a news story. Rather, as we have seen, these problems were common and often resulted in uninteresting leads and the burying of the most newsworthy and important material deep in the story.

6.7 Background and additional information

The effective use of background and additional material was another issue that the students struggled with in their early stories. Again these problems could in part be linked to the little teaching they had received on the matter. Most of what they knew appeared likely to come from their textbook *Intro*, which uses the term “background” to describe the additional information necessary to clarify a story, suggesting it should be worked into the story or embedded throughout (Tucker, 1999b). However, this brief discussion fails to emphasise the importance of this material in heightening the news elements of the story. As Bell explains, the category of “background” covers any event prior to the current action, often contained in earlier news stories. If the background goes beyond the near past, it can be classed as “history” (Bell, 1991). Journalists also describe additional contextual information as “background”. Apart from the textbook, the only evidence found that the usefulness of background information was part of the students’ training was that the tutors at one school when subediting the stories of three of the students instructed them to add some contextual material¹⁸.

Only four of the 20 early student stories provided some background or additional information. Casper, who was arguably the most skilful and talented of the students at this early stage, was the most successful in embedding or “weaving” additional information into his story (see Chapter 5). Most of the other students seemed to have equated the lack of systematic discussion on background material with a belief that it was unimportant for a news story. This had a detrimental effect on their stories. The lack of background in the original stories meant they were not linked to other stories on similar subjects which would have enhanced the news value of “continuity”. Moreover, a failure to emphasise factual information damaged the stories’ credibility, made it more difficult for the reader to grasp the stories’ thrust quickly, and decreased the clarity and coherence of the stories. The need for a better understanding of the value of background and additional information was shown clearly by the fact that the professional journalist felt the need in 16 of the stories to add such information. Indeed, all five stories selected in the representative sample (see Table 6.1) were judged to be deficient in this area,

¹⁸ At one of the two journalism schools, the students needed to resubmit their stories to their tutors after they had revised them, following the tutors’ instructions. They also recorded additional reflections on what they had learnt. I did not continue with this as the same methods were not used in both schools.

having ignored information that should have been at their very heart and placed near the beginning of their stories. The additional material inserted by the professional journalist is shown in Table 6.3 below. The professional version of the lead sentence is also repeated in the table, to provide the context of the story.

Nearly all of the additional information inserted by the professional journalist was available to the students writing the original story, but they neglected to include it. This material was gathered from the students' own taped reflections, from their revised efforts and, very rarely, from additional basic research, showing that although it was easy to obtain, the students did not recognise its importance.

For example, Brendan's long story contained very little material regarding the effects of an arson attack, despite this material being readily available. Similarly, Kathie's story failed to include basic and essential additional information that she was presumably aware of. The central subject of her story was the fire at the Rhode Island nightclub which had led to fears that a similar disaster could occur in New Zealand. However, she did not explain what happened in the fire and that more than 100 people had died in it. Only when her tutor pointed out this omission did she include this material. Henreitta's story about the first-ever rock festival to be held in the new Haworth stadium also suffered from a lack of basic research and curiosity. The controversy surrounding the cost of the stadium, which the professional journalist alluded to in the lead and inserted in P5, was well known and easily available via a quick internet search.

Mavis's story about dog attacks also failed to include some seemingly obvious and important background information that linked these attacks to a spate of similar recent incidents. Mavis was well aware of this information and the stories written about these attacks but deliberately excluded it because, as she noted in her taped reflections, she did not want to focus or "frame" her story (Gitlin, 1980), as she had recently been taught in a theory class. Thus, she decided to frame her story on animal welfare issues rather than writing another scare story about "bad dogs". However, her story lacked credibility and authority because it failed to explain the extent of the problem, through including statistics.

Sam's story on bus-only lanes similarly lacked coherence and credibility because she decided not to include obvious contextual information, such as where the lanes had been introduced and the number of motorists caught breaking the new law.

Why the students did not include such important additional or background information was not clear. However, the most obvious conclusion is that they did not recognise the material's importance because their very brief lessons on news writing had not emphasised the way that additional material can be used, or the news values, such as continuity, that it can enhance.

Table 6.3 Background and additional information inserted in five student stories

| Name | Professional Lead | Background and additional information inserted | Where inserted |
|------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Brendan</i> | More than \$11,000 raised at a Tawa school fair on Saturday will go towards replacing resources destroyed in a recent arson attack. | <u>He says the arson attack in February was devastating when the school library and many books and resources, gathered over 10 years, were destroyed.</u> | P3 |
| <i>Henreitta</i> | New Zealand hip hop artists Nesian Mystik will be among the bands performing at the multi-million Haworth Stadium for its first-ever rock festival on Saturday. | <u>The well-appointed stadium, seating up to 27,500 people, opened last year amid controversy over escalating costs.</u> | Embedded P1, Inserted P5 |
| <i>Kathie</i> | Building inspectors are clamping down on Ashwood bars, in the wake of the Rhode Island night club fire. | They will make up to four surprise inspections a month, <u>after the fire which claimed the lives of more than 100 people prompted fears of a similar disaster here.</u> | Embedded in P2 |
| <i>Mavis</i> | Mayfair children and adults are being warned not to approach strange dogs, as attacks continue. | <u>In February there were 31 dog attacks in the city while during the past year there were 236 dog attacks.</u> | P2 |
| <i>Sam</i> | Up to 70 motorists a day have been caught driving in bus-only lanes, since the start of a new campaign. | <u>The campaign is focused on Mt East, Sutherland, Dove and Grover Roads with cameras filming drivers contravening the law. Now into its second week, numbers caught on camera have dropped to 30 a day.</u> | P3, P4. |

6.8 Changes to the students' syntax

The following section considers common errors in the students' syntax. Section 6.8.1 covers grammatical errors, particularly involving tense, while section 6.8.2 illustrates the problems the students had with writing briefly.

6.8.1 Tense and aspect changes

Other common problems with the students' early stories were the grammatical errors and inconsistencies, particularly involving tense. Vivienne Holt's (1993) research into news writing in New Zealand found that many editors believed the worst grammatical error was incorrect tense, particularly the lack of verb concord between attribution and reported speech. Choosing the correct tense for a news story is not an uncomplicated or unimportant issue. Indeed, Bell (1991) believes applying tense correctly is one of the most difficult things for journalists to learn to do.

House rules are important for choosing tense. In 1993, Holt found that some organisations, particularly broadcast media, use the present tense, while most print media use the past tense. However, this convention has changed since then. Many daily newspapers today use the present tense for the lead sentence for news stories and the past tense for the rest of the story to gain a sense of immediacy. Most community newspapers tend to use present tense for news and features except when writing about an event that has already happened. Some of the students in their early stories wrote their lead sentences in the past tense, thus robbing them of the immediacy for a news item. Miranda wrote:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Miranda S1 | Youth-oriented activities contributed to the success of this year's Pasifika Festival in Ashworth which attracted increased numbers despite the threat of rain. |
|-----------------------------|---|

The professional version of the sentence, using information from elsewhere in Miranda's story, changed the tense to gain a sense of immediacy:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | The success of Saturday's Pasifika Festival provides a boost in young people's self-esteem, says a Human Rights Commission officer. |
|-----------|---|

Holt (1993) suggests that writers need to consider several factors when selecting tense. These include the general house style for news reporting and the effect of the chosen

tense. For instance, writing in present tense can add a valuable sense of immediacy, especially for non-daily newspapers where it can minimise the sense of a long time passing between when an event occurred, and the story being written and it being read. However, past tense can be appropriate in certain cases – for instance in writing about a past event (V. Holt, 1993).

New Zealand journalism institutions did not place much emphasis on the use of tense, believing they were teaching journalism not basic English grammar. The textbook *Intro* produces a little known convention that confuses rather than clarifies the issue of tense. It states that “anything in a daily newspaper story that is in the present tense and which is not enclosed in quotation marks can be assumed to be the reporter’s own comments or summary” (Tucker, 1999b, p. 127). It seems highly likely that the students at an early stage were simply instructed to write in one tense or the other. Which tense depended on which journalism school they attended. This was suggested by the fact that virtually all the early stories examined from one institution were based on the present tense while students from the other school attempted to write in the past tense. The students at the school who were writing in the present tense were writing their stories for publication in community newspapers but the reason why the other students were instructed to favour the past tense was not clear. What was obvious was that at this early stage, the teaching the students received was not effective. Most of the early stories featured tense inconsistencies and mistakes and the students appeared to have been confused about the grammatical issues.

Some seemed unaware of the need for tense concord. An example of this is Agnes’s second sentence where she wrote:

S2

Haworth Institute of Technology nurse Sally Flaunty said that although young people are aware of the risks they continue to stay on the third generation pills.

To be grammatically correct, the verb forms “are aware” and “continue” needed to agree with the past tense of the attribution verb, “said”. The professional version read:

P2

Haworth Institute of Technology nurse Sally Flaunty said although young people were aware of the risks they persisted in taking contraceptive pills, like Estelle 35.

Later in the story, Agnes introduced a nursing student who was “still taking the contraceptive pill”. Here she shifted to the present tense:

S7

Nursing student Anne Saunders is currently on Estelle 35 but is not prepared to change despite the higher risks.

In this case, the professional writer accepted the present tense as the media convention is that currently true or factual statements should be in the present tense.

6.8.2 Deletion and summarisation

A more fundamental problem with the students’ stories was the lack of clarity and their excessive length. A central aim of a news story is to be clear and unambiguous through the deletion of unnecessary material and the use of as few words as possible. While the students often reflected on the need to write succinctly, indicating it was a point that they had been taught, only a few mentioned evaluating their own text after writing for extra words, or being encouraged to do so.

Even skilled journalists frequently find their stories shortened by copy editors removing information judged to be superfluous (van Dijk, 1988). I found this was also the case with the students’ first stories, where 19 of the 20 stories were shortened. On average, 109 words were deleted from the students’ stories, reducing them by 40 per cent (see Appendix II for a sample of original stories and the rewritten versions). The exception, Agnes’s story, was lengthened because she included some statistics in her story which needed clarification.

Anastacia’s story about St Patrick’s Day was a telling example. At 340 words, it was far too long because it was written in the discursive style used for features, not news stories and had a number of unnecessary sentences and redundant phrases. It was reduced by half, producing improvements in clarity and newsworthiness. Anastacia’s first sentences were an example of the lack of understanding of the news style. They read:

S1

March 17, St Patrick’s Day.

S2

Many New Zealanders celebrate the day by drinking green beer and putting on fake accents.

They were replaced by one sentence that was taken from her fourth and fifth sentences, and the story then began in news-writing style:

P1

More than 100 members of the Westland Irish Club and many would-be-Irish New Zealanders will be celebrating St Patrick's Day on Friday.

A number of sentences added little to the story, except unnecessary length:

S6

The club, which started out about 30 years ago as the Haworth Irish Club, celebrates several Irish traditions throughout the year including the annual Rose of Tralee Contest; an internationally recognised pageant for young women of Irish descent.

S7

Club secretary Viv Warren whose ancestors came to New Zealand in 1847, says that St. Patrick's Day is "just one of the joys of being Irish."

S8

Viv will be celebrating St Patrick's Day with her fellow club members at a buffet lunch at Valentines Restaurant.

S9

She says they have a lunch every year because "some people aren't pub people."

Words were also removed by taking out redundant phrases, for example, "Although his patrons will undoubtedly be celebrating St Patrick's Day in traditional pub-style" from the sentence below:

S12

Although his patrons will undoubtedly be celebrating St Patrick's Day in traditional pub-style, Mr Foster says that he will be taking time to remember what St Patrick's Day is all about.

This became, in the professional version:

P5

Mr Foster will take time out during the day to remember what St Patrick's Day is all about.

Sully also took four sentences and 102 words to write the sentences below, while the professional took three sentences, deleting more than 40 words. The content of the professional version differed little from Sully's story, presumably written for a community newspaper in the Eastbourne area. The wordy phrase, "will be used to cultivate emerging artists" in the second sentence, was compressed to become "emerging" to head the first sentence. The lead then started with the actors, the "emerging artists", rather than the name of the gallery. The verb "taking over" and the clause "greatly increase opportunities to exhibit" have been merged into "will be able to exhibit" and "expands". The unnecessary word "facility" has been deleted. In the fourth

sentence, “has been a springboard” and “provides support and facilities”, were replaced by one word “benefited”.

| Sully | Professional Version |
|---|--|
| <p>S1: The Workshop Artspace in Eastbourne is taking over a Willis Street gallery which will greatly increase opportunities for artists to exhibit in the city.</p> <p>S2: The Spiral Gallery at 260 Willis Street becomes a “Workshop” facility from April, 2003, and will be used to cultivate emerging artists.</p> <p>S3: Established artists Mark Cross, Brent Wong and Alvin Pankhurst invited The Workshop to take over the running of the gallery, which was previously used as their studio space.</p> <p>S4: Established in 1996, The Workshop has been a springboard for a number of artists, and provides support and facilities for aspiring painters, sculptors, photographers and musicians.</p> | <p>P1: Emerging artists will be able to exhibit in the city after a non-profit Eastbourne gallery expands to Willis Street next month.</p> <p>P2: The Workshop Artspace will run the Spiral Gallery, previously used as studio space by established artists Mark Cross, Brent Wong and Alvin Pankhurst.</p> <p>P3: Since 1996 aspiring painters, sculptors, photographers and musicians have benefited from using the Eastbourne premises.</p> |

6.9 Conclusion

These 20 news stories have shown that the students at this relatively early stage of their training did not yet understand the fundamentals of news writing. In particular, they revealed a poor understanding of the inverted-pyramid model, and little grasp of news values and how to enhance them. This failure to accentuate the news values was the major reason why most of their early stories fell far short of professional standards. Journalism educators, who are primarily journalists rather than academics, seemed unaware or uninterested in the theoretical underpinnings of news values as a necessary subject for instruction.

The lead sentence is vital to the inverted-pyramid structure. The students learned that if a reader is not interested in the first sentence they will not be compelled to read on. Students appear to be told the lead must express some of the journalist’s who, what,

where, when, why and how and should express the most important theme of the story. However, they seemed to be ignorant that the lead also serves as a lens through which the main point of the story is angled, made more colourful and magnified, thus enhancing the news values. The students commented that they found writing the lead the most difficult hurdle to overcome, but were largely unaware they should be enhancing the news values. They were not taught how to organise and plan their stories in advance, so that they continued to emphasise the main theme, and their stories were often confused.

Their lexical choice was also not a consideration so that they failed to make their words more vivid and thus enhance their news values. They also had a tendency to reproduce the actual words used by their sources without smoothly integrating the different discourses into the story. This contributed to many of the stories appearing promotional in tone and message. Both these factors were accentuated by the fact that journalism schools did not seem to devote any time to teaching their students about news language or lexical choice or to think critically about their choice of words.

The effective use of background and additional material was another issue that the students struggled with in their early stories. Their brief lessons on news writing had not emphasised the importance of contextual information or the news values it can enhance by linking the present story with others that have been written.

Their stories were also often excessively long and lacked clarity so that their writing style and standard were generally well short of publication standard. Another noticeable feature was the stories' lack of spark: there was little sense of excitement, of a desire or ability to inform, investigate or entertain. From the lead sentences to the excessive length, from lexical choice to the lack of contextual information, the flaws in these early stories were only too apparent.

This chapter has argued that many of these problems stemmed from shortcomings in journalism education and not just from the students' relative inexperience. Their stories suggested the consequences of a lack of discussion about the nature and salient features of news writing and the failure to encourage students to contemplate their writing and find methods to improve it, beyond simply writing a large number of news stories. This lack of training undermined the attempt to teach the students to write in the inverted-

pyramid model. The students lacked the broader skills and understanding to fulfil the mechanical aspects of this model and, more importantly, to write an interesting, newsworthy story within its guidelines.

Of course, to judge the success or failure of New Zealand journalism education is clearly unfair at this early stage of the students' training. If the learning-by-doing model were to have its desired outcome, far-reaching and continuous improvement should be expected, as the students became more experienced and received more education. The next two chapters will assess the extent of this improvement.

7 Mid-Year Progress

Learning by doing may be common in journalism, but doing alone does not guarantee learning (Sheridan Burns, 2001, p. 3).

7.1 Prologue: The middle of the year

Five months have now gone by. The students' confidence in news writing is growing as they have completed more than 10 news stories. A number of these stories have been submitted to community newspapers and the students have experienced the thrill of seeing their byline and their story "in print". The students have also spent two weeks on "internships", working at community newspapers, provincial newspapers, or in radio newsrooms. For most, this is the "real world", the highlight of their journalism education. These experiences have encouraged them to try to write in more flexible ways. They talk in glowing terms about the whole experience but 10 days is generally too short a time for them to understand the difficulties of the newsroom culture, its routines and practices, ruled by the ever-present deadline. For them, it is exciting and stimulating and very different from the classroom. They cannot wait to join the profession and work as journalists. Coming back to "school" is a let-down.

7.2 Introduction

This chapter will trace the progress the students have made in the last five months, assessing the impact of their journalism education so far, which has included classes, writing at least 10 news stories, subediting and work experience. It will discuss the news stories written by the 17 students remaining in the study, exploring the news values, lead sentences, lexical choice, order, background information and syntax. Many of these stories were written while the students were on work experience so they varied in length and subject. The students were not instructed that there were any set criteria for the way they should write them. They were merely expected to provide a "news story" for analysis.

The previous chapter showed how the students at the start of the year did not yet understand the fundamentals of news writing. They did not know how to write a strong

lead sentence or to use the structure of their story to further enhance the news values. Their lexical choice was often inadequate and they had no knowledge of how to heighten the news values in their stories through the use of vivid or graphic words. Nor did they understand how to add background information to provide a wider context for their news items and to connect them with others that had been written on the same topic. They also included many words and phrases transferred from the discourse of the people they spoke to, so that their texts were not well integrated. Generally, their stories were dull and uninteresting, revealing a lack of innovation and initiative. In short, they were still novices and there was a long path to travel before their writing could be considered as approaching a professional standard.

The learning-by-doing approach was producing some changes in the students' writing. The considerable number of stories they were required to write and their experience of the media industry were beginning to show, especially in the way they were writing lead sentences. However, the middle of the year is also marked by a new occurrence in the students' writing. While nine of the students wrote news stories in the inverted-pyramid form, eight of the 17 students still in the study wrote news stories with more flexible forms. These news stories were predominantly human interest or promotional stories mirroring the news forms commonly found in non-daily newspapers today. I have classified them as "hybrid" texts. Hybrid texts are marked by "soft" news lead sentences, Bell (1991) arguing that journalists distinguish between "hard" news and features, marked by "soft" lead sentences. Hard news covers reports of accidents, conflicts, crime, fires, disasters, announcements, discoveries and other new events and is written in the inverted-pyramid format, while journalists have more liberty to write in their own voice in soft news or features.

The students' stories were reflecting this growing trend in the media but they themselves did not always think about what kind of story they should be writing (see Chapter 9). Of particular concern was the students' failure to recognise the difference between promotional stories advertising or promoting an event and news stories. Table 7.1 (below) represents the five students chosen earlier as typical of the entire group. It shows that by the middle of the year, three of these students were writing hybrid stories. As the table reveals, this development did not necessarily benefit the students' news stories and they required considerable modification to bring them to a standard

appropriate for publication. The full stories plus the professional versions can be seen in Appendix II.

Table 7.1 Changes made to students' mid-year stories

| Name | Student's lead | Professional lead | New news values | Description of changes |
|-----------|---|--|---|---|
| Brendan | With the selection of national representative teams fast approaching, one young table tennis player is throwing caution to the wind to ensure he makes the cut. | A Māori high school student demolished the field at the North Island Table Tennis champion-ships held at the weekend in Haworth. | Human interest Significance Prominence Proximity Immediacy Negativity Clarity | Hybrid story. Soft human interest lead replaced by inverted pyramid. News values added by replacing lead with 17 th sentence. Story reduced by three-quarters. |
| Henreitta | A white foam that is discharging regularly into the Haworth River at Branscombe Park has Haworth City Council baffled. | Mysterious white foam polluting the Haworth River has council officers baffled. | Negativity Significance Clarity Immediacy | Inverted pyramid. News values enhanced. |
| Kathie | Women's rights officer Candida Edmond is asking student parents to take part in a nationwide survey on what it's really like to care for children while studying. | Transport in Ashwood is the main problem for parents looking after kids while studying, a recent nationwide survey shows. | Negativity Human interest Proximity Significance | Hybrid story. Soft promotional lead replaced by inverted pyramid. S5 moved to lead to give negativity and increase news values and to remove promotional tone. |
| Mavis | Jason So'lo loves homework. | Jason So'lo loves the homework centre because it keeps him out of trouble. | Negativity Clarity | Hybrid story. Soft human interest lead now contains negativity, as S4 moved. |
| Sam | International exchange programme Youth for Understanding (YFU) is shutting its doors for good in New Zealand at the end of this week. | Kiwi students will miss out when an international exchange organisation closes in New Zealand this week. | Human interest Negativity Immediacy | Inverted pyramid. News values enhanced and human interest added. |

This chapter will focus on four issues. Firstly, it will examine whether the students understood the deeper requirements of the inverted-pyramid form and how to introduce and enhance the news values critical to the newsworthiness of a story. Secondly, it will consider the students' progress in being able to fulfil the technical requirements of

writing a news story, whether in the inverted pyramid or the hybrid form, and assess the appropriateness of the genre chosen. Thirdly, it will look at whether the students are gaining a deeper understanding of their own writing, are able to evaluate it and consider its worth. Lastly, it will examine whether there are indications that the students are aspiring to higher ideals of journalism. Are they independent, critical thinkers who can investigate and know how to write not only interesting and appealing but also important news stories? Section 7.3 will cover the inverted-pyramid news stories while 7.4 considers the hybrid news stories and 7.5 concludes this chapter.

7.3 The inverted pyramid

Nine of the 17 news stories were written essentially in the inverted-pyramid form. These tended to be stronger than those written in the hybrid form, indicating that the training the students had received and their experience writing news stories had some benefits. The students writing in this form also showed some development from their earlier efforts, especially in their lead sentences and in keeping their stories brief and more focused on the key proposition. But there were still significant problems centring on their variable understanding of how to enhance the newsworthiness, especially in their lexical choice and structure. Writing more stories and working in the media had reduced but not removed the shortcomings in their training about the requirements of the inverted pyramid and the news genre.

This section will discuss the lead sentences and news values of these nine stories in 7.3.1. It will show that the students had gained some skills through their experience working in the industry and their lead sentences were displaying negative news value. Section 7.3.2 considers their lexical choice, revealing that some students were still not enhancing the newsworthiness of their stories through their choice of words. Section 7.3.3 will also show that some were not aware that the story structure could also increase the news value. Section 7.3.4 looks at the insertion of background information to add continuity and context while 7.3.5 considers the syntax of this more traditional form of writing news stories. It finds that although most students were writing using fewer words, their news stories could still be shortened.

7.3.1 Lead sentences

Overall, most students were beginning to grasp the concept of lead sentences, but they had not yet fully understood the need to enhance the news values to make their stories more interesting and attention-grabbing. Of the nine inverted-pyramid stories, six lead sentences were only slightly modified. These students showed an understanding of the purpose of the lead sentence; that it both started to tell the story and summarised it. Three leads needed considerable change, including one that required information from elsewhere in the story moved into it.

By this time of the year, the students knew that news is essentially bad, so that their stories all displayed some underlying negativity, as well as other news values. News is about conflict leading to war or conflict between people, disasters of all kinds, from huge earthquakes killing hundreds, or five members of a family drowning at sea. The students' stories were not usually on this grand scale, although two students' stories had potential to be published nationally: one was about the long-term effects of the Bali bombings on a former diplomat's health, and the other on an anti-war protest. More usually the mid-year stories were about topics such as the problems the elderly have in paying their rates bills, a polluted river and the closure of a student exchange scheme. These are the stuff of community newspapers. While these newspapers are usually free and do not need to attract paying readership, they still need to attract an audience and can contain interesting and important news stories.

Most students using the inverted-pyramid format were now able to select the most important event as the focus or angle to introduce their story. For example, Henreitta's story was about white foam which had been discharged into the Haworth River, causing some pollution (see Table 7.1). The professional journalist modified this sentence only slightly, strengthening it and adding two additional words "mysterious" and "polluting" to maximise the negative news values.

Sam also chose an important event to focus her lead sentence on (see Table 7.1). Her story was about an international exchange programme that was closing in New Zealand. Her lead sentence read:

**Sam
S1**

International exchange programme Youth for Understanding (YFU) is shutting its doors for good in New Zealand at the end of this week.

The first six words in this sentence explained the international exchange programme. When this was coupled with continued repetition of the acronym “YFU”, this served to deaden the story (see 7.3.3). Instead, the professional journalist led with the actors, the Kiwi students:

P1

Kiwi students will miss out when an international exchange organisation closes in New Zealand this week

Modifications to the other students’ lead sentences were of a similar nature. The underlying negativity in Martha’s story needed to be enhanced. She wrote about problems at a primary school which had led to the principal resigning and a new interim principal being appointed. Her sentence was shortened and the reason for the appointment of the interim principal was added, plus the negative word “troubled”:

| Martha | Professional version |
|---|--|
| S1: More changes in leadership are underway at Maunganui School with the appointment of an interim principal, Mr Gary Cain, to lead the school until a permanent principal is selected. | P1: A newly appointed interim principal heads the staff changes at the top of the troubled Maunganui School. |

Mongo’s lead sentence showed similar progress, including a greater ability to highlight a number of news values. The sentence started with the actors, the two motorists who provided human interest. The negativity was in “dangerous driving”, and words that are found commonly in news, “pursuit”, “complaint” and “police”. It had significance in that a complaint against a police officer has impact. Including two place names, Ashwood and Hillcrest, gave it proximity. However, it did lack some clarity. He wrote:

Mongo

S1

Two Ashwood motorists have laid a complaint of dangerous driving against a Hillcrest police officer involved in an alleged pursuit last Sunday.

The professional journalist made some small modifications. She changed “last Sunday” to “on Sunday” to enhance its immediacy and inserted a third person, the motor cyclist, to make the sentence quite clear:

P1

Two Ashwood motorists and a motorcyclist have laid a complaint of dangerous driving against a Hillcrest police officer involved in an alleged pursuit on Sunday.

Three students, however, were still having difficulty writing a lead sentence, including Sully. His lead required information to be moved from elsewhere in his story to provide a stronger angle. His story was about conflict at the Haworth City Council over the introduction of low rates for the elderly. He started by focusing on Haworth city councillor, Robert Hansen, who was questioning whether pensioners could pay their rates bills:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Sully S1 | The ability of many pensioners to pay their rates bills has been questioned by Haworth City Councillor, Robert Hansen. |
|---------------------------|--|

Although some of the students were showing greater technical ability in their writing, there was still a marked lack of independence and innovation. The students did not appear to have been educated about the merit of journalists challenging received wisdom, or not just relying on the most obvious sources in positions of authority. Rather, with the focus of their training on meeting the expectations of potential employers, through work experience and the heightened role of editors and chief reporters, any nonconformist instincts from the students were being repressed.

Sully's lead reflects this. He wrote about a rates remission policy to provide relief to people on low incomes. His reflections provided a clue as to why he ordered his story in the way he did. While he was on work experience, the editor, who felt that the city councillor had not had his point of view adequately aired, asked Sully to write the story. The students were particularly influenced by their editors and chief reporters, and sometimes what their sources said, as Miranda's story will also show (see section 7.4). Therefore Sully began his story with Councillor Robert Hansen, rather than searching for a stronger lead. However, in the professional version, the story started with the most newsworthy angle, a spokesman from the elderly persons' lobby group, discussing the struggles that their members were encountering. This immediately gave it human interest and strengthened the negativity by introducing the "struggling" elderly with "increasing" rates bills:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | Many older ratepayers on a fixed income are struggling to keep up with increasing rates bills, says a Grey Power spokesman. |
|-----------|---|

This lead, which came from Sully's 13th sentence, not only enhanced the human interest and negativity of the story but also made the story appealing to the reader and easier to

understand. Thus it fulfilled the aim of conveying an important message to the audience in an entertaining and newsworthy fashion.

7.3.2 Lexical choice

The students writing in the inverted pyramid form were also showing some noticeable, although not remarkable, improvement in their lexical choice. There were still four areas where their lexical choice could be further developed. The first area was where the vocabulary was “news weak”. The students often repeated words, rather than enhancing the news values by using “vivid” words. The second area was where words or phrases were transferred from those of a source or informant, so that the story did not flow smoothly. The third was the persuasive or promotional words appearing in the students’ texts. Lastly, various lexical strategies could have been used to make stories appear more credible.

At the beginning of the year, it was noticeable that the students wrote dully, using often uninteresting and news-weak words. Chapter 6 showed how the professional journalist used “vivid” words (Kennamer, 1988) to heighten the negativity. Verbs such as “destroyed”, “clamping down”, “warned” and nouns including “danger”, “drink-spiking” and “attacks” were inserted. By the middle of the year, while the occasional adjective was added such as “mysterious” and “angry”, there were fewer insertions of this kind.

However, the students were still using a number of news-weak words. Jamima’s lead sentence was an example. Her story was full of these words:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Jamima S1 | Kingston Prison is anticipating the construction of more new developments as the plans are nearing completion. |
|----------------------------|--|

This lead contained two nominalisations, “construction” and “completion”, and as well used the word “anticipating”. In her second sentence she used “administration facility”, and in S3 “health facility”, “visiting facility” and “receiving office” as well as “gatehouse”. Her fourth sentence, while containing a number of grammatical errors, indicated the reason for her use of words: she was writing for the prison service newsletter. She wrote:

S4 Over the years, Kingston Prison has increased in growth and the building became inadequate in size and in number to deliver the quality of service that the department wanted.

Words such as those Jamima was using had been transferred from the mouth of someone else (Matheson, 2005). The only person Jamima spoke to for this story was the prison's project liaison manager and these words appeared to have been transferred into her text directly from him. This indicated a deeper problem. Many of the students were not probing or challenging their official source. They were merely reporting the official's opinion. Jamima repeated the words that an official would use to hide, rather than reveal, the changes at the prison. S7 was another example: the word "beneficial" was used without question or explanation, accepting the official's promotional discourse:

S7 Kingston's Project Liaison Manager Tony Black says the new developments will prove beneficial to the general running of the prison and will cater for more staff and inmates.

The next sentence continued to obfuscate rather than clarify, by suggesting the changes were for "better movement of staff and visitors". Later she described a control room and a separate area for "managing any incidents" and also cells to "better manage and process inmates" which meant better "security".

Jamima's choice of words made it difficult to understand the thrust of the story. However, the professional version removed these prison-discourse words and replaced them with clear, understandable ones. The professional lead sentence read:

P1 Plans are nearly complete to build new secure buildings at Kingston Prison.

The word "facility" was replaced by "centre" and about 100 words were deleted, including Jamima's S4. It was replaced by this sentence:

P3 Project manager Tony Black says the new buildings will house the increasing numbers of inmates more comfortably and securely.

While Jamima's story was impeded by her writing style, it was also handicapped by being "captured" by the prison discourse of her source. Students generally struggle to learn the many constraints and rules associated with the inverted-pyramid news story. They must try to select the most relevant material gathered from different people at

different times and as well use short sentences and choose the right words to tell the story. Not all these things are remembered and the students often take the easy way out and use the same words as their sources. This student worked for the prison service on work experience, also indicating that this kind of learning by doing might have been giving her plenty of writing practice but her training was not assisting her to develop the independence to ask the searching questions necessary to convey the real story.

Sully's story showed similar difficulties. He used a number of different words for describing an "elderly ratepayer" but was also "caught" by the discourse of whoever he was talking to and was not assisted to think critically about his story. At first, in his story, the text indicated it was derived from the discourse of the city council. Sully wrote about "pensioners" on "low incomes", then described how they would "get relief" under the "rates remission policy":

S2

Many Haworth pensioners on low incomes who have rates bills above the average of \$1229, will get relief under the rates remission policy recently revised by the Haworth City Council.

In his next sentence, he reinforced the council discourse by writing about the "average rates bill" which would "apply to a property" with a "land value" of about \$62,000 and "capital value" of about \$180,000. The effect of using three figures in the same sentence would also confuse the reader:

S3

The average rates bill would apply to a property with a land value of about \$62,000 and capital value of about \$180,000-\$190,000.

In terms of writing style, another example of the consequences of not encouraging the students to monitor and think about their language was the use of excessive or unnecessary repetition. Journalists are expected to use synonyms wherever possible so that the same word is not repeated in the same sentence or too often in the same story in order to make their copy exciting and to attract audiences (Matheson, 2005). Sam had difficulties with this. As mentioned previously, she used the acronym "YFU" 11 times in her story, including twice in one sentence, which served to take away any excitement:

S1

Youth for Understanding (YFU).

S2

YFU.....YFU.

S5

YFU

| | |
|------------|-------------------------|
| S7 | went on an YFU exchange |
| S9 | YFU |
| S10 | Last August, YFU |
| S13 | one of the last YFU |
| S14 | before YFU closes |
| S15 | involved in YFU |
| S16 | involved in YFU |

Instead, the professional version first described Youth for Understanding as an “international exchange programme”, later a “non-profit organisation” and also the “organisation”, “the exchange” and “international youth exchanges”. Sam had earlier reflected that she liked to “play around” with words. But by the middle of the year, she, like many other students, thought she was writing “automatically”, meaning she was not reflecting on her use of words or apparently revising her copy for repetitive words. The method of subediting also might play a part. Tutors who skim-read stories in order to correct them will often concentrate more on surface errors such as punctuation and style and will fail to pick up the repetition of words and poor structure.

The same defect could be seen in Henreitta’s writing. She repeated the word “foam” five times in her first five sentences and another three times in her last four sentences. At the same time she used a variation of the word “regular” three times in each of the first three sentences. The combination of these words made the foam appear a normal, everyday occurrence, especially coupled with the order of the story (see 7.3.3), which emphasised that a council official did not see it as a threat. However, the professional version enhanced the event, describing it as “mysterious white foam”. This made it worthy of a news story as it appeared to be significant and out of the ordinary. As well as describing it as “white froth”, later in the story it was described as “discharge”, introducing an almost sinister connotation which also enhanced the negative value.

Sully used the word “pensioners”, presumably unconsciously copying the language of the city councillors, seven times in the first 10 sentences, as well as quoting one talking about “a little old lady”. While I do not wish to discuss the rights and wrongs of politically correct language, many regard the term “pensioner” as bordering on offensive or condescending and the repetition of the word heightened this effect. This is

another example of repetition reflecting a lack of contemplation of the choice of words, deriving from the pressures of learning by doing and the failure to encourage the students to monitor their writing.

When Sully was writing about the Work and Income spokesman¹⁹, he switched to the words of a government official, referring to “superannuitants” instead of “pensioners”. He also wrote about “hardship”, “assessed individually”, “qualify” and referred to one older person not as an individual but as a “case”:

S18

Work and income spokesman Lyell Hopu says superannuitants in hardship may apply to Work and Income for financial assistance and each case will be assessed individually.

But when Sully used information from the organisation for the elderly, Grey Power, he referred to the elderly people as “older ratepayers”, using a more neutral term, as in the sentence below:

S13

A Grey Power spokesman Mr Jack Goddard says that the struggle of keeping up with increasing rates bills while on a fixed income causes many older ratepayers great distress.

This use of words from many different sources was an example of intertextual words (Fairclough, 1995) and meant that Sully’s text was not an integrated whole and did not flow smoothly. It also meant that his story was repetitive and hard to follow. In contrast, the professional version used the word “pensioners” only when using direct speech from the two councillors in P12 and P18. They were elsewhere described as “older ratepayers” in P1, “elderly people” in P5 and P7, “people on low incomes” in P8, “older people” in P16 and “superannuitants” in P19 when quoting the Work and Income spokesperson.

This problem arose in Sully’s and others’ writing, as students tended to paraphrase their sources and use their language. This indicated the students were not yet in control of their news stories. They were simply reporting what their sources said, rather than shaping the comments into a well-balanced story.

¹⁹ Work and Income is the New Zealand government department that distributes benefits to the elderly, unemployed, sick and disabled.

However, at least some of the students showed an ability to use lexical choice to convey the distinctive view of their sources while retaining overall control over the story. Mongo used the well-established lexis of news stories about crime to reflect his sources' dislike of the police. In his first sentence, he had two motorists who "laid a complaint of dangerous driving" against a "police officer involved in an alleged pursuit". The next sentence stated that the "officer endangered their lives and the lives of others" when the police car began "veering towards her to force her off the road". The motorcyclist claimed the police officer started "ramming" her, a word that is repeated in the next sentence. A witness "lodged a complaint", saying the officer "overtook two cars on a blind corner". The witness also repeated the accusation that the officer tried to "ram" her off the road. He would have "killed" anyone coming the other way, said the witness. The police "declined to comment" and the motorcyclist stated: "If the police want to kill people for the sake of a \$120 ticket then they need a serious shakeup."

This story also included a number of words producing fear, such as: "dangerous driving", "endangered lives", "veering", "force", "rammed", "blind corner", and "killed", used twice. It was coupled with official language to make it more authoritative, "laid a complaint," "lodged a complaint", "alleged pursuit", "declined to comment", "under review" and used the combination of news lexis and intertextual phraseology commonly found in news stories of this kind. Newspaper readers accept and understand these conventions much more readily than the council discourse that Sully used.

However, the credibility of Mongo's story was damaged by a lack of facts and figures. This was an example of the importance of teaching how to build up a "web of facticity" to validate the information through gathering facts, using authoritative sources and using figures as facts (Tuchman, 1978). The professional journalist used several strategies to ensure it appeared more credible. Firstly, the lead sentence was modified to make it quite clear that there were three people involved in the incident, a motorcyclist and two cars. The length of the highway, "2 kms from the Haworth Highway to Coromandel", and the speed limit of "80kph" were also inserted. Exact numbers were used to provide credibility (van Dijk, 1988). Later the name of the witness, Haworth shopkeeper Kevin Stewart, and the police officer, Haworth police sergeant John Button were inserted, as a method of making the story appear more authoritative. Mongo's eighth sentence read:

S8 Another witness has lodged a complaint saying the officer overtook two cars on a blind corner while chasing Miss Bowen into Coromandel.

Instead the professional wrote:

P8 Haworth shopkeeper Kevin Stewart witnessed the incident and has lodged a complaint claiming the officer overtook two cars on a blind corner just outside of Coromandel while chasing Miss Bowen.

P9 Another witness did not wish to be named.

In S13, Mongo wrote:

S13 Haworth police declined to comment on the incident, saying the matter would be under review.

The professional version, to further increase the story's credibility, inserted the policeman's name and read:

P17 Haworth police sergeant John Button declined to comment, as the matter was under review.

7.3.3 Order in news stories

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, the students are taught that the inverted pyramid has the most important points at the beginning, allowing the bottom of the story to be cut to fit the space (Tucker, 1999b). They, however, receive little training in why the order of the story is so important to and how it contributes to further enhancing the news values and has another fundamental purpose: to reinforce the proposition in the lead sentence. Those students writing in the inverted-pyramid formula continued to reflect this failure and their stories suggested that they had little understanding of or paid little attention to how the order of the story could strengthen the angle or theme.

Henreitta's story was an example of this continuing shortcoming. In various ways, she was exhibiting an improvement in some of the technical requirements of the inverted pyramid. At the beginning of the year, as shown in Chapter 6 and Figure 6.1, Henreitta failed to include in her lead sentence the most important material. By the middle of the year, she was successful in identifying the most newsworthy event for the lead and, as a consequence, her first sentence was far stronger. She was also showing a better understanding of the syntax of a news sentence. However, a lack of understanding of the complexities of inverted pyramid was revealed in other ways, most notably in how to

use additional information to contextualise the story (see Appendix II for Henreitta's full story and the professional version) and how to emphasise the proposition in the main sentence, including through the order of the story. While her lead sentence required only slight modification, the rest of her story needed reordering to highlight the threat of the white foam, believed to be detergent, both to the river and to the town. To do this, the deputy chairperson of the works committee's comments on the need for the public to be vigilant, were moved from the end of the story, S8, S9 and S10, to near the beginning, P3 to P6, to give them more weight. At the same time, the importance of the acting water manager's contrary view that the foam was not a threat to the river was diminished by relegating it to the end.

Figure 7.1 shows that Henreitta's first two sentences remained in the same position. They are marked "A". But S3 to S7, marked "B", are moved down in the order to P10-P14. Instead three sentences, S8-S10, marked "C", are elevated in the story to P3-P9. New information, contextualising and explaining the threat, is inserted into three sentences, marked "new" (see section 7.3.4). Thus A-B-C became A-C-New-B to reinforce the news elements of the story and enhance the lead sentence's proposition: mysterious white foam was causing a threat to the town. The changed order of Henreitta's story is shown diagrammatically in Figure 7.1. The diagram illustrates that the first two sentences were little changed but the striking reversal of the rest of the story is revealed.

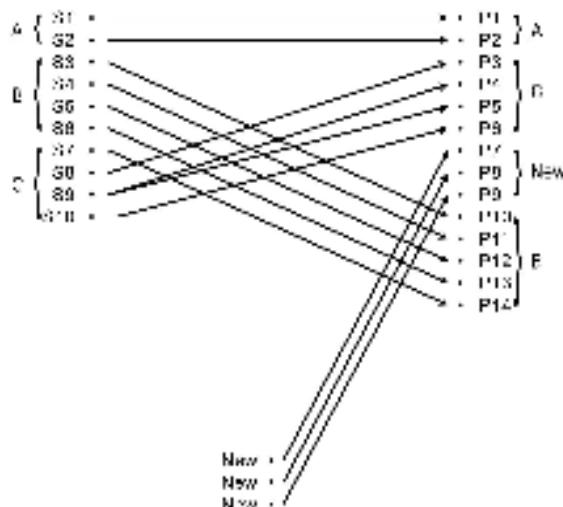


Figure 7.1 Changes to the order of Henreitta's mid-year story

Sully's story was another example which indicated the students lacked an understanding of how to order their stories to emphasise the theme and enhance the news values. He

was trying to make it clear that elderly people, in particular, were entitled to a rates cut. Councillor Hansen was promoting this viewpoint but other council members had agreed that not only the elderly but all low-income people were eligible for a rates decrease.

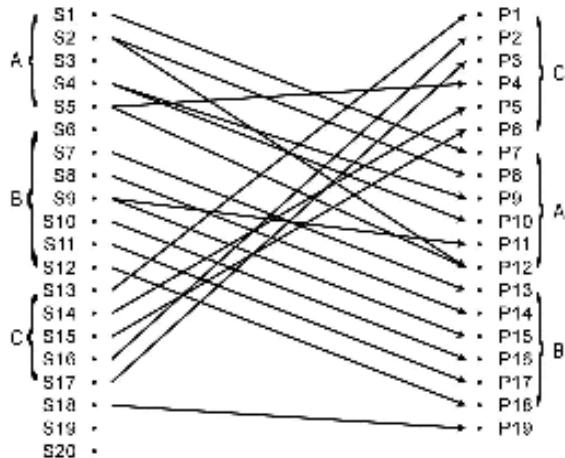


Figure 7.2 Changes to the order of Sully's mid-year story

He started his story with a rather weak lead (see 7.3.1) that was difficult to understand. The next four sentences described the rise in rates and were also hard to follow because of the large amount of intertextual wording and information derived from the council. To make the story more newsworthy, it required a sharper lead sentence which would be immediately understood. This required moving the Grey Power spokesperson's comments, originally placed at "C" in Sully's story, to the lead. This move heightened and clarified the story's main proposition: older ratepayers were struggling to keep up with an increasing rates bill. Though Figure 7.2 (see next page) is not as clear-cut as Henreitta's because of its greater complexity, it marked the change in order from A-B-C to C-A-B. Once the lead sentence was moved, S16 and S17, and then S14 and S15, followed to elaborate on it, by describing how the government had first encouraged the elderly to stay in their homes because it was cheaper but they were now being forced out by rising rates. These sentences were marked "C" in Sully's story. As well as elevating it in the story, there was also some reordering within the block to put the most newsworthy comments first. Thus in the professional version, the original sentences are in the sequence S13, S16, S17, S14, S15.

The block marked "B" in Sully's original referred to another councillor's opposing view, that not only older people, but all low-income people should be eligible for rates relief. This was put at the end of the professional version (see Appendix II for Sully's

story and professional version) to diminish its importance. Thus the order was changed from A-B-C to C-A-B, again to reinforce the theme.

7.3.4 Background and additional information

The students' ability to identify and successfully incorporate relevant background information into their articles was another problem area still evident by the mid-year stage, despite some improvements.

According to van Dijk (1988), a news report can be divided into two main categories. The first category is the main events and consequences, while the second relates to the background to the story, including the history and context, which can be further split into circumstances and previous events. The purpose of inserting this is to provide the wider context for the story. This may be what has happened historically, "recent history" or events previous to the news story, "previous events", allowing the reader to link this story to others that have been written, and enhance the news values by providing continuity. It may also be the "circumstances" that surround the story, making it easier to understand and thus enhancing its clarity. Factual information, particularly names and figures, is needed to provide credibility. This was another area where the students' journalism education appeared to be lacking.

At the beginning of the year, of the 20 stories in the research project, 16 stories required additional information of this kind to be added when they were rewritten by the professional journalist (80 per cent). By the middle of the year, this figure had diminished: eight (47 per cent) of the 17 stories required additional information to be inserted. Of the eight stories requiring additional information, five were inverted-pyramid news stories.

Casper was a rare example of a student able to embed or weave this additional material into a sentence describing the main event of the story, so that it appeared as a seamless transition for the reader. He combined the information regarding protests in Wellington with what they were protesting about by inserting a composite phrase, "US-led invasions", and embedded it in this sentence (see Chapter 5):

S2

About 50 protesters surrounded Kelburn's Skyline restaurant greeting

guests and Cable Car commuters with loud music and chanting over the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Conversely, Henreitta's story was an example of the continuing failure to insert necessary information to enhance the news values. She failed to explain why people should be worried about drinking water – the main point of the article. How it should have been done was shown in the professional version where three sentences were added to the story. The sentence, below, was inserted providing the reason why people should be worried about foam discharging in the river, and at the same time making it into a more significant story:

P7 Water from the Haworth River is treated and used as the city's drinking water.

Another area requiring additional information was the need to explain who was responsible for the problem – that is the Waiora Regional Council. Henreitta's story quoted the city council's works committee chairperson and also the city council's acting water, drainage and refuse manager. While the city was responsible for the pipes and thus what was being discharged, it was the regional council to whom questions about the discharge should have been directed. This information was added to the professional version to rectify this:

P8 Special consent must be gained from the Waiora Regional Council to discharge into the river.

A third additional sentence also provided the circumstances surrounding the incident. It showed that the regional council viewed the discharge into the river seriously and ran a complaints hotline:

P9 The regional council runs a complaints hotline to guard against illegal discharge.

This additional information also contributed to the credibility of the story by providing information that gave the story an authoritative tone.

Similarly Sam's story (see Appendix II for full story) lacked any precise figures about the number of students from New Zealand and elsewhere who would suffer when an international exchange organisation closed. In the professional version, firstly, the large number of international students who had benefited from the scheme was added with

the phrase: “to find host families for the 200 students who wanted to come to New Zealand each year”. This also signalled that the event was of some importance:

P4

For several years it has been struggling to find host families for the 200 students who come to New Zealand each year because many people are choosing to take international students who pay board.

Sam wrote the following as her seventh sentence:

S7

Rachel Watt from Penrose went on an YFU exchange to Maryland in the USA in 2002, and said it is a shame to see the programme close in New Zealand.

This sentence was also changed, in order to support the lead sentence’s proposition that “Kiwi students will miss out”. Information that 130 New Zealand students went overseas on the exchange programme in 2002 was embedded in this sentence:

P6

Penrose’s Rachel Watt was one of the 130 New Zealand students who went overseas in 2002.

While some students with greater experience of writing news stories were recognising the importance of background information, at least eight of the total 17 stories were deficient in this area. This continuing failure could, like many of the problems discussed here, be linked to the nature of their education. The failure to explain the importance of background information and discuss methods of incorporating it was combined with a focus on writing news stories at considerable speed with strictly enforced deadlines. The students had neither the time nor the theoretical tools to reflect on what they had written and how to improve it. This sometimes meant that students saw their news story as “just one of the many” they were required to write, rather than reflecting on what additional information was required. In the five months since the year had started, while there was some progress, there was still a long way to go.

7.3.5 Changes to the students’ syntax

In Chapter 6, the syntax of the students’ early stories was examined with particular focus on a general problem with tense and aspect change, and especially the tendency to include unnecessary and inappropriate words. The inconsistencies involving tense and aspect had largely been removed by mid-year. They had settled into the non-daily newspaper convention of using the present tense throughout their stories, providing

greater immediacy and consistency. This improvement may well have stemmed from their greater experience and from their periods writing and working as trainee journalists for community newspapers.

A more important requirement of a journalist is to use the minimum number of words with the maximum content so as to shorten the story for the skim-reader of the newspaper while strengthening its impact and news values. The students were also showing some improvement on their early efforts in this, although more was required to meet a baseline professional standard.

This was indicated by the fact that the professional journalist felt that the great majority of the stories, both written in the inverted-pyramid form, and as we will see in 7.4.5, in the hybrid form, needed to be more concise with redundant phrases and unnecessary words removed. Twelve out of the 17 student stories required shortening with an average of 55 words or 18 per cent of each story cut. This still represented a significant improvement from the beginning of the year when 19 out of the 20 stories were judged to require cutting at an average of 109 words (40 per cent) for each story. This situation again suggested that the greater experience and the learning-by-doing method were having some positive results in the more formulaic parts of news writing although, even in this, greater progress was still needed. The stories written in the inverted-pyramid formula were still marked by some redundant clauses, phrases and sentences and a failure to summarise information. For example, Sam's story used three sentences to convey information that could have been merged into one sentence. The three sentences read:

| | |
|----|--|
| S2 | YFU national chairman Doug Marshall said there are several reasons for the close of the New Zealand branch of YFU. |
| S3 | SARS, September 11 and email have impacted on the decline of the exchange programme, he said. |
| S4 | "The growth in fee-paying foreign students is also a factor." |

The professional version read:

| | |
|----|---|
| P2 | Growth in fee-paying foreign students is a factor in the closure of Youth for Understanding (YFU), as well as SARS, September 11 and email, says national chairman Doug Marshall. |
|----|---|

Similarly, Sully's story contained lengthy sentences, with many unnecessary words. These sentences were summarised in the professional version, words were deleted and removed and the council jargon was changed into simple English. Sully's lead sentence read: "The ability of many pensioners to pay their rates bills has been questioned by ..." This sentence was passive, did not start with the actor and did not say anything meaningful. The professional saved four words and also changed it to make it immediately comprehensible, so that it read: "City councillor Robert Hansen agrees elderly Haworth people need help to pay their rates" and moved it in the order from S1 to P7. A second way of shortening the story was to turn clauses into composite adjectives. Sully wrote: "... will get relief under the rates remission policy recently revised by ..." This took 11 words and it was reduced to four when the professional wrote: "The recently-revised policy ... "

Small changes to the writing also cut out many additional words. Sully referred to "Cr Roger Hansen" all the way through his story whereas in the professional version "Mr Hansen" was used to avoid the old-fashioned title for councillor. The use of unnecessary facts also made Sully's story difficult to understand:

S4

Provided single pensioners paying average rates had income of less than \$14,700 per annum, they would be eligible for a rates remission, in this case, increasing to a maximum of \$300 if they earned below \$12,300.

The professional journalist shortened this 36-word sentence, writing two sentences with one fact in each so that it became clear, and also reduced it by six words:

P9

Single persons paying average rates who have an annual income under \$14,700 are eligible for rates remission.

P10

They can receive a maximum of \$300 if their income is below \$12,300.

It is of interest to explore why, despite the progress they had made, many of the students writing in a form that emphasises brevity and conciseness still tended to write more words than necessary. It suggests that they required more training to meet the standards of the media industry. More worryingly, it indicates that the kind of training they were receiving had serious shortcomings. Most feedback they received on their writing came in the form of subbing by editors and journalism tutors. This could lead to a focus on surface errors rather than stylistic problems. The deletions and summarisation made by these experienced journalists may have improved the students' stories but, as they were

generally made without explanation or discussion, they did not quickly lead to student understanding. The failure to encourage or require the students to monitor and think about their own writing – and the provision of methods to help them do so – would seem to have a slowing effect on the students' progress.

This section has shown that the students by mid-year were making some progress in their writing of news stories in the inverted-pyramid formula. Given that the focus of their training was on the mechanical requirements of this formula, and on the writing of a large number of stories using this model, these improvements were not unexpected or remarkable. In areas such as their lead sentences, the students were slowly showing some signs of being able to write in the genre for which they had been trained.

However, considerable development, both in the technical skills and on the wider requirements of writing strong, compelling news stories, was still necessary. It was particularly significant that the students continued to lack an understanding of news values and how they could turn an uninteresting article into a compelling news story. This combined with news-writing styles that, while showing progress, tended with rare exceptions to be competent at best, contributed to rather dull examples of the inverted pyramid devoid of its most important, underlying requirements. Perhaps the most significant failing in the students' news stories at the half-way mark of their training was the lack of any spark or curiosity shown by many of the students. The subjects they chose to write about, and especially the common failure to go beyond interviewing the most obvious sources, and then quoting or paraphrasing them without questioning alternative viewpoints or further investigation, continued to indicate a lack of critical thinking and a wider viewpoint. The students' greater exposure to the requirements of the editor and of deadlines, and the lack of encouragement to fulfil the deeper aims of the journalist, was not leading to more exciting journalists, only marginally more competent ones.

7.4 Hybrid stories

Mid-year eight of the 17 students still in the study wrote what could be termed "hybrid" stories marked by soft lead sentences (Bell, 1991). Of these eight, five could be classified as "human interest" stories where the news interest was not placed at the

beginning but elsewhere in the body of the text (Ostman, 1997). Another type of hybrid news story is promotional news (Wernick, 1991), where information favourable to an organisation, its products or services, is encoded into a promotional message or text in the hope that this will lead the reader to buy or use the service. Promotional news stories, while not unique to community newspapers, are increasingly common in them because the line between advertising and editorial is often blurred (Cafarella, 2001). As discussed in Chapter 6, many of the students added an occasional persuasive or promotional sentence or tone to their news stories. This chapter will not consider these isolated examples but will concentrate on three mid-year stories where the central intent or tone appeared to be essentially promotional.

The high percentage of the students' stories written in the hybrid style was a reflection of the fact that all of the students had gained some experience of community newspapers, either through work experience or by writing class stories intended for publication in a particular local newspaper. Indeed, many of the students seek work after graduation in community newspapers. Community and other non-daily newspapers are often seen as the "training" ground for young journalists (Cafarella, 2001).

Although hybrid stories are increasingly common, both the journalism unit standards (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997) and the standard textbook *Intro* (Tucker, 1999a) used by the students gloss over the question of their style. They discuss feature articles which can cover a range of story types – news backgrounder, personality profiles, investigative stories and travel articles, both in the previous textbook (Tucker, 1999a) and the new edition (Tully, 2008), but there is little mention of hybrid stories as a specific form requiring different training, probably out of a basic tendency to disregard specific news genres and theoretical models and to see them as "too complex". Thus New Zealand journalism education almost entirely neglects to train its students in the writing of these hybrid stories. There would appear to be virtually no instruction on what are the specific requirements and purposes of these genres, on when it is appropriate to write in this model and what are the differences and similarities between hybrid stories and the rules of the inverted pyramid. Even the latest version of the New Zealand standard textbook over-simplifies any mention of promotional and human-interest journalism (Riddle, 2008).

This absence reflects a basic contradiction and failure in New Zealand journalism education. While the central aim of the journalism schools is to prepare students for work in the media industry, it does not essentially prepare them to write in all the forms that will be expected of them. Moreover, the emphasis on learning through working in the media is undermined if the students' education in the classroom is not better coordinated with the experiences they will receive in the newsroom. This omission has another consequence: it ignores the students' need to understand news genres and the news media in general. This section will look at the impact this lack of education has on the students' attempt to write in hybrid forms with 7.4.1 discussing their lead sentences, in particular human interest and promotional lead sentences. Section 7.4.2 considers the problems of the students' lexical choice and conversational language leading to "marketization" and 7.4.3, the order of the students' stories. Section 7.4.4 shows that more students were inserting background and additional information into their stories, a definite step towards writing professionally while 7.4.5 discusses the significant amount of superfluous material that required deletion.

7.4.1 Lead sentences

One of the most noticeable differences between inverted-pyramid and hybrid-news stories is the lead sentence. Hybrid stories tend to use what are termed soft leads, both for features and for news stories. Soft leads do not require any of the components of an inverted-pyramid lead. They are not marked by immediacy and rarely include two events, one causally related to the other. The most common form is the "drop intro" or "drop lead" where, rather than putting the most newsworthy event first as in the inverted pyramid, the major news element may be found in later paragraphs (Tucker, 1999a).

Proponents of the inverted pyramid tend to disparage the soft lead as "completely superfluous" for any story apart from the feature (Waterhouse, 1993). However, community newspapers tend to favour soft leads. From my experience of community newspapers, I would suggest there are three main reasons for this. Firstly, they help to distinguish community newspapers from daily ones. Secondly, soft leads are often deemed more appropriate for the conversational style and tone (Fairclough, 1994) that community newspapers adopt to create an image of being "closer to the people" (Thomas, 1997) Thirdly, the preponderance of soft leads reflects the fact that many

articles in community newspaper favour human-interest topics rather than hard news. It is sometimes an easier task to write an attention-gaining lead that is not an inverted-pyramid lead. This can help avoid the problem described by Bell (1991) where journalists, especially those working in daily newspapers, spend “much of their energy trying to find an angle which will present what is essentially soft news in hard news terms” (p.14).

However, the use of soft leads, especially when written by students untrained in them, can be ineffective and indeed superfluous. Five students wrote human interest stories, three with drop leads. Anastacia used her lead sentence to create local interest, while producing the news element in her second sentence:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Anastacia | Local beauty queen Kathryn Nobel has come a long way since she was awarded third place in the 2001 Miss Warkworth pageant. |
| S2 | Not only has she gained the title of Miss Ashwood 2003 but next month she will also have a shot at becoming Miss New Zealand. |

Agnes's story similarly had a drop-lead with the news element dispersed between the first and second sentences:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Agnes | Petanque players will find themselves in very experienced hands when they compete as part of the South Pacific Masters Games next year in New Lynn. |
| S2 | The Games Petanque coordinator Karl Wanders is a former petanque champion who held the National Dutch singles title five times between 1975-1980. |

A lead written in the inverted pyramid format could have made the same points and used the same news values in a more succinct and clear fashion. If these sentences had been written in the inverted-pyramid format, Anastacia's would have read:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Alternative lead | A local beauty queen is having a shot at becoming Miss New Zealand, after winning the title of Miss Ashwood. |
|-------------------------|--|

While Agnes's would have been written as:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Alternative lead | A former Dutch petanque champion will be the coordinator for the South Pacific Masters Games next year in New Lynn. |
|-------------------------|---|

This would have enhanced the human interest by starting with the former Dutch champion and added the news value of prominence, proximity and clarity to the lead sentence.

Alison, while also writing a human interest story, chose a lead similar to an inverted-pyramid lead, with more positive results. She wrote:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Alison | A Reefton brother and sister with talents for the piano played their way to the top at a music competition recently. |
| S2 | Helen and Dominique Gregory competed with about 200 other students in the New Zealand Modern School of Music Westland annual competition held at Gore on 4-5 July. |
| S3 | The pair had great success at the piano competitions and were awarded trophies and medals for their efforts. |

These opening sentences were newsworthy in a community newspaper. The predominant news value in Alison's opening sentences was human interest. This story was about two local children who had achieved some local fame, in Westland and the Reefton community, and had achieved "prominence" locally. It also had proximity: the children would be known to many other parents and children in the community who attended the same school, had seen them at local events, knew their parents, or lived down the street from them. The news values were therefore human interest, proximity and prominence. In her second sentence, the story also gained significance because of the size of the competition: they had competed against 200 students.

More education on the problems that can be caused by soft leads and the benefits of the lead in the inverted-pyramid format could have helped Brendan's story (see Table 7.1). It started with an ineffective drop-lead sentence:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Brendan | With the selection of national representative teams fast approaching, one young table tennis player is throwing caution to the wind to ensure he makes the cut. |
|----------------|---|

However it was not until half-way through his 700-word story that the main news element emerged, in his 17th and 18th sentences:

| | |
|------------|---|
| S17 | Jay certainly must have helped his chances and caught selectors' eyes, with his recent performance at the North Island Championships in July. |
|------------|---|

S18

In the main junior event, the Under 19's, Jay simply demolished the rest of the field.

Even more damaging for Brendan's lead, and for his story as a whole, was the lack of understanding of the importance of news values (see Appendix II for full story). The major news angle for this story was that the table-tennis champion was Māori in a sport associated in New Zealand with players of Asian descent. Brendan in his taped reflections recognised this as an interesting point yet neglected to include it in his story. A lead with stronger news values in the inverted-pyramid format could have had major beneficial effects for Brendan's story. The professional version of his lead read:

P1

A Māori high school student demolished the field at the North Island Table Tennis championships held at the weekend in Haworth.

This changed the lead sentence from a soft lead to a hard one and enhanced the news value so that the reader would want to continue with the story. Human interest was introduced by starting the sentence with the actor, negativity added with the word "demolished" and significance by enhancing his feat: he was a high school student who had won the North Island table tennis championships against much older players. By introducing where the event was held, the sentence gained proximity and it was also immediate and clear. An inverted-pyramid lead with strong news values would have had another key add-on effect. It would have allowed an overly long and unremarkable story to be shortened to a more appropriate and publishable length.

A particularly problematic feature of these hybrid texts was the increasing number of stories whose essential role was promotional rather than reporting news. Three of the stories in the mid-year could be classified as predominantly promotional. Kathie's story (see Appendix II) for a student newspaper was an attempt to encourage participation in a survey. Kino sought, in the most glowing language, to promote films for a local film society. Most problematically, Miranda's story was a straight piece of advertising without news value for a company seeking to promote a commercial enterprise: writing life histories in exchange for money.

The students' promotional pieces, under the guise of serious journalism, had increased as their year of education progressed. The reason for this trend would seem to lie in the nature of their training. The students, as discussed previously, generally receive

minimal education on the role of a journalist, their ethical requirements and how to maintain standards of journalistic integrity when confronted by the realities of working in the news media. They are placed in circumstances where editors, their sources and others often pressure them to write promotional pieces, particularly as most students work and write for community newspapers where the demand to write such pieces is strong. Community newspapers, with revenue derived solely from advertising, have a reputation for writing nominal news stories where the intent is to please advertisers or non-profit organisations seeking to promote community ventures.

The failure of educational institutions to prepare their students to deal with such pressures is particularly noticeable. Many of the students seemed to have no real understanding of the ethical problems of writing promotional pieces disguised as journalism. Because they had been taught *how* to write inverted-pyramid news stories rather than *why* to write such stories, they seemed unaware of how by following the requirements and standards of this model, a puff piece can be turned into something more substantial. Other students who did see the ethical issues were not encouraged to think about how to avoid these concerns. As we saw in Chapter 5, Casper's unease at writing what he saw as a celebrity piece that betrayed the wishes of his source was not expressed in a realistic way and he, instead, submitted a piece lacking newsworthiness.

Miranda's taped reflections showed she was from the outset concerned that her article on the company commercially producing life stories lacked journalistic credibility. She viewed her interview with the sole source for the story, a manager for the company, as a piece of "hard sell" where the manager aggressively "talked up" the company without providing any real substance for a news story. Despite her concerns, Miranda did indeed write a sustained piece of promotional news for the company. The article was part of her work experience for a religious newspaper and she felt that such a promotional piece was expected and even encouraged as the paper "often published similar stories". This situation again revealed the problems of learning by doing. Students are sent to work in the industry but are not taught to recognise the issues or see the ethical difficulties that could confront them. There is little discussion, debate or preparation on how to resolve such problems.

The failure of some of the students to understand the benefits of leads in the inverted-pyramid model was a major factor in turning what could have been news stories into

promotional pieces. The promotional nature of Kathy, Kino and Miranda's stories was established by their soft leads featuring the conversational style common in non-daily newspapers. Kathie's story, written for a student newspaper, was promoting a concept, rather than a commercial enterprise. The purpose of the story, as Kathie wrote it, was to urge parents to take part in a survey. Her lead sentence read:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Kathie | Women's rights officer Candida Edmond is asking student parents to take part in a nationwide survey on what it's really like to care for children while studying. |
| S1 | |

A lead according to the inverted-pyramid method would have been more newsworthy and established the basis for the news story. The professional journalist illustrated how this could be achieved. By changing the lead, the promotional intent was removed and the story gained news values of negativity, human interest, proximity and significance, finding the information in the fifth and sixth sentences of Kathie's story:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P1 | Transport in Ashwood is the main problem for parents looking after kids while studying, a recent nationwide study shows. |
| P2 | An Ashwood woman describes taking her two pre-schoolers, the youngest three-months old, on two buses to get to the polytechnic, as parking nearby is restricted to 90 minutes pay and display. |

Miranda's lead illustrated a different point. Many promotional pieces resemble the inverted-pyramid model except for their subject (Erjavec, 2004). Miranda's lead read like an inverted-pyramid lead for a news story but it was promoting a company. It read:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Miranda | Preserving precious stories and history for generations to come is the goal of the international <i>This is my life</i> Project. |
| S1 | |

However, the entire story was so short of news elements or values that the professional journalist was unable to find an appropriate lead. Even when the professional journalist reduced the number of adjectives and the persuasive language, the lead remained promotional:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P1 | Helping people preserve family stories for future generations is the goal of <i>This is my life</i> project. |
|-----------|--|

In short, this is a story that should not have been written or published as a news story. As we will see, increasing numbers of the students were writing similar pieces, suggesting a problem with their education.

7.4.2 Lexical choice

The lexical choice in hybrid stories, both human interest stories and promotional pieces, also suggests the problems of inadequately preparing the students for their work experience with community newspapers, in particular. The students receive little tutoring on lexical choice and the impact language has on defining the intent and impact of stories. Nor are they encouraged to reflect on the words they use, and as their taped reflections suggest, most students did not revise or clearly think about the words they chose for a particular story.

The result, especially when writing hybrid stories for community newspapers, is that they adopted a conversational style. Fairclough (1994) describes this as “conversationalization” in that it mixes public and private language. He argues it is part of the trend towards a more commercial and “marketized” style, close to writing in the entertainment genre. According to Fairclough, audiences are increasingly seen as consumers and this accounts for the growing amount of persuasive or promotional text used in news stories. This section will discuss this trend in the students’ hybrid news stories.

This style of writing can be appropriate. Mavis’s lexical choice was the most effective of those writing in this style. Her story about a homework centre consciously used “conversationalization” language to create an informal style to try to reflect the way a 14-year-old boy would talk. It was particularly effective when used in reported speech. She quoted the boy saying:

S3 “I go home from school, have a feed and watch some t.v.

S4 “Then I walk up to the homework centre with my cousin,” the Year 10 student says.

Jason’s way of talking was then echoed in the body of the story, where Mavis wrote that he lived with his “Nana” rather than using the word “grandmother”:

S7 Jason lives with his Nana.

However, such a conversational lexical style can lead to problems, especially when some of the values of a more traditional news story are forgotten. In order to grab attention and establish this conversational style, Mavis’s lead read:

Mavis Jason So'lo loves homework.
S1

This lead was not supported by the rest of story, which did not suggest that Jason actually loved homework. Rather, he loved the homework centre because it stopped him from getting into trouble. The desire for a breezy style of language neglected the news values of the story that could be better told in an inverted-pyramid formula that retained a relaxed style. The professional version read:

P1 Jason So'lo loves the homework centre because it keeps him out of trouble.

The lead sentence now contained the angle and the following paragraphs could then be related back to it in the fashion of an inverted-pyramid story, reflecting the close relationship between the two formats. Perhaps the most harmful result of the students' growing tendency to use "conversationalization" language was that it distanced the stories from the news genre and led to stories having promotional elements or essences. Mavis's last sentence read not like a conclusion to a human interest story but as an advertisement for the homework centre:

S16 The homework centre is at the Monowai Youth Library, Wednesdays from 4-7pm.

Similarly, Agnes's story also had "marketized" copy towards the end of her story, where lexical choice, style and intent combined to create an effect similar to advertising:

S11 There will also be fun competitions and demonstrations with the public welcome to come along, have a glass of wine and try their luck with the game.

Anastacia also concluded her story with a "free" advertisement for the commercial supporters of a beauty contestant:

S9 Although she is not being sponsored for the competition, Kathryn has received much appreciated support from her part-time employers at Orewa's The Bridal Gallery, who have supplied her with evening gowns for both the Miss Warkworth and the Miss New Zealand pageants.

S10 Part-owner of the Bridal Gallery, Pam Simpson said, "It's really our pleasure to help her ... she is a fabulous girl and I really think she has got a good chance of winning the contest."

Anastacia's lexical choice turned what should have been a human interest or news story into a promotional piece. The use of persuasive words, which are features of promotional news (Erjavec, 2004), such as "much appreciated", "pleasure" and "fabulous", damaged the story's credibility and made it appear that the intention was to persuade readers to support the store.

The problems of lexical choice were particularly apparent in the stories where the entire story was essentially promotional. The students, untutored in the lexical choice suitable for the news genre, fell easily into language more suitable for promotional pieces. Kino's lexical choice, for example, helped render her story a promotion for some movies. She appeared to be writing a review, rather than a news story. It was full of evaluative words, as the following four sentences show:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| S6 | as a "comic and philosophical look at life through cinema." |
| S7 | He promises it depicts Haworth in a way it has never been seen before. |
| S8 | Simon Thompson's cleverly amusing ... |
| S9 | ... an insightful and hilarious look at youth culture... |

Her story also ended advertising the event:

| | |
|------------|--|
| S15 | See this programme for one night only at Victoria Cinema, 999 Victoria Street. |
| S16 | For information phone Anne Harris 8885555. |

Miranda's lexical choice contributed to an entirely promotional story aimed at persuading people to buy the product. She used what Erjavec (2004) describes as over-lexicalisation, where in excessive terms she praised and promoted rather than described the company's product. Examples of language more suitable for a television commercial rather than a news story included that the aim was "preserving precious stories" and the books were described as "journeys to tell", "history for generations to come" and "family history, an essential part of everyone's identity". She used a number of synonymous adjectives that further eulogised the company's activities: "precious", "vital", "excited", "real tactile memory", "unique", "one-stop shop". Miranda wrote in the language used by the company representative's attempt to advertise the company. Her lexical choice created a sense that the article was part of a promotional campaign. It

described the product as a “project”, the goal of which was solely to help people tell their stories. In her second sentence, Miranda wrote:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| S2 | The project aims to help people tell their stories through the professional production of unique, personal books. |
|-----------|---|

Cohesion is the way in which words in a text are mutually connected into a sequence. In Miranda’s story this was gained by the strategy of repeatedly describing this commercial enterprise as a project:

| | |
|------------|---|
| S1 | goal of the international <i>This is my life</i> Project |
| S2 | The project... |
| S3 | New Zealand project representative... |
| S5 | ...the books created by the project |
| S7 | ...started the <i>This is my life</i> Project |
| S8 | The work of the project |
| S9 | ...the project now has offices |
| S10 | ...has been the project’s sole representative |
| S11 | ...her involvement with the project... |
| S12 | ...excited to be part of the project |
| S13 | ...want to work with the project... |
| S16 | ...the <i>This is my life</i> Project |
| S18 | “these are big projects” |
| S21 | ...the project team is always keen |

In all, there were 14 references to the “project” and “project team”. The question of how much it cost to have one of these books written was hidden as Miranda quoted Dale Salisbury referring to the books as a “lasting piece of history” and “priceless”. This obscured the fact that Dale Salisbury was a company representative, not a neutral observer or satisfied customer. Miranda’s story concluded with a straight piece of advertising:

| | |
|------------|--|
| S22 | Anybody who is interested in creating a lasting piece of history should contact Dale Salisbury on 02371107 or at dale@storyproject.co.nz |
|------------|--|

This section has shown how easily the conversational style of story writing can become a promotional story. The pressures of working for commercial newspapers and the lack of tutoring on lexical choice and the role of the journalist were contributing to develop students who, in the blurring of the boundaries between advertising and editorial, did not see the difference between promoting an event and writing a news story.

7.4.3 Order in hybrid stories

The structure of the students' hybrid news stories showed a similar pattern to that of the inverted-pyramid stories. In both cases, it is possible to discern an overall improvement in how the students were structuring this story. However, the limited and uneven nature of this development is apparent. The best-structured stories were from those students, regardless of whether they set out consciously or unconsciously to write a hard or soft news story, who had internalised the mechanical requirements of the inverted pyramid, in terms of putting the most important information first and the rest in descending order of importance. When the students' soft leads were reasonably effective, as they were in four stories, the professional journalist found little need to radically alter the overall structure of the story. They were logically structured in a manner not radically different from the inverted-pyramid model. However, when the soft leads were ineffective or inappropriate, the problems spread right through to the structure of the story, which needed radical change.

As mentioned earlier, the professional journalist was unable to convert Miranda's promotional story into a news story. This, in part, reflected Miranda's failure to adhere to the requirements of the structure of the inverted pyramid. These stories usually contain a category of the journalist's and the source's observations, which could be described as "comments" (Bell, 1991). The comments category in a news item encompasses only a small part of the story in the inverted-pyramid format. However, with promotional news, the comments category containing positive evaluation dominates the text (Erjavec, 2004). In Miranda's story, the entire story was made up of positive comments (see Appendix II for full story and professional version). The professional version, even with some reordering, was therefore unable to rid the story of its overall promotional theme.

Brendan's mid-year story on the table-tennis player showed most effectively the consequences of a lack of understanding and appreciation of the inverted pyramid both in form and in its relationship to news values on the structure of the story. As discussed above, his story revealed the difficulties students had when they attempted to write longer or more ambitious stories. In Brendan's case, the subject of the story did not justify its excessive length of about 760 words. The problem was worsened when, as discussed above, he neglected to include what he himself realised as the most newsworthy element in the story, the fact that the table-tennis champion was Māori.

Instead, foregoing the rules of the inverted pyramid, Brendan began his story with a drop lead which was not strong and mixed hackneyed metaphors to describe a young table-tennis player "throwing caution to the wind to ensure he makes the cut". His second sentence was meant to convey the news element. It read:

S2

Despite humble beginnings, Jay Allen a Year 13 Ashwood High School student, is now one of the top players in New Zealand.

However, Brendan did not structure his story effectively to support this claim that the subject was indeed a top player. Rather, the next five sentences described how he started playing table tennis. It was not until S17 and S18 that Brendan introduced the main news theme, when he described Jay's winning performance at the North Island championships. This poor structure contributed to a story lacking in cohesion or impact. The professional version showed how ineffective Brendan's structure and overall story were. The journalist radically shortened the story by about 500 words or three-quarters and reorganised it, inserting the point regarding the player's unusual ethnicity into P1.

The block of sentences from S17-S25 in Brendan's original formed what became the lead and the following three sentences in the professional version. They are marked "C" in the Figure 7.3 (below). The professional version used parts of S2, S17 and S18 in the lead, and S19, S23 and S25 in the next sentences. S1 and S3-S7, marked "A", in Brendan's story were deleted. Nine sentences are marked "B" at S8-S16. Of these S8, S10, and S13 were used in P5 and P6, and the rest were deleted. Another nine sentences, S27 –S35, are marked "D" in Brendan's story. Of these S27, S33 and S35 were used at P7 and P8 and again the remainder was cut entirely. The last five sentences, marked "E", were also cut in their entirety. Thus A-B-C-D-E, became C-B-D with A and E deleted.

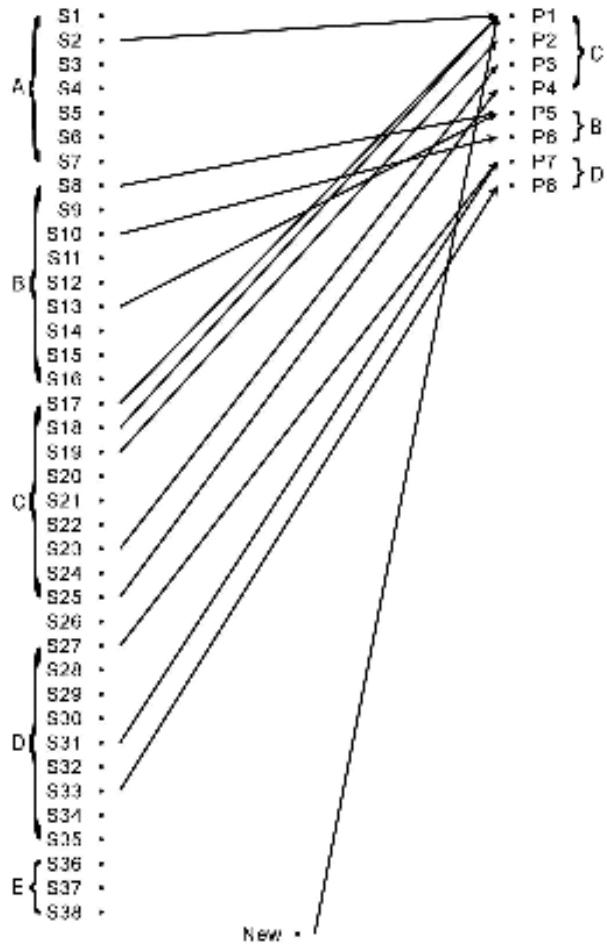


Figure 7.3 Changes to the order of Brendan's mid-year story

Kathie's story also revealed the problems associated with a lack of understanding of news values. The consequences were that her story became a promotional one urging parents to fill out a survey, rather than a story about the difficulties of students with young children. This stemmed from the nature of the lead sentence and a structure which placed the crucial point of the story low down in S5 and S6. In general, the story lost effectiveness, newsworthiness and clarity because it placed the least important elements first and the most important later. The professional journalist's alternative version was more effective because she structured the story around the inverted-pyramid model, finding a stronger news lead and reversing the order of the story (see section 7.4.1), in Figure 7.4. Kathie's sentences marked "A" were moved down the order to become "B" in the professional version with the sentences marked "A" replacing them. The last two sentences were deleted. Thus A-B became B-A:

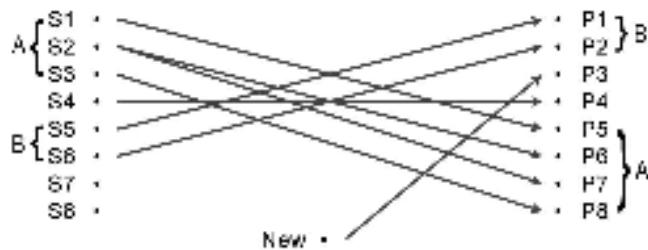


Figure 7.4 Changes to the order of Kathie's mid-year story

Figure 7.5 (below) shows the changes to Agnes's story about a former petanque champion. It is a typical example of how the more successfully structured hybrid stories essentially resembled the inverted-pyramid model in their organisation (see Appendix II for full story and professional version). There was little change to Agnes's first three sentences (marked "A"), S11 and S13 were deleted and some slight re-arrangement of the other sentences took place in the professional version. Agnes's story, despite its soft lead and subject and promotional conclusion, was basically written in the inverted-pyramid format, with the most newsworthy information being used first, and other facts presented in diminishing order of importance:

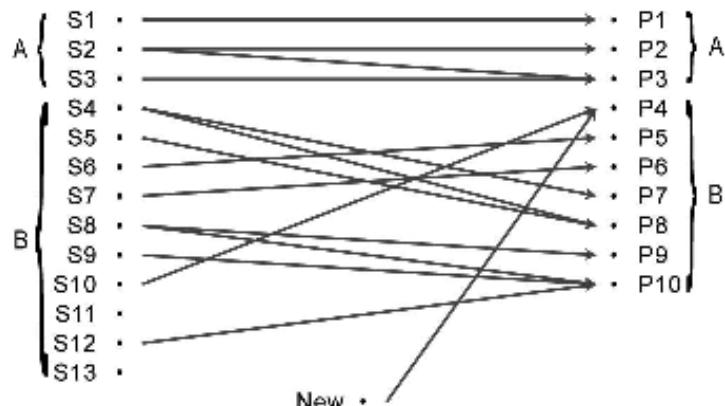


Figure 7.5 Changes to the order of Agnes's mid-year story

From this pattern, we again see that the greater writing experience and education of the students in the technical requirements of the inverted pyramid were having some positive effects. Without any explicit education on the different requirements of the hybrid form and soft news stories, some students were similarly using most of the lessons they had learned from the hard-news genre.

7.4.4 Background and additional information

By the middle of the year, more than half the students, whether writing hard or soft news items, were inserting background and additional information into their stories, greatly adding to their clarity and linking them to others written on a similar topic. This represented a definite step towards writing professionally.

Three of the hybrid news stories were exceptions to this. When Kathie's lead was changed, the story required the addition of more information about transport difficulties, while Brendan's story needed one all-important word, "Māori", added to it. This again suggests that improvements in the students' writing were neither radical nor universal as well as showing once again the consequences of an education that does not stress news values.

Agnes's story also required background information. Though she did insert some information about the nature of petanque, the professional journalist moved it closer to the lead to enhance and clarify what the story was about. Petanque is a sport that is not widely known. Agnes placed a sentence describing petanque as a game that came from France in her 10th sentence. It was somewhat hidden as the rest of the sentence linked it to French food and wine. Instead, the professional journalist moved it to P4 and the word "ball" was added, plus its growing popularity, so that the sentence read:

P4

Petanque is a ball game that originally comes from France and is gaining popularity in New Zealand.

7.4.5 Deletion and summarisation

As we saw with those students writing inverted-pyramid stories, the mid-year stories were less drastically in need of deletion and summarisation than those written at the start of the year. However, many of the stories still included a significant amount of superfluous material and unnecessary phrases. Indeed, many of the hybrid stories were in need of major cutting despite the widely held belief that the hybrid forms allow more flexibility in approach for a journalist than the requirements of the inverted pyramid. This suggests that the gains in confidence and competence of the students were not as far-reaching as might be hoped.

Agnes's story provides many examples of the inclusion of superfluous words and "chatty" phrases such as: "His talent is such that after not touching a petanque ball" (S4), "he was subsequently" (S5) "and have the pleasure of a number of coaching sessions" (S6), "nowadays Karl does not play a lot of petanque due to health problems" (S8). Her final sentence had to be cut in its entirety given its promotional intent and tone: "There will also be fun competitions and demonstrations with the public welcome to come along, have a glass of wine and try their luck with the game." The professional journalist deleted in total 100 words from the story.

The promotional sentences at the end of Anastacia's story also added little (see 7.4.2). The professional version was shorter by 109 words. Brendan's story was an extreme example of a tendency when writing longer, hybrid stories to include whole blocks of unnecessary material as Figure 7.3 (above) also shows. These include the sentences at S3-S7, which discussed the childhood of a young table-tennis champion. The next block, S8-S16, included non-essential background information about a squad of players going to Chile. S20-S23 was direct speech about how well he had played and was deleted. S27-S33 introduced a second source, a table-tennis coach. This began: "Ashwood coach and former professional player Adam White thinks that Jay has a lot of natural talent." More than 120 words followed praising Jay's abilities, the majority of which were unnecessary. These words verged on belonging to the promotional genre and were replaced by two sentences that ended the story and deleted 80 words:

| | |
|----|---|
| P7 | Ashwood coach and former professional player Adam White thinks Jay has the ability to play at the highest level. |
| P8 | Jay will really go far if he can keep working on his mental toughness and balance that with his physical prowess," he said. |

The last five sentences, S34-S38 on other table-tennis tournaments may have interested another player, but not a general audience. The professional journalist found a total of 570 words of Brendan's original story of 760 words were unnecessary,

It is interesting to question why, despite the progress they had made, many of the students were still far from being able to write with the brevity and conciseness demanded of professional journalists. Certainly, and not unreasonably, they required more experience and training to meet the standards of the media industry. More importantly for this study, it suggests some broader educational issues. Most of the

feedback the students received on their writing came in the form of subbing by editors and journalism tutors. This feedback tended to focus on the immediate and surface problems of a story rather than discussing wider stylistic issues. The deletions and summarisations made by these experienced tutors undoubtedly improved the specific stories but as they tended to be made without broader explanation or discussion may have had a limited effect on the students' broader understanding of the principles of journalism. Only rarely during this process will there be a concentration on the larger issues, such as the enhancement of news values, the lexical choice and the structure of the students' stories. This again suggests the potential benefit of encouraging or requiring the students to monitor and think about their own writing and providing methods to help them do so.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the students' news writing after five months of their journalism studies. Half way through their training programme, the students were no longer considered novices: they had written at least 10 news stories for publication and had experience of working in the media industry. As a whole, the students had gained new writing skills and exhibited greater competence and confidence.

The most significant strides were in the technical requirements of the inverted pyramid. This reflects the concentration on this issue in their training as well as their experience in writing large numbers of these stories. While the improvements were limited and not evenly spread, it is noticeable that some of the students were now able to write more concise, structured news stories. The development of their lead sentences, a critical element of the inverted-pyramid model, was noticeable.

However, an educational policy with a heavy emphasis on learning by doing and work experience has shortcomings as well as benefits, especially when the education does not deal with important issues students will face in the workplace. While the students were trained in the inverted pyramid and hard news, the media industry expected them often to write in a hybrid structure more common for human interest and features. The students' untrained attempts to write these hybrid stories – for instance the use of soft lead sentences – were often flawed. More training in, and understanding of, the

principles and benefits of various news genres could have benefited these stories and helped encourage the students to reflect more deeply about the best way to write a story.

The students, therefore, while taught the technical nature of the inverted pyramid, still had a weak understanding of some of its benefits and deeper requirements. This was further shown by the fact that some of students chose to forego the inverted-pyramid technique for stories it would have been appropriate for. And those students who did write within the traditional formula still showed a limited, although improving, knowledge of the related news values that make such a story publishable. Despite increasing use, for instance of negativity, the ability to introduce and enhance important news values remained limited. While journalists are traditionally expected to learn news values through the unspoken socialisation of the newsroom (McGregor 2002), the students' limited work experience combined with the lack of reinforcement or discussion in the classroom left them lacking in both explicit and practical knowledge of this critical issue.

Perhaps the most disturbing feature of the students' mid-year stories was the tendency to write, in part or in whole, promotional stories. This can again be linked to a heavy focus on learning by doing and work experience and the comparative lack of classroom discussion and debate about the role of the journalist. As we have seen, some of the students seemed unaware of the difference between journalism and promotional writing. Even more problematic, those students who were uneasy about the pressure to write promotional pieces seemed to lack the tools and guidance to deal with this pressure. The prevalence of promotional pieces contributed to an overall impression that the students' stories, while showing some increased technical skill, did not indicate that curiosity, self-reflection, willingness to challenge received wisdom or even desire to entertain had been encouraged during their training.

The next chapter will assess whether the students, on finishing their training, were exhibiting the ability to reach the professional standards and higher ideals of journalism.

8 Almost There

Based on their experiences recruiting on campuses and working with interns and new journalists, newsroom recruiters and supervisors expressed extremely low regard for the expertise of journalism faculty and said the quality of journalism education needs to be improved a great deal (Medsger, 1996, p. 14).

8.1 Prologue: The end of the year

It is late October and almost the end of the academic year. The students are busily looking for employment as professional journalists. One of them has already left the course for a job in a provincial newspaper. Other students regard her with something approaching awe as she has made it into the “real world”. In total, 15 students of the 20 who started the year finish this research project. Of the other four, two have health and personal problems and two have dropped out of the course.

The middle of the year was the highlight for the students. They spent at least two weeks working in the media industry, gaining considerable confidence from the experience and some increase in their news-writing skills, particularly in their lead sentences. They had also branched out from the conventional inverted pyramid and were writing in different “hybrid” forms, found more often in community newspapers. While there was considerable room for development in the structure and lexical choice to enhance the news values, the students themselves believed they had gained the necessary skills to work as journalists and could not wait to leave and look for a job in the real world.

But these last stories of the year showed a different and more disturbing tendency. These stories should reflect the experience, training and expertise the students had gained. The extra word-length and scope expected of these end of the year stories present the students with more opportunities to show their skills, creativity and curiosity.

However, the overall results are poor. Many of the students’ lead sentences need substantial modification before they are appropriate for publication. Their stories are not structured to enhance their newsworthiness. Most are too long, with some students reflecting they had to “pad” their writing to get them to the length required by their tutors. Others are promotional in parts, loosely written and inappropriately angled. In

terms of technical skill and newsworthiness, many of the students' stories show signs of regression from the middle of the year. Equally disturbing, despite the freedom and challenge of longer stories, the students' writing does not reveal increasing creativity, critical thinking and independence. The students, in their reflections, tend to blame factors such as "stress", "time constraints", and "it's a struggle because I'm not interested in a career as a journalist". In addition, a general feeling of having "had enough" of school is a prevailing theme. Their writing suggests that many are not yet ready to take their place as professional, competent and creative journalists.

8.2 Introduction

This research set out to draw a picture of New Zealand journalism education. Earlier chapters have found that students gained news-writing skills through learning by doing or practising their writing. Classrooms were set up as newsrooms and a strong emphasis was placed on work experience in the media industry. They were expected to gain these skills through practice and socialisation.

Four main components were considered central to gaining the skills and attributes of a journalist. The first focused on whether the students had developed the skills necessary to write in a succinct, clear fashion, with an ability to write in the inverted-pyramid model, emphasising and enhancing news values. The second explored their understanding of not only the purpose of the inverted pyramid but also the various hybrid forms that are increasingly in evidence today in the news genre and when it was appropriate to use them. The third component considered the students' ability to gain a deeper understanding of their own writing, to be able to monitor and evaluate it for themselves. The fourth reflected on whether the students were gaining the critical thinking skills and independence necessary for a journalist, so that they could research thoroughly, reflect deeply and write entertaining, informative and important news stories with flair.

Chapter 7 showed that by the middle of the year, the students' news stories displayed a better grasp of the requirements of the inverted pyramid, especially in their lead sentences and lexical choice. However, the last chapter showed a disappointing development: though the students were increasingly writing in hybrid forms, they had

received only scant training in the appropriateness of using different styles. As they lacked a critical, theoretical education about the media industry, its genres and its purposes, many of their stories that were not written in the inverted-pyramid form verged on the promotional. Although the students' writing skills may have been progressing, there was little indication that they were reflecting on what they wrote or could assess it for themselves. There is more to being a journalist than having the skills necessary to investigate and report on events, issues and people. A journalist needs attributes that include being independent, being able to think critically, to analyse and evaluate information, to reflect on the story and then to be able to present the findings, showing initiative. Although they had gained some confidence and writing experience, too often, when confronted by the realities of the learning-by-doing method involving publication under deadline pressure, the higher ideals were forgotten, perhaps because they had never been fully understood by the students or properly articulated or emphasised by their tutors.

In the same way as earlier in the year, no specific instructions were given to the students as to how to write news stories submitted for the study. They were asked to "gather a news story in the usual way" (see Appendix I). However, by the end of the year, their tutors expected students to write longer, more in-depth stories with more than one source. At one institution, the students were instructed to write stories of 600-800 words on a specialist topic – politics, art, music, sport, business with at least two sources. At the other, the students were also instructed to write longer stories with more than one source.

With the completion of their required stories and their year-long training, all the students in the study were expected to graduate with a National Diploma in Journalism and were deemed ready to work as professional journalists. However, this chapter will suggest a less encouraging picture. The students' news stories will be seen to be too long, dull and lacking in appeal and their lead sentences required substantial modification. This level of achievement would not meet the editorial requirements of established media outlets. Three news stories written on an issue relevant to the time, genetic modification, were particularly applicable to this discussion. These stories revealed some of the deficiencies of New Zealand journalism education that have been established in this study. When faced with an important and potentially powerful story,

the students were unable to handle it with ease or explain the issues in an informative way which would appeal to readers. One story was clearly promotional and all three revealed, with their lexical choice, the “capture” of the students in the words they used to describe the issue.

These problems reflected the students’ limited technical ability, especially when confronted with the challenges of stories outside the inverted-pyramid format, which had been the major part of their training. All of the final stories required considerable modification before they were suitable for publication. Of these stories, 60 per cent or nine of the 15 students had written stories which were classified as “hybrid”, while only 40 per cent or six were written in the inverted-pyramid form. The hybrid stories were very diverse structurally and linguistically and covered a multiplicity of styles and purposes, reflecting the diversity of the media today (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough argues that different genres complement each other and no one form is either right or wrong. What was more relevant for this study was whether the students had acquired the skill to use different genres to add to rather than detract from their news stories (see also Chapter 3).

The lack of encouragement about how to evaluate or monitor their own writing was apparent and was damaging to these stories. This was combined with the students’ tendency to “pad” their writing, careless language and a failure to think about how a sentence or quote deepens or contributes to a story. Equally worrying was a failure to reveal a sense of creativity and independence. These stories, some because of their subject matter and all because of their extended word-length, had the potential to reveal a more exciting, challenging side of journalism that at least some of the students were attracted to. But this was largely an opportunity wasted or, perhaps more fairly, an opportunity for which their training had not fully prepared them.

8.3 Lead sentences

Table 8.1 (below) acts as a summary of these findings, focusing first on the lead sentences of the five students selected as typical of the entire group throughout the year. It also serves as an indication of the overall standard of the students’ news stories at the

end of the year and shows the lack of improvement and, a regression in the students' writing and technical ability from mid-year.

Four of the news stories in Table 8.1 (below) displayed the soft lead sentences of the hybrid form, while only one student chose to write in the inverted-pyramid form. Whether a news story is a hard news story or a hybrid one, news values are the key to a reader finding it appealing and wanting to read on. All required modification to enhance their news values. Brendan, Henreitta, Kathie and Mavis wrote with the soft lead sentences characteristic of hybrid stories and all of the leads were deemed to need modification by the professional journalist.

Sam's story was written in the inverted-pyramid form but it also required its news values to be enhanced. These changes made to the students' lead sentences were a sign that New Zealand journalism education was not fulfilling the function intended: to provide students with the skills to act as professional journalists. In addition, there were few signs of a developing ability to write more important stories showing critical thinking (see Appendix II for full stories).

Brendan's first sentence was an example of a delayed lead or drop "intro", the most common form used to start the students' hybrid stories. This form is useful in background news and features, where a delay in delivering the main theme can be effective (Waterhouse, 1993), but is not necessary in shorter news stories. Brendan sought to attract the reader's interest in his first sentence, drawing a comparison between two rival businesses holding a joint exhibition and a Shakespearean-showdown, but the main theme of the story was not found until S3:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Brendan | The impending showdown between two of Ashwood's proud and powerful family owned businesses could well have had an air of Shakespearean rivalry surrounding it. |
| S1 | |
| S2 | However Capulets and Montagues these families are not. |
| S3 | Ashwood's leading art product suppliers, Parisian Artists and Art Supplies are having a duel, or an exhibition, if you will, featuring the work of their respective employees. |

Table 8.1 Changes made to students' end-of-the-year stories

| Name | Student's lead | Professional lead | News Values | Other changes |
|-----------|--|---|--|---|
| Brendan | The impending showdown between two of Ashwood's proud and powerful family owned businesses could well have had an air of Shakespearean rivalry surrounding it. | Two rival businesses will hold a joint exhibition of their employees' art work next week. | Negativity Immediacy Human interest Clarity | Negativity enhanced by deleting Shakespearean references, "impending", "proud", "powerful", and reducing wordiness of sentence by 10 words. Hybrid changed to inverted pyramid. |
| Henreitta | On October 29 the moratorium on the commercial release of GE organisms is set to end. | Opponents are worried genetically modified food will soon be on supermarket shelves, after the moratorium ends on October 29. | Negativity Human interest Immediacy Significance Clarity | Negativity enhanced and human interest added. Immediacy also added. Clarity provided by explaining "GE". Hybrid changed to inverted pyramid. |
| Kathie | Seven students from the Ashwood University School of Medicine want to know what you do and how you feel every hour of your day. | The link between emotional well-being and a strong immune system is the subject of a new medical study. | Significance Clarity | Significance and clarity added. Hybrid changed to inverted pyramid. |
| Mavis | Vodka success story <i>42 Below</i> are looking to expand in 2004 with new flavours and the possibility of another premium spirit, says chief vodka and gin bloke, Geoff Ross. | Vodka success story <i>42 Below</i> is predicting record sales of more than \$2 million this year. | Clarity Significance Prominence | Impact added to sentence, through additional news values and moving up record sales. Hybrid changed to inverted pyramid. |
| Sam | Anti-GE campaigners have set up a People's Moratorium on the web, following the lifting of the Government's moratorium last week. | Anti-GE protesters are joining together to set up an internet-based action group, following the lifting of the government freeze. | Negativity Clarity Immediacy | Negativity enhanced by change to "protesters". Clarity added through explanation added. Immediacy through tense change. Inverted pyramid. |

The main problem with using a delayed lead can be seen from these examples (above). Brendan was trying too hard for an effect in using the Shakespearean analogy and the result was his sentence was somewhat confusing and used too many words. As a

contrast, the opening sentence in the professional version was simple and descriptive, using information from S3 and S7, which converted it to an inverted-pyramid lead:

P1

Two rival businesses will hold a joint exhibition of their employees' art work next week.

Three students – Henreitta, Sam (see Table 8.1) and Samdog – wrote about the ending of the government freeze on the release of genetically modified food. This was an important and topical issue but the students' stories were not clear or well-written and lacked spark. Two years earlier, the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification had reported its findings into the risks and benefits of genetic modification. It found that New Zealand should proceed cautiously with genetic modification but not close the door to the opportunities offered by the new technology. The government put in place a two-year freeze (moratorium) on applications to release genetically modified organisms into the environment to expire automatically on 20 October, 2003. Henreitta, like Brendan, began her story with a soft lead, characteristic of a hybrid story (see Table 8.1):

Henreitta

S1 On October 29 the moratorium on the commercial release of GE organisms is set to end.

In her second sentence she wrote:

S2

Opponents of GE are now once again raising concerns about the availability of GE foods in New Zealand.

Her third sentence read:

S3

One of the main concerns being raised is the labelling of genetically modified foods in supermarkets.

In a very short news story of just over 200 words, Henreitta took almost 50 words to express what the professional journalist wrote in 17 words:

P1

Opponents are worried genetically modified food will soon be on supermarket shelves, after the moratorium ends this week.

Sam's first sentence was difficult to follow and needed to be clarified. She wrote about "anti-GE campaigners" setting up a "people's moratorium", without explaining what a moratorium was. She also used this word twice in her first sentence. In the professional version, the tense was changed to give the story immediacy and the word "moratorium"

was replaced with the more explanatory “government freeze”. The word “campaigners” was altered to “protesters” to enhance the negativity:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | Anti-GE protesters are joining together to set up an internet-based action group, following the lifting of the government freeze. |
|-----------|---|

These stories about genetic modification are discussed further in the next section. Whether the first sentences followed the inverted pyramid or were soft lead sentences, they all displayed similar problems and required substantial modification.

Martha’s original lead sentence also lacked clarity and the information to render it meaningful. Her original sentence related that “Team CRC” had taken “the lead in the Transatlantic Rowing Challenge” had immediacy but would be meaningless to the average reader who would not know what she was referring to. The professional version provided the necessary clarity and context and emphasised the significance and difficulty of the event. It introduced the human interest and enhanced the status of the team, by labelling them “last year’s race winners”. This also emphasised the news value of continuity because it provided a link with previous news stories. Martha’s original sentence is compared with the professional version so that it can be seen that her lead failed to introduce and enhance the news values of clarity, significance, human interest, prominence, continuity and negativity:

| Martha | Professional version |
|---|---|
| S1: Team CRC have taken the lead in the Transatlantic Rowing Challenge. | P1: Last year’s race winners have taken the lead in the Transatlantic Rowing Challenge, despite hitting winds up to 50 knots. |

In contrast, Anastacia had grasped the concept of the inverted-pyramid lead sentence. It started with the actors and included two events but was too long at 39 words and repetitious. It was shortened by removal of “the Haworth City Council” and of the repetitive “community” and “Haworth”.

| Anastacia | Professional version |
|---|--|
| S1: Members of the Sanctuary Cove community are appealing to the Haworth City Council for more signs directing people to their village, stating that even members of their own community get lost trying to find their way home to Haworth. | P1: Sanctuary Cove community is so badly signposted even locals have trouble finding their way home. |

Both Sully and Jamima wrote confused hybrid leads that exemplified how the writing of many of the students had failed to develop as much as could be expected. In Chapter 6 at the beginning of the year, it could be seen that it was difficult for Sully to write simply and clearly. By the mid-point of the year, he was showing some signs of improvement. However, at the end of the year his ambition to write more innovative and interesting stories was not matched by the necessary skills or training. In writing about a new television series featuring grassroots music, he endeavoured to entertain with this rather confused lead sentence and reference to the popular television show *Australian Idol*:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Sully S1 | <i>Australian Idol</i> might symbolise the launching of a new music talent to our TV audiences, but much of grassroots local music is hidden from view – something that may change very shortly, says music promoter Gaywen Tau. |
|---------------------|--|

The move towards entertainment is part of a trend towards commerce and competition and the growth of the consumer or promotional culture which Fairclough (1995) calls “marketization” (p.10). Sully’s lead sentence also showed another element of marketization. He wrote “our TV audiences”, using the stylistic form of address commonly found in advertisements where readers are seen as consumers and are addressed individually as “you” or collectively as “us”, in an effort to sell a product (Fairclough, 1995).

Jamima’s lead was also difficult to understand. It lacked impact, starting with a somewhat ambiguous question, inappropriate for the opening of a news story. It was rewritten so that it would have a focal point and the news values of prominence, negativity, proximity, significance, immediacy, clarity and continuity were therefore enhanced:

| Jamima | Professional version |
|---|--|
| S1: Professionalism in sport has come along (sic) way in New Zealand but how much emphasis should we be putting on money? | P1: Kiwi sporting heroes like Daniel Vettori could help sell New Zealand milk, says Haworth Stadium's media officer. |

This information came from S16, S17 and S18 in Jamima’s story and elevated the New Zealand cricketing captain Daniel Vettori to the lead. Successful sportspeople like Vettori are regarded as the “elite” in New Zealand, part of a small, well-known group of celebrities. This provided the main news value of prominence and also gave the story significance and continuity, linking it with other cricketing stories. The professional lead also enhanced the news value of proximity when “Kiwi” was inserted. The changed lead sentence then had all the characteristics of the inverted-pyramid form.

The problems affecting the lead sentences of the hybrid stories, in particular, suggested the difficulties the students had writing in a form in which they had not been trained, and the consequences of the lack of education on news genres and news values. The aim of the students when writing leads for hybrid stories should have been the same as when writing inverted-pyramid news stories: to gain the readers’ attention. For example, Jamima reflected in her protocol about “capturing people’s interest and making them read on”. Brendan thought his first sentence was “interesting” and would inspire the reader to keep reading (see also Chapter 9). However, the lead sentences of six hybrid stories mainly failed to achieve this goal. A lack of understanding of news genres and of the virtues of the inverted pyramid was also noticeable. As the alternative leads produced by the professional journalist showed, it might well have been more effective for the students – and more in keeping with their training and skills – if they had instead used their lead sentences to summarise and begin to tell the news story. In short, inverted-pyramid leads might well have been the better choice. The effect of the changes by the professional journalist was to convert rather formless, soft lead sentences into lead sentences showing all the attributes of the inverted-pyramid format with far stronger news values and more appeal to the reader.

8.4 Lexical choice

By the middle of the year, the students appeared more competent at using the vivid words (Kennamer, 1988) appropriate for news and largely avoided transferring words and phrases from other discourses (Fairclough, 1995). However, at the end of the year, their lexical choice seemed to have regressed. Some students were repeating many words and also using inappropriate words and phrases from their sources which meant that their news stories did not flow easily and were difficult to understand. The over-use of words that were not suitable for news stories made some appear to be promotional statements (see also Chapter 7). This was particularly noticeable in the students' stories about genetic modification. The growing use of the direct form of address and the introduction of conversational language was also evident and, generally, unsuccessful.

Genetic modification was a divisive topic at this time. A campaign led by the opponents, the GE-Free campaign, strongly influenced the discourse of the debate. Their major achievement was to popularise the noun “genetic engineering”, so that it was used also as an adjective, for example, “GE crops” rather than the milder sounding and often more grammatically correct, “genetic modification” (Henderson, 2005). All three news stories on the topic showed the impact of the campaign and the discourse of the campaigners. Sam’s story used “genetically engineered” or “GE” 19 times in 25 sentences, often as an adjective coupled with the word “food”, as in “genetically engineered food”. She used “genetically modified” only three times and once combined the two, as in “genetically modified free”. She also used the word “moratorium” seven times but did not attempt a definition:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| S1 | Anti-GE campaigners ... a People's Moratorium ... Government's moratorium |
| S2 | people's moratorium ... GE crops |
| S3 | GE free food ... GE free land ... GE |
| S4 | The people's moratorium...GE free |
| S5 | www.gefreepeople.net ... genetically engineered |
| S6 | The People's Moratorium ... Mothers against Genetic Engineering ... GE Free NZ |
| S7 | genetically modified |

| | |
|------------|---|
| S8 | the people's moratorium ... GE foods |
| S9 | GE free food |
| S10 | GE free |
| S12 | GE free food |
| S15 | GE free food |
| S16 | genetically engineered food |
| S17 | genetically modified |
| S20 | GE Free New Zealand |
| S21 | genetically modified |
| S23 | GE crops |
| S24 | GE free companies |
| S25 | genetically modified free |

Sam's story contained direct speech from the spokespeople for three environmental groups. The comments she quoted in her text were directly lifted from press releases, evident from their language. For example, her second and third sentences quoted a Greenpeace spokesperson, whose words were campaign-style rhetoric rather than everyday speech. He stated he would "formally challenge any applications to grow GE crops in New Zealand", and made this statement:

S3

"If the people's resolve remains strong and our demand for GE free food and GE free land does not falter, then GE cannot prevail – because people eat the food and the people live in the land and the people are who industry and the politicians are ultimately answerable to," says Mr Abel.

The result of her lexical choice and also the order of the story (see section 8.4) was a collection of mainly promotional statements from those protesting the lifting of the government moratorium against genetic modification.

Samdog interviewed a scientific expert who said that the public did not understand the issues about genetic modification. While his story needed reordering to emphasise clearly the scientist's view that the advantages of genetic modification outweighed the disadvantages (see 8.4), Samdog confused the issue by using the term "genetic engineering" 14 times in 15 sentences even though it would have been unlikely that the

scientific expert would have used it. This once more showed how the students tended not to think sufficiently about their lexical choice and its implications.

Words inappropriately transferred from other discourses were also evident in Anastacia's story, which transferred the bureaucratic language of a city council meeting she had attended into her news story about residents of Sanctuary Cove asking the Haworth City Council for better signposts to their village. For instance, she described the meeting using the long, official title of the "city council strategic planning and policy coordination committee meeting". As the professional version showed, a simpler way would have been to call it the "council's planning and policy committee". Anastacia quoted the mayor of Haworth:

S11

"The development of signage to help people be aware of where you are, and the inclusion of that area within the city ... may change the relationship between your church and the city ... and who knows what may be achievable if we work together?" he said.

Direct speech has two uses in a news story: to add colour and to provide credibility. This sentence did neither. The professional version removed some of the jargon, such as "development", "signage", "inclusion" and "achievable", and turned the mayor's comments into indirect speech:

P13

Better signs could change the relationship between the church and the city, as will including Sanctuary Cove within the city boundaries, he said.

Some of the hybrid stories, in particular, contained the stylistic form of direct address found in advertisements. Sully's use of "our TV audiences" has been mentioned earlier. He also used "us" at S25, apparently unconsciously influenced by the advertising genre:

S25

But Ms Tau has a vision to expose us to her ever-growing stable of artists and for the public to have an alternative to what the music industry promotes.

Some of Sully's sentences also used colloquial forms of expression, not usually written but spoken. Fairclough (1994) sees "conversationalization" involving a weakening of the boundaries between public and private discourse, as a result of the discursive practices of the market mingling with other types of discourse, such as education, health, government and the arts. In the sentence below, Sully used the conversational "it's not paying the bills" and the word "comfy", rather than the more formal

“comfortable”. His writing also showed signs of opinion in “certainly not salubrious” and “all-consuming passion”.

S15

The house she shares with her daughter is comfy, but certainly not salubrious – and while it may be an all-consuming passion, it’s not paying the bills.

The students’ stories also provided other examples of words transferred from official sources into the students’ text in a complex way that was sometimes hard to discern. Kino’s story, about a programme for multiple sclerosis (MS) sufferers was one example. It appeared that some of her words were taken from a brochure or website for sufferers with the disease, showing indications of “marketization” mixed with “conversationalization”. She started by using a word popular in business discourse, “initiative”. In the next few sentences she had “registered charity” which “serves” people, and also “targets” people. Later she used the word “recipients”. There were also some occasions when she slipped into conversational language, as in this example where she writes that “people can do plenty”:

S30

The definite cause of MS is unknown but it can be genetic and while there is no cure, Mr Bartlett says people can do plenty to help discomfort.

The introduction of conversation into Kathie’s story appeared more deliberate. She tried to keep away from using too many medical terms as she wanted it to be “readable”, she related in her reflections (see also Chapter 9). She wanted to avoid jargon and reflected that it was important to use “pretty simple language” when explaining scientific things. Kathie’s story (see Table 8.1 and Appendix II) was an example of conversational language mixed with medical discourse. The lead sentence addressed the reader as “you”:

**Kathie
S1**

Seven students from the Ashwood University School of Medicine want to know what you do and how you feel every hour of your day.

Another part of the story had a promotional tone and urged the reader to become involved, through its use of direct address:

S3

“Keep a journal of your feelings – believe me, we know how it sounds,” says student Rowan Cass.

At S9 and the following sentences, Kathie switched to medical discourse:

| | |
|------------|--|
| S9 | The students are especially interested in the behaviour of lymphocytes – the white blood cells which protect against the majority of bacterial and viral infections. |
| S10 | Originating in the bone marrow, lymphocytes become either B or T cells which have different ways of fighting infection. |
| S11 | B cells can turn into plasma cells and produce antibodies if needed, whereas T cells recognise potential infections by the presence of foreign peptides or protein fragments, attached to the surface of a cell. |

The mixing of the conversation and medical discourse can be seen in this sentence, where the quote starts off formally and descriptively, then switches to the conversational “the infection will be history”.

| | |
|------------|---|
| S12 | “The T cells will then attack the infection, and if all goes according to plan, the infection will be history,” says Ms Cass. |
|------------|---|

Kathie managed the transitions in her story smoothly so that it was easy to read and flowed well. She had the skill to mix medical discourse and conversational language in a well-integrated fashion. The professional journalist felt the need to change the lead sentence to a factual inverted-pyramid one and shorten the story (see Table 8.1):

| | |
|-----------|---|
| P1 | The link between emotional well-being and a strong immune system is the subject of a new medical study. |
|-----------|---|

However, many readers might have preferred Kathie’s original sentence to the journalist’s one (see above). This supports Fairclough’s proposition that there is not a right or a wrong way to write a news story. More importantly, Kathie’s improvements in lexical choice and her skills in integrating the various discourses were unfortunately not evident in the work of many of the other students finishing their training.

Martha was one of the few other students to show a growing skill in her lexical choice. In writing about the rowing race across the Atlantic, she used a range of graphic words, including “series of squalls”, “long slow slog” and “light head winds”. The choice of words is integral to maximising the news elements in the story. Her words added to the image of a small boat being rowed across the vast sea at the mercy of the weather. She also appeared to have learnt about the use of appropriate and vivid direct speech, choosing this apt quote to describe a wind change:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| S5 | “It blew like a bastard, all in the wrong direction,” says Westlake. |
|-----------|--|

This discussion on lexical choice again shows that there is growing flexibility in journalism today, in lead sentences and in lexical choice, particularly when the story cannot be classified as hard or immediate news. A study of any community newspaper will show that the lines are increasingly blurred. The major modifications needed in many of the students' sentences are not indicative of any fixed belief in the traditional values of inverted-pyramid format. The problem was not that the students were failing to write in the traditional format, but that many of them were not writing satisfactorily in the genre they chose. It appears that because they were inadequately trained, they responded poorly to the extra freedom and challenges of writing outside the traditional inverted-pyramid structure. Given the liberty to write in the style that they chose, too often they wrote inappropriate sentences which were hard to understand, wordy and not well-expressed. The lack of attention paid to the words they used strongly suggested deficiencies in their education about their lexical choice.

Another major issue this study has emphasised is the lack of encouragement for the students to monitor and evaluate their own work. The consequences of this were even more evident at the end of the year, when the students were increasingly moving away from the confines of the traditional inverted-pyramid news story. There were few signs that the students were monitoring their own choice of words to produce words with strong news values. Nor were there many signs of direct instruction on the effect of the use of words. This perhaps contributed to the students' tendency to choose inappropriate but commonly used words in their news stories. They used the term "genetic engineering", for example, with no regard to the fact that it was part of a clever campaign by the opponents of genetic modification. They also used discourse borrowed from other genres, such as the direct form of address. And they used conversational language without thought.

8.5 Order

Both in order and structure, the students' stories also showed a failure to build on the progress seen in the middle of the year. The quality of the structure of a story reflected the overall skill of the student rather than the length or type of story they had written. As we have seen previously, the students did not receive clear instruction on how to structure a longer story (see Chapter 3). By the end of the year, some of the students had

themselves grasped how to structure a story effectively while others were still having difficulty.

In theory, it would be expected that the students would find it easier to structure news stories written in the inverted-pyramid form, whereas the longer, hybrid stories that resembled features would require extra care and skill in their ordering. Tuchman (1978) makes this point. She describes how non-inverted-pyramid stories are often removed from the routines associated with deadline journalism because they demand “non-scheduled editorial care” and require “special professional skills” to shape them to the preferred size (p. 101).

However, this section did not find any radical difference in the way that the professional journalist edited the hybrid stories, compared with the inverted-pyramid stories. Some of the inverted-pyramid stories had material deleted from the end or near to the end, but the pattern was not clear-cut. In others, sentences had to be removed from the body of the story to provide balance or emphasis, as in Sam’s story in Figure 8.2 (below). Overall, the hybrid stories had larger chunks deleted from the body, although Brendan’s, in Figure 8.4, had chunks of material removed not only from the body but also the end. Other students’ stories required total restructuring, as Jamima’s story, Figure 8.3, showed. This, again, suggests that the issue was not so much the format in which the students were writing but their overall skill in structuring a story. And it also reflects there was not as marked a difference between the structure of an inverted pyramid and a hybrid news story as might have been expected. Most of the students, even when writing hybrid stories, structured them as if they were inverted-pyramid stories, with the most important information first. This again reflects the deficiencies in their education about news genres. The students had only been taught the structure of the inverted pyramid. Therefore they tended to apply it, regardless of the type of story they were writing.

The first two stories discussed in this section were classified as inverted pyramid stories. Miranda’s story was about a speech given by Hong Kong’s opposition leader while in New Zealand. Although it was not cut directly from the bottom in the professional version, 13 sentences near the end were removed. Figure 8.1 shows how Miranda’s sentences were only slightly reordered to form the professional version:

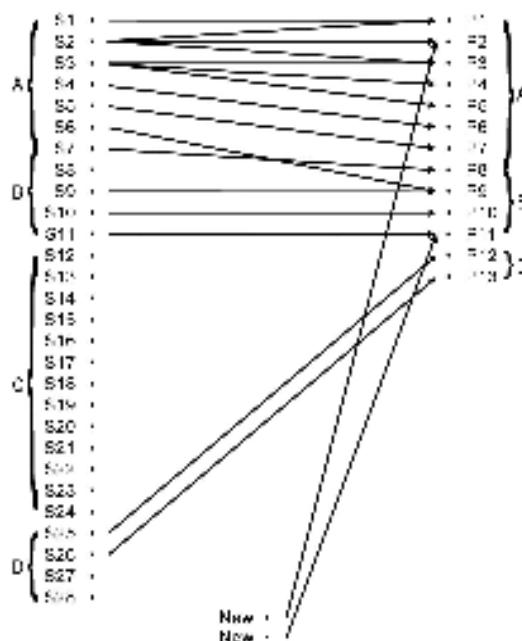


Figure 8.1 Changes to the order of Miranda’s end-of-year story

Miranda’s original story is represented by the arrows on the left side of the diagram while the professional version is on the right. Most of Miranda’s sentences remained unchanged, as revealed by the fairly straightforward pattern of the diagram. The first part (marked “A”), related that half a million people had marched against new security laws in Hong Kong. The second part was about what the march had achieved (“B”). The section marked “C” is praise of the speech and background information about Mr Lee, while “D” refers to comments about the support of the New Zealand Prime Minister. Only one sentence, S6, was moved down from the first part to the second part to maintain this sequence. The story was not wholly deleted from the bottom. Twelve sentences near the end that did not add to the overall theme, S12 – S24, also containing strongly promotional language, were deleted. S25 and S26 continued with a different theme, the New Zealand’s government’s support. They were retained and were moved to P11 and P12 to conclude the story. Material, marked “new”, was also inserted to clarify what the demonstration was about. The original story and the professional version can be seen in Appendix II. Thus the diagram reveals how material marked “A”, “B”, and “D” was retained while “C” was deleted.

Sam’s story, about genetic modification, has been discussed in section 8.3. The pattern of deletions was more complex than in Miranda’s story, although five sentences were cut directly from the end, as shown in Figure 8.2:

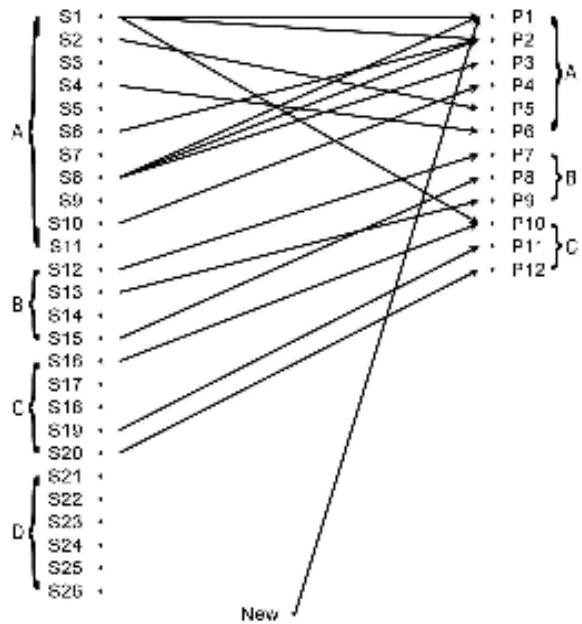


Figure 8.2 Changes to the order of Sam's end-of-year story

More than 200 words were cut in the professional version as whole sentences were removed: S3, S7 and S9, S11, S14, S17 to S18 and the five concluding sentences, S21 to S26. Also removed was the direct speech taken from press releases and most of the 19 references to “anti-GE” described in section 8.3.2.

The tendency of the students to write promotional stories was further seen in the order of Sam’s original story, as Figure 8.2 also shows. Sam started with the “anti-GE campaigners” setting up a website called the “people’s moratorium”, and followed this by elaborating on what the website would be doing. For the next 12 sentences, she used direct speech only, comprised of reinforcing comments from the people supporting the campaign. It was not until the second half, at S12, that Sam introduced the opposing view of a shopkeeper who said that people were not particularly concerned about buying genetically modified foods.

In order to make the story appear more balanced, the professional journalist deleted five of the early sentences, S3, S5, S7, S9 and S11 (marked “A”). The revised version then started with the internet action group, set up by the “anti-GE protesters”. She also added new words to the first sentence, describing the “campaigners” as “protesters”, the “People’s Moratorium” as an “internet-based action group”, and the “lifting of the Government’s moratorium” as “the lifting of the government freeze” to clarify it. The second sentence stated which groups were involved and quoted a spokesperson from

that group. The shopkeeper's views were shortened and moved closer to the start, from S12 to P7, thus strengthening the opinion of the other side of the debate and providing more balance to the story ("B"). S16–20, marked "C", was information about the Environmental Risk Management Authority, which was also shortened and retained. The last seven sentences were also cut where Sam quoted an anti-GE spokesperson who, amongst other things, said that within a year there would be hundreds of acres of GE crops growing, leaving only the neutral statement that permission was needed for field trials from the authority ("D"). These deletions, lexical changes and the modified structure all contributed to a professional version that gave the impression that it was a neutral narration of events, rather than a promotional statement released by the campaigners (see Appendix II for full story and professional version).

Structure also plays a significant part in emphasising the main theme (see also Chapter 7). This was another factor revealed in Figure 8.2: Not only must the order strengthen and support the main theme, the story must also appear to be credible and a balanced presentation of the facts. In writing about a controversial topic such as genetic modification, the story must give the impression it is balanced, even though the skilful placing of material may favour one side of the argument. Sam's story lost credibility as a news story because it too obviously supported the protesters' campaign and thus appeared not to be objective. The deletions and modifications made to it were intended to heighten its credibility and make sure the story appeared balanced, providing both sides of the argument.

The following three figures represent stories classified as hybrid texts. The radical changes made to some of the students' lead sentences meant that their order also showed dramatic changes. When Jamima's lead sentence was substantially modified, it resulted in fundamental differences to the structure, as Figure 8.3 shows:

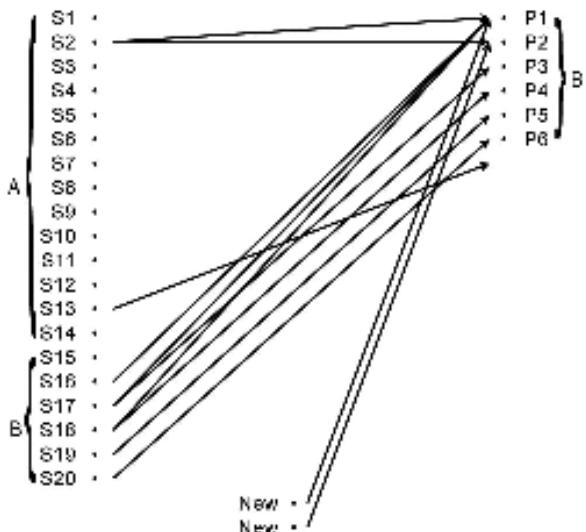


Figure 8.3 Changes to the order of Jamima’s end-of-year story

The professional version of Jamima’s lead came from S16, S17 and S18:

| | |
|------------|---|
| S16 | He said he cannot understand why our trades people don’t use our sports professionals. |
| S17 | “We battle with getting trade in places. |
| S18 | “If Daniel Vettori said ‘drink New Zealand milk’, people in India would be drinking New Zealand milk. |

The lead was formed mainly from these three sentences, plus the new word “kiwi” was inserted to replace “our”, used in Jamima’s original, and “Haworth Stadium’s media officer” from S2. This meant that these sentences, marked “B” in Figure 8.3 formed the new beginning, while the other 13 sentences, from S3 – S15, marked “A”, were deleted. The lead sentence then read: “Kiwi sporting heroes, like Daniel Vettori, could help sell New Zealand milk, says Haworth Stadium’s media officer” (see section 8.2). New information was also added to S2 in the professional version of the second sentence, to elaborate on the lead statement. Information from S19 and S20 was used to explain the lead and was spread between P3, P4, P5 and P6.

The order of Jamima’s news story was thus totally changed, to reinforce this main theme. The students’ comments on how they structured their hybrid stories provided some insight into what they thought they were doing. Jamima believed she was putting “all the important information at the top and the least down at the bottom”. She thought it was one of the major improvements she had made during her journalism training (see

also Chapter 9). However, Figure 8.3 shows how far she still had to travel (Jamima's original story and the modifications can be seen in Appendix II).

Figure 8.4 shows the greater complexity of the changes to the order of Brendan's story. The first nine sentences of Brendan's story are marked "A". The first seven sentences of the professional version were extracted from this, and are also marked "A". But the pattern was not straightforward. The professional lead sentence came from S3 and S7, the second sentence from S1 and S3 and the third from S4 and S5. These changes were the result of removing the Shakespearean references in the first three sentences and shaping it as an inverted-pyramid story, rather than Brendan's original delayed lead. The lead professional sentence then summarised the story, while the next sentence elaborated on the theme. The third sentence was derived from S4 and S5 and was direct speech, quoting Brendan's main source while the bulk of S4 formed B14. S5 – S9 formed the four sentences at P3 – P7. Brendan's S10 – S18 is marked "B". Most of this block was deleted except S12 and S14. S20 – S25 is marked "C" and became P8 – P13. S26 – S29 is marked "D" and is deleted. Thus "A", "B", "C" and "D" became "A" and "C".

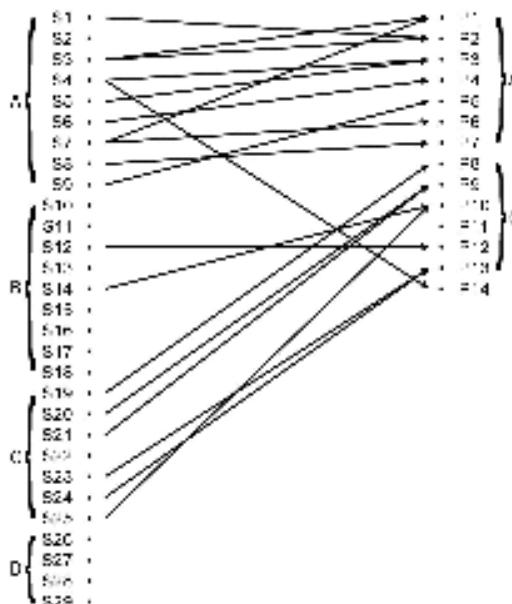


Figure 8.4 Changes to the order of Brendan's end-of-year story

Kino's first nine sentences were little changed, except for the addition of some contextual information in S3, as Figure 8.5 (below) attests. These sentences are marked "A". The next sentences, S10 to S21, are marked "B". Most of this block was deleted with only three sentences used. S13 was moved to "A" while S14 and S16 joined with

“C” in the professional version. S22 – S30 were marked “C”. Five of these sentences were also deleted while the other four were used to end Kino’s story. The last three sentences forming “D” were also deleted. Kino’s full story and the professional version can be seen in Appendix II.

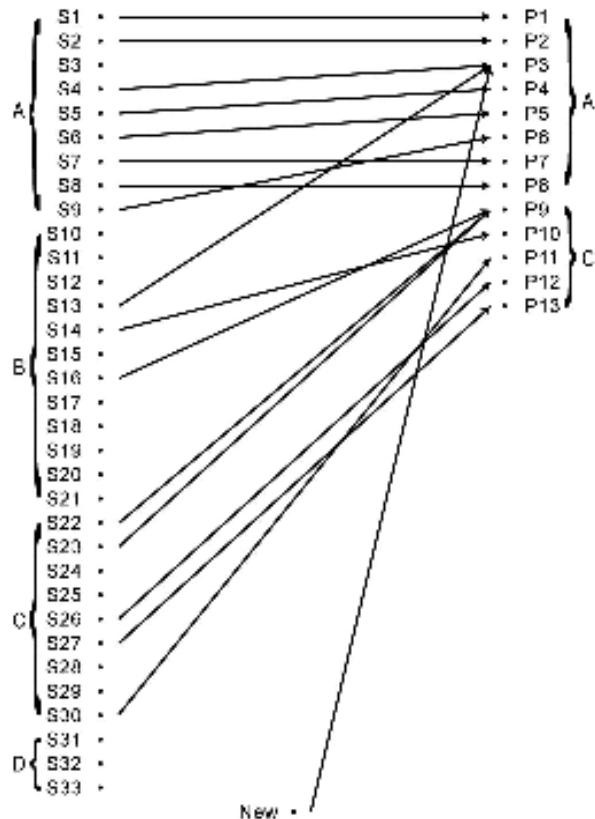


Figure 8.5 Changes to the order of Kino’s end-of-year story

Apart from Jamima’s story, which had fundamental changes made to it, this discussion has shown the similarities in the structure of the inverted pyramid and hybrid news stories. While the first eight to 10 sentences in the hybrid stories required modification to produce stronger or more newsworthy openings, the students were basically structuring their stories in order of priority, with the most important or newsworthy information first. This reinforces the findings of Chapter 3. New Zealand journalism education seldom attempts to cover any kind of instruction other than the inverted-pyramid format. The structure of the students’ stories at the end of the year showed no real development from the middle of the year, not because they were writing longer or hybrid stories, but because of a more general problem with their development and journalism education.

8.6 Background and additional information

One area where the students' stories progressed was in the growth of their awareness that some news stories required additional information added to them, in order that readers gained an understanding of their context. At the beginning of the year, 80 per cent of the students' stories needed to have further information added when they were modified by the professional journalist (see Chapter 6). Mid-year, the number of stories requiring this had shrunk to about 50 per cent (see Chapter 7). By the end of the year, this figure had decreased again to 20 per cent or just three stories. Alongside increased awareness and experience, the major reason for this development was probably because of the increased length of the stories they were expected to write at the end of the year. With more words available, it was not so necessary for the students to select carefully what to leave in or what to delete from the story. Moreover, the increased complexity of some of the stories required more contextual information.

However, not all students had yet acquired the skill of appropriately including and integrating additional information. Anastacia's story was one example. Her original story was long at 443 words. While her story talked about the \$8 million in benefits the Sanctuary Cove community brought to Haworth, and the 70,000 people who went to see the annual Christmas lights show, she assumed all readers knew what the community was and its functions. The professional version embedded the first piece of information necessary for understanding into her second sentence, to explain the nature of the community. The embedded words are underlined below:

P2

Residents of the Christian Centre are asking the Haworth City Council to put up more signs directing drivers to their village, outside the city boundaries.

Further down the story, the professional journalist decided it was important to insert some more details about the community, how many people lived there and where it was:

P6

He said the community of 900 people living 15 kms from Haworth holds many events which attract visitors.

Anastacia's original story was weakened by this lack of important information that was intrinsic to understanding the story. She also failed to explain why people visited Sanctuary Cove. This was inserted into the eighth and ninth sentences in the professional version:

P8 Six hundred students attend the college and the temple attracts many from the 89,000 strong northern congregation to it.

P9 Enthusiasts also come to the family history centre to research their family trees.

Miranda also failed to include critical contextual information. Her story and her lead sentence described half a million people demonstrating against “proposed new security measures” – “Article 23 of the Basic Law” in Hong Kong. Yet she failed to explain the kind of measures Article 23 was proposing. This mistake could perhaps be attributed to her wrongly assuming that most readers would have known about this proposed law, or a failure to recognise that without this information, the story could not be understood and lacked impact and basic clarity. The professional, by contrast, realising its central importance, embedded an explanation as soon as possible into the story, in her second sentence:

P2 Mr Lee said the huge number of people who participated in the July 1 demonstration opposing Article 23 of the Basic Law, which would allow the government to ban certain organisations, was encouraging, although it raised many questions.

8.6.1 Deletion

The most noticeable and, perhaps, the most disappointing feature of the students’ end-of-year stories was the inclusion of a large amount of superfluous and repetitive information and of generally poor and expansive writing that required deletion. At the beginning of the year, 19 of the 20 students’ stories (95 per cent) needed to be shortened and on average 109 words were taken out of each one, about a third of the story. In the middle of the year, the stories were shorter in length. Twelve students’ stories or 70 per cent did not need any material deleted and the number of words cut had dropped by half to only 50 words. However, by the end of the year, the number of words and the number of students’ stories which were shortened had increased again: almost half of every student’s story was deleted, with about 223 words removed from each one. The most obvious reason for this was the fact that the students were expected to write longer stories at the end of the year, but many lacked the skills and training to do so successfully. What this suggests will be discussed more fully in the conclusion to this chapter.

Regardless of whether they were inverted pyramid or hybrid forms, the stories included large amounts of superfluous information. The hybrid stories were only slightly longer than the inverted-pyramid ones, the average hybrid story being 490 words, compared to 444 words. Two methods were used to shorten all stories: information was deleted and information was summarised. Miranda's original story, written in the inverted-pyramid form, was typical in that it initially contained 28 sentences and was 546 words long. After it had been reworked by the professional journalist, it was half the length, 271 words, resulting in both conciseness and clarity, with no major loss of detail or complexity. As Figure 8.1 has showed, for the first 11 sentences Miranda wrote about the speech given by the Hong Kong opposition leader. Apart from some minor rearrangements, these sentences remained. It was in the next 17 sentences that the most radical deletions were made. S12 to S14 were entirely deleted, without disrupting the story flow. They were the comments of a second source, the Human Rights Commission general manager and contained the kind of language found in promotional stories, using banal quotations which did not add to the story. S14 was an example:

S14

"We are privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from Mr Lee's interesting and thought-provoking address."

The students' longer stories were generally the result of an expectation that they would research more widely and use more sources. Generally, the students failed to fulfil this expectation. The students, perhaps out of a lack of curiosity or because they did not have the time, but also as a reflection of their training, seemed unwilling to look more deeply into and critically at their stories. They appeared more comfortable in focusing their stories on the view of one official source. The additional sources and views in their longer stories added little in the way of new perspectives or genuine insight, or challenged the main source.

In Miranda's case, this was shown in a tendency to quote excessive amounts of unrevealing political rhetoric backed by predictable explanations as to the motivation of the politician. For example, she wrote:

S6

There should be a timetable for demonstrated change, said Mr Lee because "from the villages up – it is the right time for change."

S9

As leader of the opposition Democratic Party he wants more progress.

The professional journalist summarised these two sentences and took out 16 words by writing:

P9

Mr Lee, who leads the opposition Democratic Party, wants to see a timetable for change.

The next five sentences provided less relevant background information about Mr Lee and were deleted. In total, the story was shortened by 300 words. The problems of Miranda's story reflected not the structure or the topic of the story, but an inability to understand the kind of information needed and relevant to it. Her story, while a potentially important one, was not written with the insight and research needed to justify its length. The main elements of the story were appropriate to a shorter and more limited inverted-pyramid news story and were reasonably handled but the attempts at more in-depth political reporting and understanding were flawed.

Sam's story was judged by the professional journalist to require deletion and summarisation in virtually all its elements and to require major reworking. As Figure 8.2 (above) has shown, the deletions and summarisations in Sam's story were more complex. Sam's original story was 470 words. Two hundred words (42 per cent) were removed. Fourteen sentences were deleted entirely while other sentences were moved and summarised. These sentences were not necessarily placed at the bottom of the pyramid but scattered throughout. The second sentence of the professional version, for example, merged three of Sam's sentences, S2, S6 and S8. Three more sentences, S3, S5 and S7 were also entirely deleted. Sam wrote:

S2

Greenpeace spokesperson Steve Abel said the people's moratorium will formally challenge any applications to grow GE crops in New Zealand.

S6

The People's Moratorium is supported by Mothers Against Genetic Engineering (Madge), Take 5, GE Free New Zealand and Greenpeace.

S8

Madge spokesperson Alannah Currie says the people's moratorium is a direct action group to stop GE foods being sold and produced in New Zealand.

When these three sentences were summarised, 37 words were deleted. Repetition of "the people's moratorium", used three times, "Greenpeace" (twice), "Madge" (twice) and "GE" (twice), was corrected. While S6 made up the bulk of the sentence, "The

“People’s Moratorium” came from S2 and “action group” from S8. The professional journalist wrote:

P2

The action group called The People’s Moratorium is backed by Mothers Against Genetic Engineering (Madge), Take 5, GE Free New Zealand and Greenpeace.

Ten sentences at the end of Sam’s story introduced a second theme: the Environmental Risk Management Authority. Only two of these sentences remained to end the story. The rest were deleted.

The students’ lack of training in writing longer stories, and a certain shortage of creativity and curiosity that tended to limit their writing, meant that these stories featured large amounts of repetitive or irrelevant information rather than greater explanation, insight and scope. The extra words and long quotes of direct speech padded, rather than deepened, many of the stories. This meant that entire sections in many of the stories were essentially redundant and could be deleted in blocks or chunks. Three blocks of superfluous material were removed from Brendan’s story, four from Sully’s, five from Kino’s and six from Mongo’s.

This pattern of deletion can be seen in an analysis of Sully’s story (see Appendix II for original story and the professional version). Originally, his story was 620 words long, but it was shortened by more than half to 278 words, mainly through these deletions and by using strategies to summarise other sentences. Firstly, S4 and S5 were totally deleted while the direct speech in S6 and S7 were merged with S3 to form the revised P4. Sully wrote:

S3

The series will focus on emerging singer-songwriters that have been coming through open-mike nights and going on to major festivals and other events.

S4

Ms Tau sees it as a way into the public domain for many of the artists she is helping.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| S5 | “The artists have to start somewhere. |
| S6 | “The open-mikes are like a kohanga reo ²⁰ - the musicians come out of their bedrooms and get an immediate reaction. |
| S7 | “The open-mike nights develop their networking and honing of skills,” says Ms Tau. |

These 80 words were reduced to 29 words in the professional version. The “show will focus on emerging singer-songwriters” was retained from S3 and added to “major festivals and other events”. From S7 and “honing their skills” was added to “open-mike nights” because it was more expressive than the original:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| P4 | The show will focus on emerging singer-songwriters who have been honing their skills at open-mike nights and then going on to perform at major festivals and other events. |
|-----------|--|

Twelve sentences were deleted entirely from throughout the story, by cutting out large pieces of direct speech. The summarising sentence that introduced the direct speech was sharpened or revised and the direct speech that followed was deleted. For example, S15, S16 and S17 contained a 70-word description about how difficult it was financially for the subject of the story, Gaywen Tau, to make ends meet. These sentences were similarly in direct speech and did not advance the story. S19 again provided a summary of the direct speech that followed:

| | |
|------------|---|
| S19 | Māori TV producer Don Selwyn has been helping Ms Tau in planning <i>Off Beat</i> and is a supporter of helping local artists at the grassroots. |
|------------|---|

This sentence was moved up the order of the story to P12 and changed slightly to: “She has been developing *Off the Beaten Track* with help from Māori television producer Don Selwyn who supports helping local artists at the grassroots.” The next five sentences or 87 words were also deleted from S20 to S24 and were again mainly direct speech:

| | |
|------------|--|
| S20 | “Anything that is going to give anyone, who is in obscurity with a bit of talent – I’m all for it. |
| S21 | This business is full of the ‘have and the have-nots’,” he says. |

²⁰ The Māori word for preschool or kindergarten.

| | |
|------------|--|
| S22 | However, Mr Selwyn is realistic about the difficulties of getting backing from the major broadcasters. |
| S23 | “It’s a matter of attitude – where the gatekeepers have got their heads at the moment. |
| S24 | “But if we are going to look at a public broadcasting charter, then we have to look at entertainment in a wider context,” he says. |

Similarly, another 70 words were deleted from S26, S27 and S28.

Many of the students struggled with their end-of-year stories. This was despite the improvements noted at mid-year, their greater experience and training and the fact that they were now permitted to write longer and more in-depth stories, which some of them had aspired to throughout their training. The reasons behind these failings reinforce a sense of some of the deeper issues facing New Zealand journalism training and are discussed further in the conclusion.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter, unlike that covering the middle of the year, has shown few indications of the development of the skills required to be a professional journalist. The first component important in achieving this professionalism focused on whether the students had developed the skills necessary to write in a succinct, clear fashion, following the inverted-pyramid model and emphasising news values. All of the students’ stories showed the same trend. Their news stories were too long and the use of many superfluous words detracted from them. Approximately half of the words were deleted from every story before it became an appropriate length for publication.

Probably the main reason for this regression was the extra length demanded in the students’ end of the year stories. Whether this demand was appropriate is an interesting question. Relatively few newspapers today have room for these longer stories, especially community newspapers where most of the students’ work was published. However, the media today shows a greater diversity and a range of stories is being published that do not fit the short, inverted-pyramid format. At least some of the students had felt constrained by the requirement to write these traditional news stories and aspired to writing something with more depth, and scope for creativity and insight.

Unfortunately, they had not been adequately trained to write longer stories or anything outside of the inverted-pyramid news story. Moreover, the main focus of the journalism programmes had been chiefly a preparation for getting a job in the media industry. This contributed to an atmosphere at the end of the year where the students were far more concerned with finishing their course requirements and job-seeking, than seriously dealing with the new opportunities and challenges of writing longer stories.

The quality of the students' end-of-year stories raises serious questions about the nature of New Zealand journalism education. A widespread inability to write interesting, appealing news stories can be linked to the lack of instruction on the place and importance of news values. There is a tendency for journalists to assume that an understanding of newsworthiness "just happens". This assumption seems to have influenced journalism education with the result that the students are expected to gain this understanding without instruction. For many students this was not the case. The students had learnt how to write in the inverted-pyramid format by doing it, but did not learn its purpose or its value. Its purpose is not to write wholly objective and neutral stories which will be seen by readers as dull and boring. It is to enhance the news values through the lead sentence, the lexical choice and the structure, so that interesting, important and appealing news stories will persuade the reader to continue to buy the newspaper.

When the students ventured outside the inverted-pyramid format, they particularly struggled. Nine of the students' stories at the end of the year were written with soft lead sentences and classified as hybrid stories. More flexible forms of writing are a feature of the media today, one which the students were increasingly following. However, the students received scant instruction on how and when it was appropriate to use these forms. The boundaries between the forms required for hard news and soft news are often unclear for journalists, and even more so for students. This creates a tension in what the students are learning, causing confusion and increased promotional writing as the students' stories at the end of the year have shown. The result was, among other things, a lack of focus in the stories, stemming from poor lead sentences, an inappropriate and ineffective use of informal language, and the continuing blurring of the boundaries between advertising and editorial.

Another element of journalism education that needs deeper thought revolves around the students' ability to gain a deeper understanding of their own writing, to be able to monitor and evaluate it for themselves. As mentioned, this seems to be largely ignored in journalism institutions, which instead favour subediting by tutors. This may well contribute to the students' apparent tendency to be largely oblivious and unaware of the quality or lack of it in their own writing. Certainly, their end-of-year stories, as well as their taped reflections (see Chapter 9), show a reluctance to analyse and rework their own writing.

The fourth component of this study centred on whether the students were gaining the critical thinking skills and independence necessary for a professional journalist so that they could research thoroughly, reflect deeply and write entertaining, informative and important news stories with flair. Unfortunately, most of these stories showed little effort. The prologue at the beginning of this chapter showed the excuses they were making for their attempts. This was the most concerning development of all. The students had not gained critical thinking skills, so that very few of their stories could be seen as important, informative or appealing. Even when confronted with a significant news story with considerable potential and public interest, such as genetic modification, the efforts of the three students writing on this subject were not strong. One used several press releases in her story so that it read like a piece of promotional writing for the opponents of genetic modification, while all three unthinkingly and repetitively used the word "genetic engineering" which was part of the anti-genetic modification campaign. The choice of this topic at least revealed some passion about the subject. Many of the stories, despite the extra length and expectations of greater research and sources, revealed a lack of curiosity or creativity.

The central question is why the students had not yet gained the skills and attributes of a journalist. Over the last 20 years, New Zealand journalism education has been formalised. Students now spend a year at a journalism school, rather than being trained on the job as they would have been 20 years ago. Throughout New Zealand today, an increasing number of students learn journalism through degree programmes at universities and polytechnics (see Chapter 3). But little has actually changed in those 20 years in what the students learn, what they are expected to learn and how they learn. Students learn the basic skills, then practise their writing, aiming at publication.

Journalism is still regarded as a craft and is taught in much the same fashion that the craft has always been taught.

The growth of media studies and critical thinking about the media has had only a slight impact on what students are taught. The evidence of this study shows that many New Zealand journalism educators, like journalists, continue to believe that news reporting is an objective presentation of the truth and that they devote little time and effort to providing students with a deeper understanding of the news genre and the importance of news values. The students also seem to lack the training and the encouragement to aspire to the higher ideals of journalism.

This study of New Zealand journalism education has focused on the education the students received and especially on the study of the students' writing. There is still one aspect to consider in order to achieve a broader view – the students' reflections. Chapter 9 will give some insight into the cognitive aspect of these findings: It will investigate what the students thought they were doing and the difficulties they encountered, marrying it to what they wrote. It will also consider a subject that is rarely mentioned, discussing the importance of reflection and critical thinking and how this impacts on journalism education.

9 The Background to the Picture: Thinking Aloud

Analyzing a protocol is like following the tracks of a porpoise, which occasionally reveals itself by breaking the surface of the sea (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

9.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the findings of research into New Zealand journalism education by placing the students at the forefront of the discussion, providing a “human face” and adding new light to this study. The previous three chapters have discussed the development of the skills of journalism. The students’ perceptions, reasoning, motivation and intuitions, the “interpretative processes” remains to be considered (Fairclough, 1995) which will lead to a deeper understanding of whether New Zealand journalism education places sufficient importance on developing the attributes of a professional journalist, such as independence and critical thinking.

Interesting new insights are gained from including the often-neglected viewpoints of journalism students who are key stakeholders in the future of journalism (O'Donnell, 2006). This chapter changes the focus to what appears to be an area of New Zealand journalism education which has largely been ignored: developing the attributes, not simply the skills, of a journalist. The data was facilitated by the method used: retrospective protocol analysis or “thinking aloud”, which required the students to record their thoughts immediately after writing their news stories, reflecting on their lead sentences, the process of writing, the words they used, the structure and any difficulties they encountered. Other information about the students themselves came from a brief questionnaire at the beginning of the study (see Appendix I).

Retrospective protocol analysis has some limitations, associated with the nature of short-term memory: the students might have forgotten some things or provided details which they thought would be appropriate rather than factual. A number of the students also expressed their difficulties with talking into a tape recorder. At least one retrospective protocol showed evidence that the student considered his reflection as a “performance”, recording a musical introduction to it. The “Hawthorne effect” (Brannigan & Zberman, 2001; Holden, 2001) denotes a situation in which the

introduction of experimental conditions designed to identify salient aspects of behaviour has the consequence of changing the behaviour it is designed to identify. That is, when people realise their behaviour is being examined, they change how they act. Ericsson and Simon (1993) have also criticised this as “reactivity”.

It was particularly challenging to find a way to interpret and code these reflections as their relationship to the students’ practice was not always clear. For example, a student would reflect that he or she had consistently followed the inverted-pyramid format but analysis of the news story would not show this. Interpretation was similar to following the “tracks of a porpoise” (Flower & Hayes, 1980) deep down in the ocean: it was only when the tracks “broke the surface of the sea” that I gained some understanding. The students’ inability to explain clearly the genres they were working in, the methods they were using and their thought processes reflected the fact that they had not received sufficient education in certain areas. Students with only a hazy understanding of news values, for instance, could not explain how they sought to express and enhance news values. The students had received little teaching on the theories of news writing and little encouragement to reflect on their own writing. Rather, they were encouraged to simply write. It was therefore not easy or always illuminating for them to discuss their own writing and what informed it.

Therefore I did not attempt to use the data gathered from the retrospective protocols to provide a careful analysis of the actual writing process or draw up a model of how the students wrote news stories as have Best (1993) and Elefson (1989). However, I used it in conjunction with the findings of the discourse analysis to add the students to the picture of journalism education in New Zealand.

The questions posed in Chapter 1 were:

1. How do students learn to become journalists?
2. What are the main influences on their learning?
3. Is reform of journalism education necessary?

There is no one better placed than the students themselves to provide some answers to these questions. Their reflections did not come from a fixed questionnaire: if asked directly about what they learnt, the students’ answers might well have answered

differently. However, the protocols represented the students' thought processes and add an invaluable dimension to the textual analysis.

In order to provide this, the students' retrospective protocols were transcribed, producing many thousands of words of raw "data" (see Chapter 4, for rationale of how this was done and Appendix III for examples). I then attempted to categorise the contents of the transcriptions into broad headings, such as "finding the angle" and "the inverted pyramid", also drawing on my own knowledge and experience as a teacher, to reflect the current situation in New Zealand schools of journalism. In this chapter, I refer to the students, using the pseudonyms and spellings of the names they chose for themselves, and provide selected excerpts of their reflections. These excerpts are interwoven with theories about news writing and self-regulation, and an evaluation of the students' progress towards becoming professional journalists.

The reflections throughout the year of these students will provide a new dimension to this study of journalism education. It will consider how their training is shaping or is not shaping the development of independence, self-evaluation and critical thinking which are all important to working as a professional journalist. It is also particularly interesting to note the aims and aspirations of these 20 students. Only six of them were interested in news writing. Of the remainder, two wanted to be full-time novelists, five wanted to write for magazines or do features, three were heading for television and documentary production, and two hoped to be fashion or film and music writers. Two students were not planning to work in the media industry, one said she wanted to be a bar manager and the other was unsure what she wanted to do. Many of the students were more interested in writing soft features or magazine stories rather than hard news stories. These aspirations matched both their interests and the demands of the media industry. However, the education they received throughout the year was based around news writing and they received little education in these genres. News writing is the core subject of the journalism programme with other subjects being seen as additional to the main requirements. The consequences, as we have seen previously, particularly in Chapter 8, were mainly negative.

The chapter is divided into six sections. Section 9.2 covers the students' reflections at the beginning of the year. It shows the critical influence of their tutors on their learning and also reveals their lack of understanding of the nature of the inverted pyramid.

Section 9.3 discusses the very important influence of work experience in the media industry on the students' writing in the middle of the year. Working in the media is seen as the ultimate experience by the students and their tutors (see also Chapter 3). However, it did not encourage the students to be independent or show initiative, rather it was a socialising experience. Section 9.4 considers the challenges, difficulties and problems the students face at the end of the year and what they had learnt from their training. The year is summarised in section 9.5, discussing both the students' reflections and how they relate to the discourse analysis of their stories. In order to bring the picture of the students up to the present day, I traced their career paths four years after the study. The findings are detailed in section 9.6 as an "epilogue".

9.2 The beginning of the year

The first section discusses the students' reflections on news writing at the beginning of their journalism training. The differences between knowing how to structure a news story and actually doing it are considered, as well as the challenges the students encountered and the many difficulties of learning a new genre with its constraints and rules. Section 9.2.2 discusses how the students became increasingly reliant on the one-to-one attention they received from their tutors and the effects of this, including its possible contribution to the students' inability to self-evaluate their writing.

9.2.1 Learning the basics

Earlier chapters have argued that learning by doing is a central part of teaching New Zealand journalism students to write news stories and that the students receive comparatively little encouragement or training on how to critically analyse their own writing. This section suggests that those students who did reflect on their own writing and had a deeper grasp and interest in the theories of news writing tended to have an advantage when it came to writing stories.

These more analytical and articulate students were in a minority. The students' reflections, recorded immediately after writing their news stories at the beginning of the year, suggest that "thinking aloud", or reflecting, was not a skill encouraged in New

Zealand journalism education. Many of the students found it difficult to explain why they wrote in the way they did. Agnes said she was:

...finding it really difficult to say why I did things ... like it's just how I do it ... it's the way I write (Agnes, March 14, 2003).

One exception was Anastacia, who could describe the details of how she started writing and how she incorporated the inverted pyramid in her writing process:

I write down everything I've got on the computer screen ... in note form ... then I sort of move it around and fit it together and add in to make full sentences ... put in joining words and basically form paragraphs and then I'll move the paragraphs around until they make sense. I started off with a broad introduction, my second paragraph was an introduction to the club, my third paragraph was an introduction to the person within the club so it is sort of getting deeper within it ... Each sentence I've tried to include a good transition, they sort of lead on from one another (Anastacia, March 14, 2003).

The ability to self-reflect was to provide Anastacia with many of the attributes of a good journalist. It meant that she constantly monitored her own work and also considered ideas for news stories, showing flair and innovation. Self-reflection does not have to mean inaction, taking time out from a task to stop and think about potential strategies. Schön defines reflection in action as occurring when "thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it" (Schon, 1986, p. 36). Critical self-reflection should be seen as the hallmark of good professional practice (Sheridan Burns, 2002), encouraging not just greater understanding but more productive writing techniques.

Self-monitoring does not seem to be given high priority in New Zealand journalism education. Rather, the teaching programme attempts to replicate the working environment and keep students busy writing rather than thinking. Computer rooms are designated as newsrooms and the students are required to write a large number of news stories to tight deadlines, just like "real" journalists. The students very quickly picked up the slang of the working journalist. In their reflections, they used typical journalist jargon, saying that they wrote "stories" not news items or news reports, talking of "leads" and "sources". The sense was that what they found most exciting and relevant about their training was the exposure to the newsroom.

One news theory that they were taught and were certainly conscious of from the very beginning of their training was the inverted pyramid, especially its mechanical

requirements. They had learnt the top-down nature of how to write an inverted pyramid story and tried to replicate it, as Samdog reflected:

When writing a story, I'm always looking at the inverted pyramid story. You want to hook the reader in with your intro, as we've learned in classes ... The intro is the most important part of your story, because it's the major angle. As you're going down (the pyramid), it's obviously going to less important information and those things the subeditor can cut ... the least important facts are ... at the end (Samdog, March 13, 2003).

However, the students seemed to have had relatively little education on the news values that make a story newsworthy and certainly not enough to impress upon them its crucial importance. News values can be described as themes that have been shown to strike a chord with media audiences (Sheridan Burns, 2002), such as negativity. At the beginning of the year, the reflections of only three of the 20 students mentioned news values as influencing their stories.

Samdog and Henreitta mentioned that they had tried to bring in the news value of proximity into their stories, as they had been taught in class. Henreitta reflected:

This story would obviously be for the Haworth paper because it focuses very strongly on the local angle about the stadium and about the music stores in Haworth selling out their tickets ... which we've been taught to do in class because readers want to hear about what's happening in their local area, before anybody else's (Henreitta, March 14, 2003).

Samdog also mentioned that he had been taught about the importance of the news value of negativity, of which conflict is a part:

We've been told in class by our tutors that if you can get a little bit of conflict in the story, it really adds to it (Samdog, March 13, 2003).

Jamima's reflection suggested she knew of the news values of "timeliness" but also that she had a less than perfect understanding of it. Timeliness is often described as immediacy and emphasises that the news story is referring to an event that has only just happened by using words such as "this morning" or "yesterday". Jamima did not understand this and referred to a more distant time:

My first sentence I've included timeliness by saying that it's at "the end of "O" week ... (Jamima, March 14, 2003).

Even more concerning was that as the students' training progressed, they mentioned news values less often. If news values were seen as a central part of their journalism education and of their attempts to improve as journalists, it could be expected they might have mentioned them far more. None of the students in their reflections after the mid-year and end-of-year stories mentioned that they had been taught about or were trying to enhance news values in their stories. This confirms a major theme from throughout this study. The weakness, and indeed dullness, of many of the students' stories can be attributed to their failure to pay sufficient attention to introducing and enhancing news values. Indeed, the major reason why many of the student's stories, both early and later in their training, did not reach a professional standard was the lack of news values (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

This lack of understanding of news values undermined the students' efforts to write according to the requirements of the inverted-pyramid model, even though a major part of the students' early training centred on the mechanical structure of the inverted pyramid. The students were certainly influenced by this education, sometimes to an arguably, almost counter-productive, degree.

For instance, the students were highly conscious of the need in the inverted-pyramid form to write a strong lead that expressed the angle of the story. For some students, the most difficult part was finding the angle or focus of the story, before writing the lead sentence, as Kathie related:

The main problem I had was finding an angle. It took me probably about half an hour worth of reading and re-reading my notes to get the angle.

The challenge was not only in finding the angle, but in being able to turn it into an appropriate lead sentence. Kathie described the time it took and the frustrations of trying to write a lead sentence or "intro":

I had probably about five, six different intros and each time the story kind of petered off into nothing (Kathie, March 12, 2003).

Mongo, when writing his lead, sat "in front of (my) computer agonising over every single word and really having a lot of difficulty". The students' comments echo research on news stories which found that the most time-consuming part of writing a story was the lead sentence. Research shows that news writers spend a third to a quarter of their

time writing these first sentences (Pitts, 1982). However, in the case of many of the students at this early stage, this hard work did not necessarily lead to strong leads.

A major reason for this was, again, that many of the students lacked an understanding of the news values so crucial to producing an interesting lead and a newsworthy story. Some of the students thought they had mastered the inverted pyramid. From her reflections, Betty appeared to know how to structure her news story, first deciding on her angle:

I just basically sifted through all my information and decided what kind of angle I wanted to take, like if there was any new information that people would want to know or what was the most interesting thing that was going on at the moment. So after I figured that out I tried to put it into an interesting lead, kind of trying to include all the information I wanted to get across in a nice, concise sentence ... then pretty much tried to put the rest of the information in order so that it made sense and so that people could follow it easily (Betty, March 13, 2003).

However, knowing the theory and being able to put it into practice are very different, as the reality of Betty's first sentence shows. She wrote: "Young women across the country will soon have the opportunity to take part in a national choir and vocal training programme." Though this sentence was concise, as Betty reflected, it failed to tell the readers what sort of choir and training programme was on offer and even worse, failed to provide much incentive to read on. Devoid of news values, it was a promotional sentence, aimed at creating desire (Erjavec, 2004), rather than a news sentence imparting information in an innovative fashion. Betty, like so many of the other students, did not understand that "interest" equated to news values.

Another point suggested from the students' reflections is that the pressures of "learning by doing" were sometimes counter-productive, especially for students at the beginning of their training. At this early period, the students were exposed to a new way of writing with many specific structural requirements. They received relatively little training in the theories of this genre or strategies to carry it out. Rather, they were thrust very quickly into writing stories for publication under considerable pressure.

This pressure seemed to have produced what can be described as cognitive overload or "writing apprehension" among some of the students. The term "writing apprehension" was coined in the 1970s (Daly & Miller, 1975; Daly & Wilson, 1983). People who fall into a low apprehension group are those who are confident in their writing abilities and

who enjoy writing. Those in high apprehension groups are those for whom writing is a chore, a punishment they avoid when possible. Most journalism schools have some kind of screening test for applicants or require prospective students to submit writing samples and it would be expected that students planning a career in journalism would mainly fall into the low apprehension group. But sometimes the pressure of writing that includes being accurate, directing it to an audience, keeping it short, finding an angle and topic, and keeping to the deadline affects even good writers adversely. Mongo, who was a competent and experienced writer upon entering the course, found the demands of news writing difficult and time consuming:

.... doing a really structured story and trying to follow the guidelines that we've been given in class and in the style book and so on, trying to be concise, precise, being brief...I find brevity something really difficult ... when I get into a structured story, it's proving more time-consuming than if I had written 10 times the volume but in a different style (Mongo, March 11, 2003).

The pressure of following so strict a mechanical structure inhibited his natural writing ability:

This story was really difficult for me to write, to be honest ... it's taken me quite a while ... to get to this point. Once I actually hit this idea and I actually wrote the first par²¹, it all started to flow pretty freely but until then I'd been sitting in front of my computer agonising over every single word and really having a lot of difficulty ... I've never done this kind of writing before ... most of my writing has just flowed out of me (Mongo, March 11, 2003).

It was particularly stressful for the students to be quickly thrust into the professional journalists' reality of hunting for information and sources. Ramstein explained:

It's been incredibly, incredibly struggling. I've had to interview so many people who have put me on hold and transferred me to other people and then when I talk to them I have to repeat myself, who I am, and what I do, and then they say: "Oh, I'll just transfer you to somebody else" and over and over again. It's a real struggle (Ramstein, March 13, 2003).

While journalism institutions place great value in imposing the deadline pressure of the newsroom (and the classroom) on their students, it could have negative effects. Meeting the deadline became for many students more important than the quality of their news

²¹ "Par" is the jargon used by New Zealand journalists for "paragraph".

stories or, equally important at this stage of their training, of reaching a deeper understanding of the news-writing process. Sherwood (1996) describes deadline pressure as increasing a student's anxieties: "[T]he great motivator, deadline pressure, depends less on the hope of reward than on the fear of failure, and thus increases a student's anxieties" (p. 51).

New Zealand journalism institutions tend to follow the belief of many news-writing courses that news stories must be written quickly (S. Turner, 1998), allowing little time for revision, but this meant that the story was often not well-written, as Betty commented: "I kind of rushed the story". This often led to students handing a story to their tutor that they knew required further research and was not well-written. It was the fear of failing the course that was far worse than a news story that was not up to the standard, as Agnes admitted:

I always think that I will come up with something in the end ... like at least I've handed something in which means I won't fail the course and I can always rewrite it to make it a bit better. Next week I'm definitely going to be more organised (Agnes, March 14, 2003).

There is a fundamental difference between the act of writing and the act of learning to write, as Couzijn (1999) discusses. The writing process has a material aim, producing a text, while the learning process has a cognitive aim, acquiring knowledge, as well as skill, to produce such texts. Learning by doing endeavours to incorporate the two components, both executing and monitoring the task. While executing the task, writers must produce text from the facts they have gathered, with sentences, words and a theme. At the same time they must monitor what is written, which includes observing, evaluating, regulating and reflecting. They must ask themselves such questions as: "What do I want to say in this sentence?" or "What strategy must I use here?" As well, they must be able to evaluate each sentence, taking into account the positive or negative effects: "This sentence is useful as an intro because it leads into the story", or "This sentence is in the wrong position in the inverted pyramid because it does not emphasise the main theme." The writing task needs to be considered as part of the learning task for it to be instructive, so that the students must maintain the difficult "double agenda", writing, monitoring and regulating and at the same time, evaluating. The students' stories showed that the cognitive load was so high during the writing task alone that some activities, especially those relating to reflection and revision of their writing, were

often abandoned, particularly in the early stages when the students were still novices and under intense pressure.

The students were taught to revise their writing and correct the minor errors, but my earlier research has shown they receive little encouragement and assistance in techniques such as peer editing (Thomas, 1999). Anastacia was one student who mentioned having been taught a technique: reading one's story out loud.

It makes more sense once you're reading it out loud ... James (the tutor) always tells us that and I think that's right because as I'm reading it to my boyfriend, I'm like, oh hello, I realise I've done something wrong and I have to go and fix it. I reread my work about probably three or four times ... I'll try out different things, new words or a new way of phrasing it and fiddle around with it until I like it (Anastacia, March 14, 2003).

However, despite her efforts at revision and improvement, Anastacia's early story, like those of most of the students at this stage of their training, fell well short of a professional standard (see Chapter 6). This again suggests the difference between being able to talk about the task, and having all the strategies to execute and monitor it. Perhaps most importantly, it reflects the major problem that the students lacked sufficient understanding and education in the elements most crucial to a news story. What Anastacia was doing when revising her story by reading it out loud was editing the "surface" features, whether it flowed smoothly as well as checking the spelling, punctuation, syntax and grammar. She was diligently following what she had been taught to do. What her revision could not do – and was not aimed at doing – was to address the deeper problems of her and many of the students' stories, stemming from a lack of critical thinking and independence, and a lack of understanding of the importance of news values.

Anastacia was incorporating some form of independent evaluation and revision of her writing and was finding it helpful. Most of the students, as we shall see, tended to eschew examining their own writing in favour of handing it to their tutor in the hope that it would attain the necessary standard.

9.2.2 The tutor dominates

Rather than self or peer evaluation and revision, New Zealand journalism education revolves around the tutor acting as stand-in subeditor. All students submitted their news stories to their tutors who made comments and changes, marked or subedited them to bring them to a standard appropriate for publication. Under such a system, there was little room for the growth of self-evaluation or the development of self-regulatory skills (Pintrich, 1995). Instead, the students were reliant on their tutors' input to bring their stories to the required standard and did not start to gain independence.

This, alongside the inflexible deadlines for the stories, could lead to students failing to carefully craft their stories in the expectation that the tutor would repair any flaws. Kathie, for instance, wrote a story in just 25 minutes. She acknowledged the story was flawed and essentially a draft but relied on the tutor to do the revision:

I was a little bit worried about submitting such a rushed draft because it actually only took me about 25 minutes (Kathie, March 12, 2003).

Ramstein, similarly, could not wait to quit her story and give the responsibility to her tutor:

It's such a relief to get it off my shoulders ... I just hope that my tutor thinks the same way (Ramstein, March 13, 2003).

Mavis described the very intensive one-to-one process that often occurred when the students' stories were "subbed":

I wrote up my article and then on Thursday morning I took it to Sally [a tutor] for her to sub the story and she basically told me to get some statistics.

She then needed to return with her story to Sally twice more. On her third visit to her tutor, the story was "approved" or deemed suitable to be submitted to a newspaper for publication:

I went back to Sally who helped me sort out whereabouts they should go.... I then went back to her again, and she approved it.

Mavis appeared happy with the subediting process and thought it was contributing to her improvement as a news writer:

I felt my article was probably subbed a little bit less than last time so hopefully the way I'm constructing stories is improving. It's good having a tutor who isn't afraid to totally pull apart what you've done and then show you how to do it (Mavis, March 17, 2003).

However, her reflections also suggest that the students' over-reliance on tutors' subediting can discourage independence and the ability to self-evaluate, both crucial attributes in a journalist. She made little effort to understand how she could improve her writing.

The assistance the tutors offered during the subbing process was mainly directed towards readying a story for publication. Their changes created a story closer to publication standard. While the students might, as Mavis mentioned, benefit from observing the process of seeing a more experienced journalist constructing their stories, tutors when subbing a story tend to deal with practical issues such as spelling and story construction. They are not dealing with, or instructing the students in any sustained manner, in the wider issues identified in this thesis as lacking in the students' work, such as an understanding of news values and the wider ambitions and responsibilities of a journalist.

The intensive nature of the one-on-one subbing process demands much of the tutor's time that could be dedicated to addressing some of the wider issues that New Zealand journalism institutions currently discuss only in brief. Earlier research suggested the practical as well as the pedagogical benefits of using alternative methods of teaching news writing which encouraged peer support and collaboration, rather than the traditional subbing method. This research showed that a collaborative workshop intervention, where the students were encouraged to use self-regulation strategies, used about half the tutor time that the traditional one-to-one subbing method took (Thomas, 2001).

These reflections have painted a picture of 20 students at the start of learning news writing and some of the difficulties they encountered at the beginning of the year suggesting some factors that lessen the benefits to the students of the learning by doing method. It largely confirms the findings of Chapter 6 which examined the students' early efforts at news writing. It showed that while the students concentrated on the mechanical elements of the inverted pyramid, they lacked awareness of the importance

of news values in journalism. Their reflections did not suggest much ambition, independence and creativity. Rather, the dominant influence of journalism educators in subbing and shaping the stories was a common theme. This over-reliance on their tutors did not encourage the students to self-evaluate their work or develop their critical understanding of the news media. The result, as we saw in Chapter 6, was news stories that too often veered towards the dull and unimaginative. The next section will examine the students' reflections in the middle of the year and will look at a critical influence on their development: work experience.

9.3 The middle of the year

The students were almost at the mid-point of their 10-month long journalism programmes. There had been a change in the last months. The students' reflections no longer expressed the excitement of a new learning experience, evident at the start of the year. However, this emotion had been replaced by a different excitement, learning about the realities of the media industry through work experience. Work experience is an integral part of the New Zealand journalism curriculum and a unit standard requirement (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 1997), although the students spend only about two weeks involved in it. Chapter 3 has discussed the high regard it is held in by both students and journalism educators; it was described as the "ultimate learning experience". This practice can confirm the students' interest in a career in journalism or they can decide it is not suitable for them.

This section will consider the impact that work experience and learning by doing had on the students' understanding of news writing. Section 3.1 will, alongside the examination of the students' stories in Chapter 7, show that the process of writing large numbers of stories and especially the experience of working directly for the media industry had a generally positive effect on the students' confidence and competence in the mechanics of news writing and the inverted pyramid. However, as section 3.2 will discuss, work experience and learning by doing were generally not helping the students develop self-regulatory strategies or independence. The students still tended to lack innovation and critical thinking, in part because the dominant influence of the tutor had been replaced by the chief reporter. Section 9.3.3 discusses a group of students frustrated by their experiences in news reporting and work experience. It will suggest that one of these

frustrations is that some of the students were not interested in news writing and the very strict constraints of the news-writing genre. They wanted to write in other increasingly popular genres, using different formulae, such as human interest stories, features, fashion and promotional pieces – what we have called hybrid texts. However, the education they received was not preparing them for these non-news writing tasks.

9.3.1 The ultimate experience in the real world

The students had now been learning to become journalists for almost five months and were more confident about their writing. Most of them had now written at least 10 stories for publication. This confidence was aided by work experience, also described as internship by the students, which developed their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a sense of self-worth drawn from feelings of competence, a belief that one is personally capable of mastering or becoming competent in a particular task (Bandura, 1991). Students need to be taught to use strategies to encourage self-efficacy as it influences the choices they make, their aspirations, how much effort they put into any endeavour, and how they persevere in the face of difficulties (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). While the students might receive criticism from the editor or chief reporter, this criticism generally taught them new skills and made them feel more self-efficacious, as Henreitta reflected:

Another thing they taught me ... was starting with a more interesting punchy first sentence because my first sentences before I went there were quite dull and they showed me how to make some a bit more interesting, a bit more different so that people would read them (Henreitta, July 18, 2003).

As discussed in Chapter 7, Henreitta's greater confidence and work experience contributed to her using a lead in her mid-year story that was more “punchy” than her earlier stories although it still required further improvement. She wrote: “A white foam that is discharging regularly ... has Haworth City Council baffled.” This sentence could have had more impact if, as the professional version did, the descriptive words “mysterious” and “polluting” were added, but it still suggested greater competence.

Anastacia's writing had also definitely progressed since the beginning of the year. She too commended work experience and the influence of the chief reporter for this improvement:

My intro was greatly influenced by my internship because the chief reporter changed around one of my stories because he said ... you should make it the thing you would say to your friends at the pub if you were telling them the story. So since that time, a few weeks ago, my introductions to my news stories have definitely changed to make them more newsworthy.

Anastacia's growing confidence was also reflected in the way she now understood the importance of background information and was able to weave it into her story:

Ok, when I'm writing a story such as this which is going from another one that I've previously written, I can't assume that the reader has read my first story, so just throwing in a few background facts such as this sentence, just makes it more readable and more understandable for the reader, I think (Anastacia, July 18, 2003).

Martha is an example of how work experience and greater writing had limited benefit for some students. She did not manage a "punchy" first sentence and admitted she had problems choosing a lead sentence:

It was hard to choose because the story is fairly dry ... and I didn't really like the fact that I had to use the word "principal" quite a lot (Martha, June 25, 2003).

She wrote: "More changes are underway at Maunganui School with the appointment of an interim principal, Mr George Abel, to lead the school until a permanent principal is selected." But she had not yet learnt to enhance the news values in her lead sentence. In contrast, the professional journalist wrote: "A newly appointed interim principal heads the staff changes at the top of the troubled Maunganui School" which added negativity and gave an indication of the conflict that had occurred at the school. Despite these problems, one can see from Martha's comments that she was at least developing some self-evaluation skills.

Overall, most students were excited about their work experience and found it valuable. But not all the students found it pleasant. Vin's experience was less than happy, as Chapter 5 described, while Samdog's was almost gruelling. He commented:

I did my internship in Whitby ... I got a real tough internship ... probably the toughest I've heard. The editor's expectations of me were so high that after the first week I just had to lift my performance or I wasn't going to get anything published. So I had to start looking at the angle, trying to localise, things like that.

According to Samdog, the Whitby editor threatened that he would get him "off the course", because his work was so far short of the standard:

He said like “this is not up to standard, you’re not going to get anything printed here, I’ll get you off the course, you’ve got to get your words tight, you’re using 15 words when you can use 10 or 11. You’ve just got to get tighter, more precise, and you’ve really got to get more sources, back up, you can’t just say things without backing it up”.

At first Samdog found it too hard. His self-efficacy was low:

I really didn’t get on with him … sort of got me a bit disillusioned at times with how difficult it was going to be.

However, with hindsight, this experience helped him learn news writing:

When I looked at my first copy to basically my last copy … my first copy, there wasn’t much white paper on it, my last copy basically no corrections. He taught me a lot (Samdog, November 5, 2003).

While the editor’s manner of dealing with this student may be questionable, there is little doubt that work experience did have a positive effect on Samdog’s writing. Before work experience, Samdog had shown some ability and determination in finding innovative topics for news stories, but his basic writing skills were lacking and marred by sloppiness and the use of incorrect words. Work experience, and the correct identification of his problems by the chief reporter, may have been difficult at the time but helped him become a tidier, more succinct writer.

Work experience had other effects on the students. The students found that the role of their tutor was no longer the dominant influence on them. It was the practice of the newsroom, rather than the education of the classroom, that was having a greater effect on them. The newsroom was the “real world”, as Agnes described:

Our tutor James … he really wants two or more sources per story but I found that at the newspaper I worked for one source was quite sufficient especially if it’s just human interest stories. I found that quite different than what we learn in class. We didn’t actually learn what it’s going to be like in the real world (Agnes, July 18, 2003).

Another consequence of work experience was it exposed the students to the opportunity and the expectation that they would write hybrid stories, generally human interest or promotional rather than the inverted-pyramid stories they had been trained in. (see Chapters 7, 8). Not only were the students not trained in these hybrid forms, they often had little or no understanding of the differences between these forms and the more traditional ways of news journalism. Nine of the 17 students wrote hybrid human

interest or promotional stories yet Agnes was the only student to even mention in her taped recollections that she had not written an inverted-pyramid news story but a human interest one. Her story about a petanque coach was a human interest one with a typical lead for these stories, a soft first sentence followed by a second sentence or “drop lead”, providing the news element.

Mavis’s story about a 14-year old boy was also a human interest story although in her taped reflections she did not recognise it as such. Kathie’s story was an example of writing in conversational language stories that were more promotional writing than news (Fairclough, 1994). She started her story with this sentence: “Women’s rights officer Candida Edmond is asking student parents to tell her what it’s really like to look after kids while studying” and ended with a piece of advertising: “Students wanting to respond to the survey should ring Candida at the AUSA office or email her at candida.edmond@ausa.ac.nz.” Kathie did not seem to recognise the conversational or promotional nature of this writing when she reflected:

.... [T]here's nothing emotive in it ... I mean it could maybe be a little bit clinical but cold, because it's just sort of a request, so it's nothing too groundbreaking.

Indeed, like other students writing in hybrid forms, she was under the misapprehension that her story was actually the inverted-pyramid style, as her reflection suggested:

I guess I'm much more confident about the inverted pyramid style of writing ... having my second par flesh out what I've said in the first par and then trying to get the quote quite high up in the story ... that just comes quite naturally now (Kathie, July 29, 2003).

It is surprising that so few of the students did not recognise their deviation away from the inverted-pyramid news story. One reason for this appeared to be another result of learning by doing which did not provide the students with much information about different genres. The students saw journalism education as based around practice to improve their writing. Most of them had little critical understanding of the new ways of the media industry or knowledge of the different characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of various genres. This, among other consequences, made it difficult for them to adequately understand and evaluate their own writing. Learning by doing had given the students confidence and assisted in their progress toward technical competence. However, its positive impact may have been greater if it was coupled with training to encourage independence and critical reflection and self-evaluation. The

students' ability and incentive to self-evaluate was not developing at the same pace as their confidence in their own writing, as the next section will discuss.

9.3.2 Towards being independent learners

Whether it was the corrective pen of the editor or the tutor, most of the students' writing was closely subbed and often shaped by others. Many of the students felt they needed this help and that is was a central part of the journalism education process. While the one-on-one subediting method adopted in journalism schools provides valuable individual attention and encouragement, one weakness is that it tends not to encourage the growth of self-regulation or independence in learning (Thomas, 2001). Rather, it can create in the students a belief that the tutor or editor knows best and most problematically, it encourages the students to ignore evaluating and improving their own work and to leave it to others.

Ideally, learning by doing should not only involve the practising of skills but should encourage reflection and the development of self-regulatory skills (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Boud & Walker, 1990, 1993; Boud et al., 1998). Self-regulated learning is the fusion of skill – that is, the students' use of different strategies – and will, referring to the students' motivation in terms of goals, values and expectancy (Garcia, 1995). It involves cognitive skills such as self-observation and self-monitoring, while carrying out a task. It also involves self-reflection, reflecting on what one is doing and self-evaluation, being able to evaluate the performance of the task for oneself. Pintrich (1995) argues that self-regulatory learning involves three general aspects of academic learning. Firstly, it involves individual control of resources such as time, the study environment and the way peers and staff are used in support. Secondly, it involves students learning to control their emotions and affects, like stress. Thirdly, it is being able to put in place various strategies to assist learning.

Unfortunately, there would seem to have been few opportunities for the journalism students to reflect on their work and become self-regulated learners. Apart from the method of reading work out loud mentioned previously by Anastacia, the students did not talk about being encouraged or taught how to reflect on their skills. Peer editing was similarly not discussed. Deadline pressure and the emphasis on writing large numbers of stories rather than learning about the nature of news writing did not make self-reflection

easy or informed. A major factor in inhibiting independent self-learning and self-evaluation was the reliance on one-to-one subediting by tutors. Some of the students had the sense that self-evaluation was actively discouraged, as Mongo's comments suggest:

.... I'm not sure that it's a better story than the one I did previously or that my writing's improving. I feel like it is but I don't know that it is. When I write a story that I really feel good about and to be honest, I feel quite good about this one, the tutors that we have who sub my work, say it's not a particularly good story and when I do one that I think it's a bad story, they think it's great and so either they're warped or I'm warped. It's hard to trust your own judgement, especially at this stage (Mongo, July 27, 2003).

Mongo's belief that he could master news writing, his self-efficacy, had been damaged by this failure to encourage students to self-monitor their writing. More self-monitoring may well have deepened his understanding of his own writing and made it easier to accept and understand the tutors' advice and judgement.

Jamima also had little concept of how to evaluate her own writing. For instance, she thought the language she was using in a story written for a prison services newsletter about building at Kingston Prison was "pretty straightforward, pretty simple". In fact, her language was far from "straightforward" or "simple". She was working on a newsletter for the prison services. The story was full of nominalisations like "construction", "completion" and "developments". She did not use her own words but was heavily influenced by the project's liaison manager to put the best possible "spin" on what she wrote. She used a number of intertextual words (Fairclough, 1995), including "to deliver the quality of service", "better movement of staff and visitors" and "the new developments will prove beneficial to the general running of the prison" (see Chapter 7).

Self-evaluation was also not encouraged by the belief of at least some students that the tutor's or editor's opinions should never be questioned. Miranda was an example of how work experience could inhibit the students' independence and sense of journalistic integrity. As discussed in Chapter 7, Miranda, on work experience at a Christian newspaper, wrote a blatantly promotional piece for a company providing life histories for a fee. She was uneasy about it, as she suggested in this comment, but was uncertain of her own judgement:

....[T]here's lots of well, not lots, but there's quite a bit of "priceless gift" type language used in it ... I don't think the language was over the top in trying to get (my interest) across but who knows?

However, when pushed, she showed some ability to monitor her own work and did start to question whether what she had written was appropriate. However, she decided she would not try to change the story, feeling that the piece would be acceptable to the paper she was working for:

I guess it looks like a hard sell, really, in some ways, just thinking about it ... the more I think about it, I'm a bit concerned about the fact it is a bit of a sell for the project, but the *Chronicle* does that sometimes (Miranda, July 29, 2003).

Mavis similarly did not change her sentence structure, relying on her tutor to subedit it, even though she could see some of her sentences were too long:

When I'm scanning through this I can see that I'll probably get it subbed and have my sentence structure changed in terms of this intro.

Mavis was also typical of many of the students who, by the middle of the year, had a growing sense of confidence, associated both with more experience and the ability to deal with the practices of the media industry, what is often described as "confident practice" (O'Donnell, 2006).

I've been on this course for six months now and feel more confident about writing and getting things done by deadline.

But "confident practice" without the development of self-regulation did not make her entirely happy with the quality of work she was producing, as she reflected:

... but whether or not that means that I'm actually 100% happy with the work is a little bit different ... (Mavis, August 1, 2003).

Indeed, as Chapter 7 suggests, the students' greater confidence and competence were not being matched by more independence or innovation in their writing. As the students' comments in this section have shown, learning by doing and work experience were making at least some of them feel more comfortable about working in the media. However, many of them were not learning how to evaluate their own writing or the ability to be independent.

The next section will look at those students who found that work experience and learning by doing, rather than increasing their confidence and competence, decreased their desire to be news writers.

9.3.3 “I don’t want to be a news journalist”

The students were now almost at the half-way point of their year of journalism training and most had had considerable practice at writing. However, a few students had become disenchanted with news journalism. Kino was one such student who found news reporting “vaguely boring”:

I find it [news writing] vaguely unsatisfying, vaguely boring ... purely because I’m much more in the mind of a critical, almost academic writer. I like doing reviews, that’s the area I want to go into, so news writing is still very dry, very formulaic and really unsatisfying for me ... hopefully that will change.

She related this to her lack of interest in the topics she would be writing about:

I guess that kind of relates back to the fact that it’s got to mean something for me ... Timmy’s baseball game and Mildred’s large pumpkin might be interesting news stories but they mean nothing to me so I probably wouldn’t do a very good job of writing them because it would just be really unsatisfying (Kino, July 25, 2003).

Sam had decided she did not want to become a professional journalist:

Still quite cynical in regards to news journalism and I know I don’t want to write news stories for a living. Sort of thought that at the beginning of the term and the beginning of the year, and now I have confirmed that time and time again (Sam, July 27, 2003).

Mongo was enjoying magazine writing more than news writing:

I’m writing a column for a magazine on a regular basis now as well so I’ve got to say I thoroughly enjoy the magazine-style of writing more... I guess you could say creative writing, where you get a bit of artistic licence as opposed to news reporting where you get all the facts and you’re basically transferring information (Mongo, July 27, 2003).

And Samdog had definitely decided against a career in community newspapers. He wanted to be an investigative journalist:

I’ve realised (after my internship) that the community paper is not where I want to be, I want to be in top papers, I want to be maybe working in the news, I want to

be working on the big stories. I don't want to be working on a 150-year celebration or anniversary for something ... it's not something I want to do ... I really enjoy digging deep and finding stories ... I have a passion to get to the bottom of the story (Samdog, July 18, 2003).

These comments suggested some broader issues involving New Zealand journalism education. As we have seen, a significant number of the students did not see their future in news writing and did not enjoy work experience for community newspapers, the "starting from the ground up" that remains the staple of New Zealand journalism education. They wanted to be writing a wider variety of stories and realised that there was increasing demand in the media industry for feature, human interest, non-news and promotional stories. However, they were not being trained in writing these stories and it would seem that their work experience and education were not being matched to their interests. New Zealand journalism education needs to reflect the changes in the media industry and the different desires of its students.

This section has traced the students' comments and progress in the middle of the year. Their learning was heavily, perhaps disproportionately, dominated by their experiences in "the real world" of the news media and work experience, where their confidence in their skill at writing news stories was growing. However, it has also suggested that journalism education was not encouraging the students to develop some other much-needed attributes, such as independence and an ability to evaluate their own work. Instead they were continuing to rely on their tutors or editors.

9.4 The end of the year

The year had almost ended and the students were about to complete their journalism programmes. This was a difficult time for the students who were suffering from exam pressure, worried about their marks and their job prospects. It was also a difficult time for the study as the students were more reluctant to take the time to record their retrospective protocols. At least some of the students had become disillusioned with their studies and with journalism. Of the 20 students who had started the study, five did not complete for various reasons (see Chapter 8). Section 9.4.1 will discuss the students' dissatisfactions and challenges at the end of the year. They provided insight into one of the most disturbing findings of the study: compared to their increased

confidence and competence at the mid-year mark, the end of the year stories suggested a regression, rather than progression, in their writing skills. Their stories were often overly long and suggested a lack of understanding of news genres and their effectiveness. Many were written as hybrid news stories, with soft lead sentences, but suffered from the students' lack of training in these genres. The stresses of the end of the year seemed to have led to a decline among some students in standards, in self-evaluation and in satisfaction. A number of stories would have been more effective if written in the inverted-pyramid format because the students did not have the skills or training for longer pieces. Section 9.4.2 will cover what the students had gained from the journalism programmes while 9.4.3 concludes this section with the students' comments on reflection and assesses the development of the attributes of being a journalist.

9.4.1 Challenges at the end of the year

When this research project was conceived, I expected that the third and concluding part of this study would reveal the students had made considerable progress towards a professional standard of news writing. This was not the case: their writing appeared to have reached a peak in the middle of the year and after that it regressed. While the students did not attempt to justify the standard of their stories, their reflections covered a wide range of excuses, mirroring what they were feeling when writing at the end of the year. Their reflections suggested that the heavy stress of the end of the year was having a negative impact on their learning but also that some lacked the independence and self-efficacy that can inspire perseverance.

All of the students stated that they were suffering from some kind of difficulty or problem related to their writing and the course. As McDaniel (1986) contends: "Journalism students seem to have a disproportionate share of psychological conflicts" (p.27). Jamima believed that the stress of the end of the year and other pressures were affecting her writing, and her marks:

It's probably due to stress and coming to the end of the term and lots of things on my mind ... which is why I only got 6.5 and my average mark is 7.5. I think how you're feeling, what you know about the subject and what's going on around you at the time unfortunately has an impact on what you're writing ... and yeah stress

...

Overall, she was happy with her progress and believed she had greatly improved:

Everything I am writing is going to publication now so that might say something about my progress over the year. Basically I think structuring the story comes naturally now. I am able to use professional language and I find it's so much easier to shorten my sentences and just have the facts down...I've found the angle and put it in my lead sentence ... (Jamima, November 3, 2003).

However, as Chapter 8 showed, Jamima's end-of-year story had major deficiencies, suggesting a lack of realistic self-assessment and a disturbing regression in standards.

Mavis's comments also suggested she was disillusioned with journalism and the course and uninterested in self-evaluating and improving her writing. The result was a story in need of considerable modification (see also Chapter 8):

To be honest, I probably didn't work as hard this term ... The structure of the story ... I didn't actually plan it ... it's been done to death to be honest ... if I'd taken more time then maybe it would've been better ... I probably sound blasé most of the time ... but it's fine ... totally fine.

She also expressed a disregard or lack of understanding of journalism conventions, when describing where her story had originated from:

I basically poached it from another reporter (Mavis, November 10, 2003).

Many of the students' end-of-year stories also suffered because they were required to write long "specialist stories" to develop their writing skills, but had apparently received little tuition on how to handle a longer story. Their training had been focused on the mechanical requirements of the inverted pyramid and they were not well schooled in assessing the suitable form and tone for longer stories. Indeed, a number of the students expressed some dissatisfaction with the focus on teaching the conventions of the inverted-pyramid news story when they had other ambitions and interests. This dissatisfaction may have contributed to a lack of improvement and resistance to the often pertinent lessons about a well-crafted news story that they were receiving.

Brendan's writing, despite his belief that work experience had led to major improvements, had changed only marginally since the beginning of the year. His stories were still in need of substantial alterations as he missed the main news theme and continued to write overly opinionated sentences. He wanted to write investigative and more academic articles. Journalism training had, despite the protests of his tutors, not

changed his desire to write long sentences. He displayed what McLean (1984) calls a “fear of dropping ingrained theme-writing habits” (p.33) and blamed the New Zealand way of doing things:

One thing that's been drummed into us all year is that the opening paragraph should not be more than, you know, 24 or 25 words long. I was reading the *Guardian* the other day at the library, the British newspaper, and not one of their opening sentences were shorter than about 40 words and they were just beautifully constructed...that's the sort of writing I aspire to ... I don't know there's something about short sentences I don't like (Brendan, October 30, 2003).

Brendan believed that he had, despite his dislikes of the conventions of news writing, altered his style.

I came to the journalism course with a bit of an ... academic style of writing quite long winded sentences and lots of commas and a lot more opinion in it, whereas I think maybe I write a little more directly and a little bit more ... punchy. Yeah, it's quite a different style.

However, his writing had not improved greatly nor had he adapted to news-writing conventions. His end-of-year story remained opinionated and inappropriate for the forum he was writing in. His lead sentence read: “The impending showdown between two of Ashwood’s most proud and powerful family-owned businesses could well have had an air of Shakespearean rivalry surrounding it.”

Sam also described a dislike of news writing:

For myself I'm much more interested in feature writing and every time I just kind of want to research more and more instead of just scraping the surface ... however I got hold of some press releases off the internet and knew a few people I could contact (Sam, October 29, 2003).

Sam’s story showed some of the problems of the students writing outside of the news style they had been taught. Her story was promotional in nature, with a clear bias towards support of the “anti-GE campaign”. It went against the injunction not to base news comments on press releases, and inserted campaign rhetoric into the text. It was also repetitive and careless in its lexical choice in that it used the term “genetic engineering 19 times in 25 sentences (see Chapter 8).

Other students found the requirement to write a longer, more in-depth story after their training in short new stories difficult. Kathie's medical story was one example of a student struggling to fulfil the requirement to write 600 – 800 words:

I had loads and loads of stuff and then I spent some time with these med students and they just told me so much stuff that I didn't actually need to use with the story ... so I was able to be quite ruthless with the facts I included. The story is only about 600 words which is only just at the word limit, the bottom word limit for a specialist story but I just thought the majority of facts they gave me were not relevant to a short and simple story (Kathie, October 29, 2003).

The general regression of the students' stories from mid-year reflected the very real end-of-year pressures and difficulties the students were facing. However, it also suggested a wider problem of a lack of self-evaluation and self-regulation. A self-regulated learner does not blame the circumstances and is able to rise above them (Pintrich, 1995) although the lack of self-efficacy affects the ability to persevere. Many of the students at the end of the year were not demonstrating the required self-regulation, rather they were blaming the course, their lack of desire to be news writers and other issues for the problems with their stories. However, they did not see the year and learning by doing as a totally negative experience, as the next section will show.

9.4.2 Work experience remains the key

Despite the complaints expressed in the last section, most of the students had found the journalism programme useful. Revealingly, even at the end of the year, the two weeks of work experience much earlier in their training continued to be the most important influence for many of the students, as Henreitta related:

I think being on an internship definitely influenced my writing because the chief reporter really taught me how to make my sentences shorter and punchier and take out words which I thought were necessary and they obviously weren't. So that's been really helpful. It's getting easier to write now (Henreitta, November 5, 2003).

Jamima expressed a similar sentiment:

The most useful experience I think to me was the internship and getting out there and doing some work experience (Jamima, November 3, 2003).

Anastacia felt she had now learnt to condense her sentences:

I've been trained to really chop down my sentences and cut out words that I don't need and really really condense things and only use necessary words and only use necessary punctuation (Anastacia, November 3, 2003).

As has been seen, work experience did not always have the positive effect on the students' writing that some attributed to it. While Anastacia was able to articulate her thoughts clearly and her writing had progressed, she still had not perfected writing in short sentences. Her end-of-year lead was 39 words and her second sentence 59 words (see Chapter 8). Her first sentence read "Members of Sanctuary Cove community are appealing to the Haworth City Council for more signs directing people to their village, stating that even members of their own community get lost trying to find their way home from Haworth." Her story required considerable shortening and tightening. Similarly, while she claimed in the mid-year reflections that she had learned about adding contextual information to add clarity, her last story had not done so.

But Anastacia's story and comments did show that work experience and learning by doing had some generally positive effects. Workplace socialisation had helped teach her to heighten news values, to "play up" or enhance the most newsworthy part of her story. She had learnt on work experience to use the introduction to a story to emphasise its most interesting or appealing aspect:

It wasn't even a big thing, like it was just one little comment that he made whilst doing his presentation to the council, but I picked up on it and thought it was quite funny and the councillors all laughed so I thought I'd sort of play it up which is kind of what I was taught to do at the *Haworth Times* (Anastacia, November 3, 2003).

Anastacia's reflections suggested that she was acquiring some of the attributes of a professional journalist. She was becoming more self-reflective and independent. Unfortunately, her writing skills were not yet fully developed although they had progressed through work experience and learning by doing.

Martha was another student who had developed some self-regulatory skills (Garcia, 1995). She too found work experience helpful, and in her case, the greater independence of the newsroom was the key:

My experience on internship when I was pretty well left to my own devices, I learnt that I could ... I didn't need people to lead me and tell me what to do, that I

had enough resources already to be able to make some decisions myself, whether or not they were the right ones was immaterial.

This encouraged her self-efficacy (Bandura, 1991) and confidence in her own skills so that she could take a job on offer at an alternative venue: writing for a webpage about a transatlantic rowing race:

The fact I had the confidence to say, ‘well yes, I can do that,’ made a big difference. It actually stood me in good stead for taking this job because the idea of me doing it was mooted right back in June, when I knew nothing about writing for the internet, and I confidently said, ‘yes, no worries.’

Her last comment was particularly significant. Many of the students seemed to find that work experience did not complement their training so much as overshadow and supplant it:

I’m awfully glad I did because it’s teaching me more than what I learnt on the course (Martha, October 27, 2003).

9.4.3 Small steps towards self-regulation

Even at the end of the course, when they were about to embark on their careers away from the influence of tutors, it would seem that self-reflection was not a major part of their journalism education. Critical reflection has three distinct stages. First there is the preparation stage, focusing on what is known and what more is needed. The second stage occurs while the activity is being carried out, through noticing and intervening in an action while there is still time to affect the result. The third occurs after the event, when the experience is re-evaluated with hindsight (Boud & Feletti, 1991). New Zealand journalism programmes encouraged the students to rely on their tutors or other figures in the media industry such as an editor, chief reporter or subeditor to bring their writing to the standard required for publication. Mavis related how her reliance on the judgement of her tutors had been firmly established:

I don’t know [if] it’s helped me analyse my writing. I pretty much say what I think and give it to you and don’t think about it again ... I learnt news writing from Sally subbing my work, who although she was pretty honest and quite blatant, was really helpful. She was probably the most useful person because she helped me learn how to write, nothing else taught me (Mavis, November 10, 2003).

Jamima found recording her reflections on the decision-making behind her stories a difficult process as she did not think about her writing:

I find it really difficult to ... it's just really hard to talk about how and why you structured the story because now it's just a process that you do without really thinking about it (Jamima, October 3, 2003).

Other factors, as mentioned previously, discouraged self-reflection, especially the pressure of having to write up to 20 news stories to a deadline. The retrospective protocols that I encouraged the students to record as a part of this study were a rare occasion when the students were exposed to a formal method of analysing and reflecting on their work. Some found it a valuable experience. Miranda commented:

I've found it useful to analyse it for myself and I try to do that anyway when I'm not talking into the tape ... it makes you think about what you're doing and pull apart your reasons in the way that you do and sometimes if you're just writing to deadline you forget to do that ... I don't think you can improve unless you think about what you do as opposed to just doing it automatically (Miranda, October 28, 2003).

Other students came to feel that reflection, thinking for yourself about your writing, is the first step towards becoming a self-regulated learner. Henreitta remarked:

It has been quite tricky talking about them but I think it's been really good actually. It's kind of made me realise that there were things that I could've done which would've been better (Henreitta, November 5, 2003).

Reflecting on their writing, however, was a "real struggle", as Martha explained:

Why I've had times when I've hated talking into this tape recorder. It's been a real struggle to try and justify why I'm writing what I've written. A lot of it was in my head and was hard to justify but I've struggled on just for you (Martha, October 27, 2003).

But she realised that self-reflection would be crucial to her ability to act independently when she was a journalist. She described the need for independence when working on her last story for a website:

Because I've got no editor, I've got nobody, this is just me, nobody's checking my work, I get no feedback, the guys don't see it, the team guy that employs me doesn't make any comment, he's not a journalist. So I really have to stop and take careful stock of what I'm writing and why and imagine running it past people like my tutors and what they'd say if they were editing it.

Independence, in Martha's opinion, was the ultimate purpose of her education:

This [story] was easy because it brought together a whole lot of what I've learnt this year, news reporting, web writing, angles, editing and so forth and it's really made me realise quite what I've learnt this year and how I can make decisions on my own but how I have to be so careful I guess because I'm on my own ... so all in all this process has been good (Martha, October 27, 2003).

However, as this thesis has argued, too many of the students remained far from being independent and self-regulated journalists at the end of their one-year journalism training programme. This section has suggested some reasons why. The students' generally positive response to recording their retrospective protocols suggests that the methods to encourage self and peer reflection would be a valuable supplement to the current emphasis on the role of the tutor and the chief reporter or editor.

9.5 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the students' think-aloud protocols throughout the year and has been instructive in drawing a fuller picture of New Zealand journalism education. Although the number of students completing the study was not large, its findings complement and confirm many of the general arguments of this thesis as a whole. It has shown that in some important ways, current journalism education with its emphasis on learning by doing resembles the period when young journalists received all their training "on the job". It found that journalism students today were expected to learn the skills by writing up to 20 news stories, adhering to strict "deadlines". The major influence on the students, especially in the early period was their tutor who, following the industry tradition, acted as a subeditor and "subbed" their work to make it appropriate for publication. The tutors' involvement in the story was intense. The process could involve the student returning to the tutor up to three times, as the story was modified and corrected.

The focus on writing large numbers of stories, the input of the tutor and work experience did lead to positive outcomes for most of the students. For instance, the students gained declarative knowledge about the inverted-pyramid form. They could "declare" what they knew about the writing a news story. However, learning a new genre is not simple, especially one with the many constraints of news journalism. The students often failed to demonstrate strategic knowledge and were unable to put into practice what they had learnt.

The students tended to ascribe their failure to write high-quality stories to the stresses they were under. The deadlines, high volume of stories and the pressures of passing the course were generally more important than learning about the news media and writing. A student talked about “failing the course” if they missed the deadline. The pressures of finding a news story and writing it put them under more stress. They reflected on two major challenges: how difficult it was to contact people so that they could gather information for their news stories; and the challenges of writing the lead sentence. It was not uncommon for some students to have five or six attempts at writing the “intro” and they commented on the agony of sitting staring at the computer screen for long periods.

The gaps in their journalism education were also revealed, through what was not mentioned in their taped reflections. The students tended to explain what writing a news story meant only in terms of a recital of the technical requirements of the inverted pyramid. There was virtually no mention of the deeper requirements of a news story including the key role of news values. There was very little comment on how they sought to introduce and enhance news values such as negativity, significance, immediacy, prominence and clarity. Even at the end of the year, many of the students seemed largely unaware of news values and showed little attention to techniques to make a story interesting and important. The result of this, as we have seen in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 is that too many of their stories tended to be dull.

Another major finding of the retrospective protocols was how important work experience was to many of the students. This contributed to the fact that by the middle of the year, their tutors’ dominant influence was receding somewhat and being replaced by what was done in the “real world” of the media industry. Most of the students believed work experience was highly valuable and for many it overshadowed the rest of the journalism programme. They discussed the skills that work experience had helped with, such as how to write an “intro” and to keep their news stories “tight”. Work experience played a major role in boosting the students’ confidence regarding their skills and their ability to work in the media industry.

However, work experience and learning by doing did not markedly increase the students’ ability to reflect on and improve their own writing. Many of the students were still far from being independent and self-regulated learners. Being a self-regulated

learner involves controlling one's own behaviour and motivation, using resources such as time and the study environment productively, and deciding on goals. Unfortunately, this chapter showed little evidence that the students were encouraged to reflect on their own writing and their role in the news media. The pressures of a "pseudo" newsroom did not encourage such reflection and neither did the deadline-driven regime of the journalism school. The majority of students were unused to reflecting on their stories. The one-on-one subbing method adopted in journalism schools also did not encourage the growth of self-regulatory skills, and tended to lead to the dependence on others.

The students' think-aloud protocols reflected this. At the beginning of the year, many of the students relied on their tutor's judgement about their writing to an excessive degree. In the middle of the year, it was the chief reporter's or editor's judgement that dominated. There were few signs of the students being able to self-monitor or self-evaluate their own work. As one student commented, it became hard to trust his own judgement. He did not know whether he was improving or not. Unfortunately few of the students who completed the study could be described as independent learners, able to self-evaluate their own work.

This contributed to the fact that at the end of the year, the students' news stories were not improving in their quality, as Chapter 8 has discussed. The students' reflections suggested a considerable degree of stress and disillusionment. Some, although not all, of this could be linked to the fact that a number of the students wanted a journalism education that matched their particular interests in genres outside of news writing. They tended not to understand or appreciate the virtues of the inverted pyramid and the traditional news story and felt burdened by its constraints.

Indeed, the students as a whole, while having greater knowledge of technical requirements of the inverted pyramid tended to lack a deep understanding of its nature and especially of the news values. This contributed to one the main findings of this study. The students' ability to write newsworthy stories, to understand what would appeal to the audience and make for an interesting, important article had not greatly developed by the end of the year.

9.6 Epilogue: Where have all the students gone?

I began the research for the main study in March, 2003, following the progress of 20 students in two journalism schools in New Zealand. That year there were 265 students doing similar courses in journalism schools throughout the country, a number that has varied little in the years that have now past. These students were engaged in training that would prepare them to work as professional journalists and approximately 80 per cent were employed in the media, mostly in newspapers, after graduation. There are no statistics available on how long they stay in their first jobs or where they move to, although anecdotally, many are believed to leave the media after four years.

Four years after the research group of 20 students graduated, I was nearing the end of this thesis. I felt I had become very close to the students in those four years, through analysing their stories and reflections. I did not know any of them personally, nor where they were, but wanted to find out about what they had achieved and where they had gone to in the interim. I contacted the former students on an informal basis in December 2007. I learnt where they were generally through word of mouth. Once I had traced one classmate, they could tell me where others were. I phoned or emailed them all. Three could not be traced although some information about their whereabouts was received from classmates, so they have been included in the following review.

Of the 20 students who began the study, only two remained working in news journalism, both in community newspapers. Eight were in communications and public relations-type roles where their jobs involved writing for a client or clients. Another four had jobs which involved writing while six former students were working in jobs outside of the media. The two former students who were working as news journalists had studied journalism at the polytechnic. They were both working in community newspapers:

Jamima was still working as a journalist at a provincial community newspaper. She had gained this job shortly after graduation and was four years later, a senior journalist at the paper.

Henreitta had begun her career writing advertorial – a blend of editorial and advertising for a major client. She had recently ventured into public relations but had

returned to news journalism as she had not enjoyed it. “That was a big mistake,” she told me. She was now working for a large community newspaper chain but had hopes of “finding a better job and doing some real journalism”.

There was little difference between those who had done the university course and the polytechnic one. Eight former students had “crossed over to the dark side” – the expression used by journalists to refer to public relations jobs – four from the university and four from the polytechnic.

Brendan’s reflections had showed he was not at ease in news journalism (see Chapter 9), although he had worked first as a rural journalist for one and a half years. He had left to work in the communications department of a local body. He described his new job as “twice as easy and the pay was twice as good”.

His classmate, Casper, who was arguably one of the better writers to start the course, had achieved – but not in journalism. He had been highly qualified when he was at journalism school, having previously completed a five-year law degree and also worked as a lawyer. Two years ago, he had left journalism somewhat disillusioned with his job writing business news, feeling he had learnt all he “wanted to” about being a reporter. Now, aged 31, his job was a responsible one for a large public relations company. He no longer wrote, he told me. He had “three or four younger staff to do that”. Besides, he added, he was “paid too much to write”.

Mavis had never worked in news journalism. She had first worked on a free city newspaper that focused on what she described as “semi-advertising copy”. She had lived overseas but had returned to get a job in a small public relations company.

Miranda worked for a legal publishing company, doing some writing. She still wanted to be a news journalist, but believed she did not have the necessary attributes.

Of the former polytechnic students, four were also in essentially public relations jobs.

Agnes was working for a suburban newspaper company writing advertorial. Her job was to write articles for clients who have bought advertising in the newspaper. She appeared content in this job, the only one she had known.

Alison had left journalism school before the year ended because she had an offer of a job in a large provincial newspaper where she became a senior journalist. Last year, she had travelled overseas and was working in communications for a local government organisation.

Anastacia had first worked as the publications editor for a student magazine. She had then written advertorial for a homestyle magazine, and then worked in free publications that were distributed to business and rural postal addresses. She described her job: “After the advertisers had lined up a farmer or a business person and sold enough adverts for a page, I would phone the business or farmer and write an article on them. This was sometimes very difficult as they may not have recently achieved anything significant so we’d end up (literally) talking about the price of milk”. She was really enjoying her most recent job, working as the content editor on a web-site.

Ramstein’s role was also a communications one. After working for a small community newspaper in a rural town, she had married and moved to a part-time job working for a family television company. Her job was to write the company’s media releases.

Four of the former participants in the study had jobs that could not be categorised as journalism. However, they involved some writing.

Martha was one of the few in the study who had children while at journalism school. She had got what she considered was her “perfect job”, working part-time as an editorial assistant for a magazine specialising in advertising and some articles about young children. She was writing the occasional article, but was basically a conduit, between editorial and administration. With her children now growing up, she hoped to look for another job with more serious writing involved.

Kathie had found her dream job. Her job did not entail news, rather it was writing columns and articles on life-style topics.

Mongo was working as a technical writer for a specialist magazine. He also felt he was achieving in his job and had won an award recently for technical writing.

Samdog had previously worked as a junior television producer in New Zealand. He was now overseas, doing some freelance writing.

Six former students no longer had jobs that were predominantly writing.

Kino had only ever wanted to be a film reviewer when she was at journalism school. She had worked for a newspaper writing film reviews, but did not like the commercial pressures and was now working primarily as a shop assistant in a bookshop and doing some freelance writing.

Sully had never worked in the media. He had joined the journalism programme at aged 36 because he thought he wanted to be a news journalist. However, he had previously worked as a business analyst and was bringing up a young son alone. When he was last heard of, he had returned to this career.

Sam, who would now be aged 31, had never wanted to be a news journalist. She also could not be contacted. Her interest lay in documentary production and her fellow students told me they believed she was working in a film unit in production.

Betty had not completed all the requirements for a National Diploma in Journalism. She had not gone on work experience because she was “too shy and terrified”. From this, she concluded that if she could not work in the media industry for two weeks, it was not an appropriate career choice. However, she did gain her degree while at polytechnic and was now working as an accountant.

Q had never intended being a news journalist. He dropped out of the study and news reporting early in the year. He had a hearing disability and had been aiming to be a novelist. I was unable to contact him.

Vin was now 24 years old. She had also never worked in the media. She had left the programme with a large student loan to pay off and had taken a job in the public sector because she said, the “money was better”. She was enjoying her present job which was a responsible one, as a quality coach in a call centre. I asked her would she ever work in the media. She thought one day she might look for a job as a journalist but, after four years, it appeared to be a remote possibility.

These 20 former students can only be regarded as an indicative trend. Yet their present occupations pose further questions for this research. Eighty per cent had graduated with a National Diploma in Journalism. The first and most obvious question is whether a training programme specifically focused on news journalism is the most appropriate one for young people who will in the main take up public-relations type roles or move outside the media. As this was not a formal part of the study, I did not question them on whether they thought their journalism studies had been worthwhile. Three of the students did comment, however, that the journalism education they received had been valuable, in that it taught them to ask the hard questions. Casper said this enabled him “to see through the crap” in his public relations job. Kathie said she could now spot news, however, the programme had taught her nothing about other forms of writing that she was now using. She would have liked to have done a course which gave her different writing skills, particularly features and column writing. Brendan concurred: he had needed to learn to write in a different genre for his current communication job.

Their present roles suggest that a rethink of journalism education is necessary so that the skills the students learn are broader than those directly relating to a career as a news journalist. This issue will be addressed in the concluding chapter.

PART 3 CONCLUSION

10 The Study's End: Towards a New Beginning

There is a time to admire the grace and persuasive power of an influential idea and there is a time to fear its hold over us. The time to worry is when the idea is so widely shared that we no longer notice it, when it is so deeply rooted that it feels to us like plain commonsense. At the point when objections are not answered anymore because they are no longer even raised, we are not in control: we do not have the idea; it has us (Kohn as cited in Porter, 2000, p. 191).

10.1 Introduction

Journalism education in New Zealand is a field that has, to date, been only sketchily researched or written about (Oakham & Tidey, 2000; Sligo, 2004; Thomas, 1999). Along with this lack of research, there has also been scant debate or discussion. As Sligo (2004, p. 191) argues “[O]ne indicator of health in any field of human endeavour is the extent and quality of debate that occurs on how its new and developing practitioners should be educated.” This study, *The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way*, has broken new ground in that it has placed the history, practices and outcomes of journalism education in this country under a spotlight so that it can be considered in closer detail. This chapter concludes this thesis, examining the implications of the findings of the study for journalism education. It makes suggestions for future research and outlines recommendations for the future of journalism education.

This research has followed the progress of 20 students through their one-year journalism programme, in order to draw a picture of New Zealand journalism education. Although in the last 20 years, young people aspiring to be journalists have been taught in tertiary institutions, over half of them in universities, it has showed that journalism education in many ways still resembles the old-style of apprenticeship training “on the job” because of the power the industry-controlled training organisation continues to exert. This power is manifested through a curriculum that is constrained by the unit standards, and the focus on work experience in the media industry. Because this kind of education relies on socialisation, many essential elements are missing from what the

students are taught, in particular the importance of news values and an understanding of the different genres of writing and their purpose. This means that the students are not adequately trained for their new careers. They are not encouraged to become independent, critical thinkers who can reflect on their own work and write interesting, appealing and important stories.

This situation has not been seen as a crisis. Perhaps this is because it has not been examined closely or debated. However, the media industry to which the students are headed has been seen as in crisis, not only in this country but throughout the western world (Atton, 2003; Bollinger, 2003; Macdonald, 2006). Six years ago, McGregor and Comrie (2002) argued that New Zealand journalism was working through a crisis of faith:

There is justified criticism by journalists, commentators, politicians and the public about the state of the news. The news has tumbled as a means of information and education and there is declining public belief in its integrity (McGregor & Comrie, 2002, p. 7).

In 2008, the situation has changed little. Indeed, it could be said to have worsened since *What's news? Reclaiming journalism in New Zealand* was published. McGregor and Comrie cite the reasons for the crisis. The growth of commercial forces and new technology have increased efficiency but decreased the time for reflective journalism and critical thought. Changed media ownership has also played its part: the decline of family-owned newspapers has led to newsrooms staffed by fewer journalists and to highly profitable transnational ownership.

Today's journalists require far more than just training in writing skills. They are increasingly being asked to work from various platforms, reporting modern-day complexities not only for print or broadcast, but for both, requiring a variety of skills (Castenada et al., 2005; Kraeplin & Criado, 2005). Employers, particularly in radio, are already asking for young journalists who can not only write a news story, but are able also to record sound and take and script a video. In addition, what they write must serve multiple roles: it must educate and inform; appeal, and be innovative. Students also require a deeper understanding of how the various forms of journalism contribute to producing and circulating meaning in society so that they can walk the narrow line between truthfully and ethically providing the facts and writing an interesting and

attention-grabbing news story which will be commercially successful. Reflective and critical thinking powers are necessary so that they are able to question the real meaning of what they are told and to seek out the answers to deeper social problems and then write stories with significance and credibility. Understanding the power and control of the industry are also essential in functioning effectively and being independent in today's media environment.

The Making of a Journalist: The New Zealand Way combines the findings of this research into journalism education with insight from my own experiences during a lifetime working as a journalist, editor and a journalism educator. New Zealand is a small country with less than a dozen journalism schools. Journalism educators know each other well, meeting regularly at conferences and seminars. It would have been impossible to hide my views, which sometimes differ radically from many of my colleagues, or to conceal totally where the research was conducted. However, I have taken great care not to reveal the identity of the participants. I also realised that this thesis might not immediately be greeted with enthusiasm by many in the field, who are protective of the present system. My main hope is that it will be seen as a starting point for deeper and reflective research and more open debate and discussion. It was essential, therefore, that the study was designed carefully so that it could be seen by journalism educators as matching the realities of journalism education in this country, and the findings worthy of careful consideration.

To achieve this, strategies suggested by Merriam (1998) were employed (see Chapter 4). Qualitative methods were chosen to produce this word-picture of New Zealand journalism education. Out of the 265 students who were studying journalism in 2003, I selected 20 students from two different journalism schools, one a polytechnic and the other a university. While the study relied on volunteers and strict sampling was not employed, the journalism schools were situated in very different cities and the students who volunteered covered a spectrum of qualifications, ages and experience. Various methods were used in the study to increase the trustworthiness and rigour of the findings. Discourse analysis (Bell, 1991; van Dijk, 1988) provided the basic criteria for examining the students' writing. However, I did not consider using textual analysis alone was enough, as the environment in which students learn to write, who their writing is directed to, and the way that society functions also play a role in the final

shape of a text (Fairclough, 1995). In producing a picture of the wider scene in which journalism education operates, my own extensive experience in the media industry was also useful. Retrospective protocol analysis (Greene & Higgins, 1994) also allowed insight into the cognitive aspect, that is, what and how the students thought they were writing. The study was spread over a full year so that it involved long-term observation, another important method in increasing trustworthiness.

At three points during the year, the beginning, middle and the end, the students' wrote news stories which were analysed using discourse analysis methods. News stories, using the same content modified by an experienced journalist to a standard suitable for publication provided an alternative version to consider the development of the students' writing and whether journalism education was fulfilling its aim of producing professional journalists. In order to explore the cognitive aspect, the students "thought aloud" about their writing using a tape recorder and these reflections were also carefully analysed. All ethical issues were taken into account and resolved to the best of my ability and the participants' anonymity was assured (see Chapter 3).

The next section, 10.2 will summarise the key findings and implications of this study, arising from the questions posed in Chapter 1. The first question enquired how students learn to become journalists, the second the influences on them and the third whether change in journalism education was necessary. It will also consider further the implications of these questions, seeking to understand the effects of learning by doing and the unit standards and how it affects the students. Section 10.3 will consider the limitations of this study with suggestions for future research. Five recommendations for change are outlined in section 10.4, while section 10.5 concludes this thesis.

10.2 Implications of the findings

Journalism education throughout the western world is characterised by a clash between the industry and the academy (see Chapter 2). No such conflict was found to exist in New Zealand. Journalism education is unashamedly dominated by the media industry, through the New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO). The NZJTO's constitution sums up its attitude. One of its main functions is to "[U]ndertake or co-ordinate training needs analysis for all skill levels and occupations required by the

industry” (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2008). The operative words in this are “required by the industry”, meaning that journalism education is solely oriented to training for the media industry. This has become so accepted, so “deeply rooted” that it is seen as commonsense, and is seldom debated or discussed. It is the “persuasive idea” referred to in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter (Kohn, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 8) where objections are not answered because there are none raised. The effects of industry control are discussed in the next section under six subheadings; how industry control became dominant; the importance of work experience; becoming a journalist through learning by doing; the effects of one-to-one subediting; developing independent, critical thinkers; and encouraging career focus.

10.2.1 How industry control became dominant

Close relationships have always existed between the teaching institutions and the media industry, making conflict between the two extremely rare. It has long been relatively simple to move from being an experienced journalist working in the media industry into the academy as a teacher. Even today, this experience is still valued above higher academic qualifications in most journalism schools and knowledge of how to teach is considered unnecessary. Industry representatives are also active on committees advising journalism schools, and they assist in the selection of students for entry. This has led to a comfortable relationship between the journalism schools and the industry, where neither party questions the existing context. It has also led to journalism training being close to a form of apprenticeship directed to employment in the media industry. The students’ training focuses on writing news stories for the media industry and spending time on work experience for little payment. When they gain their journalism qualification, it is expected that most students – on average 80 per cent – will be employed in the media industry (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005).

This dominance is perpetuated by the unit standards, and underpinned by the textbook used for teaching journalism in all schools (Tucker, 1999a; Tully, 2008). The NZJTO is responsible for drawing up the 120 unit standards based on achieving competence in the skills necessary to work as a journalist. The unit standards prescribe in minute detail how to interview, gather and write news stories for print and broadcast. Although these standards have been reviewed several times, today they still concentrate on essentially

the same basic skills, focusing on writing a news story and the various competencies required to do this, such as gaining shorthand and having some knowledge of media law. The unit standards are well-accepted in New Zealand journalism schools. They provide a framework which gives journalism tutors, especially in smaller schools, a stable basis for the curriculum. Few educators would quarrel with the framework, although the extent of small details might be open to criticism. Rather it is the philosophy behind the unit standards that requires deeper consideration. Using the unit standards as the main guiding force for journalism education maintains an attitude that the media industry is always right. It leads to a lack of critical thinking about the industry and its practices, about the effects of work experience and the conditions and challenges of the modern media.

10.2.2 Work experience – real world experience

Today, despite the growth of journalism being taught in the universities, orientation towards the media industry remains the fundamental component of journalism education. Practices in journalism training are strongly directed towards socialising the students into the culture and routines for their future careers in the media industry. Classrooms are set up as newsrooms, as the unit standards stipulate that “the teaching programme should mirror the working environment appropriate to the unit standards being assessed (New Zealand Journalism Training Organisation, 1997, p. 8). The emphasis is also on “real world” experience. Students are “attached” to different newspapers and must write to their requirements. They also visit newspapers and write stories for publication. The ultimate in this “real world” orientation occurs when the students are sent alone to various media outlets to work as junior journalists under the instruction of the chief reporter. This is seen as the highlight of journalism education by both students and journalism educators.

Most students spent at least two weeks working in the media industry, particularly in non-daily or community newspapers. Through this experience the students did gain some of the technical requirements of writing a news story: Their lead sentences were sharper and their writing was more succinct. Community newspapers, often referred to as “giveaways” or “the local rag”, are generally regarded as the bottom rung of the media hierarchy as they are usually circulated free and rely heavily on advertising. They

have also adopted a style of writing with a “soft” first sentence to establish their point of difference from their larger relations. The emphasis is on local people and events, rather than on crime and negativity. The students eagerly adopted these soft leads, sometimes to the detriment of the length and succinctness of their news stories. Community newspapers also have a more flexible approach to what could be termed “promotional writing” – writing aimed at promoting desire for a product, event or service (Erjavec, 2004) because of their reliance on the goodwill of advertisers. This leads to a blurring of the lines between advertising and editorial (Cafarella, 2001). Some papers blatantly print stories where the content is directed to satisfying or even promoting their large advertisers. Almost all the students wrote news stories that contained promotional sentences. In its most obvious form, promotional statements were attached to the end of news stories, accompanied by an exhortation to attend, buy, or phone (see Chapter 7).

While their experience in the workplace helped develop the students’ confidence, they had not received any instruction on these different genres. They appeared unable to differentiate between them or see when it was appropriate to use them or when it was better to use the inverted-pyramid format. The lack of formal education or even discussion on these issues was also evident: the students were not given the assistance they clearly required to be able to cope with these decisions and the pressures of the industry. They did not learn to navigate difficult or complex situations. Nor had they developed the critical thinking to be able to handle conflicts of values, such as whether to write a totally promotional story (see Chapter 7).

10.2.3 Becoming a journalist through learning by doing

The method used in the journalism schools to teach students to write news stories – “learning by doing” – played a major role in the development of their writing ability. In the New Zealand context this meant that the inverted pyramid was taught in a very rudimentary way and students were then expected to practise their skills in order to perfect their writing. Journalism educators who saw themselves chiefly as journalists taught their students in a similar way that they had learnt themselves. Journalists know intrinsically what makes a “good” story. They do not believe in discussing formal codes of newsworthiness that can be identified as news values (McGregor, 2002) and there is a tendency to assume that an understanding of newsworthiness “just happens”. This

assumption resulted in the students being expected to gain this understanding without any formal instruction. Journalists also believe they are writing objectively, objectivity being tied to fairness and accuracy as important tenets of their belief system – it is the separation of news and comment, of facts and opinion. The concept of objectivity which Tuchman (1978) sees as a strategic workplace ritual has become institutionalised as a journalistic ideology. “Good” journalism is believed to be the disinterested search for and weighing of evidence in the public interest, in just the same way that a doctor acts in a patient’s interests.

Yet the inverted pyramid is a structure that is shaped by news values (Bell, 1991). News values are the elements that make a story newsworthy (Galtung & Ruge, 1965), because they appeal to readers. These elements have been added to but have changed little, since they were first documented over 40 years ago, covering such criteria as negativity, proximity, immediacy, prominence and continuity. The aim of the inverted pyramid is to tell the story, enhancing the news values, through the lead sentence, structure, and lexical choice so that it becomes compelling reading. In this way, readers are attracted to buy the newspaper. Objectivity was tied to the rise of the commercial press, supported by the rise of advertising. As making news became commercially viable through the selling of audiences to advertisers, rather than the selling of newspapers to partisan audiences, owners and editors were compelled to please advertisers and consumers by printing material that could be classified as “neutral” (Schudson, 2001).

When these attitudes and beliefs are reflected in journalism education, it leads to a failure to instruct the students of the intrinsic value of newsworthiness. The students are taught that the words they use should be “neutral” and “objective”. Both their textbook and the unit standards reinforce this: they learn that news stories are written objectively and the importance of news values; rather than being intrinsic to newsworthiness, are taken for granted. However, the study of any page of any newspaper will show the words used are colourful and vivid, enhancing the news values of the story. And while the students may be taught that their lead sentence should compel the reader to continue reading, what is missing is the importance that news values plays in this.

The students particularly struggled when they moved from writing in the inverted-pyramid format. The students increasingly followed this trend, writing in various hybrid forms from human interest to promotional stories. However, they had received little

instruction on how and when it was appropriate to use these forms. Tuchman (1978) contends “[A]sked for definitions of these categories, newsworkers fluster for they take these categories so much for granted that they find them difficult to define” (p. 47). The boundaries between the forms required for hard news and soft news are often unclear for both researchers and journalists, and even more so for the students. This created a tension in what the students were learning, causing confusion and increased promotional writing and stories lacking in newsworthiness.

10.2.4 The effects of “one-on-one” subediting

Another manifestation of the replication of industry practices in journalism education is “one-on-one” subediting. The students’ news stories were subedited by journalism educators on an individual basis to bring them to a standard appropriate for publication. Sometimes this required students to return up to three times to the tutor. This close attention was lauded by journalism educators as the best possible means of education for aspiring journalists and the students also favoured it. Based on the concept that not only does it replicate the industry where copy is routinely subedited, it also has the added advantage of providing individual attention for all students. Today the method is under threat as the increasing number of students place journalism tutors under great pressure and, instead, they often substitute the use of a computer and they use software to “track the changes” to modify news stories. In both forms, its disadvantages outnumber its advantages. It places journalism educators in a dominant position, where they appear to know best in the eyes of the students. More importantly, it also means that the students are not encouraged to monitor their own writing or rely on their own judgement. This means they fail to develop some attributes especially beneficial in the media industry – to be independent thinkers and writers.

10.2.5 Developing independent critical thinkers

Evidence suggests the ability to “manage” one’s own thinking is crucial to effective learning and intellectual growth (Bandura, 1991; Garcia, 1995; Pintrich, 1995; Zimmerman & Paulsen, 1995). It fosters independent learning and allows students to develop the skills of self-appraisal and self-management. This focus on independence makes self-regulated learning particularly appropriate for journalism students who must have the ability to make a series of decisions. They must decide who to interview, what

questions to ask, whether the information they receive should be trusted, as well as how to write, what facts to select and how to make the story appealing and newsworthy. Self-regulation, controlling the way a task is done is based on information from self-observation and self-reflection. Being a self-regulated learner involves controlling one's own behaviour and motivation and being able to decide on one's own goals. It also means using resources such as time, the study environment and opportunities productively (Pintrich, 1995). Developing these skills leads to the ability to monitor and evaluate one's own writing, to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses. Self-regulation also encompasses self-efficacy which has a strong impact on thought, motivation and action. Self-efficacy is the belief that one is personally capable of mastering or becoming competent in a particular task (Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy, not to be confused with self-esteem, plays a central role in people's beliefs about whether they are capable of exercising control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives. It influences the choices they make, their aspirations, the amount of effort put into any given endeavour and how long they persevere in the face of difficulties. Journalism graduates need all these attributes: they need self-reliance, self-reflection and critical thinking skills to skilfully negotiate the complex, social, economic and commercial context in which journalism is practised today (Sheridan Burns, 1997) [see Chapter 9].

10.2.6 Encouraging career focus

The close relationship between journalism educators and the industry had another outcome: it resulted in the students learning little about the history of the media. Thus, they were not encouraged to think critically about the effects of the ownership of the media by large transnational corporations. While they may have developed an understanding of such subjects as media criticism in other courses, the separation of a critical approach and journalism studies led to a fragmentation of knowledge. The focus on the "real world" without encouragement to discuss, debate or see the pressures and challenges meant that the students saw gaining a job as the main focus of their training and by the end of the year were making all kinds of excuses for the quality of their writing (see Chapter 8).

Analysis of the students' think-aloud protocols confirmed this. A major factor revealed in Chapter 9 was the important role work experience played in shaping the students' attitudes as well as providing them with their major training. The "real world" of the media industry was all-important, boosting the students' confidence in their own skills and their ability to work in the media industry. For many of the students, this experience also outshone the rest of their year-long journalism education. They believed that it was work experience that had helped them develop such skills as how to write an "intro" and to keep their news stories "tight" (see Chapter 9). This implies that the students might have been better off as newsroom apprentices, rather than undertaking a broader journalism education. It has been suggested that a professional training is a cheap way for the media industry to gain its employees, without the problems of training them on the job (Macdonald, 2006; Reese, 2001). Certainly, their socialisation into the media industry was almost complete.

However, for some students there were already signs that their journalism training was not as appropriate. A number of students expressed their disillusionment about writing news stories or had decided they were heading in a different career direction. This was an indication that journalism education and its strong orientation towards the media industry was failing to cater for students' diverse aspirations. Reinforcement of this came after the study concluded, when I was interested in finding out what had become of the 20 students. I phoned each of them and found only two remained working in the industry, although many were still involved in jobs using their writing skills (see Chapter 9, "Epilogue"). While there are no statistics to provide firm evidence, this was confirmation of something that I had heard anecdotally: despite 80 per cent of students entering the media industry on graduation, many leave during the first four years. Although other factors such as the low pay of journalists clearly play a part, this striking trend also appears to relate to the training that the students had received. They had received a year-long journalism training that would fit them to work in the media industry, but it had failed to prepare them for the pressures and difficulties ahead.

This study has provided many answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. It has showed that students became journalists through learning by doing, writing inverted-pyramid news stories, and one-on-one subediting. However, this learning-by-doing approach does not necessarily see the students becoming knowledgeable about

the importance that news values play in enhancing a dull story. Nor did they gain any understanding of different genres or the skills necessary to write a hybrid news story, although increasingly they are expected to write these stories. They are thus being poorly provided with the skills necessary to work as a journalist and are expected to learn these things through socialisation and exposure to the media industry. Similarly, they do not study the history of the media industry which could involve criticism of present-day trends and practices, and receive little instruction about the different values that the media industry might espouse and the pressures that could result. Nor do they learn to self-evaluate or reflect on what they write or to think critically about the processes necessary to write important news stories. The result, as this study showed, were students who wrote dull, overly long news stories, who were not critical thinkers and some who were dissatisfied with the media industry.

10.3 Strengths, limitations and further implications of this research

One of the significant contributions this thesis has made is to provide one of the first major doctoral-level studies of New Zealand journalism education. Therefore, its strength is its potential contribution to theory, literature and data for practitioners as well as other academics. A second, related strength is its potential significance for influencing policy decisions at the level of tertiary studies, and also hopefully to provide a rationale for questioning the current status quo of journalism education and the continuing industry control by its governing body (NZJTO). It may also provide some space for further industry dialogue and debate and also to raise the level of critical awareness and consciousness. Because this study was one of the first to cover New Zealand journalism education, it aimed to provide a picture of the “training” the students received and its influences. However, as well as its obvious strengths, it also had a number of limitations.

Firstly, for quantitative research methods it would have been appropriate to select a representative sample of the age, gender, ethnicity and previous educational qualifications of the total 265 New Zealand students. However, this was primarily a qualitative study and the only recent survey of journalism training (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005) does not include such information. Over the last 20 years, there have been four studies of actual journalists, but none of journalism

students. Most recently, Hollings (2007) based his figures on the non-voluntary 2006 Census, profiling the age, income and gender of New Zealand journalists. The New Zealand journalist is about 41 years old, female and European and earns \$44,752, Hollings found. Unfortunately, my own attempts (see Chapter 3) to gain reliable figures on journalism students can only be seen as an indication, as they were taken from interviews and not from quantitatively, empirically-based hard data. Secondly, the participants were drawn from only two different journalism schools out of a possible 11 in total. One was a university in an urban centre while the other was a polytechnic in a regional centre. These students were among the 53 per cent of all students (New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation, 2005) who either had a university degree, or were studying for one. The inclusion of a small one-tutor journalism school in a rural area could have made the research group more representative but was not included in the current study. Thirdly, five students did not complete the study – thus there were issues of retention and attrition. They all came from the polytechnic group which may have skewed the research in favour of those who were at the university, who were older and better qualified. Because of this, all news stories were analysed as being derived from the one group of students.

The students volunteered to take part in the study. Of these students, 14 were females, and six were males. There was only one non-European and the average age of the students was 25. Thus the sample selection was not a random one which would allow the result to be generalised to the wider population of journalism students. Instead, in common with most qualitative studies, it was a purposeful sample, based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and selects a sample from which the most can be learned (Patton, 1990).

I had found in my preliminary study that the education appeared uniform in all New Zealand journalism schools (see Chapter 3). Because of the dominance of the journalism unit standards and the traditional emphasis on learning by doing, students, whether they were in Auckland or Invercargill, learnt in a similar way so I believed these factors would not have a major effect. I also took care to make sure that the study was seen as trustworthy, as described above. While this was always intended to be qualitative research I believe that through discourse analysis and retrospective protocol analysis, I have drawn a realistic picture of New Zealand journalism education.

Yet, this picture is far from complete. This study suggests the need for further and more detailed research. It indicates first that a study of the characteristics of New Zealand journalism students should be carried out so that the age, gender, ethnicity and qualifications of journalism students is known and considered. The lack of basic data is surprising. Such knowledge would assist planning for an appropriate journalism education for all students.

Secondly, the study indicates that more research into other methods of learning journalism is necessary. One area is more research into self-regulatory strategies, including reflection, as an alternative to one-on-one subediting and to encourage critical thinking. The institution where I am based has recently trialed this as a replacement for subediting with a very large group of beginning journalism students. Preliminary results are good, but for this research to be considered trustworthy it should be done under more controlled conditions.

This study has also glossed over what should constitute a journalism programme in a university. As Bacon (1999) argues, part of being a journalist in a university is to seek to understand and explore the nature of journalism, not to merely replicate conventional practices. While New Zealand journalism schools do not display any diversity in their approach, neighbouring Australia is employing a number of different approaches to journalism education. In 2001, Australian academic O'Donnell (2001-2002) found at least four different philosophical positions in the journalism education field, some worthy of further examination. The first was the "professional" approach, similar to the New Zealand model which trains students in the technical skills necessary for work as a journalist. The second approach was aimed at raising critical awareness of the problems with existing news practices and conventions. Students were taught individual problem-solving skills as well as technical journalism skills (Sheridan Burns, 2001, 1997; Meadows, 1997). The third approach was based on the theories espoused by Schön about reflective practice, used as a response to the growing impact of new technologies (Pearson, 1999). The fourth, not entirely well-defined approach, centred on the teaching of journalism in the university. Bacon (2006) and Hirst (2007) see journalists as public intellectuals, improving the intellectual life of the community. It would be useful to do a comparative study of the writing skills of the students who received tuition in these

various approaches. Discourse analysis, as with this study, would be an excellent tool to use when trying to assess this.

This study was conceived in 2002 when journalism education was being taught in much the same way as it had been for the last 20 years. In the last six years, there have been some signals that the environment is beginning to change, not least through the introduction of new people and new ideas with broader educational views. Alongside this, more research is clearly needed.

10.4 Recommendations

The final question this research posed was whether change in journalism education was necessary. The following recommendations have been derived from the study's findings so that they merely scratch the surface of the vast number of changes that could be made to journalism education. They indicate some recommendations that if implemented, could signal new directions in journalism education.

Recommendation I: More debate and discussion is necessary to open the field of journalism education for new ideas

There has been little professional debate in New Zealand about the appropriateness of a government-mandated industrial training organisation being in the role of gatekeeper and standard-setter of academic programmes (Sligo, 2004), and even less about what journalism studies should encompass. The New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation has to date been the major influence on journalism education. While its influence has been beneficial in setting standards of what is taught in New Zealand journalism schools, it has promoted an outdated approach to journalism with its concentration on the professional skills required. It has also actively discouraged criticism of the media industry. There is no commentary on what the increased concentration of media properties in the hands of fewer and fewer multinational corporations might mean for the future of journalism or on how the new media environment might affect the opportunities, challenges and expectations for aspiring reporters.

Apart from occasional texts such as *Whose News* (Comrie & McGregor, 1992) and *What's News* (McGregor & Comrie, 2002), the textbook used by all New Zealand students is also published by the NZJTO (Tucker 1992, 1999; Tully, 2008), resulting in a lack of independent voices and new ideas. These textbooks come from the same ideological perspective as the unit standards. They have not changed fundamentally in many years, even though they may now encompass new technologies and pay lip service to media criticism. What remains consistent is their emphasis on skills, and to quote Brennen writing about American textbooks, the “unshakeable belief, that journalists, as members of the fourth estate, provide a necessary check on the other branches of government” (Brennen, 2000, p. 110).

It is timely that the role the NZJTO has played might be about to diminish as the pressures of the need to restructure and merge impact upon it. The journalists' training organisation is in talks with PrintNZ, the training organisation for allied printing trades, about a merger. If this merger goes ahead, this must lead to a declining ability to oversee journalism education. It should also provide the opportunity for the stronger journalism schools to cut their ties with the dominance of an industry-driven training regime and for debate to commence about what are more academically appropriate ways of providing journalism education.

Debate and discussion should go further than the role of the NZJTO. Although yearly conferences are held for New Zealand journalism educators, over the years there has been virtually no professional debate about journalism education. It is only through discussion, debate, even argument, that new and different concepts will spawn fresh thinking and ideas about how best to prepare New Zealand students to become journalists and help to avert, or at least have an effect on, the crisis in the media.

Recommendation II: The emphasis needs to move from a narrow view of learning by doing to a different approach

My second recommendation is more specific in that it focuses on the traditional method of learning journalism skills in New Zealand – learning by doing. I believe it is no longer appropriate for students to be expected to learn the skills of journalism by this outdated approach, through practising their writing, individual subediting, and a strong emphasis on work placement in the mainstream media. While there is nothing wrong

with these particular practices, they need to be tempered with different ones. Both tertiary institutions and the media industry have undergone major shifts in their environment which are also fuelling the need to consider alternative practices. The tertiary institutions have increasing rolls, and the sheer weight of student numbers produces pressures on staff that must result in a change to less intensive methods than one-to-one subediting. This kind of subediting done under pressure leads to a concentration on surface errors, spelling and style, which does not necessarily contribute to students' wider knowledge and, more importantly, reinforces the fact that the tutor is the controlling force.

The change to transnational ownership has also seen the media industry move to smaller newsrooms with greatly reduced staff so that it, too, has neither the time nor the resources to accommodate students for long periods. Already larger tertiary institutions are struggling with traditional practices such as attachments and field trips because of the difficulties of placing a growing number of students in the media industry to gain this experience.

While real world learning has an obvious place in learning to become a journalist, it should not be seen as the only way. Complex skills, like writing, with large social components are usually better taught by a combination of training procedures, involving whole tasks and components, individual training and training in social settings (Anderson, Reder & Simon, 1996). This would also open the way for more emphasis to be placed on the teaching of other skills. There are an increasing number of skills that journalism students need to learn from writing for different genres to learning how to tell a story for television, radio or the internet in this new age.

Knowledge of the work place is very valuable, but it should not be seen as a means in itself of providing students with skills and attributes. It should also be accompanied by meaningful discussion about the change the media is experiencing, which would encourage students to think critically about the industry. If the emphasis on the mainstream media – that is newspapers, radio and television – was removed, it would allow students to experience different workplaces and to understand there are many alternatives for employment for those who have ability and skill in writing.

Recommendation III: Self-regulated learning should be encouraged

The introduction of reflective practices and self-regulated learning is neither new nor untried. The movement became popular in the 1990s and has been adopted in a number of fields training practitioners, including nursing and law but it has not gained favour in journalism education, as it requires a change in attitude from some well-established beliefs focusing on professionalism. If such strategies as peer editing and the teaching of strategies for self-evaluation were introduced, it would relieve the pressure on present staff and also start to change the culture. It would also encourage students to develop the ability to reflect on and self-evaluate and monitor their own writing. It would also encourage them to become critical thinkers, using their intellectual abilities to consider the most suitable people to interview for a story, to ask the hard questions and to write in a considered and innovative way.

Recommendation IV: Journalism educators require more than industry experience

Fresh thinking and new ideas would also be encouraged if the field was open to more than former practitioners who are strongly orientated to the industry they have come from. While knowledge of the media industry as a practitioner is very important for a journalism educator, it should not preclude younger people with fresh ideas and different experience being employed to add to the pool of knowledge.

The need for more education would also bring a broader outlook. This thesis is just one example of this shift. As a former committee member of the NZJTO and a practitioner, I was convinced that the unit standards were an excellent concept. It was only through my own further education (see Chapter 1) that my viewpoint changed, as did my understanding of journalism. A deeper knowledge of educational methods could similarly assist the whole field.

Recommendation V: Critical communication theory should be integrated into journalism classes

In the western world, debate has raged between those who favour a single focus on vocational training and those who would have journalism students follow a broader programme based on arts, such as history, political science and sociology, and communication subjects. While New Zealand polytechnics may concentrate only on the skills of journalism, the universities have found a broader compromise. The

compromise has been the kind of programmes that exist elsewhere in the world and in New Zealand universities today, where arts and media criticism and the skills of journalism education are taught as separate subjects as a prelude to the professional journalistic skills. The question that arises then is whether these university programmes bridge the gap between the academic and vocational elements and provide deeper insights into journalism as a professional practice.

This study has shown that this compromise is not satisfactory. Although students may learn media theory as well as arts and communication subjects which encourage critical thinking in the earlier parts of their degree programmes, the concentration on the teaching of journalism skills in their final year leads to the fragmentation of knowledge. It also places the onus on the students themselves to bridge the gap between the theory they learnt earlier and the practice they are now engaged in. And it results in the students favouring courses that will give them the required skills for their future careers, thus ignoring their earlier learning. To avoid this, Skinner et al (2001) advocate the need to see journalism differently. Faculties of communication and journalism have been intertwined for many years, often unhappily. Nevertheless the teaching of critical communication theory as part of journalism studies would provide a better understanding of the journalism profession. My fifth recommendation is that journalism be taught as an institutional practice of representation, with its own historical, political, economic and cultural conditions (Skinner, Gasher & Compton, 2001). This would result in the journalism curriculum not only equipping students with a particular set of skills and broad social knowledge, but also showing the students how journalism contributes to the production and circulation of meaning in society. Critical communication studies are the key to this.

It would be more beneficial if this teaching was done as part of journalism studies, not by separate staff at a separate time. While it would be unreasonable for young journalism students to be expected to become scholars of communication, it is not impossible for them to learn the basics of such disciplines as discourse analysis, semiotics, and the political economy of communication as an integral part of journalism education. This would allow the students to see how the craft of journalism is just one part of the communication system, and how and why different genres coexist in the media today and their differences. Knowledge about the political economy of

communication, for example, would provide the students with the tools to see why the spread of transnational corporations has occurred and to study the results and debate the pressures. It would also allow them to see, on a more practical level, why news values are not just a list of elements to be learnt by rote, but the key to appealing to the readership in order to fulfil the profit motive. Basic knowledge of semiotics would show the students why lexical choice is all-important, and how journalism plays a large role in the production and reproduction of particular ideas and conceptions of the world. For example, whether the noun “protester” or “campaigner” is used, “crowd” or “mob” can subtly influence the ideological slant of a story. While this may appear self-evident, the need to provide the students with the tools to understand the importance of words was obvious from this study. Knowledge of discourse analysis would also encourage the students to study their own writing more carefully and its effects, so that their peer editing would be seen in a different light.

These recommendations are still ideas at this stage. However, with more research and thought they could be developed into programmes that would benefit the students by providing them with a wider knowledge and ability to think critically and in an independent fashion. They would also have gained the skills of journalism but in a much wider context alongside other writing skills. They would then be ready to make a contribution to the “real world”.

10.5 Conclusion

This study has answered the questions I posed in Chapter 1. It has showed how students learn to become professional journalists in New Zealand and discussed the influences on them. I have outlined how the media industry dominates journalism education and how journalism schools seem blindly to accept this control. The outcome of this has been a method which still is largely predicated on a training model, rather than focusing on critical education, thus the status quo has been maintained. Therefore, there has been little change in the last 20 years. New Zealand journalism education continues to resemble the old-style apprenticeship training. The students learn by doing: they perfect their skills through practising writing, while workplace training is seen as all-important. Students do gain the basics of writing news stories in the inverted pyramid, through this

method of learning by doing. However, they do not develop an understanding of the power of news values so that they are ill-equipped to work as professional journalists.

This study has also revealed the apparent deficiencies in the participants' journalism education and consequently in their writing. An industry-controlled system encourages learning through socialisation, not through specific instruction and critique. Therefore, the students are not taught to write in different genres; they learn little about media history and the changes in the industry. Nor do they learn to be independent, critical thinkers – in the way Freire, Boud and others advocate. Thus they are not equipped to handle the pressures and difficulties of being a modern-day journalist. More importantly, as this study revealed they are not able to write appealing stories, which are interesting, informative and important.

This thesis is just the beginning. I trust that others will be inspired to take up the challenge to do more research into journalism education. My hopes are that it will be read by many, those in the academy and those in the industry, journalism educators, employers and journalists alike. It should be read as a starting point for discussion, debate and even disagreement. It is only through informed dialogue and critique that change in journalism education can occur.

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Appendix I: Research Materials

Invitation letter



School of Communications,
Auckland University of Technology,
Private Bag 92006,
Auckland.

Jody Nobody,
Haworth Journalism School,
Hawthorn.

January 28, 2003.

Dear Jody,

This year I will be doing research for my PhD project entitled "Towards professionalism: a study of the cognitive and social influences on students as they learn to become journalists."

The first stage of this project involved interviews with 11 heads of school of journalism throughout New Zealand.

During this second and final stage I will be using the students' viewpoint only and I would very much like you to take part.

The purpose of this project is to study how students make choices and decisions whilst writing a news story.

Writing is a complex task in which you must make decisions about the words, the sentences, the structure, what information to put in and what to leave out.

Writing a news story for the media is even more difficult as there are numbers of constraints on what you do and how you do it.

I believe that by recording your reflections I will be able to look at what has influenced you and why. People complain a lot about the media and it is only through young journalists that this can change. I hope from my work to make a start at understanding the present training system and be able to make recommendations from this.

Students at two New Zealand institutions will be taking part. You have been selected for the study by your tutor at Waikato Institute of Technology.

First I will ask you some basic questions on your background and what you did before coming on the course. This will take place onand should take no more than 15 minutes.

I will then provide you with a tape recorder and ask you take part in a short training session. At this time I will give you a fact sheet and ask you to write a news story from it. In order to provide valid data, you will be asked to minimise the time between the process and reporting. You will be given the following instructions:

"After writing your news story, turn on the tape recorder and think-aloud for about 10 minutes or so, reflecting on the way you wrote this news story. First state the time and date of your recording; then look at each sentence you have written. We are interested in why you made particular choices in writing your news story. Try to account for any decisions you made as a writer in structuring the story, the facts you selected, the language you used, who you wrote this story for. Please include any other factors you consider important. Don't worry if your reflections are not perfect. If you stumble over words or have difficulty in expressing what you did. Just keep talking."

This process, known as a retrospective protocol analysis, will be used throughout the study. You will then be asked to gather information as you would for a news story for your course. You should

will be asked to tape your reflections, just as you did in the training session. This should take about 10 minutes.

You should use a story that you are required to do for your course work. My aim is to use real material, and also not to cause you too much work. I will look at this first recording to make sure I have all the information I require and may ask you some simple questions.

I understand the usual process is for you then to take your story to your writing tutor who will "sub" it, make suggestions for change, possibly ask you to include more facts. When you do your next draft and any subsequent ones, please record what changes you have made and why immediately after doing them. Make sure you record the date and time before talking. Please repeat this process until your tutor says your story is suitable for publication.

I will then collect the tapes and your thoughts will be transcribed so that I have a record from the beginning of the course, not only about what you did, but why you did it.

While this procedure is lengthy – I estimate it will take up to 30 minutes of recording to do one story- I don't expect you to do it after every news story.

After this first news story, there are only two other occasions when you will be asked to record your reflections.

The second time will be after you have been to the media on work experience, about half way through your course and the third time will be at the end of the course.

The difficulties of this process is that you may find it somewhat tedious. In return for your efforts, we will give you a \$50 book token to spend as you want. Please be assured transcripts of your recordings will be totally anonymous and they will be invaluable in making recommendations for the future education of student journalists.

Please think about the project carefully before committing yourself. You are free to ask any questions you want to. You are under no obligation to be interviewed or have your reflections tape recorded. You can turn off the tape recorder at any time you wish and withdraw from the study. You can later withdraw any information you have given in your taped reflections before 30 June, 2003.

If you are happy to take part in this project, please fill in the consent form attached and return it to Ruth Thomas, School of Communications, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the project supervisor, Professor Allan Bell, 09/9179999 ext 9683. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the executive secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 917 9999 ext 8044.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Thomas

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18 February 2008
AUTEC Reference number 03/24

Ethics approval

MEMORANDUM



Academic Registry – Academic Services

To: Allan Bell
From: Madeline Banda
Date: 18 February 2003
Subject: 03/24 Towards professionalism. A study of the cognitive and social influences on students as they learn to become journalists

Dear Allan

Thank you for providing amendment and clarification of your ethics application as requested by AUTEC.

Your application is approved for a period of two years until 18 February 2005.

You are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given.
- A brief statement on the status of the project at the end of the period of approval or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner.
- A request for renewal of approval if the project has not been completed by the end of the period of approval.

Please note that the Committee grants ethical approval only. If management approval from an institution/organisation is required, it is your responsibility to obtain this.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.

Please include the application number and study title in all correspondence and telephone queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Madeline Banda".

Madeline Banda
Executive Secretary
AUTEC

From the desk of ...
Madeline Banda
Academic Services
Student Services Group

Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020
New Zealand
E-mail: madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz

Tel: 64 9 917 9999
ext 8014
Fax: 64 9 917 9812

Consent to participation in research

Consent to Participation in Research



Title of Project: Towards professionalism: a study of the cognitive and social influences on students as they learn to become journalists.

Project Supervisor: Professor Allan Bell

Researcher: Ruth Thomas

-
- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.
 - I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
 - I understand that my reflections will be audio-taped and transcribed.
 - I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way. If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
 - I agree to take part in this research.

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Date:

Project Supervisor: Contact Details: Professor Allan Bell, 09/9179999 ext 9683.
Email:allan.bell@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18 February, 2003 AUTEC
Reference number 03/24

Participant information sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Towards professionalism: a study of the cognitive and social influences on students as they learn to become journalists

Researcher: Ruth Thomas

Department: Centre for Communication Research

The Project Explained: During 2003, I will be doing research into the influences on journalism students writing as part of my PhD. I hope to discover these influences through analysing your reflections where you think-aloud, recorded immediately after writing a news story. News story writing is a complex task in which you must make decisions about the words, the sentences, the structure, what information to put in and what to leave out as well as following a set of rules and requirements. It is hoped this research will paint a picture of the influences which will provide input into the future quality of journalism education.

You are invited to participate in this research. Ten students are required at this institute. If more people volunteer than required, names of those to take part will be drawn at random. There are five parts to this project.

1. A background interview.
2. A training session.

For the next three stages you will be given a tape-recorder and asked to record your reflections after writing a news story

3. at the start of the course
4. after you have been on work experience
5. at the end of the course

You can turn the tape-recorder off at any time. You are under no obligation to be interviewed or to record your reflections. You can later withdraw any information given in the interview or on tape up to 31 December, 2004 without giving a reason and without being disadvantaged in any way.

Transcriptions: The information from your reflections will be transcribed. If you wish to see the transcriptions, please contact me by email, Ruth Thomas, ruth.Thomas@aut.ac.nz. None of the information you provide will be directly sourced to you as an individual, although excerpts from what you say may be used as part of academic presentations on the findings of the research. The information will be confidential to me and will not be shared with any journalism tutor. It will not influence your course marks in any way. Neither you nor any individuals you may mention in your transcripts will be named in reports on the research.

Time: Each reflection will take you about 15 minutes to record. This will mean that taking part will require cutting aside three to four hours, spread out through the year.

If you have any queries or wish to know more about the research, please phone me on 09 9175999, ext 7028.

If you are willing to take part in this project, please fill in the Consent Form and return it to Ruth Thomas, School of Communications, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be noted in the first instance to the project supervisor, Professor Alan Bell, 09 9179889 ext 9683. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the executive secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 917 9998 ext 6044.

Thank you for your support and for helping to make this project possible.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 18 February, 2003 AUTEC
Reference number 03/24.

Instruction sheets

INSTRUCTION SHEET:

Writing a news story and recording your reflections

Please gather a news story in the usual way. Your news story will be written as part of your class work. You may do it at home or wherever else you feel would be comfortable and appropriate. The only difference is that I would like you to record your reflections **immediately** afterwards, following this instruction sheet. If you want a quiet place to record your reflections, I am happy to help you. Please record your reflections **before** getting the story checked by your tutor.

Don't worry if you are repeating yourself from the training session. I'd rather have information twice than not at all.

- a. Immediately after writing your news story, turn your tape over from the training session, turn on your tape recorder and think-aloud for about 10 minutes or so, reflecting on the way you wrote this news story.
- b. In order to identify your tape, please state your **name**, the **time** and **date** of your recording.
- c. Now look at **each sentence** you have written. I am interested in why you made particular choices in writing –that is your process of writing. This may vary, depending on factors like what you know about news writing, how much you have written before, the way you plan a story, etc. Please remember I do not know this so tell me as you reflect.
- d. Try to account for any **decisions** you made as a writer in the way you
 - structured the story
 - the facts you selected
 - the language you used
 - who you wrote the story for
 - whether the story was difficult for you to write or easy.Please include any other factors you consider important in your writing.
- e. **Don't worry** if your reflections are not perfect, if you stumble over words or have difficulty in expressing what you did. **Just keep talking.**
- f. When you have **finished**, please bring the completed copies of the story and the tape to me. I may need to ask you a few questions for clarification.

Thanks very much, Ruth

INSTRUCTION SHEET

Writing a news story and recording your reflections.

Final stage:

Thank you for taking part in stage two of this study. We are now up to the third and final stage and I would really appreciate it if you would conclude this project. I would like you to record your reflections immediately after writing a news story again, following this instruction sheet.

Don't worry if you are repeating yourself. Nor do you need to worry about what you said last time.

I suspect you may probably be finding writing stories easier now and I would be interested in any comments you would like to make about that, along with the rest of your reflections.

1. Immediately after writing your news story, turn your tape recorder on and think-aloud for 10 minutes or so, reflecting on the way you wrote this news story. Please do a test first to check the batteries are o.k etc.
2. In order to maintain anonymity, please use your pen name on your story and on your tape. Please state this name, the time and date of your recording.
3. Now look at each sentence you have written. I am interested in why you made particular choices in writing- that is your process of writing. What have you chosen for your intro? Was this a simple decision, is it easier than it was or is it still difficult? What about the structure of the story? Did you plan it out or did it just happen? These decisions may vary depending on factors like what you know about news writing and how much you have written before. Please remember I do not know this so tell me about these things as you reflect.
4. Try to account for any decisions you made as a writer in the way you
 - structured the story
 - the facts you selected
 - the language you used
 - who you wrote the story for
 - whether the story was difficult for you to write or easy
 - anything else that has influenced your writing (writing lots of stories, going on work experience, etc)
 - any other factors you consider important.
5. Please reflect on this process. How have you found talking about your stories into a tape recorder?
6. Finally, think about the way you have learnt news writing during the year. What has been most useful to you? What else do you think you still need to learn?

Don't worry if your reflections are not perfect, if you stumble over words or have difficulty expressing what you did. Just keep talking.

When you have finished, please bring me the completed copy of the story and the tape. I may need to ask you a few questions for clarification. Thanks very much. I really appreciate your efforts for this project. Ruth.

Student questionnaire

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE February- March, 2003

This study is about news writing and the influences on student learning. Thank you for agreeing to take part. You've already received an information sheet and a consent form. Do you have any questions you wish to ask me about the study?

The aim of this questionnaire is to gather some background information before the study begins.

A. Background Experience

A1: What is your name?

A2: How old are you?

A3: Are you married or single?

A4: Did you come to this course a. straight from school? Yes No

A5: Did you come to this course from working previously? Yes No

i. If yes: Could you give me some more details about your work?

ii. If in the media: Where did you work?

iii. How long did you work there?

A6: Did you come to this course from studying at a tertiary institution ? Yes No

i. If yes: What did you study?

ii. Did you receive a qualification?

iii. If yes: What was it?

A7: What was the highest qualification you received at school?

A8: Did you come to this course after doing anything else?

i. If yes: What were you doing?

A9. Have you written any news stories previously? Yes No

a. If yes: how many new stories have you written previously?

- b. Where did you write these stories?
- At school
 - On a course
 - Working for a newspaper
 - Other (please explain)

A10. How did you learn to write these news stories?

B. Expectations: After the course

B1: Do you want to be a news journalist after the course has finished? Yes No

B2. If no: What would you like to do?

B3: In ten years time, what would you like to be doing?

Thanks for your time.

Questionnaire for journalism courses

WORK PLACE EXPERIENCE:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ACCREDITED JOURNALISM

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS (subject to change depending on what data is available from module handbooks, on the web etc)

BACKGROUND:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project entitled "Co-operative education: Its role in socialising journalism students in the production of the news genre." These questions have been devised in order to gain an overall picture of work experience in New Zealand. This will assist the researcher, Ruth Thomas, who is also a journalism educator, with her research on the role work place experience plays in socialising journalism students in the production of the news genre. This research is for the attainment of a PhD. degree. If any of this information is available in advance, it would be helpful if I could receive it or be directed to the relevant website.

This interview schedule is in four sections

1. The journalism programme, numbers of students, numbers of staff, previous qualifications of students, qualification received on completion.
2. The journalism curriculum, subjects/modules, objectives, experiences in industry.
3. The nature of the work place experience, how students are prepared.
4. Assessment of work place experience, feedback, credit, grading.

SECTION A.

THE JOURNALISM PROGRAMME.

Institution.....Programme

Name.....

Name of Head of Journalism.....

Title (Head of School etc).....

Person interviewed and position (if different from

1. When was the journalism programme started here?

2. Has it changed since then? Yes No

3. (if yes) What was it like then?

4. How long is this program? (How many weeks?)

5. What are the entry requirements for students in this programme?

(Probe) Are they ever waived and if so in what circumstances?

6. How many students are currently enrolled in your journalism programme?

(Probe) How many in each intake?

7. What is the average age of the students?

8. What is the ethnic composition of the students

9. What qualification do students receive on successfully completing this
programme?

10a. How many staff teach on this programme fulltime?

10b. How many staff teach on this programme parttime?

(Probe) How many fulltime equivalents?

11. The NZJTO requires journalism tutors to have spent at least five years in a
newsroom environment. As well as journalism experience, do your staff have any
additional teaching qualifications?

(Probe.) What sort of teaching qualifications do they have? Any other teaching qualifications?

SECTION B

THE JOURNALISM CURRICULUM

1. (Note: This material may be available before the interview) What is the content of the journalism curriculum, that is what subjects/modules are taught?

(List subjects/modules)

2. Can you describe how students learn news writing?

(Probe) How do you start teaching them to write a news story? How do you continue? Is anything else important in the process of learning news writing?

3. How do students on this program experience the media work place, e.g. writing stories for newspapers, going on fieldtrips, being placed in a media outlet? Probe

| Workplace experience | When | How long for |
|----------------------|------|--------------|
| a..... | | |
| b..... | | |
| c..... | | |
| d..... | | |
| e..... | | |

4. a. I would like to look at each of these experiences separately, leaving work placement (internship etc) until later. At what stage of the program do your students (first mentioned experience)...write for a newspaper?

4b. Approximately how many hours would students spend on.... writing for newspapers during the course?

5a. At what stage of the program do your students go on (second mentioned experience)... fieldtrips?

5b. Approximately how many hours would students spend ona field trip?

6a. At what stage of the program do your students go on(any other mentioned experiences except internship/ work placement?

6b. Approximately how many hours would students spend ona (any other mentioned experiences except internship/work placement?

SECTION C

WORK PLACEMENT

1a. Because students must work in a newsroom to fulfil the requirements of the Journalism Unit Standards, the questions on work placement that follow are a little more detailed than earlier ones. First, at what stage of the program do your students do this work placement?

1b. Approximately how many hours are students expected to be on this work placement?

2a. Is work placement a separate module/ subject in your program? Yes No

2b. (If yes) What is the module/subject called?

3. (If no) What module is work placement a part of?

4a. Are specific formal (written in the course handbook) learning outcomes expected from work placement? Yes No

(If yes) What are they?

4b. (If no) Please describe the aims and objectives of work placement.

5. What kind of places do students go to on work experience e.g. daily newspapers, community newspapers, radio stations, etc.

6. How are these places selected?

7. How are students selected for the particular media outlets they go to for work attachment e.g. do students choose where they want to go, or do staff do the selection?

8. What kind of tasks are students expected to do while on work placement? Probe

9a. Do students get any particular kind of instruction before going on work placement? Yes No.

9b. (If yes) What kind of instruction?

10a. Do students have any contact with a staff member from the program whilst they are on work placement? Yes No

10b. (If yes) How much contact do they have?

11. What is the employer's role during work placement? Probe

SECTION D

ASSESSING WORK PLACEMENT

1. Is work placement assessed, either formally or informally?

Formally Yes No

Informally Yes No

2. (If yes) How is it assessed? e.g. with grades or credit for the module, feedback forms etc.

3. Who is it assessed by?

4a.(If no) Have you ever considered assessing it?

Yes No

4b. (If no) Why did you decide not to assess it?

5.Do the students find work placement useful?

Yes No

5b. Why do they find it useful/not useful?

6.Do you find it a useful for students?

Yes No

6b. Why do you find it useful/not useful for students?

7. How do you find that employers view work placement?

8.Have you found any particular difficulties with work placement?

9.Have you found any particular benefits about work placement?

10.Are there any general comments you wish to make about work place experience ?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix II: Students' news stories and the professional versions

The following are a selection of the students' original stories followed by the professional version of the same story. Note: the original stories may contain errors made by the students.

Section I: Early news stories

Brendan

Brendan's original story

S1: It is that time of year again, the annual school gala.

S2: But behind the happy façade of candyfloss and bouncy-castles there is often a serious economic agenda.

S3: For many Haworth schools the success of their galas is vital if they are to fundraise enough money for necessary developments.

S4: Local principals say that the Ministry of Education money they are allocated only stretches so far.

S5: Schools need to raise additional funds and are therefore reliant upon the enormous organisational efforts of volunteer parents and the support of local businesses to hold galas.

S6: On Saturday, March 8th KoroKoro Primary School held their annual gala.

S7: School principal Dan Smith was wrapt with the turn out on the day.

S8: "But this could not have been done without the amazing support from local businesses.

S9: The PTA too, they have worked phenomenally hard to get this organised," he says.

S10: There were over 30 different sponsors of the fair, ranging from the KoroKoro Pharmacy to the local ice-skating rink and liquor outlets.

S11: Among the attractions at the fair were trike rides around the school field put on by the Coast Motorcycle Club.

S12: Also popular was the Astroball attraction, originally designed to prepare NASA astronauts for space travel, riders are strapped into the machine and then spun head-over-heels and on countless different angles.

S13: Despite this, the organisers claim that nobody had been sick on the ride in the ten years they have been running it.

S14: Unsurprisingly, the most popular event at the fair was the dunk-the-teacher attraction.

S15: Two dollars seemed a small price for students (and occasionally colleagues) to pay, to get revenge on their tormentors.

S16: Unfortunately, all of the \$11,300 raised from the fair is going towards replacing the resources that were destroyed in an arson attack in February.

S17: Peninsula Primary on March 29th will be having their first gala in 8 years.

S18: Principal Adam Russell is hopeful the school will raise enough money to be able to upgrade the existing playground and to cover it with a sail to provide shade for their students.

S19: "We are under pressure to provide safe environments for our children, which of course I have no problem with, we try to."

S20: But the government does not supply us with any additional funding to achieve this," he said.

S21: A centre stage will be provided where the school's Kapa Haka and music groups, as well as local community groups, can demonstrate their talents.

S22: There will also be a wide variety of different foods available, from a hangi and spit-roasts to traditional Indian, reflecting the diverse ethnic make-up of the area.

S23: Hopefully the entertainer Pio will be available to MC the event.

S24: There will also be a bouncy castle, tractor rides, mini-put, and dunk-the-teacher challenges.

S25: Also on March 29th Beachwood Primary School is having a gala with a difference.

S26: Everything there will be free.

S27: They are holding a Community Health Fair, all the local health providers will be represented.

S28: There will be advice and information as well as an array of free health foods and drinks available.

Professional version of Brendan's story

P1: More than \$11,000 raised at a Totara school fair on Saturday will go towards replacing resources destroyed in a recent arson attack.

P2: Korokoro Primary School principal Dan Smith says he is thrilled with the turn-out on the day.

P3: He says the arson attack in February was devastating when the school library and many books and resources, gathered over 10 years, were destroyed.

P4: "Ministry of Education money allocated only stretches so far."

P5: "Raising \$11,300 could not have been done without the amazing support from local businesses and the hard work of the PTA."

P6: Mr Smith says there were over 30 different sponsors at the fair, all local, from the ice-skating rink to liquor outlets.

P7: Among the attractions were "dunk-the-teacher", trike rides and an Astroball, originally designed to prepare NASA astronauts for space travel.

P8: Riders were strapped into the machine and then spun head-over-heels at different angles.

P9: "Organisers claim no one has been sick on the ride in the 10 years they have been running it," Mr Smith says.

Kathie

Kathie's original story

S1: Ashwood City Council building inspectors are trying to toughen up on bar safety in the wake of the Rhode Island night club fire.

S2: Licence premises are scheduled to undergo monthly checks on emergency alarms and lighting, six monthly fire drills and full inspections every year which cover emergency power supplies and fire exits.

S3: However, limited resources mean that only about 3 - 4 surprise inspections are conducted each month.

S4: Supervisor of building inspectors Jack Wong says: "Hopefully word will pass around" amongst bar owners who generally have a cooperative attitude towards the inspectors.

S5: Consequences of non-compliance are tough: under the Building Act premises can be closed down if there is deemed to be an immediate danger to the public.

S6: Zac Charles, manager of Ashwood's V'bar reckons the safety of bars is "pretty well regulated" especially in the inner city.

S7: However during his eleven years in the industry he admits he has seen some "pretty dodgy" situations, particularly due to a tendency towards over-crowding.

S8: V'bar's large bi-fold doors mean there is a minimal fire risk, with any of the big gigs taking place in the quad.

S9: As the person ultimately responsible Mr Charles admits he feels pressure when there are lots of people in the bar and he "breathes a sigh of relief" at the end of the night when everybody leaves unscathed.

Professional version of Kathie's story

P1: Building inspectors are clamping down on Ashwood bars, in the wake of the Rhode Island night club fire.

P2: They will make up to four surprise inspections, after the fire, which claimed the lives of more than 100 people, prompted fears of a similar disaster here.

P3: Previously Ashwood City Council inspectors checked fire exits, and fire alarms once a year and emergency systems monthly.

P4: They also followed up any complaints of over-crowding.

P5: Now they will make surprise visits each month and, if bars are found to be dangerous, they will be closed immediately, supervisor of building inspectors Jack Wong says.

P6: Manager of Ashwood University's V'bar Zac Charles believes bar safety is well-regulated, especially in the inner city.

P7: However during his 11 years in the bar industry, he has seen some "pretty dodgy" situations.

P8: "There's a tendency towards over-crowding in bars," he says.

P9: V'bar's large bi-fold doors mean there is minimal fire risk as they allow people to leave easily and quickly.

P10: Big gigs also take place outside in Ashwood University's quad.

Mavis

Mavis's original story

S1: Mayfair District Council has issued a pamphlet to households in the Mayfair district in response to recent community concern regarding safety around dogs.

S2: Rexine Andrews, Environmental Policy and Monitoring Manager, at Mayfair city council, says people need to know how to respond to dogs.

S3: "Everyone has some relationship with dogs and lives with dogs in different ways" she says.

S4: The "Dogs in your neighbourhood" pamphlet sets out "five community expectations" for dog owners, including registering their dog, keeping their dog under control at all times and providing for their dog's well-being.

S5: "The pamphlet has a two-pronged approach", Ms Andrews says, "It gives information to dog owners and the public".

S6: Safety around dogs is an important aspect of the pamphlet, which urges children and adults not to approach strange dogs and gives them advice about what to do if they are approached by a threatening dog.

S7: Bob King, Chief Executive of the SPCA, says he is pleased the council distributed the pamphlet.

S8: "It is a very informative brochure with good advice for children", he says.

S9: "The reason for dog attacks on children are not necessarily that it is a bad dog, it is often that the dog is startled or frightened or feels threatened".

S10: Mr King says children must learn how to approach and respond to dogs.

S11: "Education is the key", he says.

Professional version of Mavis's story

P1: Mayfair children and adults are being warned not to approach strange dogs, as attacks continue.

P2: In February there were 31 dog attacks in the city, while during the past year there were 236 dog attacks.

P3: Mayfair City Council environmental manager Rexine Andrews says people need to know how to respond to dogs. .

P4: She says a council pamphlet has a two-pronged approach, giving information to dog owners and to the public.

P5: Dog owners should register their dogs, keep them under control at all times and provide for their well-being, the pamphlet says.

P6: The pamphlet urges children and adults not to approach strange dogs and gives advice what to do if approached by a threatening dog.

P7: SPCA chief executive Bob King says he is pleased the council distributed the pamphlet.

P8: Mr King says a dog which attacks a child is not necessarily a bad dog.

P9: "It is often the dog is startled or frightened or feels threatened."

P10: Children must learn how to approach and respond to dogs, he says.

P11: "Education is the key."

Sam

Sam's original story

S1. A terse new fine for bus lane drivers has increased bus reliability during peak rush hour traffic.

S2: March 3 saw the introduction of a \$150 fine for drivers caught driving more than 50 metres in a bus lane.

S3: The Ashwood City Council (ACC) Parking Services manager Les Hogg said they are getting 60 or 70 people a day on film indicating that most people are respecting the new law enforcement.

S4: "That's pretty good actually," Hogg says.

S5: Keeping the bus lanes clear during peak traffic times ensures Ashwood buses are more reliable and they keep to their time schedule.

S6: Stagecoach Marketing Manager, Ross Turner said there has been a noticeable difference on Sutherland Rd and Mt East Rd.

S7: "The campaign has made people aware of the law more than anything and it is more about education than enforcement," says Turner.

S8: The money collected from fines goes into a Local Government consolidated fund.

S9: Some of the money received is kept by the ACC to fund public education, media campaigns and real-time bus signs.

S10: The more reliable buses are, the more people will use them, agreed both Hogman and Turner.

S11: "People want predictability, routine and being caught in traffic can hinder the routine," says Hogg.

S12: Bus lanes were introduced on Dove Road five years ago and "there are now 80% more passengers and therefore 80% more buses than five years ago."

S13: Other cities are consequently looking at Ashwood's bus lane system because of the increase in bus ridership.

Professional version of Sam's story

P1: Up to 70 motorists a day have been caught driving in bus-only lanes, since the start of a new campaign.

P2: Ashwood City Council introduced a \$150 fine on March 3 for peak hour drivers travelling more than 50 metres in a bus lane.

P3: At present the campaign is focused on Mt East, Sutherland, Dove and Grover Roads with cameras filming drivers contravening the law.

P4: As the campaign heads into its second week, numbers caught on camera have dropped to 30 each day.

P5: Ashwood's City's parking service manager Les Hogg says the number of people being caught emphasises most drivers are respecting the new law.

P6: Keeping the bus lanes clear during peak traffic times ensures Ashwood buses are more reliable and keep to their scheduled times.

P7: Stagecoach marketing manager Ross Turner says there has been a noticeable difference on Sutherland and Mt East Roads.

P8: "The campaign has made people aware of the law more than anything and it is more about education than enforcement," says Mr Turner.

P9: The more reliable buses are, the more people will use them.

P10: Bus lanes were introduced on Dove Road five years ago and Mr Turner says there are now 80% more passengers.

P11: He says other New Zealand cities are looking at Ashwood's bus lanes because of the increase in bus passengers."

Section II: Middle of the year stories

Agnes

Agnes's original story

- S1: Petanque players will find themselves in very experienced hands when they compete as part of the South Pacific Master's Games next year in New Lynn.
- S2: The Games Petanque co-ordinator Karl Wanders is a former petanque champion who held the National Dutch singles title five times between 1975-1980.
- S3: Karl was also the Dutch Pentanque Associations national coach and technical advisor on and off form 1977-1981 when he emigrated to New Zealand.
- S4: His talent is such that after not touching a petanque ball for 15 years, Karl entered and came second in New Zealand in the New Zealand National Triples Championships which was also the qualifying tournament for the World Championships.
- S5: He was subsequently to represent New Zealand in this competition.
- S6: Karl first started petanque at 17 after meeting the then world champion in France and have the pleasure of a number of coaching sessions.
- S7: "I was dating his daughter so I had to show some interest in petanque," he says.
- S8: Nowadays Karl does not play a lot of petanque due to health problems but maintains a strong involvement with the sport.
- S9: He is looking forward to the petanque competition at the Master's games and believes it will be an excellent two days.
- S10: The game petanque originated in France and Karl says he is hoping to turn the tournament into a French Provincial Day complete with French food, wine and music.
- S11: There will also be fun competitions and demonstrations with the public welcome to come along, have a glass of wine and try their luck with the game.
- S12: "I have a strong interest in promoting the sport and inspiring new players into raising the level of skill and competition in New Zealand," he says.
- S13: He hopes that in the future New Zealand will be able to compete on a reasonable level internationally.

Professional version of Agnes's story

- P1: Petanque players will find themselves in very experienced hands when they compete in the South Pacific Masters Games next year in New Lynn.
- P2: Former Dutch champion Karl Wanders is petanque coordinator for the games.
- P3: Wanders won the Dutch national singles petanque title five times between 1975 and 1980, also serving as national coach and technical adviser before emigrating to New Zealand in 1981.
- P4: Petanque is a ball game that originally comes from France and is gaining popularity in New Zealand.
- P5: Wanders first started playing at 17, after meeting the then-world champion in France.
- P6: "I was dating his daughter so I had to show some interest in petanque," he says.
- P7: After moving to New Zealand he stopped playing petanque and did not touch a ball for many years.
- P8: Fifteen years later he entered and came second in the national triples championships – and went on to represent New Zealand at the world championships.
- P9: Now health problems prevent Wanders from playing a lot of petanque.

P10: But he is still actively involved in the sport and is looking forward to the petanque competitions at the Masters Games.

Brendan

Brendan's original story

S1: With the selection of national representative teams fast approaching, one young table tennis player is throwing caution to the wind to ensure he makes the cut.

S2: Despite humble beginnings, Jay Allen, a Year 13 Ashwood High School student, is now one of the top players in New Zealand.

S3: "I actually started playing in a pool hall, which also had a few table tennis tables in it.

S4: It just looked quite fun.

S5: I asked someone there who was playing if I could have a go, and it started from there," he says.

S6: That was when Jay was 13-years-old, a very late start in a sport where most players make it or break it by age 16.

S7: Soon after starting at the pool hall Jay began to attend the Ashwood Table Tennis Association's Wednesday and Sunday social clubs, where coaches quickly started noticing his ability.

S8: The social clubs and pool hall days must seem like a long time ago for the 18-year-old who now trains six days a week for several hours each day.

S9: Jay thinks one of the reasons he improved so rapidly, and his late start was not detrimental, was because of the advice and practical help he received from several Ashwood players.

S10: "My main mentors were former Ashwood coach Hal Bosworth and also (France-based player) Sebastian Lowe.

S11: Especially Hal, because he was a great player and also a great person.

S12: I learnt a lot very quickly from them, my attitude to the game has greatly improved," Jay says.

S13: Last year, Jay was part of New Zealand's junior team which beat Australia in the final of the Oceania Championships, and in doing so, qualified for the 200w World Junior Table Tennis Championships in Santiago, Chile, in December.

S14: Despite being part of the team which beat Australia in Fiji at the Ocenia's, there is no guarantee that Jay will make the junior team for Chile.

S15: An eight-man squad has been announced by Table Tennis New Zealand.

S16: Four of those eight will be selected after this year's National Championships in late September.

S17: Jay certainly must have helped his chances and caught selectors' eyes, with his recent performance at the North Island Championships in July.

S18: In the main junior event, the Under 19's, Jay simply demolished the rest of the field.

S19: After a slight hiccup in his first match he did not drop another set throughout the rest of the event, defying his seeding of second.

S20: Jay attributes his latest success to a newfound determination he has gained through mental preparation.

S21: "To be honest, I thought I had quite a lot of pressure on me (at the North Island Championships).

S22: I have to play well this year especially if I want to get selected for Chile.

S23: So at the North Island Champs when the other juniors' were socialising and talking I would keep to myself and just focus on my upcoming games."

S24: "I would try and keep all my energy reserved for my matches.

S25: I got into a routine where I would go outside the stadium and think about my games.

S26: This really helps to psych me up before the game and I come out fired up."

S27: Ashwood coach and former professional player Adam White thinks that Jay has a lot of natural talent.

S28: "Jay is extremely quick on his feet and for a little guy he has an amazing amount of power.

S29: When he is playing he looks as if he has so much more time than other players," Allan says.

S30: Recently Adam has been trying to concentrate on the initial stages of the table tennis rally with Jay.

S31: He thinks Jay has the ability to play at the highest level.

S32: His service and return of service have come a long way lately and that is important, as it is the most important part of table tennis.

S33: Jay will go really far if he can keep working on his mental toughness, and balance that with his physical prowess," he says.

S34: This year should provide Jay with more than a few challenges.

S35: As well as the Junior World Championships in December to think about, he must also prepare for the World Youth Circuit being held in Wellington in September and New Zealand's own National Championships.

S36: "The nationals this year are going to be hard with a lot of international players coming, but I will still try my best.

S37: "I will have to raise my level to compete with them.

S38: But Chile is my ultimate goal for this year," Jay says.

Professional version of Brendan's story

P1: A Māori high school student demolished the field at the North Island Table Tennis Championships held at the weekend in Haworth.

P2: After a slight hiccup in his first match, Jay Allen (18) did not drop another set in the under-19s event.

P3: Jay said he tried to keep all his energy reserved for his matches and did not socialise or talk during the competition.

P4. "I would go outside the stadium and think about my game, and this really helped me to psych up and come out fired up," he said.

P5: Jay is aiming to go to the World Table Tennis Championships in Santiago, Chile, in December and trains six days a week for several hours a day.

P6: He attributes his success to advice and practical help he receives from former Haworth coach Hal Bosworth and France-based player Sebastian Lowe.

P7: Ashwood coach and former professional player Adam White thinks Jay has the ability to play at the highest level.

P8: "Jay will really go far if he can keep working on his mental toughness and balance that with his physical prowess," he said.

Henreitta

Henreitta's original story

- S1: A white foam that is discharging regularly into the Haworth River at Branscombe Park has Haworth City Council baffled.
- S2: The foam discharges on a regular basis on weekdays mornings from the bottom of Branscombe Park in Pukeora.
- S3: Council believe the foam could be a detergent from a company or business in the area who do a regular morning clean up.
- S4: They also believe the foam could be coming from more than one source.
- S5: Acting Water, Drainage and Refuse Manager Ray Black says the foam is no threat to the river.
- S6: "We don't believe it will damage the river or residents because it is only a small amount, but obviously it is something we would prefer not to have in the river."
- S7: Mr Black says the council is currently checking the pipes on a regular basis to isolate the source of the discharge.
- S8: Deputy Chairperson of Works and Services Committee Richard Hayes says help from the public will be vital in solving the case of the mysterious foam.
- S9: "We are asking residents to be vigilant in looking for the foam, if they are out walking by the river and see any foam coming out of a pipe, please alert the council.
- S10: Anything that is discharged into the river we take seriously."

Professional version of Henreitta's story

- P1: Mysterious white foam polluting the Haworth River has council officers baffled.
- P2: The white froth appears in the river on weekday mornings, at the bottom of Branscombe in Pukeora.
- P3: Haworth City Council works committee deputy chairperson Richard Hayes says public help is needed.
- P4: "We are asking residents to be vigilant in looking for the foam.
- P5: "If they are out walking by the river and see foam coming out of a pipe, please alert the council.
- P6: Anything that is discharged into the river we take seriously."
- P7: Water from the Haworth River is treated and used as the city's drinking water.
- P8: Special consent must be gained from the Waiora Regional Council to discharge into the river.
- P9: The regional council runs a complaints hotline to guard against illegal discharge into the river.
- P10: Haworth City Council staff believe it could be detergent foam from a local business doing a morning clean-up.
- P11: They say it could be from more than one source.
- P12: Acting water, drainage and refuse manager Richard Black says he doesn't think the foam is a health hazard.
- P13: "We don't believe it will damage the river or residents because it is only a small amount, but obviously it is something we would prefer not to have in the river."
- P14: Mr Black says the council is checking drainage pipes regularly to find the source of the discharge.

Kathie

Kathie's original story

S1: Women's rights officer Candida Edmond is asking student parents to take part in a nationwide survey on what it's really like to care for children while studying.

S2: In response to the story *How Parent Friendly is our University?* (Deliberate, Issue 8), Candida will be conducting a survey over the next few weeks in order to assess how strongly student parents feel about the issue and how well this university is faring in comparison with other universities.

S3: "Although it has been really difficult to get a decent sample size, the preliminary stuff I've done so far shows the majority of students feel that more needs to be done at uni," she says.

S4: A survey presented to the 2003 NZUSA Women's conference highlighted the concerns that student parents have including finding suitable childcare, financial hardship and keeping up with their study commitments when their child was sick.

S5: A particular problem for those studying in Ashwood was the cost and availability of transportation.

S6: "I am currently taking my 3 month old and 3 year old on two buses to get to Uni as parking close to Uni is 90 minutes pay and display," said one Ashwood student.

S7: Candida hopes the finished survey will give a clearer idea about what in particular needs to be done about the situation.

S8: Students interested in filling out the survey should ring Candida at the Students' office or email her at Candida.edmond@ausa.ac.nz.

Professional version of Kathie's story

P1: Transport in Ashwood is the main problem for parents looking after kids while studying, a recent nationwide tertiary study shows.

P2: An Ashwood woman describes taking two pre-schoolers, the youngest three-month-old, on two buses to get to university, as parking nearby is restricted to 90 minutes pay and display.

P3: "There are no direct buses and so just getting to university for the morning takes us almost two hours," she says.

P4: Other concerns expressed in the survey presented to the May New Zealand University Students' Association women's conference about studying in Ashwood were the cost of transport.

P5: Parents nationwide highlighted finding suitable childcare, financial hardship and keeping up with study commitments when their child was sick as problems,

P6: Now Ashwood University Students Association women's rights officer Candida Edmond wants student parents to tell her what it's like to look after kids while studying.

P7: Over the next few weeks Candida will be conducting a survey at Ashwood University to find out how well this tertiary institution is doing compared with other universities, how strongly students feel about the issue and to provide a clearer picture of ways to support student parents.

P8: She organised the survey in response to a recent *Deliberate* article, "*How Parent Friendly is our university?*" (Issue 8, 2003).

P9: "Although it has been really difficult to get a decent sample size, the preliminary stuff I've done so far shows the majority of students feel that more needs to be done at this university," she says. .

P10: Students wanting to respond to the survey should ring Candida at the AUSA office or email her at [Candida.edmond @ausa.ac.nz](mailto:Candida.edmond@ausa.ac.nz)

Mavis

Mavis's original story

- S1: Jason So'lo loves homework.
- S2: The 14-year-old Porirua College student walks for 45 minutes each Wednesday to get to the Monowai Youth Library Homework Centre.
- S3: "I go home from school, have a feed and watch some t.v."
- S4: "Then I walk up to the homework centre with my cousin," the Year 10 student says.
- S5: "I come here to stay out of trouble."
- S6: "My other friends are at home."
- "They tell me they will meet me here but they never come."
- S7: Jason lives with his Nana.
- S8: "She thinks it's awesome that I go because I get heaps of work done," he says.
- S9: Dennis Rouse, supervisor at the homework centre, says around 15-20 students come to the centre each week.
- S10: "The students gain a chance to reinforce things they have been learning at school, in a more personal way," he says.
- S11: "They have a chance to reflect, as well as to complete assignments."
- S12: Mr Rouse is a teacher at Porirua College.
- S13: He says students from his classes come to the homework centre because they know they can get some practical help.
- S14: "There are a lot of reasons for students to come here."
- S15: "Their friends come, it is a cool environment and they want to finish their work," he says.
- S15: "Many of them come because they want to be achievers."
- S16: The homework centre is at the Monowai Youth Library, Wednesdays from 4-7pm.

Professional version of Mavis's story

- P1: Jason So'lo loves the homework centre because it keeps him out of trouble.
- P2: The 14-year-old Porirua College student walks for 45 minutes each Wednesday to get to the Monowai Youth Library homework centre.
- P3: "I go home after school, have a feed and watch some TV."
- P4: "Then I walk up to the homework centre with my cousin," the Year 10 student says.
- P5: "I come here to stay out of trouble."
- P6: "My other friends are at home."
- P7: "They tell me they will meet me here but they never come."
- P8: Jason lives with his Nana.
- P9: "She thinks it's awesome that I go because I get heaps of work done," he says.
- P10: Porirua College teacher Dennis Rouse, who supervises the homework centre, says 15 to 20 students come each week to get practical help with their homework.
- P11: "The students gain a chance to reinforce things they have been learning at school, in a more personal way," he says.
- P12: "They have a chance to reflect, as well as to complete assignments."
- P13: There are a lot of reasons why students come to the centre, Mr Riley says.
- P14: "Their friends come, it is a cool environment and they want to finish their work."
- P15: "Many come because they want to be achievers."
- P16: The homework centre is at the Monowai Youth Library on Wednesdays from 4-7pm.

Miranda

Miranda's original story

- S1: Preserving precious stories and history for generations to come is the goal of the international *This is my life* Project.
- S2: The project aims to help people tell their stories through the professional production of unique, personal books.
- S3: New Zealand project representative Dale Salisbury says immigration movement over the last 20 years has resulted in the loss of many generational stories.
- S4: "Everybody has a story to tell...We all come from somewhere else and we all have those journeys to tell."
- S5: She says the books created by the project serve the function of providing background information about where families have come from and how they have adapted to their new environment.
- S6: "Our books help to place people's lives in context."
- S7: Writers Gregory Free and Tina Stacey started the *This is my life* project about five years ago.
- S8: The work of the project is based around the belief that family history is an essential part of everybody's identity and should be preserved before it is lost.
- S9: Initially based in Johannesburg, the project now has offices in London, Toronto, Washington, Sydney and Ashwood as well.
- S10: Ex-pat South African Dale has been the project's sole New Zealand representative since December last year.
- S11: She says she has always been fascinated by people's stories, but her involvement with the project allows her to combine this with her writing interests.
- S12: "I'm really excited to be a part of the project."
- S13: People who decide they want to work with the project usually feel they want to pass their story on, says Dale.
- S14: "The finished books are vital because they help to actually remember details- the books keep stories alive.
- S15."They are a real, tactile memory."
- S16: While there are other life story production outfits, the *This is my life* project is unique as it functions as a one-stop shop for clients once they decide to record their stories.
- S17: An international group of writers, researchers and designers carry out the whole process- with the involvement of the client who decides on issues like format, style and inclusion of images.
- S18: Dale says each book can take between six to eight months because "these are big projects".
- S19: The cost depends on lots of variable," she says.
- S20: "But they're priceless – especially if you look at the value over generations."
- S21: Work on two New Zealand books has already begun, but the project team is always keen to tell more stories of all types.
- S22: Anybody who is interested in creating a lasting piece of history should contact Dale Salisbury on 0237 1107 or at dale@storyproject.co.nz

Professional version of Miranda's story

- P1: Helping people preserve family stories for future generations is the goal of *This is my life* project.

P2: This international company aims to help people tell their stories and present them professionally as unique, personal books.

P3: Creating a book is a big project, says New Zealand representative Dale Salisbury.

P4: Each book takes six to eight months to complete.

P5: International writers, researchers and designers are involved in the process – working with the client, who chooses format, style and images.

P6: The final cost can depend on many variables, Ms Salisbury says.

P7: “But they’re priceless – especially if you look at the value over generations.”

P8: Dale Salisbury says international migration has resulted in losing many family stories.

P9: A migrant from South Africa herself, she says the books provide people with information about where their families came from and how they have adapted to their new environment.

P10: “Our books help to place people’s lives in context.”

P11: Writers Gregory Free and Tina Stacey started the project five years ago in South Africa.

P12: The company now has offices in London, Toronto, Washington, Sydney and Ashwood.

P13: Work on two New Zealand books has already begun.

P14: “The books keep stories alive,” Ms Salisbury says.

P15: The company’s sole New Zealand representative since December, she says she has always been fascinated by people’s stories, and her job allows her to combine this with her writing interests.

Sam

Sam’s original story

S1: International exchange programme Youth for Understanding (YFU) is shutting its doors for good in New Zealand at the end of this week.

S2: YFU national chairman Doug Marshall said there are several reasons for the close of the New Zealand branch of YFU.

S3: SARS, September 11 and email have impacted on the decline of the exchange programme, he said.

S4: “The growth in fee-paying foreign students is also a factor.”

S5: YFU has been operating in New Zealand since 1987 and is a voluntary programme, which relies on families to host students for free.

S6: “It’s tough financially for many families, so having a fee-paying student means they get the experience of hosting a person from another culture while also covering the costs.”

S7: Rachel Watt from Penrose went on an YFU exchange to Maryland in the USA in 2002 and said it is a shame to see the programme close in New Zealand.

S8: “The exchange opens up a lot of opportunities. It is awesome meeting all these international students and the families.”

S9: YFU has been struggling to host students in New Zealand for several years.

S10: “Last August (2002) YFU started talking about closing down in New Zealand,” says Rachel.

S11: “I know they found it really hard to find host families for the students this year. That’s the main reason we thought we’d have a student.”

S12: Rachel's family hosted one of the last YFU students, Sarah Hulten from Germany, for one year.

S13: Sarah left on July 5, three weeks before YFU closes in New Zealand forever.

S14: Other countries involved in YFU will remain in operation said Mr Marshall.

S15: "It will be a sad day when we close at the end of this month, because all of us who've been involved in YFU over the years feel passionately about the value of international youth exchanges," says Mr Marshall.

Professional version of Sam's story

P1: Kiwi students will miss out when an international exchange organisation closes in New Zealand this week.

P2: Growth in fee-paying foreign students is a factor in the closure of Youth for Understanding (YFU), as well as SARS, September 11 and email, says national chairman Doug Marshall.

P3: The non-profit organisation has been operating in New Zealand since 1986 and relies on families hosting students for free.

P4: For several years it has been struggling to find host families for the 200 students who come to New Zealand each year because many people are choosing to take international students who pay board.

P5: "It's tough financially for many families, so having a fee-paying student means they get the experience of hosting a person from another culture while also covering the costs," says Mr Marshall.

P6: Penrose's Rachel Watt was one of the 130 New Zealand students who went overseas in 2002.

P7: Rachel, who went to Maryland, USA, says it's a shame to see the programme close in New Zealand.

P8: "The exchange opens up a lot of opportunities."

P9: Rachel's family hosted one of the last YFU students, Sarah Hulten from Germany, for one year.

P10: Sarah left three weeks ago.

P11: The organisation will continue in other countries, Mr Marshall says.

P12: "It will be a sad day when we close at the end of this month, because all of us who've been involved in YFU over the years feel passionately about the value of international youth exchanges."

Sully

Sully's original story

S1: The ability of many pensioners to pay their rates bills has been questioned by Haworth City Councillor, Robert Hansen.

S2: Many Haworth pensioners on low incomes who have rates bills above the average of \$1229, will get relief under the rates remission policy recently revised by the Haworth City Council.

S3: The average rate bill would apply to a property with a land value of about \$62,000 and capital value of about \$180,000- \$190,000.

S4: Provided single pensioners paying average rates had income of less than \$14,700 per annum, they would be eligible for a rates remission, in this case, increasing to the maximum of \$300 if they earned below \$12,300.

S5: However Cr Robert Hansen says that the council should be focusing on people's ability to pay, citing the plight of pensioners as an example.

S6: "I have had a pensioner come to me saying she couldn't afford to pay for the fridge seal to be fixed," he says.

S7: "We have to look at the ability of people to pay.

S8: For example, a little old lady who has lost her husband has had her income halved but is still living in the same house, still has to pay the same rates," says Cr Hansen.

S9: While Cr Hansen says that the scheme should be directed more towards pensioners as they have fewer options of financial assistance, Cr Dennis MacPhee says that all low-income earners should be eligible.,

S10: "It's not just for older people.

S11: We don't want to exclude people- what about the solo mums or people on ACC?" he says.

S12: "Pensioners just like anyone else can apply for special benefits from Work and Income," says Cr MacPhee.

S13: A Grey Power spokesman Mr Jack Goddard says that the struggle of keeping up with increasing rates bills while on a fixed income causes many older ratepayers great distress.

S14: "These are people who have always been used to meeting their obligations.

S15: They feel it very hard if they cannot meet their obligations," he says.

S16: "The Government has encouraged them to stay in their homes as it's cheaper to keep them there rather than in rest homes.

S17: Yet they are being forced out by rising rates," says Mr Goddard.

S18: Work and Income spokesman Lyell Hopu says superannuitants in hardship may apply to Work and Income for financial assistance and each case will be assessed individually.

S19: "It's a situation where some do qualify and some don't," says Mr Hopu.

Professional version of Sully's story

P1: Many older ratepayers on a fixed income are struggling to keep up with increasing rates bills, says a Grey Power spokesman.

P2: Jack Goddard says the Government has encouraged them to stay in their homes as it's cheaper to keep them there rather than in rest homes.

P3: "Yet they are being forced out by rising rates," Mr Goddard says.

P4: Mr Goddard was commenting on Haworth City Council's new rates remission which focuses on people's income but does not consider their ability to pay.

P5: He says elderly people have always been used to meeting their obligations.

P6: "They feel it very hard if they cannot do this," he says.

P7: City councillor Robert Hansen agrees elderly people need more help to pay their rates.

P8: The new rates remission policy gives people on low incomes with rates bills above the average of \$1229 some relief.

P9: Single persons paying average rates who have an annual income under \$14,700 are eligible for rates remission.

P10: They can receive a maximum of \$300 if their income is below \$12,300.

P11: But Mr Hansen says older ratepayers have fewer options of financial assistance than other people.

P12: The recently revised policy doesn't take into account some factors particularly affecting pensioners, he says.

P13: "We have to look at the ability of people to pay.

P14: "For example, a little old lady who has lost her husband has had her income halved but is still living in the same house, still has to pay the same rates," he says.

P15: Another councillor, Dennis MacPhee says the policy is correct and all low income people should be eligible for rates relief.

P16: "It's not just for the older people.

P17: "We don't want to exclude people – what about the solo mums or people on ACC?" he says.

P18: "Pensioners, just like anyone else, can apply for special benefits from Work and Income," says Mr MacPhee.

P19: Work and Income spokesman Lyell Hopu says superannuitants can apply to Work and Income for financial assistance and each case will be assessed individually.

Section III: End of the year stories

Brendan

Brendan's original story

- S1: The impending showdown between two of Ashwood's proud and powerful family owned businesses could well have had an air of Shakespearean rivalry surrounding it.
- S2: However Capulet's and Montague's these families are not.
- S3: Ashwood's leading art product suppliers, Parisian Artists and Art Supplies are having a duel, or a exhibition, if you will, featuring the work of their respective employees.
- S4: The exhibition titled Retail Therapy is set to take place at the New Art gallery in Kelburn from November 19-29.
- S5: Studio Art Supplies' employee and artist Evan Woods says the idea of an exhibition between the two family owned businesses was brought to life after their competitor laid down a good-natured challenge.
- S6: "We were rung up by the Parisian Artists who challenged us to an art exhibition."
- S7: "It is a bit of a novelty that two competing businesses can treat their competition with a sense of fun.
- S8. Businesses do not always have to be aggressive with their swords drawn."
- S9: "There has always been a bit of friendly rivalry between the two family companies and an exhibition is a great way of showcasing the talent of those who they employ."
- S10: Woods says the public may well be interested to learn that there is often more than meets the eye when it comes to the shop assistants at your local art store.
- S11: "Many people would assume that art shop workers are just ordinary shop assistants."
- S12: "But in New Zealand it is nearly impossible to make a living just from being an artist and so most of the art shop assistants are themselves artists, who are just working there part-time in order to help pay the rent."
- S13: "Especially in an art store it is essential you know what you are talking about."
- S14: Around ten artists from both retailers will be displaying their work at Retail Therapy and all of the work if for public sale.
- S15: The exhibition is to be held at the new PPg art gallery which has a novel principle of operating solely off rental fees.
- S16: With artists not being charged the usual exorbitant commission fees, it should ensure artworks are available at decent prices.
- S17: "At the new artist run space, artists do not have to factor in the gallery's commission, which is up to 45 per cent in some galleries.
- S18: It makes it more accessible for both the artists and the art buying public," says Woods.
- S19: Parisian Artists Carl Cook says the showdown should be an excellent opportunity for both experienced and budding artists alike to display their wares.
- S20: "A really interesting thing about the exhibition is how there will be artists of all levels featured.
- S21: Some who have been exhibiting work for years and some who have never had anything at an exhibition before."
- S22: So especially for them it's a great opportunity for them to have something displayed."

- S23: The most prominent artists featuring work at the exhibition from the Art Supplies are Andrew Barber, Evan Woods and Phillip Matthews.
- S24: While Parisian Artists has Adrian Jackman and Kalvin Collins.
- S25: An independent artist and art teacher Matthew Browne will judge the showdown.
- S26: The exhibition opens Wednesday November 19, 6-8 pm.
- S27: Normal opening hours are Tuesday to Friday 10.30-4.40. Saturday 11-3.
- S28: Entry to the public is free.
- S29: Where for art thou exhibition? New Gallery, 15 Kelburn Parade.

Professional version of Brendan's story

- P 1: Two rival businesses will hold a joint exhibition of their employees' art work next week.
- P2: The exhibition, dubbed a "showdown", is being held by Ashwood's leading art product shops, Parisian Artists and Art Supplies.
- P3. Art Supplies employee and artist Evan Woods says the idea for the *Retail Therapy* showdown came when their competitor laid down a good-natured challenge.
- P4: "Parisian Artists rang us and challenged us to an art exhibition."
- P 5: The two companies have always had a bit of friendly rivalry, Mr Woods says.
- P 6: "It is a bit of a novelty that two competing businesses can treat their competition with a sense of fun.
- P 7: "Businesses do not always have to be aggressive, with their swords drawn."
- P8: Parisian Artists' Carl Cook says the exhibition should be an experience for both experienced and budding artists.
- P9: "There will be artists of all levels – some who have been exhibiting for years, and some who have never had anything at an exhibition before."
- P10: The showdown features the work of the employees of the two shops and the artists' works will be judged by independent artist and art teacher Matthew Black.
- P11: Mr Woods says practising artists cannot afford to live on their art.
- P12: "Most art shop assistants are themselves artists, who are working there part-time to help pay the rent."
- P13: Better known artists from Art Supplies are Andrew Barber, Evan Woods and Phillip Matthews, while Parisian Artists have Adrian Jackman and Carl Cook.
- P14: *Retail Therapy* will be at the New Art Gallery in Kelburn from November 19-29.
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Casper

Casper's original story

- S1: Sarah Hillary's art exhibition may be Dunedin's smallest so far this year, but it's got pride of place in one of the city's most public galleries.
- S2: The exhibition's sole work is based on Rita Angus's 1942 oil painting of Betty Curnow, who was a friend of the artist.
- S3: The portrait is now in Dunedin Art Gallery's collection- just around the corner from the The Small One gallery where Ms Hillary's version of the work is displayed.
- S4: The gallery's 27.5 x 27.5 x 10 cm space – located on the wall of a public thoroughfare just off Princes St – hold the 24 painted shells making up "Betty".
- S5: Art dealer Astrid Miller says Ms Hillary has "New Zealandified" Rita Angus's painting.

- S6: In the original portrait, the subject wears a shirt with palm trees and Mexican people on it.
- S7: Ms Hillary's version of the shirt features manuka and pohutakawa.
- S8. The shells the work is painted on are from Whangarei and Mangawhai.
- S9: "I wanted to make it more New Zealand," says Ms Hillary.
- S10: Each of the two dozen shells took Ms Hillary about an hour to paint.
- S11: The work was completed over a two-month period.
- S12: Within an hour of last Tuesday's opening [ed: 14 October], Ms Hillary had sold nearly half of her work.
- S13: Separating "Betty" will be difficult for the artist.
- S14: "I was reluctant to sell [the shells] separately," Ms Hillary says
- S15: "I just started doing it for fun and then gradually saw it as an art work."
- S16: It's the second exhibition in less than six months for Ms Hillary, a senior conservator at Dunedin Art Gallery.
- S17: The first one took place in May, in her room at Kathmandu's Malla Hotel, while her famous father celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ascent of nearby Mt Everest.
- S18: The Kathmandu exhibition featured art by Ms Hillary and other New Zealanders inspired by a recently-completed 19-day trek in the Himalayas.
- S19: Ms Hillary's current exhibition coincides with The Small One's curator Bruce Randle deciding to more openly promote the availability of the High St space- which he established in 1999 to break down elitism in the art world.
- S20: "It's a hobby for me," says Mr Randle.
- S21: "It's not the kind of space that has the politics of career building.
- S22: "I've never knocked back anyone."
- S23: The gallery was originally intended by clothing designer Kate Sylvester to be a display cabinet for her shop, which shares a wall with the exhibition space.
- S24: Mr Randle says The Small One has taken a low profile for its first four years but he's changing that.
- S25: He's now planning a catalogue and a website.
- S26: Despite the lack of promotion of the space, budding artists have been drawn to it.
- S27: In four years, The Small One has featured more than 40 pieces – including works by established artists such as John Lyall.
- S28: There's a three to four month waiting list.
- S29: Despite the gallery being in public view, The Small One hasn't been afraid to test boundaries.
- S30: A fused plastic gun and dildo "got some chuckles", Mr Randle says and fashion designer Kate Sylvester bought a work – a piece of knitting which bore the words "Fuck you".
- S31: Mr Randle likes Ms Hillary's work.
- S32: "I think it's very cool. I never knew she was an artist. "
- S33: Artists wanting to display work in The Small One can contact Bruce Randle on 024 999952 or email him at brandle@ihug.co.nz.
- S34: Ms Hillary's work is on the Kate Sylvester sidewall, 47 Princes St until November 13.

Henreitta

Henreitta's original story

S1: On October 29 the moratorium on the commercial release of GE organisms is set to end.

S2: Opponents of GE are now once again raising concerns about the availability of GE foods in New Zealand.

S3: One of the main concerns being raised is the labelling of genetically modified foods in supermarkets.

S4: Green Party Safe Food spokesperson Sue Kedgley is so concerned that she has drafted a private members bill that will require all genetically engineered ingredients in food to be labelled.

S5: ‘The Consumer Right to Know (Food Information) Bill’ will go into the next Members Ballot.

S6: “This bill is based on the concept that consumers have the right to sufficient information to enable them to make informed food-purchasing decisions.

S7: This is hardly a radical concept,” Ms Kedgley

S8: At the present moment, supermarkets are not required by law to label GE foods, that is the responsibility of their suppliers.

S9: Progressive Enterprises Limited, who own New Zealand’s largest supermarkets Foodtown, Woolworths and Countdown, claim that after the moratorium is lifted they will keep their own product brands G.E. free.

S10: “We will abide by our suppliers labelling standards and our own products will not be sourced from genetically modified foods,” says Progressive Foods Health and Safety Manager, Michael Baxter.

Professional version of Henreitta's story

P1: Opponents are worried genetically modified food will soon be on supermarket shelves after the moratorium ends this week.

P2: Green Party MP Sue Kedgley has drafted a private members bill that will require all G.E. ingredients in food to be labelled.

P3: She says if food isn’t labelled, consumers can’t make informed decisions.

P4: At present supermarkets are not required by law to label G.E. foods – that is up to their suppliers.

P5: Owner of New Zealand’s largest supermarket chain Progressive Enterprises say after the moratorium is lifted they will keep their own product brands G.E. free.

P6: “We will abide by our suppliers’ labelling standards and our own products will not be sourced from genetically modified foods,” says Progressive health and safety manager Michael Baxter.

Jamima

Jamima's original story

S1: Professionalism in sport has come along way in New Zealand but how much emphasis should we be putting on money?

S2: Haworth media liaison, Winston Hooper of Haworth Stadium says he has seen the highs and lows of professional sport and the problems that money can cause.

S3: “Money is now a part of sport but it has its problems.”

S4: Hooper said it wasn't until the mid 1930's when New Zealand realised that you can make money from sport, particularly from rugby.

S5: He said back then, the highest offer made was 1000 pounds for a rugby player to play for the season, but problems with players getting more than others became evident.

S6: "You had to have strong management to gain team spirit, especially when people were getting paid as professionals."

S7: So a change was made to pay all members of the team equally.

S8: Haworth Old Boy's Rugby Executive Manager, Bill Walters says money is important in professional sport because it gives new opportunities.

S9: His explanation of what the club entails was simple. "We win championships."

S10: Walters said the club encourages people to enjoy themselves, but ultimately competitiveness is most important.

S11: "We promote to have fun because when they have fun they play better. It goes cap in hand, winning and having fun," he said.

S12: Walters commented that the amount of people attracted makes up for the vast amount of money involved in the game, but some sports, mainly netball, deserve a bit more recognition.

S13: Media Liaison, Winston Hooper says female sports people have come along way over the years, but obviously professionalism in netball has still got a long way to go.

S14: "Once they (netball players) get back home they go back to their office jobs and no one thinks anything of them."

S15: He said he remembers when netball centre player, Sandra Edge continued to battle away at the Avalon Post Office after a remarkable performance on the court.

S16: He said he can not understand why our tradespeople don't use our sports professionals.

S17: "We battle with getting trade in places. If Daniel Vettori said 'drink New Zealand milk,' people in India would be drinking New Zealand milk."

S18: "Why our trade's people aren't doing this just amazes me."

S19: And that, he says, is where the money will come in.

Professional version of Jamima's story

P1: Kiwi sporting heroes, like Daniel Vettori, could help sell New Zealand milk, says Haworth Stadium's media officer.

P2: Winston Hooper says it is difficult to improve trade links with some countries.

P3: "We battle with getting trade in places. But if Daniel Vettori said: 'Drink New Zealand milk,' people in India would be drinking New Zealand milk."

P 4: "Why our trade people aren't doing this just amazes me."

P 5: The income from this kind of promotion would also benefit all professional New Zealand sportspeople, he says.

Kathie

Kathie's original story

S1: Seven students from the Ashwood University School of Medicine want to know what you do and how you feel every hour of your day.

S2: They are exploring the link between emotion well-being and a strong immune system and need at least 80 people to keep a detailed journal about their feelings over two months.

S3: "Keep a journal of your feelings- believe me, we know how it sounds," says student Rowan Cass.

S4: "But this is important. There have been so many studies done on the effects of positive thought on sick people's recovery, but hardly any on how happiness maintains a strong immune system."

S5: Participants will check a box once an hour describing their overall state of mind as either content, neutral or discontent.

S6: A text message will be sent at the end of the day asking them to write down a couple of sentences about why they thought they felt that way.

S7: They will be rewarded for their time with the chance to win a Vodafone mobile and six-months free airtime.

S8: At the end of each week a blood sample will be taken to determine the number of white blood cells they are producing.

S9: The students are especially interested in the behaviour of lymphocytes – the white blood cells which protect against the majority of bacterial and viral infections.

S10: Originating in the bone marrow, lymphocytes become either B or T cells which have different ways of fighting infection.

S11: B cells can turn into plasma cells and produce antibodies if needed, whereas T cells recognise potential infections by the presence of foreign peptides, or protein fragments, attached to the surface of a cell.

S12: "The T cells will then attack the infection, and if all goes according to plan, the infection will be history," says Ms Cass.

S13: "We hope our study will show a link between feeling well and the effectiveness of both B and T cells.

S14: "It also encourages people to think proactively about their lives and ask questions about how they can be improved. Most people have got the message about stopping smoking and eating veggies, but do they realise that in this day and age, the really ominous health risk is too much stress?"

S15: The study will begin in February next year as part of their clinical studies paper, where groups of students in their fifth year of medicine seek to test new theories about how an area of general health can be improved.

S16: If the preliminary results are encouraging, Ms Cass and classmate Jade Stapp will assist masters student Mya Gray to test their theory in a year-long clinical trial in 2005.

S17: The trial will include both well and sick people and will test endorphin levels rather than relying on how people describe their state of mind.

S18: Ms Gray is working in the UK at the moment and although she realises the possible trial is a long way off, she needs the result from the undergraduate study in order to convince enough people to take part.

S19: "It's going to be fairly heavy on the resources and time commitment from people involved," she says.

S20: "I know it's going to be tough to make up the numbers. But I feel passionately enough about this to have put my medical career on hold to come back to New Zealand to study."

Professional version of Kathie's story

P1: The link between emotional well-being and a strong immune system is the subject of a medical study.

P2: Seven students from Ashwood University's School of Medicine will be studying the feelings of more than 80 people over two months.

P3: Fifth-year medical student Rowan Cass says people will be asked to keep a journal of their feelings.

P4: "This is important. There have been so many studies done on the effects of positive thought on sick people's recovery, but hardly any on how happiness maintains a strong immune system."

P5: Participants will check a box once an hour, describing their overall state of mind as either content, neutral or discontent.

P6: They will receive a text message at the end of each day, asking them to write down a couple of sentences about why they thought they felt that way.

P7: At the end of each week, a blood sample will be taken to measure the number of white blood cells.

P8: The students are especially interested in the behaviour of lymphocytes – the white blood cells which originate in the bone marrow and protect against bacterial and viral infections.

P9: Lymphocytes can become either B or T cells, which have different ways of fighting infection.

P10: "We hope our study will show a link between feeling well and the effectiveness of both B and T cells," says Ms Cass.

P11: The study will begin in February next year as part of the fifth-year students' clinical studies paper where new theories are tested about how an area of general health can be improved.

P12: If the preliminary results are encouraging, Ms Cass and classmate Jade Stapp will assist Masters student Mya Gray to test the theory in a year-long trial in 2005.

Kino

Kino's original story

S1: A new initiative for Multiple Sclerosis sufferers' means their dreams can come true.

S2: The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ashwood (MSSA) has introduced DREAMS-delightful, recreation and enjoyable activities for people with MS.

S3: A registered charity, it serves people with MS and their families from the whole Ashwood area.

S4: The scheme targets people with MS who are isolated in their homes, and offers sufferers a chance to mix with others who have the illness.

S5: "We ask people, 'If you could have any wish, what would it be?'" says co-ordinator Roy Bartlett.

S6: "One woman hadn't seen Muritai Bay for 20 years so we took her there and had a picnic."

S7: Other recipients of the DREAM programme include two elderly women- one in a wheelchair and the other in a walking frame- who wanted to skydive.

S8: "We did that at Whenuapai Airport. One said it was the best thing to come out of her MS," says Mr Bartlett.

S9: Anyone with MS can request a DREAM, which also puts on group activities like pottery classes or bush walks.

S10: "We make sure people know it's available so if they want to use it they can. We are also proactive about approaching people who might not get out and about often," he says.

- S11: He says it can take people with MS years to come to terms with having the disability.
- S12: "It can be hard for people to get used to the idea, especially when they were in full health before," he says.
- S13: Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic and incurable illness of the central nervous system.
- S14: Symptoms vary for each sufferer but can include fatigue, loss of muscle coordination, slurred speech and loss of balance.
- S15: These can come and go any time.
- S16: There are more than 4000 people with MS in New Zealand and another 200 are diagnosed with the disease each year.
- S17: "We have 450 people on our books but we will see anybody with MS," says Mr Bartlett.
- S18: The MMSA is a support service that produces information to educate people about MS.
- S19: They also have fieldworkers who make visits to people with the illness.
- S20: The society puts brochures in libraries, has a website and co-ordinates a Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week each September, where funds are raised.
- S21: "Ten per cent of our funding comes from a contract with the Health Department and the rest we come up with ourselves through fundraising," he says.
- S22: Roughly two women to every man are diagnosed with MS which usually affects people aged between 25 and 40 years old.
- S23: "It's known as the young person's disease," says Dr Ernest Willoughby, Medical Director of MS New Zealand and an Ashwood neurologist.
- S24: He says there has not been an increase in people with MS but an increase in those diagnosed.
- S25: "It's much easier to diagnose now than it was 10-15 years ago before we had MRI machines. It's good that people are getting diagnosed earlier."
- S26: MS can be debilitating but most who have it are able to lead normal lives most of the time.
- S27: "I have mild MS myself and other than a bit of fatigue every now and then, I'm fine," says Mr Bartlett.
- S28: Dr Willoughby says reports of new Norwegian research that claims smokers are at greater risk from MS, can give people false hope.
- S29: "People read about studies in the media which later can be proved inconclusive," he says.
- S30: The definite cause of MS is unknown but it can be genetic and while there is no cure, Mr Bartlett says people can do plenty to help discomfort.
- S31: "We have a yoga group, which is beneficial for maintaining muscle strength, and a swimming programme is also offered because hydrotherapy also helps," he says.
- S32: Both services are free to those with MS.
- S33: "A lot of it's about lifestyle. While there's no cure, there certainly is relief."

Professional version of Kino's story

- P1: Multiple Schlerosis (MS) sufferers are finding their dreams can come true.
- P2: DREAMS – which stands for delightful, recreation and enjoyable activities for people with MS – is being run by the Ashwood Multiple Sclerosis Society.
- P3: The scheme is intended to make life more enjoyable for sufferers of MS, an incurable disease of the central nervous system which can result in severe disability and isolation.

P4: "We ask people, 'If you could have any wish, what would it be?' " says co-ordinator Roy Bartlett.

P5: "One woman hadn't seen Muritai Bay for 20 years, so we took her there and had a picnic."

P6: Anyone with MS can request a DREAM.

P7: Two elderly women, one in a wheelchair and the other in a walking frame, said they wanted to skydive.

P8: "We did that at Whenuapai Airport. One said it was the best thing to come out of her MS," says Mr Bartlett.

P9: There are more than 4000 people in New Zealand with MS, which is known as the "young person's disease" because most people affected are between 25 and 40 years old.

P10: Symptoms vary, but can include fatigue, loss of muscle coordination, slurred speech and loss of balance.

P11: The cause is unknown, although there are genetic factors, and there is no cure, but there are treatments which can alleviate symptoms.

P12: MS can be debilitating, but most who have it are able to lead normal lives most of the time.

P13: "I have mild MS myself and other than a bit of fatigue now and then, I'm fine," says Mr Bartlett.

Mavis

Mavis's original story

S1: Vodka success story *42 Below* are looking to expand in 2004 with new flavours and the possibility of another premium spirit, says chief vodka and gin bloke, Geoff Ross.

S2: Ross says his plans relate to pushing his target market who are "the cocktail elite."

S3: "These are people who really care about what they are drinking," he says.

S4: They are in their late 20s to late 30s with plenty of money, living in urban cities around the world."

S5: "You need to have as much time and as much capital as possible," says Ross.

S6: He says his business, which he began in 1996 in the family garage in Wellington, really got underway once he had an investor to provide the capital.

S7: His main investor was Grant Baker, former owner of energy business Empower. *42 Below* is owned by Ross, Baker, and Shane McKillen, who also founded Empower.

S8: Ross and Baker have invested \$2 million into *42 Below* in the past year.

S9: It is predicted that *42 Below* will sell 100,000 litres of more than \$2.1 million of spirits in the year to June.

S10: Ross says he wanted to produce premium vodka made purely from New Zealand resources and the presentation of the product in a long white bottle fits his wish to match New Zealand's depiction as Aotearoa- "the land of the long white cloud".

S11: The first bottle of *42 Below*, known as the "southern most vodka in the world" (because it is 42 degrees below the equator) was sold in 1999.

S12: Ross's business gradually grew from one person in 1996 to 24 employees in 2003.

S13: Seven of his employees live and work overseas, "spreading the *42 Below* word."

S14: Ross exports to the UK, Australia and the US.

S15: He has three staff working in California, two in London and two in Australia.

S16: The key to good business is perseverance and people, says Ross.

- S17: "You need to have people on board with a wide range of business skills, from ideas through to sales."
- S18: "There's no living person who's perfect so you need to recognise where you are strong and not so strong," he says.
- S19: One person who has witnessed the popularity of the *42 Below* range is Andrew Graham, bar manager at Ruby in Kingsland.
- S20: "It's an awesome product," he enthuses.
- S21: "It's clever because it is a New Zealand vodka which makes it unique."
- S22: Graham says the infused fruit vodkas are especially popular.
- S23: "The feijoa vodka goes crazy here," he says.
- S24: Graham says a lot of his friends working in bars overseas, including New York and London, tell him that *42 Below* is most likely people's first choice of vodka.
- S25: He says it is a versatile product that mixes well.
- S26: According to Graham, *42 Below* is the hippest thing to hit Kiwi bars for a long time.
- S27: The *42 Below* was chosen to be the exclusive vodka for the *Lord of the Rings* premieres and the Cannes Film Festival, adding to its increasing reputation as "elitist vodka."

Professional version of Mavis's story

- P1: Vodka success story *42 Below* is predicting record sales of more than \$2 million this year.
- P2: The New Zealand-made vodka, billed as the "southern-most vodka in the world", has been a hit with urban cocktail lovers locally and internationally since it first went on sale in 1999.
- P3: It was chosen to be the exclusive vodka for the *Lord of the Rings* premieres and the Cannes Film Festival
- P4: The long white bottles of *42 Below*, symbolising the land of the long white cloud, are exported to the UK, Australia and the US.
- P5: In the year to June, the company predicts sophisticated drinkers will consume 100,000 litres of *42 Below*.
- P6: Ashwood bar manager Andrew Graham of Ruby in Kingsland says it's the hippest thing to hit Kiwi bars in a long time.
- P7: "It's an awesome product," he says.
- P8: "It's clever because it's a New Zealand vodka, which makes it unique."
- P9: Mr Graham says the infused fruit vodkas are especially popular at his bar. Sentence 10: "The feijoa vodka goes crazy here."
- P11: He says colleagues working in bars overseas, including New York and London, tell him *42 Below* is increasingly people's first choice of vodka.
- P12: The business, which started in 1996 in a Wellington garage, is now owned by Geoff Ross, Grant Baker – former owner of energy business Empower – and Shane McKillen, also a founder of Empower.
- P13: It employs 24 staff, seven working overseas.
- P14: Mr Ross says he's also expanding the range in 2004, with new flavours, and maybe another premium spirit.
- P15: In the past year, Mr Ross and Mr Baker have invested \$2 million in the company.
- P16: "You need to have as much time and as much capital as possible," he says.

Miranda

Miranda's original story

S1: Half a million people demonstrating against proposed new security measures has left Hong Kong opposition leader Martin Lee feeling cautiously optimistic about his country's future.

S2: In a recent presentation, at the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, Mr Lee said the number of people who participated in a July 1 march opposing Article 23 of the Basic Law was a positive message- although it raised many questions.

S3: "Hong Kong is at a crossroads: The people have told the leaders what they want. And that is- one nation, two systems working effectively.

S4: "But what if the leaders don't allow Hong Kong to go down the democratic route?

S5: We don't want another Tiananmen Square."

S6: There should be a timetable for demonstrated change, said Mr Lee because " from the villages up- it is the right time for change."

S7: The public show of no-confidence in Hong Kong's pro-Beijing government has already led to several tangible results: work on Article 23 has been put on hold, three M.Ps have resigned and an Independent Council against Corruption will be established.

S8: But Mr Lee is concerned Hong Kong's leadership has not really learnt the lesson implicit in the demonstration – to listen to the people – people and will try something similar again.

S9: As leader of the opposition Democratic Party he wants more progress.

S10: His party believes Hong Kong must develop democratic institutions and preserve freedom, human rights and the rule of law if the territory is to continue to prosper as part of China.

S11: "After the 1997 handover, we were promised all the freedoms would remain for Hong Kong people. So if they roll back any..."

S12: Human Rights Commission general manager Richard Handley says the Commission was pleased to host Mr Lee as it supports his party's battle for democracy.

S13: "Ensuring the protection of rights and freedoms is what human rights work is all about: often keeping people informed is a key component in this.

S14: "We are privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from Mr Lee's interesting and thought-provoking address."

S15: In another part of his address, Mr Lee provided an interpretation of the recent political history of Hong Kong, China and Taiwan.

S20: It is a topic he is well versed in as he has been involved in the territory's politics for almost twenty years.

S21: Originally a lawyer, he was first elected to Hong Kong's Legislative Council in 1985.

S22: From 1985 – 1989 he was a member of the Basic Law Drafting Committee which was appointed by Beijing to draft Hong Kong's post-1997 constitution.

S23: Following Tiananmen Square in 1989, Mr Lee was expelled from government and became chairman of the United Democrats of Hong Kong.

S24: In 1994 he founded the Democratic Party and has headed it ever since.

S25: On his whistle-stop trip to New Zealand, Mr Lee also met with Prime Minister Helen Clark and Minister of Foreign Affairs Phil Goff to discuss the situation in Hong Kong.

S26: He said the New Zealand government had been extremely helpful to his cause- although it had been the United States government which made the strongest statement of support on the Article 23 demonstration.

S27: "We have had lots of support internationally. But the battle has to be fought out by the Hong Kong people—even the children."

S28: "Still I hope the New Zealand government will continue to support the Hong Kong people."

Professional version of Miranda's story

P1: Half a million people marching against proposed new security laws is a positive sign for the country's future, says Hong Kong opposition leader Martin Lee.

P2: Mr Lee said the huge number of people who participated in the July 1 demonstration opposing Article 23 of the Basic Law, which would allow the government to ban certain organisations, was encouraging, although it raised many questions.

P3: "Hong Kong is at a crossroads.

P4: The people have told the leaders what they want.

P5: And that is - one nation, two systems working effectively," he said.

Sentence 6: "But what if the leaders don't allow Hong Kong to go down the democratic route?

P7: We don't want another Tiananmen Square."

P8: The public show of no-confidence in Hong Kong's pro-Beijing government has already had results: work on Article 23 has been put on hold, three MPs have resigned and an Independent Council against Corruption will be established, he told the Human Rights Commission.

P9: Mr Lee, who leads the opposition Democratic Party, wants to see a timetable for change.

P10: His party believes Hong Kong must develop democratic institutions and preserve freedom, human rights and the rule of law if it is to continue to prosper as part of China.

P11: "After the 1997 handover [when Hong Kong became part of China] we were promised all the freedoms would remain for Hong Kong people."

P12: On his brief trip to New Zealand, Mr Lee also met Prime Minister Helen Clark and Foreign Affairs Minister Phil Goff.

P13: He said the New Zealand Government had been very helpful to his cause – although the United States had made the strongest statement of support for the Article 23 demonstration.

Sam

Sam's original story

S1: Anti-GE protesters have set up a People's Moratorium on the web, following the lifting of the Government's moratorium last week.

S2: Greenpeace spokesperson Steve Abel said the people's moratorium will formally challenge any applications to grow GE crops in New Zealand.

S3: "If the people's resolve remains strong and our demand for GE free food and GE free land does not falter, then GE cannot prevail – because people eat the food and the people live in the land and the people are who industry and the politicians are ultimately answerable to," says Mr. Abel.

S4: The people's moratorium is to register residential or commercial property as GE free.

- S5: The website (www.gefreepeople.net) gives a list of companies who use genetically engineered ingredients in their foods.
- S6: The People's Moratorium is supported by Mothers Against Genetic Engineering (Madge) Take 5, GE Free New Zealand and Greenpeace.
- S7: Madge advocates women boycotting food products from the large companies that sue genetically modified ingredients.
- S8: Madge spokesperson Alannah Currie says the people's moratorium is a direct action group to stop GE foods being sold and produced in New Zealand.
- S9: "What we want is all the big food and small food companies to supply us with GE free food."
- S10: Ms Currie says the New Zealand labelling laws for ingredients in food are "lax" and consumers should be able to trace the food back to the farm to prove it is GE free.
- S11: "We need traceability and accountability from the paddock to the plate," she says.
- S12: Consumer demand for GE free food in Karori is not high, according to Foodies of Karori manager Alex Domazet.
- S13: "We have no idea what we are getting in some foods. But we are planning to sell some items that are labelled GE free."
- S14: Mr Domazet says he has just started selling organic drinks and "these are slow to move".
- S15: "No customer ever demands whether they would or would not like GE free food."
- S16: Field trials of genetically engineered food can now proceed with permission from the Environment Risk Management Authority (ERMA).
- S17: ERMA processes the applications for trialling genetically modified organisms in restricted outdoor areas.
- S18: The public can oppose these applications for general release of genetically modified products.
- S19: Madge is encouraging people to lodge complaints against any application that ERMA receives.
- S20: ERMA has said it is not expecting a lot of applications, but spokesperson for GE Free New Zealand Jon Carapiet said that ERMA are considering four field trial applications and two conditional trials.
- S21: One of these conditional trials is for genetically modified onions.
- S22: A public hearing starts in Christchurch on November 3 to consider the application.
- S23: "Within a year there will be hundreds of acres of GE crops growing," says Mr Carapiet.
- S24: Mr Carapiet does not have faith in ERMA's ability and wants the public to buy only products from GE free companies.
- S25: "We have to protect genetically-modified free products."
- S26: If it isn't ERMA, or the Government, then it will be the people's moratorium (that will do it)."

Professional version of Sam's story

- P1: Anti-GE campaigners are joining together to set up an internet-based action group, following the lifting of the government freeze.
- P2: The action group called the People's Moratorium is backed by Mothers Against Genetic Engineering (MADGE), Take 5, GE Free New Zealand and Greenpeace.
- P3: MADGE spokesperson Alannah Currie says the new organisation aims to stop GE foods being sold and produced in New Zealand.
- P4: She says New Zealand food labelling laws are lax and consumers should be able to trace food back to the farm to prove it is GE-free.

- P5: The group will formally challenge any applications to grow GE crops in New Zealand.
- P6: It will also keep a register of GE-free commercial or residential property and its website will list companies using GE ingredients in their foods.
- P7: Consumers in upmarket Ashwood suburb Karori don't seem concerned about GE food, according to the manager of a local delicatessen.
- P8: Foodies of Karori manager Alex Mozek says none of his customers have asked if food is genetically engineered.
- P9: "We have no idea what we are getting in some foods. But we are planning to sell some items that are labelled GE free."
- P10: Since the lifting of the Government moratorium, field trials of GE food can proceed with permission from the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA).
- P11: The action group is encouraging people to lodge complaints against any application ERMA receives.
- P13: ERMA is now considering four field trial applications and two conditional trials, including a trial on genetically modified onions.
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Sully

Sully's original story

- S1: *Australian Idol* might symbolise the launching of new musical talent to our TV audiences, but much of grassroots local music is hidden from view – something that may change very shortly, says music promoter Gaywen Tau.
- S2: Ms Tau, a musician with a passion for promoting unsigned artists, is in the final process of scripting a new television series *Off Beat* and is hoping to have the six-part series produced early next year.
- S3: The series will focus on emerging singer-songwriters that have been coming through open-mike nights, and going on to major festivals and other events.
- S4: Ms Tau sees it as a way into the public domain for many of the artists she is helping.
- S5: "The artists have to start somewhere."
- S6 "The open-mikes are like a kohanga reo – the musicians come out of their bedrooms and get an immediate reaction."
- S7: "The open-mike nights develop their networking and honing of skills," says Ms Tau.
- S8: Ms Tau started out as performing songwriter almost eight years ago, finding her voice and something to say, after a period of major change in her personal life.
- S9: With the encouragement of her daughters, she started performing live, but felt that the music industry's preoccupation with youth-oriented pop left a lot of talented performers out of the mix.
- S10: Showcasing these artists became the focus of *Acoustix*, a project to help artists help themselves.
- S11: "I see *Acoustix* as a vessel with a lot of handles, developing artists, an agency and organising events as well."
- S12: "We've got to do it ourselves – we now have our own radio show and we're getting artists paid for playing at events," says Ms Tau.

- S13: Artists do not sign any contract with her and must not be signed with any record label.
- S14: For the most part, she funds the project out of her own pocket.
- S15: The house she shares with her daughter is comfy, but certainly not salubrious – and while it may be an all-consuming passion, it's not paying the bills.
- S16: "I live on about \$20 a week and the rest of my money goes into paying for the radio show, administration, posterizing and advertising."
- S17: "If I can afford a coffee at the end of the week, it's been a good week," she says.
- S18: Ms Tau has no doubts that TV is the best medium to get wider exposure for her artists.
- S19: Māori TV producer Don Selwyn has been helping Ms Tau in planning *Off Beat* and is a supporter of helping local artists at the grass roots.
- S20: "Anything that is going to give anyone, who is in obscurity with a bit of talent – I'm all for it."
- S21: "This business is full of the 'have and the have-nots,'" he says.
- S22: However Mr Selwyn is realistic about the difficulties of getting backing from the major broadcasters.
- S23: "It's a matter of attitude – where the gatekeepers have got their heads at the moment."
- S24: "But if we are going to look at a public broadcasting charter, then we have to look at entertainment in a wider context," he says.
- S25: But Ms Tau has a vision to expose us to her ever-growing stable of artists and for the public to have an alternative to what the music industry promotes.
- S26: "I don't think the 20% quota can be filled just with the signed artists, otherwise just a handful of them end up being played, but on a high rotate."
- S27: "I think the public would be open to quality original music if they knew it was there."
- S28: "By using the media as an outlet, it gives the public a real choice as to what they want," says Ms Tau.
- S29: "Even if the broadcasters don't want it- I'll continue on until they do," she says.

Professional version of Sully's story

- P1: Grassroots music is about to get the encouragement it deserves, says music promoter Gaywen Tau.
- P2: She is planning a new television series focusing on singer-songwriters, called *Off Beat* to promote unsigned artists.
- P3: She's currently writing the script, and hopes to have the six-part series produced early next year.
- P4: The show will focus on emerging singer-songwriters who have been honing their skills at open-mike nights, and then going on to perform at major festivals and other events.
- P5: Ms Tau has no doubt television is the best way to get wider exposure for these artists.
- P6: She knows the territory well, because she's a singer-songwriter herself.
- P7: With her daughters' encouragement, she started performing her songs almost eight years ago.
- P8: When she found the music industry was pre-occupied with youth-oriented pop and was ignoring a lot of talented performers, she started a project to help emerging musicians help themselves, called Acoustix.

Sentence 9: "I see Acoustix as a vessel with a lot of handles – developing artists, an agency and organising events as well.

P10: "We now have our own radio show and we're getting artists paid for playing at events," says Ms Tau.

P11: For the most part, she funds the project for artists who must not be signed to any record company out of her own pocket.

P12: She has been developing *Off Beat* with help from Māori television producer Don Selwyn, who supports helping local artists at the grassroots.

P13: Ms Tau has a vision for the New Zealand public to have an alternative to what the music industry promotes.

P14: "Even if the broadcasters don't want it – I'll continue on until they do," she says.

Appendix III: Sample excerpts of retrospective protocols

Excerpt from Anastacia's retrospective protocol – March 14, 2008

"The facts I selected, well basically the facts that I had, when I do these stories, I sort of gather the information and then I end up usually using almost all of it, because it's such a small story and I usually only talk to two or three people, they don't always have the time to say an awful lot of things. I end up using pretty much everything they said and all the information I can get, which generally fits right into the word count that we're meant to do, which is about 180-220 words. So I don't so much select facts as ... use all the facts that I had. The language I used, again as yesterday, I think the language I use and the style that I use and the way I wrote the story, is the way that we've been moulded, because we're told to write for the [REDACTED] style, which we've got in the back of this book, called Intro. We're meant to follow that, so I think I'll just do that naturally now. I also wrote this story for quite a wide audience I suppose. I mean, some people will just read it and think, oh that's nice, these people are Irish and are celebrating St Patrick's Day. Some people will read it and think, oh sweet, let's go the pub, you know ... like quite a few different people will be interested in this story I think and then some Irish people might read it and think, oh that's nice, whatever ... but I think quite a few different people will get different things out of this story. The story wasn't difficult for me to write. I didn't find. I always think that my stories aren't very good. I always think [REDACTED] going to give them back and tell me to re-do them, because I feel that I haven't got a lot of newsworthy stuff in them, but then I always

Excerpt from Casper's retrospective protocol – March 17, 2008

This is Casper and it's 5.46 on Monday 17th of March 2003. I wrote a story which I'd come across when I was researching for an assignment and I just instantly knew that it was a story. You know often there is ... I find it a bit difficult to judge whether something is a story ... whether other people want to know about it or whether just something I'm interested in or whether it's something that I'm not interested in, but other people might be. But I knew this story was a good one ... a nice one. So I spoke with my newspaper and they said yes, yes – that's great, write the story and organise the photographer and that was sort of a goer for publication from the start, so I think that gave me a real confidence in writing the story and researching the story too. When I went out for the interview, you know I just went with a bit more confidence that I wasn't wasting someone's time, that it was actually going to get to print. I struggled over the first paragraph a bit and sort of was just trying to find something light and that tied in nicely and I sort of came across the words "king" and "treasure" – referring to the trophies which I mention further down in the story. I actually quite enjoyed taking the information I'd gathered from their brochures and turning it into something else. I actually really enjoyed that, for example, in the first sentence I used the expression "fun run" – that wasn't something I got, words I got from the brochures ... I think on the brochures it was "a community walk" or something along those lines and the person who I interviewed tried to sell it to me as some sort of extreme sport of going up and down [REDACTED] in a wheelbarrow and I ... I wasn't going to use that expression, when it was clearly ... it was a fun run. That's what everyone would know it as. The second sentence, organizers are desperate for the return of trophies. I was ... thought twice about using the word desperate. I don't really ... well I do back it up with a quote further down in paragraph six but there's nothing in the story really where they were really desperate and in tears and making pleas all over the place and even when I interviewed her, that the subject ... my main source, the [REDACTED] Manager, who's mentioned in paragraph five, she was ... I think keen's probably a better word ... desperate I associate with a weakness and a sort of on your knees type expression, but 'keen' is more of a positive way of looking at it. I chose the 'desperate' ... I just thought it sounded ... it was more dramatic, but I was a little bit hesitant to ... you know as to the [REDACTED] of using that word. Paragraph three, I liked the sentence, the hundreds of runners, walkers and

Excerpt from Mongo's retrospective protocol – March 11, 2008

And it's top of the hour with your host [REDACTED]. Good evening everybody and my name is [REDACTED], it's Tuesday the 11th of March and I've just completed writing my penguin story, which I finished about ten minutes ago. I have done a story on 14 New Zealand blue penguins that are being looked after by a couple of bird ladies in [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED]. They have had 14 injured or sick blue penguins that have come their way from various places and the story idea came about when some months ago, I took a wounded wax-eye, with a friend of mine, that had been mauled by his cat and we took it up to her and she looked after it and healed it and so I came up, that's how I came up with the idea for the story. The story is designed to be basically an information piece, as opposed to hard news. It's pretty soft news and it's ... it was written for the [REDACTED]. Well that was the publication that I had in mind when I wrote it and of course, thought I was very cunning and I had a great story. Unfortunately the [REDACTED] have actually done a couple of articles on the bird ladies before and so it looks like I may not be able to get it published. I'm still going to present it to them, but ... and I took a roll of film, so hopefully that will be in my favour. I got some really nice photos of the penguins, with the bird ladies and some kids and so on, but we'll just have to wait and see on that one. I'll go through it sentence by sentence, as you ask for. Hopefully you've got a copy of it in front of you ... so ... firstly, penguins are invading [REDACTED] beach daily, as the [REDACTED] bird ladies tend their latest flock of wounded birds. This is obviously my opening para and I've been trying to ... I wrote down on the piece of paper when I was writing this, I had it ... what, when, where, who, why and how and I wanted to try and answer some of those questions in that first sentence ... I've got what, which is the

Excerpt from Kathie's retrospective protocol – July 29, 2008

The language I used is quite ... there's nothing emotive in it, there's nothing that's ... I mean it could maybe be a little bit clinical but cold because it's just sort of a request ... it's basically outlining a request for a response from student parents so it's nothing that is too ground breaking. Anything else that has influenced my writing? I guess yeah I definitely think that having ~~222~~⁻⁰¹⁻ such a focus on writing short news stories having to get your 20 done has really helped me with this one. It just wasn't even daunting at all. I quickly made the one phone call that I needed to, did my sort of half an hour's research, going through the facts and figures, pulling out the main points and was ... as I said before, written within 20 minutes. I think I still am challenged by writing longer news stories, the 600-800 word specialist stories that we're going to write in news reporting this semester are going to be a lot more challenging, having to have at least two sources, having a lot more facts to organise, that kind of thing, I think that will still really be challenging but I definitely would say that intro writing has become a lot easier. I used to sit and stare at a screen for an hour trying to think up an intro and now they kind of seem glaringly obvious, which is good. I mean we've had a lot of practice at writing them and we're still practicing writing them in class, so that is really really helpful and I definitely find that once you've got your good intro, then the rest of the story can flow quite easily

Excerpt from Jamima's retrospective protocol – July 18, 2008

I did my internship at a daily paper at [REDACTED] and that taught me a lot and I think it has majorly affected my writing. I've cut it back heaps and I've become more precise. I included just the most important bits and I learnt that one of the differences was I used to always put a quote right up the top of the story and in my internship I found that that's not so important anymore, as long as you know what you're talking about and you've quoted someone or you're referring to someone, it doesn't really matter where the quotes are, so as you can probably see in my story today, the quote is right down the bottom because it's not so important to have it up the top. I have been able to eliminate any unnecessary information now because I found especially on my internship how important it is to cut back and to have a story that is as short as possible, because it's important to have it short so that it can fit into a small space, so I'm doing that more and more with my stories now. I still think that everything I've learnt this year is really valuable but you really don't know what it's all about until you get out there and do your work experience and that's what I found, so I think that personally my stories are probably getting a wee bit more professional – not quite up to standard yet, but I'm getting better. So yeah.

Excerpt from Brendan's retrospective protocol – October 30, 2008

However, I had an idea and when he told me I thought oh shit that's quite interesting and I went to the other art store and talked to their guys ... I said, oh so ... is everyone here are they ... you know professional artists or budding artists and they sort of laughed sort of thinking that was common knowledge, but it's not. Yeah so I thought that made it interesting and ... it yeah I don't know ... gives readers a bit of an insight into other occupations perhaps. Okay the next paragraph down: Around ten artists from both retailers will be displaying their work at [REDACTED] and all of the work is for public sale. The exhibition is to be held at the new [REDACTED] which has a novel principle operating solely off rental fees with artists not being charged the usual exorbitant commission fees and should ensure art works are available at decent prices. That's just another bit of information I sort of picked while talking to them, that I thought was quite interesting and then the quotes maybe indicate that ... just how good a price these paintings may be.

Excerpt from Sam's retrospective protocol – October 29, 2008

Kia ora this is Sam and I have written a story on the moratorium being lifted on genetic engineering on October 29th and I have really struggled with news writing this semester simply because I decided that I wasn't interested in pursuing it as a career and despite the argument within myself that ... like the left shoulder speaking to the right shoulder, that was really good to get this one under your belt and to you know have the skills as a news writer. It's been a real struggle to actually write any of the news stories, for myself. I'm much more interested in the feature writing and every time I just kind of want to research more and more into an issue, instead of just scraping the surface, however, got hold of those [REDACTED] press releases off Internet, knew a few people that I could contact, so my network was really good. Contacted them, got some great quotes. Contacted you know different people I didn't know, like the supermarkets in the area and just the whole process really really excited me and it was also the pressure of the deadline because it was relevant. I had to get it out, couldn't stuff around and actually having somewhere to publish it and I contacted [REDACTED] before I continued too much further on into the story, which also dictated the angle I took. One of the key issues I've had this semester, semester two, was that I was writing stories without an actual publication in mind, whereas in semester one it was always with the [REDACTED].

Excerpt from Vin's retrospective protocol – October 31, 2008

You had to make sure you had all the spelling of the names spelt right and it's hard to put it in that order ... to actually tell a story. When they hear it in court it just sounds to me like a load of ... like just spitting out whatever they feel like spitting out, so you had to really listen. What's influenced my writing? I actually say when I went on the internship that my writing was ... before I went on the internship it was okay but after my internship experience I got more confidence and I managed to get the writing skills up to a good standard because I was pushing out so much writing while I was there and it was all going to print. That boosted my confidence and seeing my work and seeing my name on it actually made me want to write better. Anything I consider important? Basically you've just got to remember what you learnt and as I saying with court stories, you've got to be very careful of the law and everything like that and you've got to be very careful you don't say anything wrong, you could be really in trouble for it. How I found talking about my stories onto a tape recorder? That I have to say I did not enjoy. I felt rather ... it was good to reflect on what I could do better and what I ... you know that kind of thing, but I really hated it because it actually made me feel kind of stupid talking to a machine. How have I learnt news during the year? The most useful thing this year is definitely definitely the internship because you learn all this theory and then you actually put it to practice and it's just so much better, actually practically doing things rather than theoretically.