

## **Journalism Education and Inclusive Society**

### WJEC 2022 Online Conference

*Stream meeting summary by Ann Auman, Professor, University of Hawai'i School of Communication and Information, U.S., and Bernie Whelan, Journalism Discipline Coordinator, Massey University, New Zealand; expert/background report by Roza Tsagarousianou, Reader in Media and Communications, University of Westminster, England, UK (see [wjec.net/2022-online-conference/](http://wjec.net/2022-online-conference/) at conference streams tab); panel chair Auman; and additional team members (below).*

When journalism fails to reflect diverse communities and perspectives it fails in its mission to serve society through accurate and ethical storytelling. Consequently, journalism students must develop inclusive practices to ensure representative and accurate coverage, from reflecting on their biases and auditing their work to embracing humility and building relationships with the communities they serve. This report discusses what we as journalism academics are doing to model and teach inclusive practice, as well as ways we can develop more inclusive curricula, and advocate for improved diversity, equity and social justice within our academic and media institutions. Examples and resources are provided.

### ***De-colonizing and de-centering Western-style journalism***

The group agreed that programs and instructors should work toward unsettling Westernizing processes of knowledge production for the sake of more inclusive and less extractive journalism. This report discusses these efforts and provides examples.

Western journalism relies on values that are critical to maintaining democracies, but these could better reflect the communities they serve, particularly Indigenous ones. These core values (Aiden White, 2015) are Accuracy (rather than “truth,” which can be complicated), Independence, Impartiality, Humanity (minimize harm, maximize dignity) and Accountability (understanding the consequences of one’s reporting). These values honor those of the [United Nations Declaration of Human Rights](#) and [UNESCO’s World Press Freedom](#). But these values are challenged in nations with authoritarian rulers, or where a traditional chief system, cultural customs or religion create conflicts with values of editorial independence and impartiality. This report presents ideas for change from within schools – in individual classes through instructor initiatives, in programs and at the institution level. It also discusses the challenges and opportunities at each level. Most of the focus is on individual instructors and their initiatives because that is where change is mostly coming from – at the frontlines through faculty – although there are some exceptions in which inclusion is part of a university’s or department’s goals.

The group’s discussion ranged from changes within schools from overall institutional strategies and awareness that inclusivity is a priority to institutions that discourage professors from talking about inclusiveness or critical race theory.

For example, ACEJMC accreditation has a “Commitment to diversity and inclusiveness” as one of its six Principles of Accreditation. That principle is woven into “Professional values and competencies” that those accredited are measured against, but the principle can sit uncomfortably in that list alongside some of the other values and competencies.

One participant suggested that we extend beyond the institutional and program levels and include global or external perspectives in which all become engaged in macro society-wide media reform and resistance to misinformation, joining with other groups to detox our channels of communication and maintain egalitarian democracy.

### ***Hegemonic model of journalism education***

Expert Roza Tsagarousianou stated that a number of scholars have written about the failure of journalism curriculum to acknowledge and reflect on non-Western journalistic practices, cultures and traditions. She suggests that educators should develop practices that challenge monocultural and universalizing models of journalism education through their teaching. Western-centric journalism curricula not only misrecognizes the value of non-Western journalism traditions and practices, but also marginalizes representation and coverage of issues that are understood as not fitting with approved and hegemonized agendas and priorities.

Some programs address the problem of monocultures by hiring people with a variety of backgrounds. But if the culture of the program or the institution is not open to change, then these instructors may try to fit in to the existing culture, especially if their goal is tenure. Here are some questions that all instructors should consider when evaluating their programs for diversity and inclusion:

1. How have you addressed the Western-based hegemonic model of journalism education in your program?
2. Is your program or institution challenging monocultural and universalizing models of journalism education?
3. What diverse forms of storytelling count as “journalism” in a hegemonistic culture? How can we change that?

The above three questions are inspired by Leask’s (2014) three steps required for change that were cited by Tsagarousianou (2022). Her expert report inspired several group members to reference Leask’s three points, where he advises allies in tertiary settings to contribute to change via: 1) imagination and practice; 2) disciplinary specialization; and 3) institution. While the questions here respond to the order in Leask’s list, the numbering of the three areas responds to a question posed by one of the stream’s team members, Tara Ross, on a Slack group discussion. Thinking about the imagination and practice of educators first is pertinent because it gets us thinking of our personal practice for inclusive journalism education. That can be our first point of inspiration to change the discipline and the institution.

## *New models of journalism education - imagination and practice*

EXAMPLE 1: Using poetry. Tito Ambyo (RMIT, Australia) tried a new format to what is accepted as journalism: “Shamsiya comes from a family of refugees from Afghanistan, and she started studying journalism to tell stories of women. But she found that many Afghan women she approached were not comfortable about being 'interviewed.' So instead of ‘interviewing’ them, she asked them to recite their favorite poem – and suddenly the stories flowed. This is the result, which I think is quite beautiful. I was reminded of this one from listening to some of the things in our discussion about what formats are accepted as journalism.” A link to the story “No trace of my father’s hands across your trees” is in the resources list below.

In a related instance, Marshall Islands journalists, in a training workshop with Ann Auman, University of Hawai’i, did an exercise in which they created Haiku first and then developed that into a podcast: Telling My Pacific Story.

EXAMPLE 2: Genealogy. Another activity used by multiple instructors involves having students explore their own family and genealogy. Ambyo’s is called “fact-check your mother.” Students are asked to find out about their family's history and fact-check it. “What's interesting is how uncomfortable this had been for the majority of the white Australian students,” Ambyo said. “Meanwhile, students who come from minority ethnic groups in Australia often find this easy.” This activity often opens up discussions about what stories we are comfortable telling and how the way we tell stories is as much a practice of erasure as it is a practice of discovery.

EXAMPLE 3: Contact list. Milica Pesic – drawing on 25 years of experience with the Media Diversity Institute and developing an Inclusive Journalism program to try to bridge the gap between academia and industry – urged educators to have students think about their contacts. She said journalists, journalism students and educators need to understand that there is no such thing as a perfect democracy. It comes down to individual journalists — first as students and then as working journalists — asking themselves: “What contacts do I have? What sources do you have?” Her questions prompted one participant to ponder: If journalism students and journalists are required to have active and inclusive contact books, surely educators should also?

EXAMPLE 4: Indigenous media guides. A Native American Journalists Association media guide may be valuable for journalism students because it uses questions about government, economy and geography to encourage reporters and editors to learn about the complexities of Indigenous nationals and their varied communities (link below).

A variation on that is an exercise that has been used at Massey University, New Zealand, where students are required to research the locality where they grew up and identify the local *iwi* (tribe) using as much background and contact information as possible to help determine aspects of governance, economy, geography and history. Such an exercise could logically be adapted in relation to any diverse group.

### *New models of journalism education –connecting with communities*

Instructors Trina Roache and Terra Tailleir (University of King's College, Canada) connected their class to a community in the nation Roache belongs, the Mi'kmaq, who reside in an ancestral, unceded territory called Mi'kma'ki. An elder recognized the usefulness and relevance of both Western and Indigenous approaches (Two-Eyed Seeing), which suggests we need to stop seeing a simple Western/Indigenous binary. She wonders what would happen if we came up with a definition and approach to journalism based on Mi'kmaw teachings and values?

It would be helpful to find more examples of how Indigenous values overlap with Western values, which could also add new dimensions and improve storytelling. Instructors could develop codes of ethics and practices that combine relevant Indigenous and Western values in their communities.

Tara Ross (University of Canterbury, New Zealand) says that instructors are discussing collaboration and partnerships with Māori and Pacific communities to build curricula that value local Indigenous knowledge and build trust with these communities. Many Pacific cultures prioritize looking after the *va*, the relationship. "I've experimented with community partnership projects in the past to help students understand Pacific approaches to community, like reciprocity and *teu le va* (taking care of the *va*)," Ross said. But the challenge was integrating these approaches at the institutional level. "On one hand that sits in tension with Western norms of journalistic detachment and independence, but on the other there's increasing attention on relationship-building as some newsrooms refocus on building trust with ethnic minority and Indigenous communities."

Magda Konieczna (Concordia University, Canada) created several assignments that are grounded in the concept of listening in communities, as outlined in the [Listening Post Playbook](#). This work is also grounded in the goal of moving beyond extractive journalism, as explained by Lewis Raven Wallace in this [podcast \(Episode 13\): The View from Somewhere](#). Reporters and students learn as much as they can about a community, then spend time in the community, listening and learning about the stories the community wants journalists to tell. Journalists also reciprocate, share the story with the community and get feedback.

Niet Hietbrink (Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands) introduced to the group a project called Dialogue-Based Journalism, an Erasmus project involving three journalism schools in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. The project, which has been built into a dedicated website including tools, is a widened journalistic approach to bring audiences inside the news production process, particularly those with diverse voices.

### New models of journalism education – institutional and program levels

Traditional journalism that focuses on more extractive storytelling is being remodeled in some programs to focus on community-centered or citizen-centered journalism. But this is not the norm at all schools, and instructors are struggling with how to encourage this at a higher level in the broader context of the institution. While the goal is to encourage inclusivity and new ways of storytelling across the curriculum, it appears that some instructors are taking this on by

themselves while for others change is coming from the outside — from government policies or accreditation standards.

The group noted that while some schools and instructors may be open to change, this is hard to carry out in practice. Group members noted that journalists are allowed to create and practice their own methods as long as they fit within the culturally acceptable standards of “hegemonic models.” And these models often are not just about how you do journalism, but also how you look and sound, Ambyo said. Most senior journalists and newsroom managers don't like to be challenged that deeply, they feel they already have an understanding of what constitutes journalism based on their own years of experience.

The group discussed approaches to connecting with specific Indigenous communities to build trust with one's local community, such as including them in story development and production, giving back (reciprocity) — and sharing the results.

For example, Canada appears to have an appetite for change in journalism schools. The change can be attributed to some extent to the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action No 86: *“We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations.”*

New Zealand has a similar legacy articulated at a government level, albeit without such specification. For example, government funding requires institutions to show how they are ensuring success among Indigenous and diverse students and also more broadly how they are responsive to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi), the agreement between indigenous Māori and the Crown. All institutions hosting journalism schools have policies developed at a high level. However, Bernie Whelan (Massey University, New Zealand) found in his research that, in at least one program in New Zealand, this only appeared to be fully embedded from policy to program to course to learning outcomes to assessments.

Although the United States doesn't have a related specific government policy, steps are being taken by national journalism organizations and some institutions to diversify U.S. curricula. For instance, The University of Hawai'i has a strategy to make its institution a Hawaiian place of learning and to be the world's foremost Indigenous-serving university. The journalism program is offering a new course in Hawaiian and Indigenous journalism, taught by a Hawaiian journalist in collaboration with Ann Auman.

### ***Reflecting on imagination and practice, on disciplinary specialization, and on institution***

It is perhaps telling that one of the most inspiring stories told during the stream, Afghan women in Australia telling their stories through poetry, was retold by an educator who is from a diverse community. Examples such as these shared among journalism educators are important in their inspiration because it can be easy to be overwhelmed by the weight of hegemonic systems – both journalistic and educational – under which we work. As we go about our job, we can use some of the discussion here to think about the many parts of the journalism education jigsaw that we can

influence: The personal in our contacts and the professional at the core course, elective course and program level. The WJEC plays an important part in continuing this conversation by connecting us globally.

## Recommendations

1. Discuss with colleagues whether they accept (and understand) new perspectives and approaches to doing journalism.
2. Encourage faculty to examine how to enact change while we still spend much time training students to work within strict and unyielding workplaces and cultures.
3. Discover what institutional strategic plans, government policies and resources could be used to support community embedded teaching or community partners.
4. Hire diverse instructors and adjuncts and provide an environment of openness that encourages different approaches to storytelling.
5. Partner with Indigenous people and others in the local community to develop resource guides and codes of ethics that integrate Western and Indigenous values and practices, such as Two-Eyed Seeing.
6. Be imaginative journalism educators.

*Additional team members included: Magda Konieczna, Concordia University, Canada; Terra Tailleur and Trina Roache, both of University of King's College, Halifax, Canada; Aristo Ambyo, RMIT, Melbourne, Australia; Niek Hietbrink, Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands; Sarah Drummond and David Baines, Newcastle University, England, UK; Milica Pesic, Media Diversity Institute, London, UK; and Patrick Johnson, University of Iowa, U.S.*

## Resources

The following resources have been hyperlinked here, and they have been included in a cloud-based folder with details on assignments and a syllabus. These can be [downloaded from here](#).

Aiden White (2015) Five Core Values of Journalism. Ethical Journalism Network.

<https://www.rcmediafreedom.eu/Multimedia/Video/The-5-Core-Values-of-Journalism>

Daniela V. Dimitrova (2021) Global Journalism: Understanding World Media Systems. Rowman & Littlefield: <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538146842/Global-Journalism-Understanding-World-Media-Systems>

Podcast: [The View from Somewhere](#)

The end of extractive journalism.

<https://www.spreaker.com/user/15244480/the-end-of-extractive-journalism>

Dialogue-based journalism

<https://dialogue-journalism.eu/>

The Listening Playbook

[https://www.listeningpostcollective.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LPC\\_Playbook.pdf](https://www.listeningpostcollective.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LPC_Playbook.pdf)

MDI latest handbook on Inclusive Journalism. This one written by Verica Rupar for Chinese journalism academics, but it's a useful read for any academic or journalism student.

<https://www.media-diversity.org/resources/inclusive-journalism-handbook/>

### New Neighbours

A shared journey: Promoting Intercultural Media Spaces

The aim of New Neighbours is to highlight the positive social and economic contributions made by migrants and refugees throughout communities across Europe. By promoting direct participation in media production and intercultural dynamics, it is hoped to foster tolerance and acceptance for migrants and refugees in EU member states.

<https://newneighbours.eu/>

Framework for Aotearoa New Zealand news media responding to *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*:

<https://trc.org.nz/research-about-media-and-te-tiriti>

Tito (Aristo) Ambyo (RMIT) – No trace of my father's hands across your trees story drawing on poetry

<https://rmitjournalism.shorthandstories.com/no-trace-of-my-father-s-hands-across-your-trees/index.html>

University of Westminster Diversity and Media MA

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/media-and-communication-courses/2022-23/september/full-time/diversity-and-the-media-ma>

Native American Journalists Association media guide:

[https://najanewsroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-NAJA-Tribal-Nations-Media-Guide-1.pdf?mc\\_cid=994fc892b5&mc\\_eid=1e94ecc608](https://najanewsroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-NAJA-Tribal-Nations-Media-Guide-1.pdf?mc_cid=994fc892b5&mc_eid=1e94ecc608)

Research ethics in New Zealand in relationship with Māori:

<https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/te-ara-tika-guidelines-maori-research-ethics-0>