

Columbia Scholastic Press Association

Summer Journalism Workshop 2008

Newspaper Editors-in-Chief (section 1)

This sequence prepares editors for the responsibilities of leading their publications and training their staffs. Editors-in-chief need to be passionate about journalism and we give them the tools to develop the expertise they need to have successful publications. This lab operates as a completely hands-on news room setting.

In addition to each topic-related assignment each editor will complete a critical analysis of their own newspaper and compare and contrast each section of their newspaper with at least three other exchange newspapers. Each editor will also receive a one-on-one critique of their newspaper with the instructor.

Upon completion of the sequence, students will be ready to “hit the ground running” in September. They will have mastered core writing, editing and design skills, planned out the first three issues of their newspaper, developed an editorial policy, written a complete staff manual, prepared job descriptions for every editor, learned how to motivate and train their staffs and how to meet deadlines. They will also evaluate the current software available for both design and photography in order to decide which programs would work best for their publication.

Sequence topics:

- **BEAT SYSTEM/COVERAGE:** Develop and assign beats for each section of the newspaper, determine what is newsworthy; develop photo and story assignment sheets, brainstorm coverage ideas. Review ways to teach your staff how to conduct effective interviews.
- **WRITING:** Learn various writing styles, how to write leads and how to edit and proofread copy.
- **STAFF MOTIVATION & ORGANIZATION:** Learn ways to motivate staffs, how to organize the staff for maximum efficiency, how to develop job descriptions for each editor’s position, how to write a staff manual, how to conduct a Candidates’ School to train your staff.
- **COLUMN/EDITORIAL WRITING:** Learn about the various types of columns and the guidelines for each, and how to write an editorial.
- **NEWSPAPER DESIGN:** Explore the various styles of design for newspapers as well as standing items for your newspaper; in focus pages; pullouts.
- **LEGAL & ETHICAL DILEMMAS - THE LAW:** Discuss various ethical dilemmas school newspapers may encounter, how the law applies to the public

and private school newspaper, review several sample editorial policies. Discuss the role of the newspaper and the administration in your school and learn how they can co-exist successfully.

- **BUSINESS:** The preparation of an ad solicitation packet, communication with advertisers, preparation of bulk mailing, and circulation tips will be explored.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** What is new in the digital media, which software would work best for your newspaper and how to pay for it.

Sequence assignments:

- **TOPIC I ASSIGNMENT:** Develop story idea lists for the first three issues of their newspaper plus the beat assignment list for their school community. Use our library of over 300 exchange newspapers from across the United States to develop an idea and design portfolio for your newspaper. Prepare sample question lists for reporters to use when conducting research for their assignments.
- **TOPIC II ASSIGNMENT:** Complete several copy editing, headline and lead writing exercises. Set up the style guide for your newspaper.
- **TOPIC III ASSIGNMENT:** Set up deadline schedule, flow chart for all materials for each issue, write job descriptions for all editors, prepare a staff manual.
- **TOPIC IV ASSIGNMENT:** Write a column and an editorial.
- **TOPIC V ASSIGNMENT:** Design page one and one page for each section of the newspaper.
- **TOPIC VI ASSIGNMENT:** Decision making exercises involving ethical dilemmas and each editor-in-chief writes an editorial policy and mission statement for the newspaper.
- **TOPIC VII ASSIGNMENT:** Develop an ad packet for your newspaper (where applicable).
- **TOPIC VIII ASSIGNMENT:** Troubleshoot any tech problems you have with your newspaper and research affordable options and solutions.