

KEMPA Winter Advisers' Retreat March 2007

- 25% of students will read anything put in front of them
- 25% of students will not read anything
- it's the 50% of the grazers that we're fighting for and trying to get to read → we have to find a new way of reaching them
- 40% of American individuals will not even consider buying/reading a newspaper → newspapers need to change to get people interested in reading

Use charticles! Rather than use boring full-length articles, use charts and info graphics

Package graphics, text, images:

- newspagedesigner.com
- sportspagedesigner.com
- maxim magazine

Brady Dennis

- series of 100 word short stories that ran on page one
- good example of profile → generated from an observation of people/ life
- don't turn off your sensory apparatus! tune in to what's around you!

Rethinking our Coverage – Jack Kennedy, VP JEA

Put a face on every story – all stories are about people.

Parts to the story:

- in English classes: setting/exposition, characters, conflict, resolution
- learn the facets of the story for news

Learn the difference between stories and topics

Go beyond the event; it's about the people

Stop using the word “story” → instead ask “who's going to do the coverage of the chess club?”

- if you say “story,” we think about actually writing a full article
- use “coverage” because it forces us to think differently and to create a product that is not merely a prose article

Coverage not stories

- don't use traditional prose
- use short text blocks, deep cutlines, strong writer voices, blurbs, charticles (articles in the form of charts), or cartoons
- graphic reporting is the new medium

Coverage Ideas

- college trips, college planning, etc → have someone write a first person account
- community service hours and how to get them → #1 volunteering age group (ahead of senior citizens); kids used to just volunteer but now it's required
- cool business in the community → spend a day at the business (do a ride along with the police, sit in the coffee shop, browse the book store)
- what do girls or boys define as “cute” or “hot”?

- the negotiating or talking phase of dating (when we use intermediaries, like note passing); first date advice
- trends/happenings from across the nation
- use exchange papers, find out what people across the country are covering
- interview parents of athletes: what is their athletic background? (athletes tend to breed other athletes)
- spend the game with the parents in the stands → how do they view the game, what's exciting, what's crushing → notice how the dads all sit together and analyze plays vs. the moms sit together and watch only their own kid (perhaps praying their kid stay safe during the game)
- interview the principal's/ coach's/ teacher's spouse → what's the person like outside of school, what's the job mean to them,
- attitudes toward teens → why do teens get followed more than adults in stores?
- make up a secret and tell at least 20 people → fun way to talk about how news gets around the school, how long it takes to get from one wing to another
- hottest gadgets → is it still ipods? is it camera phones? what is the "it" product this year that makes kids "cool"
- stop 10 or more students in the hall and ask what their ring tone is and why they chose it → tells you about technology and popular music
- poor manners → kids get blamed for not having any. are manners still taught at home? what rules most often are violated? do some manners no longer apply? (people wear hats all the time but should they? turning your phone off at the dinner table, kids walking down the hall with their earbuds in and not really engaging in what's going on around them, etc) → who's teaching manners, or are they?
- cheating → recent study said 9 of 10 students said they would work harder if their schools demanding more of them – same study said that 41 percent of students said that pressure to get good grades is a major problem. more than 40% of the students said at least half the students they know cheat – redefined the idea of cheating, there are levels of cheating and teachers/students are not using the same language to talk about this issue
- trading spaces → kids decorate one another's lockers; go live with someone else's family for the weekend in order to write a personal feature
- podcasting and pop culture
- pop culture is always present tense → no more waiting for anything any more; everything is on the web and easily accessible; no one waits for CD releases for example, it's stolen and on the web as soon as it's made
- sex → sex pervades our culture, but how do we cover sexuality? documenting is not the same as endorsing – but admin won't always see it that way. careful! → a story on guardisil could track girls' experiences with the series of shots to protect against cervical cancer
- close-ups → take close-ups of athletes' hands and then tell stories about each athlete's hands (bites, manicures, etc) [kind of a part-to-the-whole coverage]
- athlete uniforms → start with athlete in full uniform and then work on story ideas that move us from head down to toes of the athlete [talk about cost of being an athlete]
- 100 words → write a 100 words a day; short reviews, short commentaries (invite outside writers to contribute, too)

Rethinking our Writing – Jack Kennedy

Coverage Ideas:

- reviews in haiku (do short music reviews in haiku form)
- retiring principal or teacher → do a little quiz
- calendars of “lots to do”
- trading cards → present bio blurbs on trading cards; arrange multiples on one page

The seven plots (Steven Booker wrote a book about the universal plots we all use)

- Is it worth reporting? Story telling is all about things that deviate from normal → story telling is about *magic moments*, the highs and lows, the drama, the times when *something happens*
- Comedy: happy endings, nobody dies, traces a hero’s journey from immaturity to self-realization, ends with restoration of order or promise of renewal → rarely found in newspaper, but sometimes in yearbook
 - Overcoming the Monster: rival schools, difficult home lives, the central office, high school itself
 - Rags to Riches: scrawny 9th grader who dominates athletics as senior, former student teachers who is now respected teacher
 - The Quest: trying to develop traditions/school spirit, the perfect way to ask someone to the dance, getting accepted to the college of your dreams
 - Voyage and Return: kids taking family or educational trips, foreign exchange students, former students returning to teach (talk about the old days)
 - Rebirth: kids or teachers getting second chances, old or forgotten traditions brought back, revolutions in instruction or technology, spiritual rebirth
- Tragedy: deviation from comedy, hero goes on journey but is held back by fatal flaw or weakness, doomed to fall short of goal → daily papers are filled with tragedy and they do not reflect our own daily lives since our lives are not filled with such a series of tragedies; we have to work harder at finding meaning for our readers
- Now What? Decide what kind of a story you’re telling.
 - some stories demand a big stage
 - some stories can be told in a minute
 - some stories don’t need words at all

No Drive-bys

- invest in your interviews and photographs; spend time developing each; do not merely rush through the interview by asking for a quote
- use quote clusters of 2-3 sentences each

Tweaking Your Photography System – Judy Babb, Lifetouch Publishing

Photography – it’s more than just rules

- try to show more all the time – tell the story in as many different ways as you can
- every photo must have a subject – what is it you want me to look at?
 - ex: shot of an assembly – it’s just a mass of people – what is the subject?
 - ex: baseball team out in a field – it looks like a picture of a field

- follow the rules of composition
 - rule of thirds
 - repetition
 - leading lines (diagonals are much more dynamic than straight lines)

Capture a moment – every photo needs to tell a story and make the reader want to know more

- for every assignment you should come back with no fewer than 50 pictures and every picture should look different
- photographers must wait until something happens, not participate in “drive-by shootings” → you’ve got to wait until the subject is used to you being there
- watch and wait → get the best shot and get lots of shots!
- don’t isolate the subject – show the relationship
 - ex: a teacher writing on the board, but there’s no class in the frame
- cropping – crop the photo to focus on the subject; get rid of extraneous material

Choose an interesting angle

- get a bird’s eye view or a worm’s eye view – don’t just shoot it flat on – hang from a chandelier or lay on the floor!

Get close to your subject

- take the picture you’re comfortable with, then take two steps forward, then take two more steps forward
- don’t shoot until you see the whites of their eyes
- fill the frame of the viewfinder with your subject – make them as large as life

Shoot variety

- shoot four different types of photos for every assignment:
 - big picture – usually only works for dramatic events, otherwise you lose the subject of the photo
 - groups – shows interaction between 5-8 people; a large group of the whole
 - one step closer – smaller group of 3-5 people
 - close up – parts of the whole experience; find something narrow to focus on that helps to tell the story: a hand or a face

Action, reaction, emotion

- a player driving a ball, a student acting out a charade, a group of fans painting up for the game – all obvious action
- capturing reaction or emotion means thinking ahead and getting the sidelines after a big loss or win or the homecoming queen as she is announced – it’s like thinking ahead to the next question in an interview
- get there early, shoot the whole event, then stay after and see what happens afterward
 - allows you to scope the scene before things get started – you can find the best places to set up and shoot from
 - keep shooting during the whole event so you can later choose what shots match the story
 - stay later and see what happens afterward – you might be surprised with a great shot.

Select a point of view

- show the subjects’ eyes so viewer can follow what’s going on

Think 3-D

- get elements in the foreground and background

- don't shoot photos from 6 o'clock to noon – don't shoot straight on – get an angle!

Show faces and people

- who wants to look at pictures of things? no one. get the human element!
- avoid overuse of props as a photograph – don't use posed photos that include props which are obvious to the subject (ex: football players holding footballs)

Be creative

- shadows
- mirrors
- texture

Shoot vertically

- 75-80% of photos should be shot vertically to help eliminate wasted space
- start vertically and then change to horizontal, if appropriate

Be ready to shoot!

- you are only a photographer if you have your camera with you!
- carry your cameras with you and think like a photojournalist. always.

Avoid shots that will embarrass

- before running the photos, examine them carefully with “fresh eyes” to make sure there's nothing you've overlooked (ex: too much cleavage, someone picking a wedgie, etc)

Rethinking our Design – Jack Kennedy

Look at the pros – if you take ideas from other high school papers, you're taking old ideas, because everything changes so quickly that you don't want to repeat what other schools are doing.

Typography

- treat your flag or nameplate as if it were your corporate logo
- manually kern logos or lead headlines to “eyeball” the best spacing
- clip cool stuff to mimic in your own paper
- use sans serif for main heads – they pop and really look bold, more so than serif

Leading

- Adobe has built in the
- look at every headline as a unique piece
- set solid = same size as your point size

Tracking

- tighten the tracking in all stories – Adobe is too generous with the spacing

Banner

- avoid banner heads – they are boring and overused
- use reverse

Modular design

- careful – L designs can become like an armpit - eyes move from banner head, drop to photo, but never return to text at left
- most readers expect packages to move from most artistic/heavy elements to the least (moving

Using InDesign

- set the Template as an actual template – will not allow anyone to save on it – when you go to save, it forces you to retile the page

from top to bottom)

Bylines

- move to the end of the stories
- no one reads the story based on who wrote it; readers just want their news
- there's no need to include the position of the writer – it's already in the staff box and no one needs to know your position in order to appreciate your story

Copy

- hand test: if you can place your hand on the screen and not touch any art, you've got too much copy

Headlines

- avoid the dreaded banner; it's boring

Grids

- 8-column grids = safe, but they will be boring
- 7-column grids force you think more creatively
- 14-19 pica wide columns are optimum
- try not to balance the story in a symmetrical fashion

Roadblocks

- the easiest thing for a reader to do is stop reading, so as a designer you must make sure not to place obstacles in the way of a column (no eye jumps)