

CTU Student Journalists' Training Needs Report: Basis for the Formulation of Training Program

by

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Abstract

This study assessed the training needs of the 25 selected student journalists who responded to the self-administered survey questionnaires using the purposive sampling technique. Editors-in-chief of the main and external campuses were also interviewed to validate the results of the questionnaires. As perceived by the respondents, results showed that leadership and management, editorial writing, editing and proofreading, and video taking were highly needed. Results demonstrated that student journalists prefer to cover events that they are concerned with student welfare and the law and governance which are evident in the dominant activities of the campuses. However, some events that were rarely represented by these concerned students involved research and development, production, and gender and development activities. The results of this study served as one of the bases in crafting the training program of the aforementioned student journalists. This study then recommended the following training program. There is a need to craft a training program that prioritize the topics on leadership and management, editorial writing, editing and proofreading, video making, and professionalism in campus journalism. These training program was then implemented during the first semester of the AY 2020-2021 online amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: campus journalism, journalistic skills, student journalists, capacity building

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, journalism has been very vibrant. However, it needs ethical and responsible journalism since it has been considered a crucial role in providing truthful and honest information to the Filipinos. In connection with the dynamism and vibrancy of journalism, the schools and universities in the Philippines also provide opportunities for students to hone their skills in journalistic writing and values in writing with ethics and responsibility. These values and skills could also help the student journalists become responsible and truthful leaders of the nation and contribute to the nation building and development.

Campus journalism is essential because it serves as a conduit between schools and higher education institutions and the general public. The practice also keeps both internal and external stakeholders informed on the events, achievements, plans and general updates on the life of the learning institution and its immediate environment. For a university, the many platforms used by campus journalists for its audiences allow wider dissemination of its achievements and best practices. The reportage ranges from its core functions in instruction, research and development, community extension to actual production of goods and services and general welfare of students.

In CTU, campus journalism has been part of the university's activities to document essential and noteworthy events of the university involving the core functions such as instruction, research and development, community extension and production including the other areas necessary in accreditations and World Ranking accrediting bodies. However, there have been years when the student journalists were not given much attention, especially on the lack of capacity-building activities such as training-

workshops to hone their skills in journalistic writing. In addition, the presence of digital media such as video production, editing and broadcasting have not been explored much by these student journalists. With these reasons, it is very important to determine their needed skills in order to come up with relevant training programs that boost their confidence in writing quality articles. Hence, these written articles by the students would be published in the CTU website and be used as supporting documents for QS ranking and AACCUP.

It is in dire need to therefore conduct an assessment of the training needs of the CTU student journalists' needs to boost and enhance their skills in journalistic writing and other relevant needs that help them become ethical, responsible and professional student journalists. As stated in the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 ("RA 7079", 2020).

It is the declared policy of the State to uphold and protect the freedom of the press, even at the campus level and promote the development and growth of campus journalism as a means of strengthening ethical values, encouraging critical and creative thinking, and developing moral character and personal discipline of the Filipino youth". ("RA 7079", 2020).

It is also stated in RA 7079 Section 2 that the "State shall undertake various programs and projects aimed at improving the journalistic skills of students concerned and promoting responsible and free journalism. ("RA 7079", 2020). Hence, this present study supports the argument of the said policy.

This study used the categories on the adaptive expertise, nontechnical and technical expertise (Compe, 2017). The adaptive expertise of Hatano [cited in Carpenter, 2009] include the following based on the job ads such as outside knowledge area, creativity, independent thought, leadership, critical thinking skills, problem-solving, ability to learn, ability to engage community, multiple languages, ability to address social problems, and openness to diverse ideas. However, the adaptive expertise emphasized in the present study was on leadership, time management and conflict management.

For the nontechnical expertise (Carpenter, 2009), these are the skills involved: solid writing skills, working under a deadline, editing copy, teamwork skills, communication skills, AP style and grammar, researching, news judgment, multi-platform writing, writing summary content, client relations, multimedia writing and interviewing skills. On the contrary, this present study modified the list of the nontechnical skills.

Lastly, the technical skills were as follows: HTML/CSS, posting of content, image editing, blogging, video editing, content management system, animation, social media, audio editing, word processor, Excel, search engine optimization, tracking page views, computer programming, podcasting, video shooting, web-editing software, graphics program, photo shooting, database management, web design, slideshow editing, and coldfusion (Carpenter, 2009).

In sum, these expertise whether adaptive, nontechnical and technical expertise were the basis in analyzing the training needs of the student journalists understudy. Yet, there were modifications made according to the relevant skills needed and observed in the context of the CTU campus journalism practices.

There have been studies on campus journalism that dealt with the competencies and skills in writing that can be honed through inclusion of these topics in teaching journalistic writing. With these skills, students could be guided thoroughly with workshops.

Paglinawan (2010), Anderson (2011), Brown & Collins (2010) and Babista, 2009) emphasized the competencies and skills. First, a study assessed the competencies of the students in journalism, editorial, feature, sports news, and headline writing to design a training manual in addressing the issues on competence of students (Paglinawan, 2010). Communicative Competence of Canale and Swain was used as a framework of this study (Paglinawan, 2010). Using the research and development design, the elicitation technique was used in gathering the timed 300-word news articles written by the Bachelor of Arts in Communication students. The types of writing involved the headline, news, editorial, feature, and sports writing. Results of this study demonstrated that a training on journalistic writing is highly needed and the interest of the student journalists had to be developed.

Second, the schools of journalism also evolved in the same way with the media industry in encountering the challenges of the digital era and emphasized to revisit the programs of journalism whether it aligns with the actual practice in the media industry (Anderson, 2011).

Third, Brown & Collins (2010) also had the similar contention about the direction of the graduates. By using the national survey, researchers interviewed the newspaper and television news staff concerning the skills they perceived as the most important for job applicants to have. Results show that news organizations want the same skills they've always sought with two additions: " (a) an awareness among reporters, photographers, producers, and copy editors of what multimedia elements might add to their stories and (b) a select few students who want to become online producers who can maximize the multimedia elements." The results of this study suggest that "educators might want to hold off abandoning the teaching of traditional, medium-specific skills for the time being, while incorporating more multimedia education into their curricula."

The fourth study on the journalism educators reflected whether they had to maximize the use of digital media technology in the classroom and teach across multiple platform while the newsroom surveys revealed that Australian and US news employers still focused the traditional journalism skills (Callaghan & Memmanus (2010). This paper investigated whether journalism schools produced graduates with skills aligned with the needs of the industry. Results also showed that US employers still preferred the traditional journalism skills, namely, good writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, general knowledge and understanding of ethics. The employers also wanted graduates who embody the journalistic 'ideal' which includes being curious, hard working, driven and passionate in writing and reporting.

Aside from the competencies needed in journalism, grammaticality of the write-ups was also essential in writing. The student publications of the Catholic high schools in Bangued, Abra were

analyzed (Luna, 2014). By looking into the recurring patterns, predominant features and errors evident in the news, editorials, features, literary and sports pages of the schools papers from the 11 student publications, the results showed that the news cover school and community events. For editorials focus on issues concerning the students while the literary pages emphasized the adolescent student life. Among the pages that need improvement were the features. Hence, more training is needed to improve the students' writing skills.

Finally, a study also determined and analyzed the effectiveness of the intellectual pyramiding model which served as an instructional strategy in teaching campus journalism skills (Babista, 2009). The campus journalism skills examined for three consecutive academic years (2007-2009) to determine the effectiveness involved desktop publishing, editorial writing, newswriting, development communication, feature writing, sports writing, layouting, graphics, and literary writing. For the methodology, this study used the qualitative research design and discourse analysis approach by collecting the students' submitted work coming from the topics previously assigned to them. Forty-nine student journalists who passed the qualifying exams from the Kingfisher, an official publication of the Southern Luzon State University in Lucban, Main Campus participated in this study and their writing outputs were measured by the monitoring devices.

As shown in the results, this study suggests that the intellectual pyramiding model is an effective strategy in teaching campus journalism skills evident in the improvement of scores of the students' rated outputs across the three consecutive years. However, most of the studies focused on the teaching of students whose courses are Communication and Journalism. There was little research on the training needs of the student journalists, especially in the Philippine setting. Consequently, there is a need to conduct the training needs assessment of the Filipino student journalists to demonstrate the RA 7079 which intends to empower the campus journalists in exercising press freedom with ethical and responsible journalism when they are also equipped with the necessary skills in journalistic writing.

This study assessed the training needs of the selected student journalists who responded to the self-administered survey questionnaires. The results of this study would serve as one of the bases in the crafting of the training program of the aforementioned student journalists.

With these reviewed studies that mentioned digital media and necessary skills in journalistic writing, it is therefore needed to determine the needs of the CTU students in writing articles that would be accepted for publication in the university website to support the documents needed for accreditation, press release and information dissemination for the CTU community and public consumption.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: i) What events in the university were covered by the student journalists? and ii) as espoused by Hatano's theory on expertise, what are the training needs of the student journalists? This study would further be considered as the basis in crafting the training program for the Federation of Student Journalists (FSJ), a university-wide organization of campus writers of the Cebu Technological University.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used the descriptive research method by using the self-administered survey questionnaires distributed to the student journalists. The questionnaires were validated with the interviews with the editors-in-chief of the campuses.

Research Environment

The venue of this study was the Cebu Technological University where the student journalists were studying.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the 19 students journalists from the Nation Builder, official student publication of CTU Main Campus and six student journalists from the external campuses who responded to microsoft form sent and shared in the group chat room of the Federation of Student Journalists during the enhanced community quarantine in May 2020. Specifically, there were three respondents from Naga Campus and three respondents from Carmen Campus. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study with the following criterion, that is the respondent must be a student journalist of CTU. Lastly, there were also nine editors-in-chief from the main campus and external campuses who participated in the online interviews using the microsoft forms.

Table 1. Tasks in Nation Builder: CTU Main Student Journalists
N=25

Tasks	NB
Feature writer	6
Feature Editor	2
News writer	5
Photojournalist	5
Cartoonist	3
Layout Artist	2
Associate Editor in Multimedia	1
Copy Reader	1
Headline Writer	1
Literary Writer	1
Editor in Chief	3
FSJ Finance Committee Chair	1

Research Instruments

This study used the self-administered training needs questionnaires distributed to the student journalists from Nation Builder members and members of the Federation of Student Journalists of the Cebu Technological University using the microsoft form. Informal interviews were also done with the Editor-in-Chief of the Nation Builder to verify their training needs. To validate the survey questionnaires, interviews with the editors-in-chief were conducted using the microsoft forms.

Research Procedure

The data were gathered following these steps: First, the training needs questionnaire was made. Second, the distribution of the questionnaire was done during the strategic planning of the Nation Builder student journalists. Third, the microsoft form of the training needs questionnaire was modified, prepared and posted in the facebook messenger groupchat room of the Federation of Student Journalists together with the groupchat room of the advisers for dissemination. Fourth, the answered questionnaires and received responses from the microsoft form were tallied, coded, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted. Lastly the data were analyzed using the categories with modifications on the adaptive expertise, nontechnical and technical expertise (Carpenter, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

After consolidating the responses from both the training needs questionnaires distributed during the strategic planning of the Nation Builder student journalists last December 2019 and the responses taken from the microsoft forms posted in the group chat room of the Federation of Student Journalists, the consent was sought from the University Director for Student Affairs and the President of the Federation of the Student Journalists and Editor-in-chief of the Nation Builder. The tabulated data were also shown to them for their approval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the events covered by the student journalists and their journalistic skills needed for the crafting of the training program for the campus journalism.

Table 2. Events Covered
N= 18

Events	NB	EC	Total	Rank
Leadership and governance	14	6	20	1
Student welfare programs and Services	14	6	20	1
Academic affairs	12	4	16	2
Internationalization	9	4	13	3
Research and development	5	3	8	5
Performance in licensure exam	5	2	7	6
Community extension services	5	5	10	4
Faculty development	4	2	6	7

Infrastructure	4	1	5	8
Gender and development	3	2	5	8
Production	3	1	4	9

Legend: NB - Nation Builder
EC - External Campuses

Table 2 demonstrates the events covered by the student journalists in relation to leadership and governance and student welfare programs and services which are both ranked first followed by the academic affairs and internationalization.

To validate, students from external campuses, covered most of the events related to leadership and governance (6), student welfare programs and services (5), community extension services (5), academic affairs (4), and internationalization (4).

With the data shown in Table 2, the results suggest that the student journalists focused on their coverage of events to leadership and governance and student welfare which spark their interest. Explain. However, the other events related to research and development, gender and development and production were not given much emphasis.

Table 3.1. Training Needs
N=18

Training topics	NN	NSN	N	HN
Editorial writing	0	0	7	11
Basic news writing	1	1	11	5
Advanced news writing	0	1	8	9
Feature writing	0	0	10	6
Cartoon	1	4	7	6
Basic Laws in Campus Journalism	0	1	9	7
Video Making	0	2	6	10
Broadcasting	0	1	7	9
Interviewing Techniques	0	3	6	9
Photojournalism	0	3	6	9
Leadership and Time Management	0	0	5	13
Training				
Literary writing vs. news writing	0	1	8	9
Investigative journalism	0	1	8	9
Conflict Management	0	2	10	6
Crisis Communication	1	1	9	8
Writing a Magazine	0	1	10	7
Editing and Proofreading	0	0	7	11
Layout and Design	0	1	8	9
Online News Writing	0	0	10	8
Ethical Use of Social Media in News	0	0	9	9

Legend: NN - no need
 NSN – not so needed
 N – needed
 HN – highly needed

Table 3.2. Highly needed Training Needed by the Student Journalists From the Online Survey

N= 7

Training Topics	f
Editorial Writing	3
Basic News Writing	3
Advanced News Writing	5
Feature Writing	5
Cartoon	0
Basic Laws in Campus Journalism	3
Video Making	1
Broadcasting	2
Interviewing Techniques	3
Photojournalism	2
Leadership and Time Management	6
Literary Writing vs. News Writing	3
Investigative Journalism	3
Conflict Management	1
Crisis Communication	2
Writing in Magazine	3
Editing and Proofreading	3
Layout and Design	4
Online News Writing	4
Ethical Use of Social Media in News	3

To validate the results, the student journalists from other campuses considered the following top 3 training needs as highly important: leadership and time management (6) as top 1, advanced news writing (5) and feature writing (5) as top 2 and layout and designs (4) and online news writing (4) as top 3 among the needed training.

Both data in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 imply that leadership and time management are highly needed by the student journalists. The data suggest the need for adaptive expertise on the role of student journalists who would become future leaders of the country (“RA 7079”, 2020). Reference 5 argued that among the nontechnical expertise involve content writing, editing, and multimedia writing. The

student media group of De La Salle University “De La Salle” (2020) and the Manila Collegian Constitution of the University of the Philippines (“University of the Philippines”, 2020) also highlighted in their aims to develop student journalists who are responsible and apply professionalism and ethical journalism since they would become future leaders of the nation.

To validate the results from the questionnaires, majority of the editors-in-chief consider leadership and management skills very essential in leading their staff and fellow editors. These are the following extracts from the interviews with the editors-in-chief:

Extract 1

As a student journalist, **leadership skills** is highly needed to enable to lead and motivate your team. Also, you can handle and delegate responsibilities, listen to feedback, and have the flexibility to solve problems in an ever-changing workplace in the publication (EIC7)

Extract 2

Leadership skill is a necessary tool to create a team worth the name 'journalists'. (EIC3)

Extract 3

This is so because campus journalists are to be considered as **model students**. They possess great skills that require great responsibility in handling. (EIC1)

Extracts 1-3 demonstrate the need of the student journalists to hone their skills in leadership and management since they are considered role models and leaders of the student publications.

Other training needs include editorial writing, editing, advanced news writing, feature writing and online news writing. This result supports the contention that there is a high need of training students in journalistic writing [9]. There had to be enough and appropriate instruction, drills, training and related pedagogical intervention [9].

Extracts from the interviews also support the training needs on writing news worthy articles:

Extract 4

I think most on the **writing skills**, e.g. grammar, syntax and the likes. Also the ability to create newsworthy articles requires a need to be honed and improved. (EIC2)

Extract 5

Editorial and News Writing. For ought we know, these journalistic skills need not only accuracy but also wisdom. (EIC5)

Extract 6

Writing workshops and leadership trainings (EIC6);

Extract 7

Media Writing workshops would be another option. Because I admit that our skills in writing is not that excellent and we need to enhance it through this. (EIC4)

Further, extracts 4-6 taken from the responses of the informants highlighted the student journalists' need in writing workshops.

In addition, the student publications had to be improved that includes paper size, printing quality, choice of articles, and contents (Luna, 2014).

Moreover, student journalists in online surveys added topics for their training such as professionalism, making journalism websites, science writing, headline writing, and self-cultivation. This list is added by the competition of news writing and teambuilding indicated in the interview with the editor-in-chief similar to the activities during press conferences and workshops. This is demonstrated in the following extracts:

Extract 7

What I find note worthy is the conduct of **periodic competition** that will enhance and trigger utmost performance on the application of these skills. The last time I joined a Campus Press contest, there was feed-backing before the results came out. An expert would evaluate and point out the weaknesses and strengths of the written article. It is at this avenue that skills are enhanced and polished. (EIC3)

Extract 8

For me, **team building** is one of the activities or training every journalists need because this can build a good camaraderie and improve communication skills towards others. (EIC7)

Extracts 7 and 8 provide enriching skills in cooperation and healthy competition to strengthen the relationships among student journalists.

Journalism and communication programs could consider the teaching of skills in short workshops and the teaching of theory in upper-level classes (Carpenter, 2009). Students are also encouraged to be responsible in their educational pursuit in acquiring additional knowledge that requires higher cognitive ability such as reasoning, expression in writing and decision making.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, these are the conclusions made: First, student journalists prefer to cover events that they are concerned with student welfare and the law and governance which are evident in the dominant activities of the campuses. However, some events that were rarely represented by these concerned students involved research and development, production, and gender and development activities. Second, there is a need to craft a training program for the student journalists based on their perceived highly needed training that prioritize the topics on leadership and time management, editorial writing, editing and proofreading, video making, and professionalism in campus journalism.

Based on the conclusions, these are the following recommendations. First, students could be assigned to coordinate with the offices for the activities of the Office of Research and Development,

Office of the Academic Affairs, Office of the Community Extension Services, Office of the Production and Business Affairs including the Gender and Development in order to have equal representation and documentation of the essential events in the university which can aid in the acquisition of data for the accreditations such as the Institutional Sustainability Assessment, AACCU, PASUC, ISO, etc.

Second, this study suggests to have a training program that includes the following topics relevant to the responses of the student journalists, namely: a) Highly Needed: Leadership, Time Management, Professionalism, Editorial Writing, Editing/Proofreading; b) Needed: Basic News Writing, Online News Writing, Feature Writing, Conflict Management, and Writing a Magazine.

Third, webinars could be organized to boost the confidence and enhance the skills of the student journalists.

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