DIALOGUE.

Enhancing constructive journalism on social media through dialogue-based storytelling.

Erasmus+

Teaching constructive and dialogue-based journalism to B.A. students

A practitioner's report

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DMJX
Danmarks Medie- og Journalisthøjskole

hogeschool Windesheim

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

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1. Introduction

DIALOGUE is a three-year Erasmus+ project, a strategic partnership of DMJX in Aarhus (Denmark), Windesheim University in Zwolle (Netherlands) and Hochschule der Medien in Stuttgart (Germany). It is designated to develop curricula for teaching constructive and dialogue-based journalism as well as audience development and engagement to students and professionals. It was launched in October 2019 and is led by DMJX.

In this first interim report, published after the project's first year, we – the project partners – want to synthesize research and best-practice examples on our topics and translate this knowledge into prototype curriculum modules and **didactic concepts for teaching students on B.A. level**. We will continue to improve and test these concepts and modules in the course of our project. But for now, we hope that our report will inspire teachers of journalism across Europe.

In this introductory chapter, we would like to introduce ourselves and the journalistic understanding we share that made us collaborate in this project.

1.1. Project partners

The **Danish School of Media and Journalism** (Danmarks Medie- og Journalisthøjskole, DMJX) is a higher education institution focused on journalism, communication and design. We have worked with dialogue-based journalism since 2014 as a vital part of constructive journalism and we have close ties to the Constructive Institute founded by Ulrik Haagerup. Annette Holm has recently become a fellow of the Constructive Institute. As our students are familiar with focusing on solutions and covering nuances from their first semesters, our advanced 20 ECTS course on dialogue-based journalism concentrates on promoting a democratic conversation. We think that dialogue is characterized by parties seeking mutual understanding. Dialogue-based journalism operates in the same field as engagement journalism, civic journalism, participatory journalism and affiliated conversational approaches.

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences (Hogeschool Windesheim) has embraced constructive journalism since 2016 as an intellectual and practical guideline for designing the curriculum of the department of journalism. In the first two years, Cathrine Gyldensted, one of the initiators of this movement, has trained students as well as teachers in the theory and the practical implications of constructive journalism. She has advised a task force of the institute on how to incorporate constructive journalism into the education programme. In 2017, our Media Research Centre was strengthened with a research group called Constructive Journalism. Liesbeth Hermans was assigned as professor to further develop theoretical conceptualization and to substantiate the principles of constructive journalism with empirical research (Hermans & Drok 2018; Hermans & Gyldensted 2017; Hermans & Prins 2020). Using the public oriented approach is in line with the tradition of the Media Research Centre, where professor Nico Drok (Media & Civil Society) has been conducting research on civic journalism for almost a decade. The public oriented approach attaches much value to social responsibility and incorporates a more engaged form of journalism in which journalists understand, connect and collaborate with their public (Bro 2019; Hermans & Drok 2018). Today, Windesheim University offers a 30 ECTS international minor programme on constructive journalism.

Stuttgart's Media University (Hochschule der Medien, HdM) is a university of applied science dedicated to all trades of the media business. It offers a bachelor programme on Journalism & Public Relations with a combination of hands-on training in multimedia productions and lectures on the

science of communication. The 6th semester is an international minor programme on Journalism & Communication Management. In this programme, where German students of journalism and public relations collaborate with international students, we have recently begun establishing an 8 ECTS course on how to engage an audience and foster a productive dialogue. Most of our students have not been in contact with constructive or dialogue-based journalism before, so the course must also set the ground for this approach. It includes a review of video and social media formats, too, to help students develop their own.

1.2. Our shared understanding

The three universities have come together for this project because we share an understanding of the current difficult state of journalism and ideas on how to improve the situation.

We feel that the age of mass communication is dwindling. The media have lost the power to define what's news – **they are not gatekeepers anymore** but have a lot of competitors in the public realm. Their skeptical and informed audience has questions and demands answers. Journalism has also come under pressure because several **competing publishers spread misinformation** or polarize society. We believe that this is also a threat to democracy because it undermines the ability to pass on information and form a political will in free and open debate.

But it is our contention that journalistic services are needed for a working democracy – albeit in a somewhat different way than before. We believe that journalists should focus more on communities and facilitate a solutions-oriented dialogue there. **Journalism should empower the audience**, not make citizens feel hopeless as they often do today. These suggestions are meant as an addition to the traditional ways of journalism, not as a reform. Our constructive approach to journalism underlines traditional standards of reporting: giving a voice to all people and providing enough context for a nuanced reporting. The most important step in teaching this is creating the right mindset: getting used to and accepting the journalistic role of taking the audience into account by **listening to people, caring about them and making use of their input in journalistic work**.

We have mentioned the concepts of constructive and dialogue-based journalism, audience development and engagement which represent the core of our project. These concepts overlap to some degree, but we don't see this as a problem but rather as a way of reinforcing the main point of our project. We treat dialogue as one of the central tenets of constructive journalism and also as an important way of engaging the audience. Developing an audience, i.e., attracting it in the first place, is a prerequisite to all of our efforts, of course. We will have more to say on these concepts in the next chapter on the theoretical background of our project.

2. Research and resources

Before explaining the practice of our study programmes, we would like to give an overview of current research and helpful resources on constructive and dialogue-based journalism as well as audience development and engagement. This chapter is also intended to motivate the new mindset associated with these aspects of journalism. The sections 2.1., 2.2. and 2.3. have been written by Windesheim University, DMJX and HdM respectively.

2.1. Research and resources on constructive journalism

Constructive journalism is a spearhead in the curriculum and research programme of Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. This section will explain why and it will give an overview of the research and resources in constructive journalism. A nice overview of resources on Solutions Journalism can be found on the website of Kyser Lough of the University of Georgia.

2.1.1. Trends that create the need for a constructive approach

Constructive journalism arose in journalism practice from dissatisfaction with existing journalistic methods and the resulting news coverage. To improve the quality of news, journalists should act against the disproportionate attention given to what goes wrong – to conflicts and contradictions (Gyldensted 2015; Haagerup 2017). Instead, constructive journalism calls for journalists to change their traditional mindset and to embrace new skills and routines that lead to a journalistic practice more suited to the current situation. Constructive journalism looks beyond the questions which are usually addressed in the news: Who? What? Where? When? and Why? It stresses additional questions like: How? and especially: What Now? Including these questions when reporting provides a more complete portrayal of the subject matter. Given journalism's important function in society, journalists obviously cannot ignore problems that are relevant for people and society – but they can decide how to report on these events.

Hermans and Drok (2018) describe the changes that the context of professional journalism has faced in the 21st century and why there is a need to redefine journalism functions, professional values and journalism practice. Social as well as technological changes imply a different communication model in which the sender-oriented, top-down and one-way model is gradually replaced by an audience-oriented, two-way bottom-up model. This change renews the need for journalists to adapt their professional mindset: to take responsibility for the potential impact news has on individuals and to empower people so they can participate in society and public debate. This calls for different forms of dialogue with the audience.

A number of specific trends in society and journalism should be mentioned here as they shape the constructive approach to reporting:

- On the societal level, traditional sources of authority become less important. This calls for inclusion of different layers of society in public opinion and in the sources that journalists use likewise (Hietbrink, Hermans & Kik 2019).
- In politics and public debate, there is a tendency towards polarization. As journalists play a part in this process because they focus on extremes and conflict, this trend forces journalists to face their responsibility and embrace the opportunity to counteract these tendencies by providing multiple perspectives and common ground in their reporting (McIntyre & Gyldensted 2018).

- A third trend is the growing research evidence on news avoiders (Reuters Digital News Report 2019) which suggests that focusing on the problematic and negative aspects of society might alienate parts of the audience from vital sources of information like the news media. By aiming at empowerment of the audience, constructive journalism tries to work against this trend.

2.1.2. Definition and delineations

Constructive Journalism is not a completely new phenomenon but builds on previous counter-movements that use a public-oriented approach and want to stimulate public dialogue (Hermans & Drok 2018). These movements share a strong commitment to socially responsible journalism that is fair and accountable, and which treats the public as a serious participant in the news process. Traditional journalism is criticized for disproportionately representing institutions and the logic of power in society and being too distant from citizens and civil society it claims to serve.

Hermans and Drok (2018) described constructive journalism as follows:

- it acknowledges that journalists play an active role in the construction of mediated reality;
- it favors a solution-oriented perspective with a focus on how problems can be solved or can be prevented in the future;
- it focuses on giving context while including a diversity of perspectives and sources;
- it approaches people primarily as socially competent citizens and attaches great importance to an action-oriented perspective that empowers people to make self-substantiated decisions in their lives;
- it opts for a mobilizer role that wants to move the world.

The above implies that constructive journalism has the solution-orientation and the mobilizing objective in common with solutions journalism. McIntyre (2019) considers constructive journalism as a "broader approach" than solutions journalism which is concisely defined as "rigorous reporting on responses to social problems" by the Solutions Journalism Network. Hermans and Drok (2018, p. 684) describe the common ground of civic journalism and constructive journalism as follows: "Both focus on inclusiveness in sourcing, on using solution-oriented frames and information, on stimulating a public-oriented approach and on treating the audience as active citizens." The differences between the two are i.a. that constructive journalism "places additional emphasis on avoiding the negativity bias in news" and it's detrimental societal consequences; that in the context of 21st century society constructive journalism applies a broader definition of citizenship in which citizens are more action oriented; that it calls on journalism to take into account its societal impact and that it explicitly makes use of the behavioral sciences to strengthen the work of journalists.

A number of principles can be applied to make constructive based decisions in the production process of news:

- *Deepening*: provide context, offer more complete insight through thorough explanation.
- *Empowering:* inform the public about existing and possible solutions for social problems and about options they have when taking action.
- *Future perspective*: inform the public beyond the daily events and incidents, raising attention for long-term developments.
- *Inclusive:* include a broad range of perspectives and sources (representing diversity of layers and groups of society) and provide information that contributes to a public dialogue.
- *Cooperative*: involve citizens actively in the news process.

- *Inspiring*: use positive examples and developments.
- *Transparent*: be accountable for choices and for their impact.

These principles should be seen as a mix of strategies that can be helpful in several stages of the news process (Hermans & Drok 2018; Haagerup 2017). It's not a fixed set of tools but – depending on the characteristics of the particular news-issue – journalists can choose which elements are suitable.

2.1.3. Empirical results

To substantiate the principles of constructive journalism, empirical research started in the 2010s. It can be structured along the lines of the three constituting elements of journalism: profession, product and public. Research is essential to gain insights that underpin and develop constructive journalism.

For the profession, relevant knowledge is needed to understand how constructive journalism can contribute to important questions journalism is facing (e.g., From & Kristiansen 2018; McIntyre, Dahmen & Abenour 2016; Wagemans, Witschge & Harbers 2019). To mention a few: How can journalism stay relevant in the 21st network society? How should it redefine its public service function and which shifts are needed in the professional roles to respond to a new actualizing type of citizenship?

An important principle of constructive journalism is to take citizens seriously as partners in the process of news production. As a constructive approach is expected to improve news reporting, it is important to know if people value constructive news, if it matches their preferences and needs (Hermans & Gyldensted 2019), and how it affects their state of mind.

Most audience studies address the question if using constructive elements in news has the expected positive effects on the news consumers and if it empowers people in their daily lives. Often, these audience studies are theoretically embedded in positive psychology, specifically the Broaden and Build Theory (Frederickson 2001; e.g., McIntyre & Gyldensted 2018). In short, this theory states that people's minds are more open and engaged when experiencing positive emotions from the news, whereas negative emotions make them tune out. Former news effect studies have indicated that exposure to emotional cues in media messages leads to these types of effects and thus influences the way people think and act (Lecheler et al. 2013). Mainstream news routinely uses negative perspectives that provoke negative feelings such as fear, apathy and anger.

News consumers seem to act more critically towards the pessimistic focus in the news and the dominant attention on what goes wrong in the world. Research shows that the negative effect the negative focus in the news has on peoples' mood is the most common reason for them to avoid the news at least sometimes (Kalogeropoulos 2017). Using constructive elements in news is expected to bring about the opposite because it has a beneficial effect on the well-being of people. Research shows that compared to conventional news, news that includes constructive elements often decreases people's negative emotions and increases positive ones (McIntyre 2015, 2019; McIntyre & Sobel 2017; Meier 2018) and is able to engage, involve and inspire people (McIntyre 2015; Hermans & Prins 2020). Therefore, a constructive approach can reduce feelings of fear and powerlessness and evoke feelings of understanding, engagement and hope in society (Baden et al. 2019).

Knowledge from audience research can help journalists to understand how news stays relevant but also what effects news has on peoples' mood, trust, attitude, feelings, public opinion and on polarization in society. How audience research can help to reconsider the profession is shown by Hietbrink, Hermans & Prins (2019). They qualitatively analysed the reflections of graduate journalism students who participated in an education research project. In this project, the students investigated

the effects of using constructive news on the audience. The authors found that after being confronted with the impact they had, these future journalists were better able to incorporate the audience in their reflection on the profession. In short: doing audience research increased their sense of responsibility towards the audience.

2.2. Research and resources on dialogue-based journalism

The founder of the Constructive Institute, Ulrik Haagerup, calls for action in his book "Constructive News" and argues that journalists should report on both problems and solutions and should add nuances and context to give a more correct representation of the world (Haagerup 2017). The Constructive Institute lists three approaches or pillars to constructive journalism: Focusing on solutions, covering nuances and promoting a democratic conversation. Dialogue-based journalism, as the Danish School of Media and Journalism (DMJX) teaches it, lays emphasis on the third pillar as DMJX's students are somewhat familiar with the first and the second pillars from previous semesters.

Initially, the dialogue approach was implemented in a course about storytelling and longform. The idea was to include the voice of the public in the journalistic process from idea to final product. We assumed that implementing a dialogue to the work process would be a natural and easy way to update the course. But most students kept their focus and workload on traditional research and storytelling instead of investing in dialogue, and we realized that we had to change the course radically. Two years ago, we skipped the longform story and shifted our focus from product to process with emphasis involving the public in social issues.

From the very beginning in 2014, we have looked for up to date-research in this field and have found that a majority of the research is on the contents of online comments or case studies from various media outlets. Our approach is somewhat broader and includes the public in the entire process from initial idea (or even before that) to the final product. We are still in want of solid research and studies on the effect of dialogue-based journalism – for instance with regard to how engaging the public changes the choice of stories and the angles, and whether this approach affects the public's confidence in media and journalism. We would also like to dive deeper into how dialogue-based journalism changes the journalist's role and, if so, whether journalists need new skills and competencies to fulfill their role.

2.2.1. The argument for dialogue-based journalism

In spite of being in want of research, we are, to some extent, on solid ground when it comes to justification for dialogue-based journalism. In response to upcoming general news avoidance, journalism has to reinvent itself. This has been documented in several studies and reports, e.g., in Reuter's Digital News Report (Kalogeropoulos 2017).

The course on dialogue-based journalism is inspired by Jeff Jarvis, professor at City University of New York's Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, and author of the book "Geeks bearing gifts" (Jarvis 2015). Jeff Jarvis is one of the founding fathers of this particular approach to journalism and he argues in his book that mass communication belongs to an era before the internet, whereas people in the digital age are connected and communicate on an individual basis. In order to maintain a democratic role in society, journalists must see themselves as relationship-builders rather than content-creators.

Jarvis defines journalism as a service to the public. With informative conversations, journalism can reset itself by respecting the public, its knowledge and needs, and offer content that enables people to improve their lives and communities.

Another inspiration to our current curriculum is Søren Schultz-Jørgensen and Per Westergård's book "Den Journalistiske Forbindelse" ("The Journalistic Connection" will be the English title of a translated version to be published later this year). In this book, the authors aim at reinstating journalism as a valuable tool for democracy (Schultz-Jørgensen & Westergård 2018). They describe experiments of newsrooms in Europe and the United States and highlight the benefits of involving the audience throughout the whole journalistic workflow. According to Schultz-Jørgensen and Westergård, the news media most successful at creating and maintaining ties with their readers, users, listeners and viewers will be "media that dare challenge some of the journalism dogmas of the last century: The dogma of arm's length; the dogma of neutrality; the dogma of objectivity; the belief that journalists have a special ability to find, assess and choose what is important to the public. And not least: The basic idea that journalism is primarily about transporting news and information from A to B," the authors write in a summary of their findings for NiemanLab.org.

Brandel (2016) of the US start-up Hearken also argues that journalists should pay more attention to their audience. Her company offers support in doing so and promises that audience engagement will raise journalistic quality and newsroom revenue. The report "Putting Engagement to Work" from Agora journalism center, Oregon University, examines how 15 newsrooms in the USA put Hearken's model of public powered journalism in audience engagement to work (Zinger 2014). The report concludes that nearly every news organization reports some measure of success by using Hearken to reach a bigger, more diverse and/or more engaged audience (more on measuring the success of audience engagement in section 2.3.3.).

Furthermore, many reporters experience a higher level of confidence in input from the audience and are eager to continue experimenting with a more participatory approach to journalism, hoping to better connect with, understand and represent the communities they serve.

The regional Danish broadcaster TV2 Fyn launched an ambitious engagement strategy in spring 2020, at the very start of the Corona crisis, and the public responded positively. After three weeks, the TV station had received nearly 400 questions from audience members and published more than 50 audience-initiated articles and TV stories based on these questions. The engagement strategy showed that the public spent more time on articles initiated by the audience than on the ones made entirely by journalists.

2.2.2. Starting and maintaining a dialogue on social media and in real life

In the course on dialogue-based journalism, we ask our students to establish and facilitate a dialogue on social media and, if possible, in real life. Our methods on social media are inspired by professionals in social marketing:

- In her book "Sig du kan li mig" ("Say that you like me") Astrid Haug, a Danish communication consultant working on digital transformation, social media and strategic communication, offers advice on how to foster and maintain discussions on social media, and social media marketing consultant Mark W. Schaefer explains in his book "Marketing rebellion" why empathy and emotional connection is the key to people's minds.
- The former social media reporter Nadia Nikolajeva has written a "Guide til en bedre online debat" ("Guide to improved online debate") based on her own and her colleagues' experiences in this field. She has also initiated the Facebook Group "Ansvar for feedet"

("Take responsibility for your feed") where reporters help each other moderate comments professionally.

- When it comes to dialogue in real life, we lean on American media playbooks in citizen engagement as Listening Post Collective from Internews, "The best way to listen to and engage your community" from American Press Institute, and "The engaged journalism playbook" from German media project Krautreporter. They all emphasize the importance of building trust, listening, sharing and providing a relevant communication infrastructure.

2.3. Research and resources on audience development and engagement

Audience development helps the newsroom fulfill its mission by enlarging the number of readers or strengthening the relationship with them. It is an iterative process in which newsroom output is regularly adjusted as new knowledge is gained on the audience. Novak (2015) distinguishes between the short-term strategy of acquiring new users (audience development) and the long-term strategy of building relationships and a community (audience engagement). Either way, it is a strategy to make sure that journalists actually address their audience's needs.

At Stuttgart's Media University, we distinguish the journalistic task of audience development and engagement for newsrooms from similar measures of the marketing department as the latter are grounded in an economic rationale and do not necessarily reflect the journalistic aims of informing the audience and fostering a productive public debate. The journalistic task is not giving the audience what it wants but working with the audience to achieve a good result. So, journalists should not confine themselves to identifying the interests of the audience and adjusting their reporting accordingly: e.g., only reporting on topics that are trending on Google. Rather, journalists should go beyond web analytics when listening to their audience and initiate a dialogue that goes back and forth. Brandel & Haeg (2018) present a code of conduct for audience engagement: Among other things, audience engagement should be supportive, build trust and involve active listening.

Audience development and engagement is central to constructive and dialogue-based journalism as these forms of journalism place emphasis on involving the audience in every phase of the journalistic workflow. It's not only that journalism always needs an audience, but especially that the audience must be motivated to collaborate with the journalists. So, a first requirement for audience development and engagement is that journalists find people to talk to and get them to talk. But it can be construed even in a broader sense: It should include motivating people to reflect current developments and discussing them with one another and the journalists. This dialogue will eventually lead to new potential solutions and provide journalists with new topics to cover.

However, communication science shows that in many newsrooms, meaningful interaction with the audience is lacking. Positive examples as those quoted in section 2.2. are not mainstream yet.

2.3.1. Understanding the audience and understanding the media

Demographics as well as data on media usage and preferred topics can help journalists get a first impression of their audience or audiences. To gain a better understanding, they may conduct surveys or approach their followers on social media. They can also use studies. Schrøder (2018), e.g., analyzes why people read news. He finds that they choose to read news when they feel the news is relevant for their lives and their friends or family might take an interest in the story. He also finds that news avoidance is often tied to lack of knowledge about politics. Kormelink & Meijer (2018) support this finding and add that "digital news user practices such as checking, monitoring, snacking and scanning may not involve any clicking, but fulfil valuable functions for users."

Knowledge of the audience can be condensed in personas (sometimes called "proxies to create empathy"). These personas should be rich profiles of virtual people, including their habits and preferences in many fields of daily life. They can help reporters and editors decide whether a specific question or a specific article will be relevant to the audience. Creating personas is a standard method in newsrooms and marketing departments, so we will not dwell on this topic in this report.

Before we move on, however, we would like to note that understanding should grow on both sides. In a dialogue, all participants need to know each other. So, journalists should introduce themselves and strive to explain their work. Research by The Trust Project has identified eight trust indicators which should make it easier for the public to identify trustworthy news sources. Among these indicators are information about the authors, the medium's standards and the methods employed by the reporters. "A news story, we heard [in our interviews], should offer tools like annotation and forms that would allow readers to contest claims, suggest more sources and propose ideas for reporting further," adds project leader Lehrman (2017). "Journalists, people urged, should be more collaborative with the public they aim to serve."

2.3.2. Strategies for audience development and engagement

Audience development usually focuses on specific goals as, e.g., growing newsletter subscription or raising the number of followers on a social media platform. It assumes a funnel of increasing audience engagement: from raising awareness for a media product (many people) to consuming an article and, perhaps, further articles (fewer people) to becoming loyal users and paying subscribers (just a few people). When assuming low conversion rates, a plausible strategy is to start with a very large crowd at the entrance of the funnel.

More sophisticated strategies try to raise the conversion rates from one level to the next. They lure people deeper into the funnel by showing the value of the journalistic product or, indeed, the value of the interaction with the newsroom. Gúzman (2016) recommends asking readers to contribute something that will make journalism better – and making contributing easy for them. Some audience developers prefer to talk of a "ladder of participation" instead of a funnel, as Zalmanson & Oestreicher-Singer (2016) do. A community member will reach a high level of engagement only after becoming acquainted with the website and its audience, they argue. Journalists should therefore think about how they can encourage members of their audience to climb the ladder of engagement from reading suggested articles to moderating a discussion forum step by step. To encourage readers to climb the ladder, journalists should work with many "calls to action": They should ask their audience to do small things which will make them feel more closely connected to the media product.

We would like to add that journalists should also set the right tone or create the right environment to induce engagement: The audience should know what to expect from the newsroom and know that it will be treated well by the journalists. Experience from our part-time work as journalists gives a few hints on how to achieve this in dialogue-based journalism:

- *Explain the rules of the dialogue*: Make clear that you will ensure that everyone can speak their mind without fear. Enforcing the rules of free speech is an important but often overlooked task for journalists.
- *Make your goals clear*: Explain what you want to do with the audience's input. You are not just collecting quotes but you want to gain a real understanding. Such a plan is often lacking when journalists moderate public debates.
- *Ask open questions*, perhaps even vague ones, that leave room for interpretation – and, indeed, discussion. If a political debate is locked in conflict, it makes sense to broaden the

perspective and ask a different set of questions: not about which side to take but which values are guiding political thought or which futures are envisioned.
- *Follow up and cross-check*: Come back and ask how people respond to other people's arguments. Point out similarities and differences and ask for comments. Sometimes it is useful just to repeat a statement in your own words to make sure that you have understood.
- *Ask for feedback on the moderation*: Does your audience feel that the discussion has been productive? What have they learned? What will they do differently now?

In a similar vein, Ripley (2018) has summarized the results of several dialogue-based projects in an influential essay called "Complicating the Narratives". Her main point is that showing complexity will increase the audience's willingness to enter a discussion and thereby show more engagement. E.g., people often have conflicting views or mixed feelings about a certain issue. So, placing them on one side of a polarized debate and asking them to defend their position is neglecting a chance for making progress. Instead, journalists can use the internal conflicts to explore whether partial agreement among participants of the debate is possible. "When people encounter complexity, they become more curious and less closed off to new information," Ripley writes. "They listen, in other words."

2.3.3. Measuring the success of audience development and engagement

A plan for audience development or engagement should include a concept for measuring success – and this has been at the center of intellectual debates in recent years. The conflict arises because there are no good ways yet to measure what audience developers want to achieve, as, e.g., trust of their audience. Because of this, many audience developers resort to established performance indicators, even though these indicators may be unsuitable for this purpose: page impressions, sharing on social media and other metrics of reach.

"It is user activity and behavior that becomes a proxy for the voice of the audience," Ferrer-Conill & Tandoc (2018) conclude after interviews with 15 audience editors. The authors criticize "a limited understanding of the audience, let alone having a dialog with the audience." In a newer study, Nelson & Tandoc (2019) describe how journalists are torn between success according to web analytics and success according to traditional journalistic standards (i.e., serving the public interest). The authors report a case study of a US-American newspaper where editors "used analytics in a way that fits how they have always run the newsroom" – by trying to balance both aspirations. Most recently, Belair-Gagnon et al. (2020) concluded from an online survey among newsworkers in the United States that they still find value in traditional web metrics such as page views and social shares to fulfill their journalistic roles.

The start-up Hearken is a case in point. The company offers software which supports audience engagement (especially by posing questions to the audience and monitoring the responses) and which can be integrated into the content management systems of the newsroom. Owen (2018) compares and contrasts two studies – Nelson (2018) and Lesniak (2017) – which evaluate Hearken's pitch and arrive at contradicting conclusions. On the one hand, Nelson criticizes that Hearken does not have a metric for the strength of the relationships with readers and appeals to journalistic intuition instead. Lesniak, on the other hand, points out that membership conversion rates increased in one case study after Hearken's intervention. So, the two studies appeal to different criteria: Lesniak is looking for more paying subscribers while Nelson is looking for new metrics to capture what Hearken is promising: "bringing audience inputs further upstream into content production," as they write on their website.

It will not come as a surprise, that we, too, are struggling with measuring the success of our course projects (see section 3.3.2.).

3. Didactic concepts

The main thing to understand about teaching constructive or dialogue-based journalism to J-school students is that it is best taught as a **mindset** rather than a method. It is essential to understand that these approaches to journalism diverge from a traditional understanding of journalism which students may have gathered in their internships. So, some misunderstanding may arise and even resistance. In this chapter, we will present our objectives in teaching and discuss the obstacles we have encountered. In the next chapter, we will describe our courses in more detail. Similar to the previous chapter, the sections 3.1., 3.2. and 3.3. have been written by Windesheim University ,DMJX and HdM respectively.

3.1. Didactic concepts for constructive journalism

Instead of teaching a clear set of rules to be followed, teaching constructive journalism to students is about creating and fostering a climate in which students are constantly challenged to think critically about the (often unconscious) biases, stereotypes and clichés that exist in the media.

The main outcomes of teaching constructive journalism to J-school students is to tutor and train students to become **reflective and responsible practitioners** who are aware of the impact their reporting has – both on audiences and the societies they report about – and know how to find ways to contribute to society in a constructive manner via their reporting. They view their audiences primarily as citizens instead of consumers and their job as serving society instead of hitting click or rating targets.

An important implication of this premise is that being constructive should ideally be an integral part of a journalism curriculum, embedded in each course, instead of “yet another course.”

In the four-year programme of Windesheim University, we start out by implicitly incorporating some basic elements of constructive reporting in year 1. In years 2 and 3, we train students to experiment with constructive elements in their student reporting (listed in section 4.2.). We ask them to reflect upon the use of constructive elements of journalism during their internship. In year 4, we expect students to formulate their own view on (constructive) journalism and incorporate elements of constructive journalism in their graduation products.

3.1.1. Making students aware of the deficits of traditional reporting

We have developed several lessons aiming to make students aware of existing biases, stereotypes and clichés in the media. The idea of each of these lessons is to facilitate serious discussion about “how the sausage is made.” Not by bashing other media, but by encouraging students to develop a critical approach to their own profession and their own standards. In section 4.2., several exercises will be presented.

3.1.2. Rules for turning traditional reporting into constructive reporting

Because constructive journalism should be regarded as a mindset, we listed seven characteristics of constructive journalists describing this mindset. For this, we developed the Dutch acronym HOUVAST, to be translated to English as: SUPPORT – **S**olutions-Oriented, **U**plifting, **P**rocess-Oriented, **P**rovoking Action, **O**pening Eyes, **R**espectful and **T**ransparent.

Constructive journalists aim to support people in their role as citizens in a democracy with information that is both reliable and responsible. They strive to be...

…**S**olutions-Oriented: After reporting on a problem, constructive journalists **ask extra questions**: What can be done about it? What's working? Who's doing this better? Constructive journalists are as serious about investigating these responses to problems as they are about researching the problems themselves. Note: journalists are not expected to invent solutions or adopt them, but to take responses to problems into account and report about their promises and limitations.

…**U**plifting: When reporting on societal issues, constructive journalists strive to look at **long-term trends and scenarios** in order to gain a better perspective on the issue at hand. Often, not always, this implies a more uplifting story than a story that just focuses on the drama and debate of today.

…**P**rocess-Oriented: Constructive journalists invite their audiences to become an **integral part of their inquiries** by asking them clever questions and sharing their journalistic process and/or learning curve, via social media, events, etc. A single story can never have the final word on something, so constructive journalists show what they've found and what they still plan to find and co-create their stories in conversation with their audiences. The role of a modern-day journalist requires a shift from mere sending information to the role of a conversation leader, making sure all voices get heard. Constructive journalism is a two-way street.

…**P**rovoking Action: While constructive journalism is not to be confused with activism, constructive journalists show they are aware of the effect their reporting has on their audiences. Therefore, they seek to **engage their audiences** and invite them to respond to their stories. When possible, they show their audiences where the perspective for meaningful action is. In case of a disaster, e.g.: how can you help? In case of an emergency: what to do? It's about caring for your audience so they will care about you.

…**O**pening Eyes: Constructive journalists strive to open the eyes of as many members of the audience as possible and make their reporting **accessible**. This includes using visual forms of storytelling, like infographics, and requires audience awareness**.** One story can be told in many forms, constructive journalists strive to take maximum advantage of that.

…**R**espectful: Constructive journalists aim to treat sources as their fellow citizens and aim to portray them in **full richness and embrace complexity** instead of mere characters in a story. Victims, for instance, are not seen one-dimensionally as victims but also as resilient and resourceful in how they cope with difficult situations. And heroes are never one-dimensional good guys/girls either but people of flesh and blood with their own struggles and shortcomings.

…**T**ransparent: Constructive journalists strive to be open about **"how the sausage gets made"** and responsive to criticism, either from colleagues or the audience. In every story a journalist makes choices that have a subjective, often arbitrary element to them. In making of-videos, podcasts or boxes next to the story, and/or via social media, they open up about their work. This includes generous referring and linking to sources.

3.1.3. Obstacles to constructive reporting in real-life settings

Even though constructive journalism has made a remarkable journey in recent years to many respected newsrooms and J-school classrooms around the world, its reception among journalists as well as student journalists is still very mixed. Much seems to depend on how people have been introduced to the concept and/or what examples they've seen of it. Some critics claim the movement arguing for constructive journalism is too activist in its approach to journalism, others claim it's not proper journalism because of its insisting that the ideal of objectivity can never be reached.

This presents an obvious obstacle for students: the constructive approach to journalism is not always welcomed or understood properly by the newsrooms they aim to work or intern at. Students themselves also show some resistance to the concept, as they don't want to be "pushed" by their teachers into one or the other ideological direction.

A second obstacle is the danger of "jumping to solutions." When constructive journalism is presented and taught as an alternative to journalism – or even *the* alternative – students can easily get the impression that it replaces traditional reporting. However, constructive journalism is meant as an enrichment to traditional journalism, albeit in a way that addresses some of its current shortcomings. Viewed as an alternative to traditional journalism, practitioners and students can end up with fluffy, one-sided feel good stories. Especially students show a disposition to interpret constructive journalism in an oversimplified way: "simply add a line with a solution and you're done." The challenge here is to show there's at least as much effort needed to investigate a problem than a solution.

One way to overcome these obstacles is by insisting the goal is not to turn students into "constructive journalists" but to properly introduce the concept to them and let them critically engage with the concept during their studies. Because like every approach to journalism, constructive journalism surely may have its shortcomings and blind spots. Or misunderstandings of the concept. The bureau chief of a well known Dutch TV news magazine acknowledged that the programme overdid it sometimes in paying more attention to the solution than to the actual problem itself. "In this way, it will be difficult to get people involved: 'Why should I care?'" (Henk ter Aa, editor Brandpunt+, at Grote Expertisedag Nieuwe Media, 19 June 2018). Teachers need to be open about that, too, in order not to become seen "evangelizing" for an ideology but simply arguing for a way to do journalism better.

The other way to overcome the obstacles is to spend more time teaching about examples of "bad practices." By showing what constructive journalism isn't, and what misperceptions exist, students can start to see the subtle differences between "being positive" and "being constructive."

3.2. Didactic concepts for dialogue-based journalism

Sometimes, students can have a different view of journalism than the one we try to teach at the Danish School of Media and Journalism (DMJX). During our course in dialogue-based journalism, we try to minimize this divergence by letting the students meet journalists working with dialogue and a constructive approach to journalism. In spring 2020, we had presentations from Morten Ro Jørgensen, the Danish engagement strategist from Hearken Europe, and the constructive editor from a local TV station. The teachers provide lectures about citizen-driven journalism, the need for it, its potentials and challenges. Another way to work with and challenge the students' mindset is a three-day exercise called "Listen to Aarhus" (which we will describe in section 4.1.).

As we have explained in section 2.2., DMJX has worked with dialogue-based journalism for many years as a vital part of constructive journalism. It lays emphasis on **promoting a democratic conversation** – the third pillar of constructive journalism, as the Constructive Institute sees it. Our students are already familiar with the other two pillars: focusing on solutions and covering nuances in their reporting. During a 12-week, 20 ECTS course on dialogue-based journalism, students learn how to establish and monitor conversations on social media and in real life. This particular approach to journalism is not a built-in feature in the first three semesters of their education and it does not come natural to them. Therefore, a number of exercises aim at changing their mindset.

In groups of three, they apply text, audio, video, photography and visualizations to produce dialogue-based stories with a constructive approach. Student research includes discourse analysis of traditional and social media as well as focus group discussions with potential target audiences. The finished product is a number of social media posts using different media and including narrative and live elements as well as graphics and explainers. Furthermore, the groups reflect on their work in a detailed report.

3.2.1. Making students aware of the need for dialogue, participation and moderation

One of our awareness strategies is to have our students look at, identify, question and adjust their role(s) as journalists to make them realize that there are several other roles than the traditional ones that we tend to lean against and refer to as the hunting dog, the watchdog, the guide dog and the rescue dog (Bro 2004). Students see themselves primarily as watchdogs and hunting dogs, which is fair enough, whereas the roles of the guide dog (including the readers in the process) and the rescue dog (seeking solutions) are considered less important. We must point out and remind them repeatedly that these four roles are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

We try to make them aware that looking for social issues and solutions rather than limiting themselves to just producing "a story" is what matters in the first place. In that way, we try to make them understand that an important part of being a journalist is to participate in a democratic dialogue rather than focusing on single issues as an aim per se. We focus on a ladder of abstraction, a concept first conceived by the American linguist and semanticist S.I. Hayakawa in his book "Language in Thought and Action" (1949). This movement between abstract and concrete is to make sure that we neither lose the big picture nor the actual topics that matter to citizens, and we try to point out that some social issues are not just a matter of either-or (two opposing views) leaving the reader none the wiser. We encourage students to look for potential and change and acknowledge that they sometimes have to deal with the art of the seemingly impossible.

To sharpen students' awareness of the importance and relevance of dialogue, we aim at assignments that force them to meet an audience, establish dialogue and **listen to people** instead of just "asking questions" (Brandel & Haeg 2018), to take people seriously as equal partners instead of just as sources or cases, and involve them in the entire journalistic circuit – from initial identification of relevant issues to final product and beyond.

3.2.2. Starting a dialogue and maintaining it on social media

The course on dialogue-based journalism has two major assignments: the journalistic project and the semester project (see section 4.1.2.), both of them structured around a dynamic synopsis – the pivot of an initial workshop that illustrates and encourages an exemplary workflow.

The purpose of this process is to guide the students through the individual steps of a dialogue project, enable them to maintain an overview and communicate clearly with each other and with the teachers. The text of the dynamic synopsis is an essential management tool for the whole process, and the students seem to find it useful and clarifying. Each coaching session with teachers takes its starting point in the synopsis, which forces the students to keep focus and adjust their work as they go. Once the students have identified their project idea and their target group as outlined in section 4.1.2., they draft, as part of the dynamic synopsis, a targeted project plan in which they describe the purpose of the project and the changes or effects they seek to create with their particular project. This is vital for a focused strategy on social media. Also, students must describe their target group(s), not only the groups they want to communicate with on social media but also the one(s) they want to

introduce the final project to. These target groups could be identical, but sometimes the final output is ideal for a broader audience.

Finally, we ask students to set a preliminary goal and a success criterion for the project. Their expectations will not necessarily be met, since reality sometimes works differently than expected, but it is urgent that the students learn how to specify a project – and equally urgent that they learn to adjust accordingly.

3.2.3. Obstacles to dialogue-orientation in journalism

In their book "Den Journalistiske Forbindelse," Søren Schultz-Jørgensen and Per Westergård argue that most media have emphasis solely on the journalistic content and how it is published and spread. They conclude that the aspect of including the audience in a debate is widely overlooked even if the possibilities of encouraging and facilitating this debate are greater than ever due to social media.

The concept of agenda setting journalism is widely perceived as aimed at setting the agenda for a discussion between politicians and others in power as opposed to a broader public debate. So, pointing students in the direction of facilitating a debate as an integral part of their work is a huge challenge. It is hard to find examples including both the journalistic product and the debate preceding and following it. And it is hard to find journalistic projects that aim at consensus and mutual understanding.

For all concerned – journalists, students and the audience – there is also a reluctance to part with the good old one-way communication that seems to work so well. It is easier for journalists (and students) to concentrate on a product, and it is easier for the audience just to read about a dilemma – and leave the discussion and the decisions to others. The most common argument for doing this is that there is no money in just facilitating a debate. However, a number of media, for instance De Correspondent, Krautreporter, Pro Publica and Zetland are pointing towards a new business model built on ad-free, independent journalism – funded by members.

In general, students take a positive approach to dialogue-based journalism. They find the shift of mindset demanding and challenging, but they also see dialogue as a rewarding way of working, and they definitely feel that they make a difference when working in this field. But we still meet some reluctant students – for various reasons. The most important reason is that, depending on the issue, it can be hard for students to establish a conversation with people. That is a source of frustration, and they quickly jump to the conclusion that people are not interested in taking part in a dialogue. But there are several other reasons for not engaging:

- The topic can be too soft or private and people are hesitant to publicly open up even in a closed community.
- The timing can be bad. If people feel offended or upset about a political decision, they are averse to having a fruitful and constructive dialogue.
- The time frame can be too narrow. It takes time to build confidence. Especially in vulnerable communities with bad experiences with the press.
- Students can be confused about their own role as journalists and feel that dialogue-based journalism turns them into spin doctors for a specific group.

In the first semesters at DMJX, students learn to work with sharp angles and produce stories without nuances. The dialogue-based approach, however, seeks nuances and common ground in the dialogue process. It is a challenge to make the students understand that the input from the dialogue is time consuming but pivotal in fostering democratic debate.

3.3. Didactic concepts for audience development and engagement

In contrast to the courses at DMJX and Windesheim University, students at Hochschule der Medien (HdM) are generally not familiar with constructive and dialogue-based approaches in journalism when they enter our third-year course "International Content Production." Constructive journalism is still in its infancy in Germany and many other countries. In our 8 ECTS course which was launched in 2019, journalism and public relations students from Germany and other countries produce journalistic content with a constructive angle. They are assigned to teams of about five persons according to their personal profile; we want to mix students with different areas of competence so that they can profit from the experiences of their team members.

The first half of the semester is devoted to learning the mindset and basic principles of constructive journalism before students turn towards audience development and engagement. Of course, the audience is already part of the theory in the first half of the semester, but only later do students really think about how to integrate the audience in their journalistic work. Some students have made relevant experiences during their internship as, e.g., dealing with web analytics or developing personas (see section 2.3.1.). In this course, we want to build on these experiences: We want students to **appreciate a productive public debate** in a functioning democracy. If journalists help citizens get in touch with each other to discuss current events, this will make progress more probable and new leads for journalistic reporting will likely emerge.

In this section, we will focus on the didactic concepts relating to audience development and engagement in this sense: finding people to talk to and getting them to talk (see section 4.3. for the full course description). An important point to keep in mind is that our students don't have an audience to start with. Even if we take over an Instagram account of a partner for two weeks, as we have done during our first two semesters, there is little time for both sides to really get to know each other. But we will make suggestions on how to deal with this challenge.

3.3.1. Making students aware of the need for a strong relationship with the audience

Involving the audience in all steps of the journalistic process is a central tenet of constructive and dialogue-based journalism (as has been explained in sections 3.1.1. and 3.2.1.). The challenge in our course at HdM is to demonstrate how this can help produce better content. Students need to learn…

> … that it's not just about asking questions but about **wanting to know the answers**,
> … that it's not about collecting quotes but **wanting to understand** people and their motives,
> … that it's not about categorizing the answers but about **highlighting connections** between them, and
> … that it's all about starting and **maintaining a free and open debate**.

These objectives depend on the premise that meaningful and productive dialogue is possible if it is moderated in the right way. Some students dismiss positive examples of fruitful debate as scripted reality, others believe that the task of journalism is limited to portraying both sides of a debate in a neutral and detached way. We argue, however, that journalists should not leave it to their audience to resolve difficult issues but give their best to provide a nuanced and detailed picture that makes sense of the conflict – and this includes explaining why people disagree and checking their claims.

In our course, we can make use of the diversity of students to explore the positive ways of discussing controversial issues: They come from different countries and have undergone different professional training which makes it probable that they will encounter communication problems within their teams. Before starting a dialogue about these problems, the potentially controversial points need to be made salient to the students. The game CultuRalley demonstrates the power of implicit cultural

assumptions: After becoming acquainted with the rules of the game, students have to change teams to play with other students. There, they discover to their surprise that the new team doesn't follow the rules "correctly." As the players are not allowed to talk, it takes some time for all to understand that the teams have been given slightly different rules to play by – none of which are "correct" or "incorrect." Understanding that there may be further assumptions and values that we don't speak about should motivate students to strive for a better understanding of each other.

Teams can then move on to analyze debates among real people. There are three options:

1. One team discusses a controversial topic (perhaps one concerning cultural stereotypes) among its members for a couple of minutes and another team observes them.
2. Students watch a public debate on TV or in real life.
3. Students practice the interviews they have planned for the semester project in class while being filmed.

In all cases, students should analyze communication strategies that polarize and lock the debate or move it towards a compromise. The goal is to see that being interested in understanding the claims of the other side and establishing some common ground are essential for a productive debate. Students should also look out for ways of enforcing the rules of free and open debate. Every team should at least analyze one debate and present their results in class so that the students can draw conclusions from all experiences.

Besides analyzing examples of productive or unproductive debates, the subject can be taught in theory, too. There is a large body of research literature and popular literature on political deliberation and so-called mini-publics which discuss political issues in lieu of society. Some examples: Curato & Böker (2016) give an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of mini-publics within political decision making. And philosopher Cristina Lafont (2019, p. 141) even compares mini-publics to traditional media outlets: "their contribution to the citizenry […] would simply be to make the most relevant arguments for and against the political decisions at stake available to them." As a final example, German journalist Bastian Berber has documented "stories against hate" in his book and podcast "180 Grad."

3.3.2. Rules for engaging with the audience and measuring success

In the course of our semester project, students don't have the time and resources to establish an audience and interact with it on a regular basis. A long-term commitment to audience development and engagement is unfeasible. Even when working with a partner who already has an audience, it is difficult to establish a strong relationship.

Nevertheless, it is possible to get in touch with potential readers and viewers before publishing journalistic content and follow up on them after publication. Three examples which we have tried:

1. Students can ask their audience which questions they should pose in their next interview and report the answers. This requires some planning ahead but is easy to do. However, more often than not, there is not a lot of audience input to work with (see section 3.2.3. for ways to respond to this obstacle).
2. Students can survey the target group while planning the publication. This yields interesting insights into what people on the street want to know or discuss. But it is difficult for students (as for professional journalists) to integrate this into their reporting. When looking for stories, they prefer to rely on their usual methods. Following a vague lead from a survey is more challenging than following a lead that one came up with by oneself (see section 3.3.3.).

3. Students can concentrate the audience engagement on a live event as, e.g., in a chat or in a real-life setting. Students can invite guests, prepare questions, moderate the debate and report on its results. This, however, binds a lot of resources so that in our teaching, we have restricted student's work to one or two of these tasks. We will try a new way in the next semesters (see section 5.2.2.).

If the content is published at the end of the semester, it is difficult to really assess the success of the constructive and dialogical approach. Students watch the number of likes, shares and comments on social media closely as well as the responses to survey questions. The comments give anecdotal insight into how the audience evaluates the content but they do not represent a comprehensive analysis which would include questions like these: Have we chosen the right angle on the subject? Have we included all relevant perspectives? Does our reporting inspire or empower our audience? Focusing on a live event, however, makes it easy to survey the participants. So, we hope to get a more thorough feedback in the next semesters.

3.3.3. Obstacles to audience development and engagement in a student context

In the vision of constructive and dialogue-based journalism, the audience contributes tips, suggests topics and questions to the journalistic work, it criticizes journalistic work and it uses the journalistic work in a public discussion which may, in turn, inspire new journalistic research. However, working with this input is not an established practice in journalism.

Arguably the hardest problem in teaching audience development and engagement is integrating audience input into the journalistic process. Students claim that the input comes too late or is too vague to work with. Indeed, this is an obstacle for professional journalists as well. For example, most public debates moderated by journalists are not integrated into journalistic work. Media outlets might publish a report on the debate – but not more. Even if students and professional journalists see the need for talking to the audience, they don't necessarily see the value of the potential input because there are not a lot of examples where the audience has actually made journalism better. Or, perhaps, we should write more cautiously: there are not a lot of examples where the audience has *demonstrably* made a difference. The challenge, we propose, is to help students and professional journalists to acknowledge the input from their audience by making the effects visible.

The influence of the audience we are looking for in constructive and dialogue-based journalism might tacitly be present already, waiting to be recognized: While consuming news themselves, scanning social media timelines and talking to acquaintances and strangers, journalists constantly form opinions about the public and its interests. Their day-to-day experiences frame the way they view society and, arguably, these experiences are as influential as their professional interviews. Journalists have an impression of "what people think." This, of course, is a problem for journalistic practice because the impression of "what people think" is prone to bias and may only be valid for their personal bubble. In our introductory classes to journalism, we advise students not to use the phrase "as everyone knows" because this will alienate all readers who don't agree.

But this problem is also an opportunity: Students and journalists can be asked to check whether their assumptions are true by talking to people with which they normally wouldn't talk. Section 4.1.1. will detail a method for teaching how to leave one's own bubble. Another option is to invite people to a live debate (see section 5.2.2.): In such an event, journalists can create the setting for a productive debate by asking the right kind of questions and by excluding hate-speech and misinformation. Both strategies will help journalists get a better understanding of the public's interest.

4. Three curricula for students on B.A. level

After having set out the teaching objectives and general didactic concepts in the previous chapter, we would now like to present our courses as we currently teach them. In section 4.4., we will pull all of this together and provide an overview of didactic concepts and concrete exercises for the different aspects of our topic. In chapter 5, we will discuss suggestions for improvement as well as lessons from remote teaching during the Covid-19 crisis.

4.1. Danish School of Media and Journalism

First, we introduce an exercise called “Listen to Aarhus” which is designed for a small workload. It is part of our 20 ECTS course on dialogue-based journalism which we will present in the next section.

4.1.1. Minor workload: Listen to Aarhus

The exercise “Listen til Aarhus” opens the students’ minds in various ways. By visiting different neighbourhoods, students leave their white middle class comfort zone and get a sense of what’s on people’s minds and what people think of journalists and journalism. Furthermore, students return with ideas and considerations that end up as interesting stories either right away or after further development of the idea. An important take-away for the students is that it matters to *ask* and – even more importantly – to *listen*.

Day 1

Class: How can you most successfully – and in a very short time – make a person tell you what’s on his or her mind? What would motivate you to tell another person what’s on your mind? What kind of expectations are hidden in your questions?

Task: In pairs go to different places in Aarhus. Ask what’s on people’s minds. Be curious on their agenda and what they would like journalists to dive into. Be patient. Spend at least 2-3 hours at the place you’ve chosen.

Afterwards discuss with your partner: What did we learn? What was surprising? List interesting communities, issues, items, questions and wishes. Choose three ideas from the list that call for a journalistic intervention.

Day 2

Class: What was your experience of being a journalist after yesterday’s assignment?

Groups of five: 90 minutes to choose one item, question, issue or problem that the media in general have overlooked. All students present three ideas, the group chooses one.

Class: presentation of ideas from the groups. Who asked the question/raised the issue and why is it interesting?

Group work: Qualify the idea, make basic research, how could you work with the idea, what would be the best way/channel to reach the person who gave you the idea?

Prepare a presentation of your idea and the potential in it.

Day 3

Presentations of ideas

"Listen to Aarhus" works well and is certainly an eye-opener to the students. Nevertheless, we could qualify our teaching in dialogue-based journalism with more exercises that develop students' mindset, and by creating a catalogue of issues that specifically call for dialogue-based journalism.

Reflection Essay

As a follow-up on exercises and presentations, students write individual essays reflecting on their role as journalists and on the way they approach people and social issues.

4.1.2. Major workload

In this section, we present DMJX's course on dialogue-based journalism. It works with a dynamic synopsis, which guides students through the project step by step (see chapter 3.2.2.).

1st step

1. Find an idea (not a story). Your starting point could be the needs/problems of a group of people – or an important problem of society.
2. Identify a community, geographical, digital or both, who has a stake in your idea.
3. Map out and monitor digital communities on the topic, and if the topic is geographically based, visit the place physically, if possible (see note on mapping tools below).
4. Get your facts straight. Basic research.
5. Get to know the media coverage, discourses and representation. Both in traditional and social media.
6. What do you deduce from your work so far? What problems or needs can you identify?
7. Be ready to present your project idea in a manageable way to the class.

Mapping tools and analysis of digital footprints on social media

Before the students start working with dialogue on social media, they are introduced to various social media tools, among others: mapping strategies and identification/analysis of their personal digital footprints.

The mapping strategy is for target groups as well as for audience and content on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin and Twitter). Students also work with hashtag analysis and search for sources.

Analysis of digital footprints is essential when operating professionally in social media. It helps students create an online persona, i.e., transform from personal to professional profile, thus eliminating digital footprints that are incriminating in that it weakens their professional ethos. So, at the very beginning of the course, students will be asked to go through social media platforms in order to establish and monitor a trustworthy online brand for themselves.

2nd step

Arrange a focus group interview on the topic with 3-5 key persons. What do they see as the most important problems/solutions?

Decide and give reasons for your choice of communication channels.

Make a presentation of yourselves and the project idea to the target group.

Make a plan for your project.

Get started. Ask good questions. Get the conversation going. LISTEN. Respond. Moderate.

3rd step

The final step is basically the journalistic project, and a reflections report (see below) in which students go through the whole process and reflect on their work, the project, the way they have handled basic journalistic tools etc. This kind of report is mandatory for all workshops and assignments at DMJX.

The journalistic project

You work on social media with the purpose of establishing a community or interacting with an existing community. In your community you are supposed to identify and delimit journalistically relevant problems/issues in interaction with users, and to facilitate and qualify discussions and reach possible solutions.

Each group must produce at least ten **journalistic social media posts**. Short dialogue bits do not count as posts. Your posts must be produced in a way that reaches your target group, and it's up to you to decide how to do that. However, half the posts have specific requirements:

- At least three posts must include narrative elements (character, course of action, pace).
- At least one post must be live (live blogging or live video).
- At least one post must be graphics.

The product must include three kinds of media (sound, video, photo, text, graphics etc.) at a minimum.

Reflections report

The reflections report demonstrates deliberations and choices behind the journalistic project. It should not exceed 20,000 characters – excluding list of sources, source identification, source assessment and footnotes. It must include the following nine points. The weighting of the points depends on the individual project:

1. Give reasons for the subject matter/issue at hand and its journalistic and social relevance.
2. Discourse analysis of media coverage so far: What material have you examined, and why exactly that? How did you analyze the material? What are your findings? Any dominant discourses? What is your own discourse compared to the ones you have analyzed?
3. Your project: What is the idea? Why is it relevant? With whom did you establish a dialogue? What problems/needs for solution have you identified, and how did you handle them? What is new in your project? Further perspectives that don't appear from your project? Outline your strategy, plans for campaign and publication
4. Argument analysis: What are the main claims, support, warrant and rebuttal? Discuss relevance and strengths. Are uncertainties in conclusions and interpretations evident in social media dialogues? What have you done to clarify these uncertainties?
5. Target groups: Describe your target group(s) and give reasons for your choice. What has monitoring and mapping social media (pages, groups, persons etc.) shown, and in what ways have your findings been included in your work with the project? Give reasons for your choice of social media. What have you done to establish dialogues with target group(s)?
6. Presentation: Give reasons for your choice of narrative form and structure in your social media posts. Make references to the syllabus. How do you assess the impact of your posts (contents, narrative form (video, sound, text, photo, graphics), hashtags etc.)? Are the central terms in your story clearly defined, and what have you done to ensure that your target group understands what you are talking about?

7. Legal and ethical considerations – if relevant
8. A short account of your work process: Each group member must clarify their individual contribution to the project, no matter how closely you worked together.
9. Complete source list: Add a complete list of sources, both written and verbal sources, including the ones that do not appear directly in your final product. For each source: Add a short description of source competence/value and how the sources have been used in your product. Verbal sources: include name, phone, email, organisation/position. Written sources: include origin, author, title and publishing date. As for digital sources add deep links. Describe your research and interview strategy. Give reasons for deselected sources. Anonymous sources: Give reasons for use of anonymous sources. Use of anonymous sources must be approved by your project supervisor.

Criteria for project evaluation

- Your ability to unfold the particular journalistic role it takes in a community
- Ability to work solution oriented
- Your presence and actions on social media
- Understanding of what is suitable for social media as for both form and content
- Ability to listen and interact with relevant networks and conversations on social media and in real life
- Knowledge about what influences distribution and popularity when it comes to social media contents

Semester project

The course in dialogue-based journalism is completed by a semester project. Students have a choice between the two assignments below, so either they focus on constructive storytelling including social media (assignment 1) or they focus entirely on dialogue and community building (assignment 2) as in the journalistic project. Furthermore, they write an academic essay about involving citizens in their journalism (engagement journalism).

Assignment 1

A constructive multimedia story to be published online. The project should take its starting point in your journalistic project. You can't re-use contents, but feel free to further develop angles from the project. You must include social media in your research by mapping and monitoring relevant groups and sources and publish your product in relevant target groups on social media**.** The product may include sound, video, photo, text, graphics etc. depending on how you choose to publish. Extent of Output per agreement with project advisors.

Reflections report for assignment 1

The reflections report demonstrates deliberations and choices behind the journalistic project. It should not exceed 25,000 characters – excluding list of sources, source identification, source assessment and footnotes. It must include the nine points below. The weighting of the points depends on the individual project:

1. Give reasons for the subject matter/issue at hand and its journalistic and social relevance: Relevance, angles, other angles considered along the way. What's new, and why is this relevant and to whom?
2. Discourse analysis: How does your discourse differ from other discourses on the subject? In what ways has analysis affected your product?

3. Argument analysis: What are the main claims, support, warrant and rebuttal?
4. Give an account of your methods and idea
5. Presentation and publication: Account for media and target groups – and why exactly these groups? Presentation strategy: Account for choice of digital platforms. Give reasons for and reflect on the way you have used the multimedia potential in your idea. In what way do your multimedia elements add value to the project? Publication strategy: Describe and explain your strategic thoughts as for reaching your target groups. Follow up: what is the potential in publishing in other formats than the ones already mentioned (exhibition, debate, live show etc.)?
6. Legal and ethical considerations – if relevant
7. Process and work effort: Give a short account of your work process in which group members clarify their individual contribution to the project.
8. Complete source list (see requirements for reflections report on the journalistic project above)
9. Project evaluation: Your ability to unfold the particular journalistic role it takes in a community; develop, qualify and define a constructive journalistic narrative; master narrative techniques for journalistic constructive stories; work with multimedia and plan and monitor a multimedia work process; identify and use the advantages of different media and master navigation design; plan a constructive product for relevant target groups/online media

Academic essay with reflections on engagement journalism for MediaJournal/DMJX Medium

In your essay, you must include experiences from the dialogue workshop as well as references to the semester syllabus. You may draw perspectives to other engagement projects or take your starting point in the essay you wrote at the beginning of the journalistic project period. The task is to reflect on an aspect of engagement journalism that you found particularly exciting or troublesome, that made you enthusiastic, or whatever else you think others might learn from. You will write for the online journal MediaJournal, where teachers, students and researchers of DMJX is the target group – as well as people with a general interest in media- and education matters. There are no specific requirements for the form of the text, the scope is 7,000-10,000 characters. This part of the semester project is graded passed/not passed.

Assignment 2

A dialogue-based project in which you work on social media with the purpose of establishing a community or interacting with an existing community. In your community you are supposed to identify and delimit journalistically relevant problems/issues in interaction with users, and to facilitate and qualify discussions and reach possible solutions. You must produce at least ten journalistic social media posts.

The product must include a minimum three different kinds of media (sound, video, photo, text, graphics etc. Any deviations from these requirements must be authorized by the project advisor.

Reflections report for assignment 2

The reflections report demonstrates deliberations and choices behind the journalistic project. It should not exceed 25,000 characters – excluding list of sources, source identification, source assessment and footnotes. It must include the nine points below. The weighting of the points depends on the individual project:

1. Give reasons for the subject matter/issue at hand and its journalistic and social relevance
2. Discourse analysis of media coverage so far: What material have you examined, and why exactly that? How did you analyze the material? What are your findings? Any dominant discourses? What is your own discourse compared to the ones you have analyzed?
3. Your project: What is the idea? Why is it relevant? With whom did you establish a dialogue? What problems/needs for solution have you identified, and how did you handle them? What is new in your project? Further perspectives that don't appear from your project? Outline your strategy, plans for campaign and publication
4. Argument analysis: What are the main claims, support, warrant and rebuttal? Discuss relevance and strengths. Are uncertainties in conclusions and interpretations evident in social media dialogues? What have you done to clarify these uncertainties?
5. Target groups: Describe your target group(s) and give reasons for your choice. What has monitoring and charting social media (pages, groups, persons etc.) shown, and in what ways have your findings been included in your work with the project? Give reason for your choice of social media. What have you done to establish dialogues with target group(s)?
6. Presentation: Give reasons for your choice of narrative form and structure in your social media posts. Make references to the syllabus. How do you assess the impact of your posts (contents, narrative form (video, sound, text, photo, graphics), hashtags etc.)? Are the central terms in your story clearly defined, and what have you done to ensure that your target group understands what you are talking about?
7. Legal and ethical considerations – if relevant
8. A short account of your work process: Each group member must clarify their individual contribution to the project, no matter how closely you worked together.
9. Complete source list (see requirements for reflections report on the journalistic project above)

Criteria for project evaluation

- Your presence and actions on social media
- Your ability to unfold the particular journalistic role it takes in a community
- Understanding of what is suitable for social media as for both form and content
- Ability to listen and interact with relevant networks and conversations on social media and in real life
- Understanding of constructive framing and interview technique
- Knowledge about what influences distribution and popularity when it comes to social media contents
- Visualisation tools on social media

Academic essay with reflections on engagement journalism for MediaJournal/DMJX Medium

As for Assignment 1.

4.2. Windesheim University

As is explained in chapter 3.1.1., we have developed several lessons aiming to make freshmen and second-year students aware of existing biases, stereotypes and clichés in the media:

Exercise 1: The Train Crash

In this course, we ask students to each write a short news item about an – imagined – accident, where a train collides with a person. By analyzing the different news stories, we show them how many possible angles there are to one seemingly straight forward news story. E.g., one student focuses on the delay for the commuters in the train, another student focuses on the trauma for the train personnel, a third student focuses on the impact this has on the victim. Another point is to show how (often unconscious) choices and preferences define what you include and what you leave out.

As an addition to this lesson, students can be asked to analyze news reports on the same incident in different news media. By this, we aim to make students feel the power journalists have to influence the narrative about a certain news event.

Exercise 2: The Gapminder Test

One of the media criticisms underlying constructive journalism is its critique towards the so-called negativity bias. The well-documented tendency of journalists to only report on what's not working: exceptions, mistakes, problems. The Gapminder test and Hans Rosling's book "Factfulness" (2018) help to make students aware of this tendency. With material from the Solutions Journalism Network, we provide students with tools to include solutions in their reporting in a way that is journalistically sound.

Exercise 3: The Manipulation Exercise

In this exercise, we challenge students to reconstruct an existing broadcast or publication based on the same set of facts. We provide them with tools to "constructify" the original publication or broadcast with more constructive angles. After this, we show a test panel the two different versions and ask the panel members to answer questions about how they respond to the story. We ask them to look at emotions, readiness to act and several other types of responses. This exercise is designed to make students see the impact their reporting choices can have on their audiences.

Exercise 4: Why people avoid the news

We start by exploring our own media diets and that of others around us. We then look at research about the reasons for news avoidance (see chapter 2.) and analyze this further with the help of a Ted Talk by Rolf Dobelli and an article of The Correspondent's Rob Wijnberg. We conclude by discussing a video of Jodie Jackson called "Publish the Positive": Would this help increase audience engagement?

We look at research suggesting this and invite students to "adopt" a medium of their choice to consult on how to engage news consumers that seem to avoid news. As addressed in section 3.1., Windesheim challenges students in year 2 and 3 to experiment with constructive journalism elements in their reporting. For example, in the course "Narrative and investigative journalism," the two P's of the acronym SUPPORT are addressed in exercises. This is done because especially students who have to involve themselves in investigative journalism tend to focus on investigating topics or problems they themselves find interesting, and in this process forget that they actually have an audience – or better involved citizens – for whom they work or whose lives they potentially affect with their publications.

Exercise 5: Process-Oriented and Provoking Action

This exercise is also linked to the two P's in the SUPPORT method (presented in section 3.1.). The first step is a simple one, but is one students tend to forget. So, in this course, we ask the students – as soon as they have a topic they want to investigate – to go out and talk to people about their topic of investigation. They can simply start with their friends and family, but they also have to go out on the street and talk to strangers. Questions they have to ask can start very simple by finding out what kind of emotions the topic evokes or what knowledge people have about the topic. By questioning every answer their dialogue partners give, students dig deeper and find out what the audience's – or involved citizens' – interests and/or worries are related to the topic. All this will give students the focus or guidance – if you will – for their investigation which they then convert into a research question as a starting point for their production. By doing this they don't investigate what they find interesting, but they really start investigating on behalf of their audience.

Step two of this assignment is that after the initial investigation, students go back to their audience (or even return to the street) with their findings to further narrow their research question by means of conversation with their audiences. This is aimed directly at their target audience via Facebook postings and via the website of their media partner by actively asking the audience to respond to the investigation thus far.

Step three is to have them respond to their stories after the first publications. Special emphasis lies on getting the audience to come up with solutions to the problems uncovered by their investigation. The aim is to produce "final" publications that on the one hand address the problems uncovered, but also give the audience a perspective for meaningful action. This part of the exercise is thus about caring for your audience so they will care about the topic addressed.

4.3. Media University Stuttgart

Our new course on constructive and dialogue-based journalism is less extensive as those described by our partners in sections 4.1. and 4.2. and uses only selected exercises. It incorporates our reflections on audience development and engagement (see sections 2.3. and 3.3.). As mentioned, all work is done in teams of about five students with mixed nationalities and backgrounds in journalism or public relations. The course is therefore not addressed to well-trained journalism students who would like to specialize in constructive and dialogue-based journalism but it is rather intended to give students new insights into modern trends of journalism. To prepare the German students for their scientific bachelor thesis in the following semester, this course also includes some scientific reading.

The course is divided into two parallel strands: One strand is taught by Markus Pfalzgraf, a seasoned radio and television reporter of public broadcaster "Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk (SWR)." He reviews content production techniques and critically discusses examples of constructive and dialogue-based journalism meant to inspire students for their course project. In the second strand, HdM professor Alexander Mäder introduces students to constructive and dialogue-based journalism as well as to audience engagement. Both teachers offer team coachings and give joint feedback on exercises.

For course credit, students have to design a collaborative course project, contribute content to this publication and reflect on the results in an essay. The essay should evaluate the course project and the team's contribution: Did it reach the goals of constructive and dialogue-based journalism? The teams are graded according to depth of research, originality and quality of content production, participatory and constructive approach and soundness of the reflective insights in the essay.

In this section, we present an overview of the course week by week. Every classroom discussion is preceded by a video with theoretical input and a corresponding team exercise that prepares students for class. This way of organizing the course is a consequence of the Covid-19 experiences (more on that in section 5.1.1.).

1. Theoretical input: Research on trust and news avoidance. Team exercise: Analyze own media consumption and evaluate the effects of the news on oneself. Classroom discussion: Do the news work as they should?
2. Theoretical input: History of constructive journalism. Team exercise: Examining a news article. Classroom discussion: What could we do to make the articles more constructive?
3. Theoretical input: Common objections against constructive journalism. Team exercise: Making the examined article more constructive. Team coaching instead of classroom discussion.
4. Theoretical input: Presenting the DIALOGUE project. Team exercise: Testing the constructive version of the article on naïve subjects. Classroom discussion: What are effective principles of constructive journalism? What mindset do constructive journalists need?
5. Theoretical input: Overview of scientific literature on constructive journalism. Team exercise: Reading a selected research article. Classroom discussion: Team presentations.
6. Theoretical input: Introducing the general topic of the collaborative course project (e.g., sustainable mobility in Stuttgart, how businesses and organizations cope with the Covid-19 crisis, what makes cities livable?). Team exercise: Brainstorming about possible topics and formats. Classroom discussion: Decisions on collaborative project and team contributions.
7. Theoretical input: The right way of asking questions. Team exercise: Initial talks with people on the chosen team project. Classroom discussion: What can we learn from our potential audience?
8. Theoretical input: Biases and misconceptions in journalistic reporting. Team exercise: Collecting data on the chosen team project. Classroom discussion: Does the data challenge our preliminary beliefs?
9. Theoretical input: How to deal with controversial discussions. Team exercise: Filming a controversial discussion. Classroom discussion: What are effective strategies for conducting interviews?
10. Theoretical input: Journalism not as gatekeeping but as a service to the public. Team exercise: Preparing a statement on the relevance of including the audience. Classroom discussion: Presentation and discussion of the statements.
11. Theoretical input: How the audience can make your work better. No team exercise but time to prepare the team's contribution to the collaborative project. Coaching sessions with all teams.
12. Theoretical input: How public debates can be productive. No team exercise but time to prepare the team's contribution to the collaborative project. Coaching sessions with all teams.
13. Theoretical input: Mini-publics and inclusive political deliberation. No team exercise but time to prepare the team's contribution to the collaborative project. Coaching sessions with all teams.
14. Theoretical input: Measuring success. Team exercise: Preparing preliminary feedback on the collaborative project. Classroom discussion: General discussion of feedback.

In this course, we have profited from the help of student tutors who designed style-guides for the collaborative publication, provided technical support to teams and organized the publication of social media content.

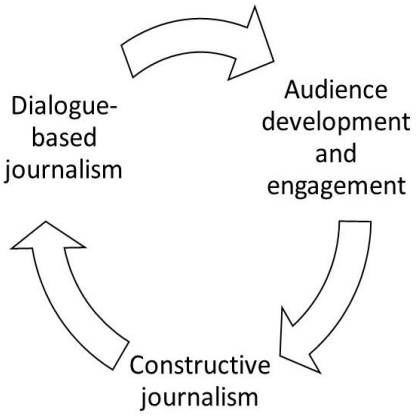
4.4. Systematic overview of didactic concepts and curricula

After having presented the learning goals and many exercises to change the mindset of students, we would like to give an overview of this material to journalism teachers. We will use a matrix which covers the three topics of our project: constructive journalism, dialogue-based journalism and audience development and engagement. We will show didactic concepts and exemplary elements for curricula suited for beginners and advanced students. As our courses start with students on different levels of expertise in journalism, we will consider the prerequisites as well. We order the topics from light prerequisites to strong.

	Audience development and engagement	**Constructive journalism**	**Dialogue-based journalism**
Prerequisites: what do students need to know before starting	Students are studying within the field of media and have received basic training in news production.	Students of J-school are familiar with the standard formats of journalism. They are trained in in-depth research and reporting.	Students already have some experience with central aspects of constructive journalism: focusing on solutions and providing nuance in their reporting.
Beginner's level: starting the course	To make students appreciate the merits of a dialogue with their audience, they first experiment with asking different questions (section 3.3.). They then film discussions and, by analyzing the films, deduce strategies for promoting understanding and compromise in public debates.	To turn students into reflective and responsible practitioners, they are asked to critically examine today's news consumption and learn the SUPPORT method (section 3.1.2.).	To help students promote democratic conversation, they are asked to go out, listen to citizens and report on their findings (section 4.1.1.). This exercise is accompanied by a reflection on their role as journalists.
Advanced level: overcoming common obstacles	Students plan and conduct a discussion round with citizens and incorporate the results in their reporting (section 5.2.2.).	Students critically examine their own constructive work and that of other reporters and discuss potential shortcomings and criticisms (section 3.1.3.).	In teams of three, students work with communities on social media and facilitate discussions in order to identify solutions to a specific problem (section 4.1.2.).

As we mentioned in the introduction, the concepts overlap – and so do the courses. We would like to highlight the connections here and also illustrate them in a diagram:

- *Constructive journalism* is the basis for all our work in this project. It tries to overcome negativity bias and news avoidance and joins forces with the audience to produce more helpful reporting that address society's problems and critically examine potential solutions. Using the input from the audience in all stages of journalistic work is central to this type of journalism as well as to dialogue-based journalism and audience development and engagement.
- *Dialogue-based journalism* builds on the concept of constructive journalism and adds the emphasis on promoting democratic conversations as a specific journalistic goal. It tries to help communities solve their problems.
- *Audience development and engagement*, as we understand it in the context of constructive journalism, builds on dialogue-based journalism as a way of gathering citizens for a public debate and motivating them to engage in this democratic conversation. But it can be construed in a broader sense to also motivate the audience to come up with solutions to pressing problems and to strive towards a societal compromise. This engagement of the audience in democratic discussion can give journalists new leads on the next topics to cover.



The exercises of our curricula and the learning goals can be used separately and integrated in other journalism courses to highlight certain roles or tasks for modern journalism.

5. What's next?

This report summarizes our experiences after the first year of the DIALOGUE project. In this final chapter, we would like to look ahead – and also draw preliminary conclusions from the special challenge of the Covid-19 crisis which affected our teaching in the summer term 2020.

5.1. Adapting to the Covid-19 situation

5.1.1. Remote teaching

Teaching remotely has presented a challenge to all universities. But the summer term 2020 has been a successful one nevertheless. It has forced universities to explore the opportunities of remote teaching – and some experiences have been quite positive.

At Stuttgart's Media University, providing theoretical input in 5-10 minute videos (which students can watch at their own pace) have proven to be a good way of introducing central concepts. Brief online tests accompanying the videos give students and teachers fast feedback on the immediate learning goals. Students like these asynchronous lectures as complementing live teaching and they complete the small online tests diligently. (In a similar vein, theoretical input in live online sessions should also be followed by questions testing whether students have grasped the main points because non-verbal student reactions are lacking.)

Class meetings, whether online or face-to-face, can then be devoted to critically discussing the concepts and answering questions students may have. Fostering critical discussion in digital formats requires new methods, however, as students are more reluctant to participate. Some effective measures to this end:

- Teachers address students personally and ask for opinions.
- Students post their contributions on a virtual board.
- Students prepare statements which are reviewed by fellow students. Teachers can give feedback on both, original statement and review.

At Windesheim University, we have our students work in smaller teams than in more "normal" times. We try to keep the size to approximately four students. Pre-corona we worked in teams of about 6-8 students. But as we are forced to mainly work online, it has proven to be more productive to keep the teams small. To work on their research projects, each team has their own online workspace (online tool TEAMS) where they can meet online and also share and save their documents. Teachers can visit these online workspaces to coach the students. So the physical workspaces by means of a classroom found their online equivalent in the form of the online tool TEAMS.

As for the journalistic outcome of the research projects, we focus more on being creative in ways of online storytelling and the use of social media as a replacement of making on-the-spot video stories or "atmospheric reporting." In some respect the journalistic work suffers from this lack of "in the field" reporting, on the other hand these limitations in what is possible in Corona times sparks also new creativity among the students as they now explore more in depth what is actually possible in online storytelling.

At DMJX, all coaching and some of the talks from guest teachers had to move online due to Covid-19. Online coaching proved almost as good as coaching face-to-face. In the beginning, students were not allowed to even meet in their respective groups, but that changed for the second part of the

semester. Being together in the same room as their group members improved both motivation and dialogue among the students. The online lectures worked best when they were held fairly short and included dynamic group work – something the introduction of Zoom and the feature of breakout rooms made possible.

Usually the groups pitch their project ideas for half the class, but when teaching moved online, we changed the set-up to pitching for two other groups in a TEAMS meeting. That was a good choice, as concentrating for a long period of time is harder online.

The students' dialogue with communities was, of course, challenged because they couldn't meet sources in person or just show up and knock on doors in the communities. On the other hand, for some students the online dialogue had even better terms than usual – perhaps due to people working from home and being more online in general. And it forced the students to think in other ways to reach their communities on a big scale, which led to an increased use of surveys – both qualitative and quantitative – with very promising results.

5.1.2. Remote international workshop

The first international workshop at Windesheim, Zwolle, in June 2020 bore the title "Corona Challenge Week." It proved to be a challenge indeed. Fortunately, the Danish, Dutch and German students respectively were able to work physically together at their respective campuses. But the original concept of having them and their teachers all work together at the same place, was impossible to carry out due to Covid-19 restrictions. Since the national teams worked in a pressure cooker, their first concern was to handle the journalistic part of their assignment. This focus made it difficult to pay sufficient attention to the international interaction such as aligning similar team roles and the online presentation of their findings. International Teams meetings with over 20 participants proved to be long and arduous and may have taken more time and energy than the real thing.

5.1.3. Writing a collaborative report

Writing this report was a two-step process. At the beginning of the year, shortly before Covid-19 hit Europe, we collected material from all partners, reviewed it and organized it into a comprehensible outline. The second step of fleshing out the report was then made more difficult by the pandemic. All partners were busy adapting their courses, and we could not have a meeting to discuss some central issues in person. How to delineate the concepts of constructive journalism, dialogue-based journalism and audience development and engagement was one such issue, and how to define didactic concepts was another. We asked students to present their respective courses in the online workshop in June 2020 (see section 5.1.2.) to get more insight into the teaching of the partners. And through a series of online chats and meetings, we arrived at the working definitions presented in this report.

Writing the report was a collaborative task. All partners contributed to a living online document and commented on the sections written by the others. Final editing was done by HdM. We included a section on our shared understanding (section 1.2.) and a systematic overview of our curricula (section 4.4.) in the hope of making it easier for other journalism teachers to use this report.

5.2. Ideas for further development

5.2.1. New tools to initiate conversations

Students in the DMJX course have asked for more tools. And even if we have introduced them to some rules, playbooks and best practices, dialogue-based journalism demands a considerable shift in the students' mindset. Most students understand this, but we still have a minor group of students who ask for practical skills and measurable results. If they fail to establish a fruitful dialogue, they feel they didn't learn anything. Therefore, our future focus will be on more exercises and examples in order to make the concept of dialogue-based journalism palpable. Here are some ideas for new exercises to open the students' mindset to dialogue-based journalism:

Exercise 1: Dialogue-based approach to ideas and issues with societal dilemmas: The surplus of humanities candidates from Danish universities

In this exercise, we will ask students to work with the issue of Danish universities turning out far more humanities candidates than the number of jobs directly related to the humanities studies. And that the labor market doesn't acknowledge humanities skills outside this particular field.

Students process the topic using the following questions and come up with approaches to the topic that invite dialogue, nuances and maybe even solutions: Can you provide an overview? What about the nuances? What is the reality of this (facts)? Should you test a myth? Has somebody already suggested solutions or ideas to solve the problem? What does it take to solve the problem? Who is capable of solving the problem? Do we need new solutions? Who is responsible for testing and implementing the new solution? Can the media play an active role? Can the media facilitate a debate? Should people at odds meet? On what grounds? What are the perspectives?

Other examples: Teaching during and after Corona, expensive medication, livable cities.

Exercise 2: Interviewing for mutual understanding (Spaceship Media, Deutschland Spricht, Einig)

Exercise 3: Framing, finding and sourcing solutions journalism (Learning Lab)

5.2.2. Evening discussions with live audiences

Students of HdM have wondered how to initiate a dialogue with an audience if the semester project merely leaves a window of a few weeks. One possible solution is to focus on **live events** with an audience that is present for one or two hours. Even if the audience just comprises a few dozen participants, it allows for a fruitful discussion. The DIALOGUE project will test this suggestion in an international workshop in January 2021 in Stuttgart.

In this workshop, students will work in international teams and take responsibility for a part of the general topic of discussion. Every team will do interviews and look for relevant statistics before the workshop. They should also prepare an introduction (possibly a short video) for the discussion planned during the workshop. Every team will moderate a part of the discussion, evaluate the event and then use the audience's input in their reporting. Invited experts will provide additional training in interview techniques and integration of studies, data and audience input.

A possible format for the discussion that is well suited for discussing future-oriented topics: The moderators ask questions that can be answered with Yes of No, and participants have to make a choice and show it. They can, e.g., choose one side of the room to sit so that the Yes-sayers and the No-sayers face each other. In online meetings, participants can select the background color of their screen accordingly: green for Yes and red for No. In any case, the moderators then ask about the reasons for preferring one side over the other. The goal is not to win an argument but to make up

one's mind, reflect on the arguments of both sides and gain a better understanding of the problem. Participants play along well as we have observed in quite a few discussion rounds of this type.

The questions should not be too clear-cut but allow room for interpretation. They should not focus on immediate political decisions but rather try to uncover emotions, values and visions. Some examples:

- Are you afraid of losing your job to an artificially intelligent machine? This question allows participants to share personal stories and, surprisingly often, leads to a discussion of how the world could be if machines take over tedious and unpleasant jobs and thereby give people time to be creative and work on more fulfilling tasks.
- Should we do everything to ensure that children are born healthy? This question leaves open what "everything" means and allows participants to discuss how far they would be willing to go.
- Do you like to drive a car? This question is just meant for fun. In Germany, surveys show that about 50% answer "yes," women and men alike. But the question can be followed by a more serious one: Do you like to drive your car to work? This will inspire a discussion about the best way of commuting – and what could be done to change traffic for the better.

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