

JOURNALISM EDUCATION: BALANCING THEORY AND PRACTICE

Theory vs. Practice



Journalists argue: Skills are best acquired through practical work, outside of the classroom.

Universities say: journalists' work requires theoretical knowledge; theory encourages practice.

The Response?



·No overall "winner". Journalism education should combine both theory and practice.

·Overabundance of theoretical courses does not help to prepare future journalists.

·Combining practical skills with a fundamental understanding of democratic processes, professional and ethical standards, equips students with crucial democratic values.

Benefits of Practice



·Improves the competence of students to face the realities of journalism.

·Strengthens their ability to determine the validity of news sources intelligently.

·Offers mentoring by experienced journalists.

·Offers work experience and presence on the labour market.

Benefits of Theory



·Improves journalists' performance

·Offers the building blocks for necessary skills.

·Invaluable in shaping students' critical thinking.

·Offers understanding of democratic processes, historical and cultural context.



"A narrowly-educated journalist—one with only technical skills or with only theoretical knowledge cannot define "news" intelligently or determine its significance... cannot distinguish a fad from a trend without the historical and cultural context..." (Mould, 2009:48).

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