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What Do Facts Have to Do with It?

A Case Study of News Literacy at Stony Brook University

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Jennifer Joyce Fleming

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

What Do Facts Have to Do with It?

A Case Study of News Literacy at Stony Brook University

by

Jennifer Joyce Fleming

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Douglas Kellner, Chair

This case study focused on the conceptualization and implementation of a news literacy course created by journalism educators at Stony Brook University in New York. The pedagogy was designed to teach students how to analyze news sources with techniques and tools informed and inspired by journalistic ways of thinking and professional practices. The idea represented an attempt to broaden the purpose of journalism education as well as diversify understandings of media literacy and citizenship instruction in the digital age. Interview transcripts, course documents, and observation notes were used as evidence in the case study. The evidence was analyzed from multiple perspectives.

From grounded theory perspectives, the study found that news literacy is a thoughtful, experimental, and well-funded pedagogy that differentiates news from other information sources and defines concepts and frameworks to be used in the analysis of news. From media literacy perspectives, the study found that news literacy represents a distinct and highly specialized

variant of media literacy because it focuses exclusively on the analysis of news and restricts its analytic techniques to those informed by journalistic mindsets and methods. The pedagogy's dependence on specialized knowledge and its emphasis on the development of information-processing skills led to the formulation of a cognitive theory of news literacy. From philosophical perspectives, the study found that news literacy architects challenge the conceptual boundaries of citizenship instruction by connecting journalism's digital future with principles and practices rooted in its print-dominated past.

Suggestions for future research include the exploration of emphasis in media literacy pedagogies, the development of new theories and understandings of what it means to be an informed and responsible citizen in the digital age, and the role of educators in the instruction of skills and competencies deemed essential for engaged and meaningful civic participation.

The dissertation of Jennifer Joyce Fleming is approved.

Leah Lievrouw

Carlos Torres

Richard Wagoner

Douglas Kellner, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

DEDICATION

The fact is that this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and kindness of many people. This page allows me to thank and pay tribute to them.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jennifer Fleming received a Bachelor of Arts in Communications with a minor in Canadian Studies from Simon Fraser University in 1995 and a Master of Arts in Journalism from the University of Western Ontario in 1997.

From 1997 to 2002, Jennifer was a writer and producer at CTV National News in Toronto, where she contributed to the top-rated programs *CTV National News with Lloyd Robertson* and *Canada AM* as well as the 24-hour cable news channel CTV Newsnet. During that time, she also published stories in the *Globe & Mail* and she produced feature reports about the emerging Internet industry for the business news program *Investor's Online*. Since 2002, Jennifer has been employed as a journalism educator at California State University, Long Beach. She also taught journalism courses at the University of Southern California.

Jennifer's scholarly work has appeared in *Media Literacy: New Agendas in Communication*, *Encyclopedia of Journalism*, *UCLA Journal of Education & Information Studies*, and *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media.* She is a member of numerous academic and professional news organizations including the American Educational Research Association, Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, Broadcast Education Association, and Radio and Television News Association of Southern California.

CHAPTER ONE

Introducing News Literacy and Setting the Context

Digital media will likely be the most transformative technologies since the printing press. Five centuries after the printing press challenged power structures and changed social norms through the distribution of knowledge, the Internet is challenging power structures and creating new ones, it is dispersing knowledge and altering social norms, and it is doing so at a much more expedited pace than the printing press did in the 16th century or the introduction and widespread adoption of television in the 20th century. Sweeping changes in the production, consumption, and distribution of information through communications media bring opportunities and challenges for educators because schooling is both a producer and product of culture.

At the dawn of the digital age, Kellner (1998) argued it was of "crucial importance" for educators to address the challenges and opportunities of a high-tech society and the digital age restructuring of education should include the development of new literacies as well as a reinvigoration of print literacy programs. Kellner believed an overhaul in education was necessary because the "Great Transformation" in media technologies would alter every aspect of society and new literacies would be needed to make education relevant to an increasingly multicultural and wired world (p. 103). The media landscape has changed dramatically in the decade since Kellner's prophecy. Most strikingly, preference for the printed word is dwindling across all age groups, education levels, and media sectors.

Circulations for newspapers have continued their 20-year slide (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2012); encyclopedias are cutting back their print editions or abandoning them all together including Encyclopedia Britannica, which first started publishing in 1768 and published its final printed set in 2010 (Enoch, 2012); and academic institutions such as the University of

California, Los Angeles, have opted for all-electronic dissertation filing and storing procedures (Boyarsky & Taketa, 2012). These trends demonstrate that audiences and organizations en masse are turning away from print sources in favor of digital databases, online searches, and social networks to satisfy their information needs.

The purpose of this case study was to examine the theory and practice of news literacy as conceptualized and taught by journalism educators at Stony Brook University. News literacy was created to meet the challenges of high-speed, highly personalized digitized media environments the journalists who designed the pedagogy argued could do more to bewilder and baffle young citizens than inform and educate them.

NEWS LITERACY

The digital revolution might bring the promise of enlightenment, but in its pathological lack of accountability might just as easily spread a virus of confusion and disinformation.

Howard Schneider (2007) in "It's the Audience, Stupid!"

Digitalization enables the convergence of media technologies such as books, newspapers, magazines, films, radio, and television into single devices. New media devices include, but are not limited to, personal computers, mobile phones, digital televisions, smartphones, and tablets. The Internet allows for instantaneous and global transmission of digital content through these platforms. The revolutionary aspect of digitalization is that it provides billions of people around the world unprecedented opportunities to select, create, and transmit highly personalized media experiences. To demonstrate the custom-made nature of digital information ecosystems, one need look no further than the staggering statistic that there are more than four billion cell phone subscriptions worldwide (International Telecommunications Union, 2010). The seismic

structural and cultural shifts in the production and consumption of information in the digital age are raising questions and concerns for news industry professionals and journalism educators.

The new media reality for journalism is characterized by a disintegration of local and national news media influence brought on by the fragmentation of audiences and advertisers across digital platforms (J. Carey, 1998; Gans, 2010; Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006). To be more specific, the nearly 200-year tradition of an advertiser-dependent press is old news. It is understandable that the newspaper industry went into a "collective panic" in 2006 when the realities of the new media world hit the bottom line (A. Jones, 2009, p. 20). Rapidly declining circulation and advertising revenues caused thousands of layoffs at newsrooms across the country. Numerous well-respected newspapers including the *Rocky Mountain News* (est. 1859) disappeared, while many other notable regional dailies—the *Chicago Tribune,* (est. 1847), the *Los Angeles Times* (est. 1881), and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (est. 1829)—went into bankruptcy. In the midst of this structural storm in journalism, Stony Brook University President Shirley Strum Kenny wanted to start a journalism school and asked Howard Schneider, who had just ended a 35-year career as a journalist at *Newsday*, to help her.

As Schneider began to build the new program, he came up with the idea to teach students how to watch and read news critically, based on the tools and techniques he used as a journalist. Schneider experimented with the pedagogy and talked about it with colleagues, friends, and Strum Kenny. There was widespread agreement among those with whom he spoke that students needed to be taught how to navigate increasingly complicated media environments and assess news reports with skepticism and a civic spirit—to be news literate. News literacy was, as Strum Kenny put it, a pedagogy whose time had come because the problem of information overload was one of national significance: "In order to protect our democracy, we must prepare students

to read intelligently, apply logic, and eye public communications skeptically, with an eye for the lie. Readers, listeners, and viewers must be able to question, to doubt, to demand proofs—in other words, to be responsible citizens" (Interview, 11/21/10).

Schneider and his news literacy supporters argued that information was moving too fast, and the opportunities to deceive and mislead impressionable young voters too many, for educators to stand by and do nothing. He reasoned a course designed for all undergraduates—not just journalism majors—on how to become more discerning news consumers was an instructional solution to the dilution of press influence and disappearance of clearly defined boundaries between journalism and other types of information sources in the anything-goes digital media ecosystem. Schneider (2007) wrote:

> I proposed a course called News Literacy—a class on how to use critical thinking skills to judge the credibility and reliability of news reports. I urged [Shirley Strum Kenny to] make it available to all students on campus. The university would nurture a more informed citizenry. Our students would acquire a lifetime asset: the ability to assess what to trust and distrust in the news media, when to act on information and when to suspect it, whether in choosing a President, a controversial medication, or a news 'brand.'

Schneider's idea to educate the consumers of news—those on demand side of the information equation—on the ethical and editorial formulas of the press attracted attention and investment. Articles about the burgeoning pedagogy appeared in *The New York Times* (Finder, 2007) and *Columbia Journalism Review* (Garber, 2009). The Knight Foundation allocated $1.7 million to help Schneider develop a freshman-level news literacy course and teach it to 10,000 undergraduates. The 10,000-student stipulation made news literacy, at one time, the most popular subject on the Stony Brook campus as well as one of the most ambitious and well-funded courses in the history of journalism education and media literacy in the United States.

Schneider's news literacy idea not only demonstrated how a large-scale and highly specialized approach to media literacy could work, it also suggested a new direction in journalism education. Schneider's (2007) demand-side position was based on the assumption that journalism schools of the future needed two missions, not one: "Our first mission was daunting enough: to train the next generation of reporters and editors in a period of media transformation. But the second mission was of equal—perhaps greater—importance: to educate the next generation of news consumers."

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The problem with journalism education in the digital age is both practical and philosophical. The relevance of journalism in academia has been in question for more than a century. It achieved a moderate level of scholarly legitimacy through widespread integration with communication studies (Medsger, 2005; Zelizer, 2004), but it is most consistently viewed as a discipline of practice, not one of deep and reflective thought (Altschull, 1990). Glasser and Ettema (1989) contend "among journalists … news is not a theoretical construct but a practical accomplishment" (pp. 20-21).

This practice-oriented philosophy is reflected heavily in instructional norms that focus on journalistic skills and sense-making as well as socialization for newsrooms (Brennen, 2000; Mensing, 2010). The thinking is that a journalism degree is a pathway to a professional career in news media organizations (Medsger, 1996). But the practical purpose of journalism education has become a problem now as news professions adjust to digital age realities of shrinking audiences and disintegrating newsrooms. Therefore, journalism programs are in the midst of an identity crisis framed around the following question: Should they digitize their curricula or should they rethink their place and purpose in the academy altogether?

The Stony Brook School of Journalism is attempting to do both. It designed its traditional skills-development curriculum for majors around the digital technology tidal wave that swept through news industries. According to the Stony Brook School of Journalism website, the goal of the program is: "To train the next generation of multi-media reporters, writers, editors, foreign correspondents, photojournalists, online news managers and media leaders. To teach students fundamental journalistic values and skills, prepare them for the communications revolution, arm them with the tools to compete for jobs across multi-media platforms and instill in them a passion for the public interest." This journalistic passion for the public interest, which elevates journalism to an essential public service in democracies, extended to news literacy. Schneider insisted that news literacy is on the cutting edge of citizenship instruction in the digital age as well as a discipline-specific variation of media literacy: "Once you accept the assumption that everybody is a citizen and a news consumer, and news is the oxygen for citizenship, the journalism school begins to move into the heart of the university in terms of its function" (Interview, 10/05/10).

Christ (2002) notes, "While professional programs focus on the practitioner, media literacy focuses on the citizen" (p. 325). Tyner (1998) adds media literacy is more about education than media because it "expands literacy to include reading and writing through the use of new and emerging communication tools. It is learning that demands the critical, independent and creative use of information" (p. 196). The Stony Brook news literacy program appears to meet those objectives; however, it has been met with resistance from some media literacy scholars who argue that the pedagogy is nothing more than "nostalgic propaganda" from the old guard of journalism, who ignore complex economic and political realities that make it difficult for journalists to fulfill their social mission (Hobbs, 2010b).

The criticisms lodged against news literacy so early in its development demonstrate a persistent problem in the media literacy community that is likely going to get worse as more fields bring their own research and disciplinary perspectives to scholarly understandings of media analysis instruction. The question as to what qualifies as media literacy—and what doesn't—has plagued media literacy in the United States for decades (Silverblatt, Ferry, & Finan, 1999; Tyner, 1991; Zettl, 1998), and it is a problem that is poised to further fracture the field because media creation and production intersects with nearly every subject of study and grade level in the digital age. Potter (2010) documents the skyrocketing interest in media literacy and warns that more confusion might come as the number of voices and disciplines contributing to media literacy discussions increases because "each person writing about media literacy conceptualizes it with a different construction of definitional elements" (pp. 676-677).

Given these problems facing journalism education and media literacy, this qualitative case study adopted a multiperspectival analytic strategy. Kellner (1995a) writes that transdisciplinary perspectives improve the ability of a researcher to interpret and contextualize media and culture phenomena. Thus, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What themes and patterns emerge from the news literacy data?
2. How do the various news literacy participants view and experience news literacy?
3. In what ways is news literacy similar to and different from media literacy?
4. What is the emphasis of news literacy in media literacy terms?
5. What are the ethical principles that inspired and guided news literacy?
6. Which genres of journalism are viewed as more civic-oriented discourses in news literacy and why?
7. What is the most persuasive theoretical justification of news literacy's connection to democracy?

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

According to Stony Brook instructional materials, news literacy is the name of a course and an ability to "use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television, or the Internet." In this work, the term *news literacy* represents an instructional philosophy and practice. This use is consistent with David Considine's conceptualization of media literacy when he asserts, "media literacy constitutes both a subject of study and a method or process of teaching" (cited in Flores-Koulish, 2005, p. 4).

The terms *media literacy* and *media education* are often used interchangeably in American educational contexts as they are in this dissertation. The main difference is that media education is frequently seen in scholarship from Europe, whereas in the United States the most common label for media analysis and pedagogy is media literacy. From European perspectives, Buckingham (2003) defines media education as "the process of teaching and learning about media; media literacy is the outcome—the knowledge and skills learners acquire" (p. 4). A dominant definition of media literacy found in American research is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a variety of forms (Aufderheide, 1993)

The terms *news*, *news media*, *journalism*, and *the press* are synonymous expressions in this study. The reason for this is news is the outcome of journalism, news media are the channels through which news is transmitted, and journalism is the method or practice of creating news. Schudson (2003) defines journalism as the "business or practice of producing and disseminating information about contemporary affairs of general public interest and importance" and adds that news is the "product of the journalistic activity of publicizing" (pp. 11-12). DeFleur and Dennis (2002) characterize news as "current or fresh knowledge about an event or subject that is gathered, processed, or disseminated via a medium to a significant number of interested people"

(pp. 73-74). News media is a more general term used to describe the ways in which news is presented, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, cable, and the Internet. Technically, the press refers to the printing presses of newspapers, thereby the writers and editors of newspapers became known as members of the press; however, contemporary references to *the press* have broadened to include journalists across all media.

Finally, *digital age* and *information age* refer to an era dominated by increasingly sophisticated digital media devices and transmission systems that have fundamentally altered and personalized the dynamics of information collection, interpretation, and dissemination. This understanding encapsulates other phrases created to describe the new stage in the history of human communication and organization brought on by digital technologies. For example, Duderstadt, Atkins, and Van Houweling (2002) call the transformation of personal, social, cultural, and political communication the *age of knowledge*, while Mihailidis (2012) describes it as the *hypermedia age*.

ASSUMPTIONS

A number of assumptions arise when thinking about news media, education, and deliberative democracy. The first assumption that informed the thinking behind this study concerns what Kellner (1995b) refers to as *media culture*. According to the media culture hypothesis, the ubiquity of mass media in modern societies means media are dominant socializing agents. That is, media teach people and influence how they behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire. Giroux (1999) calls the lessons of media *public pedagogy*. Public pedagogy lessons in media cultures are accidental in the sense that they are not products of reasoned and well-researched teaching and learning scholarship, but rather they are the results of complex interactions between technological, social, and cultural forces.

A second assumption places journalists in a distinct class of informal educators who produce public pedagogies in democracies. Many consider news media professionals unique because of their role as writers of the first drafts of American social and civic history (Streitmatter, 2008). This perspective is further reinforced by First Amendment assurances of freedom of expression and of the press. For some, the constitutional reference to the press elevates journalism from a profit-seeking profession to a craft with a moral duty to democracy. In the late 1800s, Alton B. Parker, Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeal and democratic candidate for U.S. president, wrote:

> Honest and independent journalism is the mightiest force evolved by modern civilization. With all its faults—and what institution is faultless?—it is indispensable to the life of a free people. The frontiers of the constitutional privilege of the press are as wide as human thought, and it is one of the glories of our country that its journalism, as a whole, is incorrupt, fearless and patriotic. It is the never-sleeping enemy of bigotry, ignorance and crime. It deserves the freedom which our fathers gave it. It has justified itself (cited in Pulitzer, 1904, p. 664).

For others, particularly scholars who examine and theorize about news media influence, the power and responsibilities of the press rest in its agenda-setting function in society (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; Kellner, 2005; Lippman, 1922/2007; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Gans (1979/2004) offers one of the most noteworthy intellectual understandings of news production practices and professional values in his seminal work *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. Based on observations of newsroom activities and interviews with journalists, Gans determines that one of the primary functions of journalists is to manage information. He goes on to question and criticize the journalistic practices he witnessed, but concludes that news is a powerful, "distinct form of knowledge" that is the dominant source of nonfiction for most Americans (p. 311).

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) build on this position from journalist perspectives when they state that journalism's first loyalty is to citizens, thereby the "primary purpose" of journalism is "to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing" (p. 12). Their stance alludes to the third assumption that informed the thinking behind this study, which Altschull (1995) calls the democratic assumption:

> In a democracy, it is the people who rule, and their voices are heard in the voting booths. The decisions made by the people in the voting booths are based on information made available to them. That information is provided primarily by the news media. Hence, the news media are indispensable to the survival of democracy (p. 5).

Schudson (1998) further refines the democratic assumption by identifying several phases in American civic engagement. The *politics of assent* of the colonial period denotes a citizenship based on social position. The *politics of affiliation* of the 19th century rested on loyalties to political parties. The era of the *informed citizen* emerged shortly after the ballot was introduced in late 1800s. The ballot made literacy a requirement for civic participation and elevated the importance of education and news media in the development of informed citizens, which Schudson describes as the "most cherished ideal" in American civic identity (p. 6). Patterson and Seib (2005) add that the informed citizen ideal is usually judged by whether citizens possess a significant knowledge about political issues, processes, and personalities.

LIMITATIONS

This study collected and evaluated data on the Stony Brook news literacy program. Other conceptualizations of news literacy have begun to appear in the literature (Fleming, 2010; Hobbs, 2010a; Mihailidis, 2012), while numerous educators, researchers, and advocates have already experimented with news analysis instruction previous to the introduction of the Stony Brook approach, only their ideas, strategies, and studies were often, but not always, called media

literacy (Buckingham, 1999; Considine, 1995; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Hobbs, 1998b, 2007; Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Kellner & Share, 2007; Kubey, 2004; McBrien, 2005; Mihailidis, 2009; Mihailidis & Hiebert, 2005; Moeller, 2009; Potter, 2008). This study, however, was not a global survey of instructional methods designed to teach students how to scrutinize news sources. Rather, it was an in-depth examination of the Stony Brook news literacy approach exclusively. Stony Brook had embarked on one of the most enterprising and well-funded experiments in media literacy and journalism education, yet it largely remained an unexamined phenomenon. This study was designed to address this gap in research on a pedagogy that touches on ideas, arguments, and scholarship from multiple disciplines because news has been central to the American democratic experience for centuries.

BACKGROUND: NEWS, DIGITAZATION, MEDIA CULTURES, AND DEMOCRACY

The classified ads (and stock-market quotations) are the bedrock of the press. Should an alternative source of easy access to such diverse daily information be found, the press will fold.

- Marshall McLuhan (1964/1994) in *Understanding Media* (p. 207)

Kovach and Rosenstiel (1999) were among the first journalists to hypothesize about the effects of high-speed, digital information environments on the quality of news content and the structure of news industries. Kovach, a former Washington bureau chief for the *New York Times*, and Rosenstiel, a former media critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, argued in *Warp Speed* that the "classic" function of the press, which they defined as sorting out "true and reliable account of the day's events," was being undermined (p. 5). The main culprit, they believed, was the 24/7 news cycle driven by cable news outlets and increasingly by the Internet. They used coverage of the Monika Lewinsky and President Bill Clinton scandal to demonstrate how the endless appetite for content fueled rumor-mongering and questionable news judgment and

reporting. Kovach and Rosenstiel concluded that rapid technological change, declining market share, and growing economic pressure led to the abandonment of professional press standards and ethics that left the news industry in a "state of disorientation" (p. 2). Less than 10 years later, the news industry moved from a state of disorientation to a state of panic.

The Pew Research Center described 2005—the same year Schneider came up with the news literacy idea—as the year of "unpleasant surprises" for the newspaper industry because every indicator of the health of a newspaper was on a "steep downward path" (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2006). Circulations were dropping dramatically and many newsrooms were shrinking, while some were closing all together as news audiences and advertisers fragmented across digital media delivery platforms.

The structural shift in the delivery of journalism from print and electronic media to digital platforms caused concern for the owners of newspapers and operators of news stations, while news workers and scholars sounded the philosophical alarm. A flood of books and essays predicting the death of the press and what needed to be done about it for the sake of democracy appeared (see Alterman, 2008; Cruz, 2008; Hirschorn, 2009; Isaachson, 2009; A. Jones, 2009; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; McChesney & Nichols, 2010; McChesney & Pickard, 2011; Morton, 2007; Shafer, 2006a, 2006b). Fuller (2010) summarizes the dominant sentiment of industry insiders and watchers during the first decade of the 21st century when he concludes newspapers had suffered "catastrophic" damage at the hands of the information revolution (p. 3). However, the print medium was not the only casualty of the information revolution, according to Kovach and Rosenstiel (1999). The authors argue that the craft of journalism, or at least the type of reporting they deem to be high-quality journalism, had also been compromised.

Kovach and Rosenstiel explain that the Gresham's Law of Journalism rules extremely competitive and fast-moving information ecosystems. Gresham's Law refers to an economic proposition named after a 16th century English financier that describes how the valuation of money is compromised when it is freely mixed with another currency that is worth considerably less. The law is commonly stated: "Bad money drives out good." The writers apply this principle to the state of digital journalism because, they reason, news outlets are more often reacting to information first published or broadcast by other sources instead of gathering and verifying it. In their view, this devalues well-researched, well-written, and substantiated journalism because the "lowest standards tend to drive out the higher" (p. 7). Lowest common denominator news to seasoned print journalists such as Kovach and Rosenstiel is news overwhelmed by argument, dominated by assertion, and laser-focused on celebrity, scandal, sex, and downfall.

Kellner (2003, 2005, 2009) validates this position from a cultural studies perspective. Kellner argues that thoughtful, analytical stories and arguments in news are more often overshadowed by dramatic and oversimplified spectacles of war, celebrity scandals, and presidential elections. However, Kellner sees technology as only one factor in the editorial changes in news. Kellner primarily blames the conglomeration of media ownership and the corporatization of news for the loss of civic discourse and culture in the United States. This view is an extension of Bagdikian's (2004) ideas about the how corporate ownership of news organizations is polluting the marketplace of ideas that shape democracy.

Keen (2007) looks at the digital news environment differently. He maintains that user-generated content online is dangerous for democracy because the distinction between trained expert and uninformed amateur is blurred. The problem for Keen lies not with the medium and its infinite number of information sources but with users because "too many of us aren't innately

honest creatures [and] when we're left to our own amateur devices, we don't always behave well" (p. 80). Keen asserts that truth online is becoming a commodity to be bought, sold, packaged, and reinvented by methodologies of the mob, instead of science. Manjoo (2008) builds on this idea with his argument that digital communication technologies are creating what he refers to as "post-fact society" in which the pulsing medium of the Internet "fosters divergent perceptions about what's happening in the world [and] lets each of us hold on to different versions of reality" (p. 224).

The collaborative and contested nature of truth online illuminates pre-digital media arguments of historian Nelson Goodman and political economist Harold Innis. Goodman (1978) describes how societies are made and remade through a process of composition and decomposition, weighting, ordering, deletion and supplementation, and deformation. He views truth as a process built on judgments of individuals and the worlds they come from, the worlds they create, and the worlds they perpetuate. Innis (1951/1991) suggests that communications media are the means by which cultures create and perpetuate their truths, thereby illuminating a bias of communication: The interaction between media form and social reality creates biases that affect personal and cultural worldviews.

Conceptualizations of truth bring this discussion back to journalism, which is viewed by many inside and outside the profession as a field dedicated to seeking truth and reporting it. Carey (1998) predicts that the Internet will first disrupt and then displace the national news media systems he and his intellectual contemporaries studied for decades (Bennett, 2007; Gans, 1979/2004; Schudson, 1978, 1995, 2003). The increase in content choices means a diversity of voices and, therefore, a more democratic media environment; however, Carey also observes that these same factors are eroding the influence of a national news system that cut through time and

space to link the imagined communities that make up a nation-state. He predicts cultures will experience a “category crisis or cultural melt-down” in which established conceptual schemes are no longer relevant. Carey (2005) adds, “The really interesting discoveries are to be made in locating the subtle social shifts taking place, relatively unnoticed, as a consequence of technological change” (p. 443).

Mihailidis (2012) identifies four digital age innovations that are disrupting the traditional flow of information from journalist to audience. The first is the addition of new voices to civic discourse. This is possible because costs of producing and distributing content have plummeted. Mihailidis writes, “These voices have become the public sphere of the Internet, a virtual coffee shop of ideas that are shared, remixed, and repurposed to create a diverse center opinion, judgment, and commentary” (p. 6). The second innovation identified by Mihailidis is mobile communication devices that allow citizens to receive and share reports, capture images and videos, and collaborate with others. Participatory tools are the third innovation. Mihailidis suggests participatory features of the Internet have had the greatest influence on journalism because social media have turned the top-down national media system upside down. In fact, news organizations find themselves reporting on participatory trends and relying increasingly on audience-generated content. The final significant change in the news media landscape, according to Mihailidis, is spreadability. Given that there are few boundaries between digital media, it has become extremely easy to spread information beyond borders and cultures. Mihailidis concludes that journalists and journalism educators are uniquely positioned through news literacy “to bridge the increasingly indistinguishable divide between the reporter and the audience, the journalist and the citizen” (p. 15).

JOURNALISM EDUCATION: BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

Before the century closes schools of journalism will be a generally accepted feature of specialized higher education.

- Joseph Pulitzer (1904) in *The North American Review* (p. 642)

More than 200,000 students nationwide are pursuing a degree in journalism and mass communication, making the major one of the most popular in academia (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Even in the shadows of declining newspaper circulation and television ratings, the number of degrees awarded in the field remains on an upswing, especially at the graduate level. In 2008, master's degrees were up 12.9% and doctoral degrees increased by 43%. Enrollment in undergraduate programs demonstrates, however, that interest in the major at the freshman and sophomore levels is declining. The downward trend leads researchers who monitor enrollment in the field to conclude: "A curriculum tied solely to the journalistic occupation would be one unlikely to be able to weather the current and coming storms" (Becker, Vlad, & Olin, 2009, p. 246).

Journalism in American higher education is marked by a history of curricular debates that are rarely settled before new technologies emerge that change news media industries and in turn alter journalism education. At the heart of the indeterminate existence of journalism education is a "built-in" tension between the professional and the academic (Reese & Cohen, 2000, p. 221). The skills development tradition at the college level can be traced to the late 1800s when former Confederate General Robert E. Lee who, as president of Washington College in Virginia (now Washington and Lee University), introduced journalism education through courses in "typography, stenography, and bookkeeping" (Crenshaw, 1969, p. 164). Similar courses, most often associated with English departments, began appearing at other state universities (Medsger, 2005). But it wasn't until notorious newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer, who made much of his

fortune from a newspaper circulation war with William Randolph Hearst, sought to transform the journalism trade into a learned profession through an investment in education.

Pulitzer wanted to legitimize journalism as a new area of study and rebuild a tarnished reputation by attaching his name to an Ivy League institution. Even with the lure of millions of dollars in endowment funds, it took Pulitzer more than 10 years to convince Columbia University to start a journalism program (Boylan, 2003). Scholarly critics were against the move, arguing that the university was no place for professional education, while newspaper workers of the period attacked the idea on the premise that the best place for aspiring journalists to learn journalism was on the job. Pulitzer (1904) responded to his critics and argued that journalism learned in the office was incidental learning, instead of intentional education. The best kind of intentional education for journalists, according to Pulitzer, was education designed to develop character and an appreciation for the public good:

> It is the idea of work for the community, not commerce, not for one's self, but primarily for the public, that needs to be taught. The School of Journalism is to be, in my conception, not only commercial, but anti-commercial. It is to exalt principle, knowledge, culture, at the expense of business if need be. It is to set up ideals, to keep the counting-room in its proper placed, and to make the soul of editor the soul of the paper (p. 655).

The University of Missouri established the first journalism school in 1908. Missouri was considered first in the United States because Pulitzer's $2 million gift to Columbia was not endowed until after his death in 1911. Journalism classes at Columbia began in 1912. Today, the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism offers one of the most-coveted journalism degrees in the world, and the Pulitzer Prize, also part of Pulitzer's early 20th century bequest to the university, is arguably the most prestigious award in news.

While journalism was gaining popularity as a subject of study among students, it still lacked legitimacy as a discipline among intellectuals. It was not considered a subject in the

humanities because it lacked history and depth, and it did not qualify as a social science because it lacked rigor. Former journalist turned academic Willard Bleyer sought to change that perception at the University of Wisconsin in 1927. He envisioned a curriculum organized around the liberal arts that would turn journalism into a systematic body of knowledge—a bona fide social science (Bronstein & Vaughn, 1998; Zelizer, 2004). Bleyer's commitment to bring the academic and professional together was welcomed by other scholars including Clarence E. Cason, who founded the Department of Journalism at University of Alabama in 1928. Cason (1930) urged institutions to resist the "grave danger" of vocational training and instead focus on the "infinite opportunities" available if journalism is viewed and taught as a social phenomenon (p. 313). Wilbert Schramm further solidified journalism and media studies as areas worthy of social science standing in the 1950s and 1960s under the umbrella of communications studies.

Even with a research footing in the social sciences and a curricular foundation in the liberal arts, vocational training remains the implicit and, at times, explicit goal of journalism programs (Christ & Hynes, 1997). One needs to look no further than journalism textbooks to discover that skills development dominates the way journalism is taught at universities. In an analysis of dozens of textbooks published in the 1980s and 1990s, Brennen (2000) uncovers ideological uniformity: All of the texts examined emphasize news gathering, present technological innovation in news as positive developments in human progress, and share an "unshakable" belief in the watchdog function of the press (p. 110). Brennen adds that the ideological perspective identified in her analysis has not fundamentally changed since the first modern journalist text, *A Teacher's Manual of Exercises, Suggestions, and Bibliographical Notations to Be Used in Connection with Interpretative Reporting,* was introduced in 1938.

In his speech as president of the Association for Education in Journalism, critical communication theorist James Carey (1978) warned that journalism education and other professional disciplines allowed corporate and state interests to saturate the academy. The problem with professionalization, he reasoned, was it undermined the traditional character-building responsibilities of the university. He went on to argue that the academy would "be better served if professionals, including journalists, were to see themselves less as subject to the demands of the profession and more to the demands of the general moral and intellectual point of view" (p. 853). Carey hoped to inspire his journalism education peers into action by designing curricula that included not only courses for students to master journalistic skills, but also to provide intellectual spaces to foster critical understandings of culture and develop democratic habits of mind (Adam, 2009).

Reese (1999) also urges journalism educators to broaden their programs to include courses focused on developing informed, reflexive citizens in addition to highly-skilled journalists. In doing so, Reese sees progressive potential in journalism education. He argues that journalism education can thrive if it challenges simplistic assumptions about professionalism and develops intellectual allies in the academy. From the standpoint of Reese's highly theoretical model, journalism education would not be a field of professionalization, but rather one of centralization—a field that brings together the best thinking from across the disciplinary spectrum much like a traditional newspaper binds together disparate events from surrounding communities and around the world.

Columbia University President Lee Bollinger stepped into the curricular debate when he cancelled the search for a new journalism school dean in July 2002 so he could think about the purpose of journalism education (Arenson, 2002). He invited faculty from the school as well as

other disciplines and practicing journalists to meet with him so he could better understand the problems he was seeing in journalism as a news consumer. Bollinger (2003) concluded that commercial and technological forces were driving news coverage, not journalists. Therefore, journalism students, Bollinger argued, should be given opportunities to cultivate critical habits of mind and the overarching goal of journalism education should be to develop a base of knowledge across relevant fields. A new dean was selected shortly after Bollinger released an essay outlining his vision for journalism education and a new Master of Arts program was introduced in 2005—the first new degree created at the school in 71 years. But as one observer put it, the school, and journalism education in general, has suffered from an existential crisis ever since its own university president publicly and convincingly questioned the modus operandi of the practice-orientated approach to teaching journalism students (Orden, 2009).

MEDIA LITERACY: WHERE THEORY MEETS CITIZENSHIP

Media education is an essential step in the long march towards a truly participatory democracy, and the democratization of our institutions. Widespread media literacy is essential if all citizens are to wield power, make rational decisions, become effective change-agents, and have an effective involvement with the media.

Len Masterman (1985) in *Teaching the Media* (p. 13)

Media literacy is interdisciplinary in nature and refers to a skill, process, and way of thinking about media analysis instruction that is constantly evolving. Its main concern is helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature and influence of mass media. Media literacy is intended to train students in examining and interpreting messages from the mass media, to encourage critical analysis of these messages, and to teach students to develop their own independent opinions about what they hear or see in mass media outlets. Tyner (1991), however, opines that educators, scholars, and advocates apply one small aspect of

media literacy and conclude that they have the whole picture. Share (2009) concurs and suggests that there are no clear-cut categories in a field marked by a collection of "porous tendencies" (p. 60).

Pedagogical tendencies linked to the media literacy movement in the United States strive to teach students how to access, evaluate, analyze, and create media in a variety of forms (Aufderheide, 1993). The normative premise of the movement is that schools should not ignore nor blindly accept the curriculum that media are already teaching students outside of the classroom. The U.S. lags behind comparable countries such as Canada, Australia, and Great Britain in the widespread development and adoption of instructional strategies that teach students how to thoughtfully analyze media (Kubey & Baker, 1999). Tyner (1998) suggests that this is due in part to disagreements over the definition of media literacy. Hobbs (1998a) adds that ongoing tensions may limit opportunities to collaborate that are vital to the development of the field. Even without widespread agreement on a definition or direction, a widely cited framework within the movement has emerged. The framework is based on five general principles:

1. All messages are constructions.
2. Messages are representations of social reality.
3. Individuals negotiate meaning by interacting with messages.
4. Messages have economic, political, social, and aesthetic purposes.
5. Each form of communication has unique characteristics (Hobbs, 1997, p. 9).

Critical media literacy frameworks build on these principles and include discussions of ideology. Inspired by Marxist ideas of superstructure and Gramsci's theories of cultural hegemony, arguments for critical media literacy rely on the premise that media play significant roles in creating, maintaining, and propagating unequal and oppressive power relationships in society. Theorists and educators who support and experiment with critical media literacy are most concerned with the "crucial dimensions" of race, gender, class, and sexuality in media

(Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 62). Kellner (1998) adds, “Critical pedagogy considers how schooling can strengthen democracy, create a more egalitarian and just society, and promote a process of progressive social change” (p. 103). The transition from textual analysis to ideological awareness adds a political element to media literacy. The ultimate goal of critical media literacy pedagogy is to create sophisticated citizens who are well-informed and thus well-prepared to participate fully in representative democracies (Hammer & Kellner, 2009; Kellner, 1995b; Kellner & Share, 2007; Semali & Watts Pailliotet, 1999).

Potter (2004) reorients the focus of media literacy from the political to the individual. He argues that the most effective media literacy strategies focus on personal consumption and interpretation habits. His cognitive approach is based on the idea that there are three mental building blocks that influence perception, selection, and interpretation of media. The first and most important building block, Potter (2008) argues, is the personal locus, which refers to personal decisions about information-processing tasks. The more a person is aware of the reasons behind content choices, the more she can control “mindful processing” of information (p. 117). The second building block is knowledge structures. Knowledge structures, or sets of information in a person’s memory, are important because they allow students to tap into and build upon previous knowledge. Potter’s third and final building block consists of more traditional media literacy skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

The New Media Consortium (2005) defines 21st century media literacy as a set of analytical and technical aptitudes that include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them persuasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms. Many critical media literacy pedagogues also favor media creation as a tool for empowerment by those traditionally ignored

by or misrepresented in mainstream media (Hammer, 2006; Kellner & Share, 2007). In contrast, Lewis and Jhally (1998) posit that the inclusion of production lessons in media literacy diverts students from critical awareness because they might replicate dominant production norms and cues rather than challenge them. Others argue that creation of messages is not enough, and contemporary interpretative tendencies in media literacy need to also help young people develop the ability to interact confidently and ethically in digital communities (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robison, 2009).

Christ and Potter (1998) push for media literacy courses in journalism programs. They argue that media literacy challenges the training-for-employment mode that has dominated journalism education for nearly a century: "If the goal of media programs in higher education is to educate students to become reflective, self-directed communication citizens and, perhaps, practitioners, then the process of teaching can be seen as moving students from dependency to self-direction" (p. 11). Mihailidis (2008) adds that journalism researchers and instructors in universities should frame their programs or scholarly agendas around media literacy's potential connection to the citizen because "only then will media literacy gain credibility as a teaching tool and educational discipline" (p. 14). He believes universities are ideal environments for media literacy instruction connected to citizenship.

Curricular debates about how American universities can best shape moral and intellectual virtues span centuries. Moral education evolved from religious lessons to lessons in the liberal arts. Studies in classical languages and literature, ethics, history, and moral philosophy were understood as moral and civic instruction along the lines of intellectual doctrines of ancient Greece (Cohen, 1998; Committee of the [Yale] Corporation and the Academic Faculty, 1828; Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society, 1945; Thelin, 2004).

The expansion of higher education in the 1800s and later in the 1940s was fueled in part by the belief that colleges play crucial roles in shaping citizens and this assumption remains a guiding principle of general education requirements at modern universities. Colby et al. (2003) posit, however, that the widespread adoption of the German university model of specialization, scholarly research, and academic freedom is hampering higher education's ability to focus on undergraduate moral and civic development. The authors argue that the betterment of student character needs to move from the fringes of university life and back to its center. They reason:

> College is the last stage of formal education for most Americans and the last formal education outside of their field of specialization for those who pursue further study. Although informal education can continue throughout life—at work and through engagement with the media, the arts, and books—to a great extent experiences in college determine how inclined individuals will be to pursue this kind of ongoing learning and what intellectual and personal capacities they will bring to those engagements (p. 6).

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

This dissertation contains six chapters. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present Stony Brook's conceptualization of news literacy and place it the context of relevant research found in the fields of media studies, journalism education, and media literacy. In Chapter Two, I elaborate on the design of this qualitative study and the strategies I employed to evaluate the evidence gathered during a site visit to Stony Brook in fall 2010. This is followed by presentation and explanation of the study's three major findings.

In Chapter Three, I provide a grounded theory logic model that illustrates the themes and patterns of the Stony Brook news literacy program. Within the frame of the model, I elaborate on the knowledge, beliefs, and experiences of news literacy administrators, instructions, news fellows, and students. These perspectives are further integrated into the second set of findings outlined in Chapter Four that suggest news literacy is a specialized variant of media literacy.

This specialization is demonstrated by the journalistic knowledge incorporated into the pedagogy and instructional emphasis. News literacy focuses heavily on teaching students how to analyze the veracity of information in news reports through the development of cognitive abilities. The emphasis on information-processing leads to the conceptualization of a cognitive theory of news literacy, which can be helpful for practice and research on the use of specialized knowledge in media literacy interventions. The final category of findings presented in Chapter Five explores several ethical ideas that connect news literacy with the normative assumption that news media have a moral duty to democracy. The concluding sixth chapter builds on the democratic aspirations of news literacy by exploring future directions and emerging theoretical frameworks in citizenship education that more closely align instruction with the hypermedia realities of 21st century students and societies.

CHAPTER TWO

Design of the Study and Analytic Strategies

I first sought to understand why journalism educators at Stony Brook University created a new course to teach students how to think critically and skeptically about news sources – to become news literate. I wanted to know how the news literacy course was designed and taught and why it had attracted millions of dollars in grants to assist with its development, instruction, and expansion. I was also interested in the patterns and themes of news literacy. As the investigation progressed, I began to see the similarities and differences between news literacy as practiced by Stony Brook educators and dominant themes in media literacy. I discovered, however, that the body of literature informing media literacy lacked an analytic framework that adequately reflected the diversity of disciplines that generated knowledge and pedagogy aimed at evaluating and analyzing media.

In direct response to this deficiency in the literature, I formulated an analytic matrix that incorporated multiple approaches to the instruction of media literacy in addition to the varied ways people comprehend media. Finally, I connected what I learned about the Stony Brook news literacy model with long-established and emerging arguments about the roles of journalists and educators in the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies deemed essential for effective and responsible citizenship. I concluded that Stony Brook's ambitious news literacy experiment both complemented and challenged conceptualizations of what it means to be an informed and engaged citizen in the digital age.

I begin this chapter by describing the case study approach and explaining why the methodology was appropriate for an in-depth examination of news literacy. Next, I present the research questions that guided the study and describe the data-collection procedures and types of evidence collected. I also include descriptions of the study participants and a discussion of the

ethical considerations in human subject research. I follow that section with an overview of how I utilized Nvivo, a qualitative data organization and analysis software program, in this project. Later, I address the nature and benefits of multiperspectival analyses and explain the multiple analytic strategies I employed to understand and explain news literacy. I end the chapter with remarks on the validity of the study and its findings.

STUDY DESIGN AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I conducted a case study of news literacy pedagogy as devised by educators in the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University in New York. Case study is a qualitative approach to scholarly inquiry that emphasizes an understanding of people, events, and processes in their natural settings. Yin (2009) defines case study as an "empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a '"case"), set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The case study approach is well-suited for descriptive or explanatory research questions that seek to understand what happened or explore how and why something happened. A key distinction between case study and other methods is its intensive descriptions and theory-building potential (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2006, 2009).

Key characteristics of the case study approach are demonstrated by the researcher's intent and role in data collection and analysis. Qualitative researchers attempt to evaluate a phenomenon from the perspectives of those influenced by it, and the researchers themselves serve as the central instruments for data collection and analysis. They also often conduct field work to gather multiple sources of evidence such as documents, interviews, and observations. To gather these materials, case study researchers physically travel to the site of the phenomenon to experience the natural environment and interact with people who shaped or were affected by the

subject being studied (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998). McDonald and Walker (1977) note that "the most important feature of case study in the human sciences is that it is pursued via a social process and leads to a social product" (p. 184).

Two basic designs inform the process of case study research: single and multiple. Single case design refers to a detailed investigation of a phenomenon; multiple case projects seek to understand dynamics in different settings and compare the results. According to Yin (2009), single case study design is appropriate when a case satisfies at least one of the following conditions: 1) a critical case is used to confirm, challenge, or extend a well-formulated theory; 2) a unique study examines a rare or new phenomenon; 3) a representative case explores a typical situation; 4) a case is revelatory when a researcher observes and analyzes a previously inaccessible phenomenon, and 5) a longitudinal case study looks at a single case at two or more different points in time. This study adhered to single case design logic because the examination of news literacy instruction at Stony Brook represented a blend of unique, critical, and revelatory case study characteristics.

The Stony Brook news literacy model is a unique case because it signifies a new way of thinking about journalism education. Instead of designing a curriculum exclusively for journalism majors who in theory go on to pursue careers as news content producers, Stony Brook journalism educators also hoped to create a program that serves the interests of news consumers by teaching them how to evaluate news from the perspective of journalists.

News literacy is a critical case because it represents a fully specialized and operationalized variant of media literacy. Media literacy tends to be a catchall term to describe pedagogy designed to teach students how to access, evaluate, and analyze all types of media and content genres (Aufderheide, 1993). News literacy is the antithesis to all-encompassing

approaches to media literacy. News literacy architects and instructors, the majority of them practicing or former journalists, are unapologetic for differentiating journalistic texts from other kinds of media messages. Also, the pedagogy's analytic lenses and deconstruction lessons are drawn heavily from highly specialized journalistic methods of gathering information and evaluating sources.

News literacy is classified as fully operationalized because the concept generated unparalleled enrollment and financial backing for an unproven curricular idea. In less than three years, news literacy attracted millions of dollars in grants, a news literacy course was created and approved for credit in two of Stony Brook's Diversified Education Curriculum general education categories, and the course was quickly standardized to meet enrollment that grew from dozens of students a year to more than 1,000 a semester.

The idea of teaching students how to analyze and criticize media was not new. Media literacy educators and advocates in the United States had been experimenting with, theorizing about, and advocating for the inclusion of media literacy in curricula at all levels of education for more than two decades (Aufderheide, 1993; Hobbs, 1998a, 1998b; Kellner, 1995b, 1998; Silverblatt, 2001; Tyner, 1991, 1998). Media literacy is more advanced abroad, particularly in European nations and Canada, where it is often a requirement in K-12 and college classrooms (Buckingham, 2003; Masterman, 1985; Masterman & Mariot, 1994; Schwarz & Brown, 2005). However, there is little evidence in the history of American higher education of a media literacy-related pedagogy as ambitious and specialized as Stony Brook's news literacy program. Therefore, in addition to being a unique case, news literacy was also viewed as a critical case because it had the potential to challenge and extend media literacy theories and practices.

News literacy is a revelatory case in the realm of citizenship instruction because it is among the first large-scale instructional interventions designed in direct response it cultural, structural, and industrial changes in news and society brought on by digital age innovations. News literacy is positioned as an instructional solution designed to teach students how to organize and assess the avalanche of information and disinformation available to them through a never-ending supply of digital media content and delivery platforms. The intent of news literacy pedagogues is not to turn news literacy students into journalists, but rather to make them more informed and engaged citizens through the development of cognitive techniques laser-focused on the quality of information found in journalistic texts—texts that Schudson (2008b) characterizes as "valuable" forces in democratic societies (p. 62). Given the presuppositions of the case study method and the unique, critical, and revelatory characteristics of news literacy, three categories of research questions guided this study:

News Literacy Themes, Patterns, and Perspectives

What themes and patterns emerge from the news literacy data? How do the various news literacy participants view and experience news literacy?

News Literacy and Media Literacy

In what ways is news literacy similar to and different from media literacy? What is the emphasis of news literacy in media literacy terms?

News Literacy and Educating Citizens for Digital Democracies

What are the ethical principles that inspired and guided news literacy? Which genres of journalism are viewed as more civic-oriented discourses in news literacy and why? What is the most persuasive theoretical justification of news literacy's connection to democracy?

CONTEXT AND ACCESS

Founded in 1957, Stony Brook University is a public research institution with more than 25,000 students. It is located on Long Island, 60 miles east of New York City, and is considered one of two flagship institutions of the State University of New York (SUNY) system.

Founded in 2006, the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University is the only undergraduate journalism program in the SUNY system. In less than five years, the school attracted more than 300 majors, started a Master of Science program, and generated millions of dollars in grants to assist in the development, instruction, and expansion of news literacy (see Appendix A). School of Journalism Founding Dean Howard Schneider created the news literacy concept in response to the tsunami of information and disinformation available in the digital age. At the heart of the news literacy program is a three-unit, freshman-level course aptly called News Literacy. The stated purpose of the 15-week, general education credit-bearing class is to teach students how to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports.

News literacy students meet twice a week: The first meeting takes place in a large lecture hall filled with about 200 students. The second meeting is known as a recitation, which are smaller, discussion-based classes of between 20 and 25 students that reinforce and explore in-depth ideas introduced in the preceding lecture. This study is most concerned with developing multiperspectival understandings of the Stony Brook approach to news literacy.

Schneider approved of the study in spring 2010. I was in periodic email contact with him until data collection in the field began in fall 2010. During the site visit, 1,230 students were enrolled in the news literacy course across seven lectures and 43 recitations.

DATA COLLECTION AND SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

I collected five types of evidence: documents, audio-visual materials, physical artifacts, observations, and interviews. I retrieved most of these data during the aforementioned fall 2010 site visit. I gathered documents, audio-visual materials, and physical artifacts; I attended news literacy meetings, lectures, and recitations; and I interviewed more than two dozen news literacy stakeholders. I contacted several of the participants via email or phone after the site visit to clarify comments, facts, or opinions. Table 2.1 provides an overview the data collected.

Table 2.1: Data Collection Overview

Type of Evidence	Total #	Duration	Participants
Documents	100+	-	Administrators and lecturers
Audio-Visual Materials	7	-	Administrators
Physical Artifacts	2	-	Administrators
Observations	26	30 minutes to 2 hours	Administrators, lecturers, recitation instructors, news fellows, and students
Interviews	28	20 minutes to 1.5 hours	Administrators, lecturers, recitation instructors, news fellows, and students

Documents

I collected hundreds of documents before, during, and after the fall 2010 site visit. These documents included press releases, news articles, information posted on the School of Journalism and Center for News Literacy websites, syllabi, assignment directions, course reading materials, examinations, assessment rubrics, PowerPoint lecture slides, and instructor notes used to organize and inform lecture and recitation topics and discussions. Only the materials used in the instruction of news literacy were coded and analyzed; all other documents retrieved online or

onsite served as background information or was used to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (Yin, 2009).

Audio-Visual Materials

The news literacy lectures and recitations I observed regularly displayed television news segments to demonstrate course concepts or initiate in-class discussions. As a result, I acquired seven audio-visual segments. These materials represented a diverse sample of electronic news sources including reports from local and national television news providers, excerpts from satirical late-night television programs such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* and debates from the Fox News Channel's *The O'Reilly Factor*. These materials were not collected to be analyzed individually, but rather to be used to determine the overall objective and influence of audio-visual materials on news literacy (Yin, 2009).

Physical Artifacts

I retrieved two physical artifacts during the site visit. The first was a flyer created to announce and promote a "My Life As …" speaker event. Lydia Cacho visited the Stony Brook campus in October 2010 to tell students about her life as a journalist in Mexico. The second artifact collected was a bright red round button with the phrase "Open the Freezer" in the middle of it. The phrase references a news article that was published with a substantial factual error about the death toll in Hurricane Katrina because the reporter failed to look in a freezer to verify the number of bodies inside of it. The button is distributed to students at the end of the semester and is supposed to remind them to verify information for themselves.

Observations

I conducted 26 observations in multiple settings. I directly observed 10 news literacy lectures, eight recitations, six meetings, and two special events. During each session, I took notes

on the activities, behaviors, and conversations I witnessed. Instrumentation used to guide field note collection was based on Merriam's (1998) checklist of elements in observational settings:

1. The physical setting: What is the physical environment like? What is the context? What objects, resources, and technologies present?
2. The participants: Describe who is at the scene, how many people are present, and what their roles are. What brings these people together? What are the relevant characteristics of the participants?
3. Activities and interactions: What is going on? Is there a definable sequence of activities? What norms or rules structure the activities and interactions?
4. Conversation: What is the content of conversations in this setting? Who speaks to whom? Who listens?
5. Subtle factors: What does not happen? Describe and note informal and unplanned activities; symbolic and connotative meaning of words; and nonverbal communication such as dress and physical space.
6. Your own behavior: How is your role affecting the scene you are observing? What do you say and do? What thoughts are you having about what is going on? (pp. 97-98)

The handwritten observation notes taken during each of the 26 observation sessions were typed and added to the case study database.

Interviews

The importance of interviews in case study research is consistent across qualitative methodology literature. According to Yin (2009), interviews are "essential" sources of evidence (p. 106); Merriam (1998) classifies them as "primary" sources of data (p. 94). Qualitative researchers rely heavily on interviews as a means to access, understand, and analyze perspectives that cannot be observed or captured in survey instruments. Patton (1990) reasons:

> We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe situations that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meaning they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

I interviewed 28 people for this study. Three participants served as key informants. Key informants provide important facts, opinions, and insights about the subject of study and often

suggest other persons to be interviewed. Their role, therefore, is critical to the success of a case study, and their interviews can take place over a period of time instead of a single sitting (Yin, 2009).

Twenty-five of the interviews were in-person, two were by phone, and one was via email. The majority of the face-to-face interviews took place in a private office provided to me by the Stony Brook School of Journalism, while a handful were conducted in individual faculty offices and one was carried out in an off-campus restaurant. All of the interviews were semi-structured. This means that they were more like guided conversations instead of inquiries that followed strict lines of questioning (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Semi-structured interview formats allow the researcher to be personal, conversational, and flexible. Merriam (1998) writes: "Less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways [and interview] questions thus need to be more open-ended" (p. 74). The semi-structured format allowed me to be responsive to participant answers, follow up on issues raised, and pursue unexpected ideas about how the interviewees viewed and experienced news literacy. With the exception of the email interview, all of the interviews were audiotaped. The recorded interviews were transcribed and pseudonyms were assigned to the transcripts of participants who wished to remain anonymous. The transcripts were added to project's database for analysis.

ETHICAL CONSIDERTATIONS

As per the human subjects review process at the University of California, Los Angeles, this study adhered to informed consent and privacy protection ethical standards, and I always took care to treat the participants with dignity and respect.

Each of the participants who agreed to be interviewed received one of two Informed Consent Forms. Both forms described the purpose of the study and explained the expectations of

those who chose to participate in it. The forms noted that participation was voluntary and participants could remove themselves from the study at any time and without penalty. The forms also included information on how to contact me and the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program. The main difference between the two forms concerned the issue of anonymity in presentations and printed materials produced as result of the research.

The default approach in qualitative research in education is to mask the identity of participants through the use of pseudonyms (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Anonymization is preferred in order to protect participants from repercussions that could result from speaking candidly about the subject examined. MacDonald & Walker (1977) note that case studies are "public documents about individuals and events. They are identifiable at least to those involved and usually to wider audiences. They have consequences for the lives of those portrayed as well as for the reader" (p. 187). Simons (2009), however, argues that anonymization is not the most appropriate procedure to adopt in case studies that examine a single institution or program that is unique or programs that include high-profile individuals or public figures who would be difficult to anonymize. The news literacy program at Stony Brook satisfied both of these non-anonymization conditions.

The Stony Brook news literacy project was not only unique in journalism and higher education, it was also well-publicized. The university issued and posted on its website press releases that announced numerous developments including the $1.7-million John S. and James L. Knight Foundation grant (Stony Brook University, 2006) and the appointment of Dean Miller to the position of director of the Center for News Literacy (Stony Brook University, 2009). Additionally, Schneider (2007) and Miller (2010) penned articles advocating the adoption of news literacy at other universities and news organizations such as the *New York Times (*Finder,

2007*)* and *Boston Globe* (Loth, 2010) published stories that named either Schneider or Miller and associated Stony Brook with news literacy. Given these easily accessible and widely distributed materials, I determined that it would be challenging to anonymize key administrators such as Schneider and Miller, so I created two Informed Consent Forms.

Informed Consent Form, Anonymous (see Appendix A) notified participants that their identities would not be revealed in any printed materials or oral presentations resulting from this research. All students who participated in the study, including the PhD candidates who served as recitation instructors in the news fellows program, were provided with this form. The identities of these participants were protected through the use of pseudonyms. Informed Consent Form, Non Anonymous (see Appendix B) explicitly stated that informants could be identified or quoted in materials resulting from the research. All administrators I interviewed agreed to be named or cited as did every news literacy lecturer.

PARTICIPANTS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

I followed a mixed purposeful sampling technique to gain access to news literacy participants. Purposeful sampling refers to the deliberate selection of informants with special experience or competence in topics of central importance to the study. The purposeful methods employed in this study included criteria and snowball techniques. Criteria sampling refers to characteristics identified by the researcher that serve as precursors for participation in the study, while snowball sampling is a form of network building because it relies on informants for referrals to increase the size of the sample (Patton, 1990). The overarching criterion for participation was that the person had to be involved with news literacy in some capacity at the time of the site visit in fall 2010.

Previous to the fieldwork phase of the study, I identified five types of news literacy stakeholders with whom I wished to speak: administrators, lecturers/instructors, news fellows, students, and grant managers. I relied on key informants such as Howard Schneider, Dean Miller, and Center for News Literacy staff assistant Elizabeth Farley to introduce or refer me to news literacy stakeholders. Below are brief biographical sketches of the participants I interviewed. A complete list of participants with select demographic data and pseudonyms, when applicable, can be found in Appendix D, and the types and dates of their interviews are listed in Appendix E.

Administrators

I interviewed eight news literacy administrators. Administrators included former Stony Brook President Shirley Strum Kenny, School of Journalism founding dean and news literacy creator Howard Schneider, associate dean Marcy McGinnis, Undergraduate Director Paul Schreiber, Center for News Literacy director Dean Miller, Center for News Literacy Advisory Board chair Andrew Heyward, Center for News Literacy staff assistant Elizabeth Farley, and external researcher Christopher Weber of Louisiana State University. I classified the above participants as administrators because they held a news literacy leadership, advisory, or staff support position.

Dr. Shirley Strum Kenny became president of Stony Brook in 1994. She served in that capacity until her retirement in 2009. Previous to her Stony Brook presidential appointment, Strum Kenny, a Restoration and 18th century British drama scholar, held various faculty and administrative positions at universities across the United States. It was Strum Kenny who approached Schneider to design and launch a journalism program at Stony Brook, and she was a member of the Center for News Literacy Advisory Board at the time of this study.

Howard Schneider was named dean of the newly formed Stony Brook School of Journalism in 2006 after a more than three-decade career as a reporter and editor at *Newsday*, a daily newspaper based on Long Island. Under his leadership as managing editor, *Newsday* won eight Pulitzer Prizes, which is widely considered the most prestigious award in journalism. In addition to his administrative duties as dean, Schneider taught one news literacy lecture and one recitation section in fall 2010.

Marcy McGinnis joined the faculty in 2006. She brought with her three decades of professional journalism experience at CBS News, where she was an award-winning producer and senior executive. McGinnis was appointed associate dean of the Stony Brook School of Journalism in 2007. McGinnis often spoke to news literacy classes about television news principles and practices. Additionally, she produced a three-hour online news literacy learning module, "Watching TV News: How To Be a Smarter Viewer" (McGinnis, 2010).

Paul Schreiber was named the school's undergraduate director in 2006. Schreiber worked at *Newsday* for 33 years as a reporter and columnist. He taught news literacy a handful of times and assisted Schneider in the development and instruction of news literacy in its earliest stages. Schreiber, however, was neither a news literacy lecturer nor a recitation instructor at the time of the study; hence, he was classified as an administrator.

Dean Miller was named director of the Center for News Literacy in fall 2009. He came to Stony Brook after more than 20 years in newspaper editorial and management positions in the western United States. In addition to his administrative duties, Miller taught two news literacy lectures and one recitation section in fall 2010.

The final three people included in the administrator category were Andrew Heyward, Elizabeth Farley, and Christopher Weber. Heyward, a former president of CBS News, was a

member and chair of the Center for News Literacy Advisory Board. Farley was the staff assistant for the center. Weber, a political science scholar, assisted Stony Brook administrators in the design, implementation, and interpretation of a news literacy longitudinal instructional-effectiveness assessment program.

Lecturers and Recitation Instructors

I interviewed four news literacy lecturers and two recitation instructors. The lecturers were Richard Hornik, James Klurfeld, Julia Mead, and Steven Reiner.

Previously, Richard Hornik worked for more than 20 years as a correspondent, editor, and bureau chief at TIME magazine. James Klurfeld spent his nearly four-decade career in journalism at *Newsday*, where he served as vice president and editor of the newspaper's editorial pages. Julia Mead was a reporter who specialized in science journalism and was a regular contributor to *The New York Times*. Steven Reiner worked in broadcast news for more than three decades as a producer for numerous national broadcast news programs including *60 Minutes* and *All Things Considered*.

Lecturers were responsible for leading lectures. They also participated in weekly lecturer-only gatherings known as collective meetings. During these meetings, the six fall 2010 news literacy lecturers—Schneider, Miller, Hornik, Klurfeld, Mead, and Reiner—discussed and debated news literacy lessons, themes, examples, and examination topics and questions. Recitation instructors, on the other hand, were responsible for teaching the smaller, discussion-dominated recitations that followed the weekly lectures.

The two recitation instructors I interviewed had at least 15 years of newspaper journalism experience each. Pseudonyms were used in place of their actual names in the manuscript due to their adjunct status at Stony Brook.

I included lecturers and recitation instructors in the same category for two reasons. First, lecturers were required to teach at least one recitation section so they were responsible for leading at least one lecture and one recitation at the time of the site visit. Second, all of the lecturers and the majority of recitation instructors had extensive experience in journalism. There was, however, a special category of recitation instructors made up of graduate students without news experience. These non-journalist recitation instructors were categorized as news fellows.

News Fellows

I interviewed three news fellows. News fellows were PhD candidates from other disciplines who received a stipend to lead recitations, assist instructors during lectures, research stories to use as examples in lectures, and grade assignments and examinations. For all intents and purposes the primary function of news fellows was to teach recitations, but I did not place them in the Lecturer and Recitation Instructor category. This was because they did not identify themselves as journalists. Instead, they were academics from a variety of departments including but not limited to philosophy, literature, languages, political science, sociology, and anthropology. The three news fellows interviewed for this study were pursuing PhDs in the social sciences. Pseudonyms were used in place of their actual names.

Students

I conducted one-on-one interviews with 11 undergraduate students who were enrolled in the news literacy course at the time of the site visit. Eight of the students interviewed were freshmen, one sophomore, a junior, and the third non-freshman student was a senior who had recently transferred from a community college. Most of the students interviewed were between 18 and 20 years old. One student was a former U.S. Marine in his late 20s who had served in

Iraq. The other non-traditional student was in his early 40s and had returned to college to complete his bachelor's degree in health sciences. Only one person in the student sample was pursuing a degree in journalism. Other majors included computer science, mechanical engineering, marine biology, economics, history, and health sciences. Several of the students reported they had not yet decided on a major. All of the students volunteered to participate in the study and pseudonyms were used in place of their real names.

Grant Managers

The snowball sampling protocol did not lead to interviews with representatives from organizations that awarded grants to assist Stony Brook with news literacy. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation was the first large backer of news literacy with its $1.7-million grant in 2006 to create a news literacy course and teach it to 10,000 undergraduate students. The Ford Foundation later contributed $385,000 for various projects including the development of summer news literacy workshops for high school teachers. The Robert R. McCormick Foundation provided $530,000 to support two national news literacy conferences and a digital resource center. The Atlantic Philanthropies awarded a $25,000 grant to help fund a news literacy conference, and New York Community Bank provided $15,000 to fund a scholarship competition for news literacy students.

By spring 2012, the Stony Brook news literacy program had raised more than $3 million. In lieu of interviews with representatives from the organizations that awarded the various grants, I relied on key informants to provide details about how the grants came about and how the monies were being spent. I also reviewed press releases and the websites of the organizations that awarded funds to support news literacy. A complete list of the granter organizations, their mission statements, and the amounts and purposes of their awards can be found in Appendix C.

DATA ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS

The primary objective of case study research is to develop an understanding of a real-life situation from the perspectives of people who are involved in it. Creswell (2009) states that the qualitative researcher "keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue" (p. 175). The goal of case study analysis is to organize and understand data so the perspectives of the participants can be identified and communicated. Data organization and analysis are systematic in case studies because there are various protocols a researcher can choose to follow. It is the choices researchers make in the design, execution, and analysis of a case study that make the method highly theoretical because a researcher is constantly making sense of the data by judging them and weighing the evidence collected (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

According to Merriam (1998), there are multiple levels of analysis available to a qualitative researcher with the first and "most basic" level being the descriptive account (p. 178). Case studies are known for their detailed descriptions and, therefore, they are often guided by descriptive research questions. However, LeCompte and Preissle (1993) contend that researchers who restrict analysis to description alone fail to do the data justice, thereby increasing the likelihood of misinterpretation, adding that their results may be "trivialized by readers who are unable to make connections implied, but not explicit, by the researcher" (p. 267).

The next level of analysis involves the construction of categories known as codes. Codes are labels that allocate units of meaning to data that make up categories. Strauss and Corbin (1990) define a category as a classification of concepts, while properties are attributes or characteristics pertaining to a category. The formulation of categories is an ongoing interpretive process of systematically classifying data into schema. Code categories should reflect the

purpose of the research project and attempt to provide answers to its research questions. They should also capture the theme of the category and the labels should "make sense" individually and in comparison with other codes (Merriam, 1998, p. 184). Coding represents an inductive or "bottom up" approach to analysis because researchers build their code categories through a process of organizing data into abstract units and then comparing them through pattern matching (Creswell, 2009, p. 175).

Pattern matching is an analytic technique that identifies commonalities in the data and groups sets of data based on themes, causes, explanations, relationships among people, and theoretical constructs. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to patterns as the "conceptual hooks on which the analyst hangs the meatiest part of the analysis" (p. 72). Inductive inquiry in qualitative research is often guided by grounded theory. According to the tenets of grounded theory, patterns, and themes emerge through the identification and comparison of categorized data, and the themes that emerge from the process of identification and comparison represent a "set of higher level concepts" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110).

Deductive analysis looks at data from the top down. Instead of starting with a particular case and letting theory emerge from the data, deductive reasoning starts with specific, preset categories and looks at patterns and themes found in the data with the preset categories in mind. Code categories in deductive analysis are often based on theoretical prepositions that inform the selection of the case, the overall design study, and analytic strategy employed. Hartley (2004) describes case study as "theoretically exciting" because phenomenon under investigation are not isolated from their contexts and thus the ability to illuminate understandings from multiple vantage points is enhanced (p. 323).

LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesche (1993) define theorizing as the "cognitive process of discovering or manipulating abstract categories and the relationships among those categories" (p. 239). At its core, theorizing is thinking about data. Theorizing is part of all levels of analysis in case study projects. One way to track and explore the theorizing process is through memos. The purpose of writing memos is to log and link ideas about data. This can help with formulation and interpretation of code categories. Memos typically are comprised of thoughts about the study, its codes, and their relationships. Memos can be a few sentences, a couple paragraphs, or several pages long; the length of memos is at the discretion of the investigator because the audience for memos is the investigator. The rationale for creating memos and analyzing them is that they capture the researcher's thinking in the moment. This proves to be helpful in the development of propositions and theory building when memories may have faded, but the logic behind key decisions and ideas is captured (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

For this study, I integrated descriptive accounts into inductive and deductive analyses data. I viewed the levels of analysis not as sequential steps in a linear process, but as complementary, cumulative, and connected building blocks in an analytic pyramid. The types of data collected and bodies of literature that informed the study design formed the pyramid's foundation. On the next level, inductive reasoning clarified, deepened, and diversified understandings of news literacy patterns and themes that emerged from the data. This analysis was followed by deductive processes that looked at news literacy from media literacy perspectives. Philosophical inquiry was the focus of the final level of analysis as a means to connect news literacy with traditional and emerging ideas about the relationship between news, education, and democracy. Each of these analytic strategies coincided with theory exploration

and construction. Theory exploration and construction are “especially relevant” for unique and revelatory topic areas such as news literacy (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 530).

To assist with these multiple understandings of news literacy, I utilized Nvivo. Nvivo is a software program designed to store, organize, retrieve, and analyze qualitative data. In Nvivo, data are linked together to form what Bazeley and Richards (2000) refer to as a “web of evidence” (p. 97). Within Nvivo’s web of evidence, rich qualitative data come “alive” (Richards, 1999, p. 412). Data are “rich” when they reflect “a wide and diverse range of information collected over a relatively prolonged period of time… ideally, through direct, face-to-face contact with, and prolonged immersion in, some social location or circumstance” (Lofland & Lofland, 1984, p. 11). Rich data transform into living, interactive units within Nvivo because researchers can conduct code-based inquiries, develop and display dynamic documents, store and link memos that capture theorizing about data, visualize connections between data categories through the creation of models, and track of their movements within the data.

Observation notes and memos, interviews, and course documents were uploaded into the Nvivo case study database. I organized the data into files based on the characteristics of the sources. The Interviews folder consisted of four sub-folders that reflected the various stakeholder groups identified and interviewed: administrators, lecturers/recitation instructors, news fellows, and students. The Instructional Materials folder contained documents used in news literacy pedagogy including lecture and recitation instructor notes, assignments, examinations, evaluation rubrics, and course readings. The final Observations folder was divided into five sub-folders that communicated the types of activities that I observed: advisory board meetings, collective meetings, lectures, recitations, and special events.

Nodes are the organizing schema at the center of the data analysis process in Nvivo. The term *node* is specific to Nvivo and refers to the labels given to categories of data. To put this differently, coding is the process that labels the patterns of themes of data, and nodes are the virtual containers that store data coded or tagged to a particular node category. Therefore, the process of coding in this study meant that I reviewed, analyzed, and coded excerpts of evidence that were significant or interesting in the interviews, instructional materials, and observation notes. Other unique-to-Nvivo features included a variety of search and analysis tools. Word frequency and text searches were used to see what the data were saying and to inform the formulation of node names, while coding frequency and comparison reports allowed me analyze the data stored in nodes as well as the interactions between data categories. These interactive Nvivo features facilitated the multiperspectival analytic strategy.

The strategy was multiperspectival because I looked at the same data from different participant perspectives, disciplinary standpoints, and theoretical angles. Nvivo's interactive design was ideally suited for a project that looked at and linked data in different ways and for different purposes (Bringer, Johnston, & Brackenridge, 2006). Its search and query tools were particular helpful because they examined and presented data in a variety of configurations, thereby providing opportunities to look at the evidence from multiple perspectives. A more comprehensive, multiperspectival approach to scholarly inquiry is advantageous because it "forces one to see, experience and interpret phenomena in a multiplicity of ways and thus contributes to a postmodern vision that frees one from partial or restricted views" (Best & Kellner, 2001, p. 53). Merriam (1998) notes that case study researchers "build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gained in the field" (p. 7).Yin (2006) adds that the structure of case study reports are often significantly influenced by analytic strategies. Hence,

each of the three categories of research questions that guided the study was accompanied with its own distinct analytic strategy.

News Literacy Themes, Patterns, and Perspectives

The goal of the first, grounded theory phase of the study was to identify, explore, and connect themes and patterns that emerged from the data. The process of theme and pattern identification started with the creation of preliminary nodes based on literature and research previous to the site visit. As the study progressed, so did the coding schema. I reduced and renamed nodes and added new ones to more accurately capture, communicate, and reflect the characteristics of the phenomena. I also created nodes to store and link data that I deemed to be interesting, significant, or relevant to the study and its research questions.

Part of the node formulation, reformulation, and reduction process included Nvivo data-exploratory tools such as word-frequency reports. I ran numerous word-frequency reports, drawing from a variety of sources including course documents, observations, and interviews. The reports helped to synthesize and illuminate the themes and patterns in the data and thereby inform and clarify node names. The following tag cloud image of the 30 most frequently referenced words indicates commonly shared ideas across the sample of interview participants.

Figure 2.1: Word-Frequency Tag Cloud

The snapshot illustrated conceptual cues about the themes and patterns in the data. The words *news*, *think*, *know*, *information*, and *journalism* were among the most frequently cited by participants, thereby they were larger and darker than others in the tag cloud. The cloud also visualized the focus and strategy of news literacy: News literacy is about teaching people how to think and ask questions about news and information based on journalist perspectives.

Given that *news* was the most frequently cited word in the database and the focus of the pedagogy, I made news the core category in the study's axial coding paradigm. A coding paradigm, also known as a logic model, displays the interrelationships of codes with the core category at the center (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Following the structure of a logic model found in Creswell (2005), I identified and formulated nodes to reflect causal conditions, strategies, contextual factors, and consequences of news literacy.

Causal conditions in the logic model included the technological, cultural, and industrial changes in news production, distribution, and consumption that triggered the creation of news literacy. The instructional strategies category captured the themes and patterns of the tactics used

by Stony Brook educators. Instructional environments that influenced the strategy were placed in their own category. Intervening conditions that also shaped the design and execution of news literacy were coded in their own categories. The final category in the model was outcomes, which described the effects of news literacy pedagogy as experienced by the participants and observed by the researcher.

The model assisted with the visualization and explanation of how the various pieces of the pedagogy were interrelated. Furthermore, it confirmed that news was the unifying theme across all data sources. Throughout the analytic process, I created memos to capture my thinking about what I found interesting or important and link those ideas with patterns and trends I was seeing in the evidence. These memos played a substantial role in the subsequent creation of a set of general news literacy principles. A diagram of the news literacy logic model and in-depth discussion of its categories are presented in the next chapter.

News Literacy and Media Literacy

I used media literacy principles to understand and explain news literacy in the next phase of analysis found in Chapter Four. This deductive stance was important to the study because Stony Brook news literacy creator Howard Schneider argued that news literacy was a specialized form of media literacy. In fact, Schneider first called the pedagogy media literacy, but realized that it did not adequately communicate what he was trying to do so he edited the term to reflect his lifelong profession and passion: news. News literacy is focused exclusively on how to identify news texts and deconstruct them, and why citizens should appreciate them. However, I was unable to locate in the literature an adequate framework that allowed me to assess how a specialized approach to media literacy exemplified or contradicted media literacy principles.

Instead, I found materials that synthesized the state of the media literacy (Hobbs, 2004; Mihailidis, 2008; Potter, 2010), articles that defined media literacy and identified or expanded on a popular key concept framework (Aufderheide, 1993; Hobbs, 1998a; Share, 2009; Thoman & Jolls, 2004), and publications that presented detailed, experimental accounts of small stand-alone media literacy interventions and their possible effects (Byrne, 2009; Hobbs, 2011a). In brief, the literature offered some interesting definitions, convincing arguments, engaging ideas, and promising assessment tools, but lacked a model that incorporated and welcomed the multitude of disciplines that inform understandings of media analysis.

Critical media literacy theorists, for example, identify and challenge oppressive depictions of race, class, and gender in media (Kellner, 1995b; Kellner & Share, 2005, 2007; Mclaren, Hammer, Sholle, & Reilly, 1995). Sociologists emphasize examinations of the social processes that influence the production of media messages (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Gans, 1979/2004; Schudson, 2003), and political scientists study and hypothesize about the relationship between media content, most often news texts, and voter behavior (Iyengar & Reevers, 1997). These bodies of knowledge about media are rich and diverse, yet they are rarely referenced in discussions and examinations of media literacy. As Tyner (1991) put it, “Media educators in the United States are a fractious bunch. One teacher's definition of media education is another's heresy. Like the blind men and the elephant, teachers often practice one small aspect of media education and conclude that they have the whole picture.”

Two decades after Tyner referred to media literacy in the United States as a “fractious” field and countless media innovations later, including the introduction of the worldwide web and digital media giants Google and Facebook, Potter (2010) describes media literacy as field made up of a “large complex patchwork of ideas” that remains marred by a lack of consensus about

how to define, teach, assess, and research it (p. 676). Additionally, Potter finds that the most frequently cited purpose of media literacy is the development of critical thinking skills, yet these skills are infrequently spelled out and, as a result, critical thinking is used as an "umbrella idea for an unspecified conglomeration of mental processes" (p. 680). This ambiguity leads Potter to conclude that articulations of specific skills and kinds of knowledge in media literacy are rare.

One of the findings of the grounded theory phase of the study was that news literacy is a very pointed pedagogy: It is clear about the types of skills and kinds of knowledge it wants students to learn, and it formulated definitions and frameworks based on journalist professional practices to achieve its learning outcomes that are laser-focused on the analysis of news. In light of this specialized approach to media literacy, I formulated an analytic matrix that combined various approaches to the instruction of media analysis with various ways people interpret and consume media. The purpose of this matrix was to better understand news literacy within the parameters of its parent field of media literacy.

Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan (1999) synthesize and explain five ways to teach students how to analyze media. Ideological analysis is informed by cultural studies and thereby seeks to teach students how to recognize and challenge oppressive social structures and stereotypes created and perpetuated by the media. Autobiographical analysis uses personal experiences, attitudes, values, lifestyles, and decisions as pedagogical reference points to spur discussion and investigation. Nonverbal analysis focuses on critiquing the meaning of unspoken communication in media messages such as gestures and facial expressions. Mythic approaches instruct students on how to identify and analyze allegorical elements in media programming that express deep and commonly held beliefs about culture. Analysis of production elements emphasizes interpretation

of media presentations through the examination of the style features such as editing, composition, point of view, angle, graphics, and the use of sound and special effects.

As I coded data to node categories that reflected ideological, autobiographical, nonverbal, mythic, and production element characteristics, I discovered that the nonverbal and mythic approaches were not significant in a framework designed to evaluate a pedagogy that was focused on teaching students how to analyze non-fiction narratives. As a result, I removed nonverbal and mythic categories and added a factual category to more accurately reflect and evaluate instructional emphasis in news literacy. Brief journalistic texts used often in the pedagogy left little room for mythic elements associated with longer works of fiction such as novels and film. The pedagogy also focused primarily on text-based news artifacts, thereby limiting opportunities for nonverbal instruction.

Node categories were also created to reflect the different ways people interpret media messages. The ways people process information make up what Potter (2008) refers to as the four domains of media literacy understanding: cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral. Cognitive processing of information denotes skills such as analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, synthesis, and abstracting. The emotional domain refers to feelings created by the media, and media literacy pedagogy in turn teaches people how to become more aware of feelings generated by media content. Aesthetic processing concerns developing an appreciation for the quality of craftsmanship and artistic merit of media content. The moral domain refers to values embedded in media that provide consumers with cues for the basis for making judgments in their own lives. Potter (2010) goes on to argue that media literacy pedagogues and scholars too often focus on only one dimension while ignoring others: “Each of these dimensions was

thought to be independent from one another, that is, a person could improve on one dimension but not necessarily on others. However, all are important" (p. 682).

To emulate the media literacy learning dimensions and understand how they interact with various media literacy instructional strategies, I created a media literacy analytic matrix that was informed by Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan's (1999) synthesis of instructional approaches and Potter's (2008, 2010) learning domain framework. To do this, nodes were labeled according to the principles described above, and data were coded to the nodes according to the theoretical presuppositions associated with the characteristics identified. A matrix coding query was executed next. The results of this Nvivo-specific analytic tool illustrated the instructional and learning emphasis of news literacy. Results of the matrix coding query are presented, explored, and discussed in Chapter Four.

News Literacy and Educating Citizens for Digital Democracies

In addressing the final category of research questions, I sought to advance the theory-building potential of news literacy. From the outset, news literacy was an altruistic endeavor for Schneider. He posited that the skills students developed in news literacy such as assessing the credibility of news reports and evaluating the veracity of information were essential for effective digital age citizenship. He pointed to the flood of information and disinformation racing through the Internet and reverberating across other media at lightning speed as proof that something needed to be done to help young people manage and make sense of the amount of information they are exposed to on a daily basis. And journalists, he reasoned, were well-suited to teach students information-processing lessons because journalists were seasoned information-processors: They had been gathering, organizing, and presenting information in a variety of

forms for centuries, believing that their actions were essential for self-governing societies to function well.

The historic and, to some degree, mythic view that journalists are supposed to act in public interest and, therefore, they have a moral duty to democracy serves as the conceptual foundation for the philosophical analysis of news literacy presented in Chapter Five. The purpose of this inquiry was to understand principles from journalism's print-dominated past that inspired the creation and instruction of news literacy and connect those principles with ideas about the types of civic competences needed to be an informed and engaged citizen in the digital age.

VALIDITY

Validity refers to the accuracy, credibility, and authenticity of a study's findings (Creswell, 2005). Validity poses "considerable problems" in case studies, according to MacDonald and Walker (1977) because they are "always partial accounts, involving selection at every stage, from choosing cases for study to sampling events and instances, and to editing and presenting material" (p. 187). This study was no different. However, numerous procedures were followed to enhance the validity of the study and its findings.

One strategy was triangulation. At its conceptual core, triangulation is a process of comparison and corroboration because it seeks to confirm or question facts, assertions, and findings from multiple reference points. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that triangulation should be viewed as "a way of life" in research because double-checking facts and results and using multiple sources of evidence to confirm or deny hypotheses are just good practices (p. 267). I used triangulation in the field as a means to verify information provided by sources. I later employed it on a meta-level to corroborate patterns, themes, and theories that emerged from

the data and also to reveal any inconsistencies and contradictions within and between them. Part of the triangulation strategy also included the use of word and node cluster reports in Nvivo.

Word cluster reports let researchers know how sources are similar and how they are different based on the words in the sources specified. Node cluster analysis follows the same logic, but instead of focusing on word choice, it focuses on how the data from sources are coded and reports on how the sources cluster based on coding frequency. Given that one of the goals of this study was to understand news literacy from participant perspectives, word and source cluster reports on interview transcripts were generated. These reports confirmed my expectations that news literacy was experienced and viewed differently based on a participant's relationship to the pedagogy. There were, however, outliers, meaning the words used by or the nodes connected with some participants were not consistent with other members in their group. In these non-exemplar cases, I first revisited the data source to assess whether I had adequately coded it. Additional analytic and theory-building opportunities were revealed each time it was determined the source was a bona fide outlier. I subsequently sought to understand why these outlier sources looked at and discussed news literacy differently and theorized about how their perspectives informed deeper and more nuanced interpretations of news literacy.

My findings validation strategy also included occasional post-fieldwork conversations with numerous study participants to clarify comments and confirm facts and dates. I also returned to the Stony Brook campus in May 2012 to share and discuss my findings with select administrators, news fellows, and students. The purpose of these on-site member checks was to ask the participants if the interpretations were fair and representative and if the themes and patterns that emerged from the data were accurate reflections of how the participants viewed the pedagogy (Creswell, 2005). The member check discussions lasted about an hour each. All of the

participants with whom I followed up agreed that the study's findings adequately represented their understandings of and experiences with the Stony Brook news literacy program.

CONCLUSION

MacDonald and Walker (1977) describe the case study method as an examination of an "instance in action" (p. 181). This chapter outlined the case study research strategy used to examine the instance of news literacy at Stony Brook University. Twenty-eight interviews and 26 observations were conducted, hundreds of documents were collected, and a handful of physical artifacts and audio-visual materials were retrieved. Data analysis started during the design phase of study. It came to life in the field and evolved as I organized the evidence. Analysis intensified when I coded data and looked at them from multiple perspectives. The following three chapters report on the results of these analyses. Chapter Three visualizes and explains the patterns and themes that emerged from the data based on grounded theory principles and protocols. Chapter Four takes a deductive stance by looking at news literacy within a media literacy analytic matrix that combines instructional approaches and learning dimensions. Chapter Five theorizes about how news literacy illustrates traditional journalistic ethics and connects these principles with the argument that news literacy is as a cutting-edge approach to civics instruction in the digital age.

CHAPTER THREE
Patterns, Themes, and Perspectives

In the previous chapter I included a detailed description of the design of this case study that examined news literacy initiatives at Stony Brook University. This description included summaries of the analytic strategies used to understand news literacy on its own terms and within larger contexts. Those items served as a precursor for this chapter, which illuminates the themes and patterns that emerged from news literacy data sources and informed the creation of a news literacy logic model. This chapter starts with a brief review of the study's design and evidence collected. This is followed by an explanation of grounded theory principles. Next, the results are presented. Discussion of these results is organized according to the themes and patterns that emerged from the data during the coding process. Code category characteristics and supporting excerpts from data sources are included underneath each heading. The chapter concludes with a summary of the news literacy logic model generated to visualize and explain news literacy.

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to instructional materials, news literacy is defined as an "ability to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television or the Internet." Stony Brook School of Journalism Founding Dean Howard Schneider came up with the idea to teach students how to evaluate the veracity of information in news sources in 2005. A little more than a year later he had secured a $1.7-million grant from the Knight Foundation to develop and teach news literacy to 10,000 undergraduate students. A course offering general education credit was created and standardized based on the learning outcomes listed in Appendix F and, at one time, news literacy was the largest course on the Stony Brook campus.

This study was concerned with developing multiperspectival understandings of the Stony Brook news literacy experiment. The results presented in this chapter were guided by grounded theory protocols and the following questions: What themes and patterns emerge from the news literacy data? How do the various news literacy participants view and experience news literacy?

STUDY DESIGN AND CHAPTER ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Grounded theory represents a systematic approach to qualitative inquiry that seeks to explain a process that occurs over time through analytic techniques designed to visualize patterns and themes in data. Analysis in grounded theory research is guided by coding, which refers to a process of naming and comparing patterns and themes identified in the data. There are typically three stages in the coding process: open, axial, and selective.

Open coding refers to initial interpretations of the data that begin in the field with memoing to track ideas about data. Once a researcher gains a solid understanding of the data, open coding evolves into axial coding. Axial coding pushes analysis further when the researcher selects one open coding category and places it at the center of the process under examination. The phenomenon at the center of the framework is known as the core category because it is connected in some way to the other categories, which typically include causal conditions, contextual and intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. A logic model is created in order to visualize and assess how the categories of codes are interrelated. Selective coding refers to the resulting narrative that describes and explains the interrelationship of the categories in the logic model (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This study included the development of a logic model of news literacy based on interpretation and explanation of data collected in the field.

I visited Stony Brook University during the fall 2010 semester when more than 1,000 students were enrolled in the news literacy course across seven lecture sessions and 43 smaller,

discussion-based recitations. During the site visit, I collected hundreds of documents, I interviewed 28 people, and I observed 26 news literacy activities in their natural settings. I also created memos throughout the data collection and analytic processes. To visualize the flow of the course, I created templates for each of the 14 units that made up its conceptual frame. These templates can be found in Appendices G through T and the titles and order of the units are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: News Literacy Units

Unit #	Title	Appendix
1	Why News Literacy Matters	G
2	The Power of Information	H
3	Know Your Neighborhood—What Makes Journalism Different	I
4	The Mission of the American Press	J
5	What is News and Who Decides?	K
6	Opinion Journalism	L
7	Balance, Fairness, and Bias	M
8	Truth and Verification	N
9	Evaluating Sources	O
10	Deconstructing the News	P
11	Power of Images and Sound	Q
12	Deconstructing TV News	R
13	The Internet & News	S
14	The Future of News	T

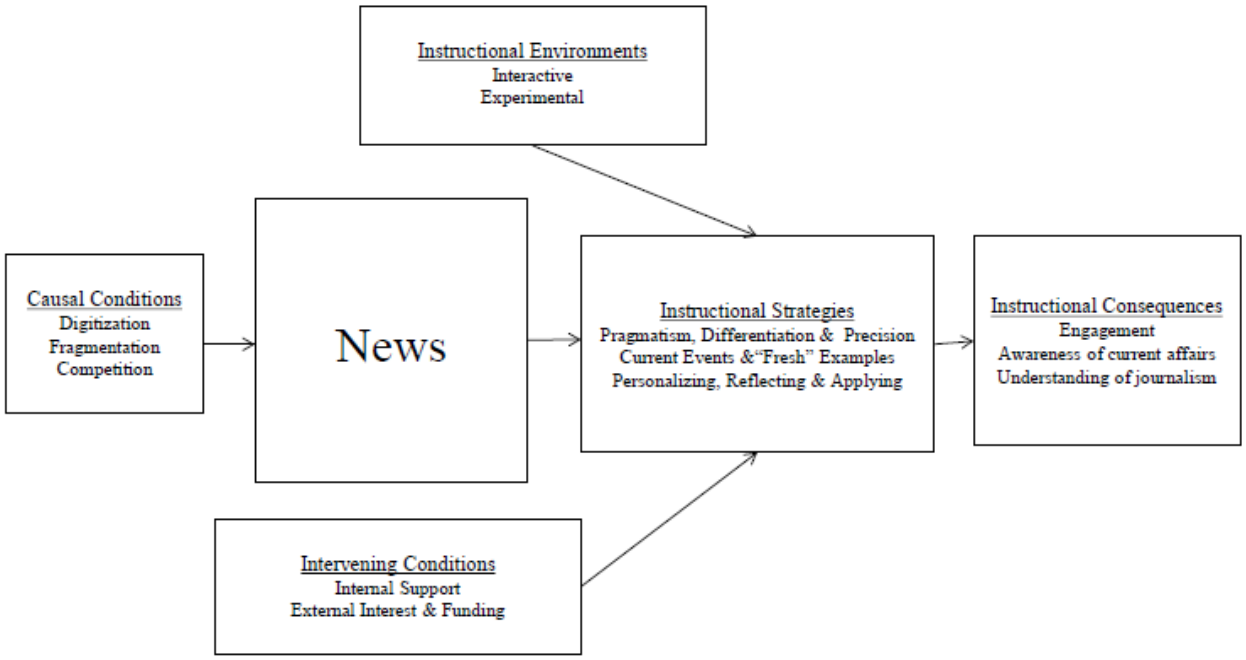
Instructional materials, memos, interview transcripts, and observations notes were uploaded into the case study database in Nvivo, a qualitative analysis software program. In Nvivo, the process of organizing and thinking about data is referred to as coding, and the names and categories of codes are known as nodes. The open coding phase was extensive, given the large amount of data collected. I came up with numerous open coding categories in the field, and I carefully reviewed and coded the evidence when I returned. I also used several Nvivo-specific tools such as word-frequency reports to get a better sense of how participants viewed news

literacy and what they were saying about it. The coding schema evolved from general labels to more specific names that better captured trends in the data. The process progressed to axial and selective coding when the core category was established: news.

THE LOGIC OF NEWS LITERACY AT STONY BROOK

News was the most frequently mentioned word in the database. Additionally, the pedagogy was designed by journalists and created in response to recent developments in the production, distribution, and consumption of news. The factors of digitalization, fragmentation, and competition that altered news industries served as the causal conditions in the logic model. The tactics used to teach students about news and how to deconstruct news texts were classified as instructional strategies. Intervening factors included administration support and external interest and funding, while instructional environments referred to classroom and institutional cultures. The final category in the news literacy logic model captured the consequences of the pedagogy as reported by the participants and observed by the researcher. The purpose of the logic model was to visualize the code clusters and conceptual trends in news literacy. The model is presented in Figure 3.1 on the following page.

Figure 3.1: News Literacy Logic Model



Adapted from Creswell, 2005, p. 401

What follows is an explanation of logic model characteristics. The narrative is organized within the framework of the logic model itself. Excerpts from documents, interviews transcripts, observation notes, and memos are incorporated when appropriate to provide insight into the perspectives of the various news literacy stakeholders as well as to demonstrate how the evidence informed, confirmed, and at times, contradicted or raised important questions about the model and its findings.

CORE CATEGORY: NEWS

News literacy at Stony Brook was created in direct response to developments in news industries. News organizations, newspapers in particular, were experiencing a business model

crisis when Howard Schneider came up with the news literacy idea in 2005. Digital technologies democratized news production and fragmented news audiences and advertisers across an increasingly competitive media marketplace. News texts were the subject of countless class discussions and the sources of homework exercises. The course concluded with a final examination that prompted students to examine several news reports and a final essay assignment that challenged students to pick a topic that interested them, use news sources to research it, and make use of the information found in these self-selected news reports to make a decision about the topic or issue. News literacy was about news: how to recognize, understand, and analyze it. Therefore, news was named as the core category in the logic model, given that it intersected with every variable in the news literacy schema. However, the ways in which the various stakeholders defined and experienced news were revealing.

Most of the administrators and all of the lecturers were at some point in their careers journalists. In fact, the majority of them still identified themselves as journalists. To put this differently, the designers of news literacy were journalists first and educators second (see Appendix D for a list of participants). This did not detract from their teaching abilities but rather was consistent with the specialized knowledge doctrine of the academy and journalism education in general: Who better to teach courses about journalism than journalists? What was important when thinking about news as the core category in the logic model was how journalists viewed news, given that the pedagogy was a reflection of their professional perspectives and experiences, and the definitions of news presented to students served as a window into the worldviews of journalists.

Definitions of news were introduced during the What is News and Who Decides? unit (see Appendix K). Students were presented with various ways to think about news through a

series of PowerPoint[1] slides. These definitions included: 1) News is what's on society's mind; 2) News is information that makes a reporter's heart beat faster; 3) News is what an editor thinks is news; 4) News is information that powerful people don't want you to have; 5) News is independent, reliable, accurate information that citizens need to ensure their freedom; 6) News is novelty; and 6) News is what "we" think is fit and proper. The "we" in the final definition alluded to journalists.

Previous to the digitization of media, journalists were the primary gatekeepers of news: They determined what would go into a newspaper or news program, how much time or space would be given to a particular story or issue, and conversely which stories or issues would be ignored. This meant that journalists defined and judged news. An excerpt from the unit's assigned readings echoed this position. Dennis and Merrill (2006) write in *Media Debates: Great Issues for the Digital* Age: "A standard view is that news is determined by editors and that editors' (or other gatekeepers') judgments, should, in fact, decide what is news. … Therefore, the well-trained editor or news director makes judgments reflecting prevailing journalistic practices and the specific needs of the audience as perceived by upper management" (pp. 110-111). But the widespread diffusion of digital technologies and subsequent fragmentation of audiences and advertisers turned prevailing journalistic practices upside down.

Schneider recognized that as news production, distribution, and consumption patterns changed, the definition of news needed to change too, at least in the context of news literacy. The premise of the course depended on it. In a nutshell, students needed to be their own evaluators of information, given that the editor's role had been minimized by the sheer volume of information available electronically. In the digital age, news is no longer the sole domain of news

[1] PowerPoint presentations were the central organization mechanisms for each lecture observed. The presentations, which often exceeded 50 slides, included key points, definitions, analytic frameworks, videos, and images.

professionals. Therefore, the official news literacy definition of news removed specific reference to a professional journalist and inserted a “journalistic process” in its place. The pedagogy defined news as “information about a subject of some public interest that is shared and subject to the journalistic process of verification.” The definition suggests that the value of news is no longer the exclusive domain of the journalistic gatekeeper but rather the digital age definition of news was embedded in a process unique to the field journalism—a process that was supposed to produce independent, verified, and accountable information.

Of note, the core category did not include the term *literacy*. This was because the data suggested that literacy, which like news has a multitude of definitions, was not prominent enough in the database to be included in the core category. In other words, participants were not talking about literacy, they were talking about news: how to read it, watch it, analyze it, and understand it. Nearly half of the course was devoted to defining news, differentiating it from other information sources, and understanding the elements of news accounts before literacy lessons—how to critically read and watch news—began. These lessons in news literacy were tied to deconstruction lectures, activities, and assignments. The Deconstruction Guide in particular (see Appendix X) prompted students to read, watch, and evaluate news according to a preferred reading that focused on the quality, veracity, and completeness of news texts. But the deconstruction framework was introduced more than halfway through the semester. Hence, the development of literacy skills was part of the overall instructional strategy, but it was not conspicuous enough in the data to be included in the model’s core category.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

The next category in the logic model was Instructional Strategies. Numerous patterns were identified, classified, and coded as dominant tactics used to teach students how to analyze

news. These themes included 1) pragmatism, differentiation, and precision, 2) an emphasis on current events and fresh examples, and 3) opportunities for students to apply course concepts and personalize their interpretations of news.

Pragmatism, Differentiation, and Precision

Schneider and his team of collaborators turned news literacy into a pedagogy of pragmatic precision. News literacy was pragmatic because Schneider wanted to teach students how to analyze information from a practical, journalistic point of view. Therefore, every instructional tactic and analytic tool was carefully designed with the journalism perspective in mind. Schneider commented: "We had to make sure that we were really stepping back and it helped me as a journalist. I didn't think about [the definition and characteristics of news]. I knew what news was often in my stomach before my head" (Interview, 11/05/10). The pedagogy was pragmatic also because Schneider felt that he could only teach so much about news in a 15-week semester. As a result, he sought to define the practices and concepts he instinctively knew in his gut, but needed to turn into academic exercises so those outside of journalism could understand and apply his instinctual principles. The pragmatic approach forced news literacy to be precise in its definitions, arguments, and learning tools so students could easily remember and apply the course concepts in their own analyses of news.

The strategy also relied on the premise that news is different. Schneider's desire to differentiate news from other information sources can be traced to his first experiences inside a Stony Brook classroom in 2005. President Shirley Strum Kenny had suggested Schneider teach a class as he began to build the new journalism school so he could get to know the campus and its students. Schneider recalled that his experiences in the Ethics and Values of the American Press class haunted him. Schneider estimated that about a third of the students were completely

gullible and believed anything that came from what they believed to be a news source; another third of the students were cynical about news and, therefore, believed nothing. The final group he described as completely confused: They did not know what to believe and were unable define news, let alone differentiate it from other types of information.

For Schneider, all three of these experiences with journalism were problematic. His worldview dictated that independent, investigative, accurate, and accountable journalism was essential for a lively and healthy civic culture, but his classroom experiences suggested that the value of journalism was lost on a generation of news consumers who were unable to recognize news and its democratic function. News literacy was Schneider's (2007) instructional solution to what he believed were serious deficits in the understanding of news among young citizens. He reasoned that students taught how to recognize and utilize independent, investigative, and accurate journalism would, in turn, appreciate and support it:

> The ultimate check against an inaccurate or irresponsible press never would be just better-trained journalists, or more press critics and ethical codes. It would be a generation of news consumers who would learn how to distinguish for themselves between news and propaganda, verification and mere assertion, evidence and inference, bias and fairness, and between media bias and audience bias—consumers who could differentiate between raw, unmediated information coursing through the Internet and independent, verified journalism.

The first step in the instructional strategy of differentiation was to help students find journalism so they could analyze it. The Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods (see Appendix U) is a grid that separates news from entertainment, promotion, propaganda, and raw information. News is parsed from the other information sources because, according to the framework, news has different goals, methods, practitioners, and outcomes. For example, the goal of news from the perspective of the journalists who created the grid is to inform whereas the goal of entertainment media is to amuse. The methods of news include verification,

independence, and accountability; the methods of entertainment include storytelling and performance. Neighborhood was a metaphor to prompt students to differentiate news from other sources as they would zero in on a specific location or neighborhood when using a map to find an actual address. The neighborhood metaphor became a foundational idea shortly after Schneider came up with it because it "struck him and stuck" (Interview, 11/05/10). The idea resonated with Schneider because he believed it helped students develop the ability to recognize fine distinctions among similar ideas about mediated messages and those who create them.

According to the list of learning outcomes (see Appendix F), differentiation is a key news literacy skill. By the end of the course students should be able to: "Recognize the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors." Observation data suggests that lecturers and recitation instructors used the news neighborhood metaphor regularly and were often overhead asking students: "What neighborhood are you in?" Schneider, however, admitted that the grid was "not perfect" and could be "a little confusing" (Interview, 11/05/10).

One student in particular, Jacob, did not find the grid confusing per se, but rather a source for debate, especially when it came to interpreting segments from *The Daily Show's* faux news anchor Jon Stewart. Jacob asked: "Does he [Stewart] blur the journalism lines?" He added, "That's the problem with [the grid]. Because it kind of fits, but once you start to blur the lines, then it's harder to take apart because there are so many facets of information that share similarities" (Interview, 11/05/10). Jacob did not reject the neighborhood concept altogether. In fact, he found it useful as did most of the other students who echoed the phrase "What neighborhood are you in?" when they described memorable news literacy lessons.

Another concise and catchy concept created by Schneider was news drivers. The news driver framework was designed to explain why some news stories are given space in a newspaper or time on a television program and others are ignored all together. Journalism was characterized as a process of constant judgment. News drivers influence editor and producer interest in stories. Therefore, the news driver catchphrase was used to encapsulate the traits of information that make information newsworthy in the eyes of editors and producers. These traits include importance, relevance, proximity, magnitude, prominence, conflict, human, interest, change, commemoration, peculiarity, and immediacy. To understand the process of news judgment and thereby better assess the elements of news accounts, students were told that they needed to apply the news driver framework to every story they analyzed by asking the following questions: Why is this news? Which drivers characterize this story? Schneider reported that the driver framework as well as other news literacy concepts were derived from his professional experiences and insights in addition to a combination and simplification of materials and ideas outlined in *Elements of Journalism* (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007), *A History of News* (Stephens, 2007), and *Media Debates: Great Issues for the Digital Age* (Dennis & Merrill, 2006).

The crucial message for students from the news neighborhood and news driver units was that journalism is different. The pedagogy posited that journalism is different from other types of information because it is created with different techniques and for different purposes. Journalism focuses on real events and actual people and is produced in real time, often under extreme deadline pressures. The pedagogy also positioned news sources as the primary sources of information about civic matters. Schneider noted: “We’re not teaching an abstraction here. We’re teaching students to be able to be good citizens and to be able to distinguish what’s reliable from what is suspect” (Interview, 11/05/10).

Reliable information was defined as "actionable information [that] allows news consumers to make a judgment, reach a conclusion, or take an action." Schneider believed that the news literacy techniques he developed were among the best available to separate well-sourced and reliable news from careless and erroneous information sources. Along these lines, the pedagogy favored a particular brand of journalism and a specific type of journalist. Journalists who challenged power, checked and double-checked their facts, and produced information that was verified, independent, and accountable were held in high esteem as evidenced by the journalists invited to speak as part of the "My Life As …" lecture series.

During the fall 2010 site visit, the "My Life As …" speaker was Mexican journalist Lydia Cacho. Cacho told hundreds of news literacy students about why she dedicated her life to investigating and publishing stories about child prostitution. Cacho recounted how she was threatened by gangs and arrested for challenging their authority, yet her commitment to shine a light on the international sex slave trade never wavered (see Appendix V for Cacho "My Life As …" flyer). At the heart of Cacho's tale is a steadfast commitment to investigate and expose corruption as well as instigate change in society by giving voice to the voiceless through verified, independent, and accountable news accounts.

According to the Know Your Neighborhood lecture materials, verified information refers to evidence in news accounts that is established, confirmed, and accurate. Independent means that an information source, whether it was the source of a news story or sources quoted in news stories, is free from the control, influence, or support of interested parties. Accountable information providers take responsibility for their work. However, the most precise and memorable lesson in verification and, therefore, news differentiation came from another instructional metaphor that transformed into a Stony Brook news literacy branding tool.

"Open the Freezer" refers to a seminal story about Hurricane Katrina in which a reporter got the facts wrong because he failed to verify. Under the shocking headline "Katrina's Body Count Could Reach 10,000," *The Times-Picayune* journalist Brian Thevenot (2005a) reported that bodies were piled on top of each other inside the freezer of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Thevenot's report was based on information provided to him by National Guardsmen who were standing outside the freezer. But Thevenot did not open the freezer to see the bodies for himself and, it turned out, the story was nothing more than a rumor that made its way into the paper: The guardsmen had told Thevenot a story they heard in the food line at a nearby staging area for police and military personnel. The incorrect *Times-Picayune* story and Thevenot's (2005b) analysis in *American Journalism Review* of how and why he got it wrong became required reading for news literacy students and the Open the Freezer phrase became a simple, albeit macabre, reminder to verify. Schneider believed the metaphor communicated the key lessons of news literacy so well that he created bright red buttons with the phrase emblazoned across it (see Appendix W). The buttons were given to students at the end of each semester to remind them to check for themselves the accuracy of a news report.

The next example of pedagogical differentiation and precision was the Stony Brook News Literacy Deconstruction Guide (see Appendix X). The guide provided eight steps for students to follow in their examination of the credibility and reliability of news accounts. The guide zeroed in on word choice and the types of sources quoted in news stories by incorporating the various lessons that preceded the deconstruction units. These lessons included units that 1) explained how opinion journalism is different from other types of journalism and alerted students to the markers of well-researched and well-argued opinion journalism; 2) dissected the concepts of balance, fairness, and bias as they pertain to journalism; and 3) debated and explained how

truth and verification are viewed by journalists. Jason, a PhD candidate in the social sciences and second-year news fellow, believed in the instructional value of deconstructing news based on journalistic perspectives and likened the method to a mechanical process:

> I think they mean deconstruction not in the sense that they use it in English or philosophy but in the sense of taking something apart, then putting it back together. It feels almost like what I would do as a kid. Here's a phone. Let me take it apart and put it back together. Now I know how it works, much more than if I just dialed it. I don't want to disparage what they do as being sort of mechanical, but I think that's something valuable for people to be able to take apart every sentence, every source, every bit of evidence and say, 'Can I make a judgment here? Can I say for sure whether I agree or disagree with this position? How do I know if this is reliable?' (Interview, 11/04/10).

News literacy lecturer Steven Reiner echoed Jason's line of reasoning. Reiner compared the deconstruction techniques found in the guide to steps consumers take when they want to assess the quality, utility, and durability of a product:

> It's like you go to shop for a piece of fruit. How do you pick out the good one? They all look the same. How do you know the good one? How do you know the good anything? How do you differentiate the suitcase that's going to fall apart the first time you stuff it with clothing from the one that is sturdy? There's probably a way to check: You look at the binding, you look at the handle, and you look at the wheels (Interview, 10/03/10).

The instructional strategy of pragmatism, differentiation, and precision was designed to teach students how to identify the markers of high-quality journalism. Exemplary journalism in news literacy instructional schema means news sources that are independent from influence, practice a process of verification, and are accountable for the materials they distribute. If a source satisfies these criteria then it likely contains reliable information, which was defined as "actionable" information that allows news consumers to "make a judgment, reach a conclusion, or take an action."

Current Events and Fresh Examples

For every concept introduced, the news literacy instructional strategy required at least one example to illustrate it. Examples could be video or audio clips, newspaper stories, images, or often a combination of all three. Thereby a definite pattern of examples in news literacy instruction emerged. But not just any example would do. News literacy architects favored fresh examples, which meant recent, ripped-from-the-headlines stories or video reports. Dean Miller, director of the Center for News Literacy, explained that fresh examples were the "oxygen" of the course because they made the course "more relevant to the students if they're seeing the course unfold in real time. Even if they're not big news consumers, they're still getting something that happened this week, not something that happened two years ago and they were 15 at the time. [If the examples are not current] they're not really sure why they should give a crap" (Interview, 10/22/10).

During the 10 lectures and eight recitations observed, references to current events and the use of examples exceeded 100 and many of the timely topics discussed were linked to one course concept or another. For example, one of the biggest stories in fall 2010 was the rescue of 33 Chilean miners who were trapped for more than two months nearly 1,000 meters underground. The story consistently made headlines around the world and generated a significant amount of cable news coverage in the United States. It subsequently became a lesson about news drivers as to what was driving coverage in the American media, half a world away from Chile. Center for News Literacy staff assistant Elizabeth Farley stated: "You can see all the timely things. We try to use a lot of very evergreen stories that we can use every semester, but it is also very important, especially to Howie [Schneider] and I think the integrity of course, to use a lot of very current events, too" (Interview, 10/15/10).

Lecturers, recitation instructors, and news fellows participated in the ongoing search for fresh stories that could be used in lectures and assignments to demonstrate course concepts and engage students in current events. For example, Marcy McGinnis, the associate dean of the School of Journalism and a former vice president at CBS News, produced a three-hour online learning module that students were required to complete as part of the Deconstructing TV News unit (see Appendix R). McGinnis (2010) produced, wrote, and narrated the "Watching TV News: How to be a Smarter Viewer" module in which she walks students through the information neighborhoods and deconstructs television news segments. McGinnis commented that tracking down examples to demonstrate concepts was a challenge: "There's a lot of stuff on TV that doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the particular lessons of news literacy, so it's hard" (Interview, 11/13/10).

During a conference call meeting of the advisory board for the Center for News Literacy, board chair Andrew Heyward, former president of CBS News, classified the harvesting of fresh examples as a "vital need" (Memo, 10/11/10). School of Journalism undergraduate director Paul Schreiber said it made sense to reflect current news environments because the course focused on news and news by and large reports on new events and the latest developments in ongoing issues and stories. He explained, "We stressed current events because if you're not keeping up with current events, how can you be evaluating the news or understanding what is going on around you?" (Interview, 10/20/10). Schneider echoed this reasoning: "It became clear to us very early that just like if you study physics you need to know math. Teaching news literacy without having the students engage in the news was kind of self-defeating" (Interview, 11/05/10)? For journalists like Heyward, Schneider, and Schreiber, the emphasis on current events and fresh examples was a natural extension of their work in journalism.

News fellows, the doctoral students who received a stipend for teaching recitations and tracking down fresh examples, were more skeptical of the strategy. Anthony thought it was overused. He felt that the "constant push" for "more relevant and newer examples" was a weakness in the pedagogy because it meant the course was always unsettled: "I'm a little against keeping the course fresh at all costs because I am an academic so I'm like if an example works let's use it more than once. It doesn't matter if it's the Lewinsky thing. It's OK if that's the perfect story to explain what we're going to talk about" (Interview, 10/28/10). Richard, the most experienced news fellow interviewed, shared Anthony's concerns: "They're more interested in what's current than what's important, but frankly that's more of a criticism of journalism than the class" (Interview, 10/22/10). Jason, on the other hand, understood the approach: "After all, this is a course on news. It [the fresh example strategy] allows students to open a newspaper that's relevant to what they heard in class earlier that day" (Interview, 11/04/10).

Students overwhelmingly reported that they appreciated the emphasis on current events and extensive use of examples. In fact, students credited the strategy for helping them be more engaged and interested in the course materials, as reflected in their comments below:

> I enjoy the class very much. In fact, it is probably one of the classes that I enjoy the most because it is very applicable, and everything that we talk about happened recently (Allison, Interview, 10/21/10).

> I definitely think the course is interesting. I really like the way they do the lectures. They're interactive so it's not like you're sitting there looking at slides. They play videos and use a lot of examples so you get to see newspaper clippings of why this concept worked or didn't work. … [It's like they're saying:] 'We're not just making this up and telling you it's true because we say it's true' (Barbara, Interview, 11/03/10).

> I like the fact that the course focuses on stuff that we would like to read in the news. It's something that you're familiar with. It's your own news media—stories that are happening in your time that we're dissecting. I think that's very effective in that it keeps people interested. I think it is one of the strengths that we stay current and lectures are geared towards things students are interested in (Samantha, Interview, 11/05/10).

Students also participated in the search for fresh examples through the News Matters assignment. News Matters was an ongoing, extra-credit activity that invited students to submit stories that mattered to them along with a brief explanation of how the stories demonstrated course concepts such as news neighborhoods and news drivers or lessons in verification. Instructors reviewed the submissions and selected several to be included in their respective lectures each week. PowerPoint slides of the student-submitted stories were developed and students whose submissions were selected were asked in lectures to stand up and explain why their story connected with the course concepts. Stories about the suicide of Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University student who killed himself on September 22, 2010, shortly after he was caught on camera kissing another man inside his dorm room, and developments in the ongoing New York governor's election were regular News Matters submissions in fall 2010. Students were also observed submitting more lighthearted stories including articles or video clips about the gubernatorial candidate from the Rent Is Too Damn High Party, Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart's Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, and a week-long game of tag known as Zombie vs. Humans on the Stony Brook campus.

Personalizing the Pedagogy, Reflecting on Experiences, and Applying Principles

The News Matters assignment was a way for instructors to respect and recognize student interests while keeping the course lively and relevant with fresh examples. It also exemplified another instructional strategy that was labeled *personalization* in the logic model. Personalization denoted a pattern of inviting and incorporating individual interpretations, experiences, and opinions. Almost every assignment, lecture, and recitation challenged students to reflect on an experience, develop an argument, and apply at least one course concept to the analysis of news

or the analysis of how they consumed and interpreted news. This made the pedagogy highly personal.

One of the most memorable and impactful news literacy experiences for Huang, a freshman marine biology major, was the Censorship in China assignment. The assignment directed students to read numerous articles about Google's entry into China (Drummond, 2010; Jacobs & Helft, 2010; Kristof, 2010; Thompson, 2006) and take the position of chief executive officer of Google to develop an argument in response to the question: "Would you stay in China and accept restrictions on freedom of expression or would you stand up to the Chinese government and stand up for corporate principles that information should be free?" Huang took the challenge to plant himself in the shoes of an information provider seriously, but he also took on a more personal challenge to reflect on his own biases against China as a result of his Taiwanese heritage. Huang said, "I obviously knew what my decision was first, but I did take the time to read everything to make sure I made the right choices to see if it's actually a good choice to pull out of China. And I thought it was" (Interview, 10/26/10).

Another activity that hit home on a personal level with students was the Message Machine assignment. Students were directed to read an in-depth *New York Times* article (Barstow, 2008) about how former high-ranking military personnel were framed as independent analysts on news programs during the American invasion of Iraq even though their expert opinions were tainted by personal and professional agendas and financial motives. Jacob found it difficult to get through the article and accompanying assignment that students were told would help prepare them for their "leadership role as a news literate citizen who can hold journalists accountable to their highest values and mission" because of his personal experiences with the invasion. Jacob was medically discharged from the military after he served in Iraq. He said he

was angry because the media outlets seemed to violate their own principle of independence "if news organizations are our watchdog, and every single one of these supposed experts had a vested interest" (Interview/, 11/05/10).

The pattern of personalization, reflection, and application started at the very beginning of the course with the 48-hour news blackout and ended with the final essay. Schneider created the 48-hour news blackout exercise because, he reasoned, the only way to teach about the influence of, importance of, and dependence on news was to deprive students of news. Students were told to refrain from consuming news or talking about stories in the news for two days and reflect upon their experiences in writing. The blackout assignment directions explained to students the outcomes of the exercise: "You should develop an understanding of the information that you normally rely on to make decisions, large and small. You should consider why and how the news is important, where it comes from, and the extent to which we may take its presence for granted." Diana stated that the blackout experience made her step back and think about what news meant to her: "You couldn't see the news at all, and I was kind of like, 'Oh, I don't pay attention to news that much,' but then you realize that you pay attention more than you think" (Interview, 10/26/10). The final essay prompt directed students to select a topic currently in the news that mattered to them, follow the issue for about a month, and in a 1,000- to 1,500-word essay explain how they used news literacy skills and concepts to "reach a conclusion, make a judgment, or take an action" on an issue they cared about.

The pedagogy challenged students to develop opinions about issues in the news and reflect on those opinions while applying the course-specific frameworks. Students were required to complete at least one homework assignment each week that was designed to demonstrate thoughtful application of the concepts introduced. The homework assignments were often in

addition to recitation activities designed with the same personalization and application strategies in mind. Schneider said that constant reinforcement and application of course concepts was important to developing the critical and skeptical habits of mind central to the pedagogy: "It's not a theoretical course. We're not interested in students memorizing the five sourcing rules. It's all about whether they can apply them" (Interview, 11/05/10).

Even though students were encouraged and in some cases required to apply news literacy tools and techniques such as the five sourcing rules, the final decision about the reliability information was always the responsibility of the students. This emphasis on personal experience and interpretation demonstrated the themes of personalization and application in the pedagogy and contributed to an atmosphere of collaboration.

INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

The pedagogy welcomed and encouraged input from students. This made instructional environments in lectures and recitations highly interactive. Behind the scenes, environments were interactive and experimental. Lecturer meetings were lively because they were marked by discussion and debate; the pedagogy was experimental because the focus of these discussions and debates was most often on how to make the lessons more meaningful and impactful.

Interactive

News literacy lectures were dynamic. The opportunities for students to engage with course materials and interact with instructors and each other were plentiful. The interactions between instructors and students were so frequent that I began to count them and this pattern was seen across all of the five lecturers observed. It was surprising to see so much interaction

between instructors and students in classes with about 200 students each. This high level of engagement was also noticeable in the smaller recitations.

Discussion topics in recitations included current events, lecture subjects, and homework assignments. Some recitation instructors spent at least 15 minutes of class time discussing current news stories with students. Students reported that they appreciated hearing what their peers had to say on issues in the news. For example, Huang, a marine biology major, admitted that he didn't speak up much in class because he was not comfortable doing so, but he certainly liked listening to and learning from his classmates:

> One of my favorite parts is hearing everyone else's opinion. This is one of the only classes where they emphasize your opinion, and that's something very valuable. I think opinion is very important, but you can't really express your opinion in other classes. You can't voice your own opinion. Instead, you have to do it the professor's way. That's why I like this class. I like hearing everyone's opinion and how they see things in society (Interview, 10/26/10).

News literacy classrooms were dominated by dialogue, and instructors were clearly committed to the free exchange of information and ideas. This demonstrated a conscious effort on the part of instructors to demonstrate respect for individual opinions by encouraging expression and participation. Instances of interaction were so frequent that engagement was noted as a key component of the news literacy student experience. In fact, the pedagogy seemed to be dependent on student contributions as much as it was on fresh examples and the journalistic point-of-view. These interactive environmental characteristics were also prominent during lecturer meetings known as *collectives*.

Each week lecturers would gather to discuss and at times debate the topics and examples to be included in upcoming lectures, assignments, and examinations. I observed a spirit of collaboration during these meetings and likened their transparent, inclusive, and animated process of reviewing, editing, and enhancing instructional materials as a form "open peer

review" (Memo, 10/25/10). Much like traditional peer review in scholarly contexts and the editorial process inherent in newspaper production, peer review within news literacy meant that there was a culture that welcomed and integrated feedback as a means to improve the pedagogy. This meant that the pedagogy was viewed in some degree as one big experiment on how to teach students news literacy skills that were for all intents and purposes still in development.

Experimental

For data to be coded at the experimental node, they had to demonstrate indeterminate characteristics. These indeterminate data excerpts went beyond the always-changing fresh examples that news literacy pedagogues deemed essential to the success of the pedagogy. Rather, experimental data denoted a sense of inconclusiveness that reflected a belief that there were still undiscovered ways to explain and demonstrate important skills or concepts. Schneider commented, "One of the exciting things is that when other people teach the course, I always ask them what they think about the learning outcomes. Are they the right outcomes? Are we missing one? Should we substitute any?" (Interview, 11/05/10) Lecturer Richard Hornik, a former reporter and editor at TIME magazine, believed that the experimental and collaborative approach to improving the course helped develop, broaden, and deepen it: "Our default is that we're not really sure any of this works, so if we think of a better way to do it, we will do it" (Interview, 10/21/10).The evolution of the definition of truth in news literacy further demonstrated the experimental and reflective nature of the pedagogy.

When Schneider first began teaching news literacy, he brought with him a journalistic notion of truth. The first lecture slide in the Truth and Verification unit (see Appendix N) states journalism's first obligation is to the truth. But philosophy students questioned and challenged Schneider when he referred to truth as an absolute concept. He recalled that he was surprised

when a student early in the development of news literacy asked: “What do you mean by truth?” (Interview, 11/05/10). He, however, welcomed the divergent perspective and responded to it by experimenting with more nuanced ways he could explain to students how journalists view and pursue truth. Schneider subsequently invited two Stony Brook faculty colleagues, Dr. Harvey Cornier of the Department of Philosophy and Dr. Massimo Pigliucci of the Department of Ecology & Evolution, to discuss truth from their disciplinary perspectives. The exchange became known as the Truth Debate. The Truth Debate was recorded and became required viewing for all news literacy students thereafter. Schneider’s position on truth changed: Truth in journalism and, therefore, news literacy was to be referred to as provisional. This meant that journalistic truth changes over time as new evidence and facts emerge. Schneider argued that this cumulative approach to truth seeking is similar to the scientific method:

> The differences here are that journalists are not operating in a laboratory. In the real world, there are a lot of variables. Journalists are reacting to deadline pressures. They can’t control those variables, so reliable and actionable information is the best obtainable version of the information that they can give you in a course of a day. They don’t have the luxury of time and the control of the variables that scientists do. So you can argue that scientific standards of reliability are going to be higher because scientists control a lot more conditions. They’re not facing deadline situations and they can have lots of their colleagues replicate the results. In journalism, we have the same kind of process, but it’s sloppier, it’s messier, and it’s changing over time (Interview, 11/05/10).

One example used to demonstrate the provisional nature of truth in journalism was coverage of an alleged rape at Hofstra University, which is located about an hour west of Stony Brook. Early news accounts reported that four men were facing charges in connection with the gang rape of a female student. But the story changed as new details emerged. In the end, the accuser told law enforcement officials that she lied about the assault. The lesson from the Hofstra rape case in news literacy terms is that students need to follow a story over time in order to be fully informed because truth in news changes as more information becomes available.

While the experimental nature of news literacy pushed the pedagogy forward, it left some news literacy stakeholders unsettled. The news fellows in particular stated that they felt some of the changes to the course were made for the sake of change instead for any clearly articulated instructional reason. Anthony went so far as to suggest that the indeterminate environment was due in part to the professional backgrounds of the lecturers: "I think it's just their bad habits because they're used to being in a newsroom and getting stories. They say, 'Oh, that's a bad story. That's a bad story. No. Toss it. Let's find a better story.' I think they just can't get rid of the habit of judging and changing things" (Interview, 10/28/10). At the same time, the news fellows, Anthony included, welcomed the philosophy of inclusion and improvement. They believed change was healthy in the evolution of any curriculum. The question for the news fellows seemed to be: When would lecturers stop changing the pedagogy and focus instead on perfecting it? Jason summed up this perspective: "I think it's difficult enough to start a new curriculum and everyone has a million great ideas [and] they definitely are open to these ideas. But how much can they implement because they are constantly developing and changing it?" (Interview, 11/04/10)

Students favored the fresh, ripped-from-the-headlines examples that were regular features of recitations and lectures. However, many stated that they were also weary of last-minute assignments that seemed to be by-products of the trial-and-error, experimental culture. The students said they didn't mind a heavy workload but found it difficult to arrange their schedules to complete assignments they were given only days to complete. This was a common sentiment. Huang explained, "Sometimes they won't tell us until the Monday of lecture that we have work due on Wednesday, and I already have stuff that I really need to get done. I think we should get

at least one week. I don't mind doing all of the work, but I need more time in order to think about it" (Interview, 10/26/10).

INTERVENING CONDITIONS

The instructional tactics and tools and interactive and experimental environments that influenced news literacy would likely be markedly different if it were not for significant intervening conditions identified in the data. These conditions included internal support, external interest, and funding.

Internal Support

Almost all of the students interviewed stated that they had heard about news literacy and subsequently signed up for the course after they participated in a university-sanctioned orientation or mentoring program. Additionally, all of the applicable curricular-approval committees approved the course so it could satisfy two Diversified Education Curriculum categories. DECs, as they were most often called, were Stony Brook-specific general education requirements. News literacy was the only course permitted to satisfy two DEC categories. Students enrolled in JRN 101-B satisfied DEC B courses, which facilitated the development of critical interpretation and analytical skills. Students registered in JRN 103-G earned DEC G or methods and disciplines in the humanities credits. The dual DECs made the course attractive to non-journalism majors in need of general education credits. The fact that students were encouraged to take the course from multiple sources demonstrated institutional support for the course, which appeared to come right from the top.

Dr. Shirley Strum Kenny, president of Stony Brook, approached Schneider to start a journalism school and she later supported Schneider's vision of journalism education in the

digital age with two missions: to train news producers through more traditional journalism education curricula and to train news consumers through news literacy. Strum Kenny believed that Schneider had articulated a need in undergraduate education that had not been specifically identified previously. She served as a de facto advisor as Schneider developed the new school and news literacy. Strum Kenny offered her insight and time and channeled university resources to news literacy to give the idea the chance she felt it deserved:

> I do believe it offers an experience they don't get elsewhere, much as I wish it wasn't so. Students in English classes are taught to read literature and write essays, but to read news critically is not one of the goals. Philosophy departments that used to teach logic classes to masses of students no longer do so. Technical writing and business writing courses focus on improving professional skills. No one was paying particular attention to the civic importance of critical reading of public communications (Interview, 11/21/10).

Strum Kenny allocated university funds to support news literacy and she hosted a special President's Forum at the first national news literacy conference held on the Stony Brook campus in spring 2009. She also remained a visible and vocal advocate of news literacy as a member of the Center for News Literacy Board after she retired. Strum Kenny stated that she believed in the civic-minded mission of news literacy and commented that news literacy fostered "responsible citizenship in the Information Age" and that "there is a lot at stake, not only for students, but the country" (cited in Stony Brook University, 2006)

External Interest and Funding

The position that news literacy was good for democracy generated support from high-profile Stony Brook insiders such as Strum Kenny as well as unprecedented external interest and investment in the new pedagogy on local and national levels.

On a local level, Schneider convinced a neighborhood bank to donate $15,000 to support a tuition prize awarded to the student with the best final essay each semester. Schneider also

often spoke to local business organizations and high schools about news literacy. During the fall 2010 site visit, Schneider was the keynote speaker at a meeting of The Energeia Partnership, a Long Island business leadership and networking organization. The Energeia presentation, much like news literacy lectures, was lively, and audience members were clearly interested and invested in what Schneider had to say.

On a national level, news literacy attracted even more attention and investment. Articles about news literacy appeared in numerous high-profile journalism and scholarly publications including *The New York Times (*Finder, 2007*), Columbia Journalism Review* (Garber, 2009), *Boston Globe* (Loth, 2010), *Christian Science Monitor* (Miller, 2010), Harvard's *Neiman Reports* (Hobbs, 2011b; Schneider, 2007), and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Loth, 2012a). This attention was due to the personal connections of the journalists-turned-instructors, the Knight Foundation's 10,000-student stipulation, and the unprecedented number of grants awarded to assist Schneider and the Center for News Literacy with the development, instruction, and expansion of the Stony Brook news literacy model.

In less than five years, news literacy attracted more than $3 million in external funding (see Appendix C). The largest and most influential grant came from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The stated mission of the Miami-based organization is to support "transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged" (Knight Foundation, 2012). In 2006, the foundation committed $1.7 million to news literacy at Stony Brook. Eric Newton, a vice president at the Knight Foundation, was quoted in a *New York Times* article about news literacy: "A college that could teach its students to tell quality journalism from junk could, in theory, change the way they

consume news. At the very least, we expect it to boost student awareness of the value of a free press" (Finder, 2007).

INTRUCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of the pedagogy that emerged from analysis of data, particularly the transcripts of interviews with student participants, included high levels of engagement, an increased awareness of current events, and more nuanced understandings of journalism.

Engagement

The opportunities for students to engage with course materials and interact with instructors and each other in lectures and recitations were plentiful. Each instance of a lecturer tossing out a question to the 200+ student crowd was marked in observation notes because it was surprising to see such a high level of engagement in large lecture halls. There were dozens of such interactions in each lecture, and the pattern of engagement was sustained across all of the lectures observed. The pattern of engagement was even more pronounced in recitations. This was understandable, given their smaller sizes and the directive given to instructors. According to news fellow Anthony, recitation instructors were told that one of the primary goals of the recitations was to get students talking about news. He recalled his news literacy superiors telling him, "This is a participation thing, and you're going to be teaching the participation part, and you need to get everyone to be involved, to be engaged, [and] to speak up" (Interview, 10/28/10).

The strategy of engagement and inclusion appeared to contribute to a consensus among the students that news literacy was fun and interesting. One student wanted the recitations to be longer because he enjoyed the discussions so much. Another excitedly described how she would tell her friends back home in Tennessee about all of the useful lessons she was learning in news

literacy, while John, a junior business major who played on the Stony Brook hockey team, said he would recommend news literacy to his friends: "They have to be prepared to work and that if they do put in the effort that there are rewards. It changes your mindset. It changes the way you think about consuming news, which is very important these days" (Interview, 11/04/10). President Strum Kenny noticed the high levels of engagement in news literacy students:

> One of the things I love about the news literacy program at Stony Brook is that it has caught the imagination of the students. They love it; they want to take it; they engage intellectually. I believe this waking of excitement about learning is an important and perhaps unexpected element of the program. This is not a dreary course, necessary because it is a requirement (as some of the English lit surveys I taught doubtless were). This is action, energy, excitement. This is Now. Here. And the student's mental sharpness is challenged in a way different from other courses (Interview, 11/21/10).

Awareness of Current Events

Getting students to follow and monitor the news was a guiding principle of the news literacy instructional strategy. Schneider commented, "Teaching news literacy without having the students engage in the news was kind of self-defeating, so we looked for ways to get students to engage in the news" (Interview, 11/05/10). Some of the tactics were the News Matters extra-credit assignment and weekly news quizzes in recitations. Students were also directed to change their homepages to different news websites throughout the semester. News fellow Jason agreed that the tactics were logical, given the course outcomes. He compared the approach to other disciplines that require students to read things they otherwise wouldn't: "If you're taking an intro-to-poetry class or a poetry-appreciation class, you don't know anything about poetry but at least you're going to be exposed to poetry" (Interview, 11/04/10).

Schneider's strategy apparently worked, at least in the short term when students were enrolled in the course. All of the students interviewed said that they followed news more regularly as a result of taking the class. Diana, a freshman engineering major, enjoyed

developing the habit of regularly following the news and staying up-to-date on current affairs. She wished she looked at news more often, and news literacy gave her a three-credit reason to do so: "I mean, we have to pay attention to the news for class, for the quizzes, but we also actually learn why news is important. I think I'm better at following stories. You know once news lit ends, I will remember the lessons about why you should pay attention to news and why it is important" (Interview, 10/26/10).

In contrast to Diana, several students reported that they had already been regular news readers and watchers when they signed up for the class. For these students, the pedagogy taught them how to look at news differently and more critically. Jose, a senior health science major, discussed how his news interpretation habits changed: "I'm in my 40s, so for me I watch the news regularly for a lot of reasons—financial, whatever. It's like something I've done all of my life. But it's never been broken down to specifics" (Interview, 11/01/10). John concurred:

> I do find that it's opening my eyes to a lot of things in journalism and news. The course is bringing how I previously went about reading the news on a daily basis to a different light, which I understand is one of the core concepts of the class. I feel like it's getting across to me quite nicely (Interview, 11/04/10).

Understanding of Journalism

Across the interview sample, students reported a deeper understanding of journalism and, in some cases, a new appreciation for the work of journalists and their storied role in democracies. Rochelle, for example, thought that "everybody" could do journalism before she took news literacy:

> It's like writing a little story and you put some facts in there and baam! You've got journalism! But [the course taught me] that there is actually a thought process behind it and so that stuck with me. Whenever I read an article I ask myself: Is this verified? Where is the verification? Where is the independence? (Interview, 10/28/10)

Shannon, a freshman who was pursuing a degree in health sciences, said that she found news literacy pedagogy interesting, revealing, and inspiring: "You always hear the news isn't reliable and all this stuff, but you never hear of how to look at it to make sure it is reliable and how to find out if it is reliable. I think it teaches us new ways to look at the news and judge it better" (Interview, 10/27/10). Noel, a freshman pursing a degree in journalism, thought he knew all he needed to know about news because he worked for several years as a reporter for his high school newspaper. But news literacy broke down journalistic principles that surprised and enlightened him about the very profession he thought he knew so well: "You know, the three aspects of journalism: independence, verification, and accountability. I didn't even know what that was before I came to this class. I knew you had to be accountable for stuff, but I didn't really know how to verify stuff. I didn't know how to be independent" (Interview, 10/22/10).

These more refined understandings of news carried over to lecturers and recitation instructors, most of whom had at least 20 years of journalism experience each. For example, lecturer Steven Reiner, a former producer for *60 Minutes* and *All Things Considered*, called himself a "self-taught" journalist and compared what he learned about news through teaching news literacy to someone who was never taught to read music until mastering an instrument:

> To some extent it is sort of like playing the piano for a long time. You play and you play pretty well. You've been pretty successful and all of a sudden someone says now you're going to teach how and why to play music and you say, 'I know all of that but I never thought about it.' I suddenly am looking at a curriculum that kind of explained everything that I put into practice or tried to put into practice but never really was taught myself or I actually thought about myself. But it's all there. That's why from a journalist perspective it's sort of interesting. We're not regurgitating what we know. We're sort of teaching about what is almost intrinsic to what we used to do (Interview, 11/03/10).

A Center for News Literacy quantitative study examining the effectiveness and consequences of news literacy produced complementary findings. The survey instrument was administered at the beginning and at the end of the fall 2010 semester to two groups of students:

368 students enrolled in the fall 2010 news literacy course and 126 students not enrolled who made up the control group. The report indicated that the news consumption habits of the news literacy students changed and their awareness of current events increased during the semester. No significant changes in these categories were evident in the control group. Miller (2011) also reported in the executive summary that news literacy students were more knowledgeable about politics and more interested in civic matters than their peers in the control group.

A Glimpse at the Consequences of News Literacy in the Long Term

An assessment of whether the news literacy-inspired habits lasted beyond the course was outside the scope of this study. However, I followed up with the student participants via email a little more than a year after they had completed the course to ask them if they continued to use any of the concepts or frameworks they learned. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some of the news literacy lessons were memorable. The comments below reveal a few lasting lessons:

> I think the concept Open the Freezer has stayed with me mainly because I have the pin! It also mixes with principles I already value, which are check your sources and believe half of what you read and none of what you hear. After taking that class, I think I also have a greater respect for journalists. Before, I kind of saw it as a profession that is pushing through crowds and shoving cameras in people's faces. Now I realize that's one type of journalist. Most are hopefully not like that (Barbara, interview, 02/13/12).

> Whenever I watch the news I remember the lesson on reliability. I look to see if the person speaking has credentials in the field or if they are a just a person off the street. I am also more critical of how interviewers present their findings (Diana, interview, 03/30/12).

> One lesson that stuck with me was the difference between sensational news, such as gossip magazines, and real news, which discusses issues. I love to apply that in real life when my friends tell me about something such as a celebrity couple breaking up. I tell them that is not real news (Samantha, interview, 02/17/12).

> I wouldn't say the news literacy principles come up regularly, but if I try to be analytical about a subject or story, then I try to apply news literacy principles and I look for things like bias, fairness, balance, and credibility. This happens more now that we're in a campaign year (Jacob, interview, 02/17/12).

SUMMARY OF THE NEWS LITERACY LOGIC MODEL

Examination of observation notes, instructional documents, and interview transcripts suggest a distinct logic to news literacy at Stony Brook. Educators first introduced and succinctly defined a concept or process. These definitions were informed by journalistic perspectives and professional practices. Next, news literacy educators illustrated the concept with print, video, or multimedia examples that were often fresh. Examples were followed by in-class discussions, reading, and writing assignments that encouraged students to reflect on personal interpretations of news sources and apply news literacy principles in the analysis of information found in those sources. In brief, the pedagogy attempted to teach students how to look at news from the perspective of a journalist.

Edith, a first-time recitation instructor and experienced newspaper reporter and editor, stated, "I think the class teaches students what a journalist is supposed to go through to get the actual truth" (Interview, 11/02/10). According to Howard Schneider, founding dean of the Stony Brook School of Journalism and the source of most of news literacy's conceptual frameworks and analytical tools, the class offered students unique methods to analyze information—methods that are second-nature to many journalists like himself: "I think good journalists bring analytical and communications skills so they can reduce these concepts and explain them well. I also think we are extraordinarily engaged with the news" (Interview, 11/05/10).

High levels of engagement, an increased awareness of current events, and more nuanced understandings of journalism were the main consequences of the pedagogy. There was also a distinguishable entrepreneurial spirit guiding the development and instruction of news literacy. Strong administration support and significant funding were contributing factors to an environment that resembled a fast-paced, innovative Silicon Valley start-up. It seemed as though

many participants believed they were breaking new ground in education. Schneider often said that news literacy was more than a journalism course and instead should be viewed as a "citizenship and critical thinking" course (Interview, 11/05/10).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the themes and patterns that emerged from data collected for this case study of news literacy initiatives at Stony Brook University were analyzed within a coherent model. The news literacy logic model suggested that the pedagogy focused on the development of abilities that journalists deemed essential in the evaluation of news sources in the digital age. Instructional strategies included differentiation, pragmatism, precision, and personalization. These strategies were marked by experimental environments and enhanced by strong support from senior administrators and a substantial amount of external funding. The consequences of the Stony Brook approach included noteworthy levels of engagement, a heightened awareness of current affairs, and an increased knowledge about journalism. Overall, this chapter sought to understand news literacy on its own terms by analyzing and explaining the process of news literacy from the perspectives of those who created, supported, taught, or took the Stony Brook news literacy course. The next chapter takes a deductive stance and looks at the pedagogy through an optic informed by media literacy theories and practices.

CHAPTER FOUR
Using Media Literacy Principles to Understand News Literacy

In the preceding chapter I created a logic model of news literacy based on grounded theory protocols. Categories that made up the logic model were discussed. Excerpts from interviews with administrators, lecturers, recitation instructors, news fellows, and students were integrated into these discussions as a means to gain a better understanding of news literacy from participant perspectives. The major purpose of this chapter is to analyze news literacy from media literacy perspectives. The chapter begins by connecting news literacy with the broader and more established field of media literacy. Next, a synopsis of the study design is provided and the chapter's analytic strategy is explained. This is followed by a comparison of news literacy and media literacy definitions. Moving beyond definitions, I assessed news literacy within a media literacy analytic matrix. The purpose of the matrix was to identify and understand instructional and learning emphasis in relation to media literacy. Results of the matrix analysis are presented. Finally, a cognitive theory of news literacy is featured.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, Howard Schneider, founding dean of the Stony Brook School of Journalism, began to experiment with a pedagogy he hoped would teach students how to become more discerning news consumers. The idea sprung from his experiences teaching an Ethics and Values of the American Press class. Schneider originally called what he was trying to do media literacy, even though he admittedly did not know much about media literacy at the time because he had just joined the academy after a three-decade career in newspapers. But Schneider was eager to learn about media literacy and how it could help shape the idea he was developing. Schneider quickly determined what James Potter (2010), a communications scholar who had been studying

and theorizing about media literacy for more than 20 years, concluded when he wrote: “Media literacy is a term that means many different things to different people” (p. 675).

For Schneider, the media literacy theories and practices he encountered were too broad to apply directly to the analysis of news texts. It didn’t make sense to him to teach students how to analyze a newspaper story the same way one would scrutinize a feature film. He reasoned that newspapers were produced in deadline-driven environments, they focused on real events and people, they were produced with a lot less money than Hollywood blockbusters, and they had a storied civic function in American democracy. Schneider concluded that a one-size-fits-all approach to media analysis did not suit his burgeoning pedagogy. He recalled, “What I discovered was pretty obvious: Media literacy was a much broader area of inquiry. It looked at the impact of media messages on society. It ranged from news to gender to advertising to violence on television. We were very interested in news” (Interview, 11/05/10).

Schneider came up with the news literacy moniker in 2006 as he was discussing his idea with Eric Newton of the Knight Foundation. Newton saw promise in the idea to teach the general undergraduate student population about journalism and was interested in helping Schneider develop it. Schneider explained the transition from media literacy to news literacy: “Eric and I talked and at one point he said, ‘You know what you’re really talking about is not media literacy. It is really news literacy.’ I immediately realized the frame for the course. We went from press values to media literacy to news literacy” (Interview, 11/05/10). The Knight Foundation allocated $1.7 million to Schneider’s idea with the stipulation that 10,000 Stony Brook students complete a news literacy course within five years.

Schneider and others involved in news literacy considered the pedagogy a specialized approach to media literacy and thereby argued that news literacy belonged in the growing family

new media literacies. Schneider classified news literacy as an “off shoot” or “tributary” of media literacy (Interview, 11/05/10). Dean Miller, who was named the director of the Center for News Literacy at Stony Brook in 2009, characterized news literacy as a “narrow subset” of media literacy. Miller added that the philosophy of specialization was nothing new in the academy: “If you look at academic fields, everything is broken into small parts because they are easier to consume. You take one part of biology and study it even though everybody knows biology is a very rich and complex field, so news literacy is a very focused approach to media literacy” (Interview, 10/22/10).

This case study first explored news literacy at Stony Brook on its own terms and from the perspectives of its stakeholders. The next phase in the analysis, which is presented in this chapter, looked at news literacy through media literacy theoretical and pedagogical lenses. The following research questions thus guided the chapter’s analytic strategy and organization: In what ways is news literacy similar to and different from media literacy? What is the emphasis of news literacy pedagogy in media literacy terms?

STUDY DESIGN AND CHAPTER ANALYTIC STRATEGY

This chapter drew from a case study database comprised of evidence gathered during a site visit to the School of Journalism at Stony Brook University in fall 2010. Stony Brook was identified as an instructional hub of an emerging pedagogy known as news literacy. Within five years, Howard Schneider’s idea to teach undergraduates how to evaluate the reliability and credibility of news reports had become one of the largest and most ambitious experiments in the history of media literacy in the United States. During the site visit, hundreds of course documents were collected; 26 news literacy classes, activities, and meetings were observed; and 28 news literacy stakeholders were interviewed.

A grounded theory examination of news literacy determined that news was at the center of a logic model created to visualize and explain the pedagogy based on the patterns and themes that emerged in the analysis of the data collected. Instructional strategies employed to teach students how to identify and analyze news included precision, pragmatism, differentiation, current examples, and multiple opportunities to apply the concepts introduced. These strategies were enhanced by interactive environments and unparalleled external and internal support. The consequences of news literacy instruction included high levels of engagement and increased understandings of journalistic methods across all participant groups. The analytic strategy employed in this chapter focused on examining, understanding, and connecting the Stony Brook approach with media literacy perspectives.

This deductive stance started with a juxtaposition of the definition of news literacy with conceptualizations of media literacy. This was followed by a formulation of an analytic matrix that was designed to reflect various ways of thinking about media literacy instruction and learning. Next, data were evaluated and coded to these ways of thinking in Nvivo, a qualitative data organization and analysis software program. The coding of data to media literacy categories was followed by a coding matrix query. The query combined data coded at various approaches to the instruction of media analysis with data coded to various dimensions that reflect how people make sense of media. The results allowed me to visualize the frequency of responses across these categories and thereby identify and compare instructional and learning emphasis in news literacy within media literacy frameworks. The matrix query also illuminated the patterns of association between instructional strategies and learning dimensions. The results of the query subsequently led to the development of a cognitive theory of news literacy.

NEWS LITERACY AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF MEDIA LITERACY

According to Stony Brook news literacy instructional materials, news literacy is defined as the "ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports whether they come via print, television, or the Internet." In order to assess whether news literacy is a specialized variant of media literacy, juxtaposition of this definition with a definition of media literacy was necessary. However, a succinct, widely agreed upon definition of media literacy did not exist. This is because, as Potter (2010) points out, each person who studies or teaches media literacy "conceptualizes it with a different construction of definitional elements" (pp. 676). In the absence of a dominant definition guiding research and instruction in the diverse field of media literacy, numerous definitions and conceptualizations were identified and assessed. A sampling of these perspectives along with the various disciplinary origins of the scholars, teachers, or advocates who created them are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Conceptualizations of Media Literacy

In her report on the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, history and communications professor Patricia Aufderheide (1993) defines media literacy as the "ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes" (p. 6).
Education researcher Renee Hobbs (2010a) refers to media literacy as a "constellation of life skills that are necessary for full participation in our media-saturated, information-rich society." She defines life skills as those that help people make responsible choices, analyze messages in a variety of forms, create content in a variety of forms, reflect on one's conduct, and take social action (p. vii).
Philosopher and cultural studies theorist Douglas Kellner (1995b) endorses media literacy instruction that teaches "critical skills and how to use media as instruments of social change" (p. 336).
English scholar Art Silverblatt and librarian Ellen Eliceiri (1997) define media literacy in their *Dictionary of Media Literacy* as "a critical-thinking skill that enables audiences to decipher the information that they receive through channels of mass communications and empowers them to develop independent judgments about media content" (p. 48).
Media studies scholar James Potter (2008) describes media literacy as a "set of perspectives that we actively use to expose ourselves to the media to interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter" (p. 19).

Activists Elizabeth Thoman and Tessa Jolls (2004) of the Center for Media Literacy state that the goal of media literacy is to "explore questions that arise when one engages critically with a mediated message – print or electronic. It involves posing problems that exercise higher order thinking skills – learning how to identify key concepts, make connections between multiple ideas, ask pertinent questions, identify fallacies, and formulate a response" (p. 23).

Media literacy expert Kathleen Tyner (1998) asserts that media literacy "expands literacy to include reading and writing through the use of new and emerging communication tools. It is learning that demands the critical, independent and creative use of information" (p. 196).

News literacy's commitment to the development of critical thinking skills is consistent with the conceptualizations of media literacy listed above in addition to numerous others (Christ & Potter, 1998; Feuerstein, 1999; Livingstone, 2003; Masterman, 1985; Mihailidis & Hiebert, 2005). Therefore, news literacy was deemed to be a bona fide variant of media literacy along definitional terms. It was also thematically consistent with media literacy.

According to Potter (2010), the four common themes across media literacy scholarship include a belief among advocates, researchers, and instructors that 1) Media can harm individuals; 2) The purpose of media literacy is to teach people how to guard against being harmed by media; 3) Media literacy skills and abilities must be cultivated; and 4) Media literacy is multi-dimensional, meaning people are influenced by media on multiple levels. Along these lines, Stony Brook news literacy creator Schneider was driven by a belief that the abundance, accessibility, and speed of information in the digital age could harm individuals. Schneider (2007) reasoned that too much unfiltered information all at once could be overwhelming and misleading. Shirley Strum Kenny, former president of the university and a long-time supporter of Schneider's news literacy idea, also thought that educators needed to do more to prepare students for a more deceptive media ecosystem: "I believe our country sorely needs such education, that it is increasingly important as the modes of communication enable increasingly sophisticated distortions of truth to occur" (Interview, 11/21/10).

News literacy was subsequently envisioned as way to protect young citizens from the dangers of dishonest rhetoric and information overload by teaching them how to evaluate the veracity and quality of news narratives. In learning how to deconstruct news, students developed multiple skills and abilities. At the end of the news literacy course, the learning outcome framework (see Appendix F) states that student should be able to:

1. Recognize the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors.
2. In the context of journalism, recognize the difference between news and opinion.
3. In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference.
4. Evaluate and deconstruct news reports based on the quality of evidence presented and the reliability of sources; understand and apply these principles across all news media platforms.
5. Distinguish between news media bias and audience bias (Stony Brook University, Center for News literacy).

Potter (2010) also notes in his summary of the state of media literacy in the United States that critical thinking was the most frequently cited outcome of media literacy interventions. At the same time, however, he critiques the way critical thinking was being used in media literacy scholarship. He argues that critical thinking had become an "umbrella idea for an unspecified conglomeration of mental processes" and that "articulations of specific skills and kinds of knowledge are rare" (p. 680). Alternatively, news literacy is a pedagogy based on specified articulations of mental processes listed in the learning outcomes above and these outcomes are informed by journalistic knowledge and professional practices. To put this differently, news literacy focuses exclusively on the analysis of news texts and uses journalistic knowledge to develop concepts and frameworks to be employed in the analysis of news. Richard Hornik, a news literacy lecturer and former editor and reporter at TIME magazine, stated the goal of news literacy was not to have students understand everything about the media, but rather "we just want them to understand something about how journalism works and things they can look for to get

the most out of it" (Interview, 10/21/10). Given these points, news literacy's use of specialized knowledge to teach specified skills makes it a rarity among media literacy pedagogies.

This project sought to situate news literacy within the broader field of media literacy through methods that moved beyond a comparison of definitions, themes, and arguments. But an all-encompassing framework that reflected different ways to teach and learn about media did not exist in the literature. Zettl (1998) notes, "What is still lacking is a theory that will help us understand what media literacy is and what it is not, why we should bother with it, how we can become media literate once we decide that this is a valuable thing to do, and, finally, how we will know when we have become media literate" (p. 82). To address the lack of precision in the study and practice of media literacy, Zettl proposes a theoretical model that he argues would deepen and clarify understandings of what media literacy is and how it functions. Zettl's model is grounded in media aesthetics and divides media literacy into four levels of analysis: elements of screen images, how the images are structured, how the images are perceived, and how the images fit into other media analysis frameworks.

Zettl's model was informative but not appropriate for an analysis of a pedagogy designed to teach students how to analyze news sources. He focused on the multiple ways one could look at images; this study looked at an instructional approach as a whole. Nonetheless, Zettl's argument that media literacy should be understood within a framework that reflects hierarchical relationships between the different ways media texts can be examined served as a precursor for the matrix that was created for this study to evaluate news literacy. The purpose of constructing the matrix and analyzing news literacy within its parameters was to illuminate and illustrate instructional and learning emphasis in the pedagogy along media literacy terms.

CONSTRUCTING A MEDIA LITERACY ANALYTIC MATRIX

Given the wide range of backgrounds and interests of those teaching and researching media literacy, I sought to create a multiperspectival and multidimensional analytic matrix that best reflects and respects the multiplicity of ways people think about and practice media literacy. A matrix is an appropriate framework because it situates media literacy along two continua: instructional approaches and learning domains. This integrated approach to analysis reflects Potter's (2008) characterization of media literacy as a continuum:

> Media literacy is not a category—like a box—where either you are in the category or not. We all occupy some position on the media literacy continuum. There is no point below which we could say that someone has no literacy, and there is no point at the high where we can say someone is fully literate – there is always room for improvement … People are positioned along that continuum based on the skills and knowledge they bring to bear (p. 21).

Following this logic, it would have been foolhardy to restrict analysis of news literacy to only one conceptualization of media literacy because of the breadth of perspectives informing the field and multiple ways people can gain control over the meaning-making process. Thereby the matrix had two planes: instructional perspectives and learning domains.

The rows in the matrix emulate Potter's (2008) four domains of media literacy understanding. The *cognitive* domain refers to intellectual processes and skills including analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, and synthesis. Thereby data coded to the cognitive node in the Nvivo database contains references or inferences to these skills. The next level is *emotional*. Data coded at the emotional node alerts students to techniques used in news to manipulate or elicit emotional responses in audiences. The *aesthetic* domain denotes learning about quality of media content, as judged by professional content producers. Data that demonstrated critical appreciation of journalism were coded at the aesthetic node. The final dimension is *moral*, which suggests an increased awareness about values. Potter classifies

moral information as that which “resides in your conscience or your soul” (p. 20). In the context of news literacy, data that communicated messages of morality, civic duty, and social responsibility were coded at the moral node.

The columns in the matrix represented various attitudes about how to teach media literacy. Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan’s (1999) synthesis of the five major approaches to teaching media literacy was used as a conceptual starting point. *Ideological* methods focus on oppressive power relationships in society created, perpetuated, and propagated by media. Corporate ownership and depictions of race, class, and gender in media are of most concern to critical cultural theorists who put ideology at the center of media literacy analysis and inject activism as one of its learning outcomes. Thus, data that demonstrated lessons on media ownership, race, class, and gender in news were coded at the ideological node. *Autobiographical* strategies view media consumption and analysis as opportunities to develop personal growth and discovery. Thereby evidence that suggested that individual experiences, values, lifestyles, and decisions were used as reference points in news literacy lessons, activities, and assignments were coded at the autobiographical node. *Nonverbal communication* pedagogies zero in on communication cues expressed through body language, facial expressions, and eye movements. In turn, data that reflected this approach were coded at the nonverbal node. *Mythic* approaches seek to teach students how to identify, examine, and question recurring themes and character types in media that represent commonly held beliefs about human or cultural experiences. Data coded at the mythic node demonstrated an understanding of supernatural phenomenon, heroic exploits, and transcendent acts in news. *Production elements* alert students to stylistic features such as editing, composition, point of view, angle, graphics, color, sound, and special effects. Thereby data coded at the production elements node suggested that students are taught how to examine the

assembly of news texts whether they were print, broadcast, or online. Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan (1999) contend that the five general approaches to media literacy enable one to "see content from different perspectives and depending on the specific area of study, one approach may be more useful than others" (p. xi).

Most of the approaches identified by Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan (1999) were relevant in the examination of news literacy except for two: nonverbal and mythic. No data were coded at either category. This was likely for two reasons. First, news literacy focused heavily on the understanding of print journalism, thereby limiting opportunities for nonverbal analysis that is restricted to television and film. Second, the news narratives used in the course and the frameworks designed to analyze them did not demonstrate mythic analysis. News was positioned in the pedagogy as non-fiction texts—texts that were much shorter in length than more traditionally mythic media representations most often associated with feature films and books. The nonverbal and mythic perspectives were thus removed all together from the analytic matrix and a new *factual* category was added in their place.

The factual node was added midway through the coding process in response to memos that tracked trends in the data and theorized about deficiencies in the original media literacy matrix. It became clear that none of the approaches to the analysis of media identified by Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan (1999) taught students how to evaluate the veracity of information, which is at the heart of news literacy theory and practice. During an observation of a recitation on verification, Jeff, a journalist with more than 15 years of experience as a newspaper reporter, described journalism as a "fact-finding methodology" (Memo, 10/27/10). Steven Reiner, a news literacy lecturer and former producer at NPR's *All Things Considered*, reiterated Jeff's description when he said that journalism was "fact-based." Reiner added:

> It's about the facts. It's rooted in facts. It's rooted in being able to prove things. It's rooted in evidence. … Get it right. Spell the guy's name right. Get his age right. Get what he does for a living right. Get what he said right. Get what happened during the traffic accident or whatever – get it all right and get it right regardless of the ramifications of that (Interview, 11/03/10).

The comments from Jeff, Steven Reiner, and others proved crucial in adding factual to the instructional approach continua. I experimented with other labels such as truthful, reliable, and credible, but none seemed to capture what was going on in news literacy classrooms more than factual. News literacy was created by journalists and it was mostly taught by journalists. Given that journalists who taught news literacy overwhelmingly viewed journalism as a fact-finding methodology, news literacy was for all intents and purposes a fact-finding pedagogy.

LOOKING AT NEWS LITERACY WITHIN THE FRAME OF A MEDIA LITERACY ANALYTIC MATRIX

Once data were coded to categories that corresponded with instructional perspectives guiding the analysis of media (ideological, autobiographical, production elements, and factual) and the domains of learning discussed previously (cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral) a matrix coding query was run in Nvivo. The query reported the frequency of data coded to these categories and explored the relationships between the categories. The purpose of the query was to illustrate instructional emphasis and explore how the approaches to the examination of news including in the matrix interacted with the various ways students interpret media. The results indicated that news literacy focused heavily on lessons and activities that emphasized factual analysis of news, and this emphasis intersected and interacted the most with the development of cognitive skills, as per Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Media Literacy Analytic Matrix and Results

Approaches to Instruction of Analysis

		Ideological	Autobiographical	Prod. Elements	Factual
Learning Domains	Cognitive	5	22	17	44
	Emotional	3	7	2	0
	Aesthetic	0	0	3	1
	Moral	1	6	2	3

Emphasis in news literacy was revealed by three distinct yet complementary vantage points within the matrix. The first was the total number of references coded at the four categories along the instructional approach continua. The results suggested that news literacy focused primarily on teaching students how to analyze the veracity of information in news texts as per the 48 data excerpts coded at the factual node. The data coded at the factual node intersected with each of the domains of learning except aesthetics. The next most frequently coded instructional approach was autobiographical with 35. This was followed by production elements with 25 and ideological with nine.

Results along the domains of learning plane revealed a second layer of emphasis. With 88 data excerpts coded at the cognitive node, the development of information-processing skills was clearly favored. There was also evidence of teaching students how to understand news on emotional and moral levels with 12 coding incidences each, and there was slight evidence of students learning how to understand news from aesthetic perspectives. But by and large, the

matrix query determined that news literacy was a pedagogy dominated by lessons and activities aimed at developing cognitive skills and abilities.

The third and final layer of emphasis revealed within the matrix showed how instructional approaches and learning styles interacted. The number of references within the two intersecting cells meant that data were coded at both planes simultaneously and thereby shading in the matrix indicated density of coding: The darker the shade, the higher incidences of coding between the two categories combined in each cell. The darkest hue was where the factual and cognitive categories met. This meant that instruction on how to analyze the veracity of information rested heavily on the development of cognitive skills. This emphasis on information-processing was seen across all instructional approaches. In light of these findings, a cognitive theory of news literacy was formulated. Presentation and discussion of this theory comes after an explanation of the results of the matrix query, which is organized by instructional approach.

Ideological Analysis

There was little evidence of critical examination of race, class, and gender in the course. Discussions on concentration of ownership in news were practically non-existent. Also, none of the 10 news literacy learning outcomes (see Appendix F) contained reference to ideological analyses. The lack of ideological analysis was somewhat expected because outside commentators had criticized the Stony Brook news literacy method for turning a blind eye to ideology in news.

For example, Hobbs (2011b) writes that news literacy at Stony Brook is comprised of journalists “recounting war stories from the good old days” and that their professional experiences in news businesses blind them to commercial biases in news that only those without a stake in news industries can see. Schneider indicated that he was aware of and took these

concerns seriously. However, he decided there was not enough time in a 15-week, freshman-level course to introduce, let alone meaningfully explore, ideological perspectives:

> The criticism is that we don't deal enough with the structural issues that help determine what gets published and what gets broadcast—the corporate interests, the commercial interests, and the consolidation. That was another area that initially, to us, didn't seem crucial for what we were trying to do. We didn't think it was a dominant issue (Interview, 11/05/10).

For Schneider, the focus of news literacy is teaching students how to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, not how to examine the structural forces that influence news production processes and decision-making. This stance was consistent with multiple studies that found that journalists were often governed by unspoken and unchallenged professional practices (Bennett, 2007; Gans, 1979/2004; Schudson, 2003). Glasser and Ettema (1989) add, "among journalists … news is not a theoretical construct but a practical accomplishment" (p. 20-21).

Additionally, the news literacy position on ideology was markedly different than that of critical scholars. For example, news literacy argued that bias in news was more of an audience problem than a structural issue. This means the news literacy view on bias is that bias is primarily the product of individual consumption and interpretation habits and, therefore, it is important for news literate citizens to make the distinctions between news media bias and audience bias. While news media bias was raised, the activities and assignments mostly focused on audience bias and what students can do to address and correct their own predispositions.

The issue of bias was addressed in the seventh Balance, Fairness and Bias unit (see Appendix M). According to lecture materials, bias is defined as a "predisposition that distorts your ability to fairly weigh the evidence and prevents you from reaching a fair or accurate judgment." To address issues of fairness in news, students were told to look for cues that suggested balance. Balance meant there was evidence that the reporter attempted to provide two

(or more) sides of a story or issue. However, students were also warned that not all accounts are equal, so the concept of balance should not be taken literally. Instead, balance needs to also be fair. Fairness in news literacy was described as being "fair to the evidence." Being fair to the evidence means that the evidence included in the story is impartial and honest. The example most frequently used to demonstrate the difference between balance and fairness from the perspective of journalists was stories about the Holocaust.

If one were to take the concept of balance at face value, Holocaust deniers would be given the same space and time in news stories as survivors and scholars. But the Holocaust is an undisputed historical fact and thereby by giving time and space to deniers, a reporter would not be fair to the evidence. The same principle was applied to so-called Birthers, who question President Obama's American citizenship. News literacy instructors argue that giving attention, let alone equal weight to the Birther position, was not fair to the evidence or to the president. Jeff, a recitation instructor who was working as a reporter at the time of the study, thought that the balance, fairness, and bias lecture was the most "demystifying" and "enlightening" because it was the one lecture where "people come in and a lot of their misconceptions about what the news is are dispelled immediately" (Interview, 11/03/10).

The news literacy stance on bias seemed to be in response to audience perceptions of news industries and professional practices. News literacy instructors, Schneider especially, believed that audiences too easily dismiss and disparage news because they have a perception that all news media are biased. Schneider was convinced that this was an overgeneralization and unprovable accusation. Schneider argued in lectures that bias in news was impossible to prove because bias suggests a pattern of unfairness over time across a wide range of news sources. He reasoned that the American news market is too large to be biased as a whole. One student

interviewed said that Schneider believed so strongly that students would not be able to prove bias in news that he promised to give the student who could an A+ in the course and she would no longer need to come to class.

Instead, news literacy at Stony Brook primarily placed bias in the minds and habits of the news consumers. It was, therefore, the responsibility of consumers to become aware of and challenge their own biases. This pedagogical position meant most of the data about bias was coded to the autobiographical node instead of ideological. To understand their own biases, students were directed to complete an Implicit Association Test online. The exercise was designed to illuminate individual attitudes and beliefs about ethnicity, age, and class by prompting students to instantaneously and thereby unconsciously react to flashes of individual faces. The activity was interesting, but it seemed out of place because none of the news literacy learning outcomes matched with the goals of the text. Additionally, the images were not from news stories; they were still shots of faces similar to those seen in passport photos. In other words, the assignment did not fit in a pedagogy that took pride in its commitment to reflecting current news environments and using real-life news stories in assignments and examinations. Finally, discussions and lessons about the implicit association exercise were not firmly grounded in any easily identified body of literature that studied and theorized about race, class, and gender stereotyping in general.

There were, however, some examples of ideological analysis in the unofficial news literacy curriculum. *Unofficial* refers to resources and ideas individual instructors brought to their recitations that fell outside of standardized lesson plans. Because the recitations were so heavily dependent on dialogue, observations revealed that there was a significant degree of freedom to explore critical ideas, if instructors chose to do so. The news fellows in particular, all

of whom were graduate students at the PhD level, took advantage of this freedom. The news fellows admitted in interviews to using scholarship from their respective disciplines and a lot of their choices reflected critical perspectives.

Richard, who had worked in the news fellow program for several years, incorporated ideas from Bagdikian's (2004) critique of news media ownership as well as Herman and Chomsky's (1988/2002) propaganda model of news. The propaganda model asserts that corporate forces and professional practices dictate newsroom cultures that self-censor and favor commercial interests over engaged debate on substantive issues. Richard believed that these works significantly deepened news literacy and that the lack of ideological analysis was a weakness of the program. Richard also included "things that maybe the media are not covering. I also bring in the interconnections between other types of media that people are exposed to and how they interpret the news" (Interview, 10/22/10). Jason, another news fellow from the social sciences, also raised concerns about the lack of ideological perspectives in news literacy but stated that he understood the time and space constraints inherent in all freshman-level classes:

> One of the topics that the news literacy program doesn't address that much is ownership of the news. That's one of the first things that students say: 'Why should we trust this CBS News report about the Iraq war? CBS is an American news company. Isn't that biased?' I kind of agree, but I tell them that within the context of the curriculum you should try to understand it this way. In my discipline we would talk about ownership, but this is certainly not how my discipline would approach news, so it's unfair to use the standards of what I would ideally like to teach (Interview, 11/04/10).

Autobiographical Analysis

News literacy was a highly personal pedagogy for both instructors and students. On one level, news literacy tapped into the professional autobiographies of instructors. On another level, it was designed to reflect how students thought about news and incorporated it into their daily lives. Therefore, any data that suggested an emphasis on personal experiences, interpretations,

and habits were coded at the autobiographical node. The results of the analytic matrix query revealed that autobiographical analysis was a significant part of the instructional strategy.

For news literacy instructors, journalism was their chosen profession. All of the lecturers interviewed articulated a belief that good journalism was good for democracy. *Good* meaning independent, verified, and accountable. This was the type of journalism the pedagogy taught students to identify, assess, and appreciate. Julia Mead, who was a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, valued the public service mission of the press. Freedom of expression and reporting on those in power were more than theories for Mead; they were personal imperatives that attracted her to the field and kept her in it through turbulent times and long days:

> I do talk about journalists being really idealistic people. We really do believe in the public service element of what we do, the public's right to know, the First Amendment. All of those noble, high ideals are motivators for us because, surely, none of us are getting rich doing this. We get a lot of criticism and a lot of heat from the public and from our competitors. We take our jobs homes and a lot of us work long hours. It can be pretty thankless, so I think those ideals really are important. They really do push us forward and get us out of bed in the morning (Interview, 11/04/10).

Mead's view of the press was indicative of how the other instructors thought about journalism in society. With the exception of the news fellows, all of the instructors had extensive experience in journalism and all of them had witnessed the structural changes that swept through news industries at the turn of the 21st century. For these reasons, instructors had plenty to say in news literacy classrooms about their work as journalists and how news had influenced their lives.

Edith, a journalist with reporting and editing experience and a first-time recitation instructor, described how she personalized the pedagogy. She admitted to talking about her work as a journalist in the context of the pedagogy. However, during the Power of Information unit (see Appendix H), Edith shared a very personal story about why she got into journalism and why

she believed it was in the public's best interest to support an independent and accountable profession that fought against censorship and reported on abuses of power. She recalled:

> I told my students the story of my uncle who went to Vietnam. I told them about the Pentagon Papers. He didn't have to go. He was an only son. He volunteered. He wanted to go. He died in 1967. The government knew that Vietnam was a lost cause. If he had known what the government knew, he would not have gone. My cousin would have grown up with his father. I was a year old and he was three weeks old, so I didn't really know his father and he obviously looms large in our family. I tell the students the story about how if the government hadn't lied about Vietnam, my uncle would still be alive (Interview, 11/02/10).

Jeff, another full-time reporter and part-time news literacy instructor, often told students about the stories he was working on just before he travelled to Stony Brook to teach his class: "I might tell the class that as I was reporting yesterday an issue popped up regarding a source who was reluctant to talk to me. I would then them what obstacles I had to go around in order to get the information I was looking for." Jeff added that it was "second nature" for him to include his reporting experiences in the classroom (Interview, 11/03/10)

Students responded well to these personal stories and the real-life knowledge and experiences journalists brought to news literacy classrooms. Allison commented, "I can respect my professor more and listen to what he has to say more because he actually has experience in the field" (Interview, 10/21/10). Shannon thought the in-the-trenches stories strengthened the course because "you get to learn more in depth about it. You get to know opinions on certain insider things. The fact that the recitation teachers have or are writing in newspapers [means] they have a personal and professional experiences to back up what they're saying" (Interview, 10/27/10). Rochelle described how she bragged to her friends about the professional pedigree of her news literacy lecturer: "I'm always telling my friends: 'By the way, a former editor of *Newsday* is my teacher!'" Rochelle added that she learned that being an editor was not easy and

described the realization as a “light bulb moment” because “now I was seeing it [news] from the other side” (Interview, 10/28/10).

News literacy instructors wanted students to see news from editor perspectives, the “other side,” as Rochelle put it, but it was equally, if not more, important to the creators of news literacy for students to see news from their own perspectives. Therefore, any activity, exercise, or interview excerpt that suggested personal growth and discovery was coded at the autobiographical node. The pattern of personalizing the analysis of news started with the first homework assignment, it continued throughout the course, and it ended with the final assessment.

The first assignment was the 48-hour News Blackout. As part of the assignment, students were told to refrain from watching, reading, or talking about news, weather, and sports for two days and then analyze and write about their experiences. The final assessment was an essay that prompted students to pick a topic in the news that mattered to them and keep track of news coverage of the topic for about a month. As students followed the news, they were supposed to deconstruct the stories they found to determine if information in the stories was reliable enough for them to “reach a conclusion, make a judgment, or take an action” about the issue. The goal of the final essay was to turn students into thoughtful and critical news consumers. The final essay was primarily considered an example of an autobiographical approach because it was guided by a self-directed topic and dictated by individual reasoning and interpretation. Most of the assignments and exercises reflected this personalized approach. Students were encouraged to develop and express independent opinions on a wide range of news-related topics. This was best demonstrated through the ongoing News Matters assignment, which prompted students to find

and share stories they judged would matter to their peers. Select student-generated content was included in lectures.

Shannon, a freshman health sciences student, favored the personalized, autobiographical approach to news analysis. She enjoyed developing and sharing opinions because it pushed her thinking in new and surprising directions: “It allows you to have an opinion based on what happened, and it allows you to express it rather than [an instructor saying] this is what happened and this is the way it’s supposed to be. It allowed us to discuss what we feel and learn other people’s opinions too” (Interview, 10/27/10). Shannon’s comment mirrored what British media literacy scholar Len Masterman writes about effective media education: “Media education has a distinctive epistemology in which knowledge is not so much deposited upon students as actively created through a process of investigation and dialogue” (Masterman & Mariot, 1994, p. 59).

Investigation and dialogue about news extended to personal news choices. News literacy creators wanted students to think about how and where they got their news. One method to generate dialogue about news habits was an assignment that directed students to change the homepage of their web browser to a specified news page. This way the assigned home page would be the first thing they saw when they went online. These sites were often the primary sources of questions for the weekly news quizzes, so students had a vested interest in paying attention. Many of the students interviewed reported that they appreciated that they were required to pay attention to news. Barbara said that she would likely continue to change her home page after the class ended so she would be regularly exposed to news: “It’s an extra step to get to my email, but I don’t have a TV, so it’s actually really good that I have to do this. That way I stay up with this stuff” (Interview, 11/03/10). Huang also stated that his news consumption habits changed as a result of the homepage activity and admitted the assignment prompted him to

“try looking at more news sources now, more than just Yahoo News” (Interview, 10/26/10). Barbara’s and Huang’s comments were consistent with the findings of an ethnographic study on the news consumption of young people in six major cities in three countries. The study found that news consumption for 18- to 24-year-olds was connected to email (Associated Press & Context-Based Research Group, 2008).

Allison, a freshman of Armenian descent, took the lessons about consuming news from a variety of sources to heart when she was asked how she would describe someone who was news literate. She said that she had more to learn before she developed the traits she believed made someone news literate. She, however, considered her father news literate:

> I think someone who is news literate shouldn’t only focus on one certain news outlet—you shouldn’t just watch CNN or Fox News. You should read something that is in opposition to your beliefs because that way you’ll be more objective. You’ll be able to look at things and see one side and the other side and make your own interpretation of what you believe is happening. My dad watches millions of different kinds of news outlets because he wants to know all sides of the story. He watches BBC. He watches EuroNews. He’s watches Armenian news. He’s watches Middle Eastern news because Armenia falls is the category of the Middle East (Interview, 11/05/10).

Production Elements Analysis

Data were coded at the production element node if they encouraged analysis of the stylistic elements of news accounts. These included editing and composition in text-based journalism and editing, composition, point of view, angle, pacing, graphics, and sound in visual pieces. The most prominent example of the production element approach in news literacy was the Opinion Journalism unit (see Appendix L). The unit started with a question: Is opinion in news out of place or rare and valuable? The reasoning behind the question was that, at first glance, opinion did not belong in news because, according to the Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods (see Appendix U), the purpose of news is to inform with information from

independent and accountable sources, not to persuade through opinion. In brief, journalists are supposed to report on what others have to say about an issue and keep their opinions to themselves. However, the Opinion Journalism unit argued that opinion belongs in news as long as it is constructed responsibly, based on facts, and subjected to a verification process. In order to judge whether opinion journalism adheres to these standards, students needed to first differentiate an editorial piece from a traditional news report.

According to instructional materials, the difference between news reporting and editorial writing is found in language, labeling, and location, hence its inclusion in the production elements category. Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan (1999) write that production element cues are "roughly analogous" to grammar in print because they represent the mechanics of how media texts were created to construct and communicate meaning. The authors add that production element analysis of news could include examination of word choice, point of view, connotation, arrangement of information in stories, arrangement of stories in a newspaper or news broadcast, and language. News literacy students were told opinion journalism language landmarks include first-person statements, exaggeration or superlatives, emotional or dramatic descriptions, and the use of tone demonstrated by sarcasm, irony, or parody. Additionally, opinion journalism is found on separate pages in newspapers and is often clearly labeled as opinion. Howard Klurfeld, a long-time colleague of Schneider's at *Newsday*, would occasionally talk in his lectures about situations from his time as the editor of the newspaper's Op/Ed page. He explained to students how the so-called wall between news reporting and opinion journalism worked. He told them that journalists are not supposed to cross over into the world of opinion unless they are invited to do so. Klurfeld emphasized that opinion journalism is a privilege for journalists, and it is a privilege to be honored and used responsibly:

> I feel very strongly that when you're given the ability to write opinion that it's a higher calling. It's a license. We're going to allow you to express your opinion, but the basic rules of journalism still have to apply. You have to verify your facts; you have to be independent (Interview, 10/27/10l).

The ability to recognize and critically assess opinion journalism would allow students to separate high-quality opinion based on facts from lower-quality opinion pieces based on hyperbolic bloviation. To demonstrate these differences, students were shown video clips from various cable news outlets including CNN, CNBC, and Fox News. The segments with erratic, emotional, or argumentative rhetoric were not to be trusted. Jason, a news fellow, thought the idea of parsing opinion journalism from news reporting was a good one: "To say [to students] that some people just spout off their opinions and other people want to check their facts and believe they have a responsibility to inform the public is a nice concept" (Interview, 11/04/10).

All of the news fellows agreed that breaking journalism into segments allowed students to see the elements that made up a well-sourced news story or opinion piece, and this information could assist them in noticing when something was missing from a story. These production element lessons were most pronounced in the Deconstructing the News unit (see Appendix T). Jason stated that the deconstruction techniques and tools provided to students were what made news literacy distinct from other ways to think and teach about the news: "It's going to be different than a professional philosopher teaching an intro-to-philosophy course, asking students to talk about the news. Journalists have their own standards and practices, but I don't think many people know them" (Interview, 11/04/10). Another recitation instructor, Jeff, concurred: "I think it's one of those courses that tends to really open up people's eyes to a world they may have taken for granted before, and I think it's structured in a way that does try to boil the actions of journalists down to their most essential ingredients" (Interview, 11/03/10).

Students reported that they appreciated the insider information. Allison called the production element lessons the "little tricks of the trade" and said they were her favorite parts of the course (Interview, 10/21/10). Rochelle said the insider knowledge about journalism allowed her to tell the difference between "good" and "bad" journalism:

> I see bad journalism and it's like you need to find another job. I've learned in class: No opinion and no bias—that's definitely good journalism to me. Now I can see the whole journalistic process and when they make a mistake they are accountable. To me, that's big! You are a good journalist because you're coming back and you're correcting yourself (Interview, 10/28/10).

Factual Analysis

Stony Brook President Shirley Strum Kenny described the intent of news literacy well: "In order to protect our democracy, we must prepare students to read intelligently, apply logic, and eye public communications skeptically, with an eye for the lie" (Interview, 11/21/10). Teaching students how to develop an "eye for the lie" as only a journalist knew how to do was the underlying purpose of news literacy. One interviewee summed up the journalistic mindset when he described journalism as a "fact-finding methodology" (Jeff, Interview, 11/03/10). Therefore, if there was a problem with the facts in a news story, there was a problem with the journalism that created it. Lecturer Steven Reiner said news literacy was designed to teach students the characteristics of good journalism:

> What we're talking about is how to recognize good journalism and, for lack of a better description, bad journalism—to know why something is bad journalism and why something is good journalism. And you need to demand good journalism. … We're telling you please don't make any decisions based upon the information you get via lousy journalism (Interview, 11/03/10).

According to Potter (2004), media messages can be divided into two types of information: social and factual. Social information is composed of beliefs that cannot be verified the same way factual information can. Factual information, on the other hand, is made up of

“discreet bits of information, such as names (of people, places, characters, etc.), definitions of terms, formulas, lists and the like” (p. 44). For Potter, factual information is raw and unprocessed and audiences watch or read factual information when they consume news because news messages are composed of facts: “With news messages, the intention of the media is to evoke in audience members a sense that they are being informed” (p. 45). The Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods framework (see Appendix U) that differentiates news from other information sources is consistent with Potter’s conceptualization when it states the goal of news is to inform. Comments from other news literacy instructors also confirmed the importance of facts to journalism and thereby news literacy.

Edith, a first-time news literacy recitation instructor, said that she thought the course taught students what a journalist is supposed to go through to get to the “actual truth” (Interview, 11/02/10). James Klurfeld, a former *Newsday* editor and early news literacy collaborator with Schneider, stated, “We’re teaching about the process of gathering and consuming news and about the facts that you’re trying to get to put in the story, trying to present a real story—the truth” (Interview, 10/27/10). Lecturer Steven Reiner added:

> The purpose of journalism is to present the facts to you to inform you, to tell you as best we can what happened. It’s not to convince you of something. It’s not to make you laugh. It’s not to change your mind. It’s not to make you angry. It’s just to tell you what happened and that’s very, very hard. It’s very, very hard because you’re getting the information that you’re using from people, and people are bringing their own stuff, so you have to figure out what to believe and what not to believe (Interview, 10/03/10).

Beyond regular news reporting, students were also told high-quality opinion journalism is “fact-based” and that the “factual basis” of the argument should be provided (Observation notes, 10/7/10). Given the professional preferences of journalists, Potter’s (2004) differentiation between factual and social information in media literacy, and the implicit emphasis on facts in news literacy, any interview excerpt, observation note, activity, lesson, assignment, or

examination that referenced the facts or reliable and credible information was coded at the factual node.

According to the results of coding matrix query, factual analysis accounted for close to 50% of all of the data coded along the learning domain continua. Materials from the Truth and Verification unit (see Appendix N) were among the primary sources of the factual data. The concept of truth in news literacy rested on the argument that truth in journalism is "the best obtainable information on a given day," according to lecture notes provided to instructors. The pedagogy argued that this evolving notion of accuracy was similar to how scientists generate and test hypotheses and theories. Schneider explained that he came up with the "provisional truth" idea after he invited two Stony Brook faculty colleagues—a philosopher and a scientist—for a debate on truth. He recalled:

> It was an interesting insight for us when the scientist debated me on truth. Bells began to ring. I would tease the scientist and say: 'Boy, we are a lot alike.' He laughed. But the differences here are that journalists are operating not in a laboratory, but in the real world where there are a lot of variables. They are reacting to deadline pressures. They can't control those variables, so reliable and actionable information is the best obtainable version of the information that they can give you in the course of a day (Interview, 11/05/10).

According to provisional truth logic, the facts that make up news stories are always changing because new information and perspectives becomes available as a story progresses. Klurfeld talked about how he made the provisional truth argument to faculty from other disciplines: "I was on a panel with a group of scientists the other night. We were talking about the BP [oil spill] and how journalists handled it. I pointed out that we [journalists] were very much like the scientists on my panel in that we dealt with provisional truth and the truth changed over time as we got more and more facts about things" (Interview, 10/27/10). Consequently, one of the key news literacy lessons for students was that they needed to follow stories over time to

understand the context of the issue or event as more facts emerges. Reiner told students that consuming news regularly and thoughtfully would allow them to gather "all the information necessary to understand the facts so you can put these facts into perspective" (Observation, 11/01/10).

The pedagogy positioned the process of verification and types of evidence and sources quoted in stories as the chief pedagogical pathways in the determination of the reliability and accuracy of information. According to news literacy instructional materials, the discipline of verification in journalism requires journalists to gather, assess, and weigh information, add meaning to facts through context, seek enough information to make a story balanced and fair, and explain how they came to learn the facts and, when appropriate, what they didn't know. To assess the level and rigor of the verification, students were told to look for examples of direct and indirect evidence. Eyewitnesses, documents, records, photographs, and videos are examples of direct evidence. Alternatively, second- and third-hand accounts are examples of indirect evidence. If a story relied heavily on indirect evidence, students were told to not trust it as much because the reporter did not "open the freezer."

This phrase refers to a cautionary tale about failing to verify facts told by Brian Thevenot of *The Times-Picayune* newspaper in New Orleans. Thevenot (2005a) got the facts wrong on the biggest story of his career when he reported that the death toll from Hurricane Katrina could reach 10,000 and that bodies were piled on top of each other in the freezer of the convention center where people sought refuge from the massive storm. Thevenot (2005b) admitted that one of the reasons for the mistake was that he relied on second-hand information from National Guardsmen standing outside the freezer who told him there were bodies inside. What he failed to do was open the freezer to see the bodies himself and thereby verify what the guardsmen had

asserted. “Open the freezer” became an instructional reminder of the value and importance of verification in journalism and news literacy.

Paul Schreiber, undergraduate director at the School of Journalism and an early news literacy collaborator of Schneider’s, said that concepts such as “open the freezer” were designed to help students “suspend judgment” until they had some reasonable understanding of the subject. This suspended judgment, he explained, would give students time to stop and think about the veracity to the story they were reading or watching. He added, “If it’s accurate, they can act on it. If it’s not accurate, they can ignore it. But if you can learn to separate those two things, I think it will help students understand the differences between ‘I think’ and ‘I know’” (Interview, 10/20/10).

Students found the emphasis on facts advantageous. Many stated that news literacy was the first time educators had taught them how to assess the authenticity of information in news. Allison, a computer science student, said that the lack of a framework to evaluate news sources made her doubt herself just as much, if not more, than the news media she encountered:

> In the past, I was concerned: Is this right? How am I supposed to know? ‘Never trust anything you read,’ some of my friends would say, which creeped me out. But nowhere else do you ever talk about how true the information you’re getting is or definitely how to determine if it is factual or not. If you can decide for yourself what’s good to read for yourself then you can trust it more (Interview, 10/21/10).

Jacob also reported that he became more comfortable consuming and critiquing news as a result of his news literacy experiences. He admitted that he was already a skeptical news consumer previous to his enrollment in the course, but felt that the pedagogy offered him tools to be more analytical when it came to assessing the evidence in news stories and critiquing journalism as a whole: “Before the only criticism I could bring was that doesn’t sound right. But this really kind of helps you pick stories apart. News literacy shows you why the facts might not

be right or why they were presented even though they might have been faulty. Maybe it was the best information they got" (Interview, 11/05/10).

Diana, a freshman who was majoring in engineering, likened the focus on facts and how to recognize and assess them as to how much one should trust a news source (Interview, 10/26/10). John also used the word *trust* when he referred to factual, verified, and well-sourced journalism. For John, making an informed decision about civic affairs was dependent on facts:

> I think students and the younger generation today are flooded with so many different sources of information that they're not really focusing on the truth and what really matters to them. I think that this course gives students the ability to be more critical in their understanding of their surroundings so they can go out and make more educated decisions about the community and the greater country as a whole (Interview, 11/04/10).

Of note, the emphasis on the veracity of information was where news literacy deviated to the highest degree from other media literacy instructional approaches. This was because the "central and unifying" concept of media literacy is representation (Masterman & Mariot, 1994, p. 53), whereas the central and unifying concept of news literacy was the analysis of the authenticity of information. Representation means that media do not reflect reality but epitomize it through signs and symbols. Most media literacy theories and pedagogies in turn focus on elements of representation by developing interpretative skills to assess the meaning of the sign and symbols as well as the cultural and corporate structures that produce them.

This perspective is best synthesized in a well-cited conceptual framework created by media literacy activists of the Center for Media Literacy. Thoman and Jolls (2004) argue that their five key media literacy questions would "change the world" and, therefore, should be the "cornerstone" of any media literacy analytic process (p. 25). News literacy pedagogues also had their own questions to guide students in the analyses of media. The two frameworks are listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Media Literacy Questions and News Literacy Deconstruction Steps

Five Key Media Literacy Questions	Eight News Literacy Deconstruction Steps
1. Who created this message? 2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention? 3. How might different people understand this message differently from me? 4. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented or omitted from this message? 5. Why is this message being sent?	1. Summarize the main points of a story. 2. Assess the evidence supporting the main points of the story. 3. How close does the reporter come to opening the freezer? 4. Are the sources reliable? 5. Does the reporter make his or her work transparent? 6. Does the reporter place the story in context? 7. Are the key questions -- Who? What? Why? When? Where? How? -- answered? 8. Is the story fair?
Source: Thoman and Jolls (2004) p. 25-27	Source: Stony Brook Center for News Literacy

The eight deconstruction steps listed above were considered the climax of news literacy. The guide was introduced and explained in the Deconstruction the News unit (see Appendix X), and encapsulates the key skills and concepts found in the list of learning outcomes that guided the course (see Appendix F). Students were expected to practice and demonstrate deconstruction concepts and skills in subsequent assignments and examinations. For example, the final essay required students to find their own news stories about an issue that mattered to them and evaluate the stories for reliable information. Next, they were told to explain in a 1,000- to 1,500-word paper how they were able to "reach a conclusion, make a judgment, or take an action" based on the information in the stories (see Appendix Y for final essay directions and evaluation rubric). Along these lines, the final examination directed (see Appendix Z) students identify specific deconstruction characteristics in news stories. Topics included the reliability of news sources, the fairness of news accounts, and the transparency and independence of reporting.

Jason, a PhD candidate in the social sciences and second-year news fellow, noted that that the news literacy curriculum had an underlying current of critical thinking that came to life in deconstruction lessons: “Deconstruction is a great skill for students to learn. I think they hear it a lot at the university: ‘We want you to be critical thinkers. Here are five critical thinking skills.’ But what does that really mean to think critically about the news? Well, here are some techniques that are really helpful” (Interview, 11/04/10).

A COGNITIVE THEORY OF NEWS LITERACY

Journalists viewed themselves as expert information gatherers and processors. Schneider commented, “One of the great skills of journalists is the ability to synthesize information” (Interview, 11/05/10). Journalists spend their professional lives chasing information; trading it, analyzing it, and judging its validity and veracity, often under very strict deadline conditions. These experiences make journalists, according to news literacy lecturer Richard Hornik, excellent “bullshit detectors.” Hornik suggested that news literacy in turn helps students think critically about news by learning the same kind of skeptical habits of mind the journalists he respects and admire possess (Interview, 10/21/10). All lecturers and news fellows mentioned critical thinking at least once when they described news literacy and what they were trying to teach students to do. Julia Mead, a seasoned news literacy lecturer and accomplished science journalist, believed that news literacy changed perspectives and habits of mind once students understood what news was and how journalists analyzed information:

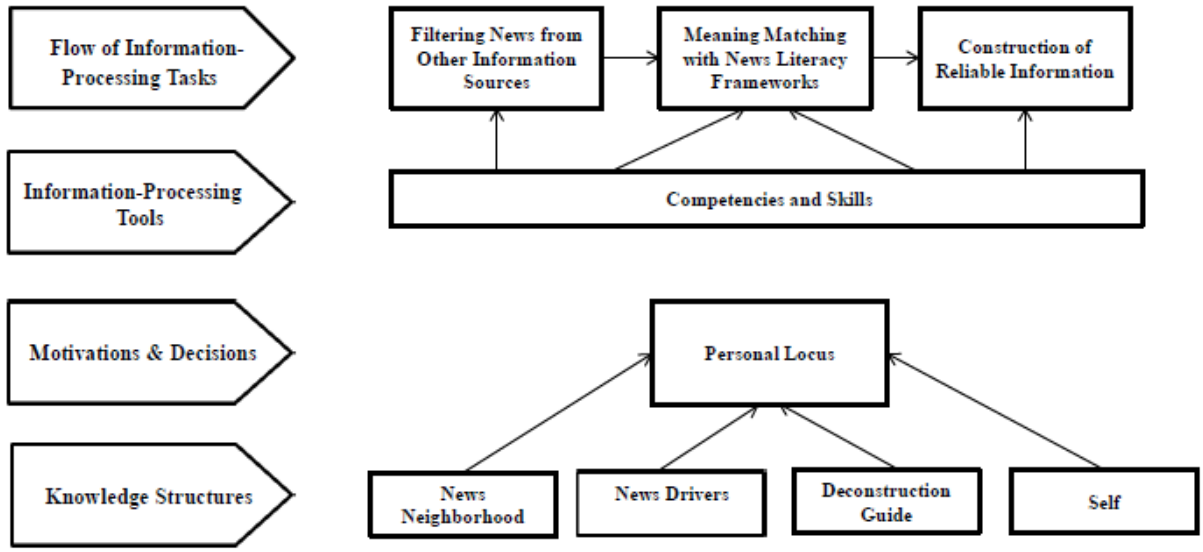
> I think you can only teach critical thinking within a field of knowledge and you have to give students that field of knowledge. You have to give them the tools. They have to be able to identify the different parts of the engine and then when all of the parts are together and they’re working and there’s some part that’s not doing what it’s supposed to do, then the critical thinking plays into it (Interview, 11/04/10).

Research supports Mead's contention about the effectiveness of teaching critical thinking skills within a body of knowledge. A meta-analysis of the research on critical thinking instruction indicates that critical thinking skills are best taught using the intellectual tools of a discipline (Abrami et al., 2008). According to Halpern (2003), discipline-specific tools provide important cues students can habitually draw from in their assessment of situations in which critical thinking skills are needed.

Anthony, a PhD candidate in the social sciences who taught four recitations as a news fellow, described news literacy as a "wake-up class" designed to kick start "cognitive defenses." He likened it to "when you're walking in the woods and you hear sounds and you know there is something wrong. Your body gets alert. We want students to stop being complacent and letting information just sink in, and rather say, 'Wait, what's going on?'" (Interview, 10/28/10).

The focus on cognitive development was consistent across the sample. However, further analysis was needed to more precisely define what critical thinking about news meant and what kinds of cognitive skills, competencies, and defenses were being developed. The perspectives of those interviewed and the results of the coding matrix question revealed an opportunity to create a cognitive theory of news literacy. The theory illustrates the interaction between journalistic disciplinary knowledge about news that instructors brought to the course and the advancement of purposeful analysis habits about claims and ideas in news. Moreover, the theory determined that the development of information-processing skills is at the heart of the news literacy instructional strategy as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Cognitive Theory of News Literacy



Adapted from Potter (2004), "Cognitive Model of Media Literacy" (p. 68)

Information processing in news literacy began with knowledge structures that were comprised of understandings about journalism and personal news habits. According to Potter (2004), "Information is piecemeal and transitory, whereas knowledge is structured, organized, and of more enduring significance. Information resides in messages, whereas knowledge resides in a person's mind" (p. 52). The structured, organized foundational knowledge identified in news literacy included information neighborhoods, news drivers, and the Deconstruction Guide.

News literacy instructors thought it was important for students to recognize journalism and separate it from other information sources so they could analyze it according to principles of journalism. What made journalism different in the Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods were the principles of independence, verification, and accountability. The next knowledge foundation was the news driver framework. News drivers such as importance, relevance, prominence, and proximity taught students why certain news stories were given time, space, and

attention in news media while others were ignored. The Deconstruction Guide was considered a conceptual pillar because it integrated the majority of news literacy lessons into one analytic tool. The model's final category of knowledge was the self, which refers to personal interpretation habits, biases, and consumption patterns.

According to Potter's (2004) original cognitive model of media literacy, knowledge structures lead to the personal locus which is comprised of goals and drives of media consumption and interpretation. Potter (2008) asserts that individuals are active information processors, therefore, they are in control of media literacy learning. He adds that the more people know about the locus and how they can make conscious decisions about media, the more they can control the meaning-making process: "The goals shape the information processing tasks by determining what gets filtered in and what gets ignored. The more you are aware of your goals, the more you can direct the process of information seeking" (p. 12). The primary goal of news literacy is for students to understand their own news consumption and interpretation habits. Schneider commented, "The success or failure of this course is not based on whether students consume more news. It would be ideally, and I want them to do this, it's in their self-interest; however, the key thing is whether when they go to the news, they can discriminate" (Interview, 11/05/10).

Moving up the model to the next tier, the types of skills and abilities identified to help students become discriminating consumers of news mirrored Potter's (2004) seven skills of media literacy, only the news literacy information-processing skills are grounded in knowledge that reflects journalistic philosophies and practices. These skills include analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, and synthesis. Descriptions of each of these information-processing tasks are provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Skills of News Literacy

Skill	Task
Analysis	Breaking down a news story whether is it in print, on television, or online into meaningful elements using tools and techniques designed to assess the veracity and reliability of information presented in news texts.
Evaluation	Judging the value of verification, independence, and accountability elements in news accounts; the judgments are made by comparing them to the other types of information sources in the Information Neighborhood framework.
Grouping	Determining how different genres of news such as opinion journalism, cable news, talk radio, and blogs are similar in function, purpose, and presentation; determining how different genres of news such as opinion journalism, cable news, talk radio and blogs, vary in function, purpose and presentation.
Induction	Inferring a pattern across news consumption and interpretation habits based on the functions of news framework, then generalizing the pattern across other news consumer populations.
Deduction	Using general principles about journalism as identified in the news neighborhood, news driver, and deconstruction frameworks to explain the particulars of news accounts
Synthesis	Assembling elements of news accounts into brief reports while applying literacy principles.

Adapted from Potter's (2004), "The Seven Skills of Media Literacy" (p. 124)

The skills interacted with the meaning-making boxes along the top of the cognitive theory of news literacy model. News first had to be filtered from other information sources through the news neighborhood framework before meaning-matching began. Meaning-matching referred to the application of the analytic frameworks introduced in the course. These frameworks, according to the cognitive theory of news literacy, would allow students to identify information that could help them make a judgment, reach a conclusion, or take an action, which concluded the flow of information-processing tasks illustrated in the model.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I examined news literacy with media literacy perspectives. The analysis began with a juxtaposition of news literacy with various conceptualizations of media literacy and dominant themes found in media literacy literature. The analysis extended to the identification of instructional and learning emphasis. To illuminate emphasis, an analytic matrix was constructed and data drawn from interviews, observations, and documents coded to four approaches to media literacy instruction (ideological, autobiographical, production elements, and factual) and four domains of media literacy learning (cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral). Results of the matrix query revealed that news literacy instruction focused on factual analysis of news texts and emphasized information-processing skill development. A cognitive model of news literacy was created to visualize this fully operationalized and highly specialized variant of media literacy. The next chapter theorizes as to how the journalistic mindset that inspired news literacy could inform discussions about digital age citizenship competencies and the role of educators in developing them.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Civic Foundations and Prospects of News Literacy

In the preceding chapters this case study examined news literacy from two distinct yet complementary perspectives. From grounded theory perspectives, the study found that news literacy was a demonstrative pedagogy marked by an instructional strategy of differentiation, dialogue, and experimentation. High levels of engagement and an increased awareness of current affairs were identified as common consequences of instruction. From media literacy perspectives, analysis of the evidence determined that news literacy focused on the development of cognitive skills through the deconstruction of news texts. This chapter connects the educational aims of news literacy with theories on the purpose of journalism in democracies.

The chapter starts with a brief review of the news literacy program. This background information is followed by an explanation of the journalistic notion of the public interest that inspired and informed the Stony Brook news literacy project. The type of journalism deemed essential to the public interest in the digital age and, therefore, favored in news literacy is explored next. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how the journalists who created and taught news literacy tapped into American civic history and attempted to extend a storied, value-based, and ordered vision of the press into high-speed, highly personalized, and disordered digital media environments.

BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY, AND CHAPTER ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Howard Schneider, founding dean of the Stony Brook School of Journalism, came up with the idea to teach students how to analyze the reliability and credibility of news reports in 2005. In less than three years, thousands of students had taken a 15-week news literacy course that was supported, in part, by millions of dollars in grants. The Knight Foundation's $1.7-

million award in 2006 propelled Schneider's idea into one of the most well financed pedagogical experiments on the Stony Brook campus. Schneider argued that teaching undergraduates the skills of news literacy—judging the credibility and reliability of news reports—would cultivate an informed citizenry. He added, "Everybody who heard about it said that it seemed to be the right course at the right time" (Interview, 11/05/10).

For Schneider, the first decade of the 21st century seemed like the right time to think differently about journalism education and citizenship instruction because changes in the production, distribution, and consumption of news demanded reconsideration of journalism's role in democracy and journalism education's skill-development tradition in the academy. Schneider maintained that teaching undergraduates how to assess the quality of news reports was more than an academic exercise. Rather, it was a necessity for engaged citizenship in digitized democracies. Schneider stated, "We had to make it clear that news literacy was not a journalism course but a course about citizenship and critical thinking" (Interview, 10/05/10). Schneider thus believed journalism education in the digital age needed two missions.

The first mission was to train future news practitioners; the second was to teach news consumers about journalism—how to recognize and evaluate it—through news literacy. Schneider's civic-inspired stance was reflected in the hundreds of documents collected; it was overheard in the 26 news literacy activities observed; it was echoed by many of the 28 news literacy stakeholders interviewed; and it was reflected in the news literacy course description found on its syllabus:

> This course is designed to teach students how to take skillful possession of their power as citizens by becoming perceptive news consumers. Armed with critical-thinking skills, a firm grasp of relevant history and practical knowledge about media, students learn how to find the reliable information they need to make decisions, take action or make judgments.

One of the main aims of the case study method is to develop an understanding of the perspectives of people who were responsible for the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explore further the normative assumptions about journalism held by news literacy supporters and how these assumptions compliment and contradict the position that news literacy cultivates digital age citizenship skills. The analytic strategy addresses the following questions: What are the ethical principles that inspired and guided news literacy? Which genres of journalism are viewed as more civic-oriented discourses in news literacy and why? What is the most persuasive theoretical justification of news literacy's connection to democracy?

A PROGRAM AND PEDAGOGY CREATED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

In the ashes of the print-based newspaper industry, Stony Brook President Shirley Strum Kenny saw opportunity. Strum Kenny indicated she wanted to do "something big" with journalism at Stony Brook and in late 2004 she asked Howard Schneider, a 30-year veteran of the press, to help her (cited in Schneider, 2007). Strum Kenny had long believed that the lack of a journalism program at Stony Brook was a "serious omission of an important field" and a missed opportunity for students, given the proximity of the campus to Manhattan, which is widely considered the journalism capital of the world (Interview, 11/21/10).

The idea of starting a journalism school in the midst of a business model mêlée in news seemed nonsensical to Schneider—at first. The dominant paradigm in journalism education was that journalism schools were training grounds for future journalists: They were places for students to learn and practice the skills needed for entry-level jobs in news professions (Medsger, 1996, 2005). But with the employment outlook for the industry looking as bleak as its dwindling circulation figures, Schneider thought a new program would give students false hope for a bright

future in a field many said had no future. Strum Kenny disagreed. She thought the time of transition in news was the ideal time to start a new program, precisely because the field was changing so rapidly: "We had the opportunity to prepare students for the new, multi-faceted world of journalism, in which print, media, and internet were all important but each had its own character and requirements. That would be far easier for us than for universities whose faculties had aged under the old journalistic forms" (Interview, 11/21/10). Strum Kenny's persistence paid off: Schneider agreed to build a journalism school at Stony Brook. Schneider believed the invitation to join the administrative ranks in higher education had a higher calling: "I was hopeless believer that responsible journalism would endure if only we could inspire young reporters with the courage, skills, and passion to act in the public interest" (Schneider, 2007).

Schneider was a journalist first and an educator second as were the majority of his colleagues. It is understandable that they collectively brought to the academy their journalistic senses and sensibilities, including the belief that journalists have a duty to act in the public interest. Center for News Literacy Director Dean Miller referred to the press as a "full-time citizen," which meant that the press is "just doing what citizens don't have time to do for themselves" (Interview, 10/22/10). Jeff, a recitation instructor who had more than 15 years of experience in newspapers, called the press a "major civic institution" (Interview, 11/03/10). School of Journalism undergraduate director Paul Schreiber commented, "Democracy requires citizens who know what's going on" (Interview, 10/20/10), and lecturer Julia Mead remarked, "We really do believe in the public service element of what we do. The public's right to know, the First Amendment, and all of those noble high ideals are motivators for us because surely none of us getting rich doing this" (Interview, 11/04/10). The public interest philosophy proved crucial in the development of the new school and the genesis of news literacy.

Schneider came up with the idea to teach students how to evaluate news narratives shortly after he agreed to help Strum Kenny build a journalism school. The news literacy idea was borne from Schneider's experiences teaching an Ethics and Values of the American Press class. Schneider quickly realized that he was unable to teach undergraduates about the ethics and values of the press because many of his students were unable to identify news or explain its civic function. Schneider recalled about a third of the students in that fateful first class believed everything they read or heard, another third believed nothing, and the rest totally confused:

> They didn't know whether Michael Moore was a journalist, whether the clips they were getting on Youtube was journalism, whether Oprah Winfrey was a journalist. That was the key turning point in the genesis of what we did. It became clear to me as I taught this course that unless we dealt with the demand side of the information equation—the people who were on the other end of journalism—we were not going to be able to support, in my view, either a robust democracy or a robust press (Interview, 10/05/10).

The prism of public interest from which news literacy creators looked at journalism and their subsequent role as journalism educators is rooted in the heated arguments of the pamphleteers of the American Revolution (Leonard, 1986) and the freedom-of-expression legal challenges of the 19th and 20th centuries (Gleason, 1990). However, the normative expectation that journalism has unique responsibilities in self-governing societies was primarily the product of professional and ethical standards that evolved as the commercial press in the United States matured and adapted to the needs of growing and increasingly diverse audiences.

At first, journalism was viewed as a trade comprised of stenographers who simply described what they observed or repeated verbatim what they heard. Journalism transformed into a bona fide profession as journalists began to hold university degrees, interviewing became part of the reporting process, bylines indicating the author of a particular piece appeared under stories, and newspapers separated themselves from political parties in favor of financial and editorial independence. Industrialization in the 1800s allowed for the mass production of

newspapers thereby significantly driving down the cost of production. Advertising also further subsidized costs. The newspapers of the era became known as the penny press because of their low price, one penny per paper. Advertising in the penny press offered editorial independence: Journalists were no longer required to publish the political rhetoric or positions of their publishers. Instead, they could report on politics from nonpartisan perspectives as well as cover other topics with a spirit of independence and objectivity. Schiller (1979) writes,

> A profound and vital aspect of this transformation of news creation was the progressive development of 'objectivity' as the overarching norm guiding the construction and evaluation of news accounts. Although not so-called until the twentieth century … objectivity developed in tandem with the commercial newspapers' appropriation of a crucial political function—the surveillance of the public good (p. 47).

Public good journalism at the time of the penny press, according to Schiller, involved disdain for political elites as well as an emphasis on crime coverage. Schiller adds that the veil of objectivity in the commercial penny papers allowed them to legitimize the theory that newspapers should be regarded as social institutions: "News objectivity purported to ground the commercial newspaper's defense of public good in a positively verifiable and theoretically pristine world of fact. 'The facts,' in turn, were equated for the first time with the total mission and ideal content of the newspaper" (pp. 48-49). But the profit-seeking imperatives of the penny press took an excessive turn during the yellow journalism period a few decades later.

The origins of the phrase *yellow journalism* are found in a newspaper circulation war between Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* in the late 1800s. In their battle for audiences and advertisers, the two publishers targeted working class audiences and relied on sensational stories that were often fabricated, inaccurate, or full of hyperbole. The two titans even fought over the popular Yellow Kid comic strip, which satirized the life of a poverty-stricken boy who wore a yellow nightshirt. News accounts with exaggerated

headlines, sensational stories, and scandalous reporting thereafter became known as yellow journalism because the cartoon appeared in both newspapers at different times (Campbell, 2003). The yellow newspapers focused heavily on crime, however, the most famous circulation strategy guised as news concerned coverage of the Spanish-American War in 1898. The *World* and *Journal* were filled with misleading stories that favored American involvement. The approach worked: Readership increased as war fever spread across news audiences (Spencer, 2007; Streitmatter, 2008). Around the same time the yellow press was making journalism and civic history, another kind of journalism was making its mark in magazines.

Ida Tarbell's investigations into Standard Oil, Lincoln Steffens' reports on municipal government corruption, and Ray Stannard Baker's piece on labor racketeering in *McClure's Magazine* in the early 1900s were among the most notable examples of adversarial or watchdog journalism to emerge during what Bennett and Serrin (2005) call the "grand era of investigative reporting" (p. 177). The writers looked into a wide range of social issues and industrial excesses. Their stories often inspired public mobilization that led to changes in labor laws, food and drug regulations, and legal sanctions for corruption in politics and business. The investigative journalists of the era became known as muckrakers after Theodore Roosevelt likened their adversarial methods to a character in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in his 1906 "The Man with the Muck-rake" speech: "The man with the muck-rake, the man who could look no way but downward with the muck-rake in his hands; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck-rake, but who could neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake to himself the filth of the floor." Roosevelt was concerned that the writers were spending too much time on scandal instead of actual investigations that served society (Bennett & Serrin, 2005).

Muckrakers are important to modern-day journalism and thereby news literacy because they demonstrated the power of a journalist who moves beyond the role of a simple stenographer and above the yellow journalist who bowed down to powerful publisher and commercial interests. Muckrakers were independent crusaders who investigated and challenged power. They brought attention to industrial excess and political corruption and, as a result, their work is often viewed as a "grand civics lesson" (Leonard, 1986, p. 193). The muckrakers stylized the premise that journalists should watch and report on those in power on behalf of the public at large (Aucoin, 2005; Entman, 2004). This philosophy remains a widely held assumption that guides professional practices and ethics codes, and is often the basis for critiques of the press.

For example, the presumed responsibility of the news media to democracy was the basis of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press in the 1940s. Headed by Chancellor Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago, the commission produced *A Free and Responsible Press*. The report argues that the purpose of a free press is to serve democracy and therefore a press that tailors its content to commercial interests is not living up to its civic obligations. The commission (1947) reasoned that because newspapers are "common carriers of public discussion," they have a "moral duty" to provide:

1. A truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.
2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.
3. The projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society.
4. The presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society.
5. Full access to the day's intelligence (p. 18-29).

In his analysis of the recurring themes in journalism 50 years after the *A Free and Responsible Press* report, Blevins (1997) notes that imprints from the five conventions can be found in strategic plans, ethics codes, academic programs, and textbooks, leaving "little doubt

that the Commission's proclivities and theory are shared, consciously or otherwise, by journalism's low editorial and educational institutions."

The evolution of an accurate and investigative press in the United States reveals a complex and contradictory history. It is a story of heated rhetoric and revolution, of circulation wars and commercial excesses, of influence and condemnation, and of change in the face of innovation. The press and its production and ethical practices adapted and expanded with each new delivery platform introduced—film, radio, broadcast, and electronic—while a normative expectation solidified and survived each technological transformation: It was the responsibility of journalists to inform the public and investigate and report on those in power—to be democracy's watchdogs (Curran, 2005). Bennett and Serrin (2005) define watchdog journalism as: "1) independent scrutiny by the press of the activities of government, business, and other public institutions, with an aim toward 2) documenting, questioning, and investigating those activities, with an aim toward 3) providing publics and officials with timely information on issues of public concern" (p. 169).

The resignation of President Richard Nixon is among the most famous examples of the power of a modern watchdog press. Streitmatter (2008) documents how a *Washington Post* investigation of a burglary inside the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate office complex pushed the limits of investigative reporting and reminded the country of the key role the press plays in democracy. Streitmatter adds that the two reporters behind the series of *Washington Post* stories, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, became "all-American heroes," and "schools of journalism around the country burst at the seams with [Woodward and Bernstein] wannabes, and more than any other time in U.S. history, journalists were lauded as the saviors of democracy" (p. 223).

By the first decade of the 21st century, memories of Watergate had faded and the news industry had experienced a seismic structural shift. The press that brought down a president was brought to its own knees by technological change, market forces, and intense competition for advertisers and audiences. Schneider commented:

> I was watching a news organization that I helped build be systematically dismantled. I was watching colleagues who I thought were among the best journalists in the country being pushed out or fired. I was having a difficult time trying to accept the fact that all the work that I had done, and I don't mean me personally, but I mean my generation had done, was now in jeopardy (Interview, 11/05/10).

The generation Schneider held in high esteem was the generation of journalists behind the Watergate investigations. It was a generation that watched CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite influence public opinion and policy after he concluded that the Vietnam War would end in a stalemate. It was a generation of journalists, Schneider believed, who proved that the pen of a watchdog press was mightier than the sword of a dictator. In this context, news literacy was Schneider's way to make the journalism of his generation matter to the public—to teach news audiences how to recognize and reward independent news sources and watchdog reporters.

Schneider (2007) called the approach demand side journalism education because it was education geared towards all undergraduates, not just journalism majors. Schneider believed that the cognitive skills students developed in the process of reading, watching, and analyzing news sources would make them more informed and thereby more engaged citizens. Schneider also incorporated instruction on the values, ethics, methods, and mission of the press into news literacy. The theory behind these principled lessons was to ensure the endurance of a news media committed to the public interest. Schneider reasoned, "If we were really going to create an environment in which an aggressive, watchdog journalism was to survive and thrive, the

journalism devoted to the public interest, we needed an audience that could recognize it, value it, and be willing to support it (Interview, 10/05/10).

TEACHING CITIZENS HOW TO LOVE AN UNLOVABLE PRESS

As Schneider was beginning his news literacy experiment, sociologist Michael Schudson was watching with interest what was happening to journalism. Schudson had researched news extensively—its influence, its historic role in democracy, its business models, its biases, its narrative forms, and the professional customs and belief systems of journalists (Schudson, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2010). With digitalization, fragmentation, and corporate forces transforming the profession he had studied for decades, Schudson moved from a detached observer of the press to an intellectual advocate for a particular brand of journalism he deemed good for democracy.

In *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*, Schudson (2008b) argues that self-governing societies need an unlovable press, even as the number of alternative information sources rise. According to Schudson, an unlovable press is made up of journalists who "get in the face of power—and are enabled to do so because both their doggedness and their irreverence is protected by law, by a conducive political culture, and by a historical record of having served self-government well when they hunt down elusive or hidden facts" (p. 10). Schudson's description of an unlovable press mirrors the investigative, watchdog reporter favored by Howard Schneider and thereby celebrated in news literacy.

News literacy pays tribute to a press that investigates and challenges those in power. The Power of Information unit articulates the investigative spirit of an unlovable, watchdog press well (see Appendix H). The unit portrays journalists as brave information soldiers who pursue information at all costs with some losing their lives for "committing journalism." For example,

the second PowerPoint slide in the lecture shows a photograph of *Wall Street Journal* south Asia bureau chief Daniel Pearl with someone holding a gun to his head. Pearl was executed in Pakistan in 2002 shortly after the photo was taken. The caption below it asked: "Why do people want to kill journalists?" Students were told it's because journalists uncover information that those in power would prefer to keep secret. The information-is-powerful and journalists-as-heroes argument is simplistic, and the statistics provided to students on how many journalists are killed each year are misleading, given that most journalism deaths are outside of the U.S. In other words, information may be powerful, but it is hardly deadly in the American experience (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2012). Nonetheless, the lecture was important to this analysis because it demonstrated how the press was portrayed to students.

Throughout the course, journalists were depicted as democracy-enhancing crusaders and news literacy was another way that journalists strengthened democracy. Lecturer and former *60 Minutes* producer Steven Reiner commented, "There is certain inbred romanticism about journalism—a kind of love of and respect for journalism" (Interview, 11/03/10). Reiner credited the course's respect for journalism to Schneider and it was clear Schneider respected a specific type of journalist: The investigator and instigator, who watched, reported on, exposed those in power. The "My Life As …" speaker in the fall 2010 semester, Lydia Cacho, is a good example of a modern and heroic watchdog reporter. According to the flyer promoting her talk (see Appendix W), Cacho was as an activist reporter who faced great danger in her pursuit of truth and her investigative targets included international sex trade ringleaders, criminal gangs, and corrupt government officials in Mexico.

In making his arguments on how self-governing societies need an unlovable press, Michael Schudson (2008b) suggests that the news needs to be looked at as a mixed-bag of an

institution because it has multiple forms and multiple purposes. Forms include newspapers, radio, television, blogs, and podcasts in addition to different genres—international, national, local, political, judicial, criminal, weather, traffic, entertainment, culture, celebrity, arts, and sports. Schudson posits that critics are tendentious and simplistic in their expectations that the press should always directly serve democracy and often cherry-pick examples to support arguments that the press is not fulfilling its democratic mandate. Schudson reminds readers that even though the watchdog, investigative reporter is the star of the press, all members of the press, including obituary writers, serve important functions: "The obituaries honor and validate a community, a village, or a nation. They celebrate achievement and they may remind us that even the high and mighty have been lonely or sick or sad" (p. 8). The thinking behind Schudson's mixed-bag blueprint for the analysis of news—that news should be understood in terms of the multiple functions it serves in society—was also seen in news literacy classes, though it was presented from professional journalism perspectives.

Howard Schneider reasoned that an understanding of the methods of journalism would help students separate solid, well-sourced journalism from junk and that news should be viewed as a part of everyday life—as a source of information about topics as regular as the weather, as important as personal health, or as relevant to undergraduates as which college to attend. It is within these everyday parameters that news should be examined because news is, as Schneider put it, "the largest source of continuing education" in the world (Interview, 11/05/10). As a result, Schneider believed that everyone now needs the skills of a seasoned newspaper editor—to synthesize information quickly, judge it critically, and publish it responsibly— in the fast-moving, information-overloaded digital media world. Stony Brook President Shirley Strum Kenny, a career academic, esteemed university administrator, and early news literacy supporter,

agreed: "I believe our country sorely needs such education, that it is increasingly important as the modes of communication enable increasingly sophisticated distortions of truth to occur" (Interview, 11/21/10). Strum Kenny's comment about truth returns this discussion the Michael Schudson's points about why, he believes, democracy needs an unlovable press.

For Schudson (2008b), the dogged, watchdog reporter and the multiple functions of news are only two reasons why journalism holds a special place in democracy. He adds journalism's commitment to fact-finding and truthtelling is also integral to its democratic mission. Schudson acknowledges concerns regarding declarations of absolute truth and supports more nuanced interpretations of reality. However, he sees civic value in a vocation that strives to operate outside power that is dedicated to "institutionalized truthtelling and independent judgment." Schudson turns to a theory of factual truth put forth by political theorist Hanna Arendt to make his case that an unlovable and independent press committed to producing factual knowledge may be "as good as we get" in democracy and therefore such as press should be preserved and promoted (p. 2).

FACTUAL TRUTH, HONEST BROKERS, AND BULLSHIT DETECTORS

Arendt (1968) proposes that truth and politics have historically been on bad terms because those who seek political power are neither altruistic in their motivations nor honest in their communications. In light of the inherent dishonest nature of political rhetoric, Arendt argues there needs to be a way to reveal the most *relevant* truths in political discourse and by relevant she means *factual* truth. Arendt explains that factual truth is distinct from philosophical truth because philosophical truth becomes opinion and argument when it is shared with others:

> Factual truth, on the contrary, is always related to other people: it concerns events and circumstances in which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends on testimony [and] it is political by nature. …Facts inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long they respect factual truth. Freedom of opinion is a farce unless factual information is guaranteed and the facts themselves are not in dispute. In other words, factual truth informs political thought just as rational truth informs philosophical speculation (p. 238).

Arendt (1968) goes on to classify journalism as one of the outstanding "modes of truthtelling" in modern societies: "The solitude of the philosopher, the isolation of the scientist and the artist, the impartiality of the historian and the judge, and the independence of the fact-finder, the witness and the reporter" (pp. 259-260). Arendt elevates journalists to a place of distinction in society because of their place outside of the power struggle of politics. This independence, she reasons, awards members of the press an important, independent perspective on civic matters. Howard Schneider would likely agree.

Schneider argued through news literacy that journalism is just like any other empirical discipline. Schneider pointed to the principles of verification, independence, and accountability as the methods journalists use to assert the validity of their news reports. In fact, the official news literacy definition of news explained to students during the first lecture rested on these foundational ideas. According to instructional materials, news is defined as "information about a subject of some public interest that is shared and subject to the journalistic process of verification by an independent organization that is accountable." Gans' (1979/2004) seminal study of news practices confirms the belief among journalists that their methods are similar to science in part because of their commitment to objectivity: "This objectivity derives from the use of similar fact-gathering methods; like scientific method, journalistic method is validated by consensus. Equally important, the methods themselves are considered objective because journalists, being detached, do not care how the story comes out" (p. 183).

Jones (2009) defines journalistic objectivity as "a genuine effort to be an honest broker when it comes to news. That means playing it straight without favoring one side when the facts are in dispute, regardless of your own views and preferences" (p. 82). News literacy pedagogues, however, steered clear of using the term *objectivity* in the course and opted for independence instead. Objectivity, they believed, had become a source of considerable confusion inside and outside news rooms. Merrill (2006) defines objective reporting as "detached, unprejudiced, unopinionated, uninvolved, unbiased omniscient—and infallible. … The objective report would in effect match reality: it would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Merrill goes on to argue that objective reporting is an impossible benchmark because "no reporter knows the truth; no reporter can write a story that can match reality. …All reporters, in addition to being limited in their objectivity by the inadequacy of language, are also conditioned by experience, by physical state, by education, and by many other factors" (p. 134).

News literacy instructors understood these problems with objectivity so they opted instead to use independence to describe the philosophy and practice of detachment in news reporting they wished to communicate to students. Independence in news literacy terms means that an information provider does not have a stake in the outcome of the issue at hand. Independence, in turns out, denotes an outside observer stance that fits well with Arendt's (1968) view on how to look impartially at politics and other realms of power: "This is the standpoint of the truthteller, who forfeits his position—and with it, the validity of what he has to say—if he tries to interfere directly in human affairs and to speak the language of persuasion or violence" (p. 259).

According to news literacy logic, the tactic at the heart of journalist truthtelling is verification. The pedagogy argued in the Truth and Verification unit (see Appendix N) that

journalism's first obligation is to the truth, and the overriding goal of journalism is the disinterested pursuit of truth. Disinterested again emulates Arendt's (1968) arguments on the importance of independent standpoints. News literacy, however, classified truth in journalism as provisional because a story should be viewed as the best obtainable version of the truth available at the time of publication or broadcast. The reasoning for the provisional label was Schneider wanted students to recognize that truth in news changes as new information becomes available. News literacy subsequently encouraged students to get into the habit of following the news regularly so they could develop a complete understanding of a story over time.

Verification in news was explained as a journalistic "process that takes newsworthy information and checks its credibility and reliability before it is published or broadcast as news." Evidence that a story went through a process of verification could be determined if a reporter explained how she gathered, assessed, and weighed evidence; added meaning to facts through context; adjusted the story for balance or fairness; and explained how she knows or doesn't know something. Many of these criteria are integrated into deconstruction lessons and the all-encompassing deconstruction guide (see Appendix X).

The final characteristic that news literacy argued made journalism different from other information sources is accountability. Accountability means journalists take responsibility for what they print or broadcast by standing by a controversial story or admitting to and printing retractions when they make mistakes. These ideas were demonstrated to students through the case of Brian Thevenot of the New Orleans newspaper *The Times-Picayune*.[2]

In the early days of Hurricane Katrina, Thevenot failed to verify key facts and his errors reverberated around the world. Thevenot (2005a) first reported that dozens of bodies had been

[2] *The Times-Picayune* was founded in 1837, making it one of the oldest newspapers in the United States. In June 2012, the newspapers laid off nearly half of its editorial staff and announced it would soon publish only three printed editions per week in an effort to shift its focus to online news (Robertson, 2012)

stacked inside a freezer at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. But Thevenot got it wrong. He later admitted that he did not look inside the freezer to see for himself what two National Guardsmen standing outside of it told him. In other words, Thevenot failed to verify. The newspaper printed retractions and Thevenot (2005b) published a self-correcting missive in *American Journalism Review*: "I retell this story not to deflect blame—factual errors under my byline are mine alone—but as an example of how one of hundreds of myths got reported in the early days of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath" (p. 32). Thevenot's articles became required reading for news literacy students because they demonstrated accountability and the consequences of failing to verify information.

Alternatively, the movie *Shattered Glass* (2003) was also required viewing, even though it was an example of journalism at its worst. The film told the story of Stephen Glass, a young reporter at *The New Republic* in the 1990s, who lied. He made up names; he attributed quotes to people who didn't exist; and he pretended that he attended parties and events that never happened. The process of verification in place at the magazine was supposed to catch and correct factual errors, but Glass tricked his editors and fact-checkers too. The editing system in place at *The New Republic* was not set up to catch a reporter who outright lied by presenting pure fiction as well-sourced reporting. The assignment that accompanied the film asked students to 1) describe how and why the verification process broke down in this case, and 2) explain how the movie illustrates that journalists are subject to peer review. At first, the pedagogical value of the exercise was questionable in terms of teaching students how to recognize independent, verified, and accountable sources. However, it made instructional sense once it was examined through the theoretical lens of factual truth.

Arendt (1968) explains that factual truth is more easily understood by what it is not: "The hallmark of factual truth is that its opposite is neither error nor illusion nor opinion … but deliberate falsehood, or lie" (p. 249). The justification for news literacy is also often explained by the opposite of high-quality, fact-based journalism, such as the story of Stephen Glass at *The New Republic* and the numerous examples of argumentative and opinionated video clips from the cable news sphere displayed in classes. Schneider (2007) called deception and manipulation the "dark arts" of information, and he frowned upon the practice of "disguising reality through sleight-of-hand and half-truths, conjuring up assertion as verification, masquerading ideology as news analysis, and morphing news values into entertainment hype." News literacy was presented as the instructional savior to these sins of information. President Shirley Strum Kenny also maintained that educators needed to teach students how to identify and guard against dishonest tactics and rhetoric:

> Increasingly in our time there has been an obfuscation of the differences and often an attempt to confuse them so that people believe as fact what propagators of fiction, opinion, or propaganda would have them believe. This is a major matter of importance not only for journalism students but for all of us. In order to protect our democracy, we must prepare students to read intelligently, apply logic, and eye public communications skeptically, with an eye for the lie. Readers, listeners, and viewers must be able to question, to doubt, to demand proofs—in other words, to be responsible citizens (Interview, 11/21/10).

Fact in public communications, according to news literacy principles, was determined by the reliability of information. News literacy course materials define reliable information as "actionable information. It allows news consumers to make a judgment, reach a conclusion, or take an action." Students were taught to determine the reliability of information in news reports by going through the deconstruction steps. The final essay gave students five weeks to follow an issue in the news and analyze stories they found based on deconstruction principles (see Appendix Y). The final examination (see Appendix Z) was made up of exercises that prompted

students to pick apart news stories and pinpoint deconstruction concepts such as direct evidence, fairness, balance, assertion, verification, and context. However, one rarely heard the word *reliable* when the journalists who taught the Stony Brook class talked about their craft.

Center for News Literacy director Dean Miller referred to journalists as "honest brokers" (10/22/10). Lecturer Richard Hornik called them excellent "bullshit detectors" and thereby he added news literacy could be known as "how to grow a bullshit detector," given the course was designed to teach students how to think about information like a journalist does (Interview, 10/21/10). For Steven Reiner, journalism was fact-based: "It's about the facts. It's rooted in the facts. It's rooted in being able to essentially prove things. …Get his age right. Get what he does for a living right. Get what he said right. Get it all right, and get it all right regardless of the ramifications" (Interview, 11/03/10). Literature confirms the fact-based, honest-broking, bullshit-detecting philosophy of journalists.

Altschull (1990) describes journalists as "dedicated empiricists; it is the facts that they are after" (p. 2). The Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947) builds on this fact-finding philosophy in its recommendations on how news media can better serve democracy: "It is no longer enough to report *the fact* truthfully. It is now necessary to report *the truth about the fact*" (p. 22) [emphasis in original text]. Altschull (1990) adds the "just the facts, ma'am, just give us the facts" approach journalists are known for seems, at first, to lack philosophical grounding because journalism is viewed a practical pursuit and not a field known for deep reflection. But if one looks deeper, he argues, the operating philosophy of fact-based journalism is the result of the assimilation of ideas that form the basis of American intellectual tradition. Both Arendt (1968) and Schudson (2008b) integrate elements of this intellectual tradition into their arguments about news, facts, and democracy.

Arendt turns to Immanuel Kant's (1790/2000) ideas about reason and judgment; she integrates elements of Thomas Hobbes' (1651/1994) social contract theory; and refers to James Madison's (1788) comments about opinion in politics to support her factual truth framework and arguments that democracy needs independent perspectives that watch and report on political power from the outside. Schudson (2008b) grounds his unlovable press archetype in Alexis de Tocqueville's (1840/1969) observations on early American democracy as well as Walter Lippmann's (1920) and John Dewey's (1927/1954) debates about problems with democracy if deception and opinion run rampant in public communications. Therefore, it is through the lenses of Arendt's factual truth model and Schudson's unlovable press archetype that the civic value of news literacy becomes more theoretically persuasive and, given these perspectives, the ideological undercurrent of news literacy becomes clear: Facts have a lot to do with journalism, democracy, and news literacy.

THE ETHICS OF NEWS CONSUMPTION IN DIGITIZED DEMOCRACIES

It seems fitting that the most convincing theoretical justification for news literacy's civic education ambitions comes not from increases in student political knowledge as reported by news literacy administrators (Miller, 2011), but from Arendt's (1968) philosophical text *Between Past and Future* that was first published during same era of Walter Cronkite's Vietnam war stalemate comment and the investigative work of two watchdog *Washington Post* reporters who exposed corruption in the American presidency. It has long been Stony Brook news literacy creator Howard Schneider's position that a better understanding of the journalistic principles and practices of his print-oriented generation would make students better equipped to assume the responsibilities of informed citizenship in an age of information inundation: "Once you accept the assumption that everybody is a future citizen and everybody is a news consumer, news

literacy becomes the means by which we're teaching people in the digital age to be well-informed" (Interview, 10/05/10). Schneider's comment about the role of education in the development of civic competences taps into the history of education in the United States.

To take just one example, Dewey's (1916/2007) early 20th century blueprint for education suggests that schooling serves a social need and function. Schools are the places where ideas about life and society are formed and, therefore, they feed and nurture democratic thought, debate, and practice. Dewey also maintains that schools should not be isolated from their cultural environments: "Isolation of subject matter from a social context is the chief obstruction in current practice to securing a general training of the mind" (p. 52). Dewey extends his argument about how education should be viewed as pubic good to journalism too. For Dewey (1927/1954), public communication informs and thereby forms the "great community" that makes up democracy, and it is the responsibility of citizens of the great community to keep track of public affairs as part of their daily routines (p. 142).

News literacy goes out of its way to integrate fresh examples from current news topics into its lessons and it positions consuming news regularly as a responsibility of digital age citizenship. Schneider postulated that the influx of new voices through social media, blogs, tweets, and text messages means more diverse discussions about matters of public interest, but also more opportunities to manipulate the truth and deceive the public. His concern was that unchecked, unethical, and untruthful texts would spread like viruses in the wired world and subsequently be accepted as truth. Schneider believed that the anonymity and lack of accountability online means that citizens now have to do for themselves what American journalists have been doing for two centuries: sift through mountains of information to figure out the most relevant facts needed to "make a judgment, reach a conclusion, or take an action."

It seems Schneider, however, was imparting on students far more than the skills of a seasoned newspaper editor. He was trying to translate a deeply held moral vision of the press into a moral vision of news audiences in the digital age. As dean of the new Stony Brook journalism school, Schneider was "determined to produce another generation [of journalists] that will go out and restore the kind of values and restore of kind of passion for good journalism that so many people I know had" (Interview, 11/05/10). News literacy extended that value-based vision to young news consumers. This pedagogical stance parallels Dewey's (1916/2007) contention, "Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits and aims of the group" (p.65).

Consuming news in the public interest means suspending judgment about an issue until one can critically assess information based on the principles introduced in the course. It also means acting in the public interest when accessing, exchanging and publishing information. According to course materials, a news-literate citizen has a responsibility to 1) stay informed; 2) set an example when posting information and images online; and 3) support high-quality and ethical journalism. On the possibilities, imperfections, and powers of the press in society, Arendt (1968) concludes, "The telling of factual truth comprehends much more than the daily information supplied by journalists, though without them we should never find our bearing in an ever-changing world and, in the most literal sense, would never know where we are" (p. 261).

Along these lines, the civic value of news literacy seemed to lie more in the ethics of news consumption instead of the analysis of news itself. The heart of news literacy at Stony Brook rested on the assumption that the key to civic culture in the digital age was not a more virtuous press, but rather a more virtuous news consumer who appreciated watchdog journalism

and demanded verified, independent, and accountable news sources. In explaining his arguments on why democracy needs an unlovable press, Michael Schudson (2008b) reasons:

> Journalism does not produce democracy where democracy does not exist, but it can do more to help democracies thrive if it recognizes the multiple services it affords self-government, encourages the virtues that underwrite those services, and clarifies for journalists and the public the many gifts news contributes to democratic aspirations (p. 26).

This examination of the philosophical roots and civic potential of news literacy discovered that Howard Schneider was honoring and advancing a philosophy of the press deeply rooted in the American democratic tradition. Schneider created a curriculum designed to illuminate and celebrate the virtues of an investigative press and clarify to young news audiences the social and civic functions of well-sourced and accurate news accounts. The theory behind Schneider's strategy was that young news audiences would become more discerning news consumers and, in turn, appreciate and support the type of journalism he deemed essential for democracy to function well.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the democratic aspirations attached to news literacy were examined. The analysis revealed that news literacy pedagogues at Stony Brook University were driven by a passion for the public interest that was inspired and informed by their previous careers as journalists. In turn, news literacy was viewed as an extension of an altruistic mission of the press that favored an investigative, watchdog reporter and independent, verified, and accountable information. This belief system was projected onto news audiences through news literacy, which was positioned as a pedagogical pathway to an informed and engaged citizenry in the digital age. The next chapter concludes this case study with a summary of its major findings and a discussion of future directions in journalism education, media literacy, and civics instruction.

CHAPTER SIX
News Literacy, Media Literacy, and Democracy: Discussion and Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

My dissertation has explored the news literacy program at Stony Brook University with the aim of attaining a deeper understanding of an instructional strategy that represents a new direction in journalism education, a specialized approach to media literacy, and a novel way to think about civic knowledge and engagement in the digital age. Many critics have concluded that digitization, competition, and advertiser and audience fragmentation have profoundly altered news-gathering methods, the advertising-supported business model of the press, and the traditional gatekeeping role of journalists. Yet even though the ways in which news is produced, distributed, and consumed have changed dramatically in the past 20 years, the cultural and professional expectation that the press has a moral duty to democracy has endured. For Stony Brook news literacy creator Howard Schneider, becoming literate in understanding and reading news is conceived as an extension of the civic responsibility he took seriously as a newspaper journalist and subsequently as a journalism educator.

Schneider sought to preserve and promote the principles of the press he favored by teaching college students how to look at news the way a journalist would—with an "eye for the lie," as Stony Brook president Shirley Strum Kenny put it (Interview, 11/21/10), and with a journalistic passion for the public interest. Schneider reasoned that everyone would benefit from learning the skills of a seasoned editor because of the speed and abundance of information in the 21st century. He commented, "News literacy is about being a citizen in the digital age in which information has exponentially increased and is potentially able to overwhelm us. Unless we can sort information that's reliable from what's suspect, we are not individually or collectively going to be able to make the kinds of decisions that are inherently necessary" (Interview, 11/05/10).

To teach students how to think like journalists, Schneider and his instructional team, made up primarily of journalists, designed and taught a 15-week, three-unit general education credit bearing, freshman-level course aptly called “News Literacy.” Millions of dollars from external grant agencies were raised to support the instruction of news literacy at Stony Brook as well as export it to other universities and into high schools.

My strategy has been to scrutinize news literacy from varied vantage points because the focus of the pedagogy—news—has traditionally been at the intersection of American social, intellectual, and civic life. During a fall 2010 site visit to the Stony Brook campus, 26 activities were observed, 28 interviews were conducted, and hundreds of documents were collected. The evidence was compiled, organized, and analyzed within a database in Nvivo, which is a qualitative data analysis software program. This dissertation generated three major categories of findings, which I will elaborate on in this concluding chapter.

First, I present the results of a grounded theory examination that illustrated the organizational and instructional flow of the course inside a news literacy logic model. The purpose of the logic model was to create a visual picture of the theory created. Second, I explain how and why I designed an analytic matrix to situate news literacy within the broader and more established field of media literacy. Next, the results of the matrix are addressed. Third, I touch on the findings of a philosophical assessment of news literacy. This inquiry found that the civic value attached to news literacy rested more on historic principles of the press than on the critical assessment of news reports, which suggests a need for forward-thinking, ethics-inspired notions of civic engagement as democracies become increasingly mediated. These sections are followed by a discussion of the implications of this study on future policy, practice, and research; I also address the limitations of the study. I end the chapter with closing remarks on why I pursued this

project and what I see as its major contributions to journalism education, media literacy, and citizenship instruction.

THE LOGIC OF NEWS LITERACY

In Chapter Three, I presented and discussed the conceptual flow of news literacy. According to grounded theory protocols, patterns and themes become apparent in the process of organizing and analyzing data (1989; Creswell, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I identified the essential ideas of news literacy through a systematic coding procedure and amalgamated them into a news literacy logic model, which clarified and illustrated the key findings of the grounded theory investigation. Creswell (2005) writes that the visual model is the "centerpiece of the grounded theory study and represents the author's attempt to visualize the process under examination" (p. 417). The logic model created for this study revealed that news literacy was a multifaceted pedagogy with distinct insight into the analysis of news.

News was at the center of the model because it was the subject of nearly every lecture, discussion, and activity in the Stony Brook news literacy program. Changes in news industries prompted Schneider to design a curriculum he believed should become a requirement for all undergraduates. Schneider argued that citizens needed to develop expert information-processing skills because of the unlimited opportunities to consume, produce, and disseminate information now available to them. Teaching students how to think like journalists translated into an instructional strategy of differentiation and precision that was marked by current events and fresh, ripped-from-the-headlines examples. Opportunities to discuss and debate course concepts and news stories were plentiful across all lecture and recitation sections observed, which made instructional environments interactive and experimental. The experimental conditions were due, in part, to intervening factors such as robust support from senior university administrators and

significant investment from external foundations. Instructional consequences included high levels of engagement, a greater awareness of current events, and deeper, more nuanced understandings of journalism. Stony Brook president Shirley Strum Kenny, a literary scholar, commented, "One of the things I love about the news literacy program at Stony Brook is that it has caught the imagination of the students. They love it; they want to take it; they engage intellectually. I believe this awakening of excitement about learning is an important and perhaps unexpected element of the program" (Interview, 11/21/10).

The significance of the grounded theory examination of the Stony Brook news literacy program is that it provides the first in-depth qualitative scholarly inquiry into what is shaping up to be the seminal conceptualization of news literacy. Recent initiatives at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, an early and ongoing supporter of news literacy, demonstrate the trendsetting status of the Stony Brook approach. The foundation recently announced a $6-million grant-making program aimed at funding ideas that advance news literacy scholarship and practice. The name of the Why News Matters appeal mirrors the first Stony Brook news literacy lecture (see Appendix G). Also, the definition of news literacy found on the McCormick website is similar to the Stony Brook description. According to the McCormick Foundation (2012), news literacy is the "ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports and information sources. It enables citizens to become smarter consumers and creators of fact-based information." According to Stony Brook instructional materials, news literacy is defined as the "ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, television, or the Internet." Garber (2009) suggests that the appeal of news literacy for benefactors and journalism educators goes far beyond teaching information-processing skills:

> The news-literacy movement has the potential to begin to rewrite the unflattering narratives about the press that have become so pervasive that we've nearly stopped questioning them—to remove derogatory undertone from the phrase 'mainstream media.' It has the potential to push back against the hijacking of the journalistic reputation.

Garber was referring to Stony Brook's news literacy initiatives as well as The News Literacy Project, which was created by former *Los Angeles Times* investigative reporter Alan C. Miller. According to the organization's website, The News Literacy Project "mobilizes seasoned journalists to help middle school and high school students sort fact from fiction in the digital age." Through classroom visits from practicing and retired journalists, the project claims to teach K-12 students critical thinking skills that will enable them to be "smarter and more frequent consumers and creators of credible information across all media and platforms." The reference to more frequent news consumers in The News Literacy Project's stated mission and Garber's comments about the news literacy movement in general raise the question about the motives and biases guiding the movement: Is news literacy an extension of the journalistic commitment to the public good or is it an example of pedagogical public relations?

I would not go as far as to describe news literacy at Stony Brook as a course that evangelizes journalism because the pedagogy is quite critical of sloppy, emotion-laden, or argumentative journalism nor would I refer to it as highly ideological, even though the pedagogy is clearly advancing a position, which is that of newspaper writers, reporters, and editors. What I mean by this is there are preferred readings of news texts and preferred understandings of journalism within news literacy that seem to be byproducts of unquestioned, ideological assumptions about information, news, and democracy derived from decades of experience working in newspapers.

For example, news literacy is positioned as a forward-thinking approach to journalism education because it targets the so-called "demand side" of the information equation (Schneider,

2007). The thinking is that a generation of news consumers schooled in the ethics, principles, and practices of the press would come to appreciate, support, and buy, when appropriate, solid, well-sourced journalism. There is, however, a contradiction within this line of reasoning because 21st century news audiences do a lot more than consume the news: They share it; they post it on Facebook or other social networking sites; they comment underneath stories on news websites; they write about news stories or issues in the news on their own blogs; and they gather and distribute information and images on what they witnessed or experienced in much the same way reporters on the scene of a crime, natural disaster, or revolution would.

A recent demonstration of the power of the public as citizen journalists is found in the Arab spring of 2011 (see Kellner, 2012). Citizens effectively and strategically used communication technologies to mobilize, spread information, and challenge decades-old regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. Recent studies have suggested that the most reliable, up-to-date information about the highly fluid events in these countries often came, not from the journalists employed by global news media conglomerates, but from average citizens armed with mobile phones who communicated with each other, and the world, through social media distribution channels (Hermida, Lewis, & Zamith, 2012; Lotan et al., 2011).

News literacy attempts to recognize and reflect the shift in production and distribution power to news audiences, as per the following key concept listed in the course's learning outcomes: "Understand how the digital revolution and the structural changes in the news media can affect news consumers; understand our new responsibilities as publishers as well as consumers" (see Appendix F). At the same time, the idea that average citizens can produce credible and reliable information on par with the work of journalists is never fully explored. In other words, at a time when the lines between news producers and audiences are becoming

increasingly blurred, news literacy keeps journalists squarely on one side of the information equation and consumers on the other. This perpetuates a stale, print-oriented view of the press.

Paul Mihailidis, who has also experimented with conceptualizations of news literacy from a predominantly academic vantage point, has more fully thought through how to characterize the relationship between professional news producers and audiences in the digital age. Mihailidis (2012) argues that with every shift in technology comes a transition in information—how it is gathered, processed, and distributed. For Mihailidis, the shift in digital news gathering, production, and distribution brings new civic voices to democratic discourses once predominantly controlled by journalist gatekeepers and agenda-setters; therefore, research on news as well as pedagogies that intersect with the news need to reflect the collaborative realities of digital news production and consumption, as shown by the model below.

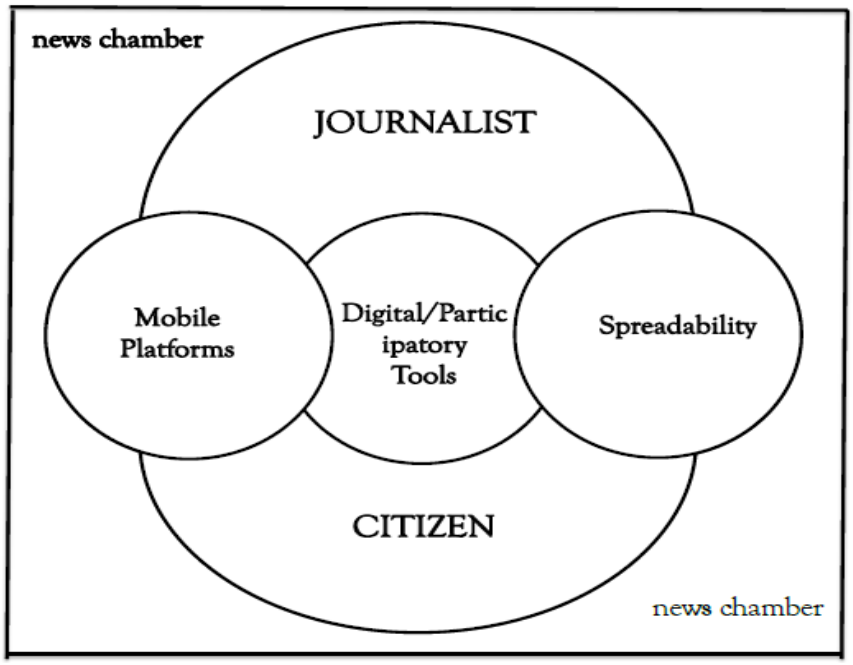


Figure 6.1: Concentric Model for 21st Century News (Mihailidis, 2012, p. 8)

In Mihailidis' concentric model for 21st century news, news audiences are no longer consumers, but citizens. His choice of words is reminiscent of Lewis and Jhally's position on

media literacy when they write, “The goal of media literacy is to help people become sophisticated citizens rather than sophisticated consumers” (p. 109). Mihailidis suggests that in 21st century news chambers, technology-savvy citizens use mobile devices to receive and share information instantaneously, take advantage of participatory tools that increase competition for information and attention, and easily spread information they retrieve or collect themselves. Mihailidis believes that journalism professionals and journalism educators can play an important role in educating and guiding citizens who contribute to digital news chambers about these new, collaborative relationships through news literacy. He adds that journalism organizations should not view these new voices as competitors, but collaborators: “Instead of carving out their own space for ‘news,’ journalism organizations have had to work within converged landscapes to provide meaningful information that users demand, often in spaces predominantly occupied by the users themselves” (p. 7).

Mihailidis’ concentric model for the 21st century reflects the ideas of Rosen (1991, 1999), who experimented with the theory and practice of citizen journalism at a time when the newspaper industry was still relatively healthy. Citizen journalism rested on the assumption that audience-generated content would make journalism more democratic and inclusive and thereby increase interest and engagement in civic affairs. Digital technologies have made the possibility of participatory, citizen journalism a reality on a global scale. However, Rosen argues that news industries remain locked in a view of audiences as passive consumers of information, instead of active contributors to and commentators of news. Gillmor (2004) writes that the ability of non-professional journalists, or the people formerly known as the audience, to contribute to the coverage of important issues and events is just the beginning of the possibilities the digital revolution brings to news:

> What also matters is the fact that people are having their say. This is one of the healthiest media developments in a long time. We are hearing new voices—not necessarily the voices of people who want to make a living by speaking out, but who want to say what they think and be heard, even if only by relatively few people (p. 139).

Schneider emphasized in interviews that there was an intentional, ongoing effort to improve the impact and efficacy of news literacy. Observation data confirmed the experimental, collaborative philosophy guiding news literacy. Thus, the works of Mihailidis, Rosen, Gillmor, and others may prove helpful as news literacy at Stony Brook and the field as a whole matures.

What is important, then, about the news literacy logic model outlined in Chapter Three is that it provides a conceptual frame of how the Stony Brook news literacy program worked in instructional and institutional settings at an important stage in its development. During the fall 2010 site visit, more than 1,000 students were enrolled in news literacy across seven lectures and 43 recitations. These substantial enrollment figures made news literacy the biggest course on the Stony Brook campus and possibly the largest course in all of journalism education at that time. Through the lens of the model, administrators, researchers, teachers, and donors can better understand the perspectives of Stony Brook news literacy participants to assess the suitability of the pedagogy to the goals and needs of their own programs and constituents.

NEWS LITERACY AND MEDIA LITERACY

From the beginning of the Stony Brook news literacy experiment, Schneider positioned news literacy as a subset of media literacy. As a reminder, news literacy is defined as the ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports. The most widely cited definition of media literacy in American scholarship comes from attendees of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, who agreed that media literacy represents "the ability to assess, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes" (Aufderheide,

1993, p. v). Subsequent media literacy definitions have added to this framework. Rubin (1998), for example, argues that media literacy is about "understanding the sources and technologies of communication, the codes that are used, the messages that are produced, and the selection, interpretation, and impact of those messages (p. 3). Thoman (1999) describes media literacy as the "ability to create personal meaning from verbal and visual symbols we take in every day. … It's the ability to choose and select, the ability to challenge and question, the ability to be conscious about what's going on around us—and not be passive and vulnerable" (p. 50). Even though news literacy shares many of these characteristics, Schneider rejected calling his emerging pedagogy media literacy because, he believed, media literacy was too broad and thereby did not adequately capture the specialized nature of news in terms of its unique narrative forms, production methods, and democratic function. Schneider's position inspired the second analytic phase of this dissertation, which was outlined in Chapter Four.

The goal of Chapter Four was to give an account of news literacy beliefs, knowledge, and skills in relation to media literacy. Along definitional terms, news literacy was consistent with conceptualizations of media literacy as well as dominant themes in media literacy literature. This study, however, sought to go beyond definitional and thematic dialectics to explore instructional and learning emphasis in media literacy-inspired pedagogies. Emphasis was important because the premise of news literacy as a subset of media literacy rested on the argument that the journalistic knowledge instructors brought to news literacy warranted a media literacy category all its own. The multifaceted analytic strategy was aided by the matrix coding query function in Nvivo. Bazeley (2007) comments, "Nvivo matrices have particular value in that they provide both numeric summary information and also access to the underlying text, thus maintaining a

connection with the evidentiary database. The numbers will tell you *how many* or *how often* something varied; the text will tell you *how* something varied" (p. 204).

To utilize the matrix query function, I coded data into nodes along two planes. The instructional plane consisted of four categories that represented various approaches in the instruction of media analysis: ideological, autobiographical, production elements, and factual. The learning dimension plane consisted of the four ways Potter (2008) suggests people interpret and learn from media: cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral. The results of the matrix query confirmed that news literacy focused heavily on the development of cognitive skills by teaching students how to analyze the veracity of news texts. The emphasis on information-processing led to the formulation of a cognitive theory of news literacy.

One of the contributions of this phase of the dissertation to the research and practice of media literacy is that it helps resolve some of the ambiguities in the field because, as Schwarz (2005) notes, "definitions of media literacy vary as theoretical foundations and educational purposes of media literacy educators vary" (p. 12). Hobbs (1998a) adds that the multiplicity of disciplines attracted to media literacy is a "source of strength and vitality. … Yet, this same dizzying array of perspectives is paralyzing, as the inability to reach consensus drives educators, activists, and scholars into defensiveness and sniping, away from efforts to work together" (p. 27). The media literacy analytic matrix formulated for this study addresses these ongoing concerns because it provides a comprehensive framework designed to examine and compare different understandings of media literacy within a single conceptual frame.

The matrix builds on the idea that media literacy as an educational theory, teaching tactic, and ability is multidimensional. Silverblatt (2001) argues media education programs must be designed to reflect the fact that media messages are produced with different techniques and for

different purposes. Zettl (1998) adds to this proposition with a theoretical model that breaks down the analysis of media into steps that guide the examination of media texts from different aesthetic points of view. Potter (2008) further refines the multidimensional position with his learning domain framework that divides media interpretation into cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral categories. Buckingham et al. (2005) argue media literacy needs to better reflect the unique purposes of educators:

> The nature and extent of the media literacy that individuals need to develop depends very much on the purposes for which they use the media in the first place. Different social groups may also develop and require different forces of media literacy in line with their motivations and preferences in media use. As such, we need to beware of adopting a reductive or mechanistic approach to assessing levels of media literacy among the population at large (p. 4).

In addition to exposing emphasis in news literacy, the matrix also revealed conceptual holes in the pedagogy, when compared with other media literacy approaches. Missing from news literacy altogether was instruction on how ownership and economic interests influence news coverage, which is emphasized by critical media literacy scholars and pedagogues (Westbrook, 2011). To put this differently, news literacy instructors didn't question structural and institutional factors that influenced how and why news was produced. Instead, they focused on the individual decision-making customs of the journalists who produced news and the products of journalistic processes. The lack of ideological awareness and instruction caused concern for some media literacy scholars (Hobbs, 2011b).

Schneider was aware of these criticisms, but he did not think he had enough time or space in the course to adequately address news media ownership issues, given that the focus of the course was to teach students how to: 1) identify news with the news neighborhood framework; 2) understand journalistic decision-making through news drivers; and 3) analyze the reliability and credibility of information through deconstruction steps and exercises. Additionally, Schneider

questioned the validity of ownership and ideological arguments directed at news literacy because his experiences inside newspaper newsrooms did not support the conclusion that ownership was a dominant factor in news decision-making. In fact, Schneider questioned whether ownership had any influence:

> On one level there are people who, from the outside [of journalism], will say there is no such thing as an independent press and that journalism cannot remotely be objective. I take great issue with both of those concepts. I have 35 years of experience first-hand in a corporate environment in which no one ever told me what to do or how to publish. I never felt at any time during my career that the commercial interests were centering what I did. I could turn around and say to those people that I've lived and worked in an environment where we did stories that were against the commercial self-interest of my own news organization and they'll be very cynical and not accept that, so there is a divide there. There is an absolute divide there (Interview, 11/05/10).

The divide between professional and academic understandings of news is not new (Zelizer, 2004); however, it is my position that both sides of the divide Schneider alludes to can learn from each other's perspective and thereby strengthen their own arguments, approaches, and pedagogies. For example, news literacy pedagogues might want to look to critical media literacy theorists and educators to address how ideological forces direct news content. Kellner and Share (2005) propose five core principles for critical media literacy they argue moves the power from information providers, such as journalists, into the hands and minds of information receivers. These principles include:

> 1. Principle of Non-Transparency: All media messages are constructed.
> 2. Codes and Conventions: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
> 3. Audience Decoding: Different people experience the same media message differently.
> 4. Content and Message: Media have embedded values and points of view.
> 5. Motivation: Media are organized to gain profit and/or power (p. 374-377).

Critical media literacy advocates and theorists such as Kellner and Share include multiple propositions in their conceptual frameworks, but they concurrently argue that instructional emphasis should clearly be on the profit- and power-seeking motivations of media outlets and

how these motivations influence individuals and cultures. These perspectives are based on Frankfurt School assumptions that all media contain ideological and value messages. Therefore, Kellner and Share argue that to be critical media literate means to be able to identify, question, and challenge ways that media messages reinforce relations of power, domination, and oppression in society:

> Individuals are often not aware that they are being educated and constructed by media culture, as its pedagogy is frequently invisible and unconscious. This situation calls for critical approaches that make us aware of how media construct meanings, influence and educate audiences, and impose their messages and values. Critical media literacy involves cultivating skills in analyzing media codes and conventions, abilities to criticize stereotypes, dominant values, and ideologies, and competencies to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts (p. 372).

To evaluate media messages, Lewis and Jhally (1998) put forth a contextual approach, which integrates critical elements because it means looking at the structure of media institutions in addition to the texts these institutions produce. The authors argue that "students must learn to see them not simply as true or false, realistic or misleading, stereotypical or positive, but as authored voices with certain interests or assumptions about the world, voices that could be influenced or replaced" (p. 119). Insights gleaned from these critical perspectives could be used in news literacy to provide more nuanced, outsider perspectives on the effects of ownership on news decision-making and the professional assumptions and practices that guide the course.

News literacy's emphasis on factual analysis and cognitive development brought into focus in the matrix appear to be byproducts of print journalist perspectives that make news literacy different from other media literacy approaches. At the same time, the journalistic way to analyze information and look at news production, distribution, and consumption is not the only way to think, study, and teach about news. Schneider instinctively knew this and often welcomed dialogue between disciplines because he did not want to be defensive or "pretend the journalism

perspective is the only perspective." He added, "on the other hand, people in the academy who out and out reject this perspective and are not willing to think about it, I think, are making a mistake" (Interview, 11/05/10). The so-called truth debate during which Schneider invited a philosopher and a scientist to discuss the meaning of truth from their disciplinary perspectives is just one example of his effort to go beyond the conceptual borders of journalism. Another example is the use of theories and studies from psychology to guide lectures and exercises on cognitive dissonance. However, this cross-disciplinary effort was not extended to knowledge about news in any meaningful way. Understandings of news, it seemed, were the primary domain of experienced journalists.

For example, only journalists were invited to speak to news literacy students, most often during the "My Live As …" series. Additionally, the majority of readings in the course were written by journalists. These readings included Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel's (2007) *Elements of Journalism* and Anderson Cooper's (2006) *Dispatches from the Edge.* The preference for the journalistic perspective is understandable, given that journalists created and taught the course, but it also meant that key works about news practices produced by scholars such as those from sociologists Herbert Gans (1979/2004) and Michael Schudson (1978, 2001, 2003) and the critical arguments of Ben Bagdikian (2004), Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988/2002), and Douglas Kellner (2001, 2005, 2009) were overlooked. I'm not suggesting that news literacy turn into a sociology, political science, or critical theory course. I am, however, arguing that the pedagogy would be enriched by several modules or readings that examine, question, or challenge the routines of journalism and ownership patterns from outsider perspectives as a means to counter the dominant professional paradigm guiding the course.

Another lacuna in news literacy in relation to media literacy is content creation. Hobbs' (2010a) list of digital and media literacy competences include access, analyze and evaluate, create, reflect, and act. These skills form what Hobbs refers to as a media literacy spiral of empowerment. She defines media creation as "composing or generating content using creativity and confidence in self-expression, with awareness of purpose, audience, and composition techniques" (p. 19). What is missing, however, from Hobbs' spiral of empowerment is the knowledge needed to guide meaningful content creation lessons. That is, how can a media literacy educator teach students how to create news messages without any training in the tenets of journalism? Wouldn't the educator and subsequently her students just be mimicking journalistic conventions instead of truly understanding them?

Schneider was aware of the production debate in media literacy, but decided that teaching students how to critically think about news texts *and* create them in a variety of forms would be unrealistic given the size of the course and the resources needed to attain, manage, maintain, and update constantly changing technologies. Additionally, he believed content creation lessons would detract from the goal of the course, which was to teach students how to think about journalism. Not to mention, the journalism school offered plenty of courses on how to write and produce journalism. My point is not that news literacy pedagogues or media literacy educators in general should ignore calls for media creation as part of their instructional strategies, but rather they should assess the feasibility of such strategies on a campus-by-campus basis and with course-specific learning outcomes in mind. I imagine well-financed programs with small class sizes and/or an army of technical support staff would have the resources needed to support a robust production component in media literacy. This is likely not the case at many budget-conscious campuses.

In sum, the results presented in Chapter Four connect the Stony Brook news literacy program with the broader field of media literacy. Stony Brook's 10,000-student sample, the specificity of its design, and its reliance on journalistic knowledge and professional practices set it apart from other media literacy strategies. This is not to suggest the news literacy program is superior to other media literacy pedagogies, only different, and this difference was examined within an analytic matrix designed specifically for this study. The matrix combined multiple ways of teaching media literacy with various ways people interpret media content. The results revealed that news literacy focused on factual analysis of news texts, while mostly ignoring ideological and creation modules. The matrix strengthens media literacy research and practice by providing an all-encompassing framework that respects and encourages a diversity of ways to think and study media literacy. Having now just argued that the examination of news literacy found in Chapter Four contributes to the vibrant, diverse, and growing body of knowledge informing the media literacy field, let us now turn our attention to news literacy's claim that the pedagogy is productive for democracy.

NEWS LITERACY, MEDIATED CITIZENSHIP, AND ETHICAL READERSHIP

News literacy's claim to nurture the skills necessary for an informed citizenry was central to its appeal with university administrators, such as Stony Brook President Shirley Strum Kenny, and outside funding agencies that collectively contributed more than $3 million to the news literacy cause. Schneider reasoned that by teaching students how to become more discriminating news consumers, they would become more informed and engaged citizens. The philosophical inquiry in Chapter Five explored this connection to citizenship,

The analysis revealed that news literacy's tie to democratic thought and practice lies in the professional practices and ethical codes of journalists that evolved as news industries in the

United States matured and expanded. The analysis also discovered unlikely theoretical allies for Schneider in the works of philosopher Hannah Arendt and sociologist Michael Schudson. Arendt (1968) positions journalists as important truth tellers who stand outside the realm of political power in their pursuit of facts. She admits there are problems and perplexities in determining facts, but "they are no arguments against the existence of factual matter, nor can they serve as a justification for blurring the lines between fact, opinion, and interpretation" (p. 238). Schudson (2008b) agrees that the facts that journalists uncover and publish matter to democratic thought and practice and, he adds, that democracy needs an "unlovable" press that "gets in the face of power" (p. 10). At the same time, Schudson (2008b) asserts that traditional measures of civic success such as political knowledge and participation are faulty and urges others to think beyond the informed citizen archetype as journalism and democracy go digital: "My goal is to understand journalism's special place in democracies, especially how to think through its mission once we stop equating democracy with maximum feasible participation or direct popular rule" (p. 3). Along these lines, the following discussion connects news literacy principles with ideas aimed at redefining digital age citizenship.

Jones (2006) argues traditional political engagement measures such as voting, party affiliation, political knowledge, and activism are outdated in highly mediated societies. Jones is not convinced of Putnam's (1993, 1995) position that television is to blame for civic disengagement. Instead, Jones says the problem lies in how scholars and others define and assess political knowledge and participation. Jones suggests that media and politics should be examined from the "bottom up," meaning "from the perspective of those who utilize numerous and multiple forms of media in their interactions with the world of politics" (p. 371). Jones puts forth a *mediated citizenship* framework:

> This emphasis on mediation, therefore, recognizes that daily citizenship engagement with politics is more frequently textual than organizational or 'participatory' in any traditional sense. That is, the most common and frequent form of political activity comes, for most people, through their choosing, attending to, processing, and engaging myriad media texts about the formal political processes of government and political institutions as they conduct their daily lives (p. 378).

Schroll (1999) reflects the assumption that civic engagement is increasingly textual instead of participatory as well as the belief that news consumption is habitual as much as intellectual in his theory of ethical newspaper readership. Schroll argues that the roles and responsibilities of news audiences are too often ignored in discussions about what to do about the supposed ills of journalism and its failure to serve democracy. This argument is similar to Howard Schneider's position that journalism education needs to design curricula for news audiences, or the demand side of the information equation, in order for democracy-enhancing journalism to survive in the digital age onslaught of information. Schroll refers to his "citizen-reader" idea as the "flip side" of civic journalism. According to Schroll, a citizen-reader ethically interprets and uses news for the betterment of herself and her community:

> The coductive reader does more than merely share her or his personal reaction to the ideas communicated in a text, or simply respond to the qualities of the text itself. Coductive readers seek to substantiate the *process* used in coming to a judgment of a text, asking, in essence, 'am I testing my reactions adequately?' (p. 331).

Of course, much has changed in the newspaper industry since Schroll (1999) formulated his citizen-reader construct, namely, fewer people are reading newspapers in their original, printed form on a regular basis and this trend is likely to continue as more newspapers fold or refocus their resources on digital delivery. At the same time, the routine of news reading has increased. News is consumed and exchanged more now than ever before in the history of journalism. The difference is that digital age news readers prefer digital platforms and forums to access, share, and exchange stories and ideas (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2012). Thus,

the theories of ethical newspaper readership and mediated citizenship are inadvertently advanced by news literacy. Essentially, I am arguing that news literacy is different from other notions of civics education because of what Bybee (1999) refers to as the "interconnections of citizenship, media, and democracy" (p. 30). This position reminds one of nearly century-old arguments of Walter Lippmann and John Dewey on the role of news media and citizens in democracies.

In *The Phantom Public*, Lippmann (1925/2009) questions the notion of the informed and engaged electorate in democratic theory. For Lippmann, the idea that the masses should dictate public policy is dangerous. He reasons that only those with first-hand, expert knowledge of problems should have the capacity to solve them because, he argues, the public is mostly made up of individuals who care more about their own lives than the welfare of society as a whole. This makes people passive spectators of political affairs and, therefore, the role of the press is to inform the public on the actions and policies of elected decision-makers.

In contrast to the Lippmann, Dewey (1927/1954) argues in *The Public and its Problems* that citizens can and should be active participants in democratic decision-making and that being informed is just one of their roles as citizens. The complicated relationship between democracy and individual participation is best understood through Dewey's ideas on communication, associations, ethics, and education. According to Dewey, the importance of communication—personal, interpersonal, and mass—in democratic states is that it creates common interests and shared understandings that lead to associations that transcend immediate family. The means of mass communication, which at Dewey's time included newspapers, magazines, radio, and the emerging film industry, informed the public but did not dictate their thoughts or actions:

> Singular persons are the foci of action, mental and moral, as well as overt. They are the subject to all kinds of social influences which determine *what* they can think of, plan and choose. The conflicting streams of social influence come to a single and conclusive issue only in personal consciousness and deed (p. 75).

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916/2007) puts forth a student-centered model for education to help cultivate personal consciousness: “Individuals act capriciously whenever they act under external dictation, or from being told, without having a purpose of their own” (p. 60). Dewey argues that the main function of education should be to nurture the characteristics and characters of citizens who need guidance on how to become informed, active, and thoughtful contributors to the democratic process. For Dewey, the health of American democracy depended on the quality and course of the education its young citizens received. Dewey writes, “In directing the activities of the young, society determines its own future in determining that of the young” (p. 34). Overall, Dewey was optimistic that education *and* communication could help solve the problems of the public as well as shape a “great community” of citizens who participate actively in public life and are committed to the welfare of others.

Optimism for the future was shared by Stony Book news literacy creator Howard Schneider, who turned to education to teach the principles of the press he believed would help students become independent, skeptical thinkers and therefore more responsible citizens. However, sociologist Michael Schudson (2008a) maintains that professional codes and conventions in journalism make the Lippmann view of the press the dominant, default position in modern journalism, which is reminiscent of critical pedagogue Paulo Freire’s (1970/2007) conceptualization of the banking method of education. The banking method is denoted by teachers imparting or depositing knowledge into the minds of students with little understanding of or respect for the views, backgrounds, and contributions of the students themselves. Freire argues that the banking approach makes teaching and learning ineffective, alienating, and oppressive experiences: “The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static,

compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students" (p. 71).

Interestingly, the pre-digital, industrial, non-participatory model of news could be viewed in many ways as the banking method of journalism: Journalists decided what was news (and what wasn't) (Gans, 1979/2004; Schudson, 2003); they, at times, focused on superficial "spectacles" that emphasized entertainment and attention-getting narratives over substantive stories and issues on civic affairs (Kellner, 2001, 2005); and they followed a system of verification that preferred authoritative and elite sources who advanced their own interests through supposedly independent and objective news stories at the expense of the interests of common citizens (Gans, 1979/2004; McNair, 1998; Tuchman, 1978). News audiences in this banking framework were passive receivers of information in the sense that they had limited opportunities to engage with news creators, direct news coverage, or interact with others in news reading, watching, and listening communities. To put simply, the pre-digital model of news lacked meaningful dialogue between news audiences and news producers, much like the banking method of teaching Freire loathed. But the near-death experience of newspapers and the participatory models of news that emerged at the turn of the 21st century ripped open the information floodgates and turned the top town, banking view of news production upside down.

In the midst of the largest structural transformation in the history of news, Howard Schneider unknowingly adopted a Deweyan approach to news, education, and democracy through news literacy. Lippmann viewed journalists as shepherds of the citizenry, while Dewey characterized them as teachers of the public (Champlin & Knoedler, 2006). Hermida et al. (2011) add: "Lippmann viewed journalism as a hierarchical system of providers and consumers, Dewey viewed journalism as a much more collaborative system for conversation, debate, and dialogue"

(p. 5). While there is evidence that a divide between news producers and consumers persists in news literacy, additional evidence suggests that this mindset is evolving as journalists step into and embrace their role of educators about public affairs in their day-to-day work and educators about the field of journalism itself, as demonstrated by news literacy at Stony Brook and similar programs designed by journalists such as The News Literacy Project. Whether news literacy is the next big thing in journalism education, media literacy, and civics instruction or an instructional fad that fizzles when funding runs out, Schneider's leadership, vision, and passion for the journalistic public interest and the ethics of the press he hoped to share with young citizens will be lasting legacies of the Stony Brook news literacy program.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Given the attention paid to news literacy on the part of agencies that fund innovation in journalism education, an increase in news literacy research and instructional programs is likely to follow. However, it would be premature to recommend policy initiatives given the pedagogy is still at an early, experimental stage and the majority of its instruction remains restricted to one institution. Regardless, several policy areas that could be informed by the Stony Brook news literacy experiment have been identified.

As I stated in the problem section in Chapter One, journalism education is at a crossroads: Should educators continue to focus on skills-training or should they broaden programs to attract the interest of non-majors? There is no governing body ruling journalism education; however, many programs seek accreditation through the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. As of spring 20012, 109 programs in the United States were accredited (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism Mass Communication, 2012). Programs are reviewed on their ability to meet standards in nine

categories: 1) Mission, governance, and administration; 2) curriculum and instruction; 3) diversity and inclusiveness; 4) full-time and part-time faculty; 5) scholarship: research, creative and professional activity; 6) student services; 7) resources, facilities, and equipment; 8) professional and public service; and 9) assessment of learning outcomes (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism Mass Communication, 2003). According to updated curriculum criteria, instruction at accredited programs should include lessons on the principles of freedom expression and of the press as well as be "demanding and current [and] responsive to professional expectations of digital, technological and multimedia competencies" (Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism Mass Communication, 2012). The curriculum area is perhaps where news literacy could fit into established journalism education policy schema. The only difference is news literacy would be positioned as a conceptual, civic competence instead of a skill developed in response to professional expectations.

The second problem raised in Chapter One concerned media literacy. Research and instructional interest in media literacy is growing as media continue to permeate every facet of modern life (Potter, 2010). While the literature on media literacy is becoming more diverse, policy-initiatives are somewhat scattershot. Policy on media literacy can be found in 48 or 50 states, with many using their own curriculum frameworks and guidelines (2002). However, it has been difficult for programs to take root in schools because of lack of support, time, and training (Share, 2009). Additionally, Considine (2002) is concerned that the high stakes testing movement might sabotage media literacy learning.

Alternatively, Westbrook (2011) argues that media literacy advocates and educators should look beyond state standards to federal initiatives. Westbrook positions the National Education Technology Plan (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) as an appropriate conduit for

media literacy, critical media literacy in particular, to gain a foothold in schools across the nation. Westbrook's analysis of the NETP, media literacy approaches, and good teaching practices found that media literacy already exhibits many of the 'connected teaching' principles the federal report suggests would enhance technology-driven teaching and learning in the 21st century. She concludes that media literacy theorists and educators should consult with the NETP findings to form a guiding framework in order to be taken seriously:

> Media literacy pedagogy must take into account what the National Education Technology Plan names 'factual knowledge.' Content versus process debate in media literacy education underscores critical analysis as demonstrated by the ability to encode and decode texts. But we as educators must take into account that for media literacy pedagogy to be recognized as an autonomous instructional field to be integrated across the curriculum, or to stand within its own curriculum framework, there should be conceptual—dare one say?—standards that allow media literacy pedagogy to mark itself as distinct, though not necessarily separate, from other conceptual content approaches (p. 162).

In my view, news literacy, as conceptualized by Stony Brook educators, already addresses many of Westbrook's arguments because of its specificity and emphasis on factual analysis, as per the findings spelled out in Chapters Three and Four. Based on advances in cognitive science, neuroscience, education, and social science, the NETP argues that 21st century instruction needs to reflect three types of learning: Factual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and motivational engagement. Motivational engagement follows the principles that people learn better when they are interested in a subject and engaged in the materials; procedural knowledge includes learning on how to identify procedures and problem solve; and factual knowledge, according the NETP framework, suggests that students learn how to "build usable knowledge" from the information they encounter. The report's reference to *useable* knowledge is reminiscent of news literacy's primary learning outcome, which is to determine the reliability and credibility of information in news reports so students can use the information to reach a conclusion, make a

judgment, or take an action. Therefore, it seems news literacy's emphasis on the veracity of information and its explicit connection to citizenship vis-à-vis journalism's storied civic history may very well give it an advantage in the eyes of federal education decision-makers when compared with other media literacy strategies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As a former newspaper reporter and editor, Howard Schneider instinctively and intimately knew the practices of the press and this knowledge of news from the perspective of a long-time practitioner is archived in news literacy. The results of this study suggest that news literacy is a "new" literacy inspired and informed by a pre-digital, print-based point-of-view. Schneider, in effect, created a pedagogy aimed at slowing down high speed, socially networked news consumption and interpretation practices by encouraging students to stop and think about the torrents of information available to them as if the words and images were on a printed page instead of flashing across a computer, television, or cell phone screen. Stony Brook president Shirley Sturm Kenny commented,

> Journalists bring to the classroom a special perspective and a world of experience from their professional lives. Having striven to rid their own news stories of fiction or biased interpretation or having written their own or their editorial board's interpretations of the news, they are aware of what is fact and what is not. … Imagine the intelligence with which young people could read news and its imitations if they had courses in high school, bolstered by more sophisticated analysis in college. I believe our country sorely needs such education (Interview, 11/21/10).

I agree in principle with Strum Kenny's argument, but it should be noted that what happened at Stony Brook was unique in many respects. Most notably, news literacy was a byproduct of a novel idea combined with strong senior administration support and flush finances. Therefore, educators interested in teaching news literacy modules or creating stand-alone courses should be weary of designing curricula based solely on the Stony Brook experiment. Florida

International University professor Frederick Blevens, a former newspaper reporter turned news media scholar, integrates some Stony Brook principles into his own popular news literacy class. However, Blevens notes that the Stony Brook method is difficult to fully replicate elsewhere because "most of us are out here, lonely little merchants at our universities trying to scrape up a few courses." Blevens adds, "It's the difference between running an experiment in an ideal laboratory and trying to mix your chemicals in a shot glass" (cited in Loth, 2012b, p. 15).

As a journalism educator, I would integrate elements of the Stony Brook news literacy program into my own classes. A stand-alone news literacy course organized around many of Stony Brook's principles is also appealing, but I would not transfer the course to my campus seamlessly for many same reasons Blevens mentions above. I imagine most instructors at all levels would find it difficult to devote the same amount of time news literacy pedagogues did developing and teaching a single course. Additionally, I would augment my own news literacy offering with in-depth readings about news from non-journalism perspectives, including several from critical scholars. I would also integrate more collaborative, social media exercises into the pedagogy, given the participatory culture realities of digital age students who have minimal experience with newspapers in their original, printed form and plenty of experience using technology to network with others, express themselves, problem-solve, and circulate information (Jenkins, et al., 2009).

I believe the key message from this work for educators it that is up to each individual instructor to interpret which news literacy lessons are appropriate for her desired outcomes and student populations. Tyner reminds us that "students who are inundated with mass media forms also bring a great deal of common prior knowledge of mass media narratives" to media literacy classrooms (p. 166). My point is that the possibilities of news literacy, whether it's the Stony

Brook method, a variation of it, or a completely different conceptualization, are seemingly endless because news remains the main source of public knowledge. I also recommend that educators look at news literacy with the same level of skepticism that news literacy pedagogues encourage students to look at news texts with.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Studies such as this reveal that additional research is needed and several areas emerge as possible directions for future research. One such topic is how to measure and compare media literacy pedagogies. The analytic matrix outlined in Chapter Five provides exploratory space for scholars to identify and compare instructional emphasis as well as more fully understand the relationship between instructional emphasis and the various ways people learn about media. Future researchers could add or subtract approaches and learning dimensions to the matrix based on the kinds of knowledge informing the pedagogy under examination (Potter, 2008). In the case of news literacy, journalistic knowledge was the dominant perspective shaping instruction; thereby a factual analysis category was created and used as means to compare what was going on in news literacy classrooms with other viewpoints in the field. One instructional approach gaining in popularity but missing from this study, content creation, could easily be added to the matrix, as shown by the *creation* category in the expanded matrix prototype on the next page.

Figure 6.2: Additional Analytic Matrix Categories for Future Studies

Approaches to Instruction

		Ideological	**Autobiographical**	**Production Elements**	**Factual**	***Creation***
Learning Domains	**Cognitive**					
	Emotional					
	Aesthetic					
	Moral					
	Habitual					

The other category included in the figure above that was not in the original matrix is *habitual*. I noticed as I was coding data that news literacy creators sought to influence news consumption habits of young citizens. News literacy pedagogues believed that skeptical *and* regular consumption of news from a range of wide sources was an essential part of being a news literate citizen in the digital age. To some degree, the students interviewed also viewed news consumption as a habit—a habit most often done on their way to do something else, such as check email. The habitual category also provides space to critically examine the tools of media instead of remaining locked in process-product modes of instruction.

This is important because the revenues and reach of Google and Apple rival many of the traditional big media companies such as Viacom and Disney. To express this point differently, Apple, Google, and other new media companies are very much profit-seeking, growth-minded entities, yet they have predominantly escaped the theoretical and instructional scrutiny of media literacy even though they are often the dominant source of media content. Additionally, many of these companies generate a significant amount of their revenues from advertising, much like pre-

digital era media giants. The primary revenue source for Facebook, for example, is advertising it embeds in content created by its users. The suggested shift in attention from media content to the means of distributing media messages, whether it's a search engine, social networking site, or an iPhone, echoes Marshall McLuhan's (1964/1994) electronic age arguments that media are extensions of man. McLuhan opines:

> If the formative power of media are the media themselves, that raises a host of large matters …. Namely, that technological media are staples or natural resources, exactly as are coal and cotton and oil. Anybody will concede that society whose economy is dependent upon one or two major staples like cotton, or grain, or lumber, or fish, or cattle is going to have some obvious social patterns of organization as a result (p. 21).

Two final and immediate directions in research that carry the ideas presented in this dissertation forward include the assessment of the effectiveness of news literacy as well as the comparison of programs that are teaching critical analysis of news under the news literacy moniker. As mentioned previously, the McCormick Foundation (2012) recently announced a multimillion dollar grantmaking initiative geared exclusively towards advancing news literacy. McCormick has already contributed more than $500,000 to Stony Brook's news literacy program and is also a substantial supporter of The News Literacy Project. Other approaches include John McManus'(2009) news literacy text, *Detecting bull: How to identify bias and junk journalism in print, broadcast and on the wild web,* which reflects journalistic and critical orientations, as well as Mihailidis' (2012) work that integrates communication studies and global perspectives into the news literacy instructional mix. Further study, however, is necessary to assess the similarities and differences between each of these emerging approaches as well as others as more educators and researchers experiment with the possibilities and pitfalls of news literacy.

LIMITATIONS OF MY STUDY

Single case study research such as this is limited in the sense that its findings are not generalizable as case studies are by their nature intimate investigations. The researcher often spends a lot of time at one site observing, interviewing, and getting to know the participants thus making it difficult to generalize findings beyond the specific case investigated (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). All of the data collected for this study were compiled, organized, and analyzed within the qualitative software program Nvivo and systematically processed so as to control as much as possible for bias. Various analytic strategies were employed to piece together the evidence into broader themes. Triangulation techniques and participant member checks were used to further corroborate evidence and verify findings.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This study was undertaken because of the interest I had, as a journalism practitioner and educator as well as a graduate student in education, in an enterprising and well-funded instructional idea that attempted to teach undergraduates about news from the perspectives of journalists. Although it may seem of concern to only a small group of journalism educators, news literacy and this work should in fact concern anyone who has research or instructional interests in media literacy as well as the kinds of competences needed for engaged and informed citizenship in the digital age.

At a time when calls for reform in education at all levels grow louder to address the needs of increasingly diverse, globalized, technology-dependent societies (Kellner, 1998), the dissertation tells the story of how a civic-minded journalist tried to use college classrooms to secure a future for the principles of newspaper journalism many predicted would disappear as

audiences turned away from the crinkle of newsprint towards high-speed and highly fluid digital news sources. The detailed descriptions and analytic explanations embedded in this project demonstrate the thinking behind the creation of news literacy and its instructional strategies. By using a systematic research design and developing multiple analytic explanations, a more dynamic picture of news literacy—its choices, consistencies, contradictions, and opportunities—is revealed.

As a result of this research experience, I have personally gained a better understanding of the commitment to the public interest that the journalists behind news literacy brought to their work. An unshakeable belief in the power of the press to affect positive change in society in addition to the view that the press is an invaluable institution of American democracy permeated the course materials and was echoed in interview after interview. With this greater understanding, I came to respect what Stony Brook news literacy creator Howard Schneider tried to do and how he did it.

Schneider argued with conviction that freedom of expression protections championed by the American press for centuries and the journalistic commitment to producing verified, independent, and accountable information enhanced social and political life and, therefore, needed to be protected and promoted in the anything-goes digital media environment. His strategy was to teach the next generation of news consumers, those on the so-called "demand side" of the information equation, about the principles and practices of the press he was intimately familiar with as a news professional for more than 30 years. These students would, in turn, become more discriminating news consumers, able to pinpoint and thereby appreciate and utilize high-quality journalism when they come across it in their information-saturated lives. My point is not that the journalists who designed news literacy should be idolized or that the

pedagogy they designed is without fault, but rather it is essential to understand the professional doctrines that inspired these journalists to create news literacy are as important, if not more so, than the critical thinking skills they claim the pedagogy develops in students.

I will end here with what I believe to be important contributions of this dissertation. The project generated assorted understandings of a pedagogy that started as an earnest and largely intuitive experiment but transformed into a tangible, thought-provoking example of an instructional strategy designed to assist young citizens in their navigation of high-speed digital media environments. The beliefs, knowledge, and experiences of administrators, lecturers, news fellows, and students presented and examined in this study offer an in-depth insider view of a course designed to teach students how to deconstruct news texts. However, news literacy turned out to be much more than a class on reading, watching, and listening to news for the journalists-turned-educators behind it. Instead, analysis of the evidence suggested that news literacy sought to merge journalism's print-dominated past with its uncertain, digitized future. Future studies and pedagogies that intersect with news, media literacy, or citizenship instruction could use the ideas and arguments presented in this work as conceptual springboards to move these fields forward, and with the perspectives of news professionals in mind, as digitization continues to revolutionize news industries as well as the ways in which people live, learn, and communicate.

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form, Anonymous

You have been invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Jennifer Fleming of the University of California Los Angeles. Participation in this research is voluntary. The purpose of this project is to improve our understanding of news literacy and future directions in journalism education.

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research by consenting to meet with Jennifer for semi-structured audio taped interviews to discuss my experiences with news literacy, my ideas about news literacy and my thoughts about the future of journalism education in general.

I understand that any written materials or oral presentations that may be developed will be presented in such a way that my anonymity will be protected.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time from the research. I am also free to ask any questions concerning the research during or after my participation. I can contact Jennifer Fleming at any time via email jenniefleming@XXXX or by telephone 949-XXX-XXXX or I may contact her advisor Dr. Douglas Kellner; his email is kellner@XXXX and telephone 310-XXX-XXXX. If I wish to ask questions about my rights as a research participant or wish to voice any problems or concerns I may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, I can call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

In signing this form, I agree to participate in the research under the conditions stated above.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Printed Name

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form, Non Anonymous

You have been invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Jennifer Fleming of the University of California Los Angeles. Participation in this research is voluntary. The purpose of this project is to improve our understanding of news literacy and future directions in journalism education.

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research by consenting to meet with Jennifer for semi-structured audio taped interviews to discuss my experiences with news literacy, my ideas about news literacy and my thoughts about the future of journalism education in general.

I understand that I may be identified and/or directly quoted in any written materials or oral presentations that may be developed as a result of this research.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time from the research. I am also free to ask any questions concerning the research during or after my participation. I can contact Jennifer Fleming at any time via email jenniefleming@XXXX or by telephone 949-XXX-XXXX or I may contact her advisor Dr. Douglas Kellner; his email is kellner@XXXX and telephone 310-XXX-XXXX. If I wish to ask questions about my rights as a research participant or wish to voice any problems or concerns I may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, I can call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

In signing this form, I agree to participate in the research under the conditions stated above.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Printed Name

APPENDIX C

External Funding Sources

Organization & Mission Statement	Amount	Purpose
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. It believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.	$1,700,000 $50,000	To teach 10,000 students, partner with other universities, create a digital textbook, and assess the effect of the course on students. To train journalists to teach news literacy at partnering universities.
The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is committed to fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens.	$100,000 $330,000 $25,000 $75,000	To partner with the Project for Excellence in Journalism to find and create fresh and evergreen material for news literacy curriculum to be shared with partnering universities. To expand a digital resource center for teachers and to support a curriculum workshop in Chicago. To support report on 2009 news literacy conference and to fund 2010 working conference. To fund 2011 national news literacy conference.
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world.	$285,000	To expand a digital resource center for teachers.
The Ford Foundation supports visionary leaders and organizations on the frontlines of social change worldwide.	$185,000 $200,000	To fund public lectures and summer institutes. To fund web module with Poynter Institute, pilot summer institute and 2009 national conference.
The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting change in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people.	$25,000	To fund a portion of the 2011 conference and the 2011 and 2012 summer institutes for teachers.
The Laurence W. Levine Foundation	$50,000	To fund activities of the center with an eye to special education.

TOTAL: $3,025,000

APPENDIX D

Participant Names, Pseudonyms, and Descriptors

Administrators

	# of Years in Journalism	Primary Medium: Print or Broadcast	# of Times Taught News Literacy	Gender
Elizabeth Farley	0	-	0	Female
Andrew Heyward	30+	Broadcast	0	Male
Marcy McGinnis	30+	Broadcast	0	Female
Dean Miller	20-25	Print	5-10	Male
Paul Schreiber	30+	Print	5-10	Male
Howard Schneider	30+	Print	10-15	Male
Shirley Strum Kenny, PhD	<1	Print	0	Female
Chris Weber, PhD	0	-	0	Male

Lecturers

Richard Hornik	30+	Print	5-10	Male
James Klurfeld	30+	Print	10-15	Male
Julia Mead	20-25	Print	5-10	Female
Steven Reiner	30+	Broadcast	5-10	Male

Recitation Instructors (Pseudonyms)

Edith	15-20	Print	1-5	Female
Jeff	15-20	Print	5-10	Male

News Fellows (Pseudonyms)

	Class Level	Disciplinary Area	# of Times Taught News Literacy	Gender
Anthony	PhD Candidate	Social Science	1-5	Male
Jason	PhD Candidate	Social Science	1-5	Male
Richard	PhD Candidate	Social Science	6-10	Male

Students (Pseudonyms)

	Class level	Major	Journalism Experience	Gender
Allison	Freshman	Computer Science	No	Female
Barbara	Freshman	Mechanical Engineering	No	Female
Diana	Freshman	Engineering Science	No	Female
Huang	Sophomore	Marine Biology	No	Male
Jacob	Freshman	Undeclared	No	Male
John	Junior	Economics	No	Male
Jose	Senior	Health Sciences	No	Male
Noel	Freshman	Journalism	Yes	Male
Rochelle	Freshman	History	No	Female
Samantha	Freshman	Undecided	No	Female
Shannon	Freshman	Health Science	No	Female

APPENDIX E

List of Participants, Types of Interviews, and Dates

	Type	Date(s)
Administrators		
Elizabeth Farley	In-Person	10/04/10, 10/15/10
Andrew Heyward	Phone	11/04/10
Marcy McGinnis	In-Person	11/03/10
Dean Miller	In-Person	10/22/10
Paul Schreiber	In-Person	10/20/10
Howard Schneider	In-Person	10/05/10, 11/05/10
Shirley Strum Kenny	Email	11/21/10
Christopher Weber	In-Person	11/08/10
Lecturers		
Richard Hornik	In-Person	10/21/10
James Klurfeld	In-Person	10/27/10
Julia Mead	In-Person	11/04/10
Steven Reiner	In-Person	11/03/10
Recitation Instructors		
Edith	In-Person	11/02/10
Jeff	In-Person	11/03/10
News Fellows		
Anthony	In-Person	10/28/10
Jason	In-Person	11/04/10
Richard	In-Person	10/22/10
Students		
Allison	In-Person	10/21/10
Barbara	In-Person	11/03/10
Diana	In-Person	10/26/10
Huang	In-Person	10/26/10
Jacob	In-Person	11/05/10
John	In-Person	11/04/10
Jose	In-Person	11/01/01
Noel	In-Person	10/22/10
Rochelle	In-Person	10/28/10
Samantha	In-Person	11/05/10
Shannon	In-Person	10/27/10

APPENDIX F

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

Description of News Literacy Course:

This course is designed to teach students how to take skillful possession of their power as citizens by becoming perceptive news consumers. Armed with critical-thinking skills, a firm grasp of relevant history and practical knowledge about media, students learn how to find the reliable information they need to make decisions, take action or make judgments. At a time when the digital revolution is spawning an unprecedented flood of information and disinformation each day, the course will seek to help students recognize the differences between news and propaganda, news and opinion, bias and fairness, assertion and verification, and evidence and inference.

Learning Outcomes:

Key Skills:

1. Recognize the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors.
2. In the context of journalism, recognize the difference between news and opinion.
3. In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference.
4. Evaluate and deconstruct news reports based on the quality of evidence presented and the reliability of sources; understand and apply these principles across all news media platforms.
5. Distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.

Key Concepts:

1. Appreciate the power of reliable information and the importance of a free flow of information in a democratic society.
2. Understand the nature and mission of the American press and its relationship with the government; compare and contrast to other systems around the world.
3. Understand how journalists work and make decisions and why they make mistakes.
4. Understand how the digital revolution and the structural changes in the news media can affect news consumers; understand our new responsibilities as publishers as well as consumers.
5. Understand why news matters and why becoming a more discerning news consumer can change individual lives and the life of the country.

Source: Stony Brook University, Center for News Literacy

APPENDIX G

Unit #1: Why News Literacy Matters

Concepts:

- Define news literacy
- Situate news in personal, social, and cultural contexts
- Break down the meaning of reliable information

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to define news literacy
- Students will be able to articulate the meaning of "actionable" information
- Students will be able to analyze and discuss their own news consumption habits

Guiding Questions:

- What is news literacy? Why is it important?
- What does the public think of the news media and why?
- How do students get the information they use to make decisions?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture
- Contribute to discussion during lectures and recitations
- Complete "48-Hour News Blackout" homework assignment: Disconnect from news environment, analyze experiences, and discuss results in 250-word essay

Processes and Skills:

- Assess and compare news habits
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate 48-Hour News Blackout
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, online supplemental materials

Course Outcomes:

- Distinguish between news media bias and audience bias
- Understand why news matters and why becoming a more mindful news consumer can change individual lives and the life of the country

Adapted from Flores-Koulish (2005) "Concept-based Unit Template" (p. 93)

APPENDIX H

Unit #2: The Power of Information

Concepts:

- Explore the desire and need to receive and share information
- Examine the role technology plays in the distribution and consumption of information
- Understand the importance of freedom of expression to democracies

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to differentiate journalistic sources from other information sources
- Students will be able to explain the value of news compared with other kinds of information sources

Guiding Questions:

- Why do people consume news and exchange information with others?
- How and why is information controlled?
- What is censorship?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture
- Contribute to discussion during lectures and recitations
- Read Thompson's (2006) "Google's China Problem (and China's Google Problem)" article from *The New York Times*; Drummond's (2010) "A new approach to China" blog from *The Official Google Blog*; Kristof's (2010) "Google Takes a Stand" article from *The New York Times*; Jacobs and Helft's (2010) "Google, Citing Attack, Threatens to Exit China" article from *The New York Times*; and "Clash of the Great Firewall" op-ed article from *The Wall Street Journal* (2010)
- Complete Censorship in China assignment

Processes and Skills:

- Evaluate the principles of freedom of expression
- Develop an argument
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Censorship in China assignment
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, blogs, and news articles

Course outcomes:

- Appreciate the power of reliable information and the importance of a free flow of information in a democratic society

APPENDIX I

Unit #3: Know Your Neighborhood – What Makes Journalism Different

Concepts:

- Recognize the key values of journalism: verification, independence, and accountability
- Analyze information within the Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods framework
- Understand the difficulties in differentiating journalism from other information sources

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to understand the significance of news compared with other kinds of information sources
- Students will be able to differentiate journalistic sources from other information sources

Guiding Questions:

- What makes journalism different from other kinds of information?
- Why does differentiation matter?
- What are the news narrative markers students should look for during their analyses of information sources?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture
- Participate in discussions during lectures and recitations
- Read Garofoli's (2008) "Fake News Anchor Rips Media's Failure to be a Watchdog" article from the *San Francisco Chronicle*; Clifford's (2008) "Montel's Back, and Does He Have a Deal for You" article from *The New York Times*; and Kakutani (2008) "Is Jon Stewart the Most Trusted Man in America" article from *The New York Times*
- Complete Is Youtube a Source of Journalism? assignment: Watch three video clips and analyze them with Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods framework
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Judge the value of video clips produced for different purposes but accessed through the same channel
- Infer a pattern across various types of information sources
- Create brief and clear essay that captures the essence of the message and arguments
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Is Youtube a Source of Journalism? assignment
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Recognize the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors
- Understand the nature and mission of the American press and its relationship with the government; compare and contrast to other systems around the world

APPENDIX J

Unit #4: The Mission of the American Press

Concepts:

- Understand the philosophical and practical underpinnings of journalism in the U.S.
- Examine presumed and assumed press responsibilities in democracies
- Develop an argument about the tension between unfettered access to information and control of it

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to recognize First Amendment and censorship issues
- Students will be able to show their understanding of the watchdog function of the press

Guiding Questions:

- What is the purpose of journalism in the United States?
- Why is freedom of expression important in democracies?
- What are the tensions between the press and government, especially during wartime?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture
- Participate in discussions during lectures and recitations
- Read Barstow's (2008) "Behind TV Analysts, Pentagon's Hidden Hand" article from *The New York Times*
- Complete Message Machine assignment: Read, summarize the article's findings, and explain which characteristics of journalism may have been compromised, and why
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Synthesize and analyze an article
- Critique news media practices
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Message Machine written assignment
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Appreciate the power of reliable information and the importance of a free flow of information in a democratic society
- Understand the nature and mission of the American press and its relationship with the government; compare and contrast to other systems around the world

APPENDIX K

Unit #5: What is News and Who Decides?

Concepts:

- Examine news judgment and the decision-making processes of journalists
- Identify and question the motives that drive news decision-making

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to show their comprehension of terms that describe journalistic judgment, including news drivers, news values, and sensationalism
- Students will be able to explain how the news production process works
- Students will be able to formulate an opinion about and experience how the profit and social responsibility motives influence news judgment and placement

Guiding Questions:

- What is news and who decides?
- How do journalists assess the newsworthiness of stories?
- Why do journalists focus on certain stories and ignore others?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and participate in recitation discussions
- Read Dennis & Merrill's (2006) "Deciding What Is News" from *Media Debates*
- Complete What Is News? assignment: Read chapter then formulate and explain your position in the debate on motives that influence news production
- Complete News Log #1: Select stories from a variety of sources and identify and explain news drivers that influence coverage of topics
- Complete news quiz
- Participate in You Be The Editor in-class activity

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor news quiz
- Develop an opinion; synthesize, express, and defend it
- Connect news driver framework to personal news consumption choices
- Collaborate with peers to judge news stories and justify judgments to rest of class
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate What Is News? assignment
- Evaluate News Log #1
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, book chapter, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Understand how journalists work and make decisions and why they make mistakes
- Understand how the digital revolution and the structural changes in the news media can affect news consumers; understand our new responsibilities as publishers as well as consumers

APPENDIX L

Unit #6: Opinion Journalism

Concepts:

- Differentiating between news reports and opinions in news
- Understanding the purposes of opinion journalism

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to identify opinion journalism
- Students will be able to evaluate the pros and cons of the increase in opinion journalism

Guiding Questions:

- What are purposes of opinion journalism in newspapers? Cable news? Radio? Internet?
- What is a columnist? A commentator? Are bloggers journalists?
- Why are the lines between objective reporting and opinion journalism becoming increasingly blurred?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture
- Complete News Log #2: Choose a news story on any subject and find an opinion piece on it; describe the similarities and differences between the two news genres

Processes and Skills:

- Survey multiple news sources
- Examine news texts for markers that demonstrate assertions of opinions rather than facts
- Recall, understand, and apply course concepts in analysis of news and opinion
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate News Log #2
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, book chapter, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- In the context of journalism, recognize the difference between news and opinion
- Understand how journalists work and make decisions and why they make mistakes
- Understand the nature and mission of the American press and its relationship with the government

APPENDIX M

Unit #7: Balance, Fairness, and Bias

Concepts:

- Understand the concepts of fairness, balance, and bias in news texts
- Analyze news texts

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to examine news texts for indicators of fairness, balance, and bias
- Students will be able to understand differences between news bias, and audience bias

Guiding Questions:

- What are fairness and balance in news?
- Are the news media fair and balanced?
- How do journalists define and apply the principles fairness and balance?
- What are the differences between media bias and audience bias?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and participate in recitation discussions
- Read Wang and Aamodt's (2008) "Your Brain Lies to You" Op-Ed article from *The New York Times;* Carey's (2008) "Undecideds More Decided Than They Think, Study Says" article from *The New York Times*; Kristof's (2009) "The Daily Me" Op-Ed article from *The New York Times*; Clark's (2008) "The Public Bias Against the Press" blog
- Complete Project Implicit exercise online: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
- Complete News Log #3: Select any newsworthy story and explain why it is newsworthy using the news driver framework
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Reflect on the biases revealed through completion of the Project Implicit exercise
- Determine which elements in news stories are alike in some ways and different in others
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate News Log #3
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- In the context of journalism, recognize the difference between news and opinion
- In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference
- Distinguish between news media bias and audience bias

APPENDIX N

Unit #8: Truth and Verification

Essential Understandings:

- Student will be able to explain the Open the Freezer metaphor
- Students will be able to distinguish between direct and indirect evidence, assertion and verification, and evidence and inference
- Students will be able to compare how journalistic notions of truth and peer review differ from philosophical and scientific understandings of truth and peer review

Guiding Questions:

- What do journalists mean by truth?
- How does journalistic truth differ from philosophical or scientific truth?
- What standards do journalists use to verify information?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture
- Read Thevenot's (2005b) "Myth-Making in New Orleans"
- Read "Tsunami Washed Away" excerpt from Cooper's (2006) *Dispatches from the Edge*
- Complete Anderson Cooper assignment: Make a list of steps in the verification process discussed in the book and evaluate the evidence uncovered at each step
- Complete News Log #4: Select a dominant claim in the media made about healthcare reform, research the claim, and state whether or not it is true. Provide evidence for how you reached your conclusion
- View *Shattered Glass* (Ray, 2003) and complete assignment: Describe how and why the verification process broke down in the case of Stephen Glass at *The New Republic*, and explain how the movie illustrates that journalists are subject to peer review

Processes and Skills:

- Recognize journalistic verification process or lack thereof
- Monitor and test evidence presented in news texts
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Anderson Cooper assignment
- Evaluate News Log #4 assignment
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, feature film, book excerpt, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Understand how journalists work and make decisions and why they make mistakes
- In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference
- Understand why news matters and why becoming a more discerning news consumer can change individual lives and the life of the country

APPENDIX O

Unit #9: Evaluating Sources

Concepts:

- Distinguish between categories of sources in news narratives
- Assessing evidence provided by sources in journalistic texts

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to explore the various types of sources quoted in journalistic texts, including self-interested, independent, and authoritative
- Students will be able to design a strategy to evaluate evidence presented in news reports
- Students will be able to remember and apply the mnemonic device I'M VAIN in analysis of news reports

Guiding Questions:

- What makes some news sources reliable and others unreliable?
- What are the standards used to weigh the credibility of sources quoted in news reports?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and contribute to recitation discussions
- Read "Soldiers Face Neglect, Frustration At Army's Top Medical Facility" article from the *Washington Post* (Priest & Hull, 2007)
- Complete Walter Reed assignment: Make a list of steps in the verification process discussed in "Soldiers Face Neglect" story and evaluate evidence uncovered at each step
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Judge evidence presented in news texts
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Walter Reed assignment
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- In the context of journalism, recognize the difference between news and opinion
- In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference
- Evaluate and deconstruct news reports based on the quality of evidence presented and the reliability of sources

APPENDIX P

Unit #10: Deconstructing the News

Concepts:

- Apply news literacy principles in analysis of news reports
- Detect inconsistences in news reports
- Test to see if conclusions in news reports are supported by the evidence provided

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to analyze the credibility and reliability of news reports
- Students will be able to recall and apply previous course ideas and arguments on evidence, sourcing, transparency, context, and fairness in their analyses of news reports
- Students will be able to assess news reports based on the Deconstruction Guide prompts

Guiding Questions:

- What standards do journalists use to evaluate the credibility and reliability of news?
- How can students use journalistic principles and practices in their analyses of news?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and contribute to recitation discussions
- Deconstruct various stories in the Deconstruction Workbook
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Recognize journalistic verification process or lack thereof
- Judge evidence presented in news texts
- Practice deconstruction techniques
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Deconstruction assignment
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Lecture slides, video news reports, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- In the context of journalism, recognize the difference between news and opinion
- In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference
- Evaluate and deconstruct news reports based on the quality of evidence presented and the reliability of sources; understand and apply these principles across all news media platforms

APPENDIX Q

Unit #11: Power of Images and Sound

Concepts:

- Judge how images and sounds in news reports influence audiences
- Explore how digital technologies can alter images and sounds in news reports

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to understand the ethical decision-making and/or self-censorship processes in journalism
- Students will be able to recognize how images and sounds can be manipulated to attract attention and arouse emotions in audiences

Guiding Questions:

- What is the impact of images and sound on the search for reliable information?
- What challenges arise when digital technologies can easily alter images and sounds?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and participate in recitation discussions
- Read "Behind the Scenes: To Publish or Not" blog from *The New York Times* (Dunlap, 2009) and "Gates Assails News Agency for Publishing Photo of Marine Killed in Afghanistan" from *New York Times* (Seelye, 2009)
- Complete AP Photo assignment: View controversial photograph of an American Marine killed during the Iraq invasion, read two articles about whether or not the Associated Press should have published the image. Post on blog on the course website stating whether you agree or disagree with the AP's decision to publish. Explain why.
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Develop and defend an argument
- Consider ethical decision-making in news
- Recall and apply news literacy concepts
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate AP Photo blog
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Multimedia lecture slides, video news reports, news photographs, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Understand how journalists work and make decisions and why they make mistakes
- Understand how the digital revolution and the structural changes in the news media can affect news consumers; understand the new responsibilities of publishers and consumers
- Understand why news matters and why becoming a more discerning news consumer can change individual lives and the life of the country

APPENDIX R

Unit #12: Deconstructing TV News

Concepts:

- Determine how news literacy deconstruction elements apply to television news
- Think critically about television news reports and production elements

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to identify the elements of TV news accounts
- Students will be able to critique television news reports

Guiding Questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between television news and other media?
- How can consumers watch television news more actively and critically?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and contribute to recitation discussions
- Complete NewsU assignment: View Watching TV News online learning module (McGinnis, 2010) and apply news literacy principles in the analysis of TV stories
- Complete news quiz

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Analyze television news reports
- Recall and apply news literacy concepts
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate NewsU blog
- Evaluate news quiz
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Multimedia lecture slides, video news reports, online module, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Recognize the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors
- In the context of news stories, analyze the difference between assertion and verification and between evidence and inference
- Evaluate and deconstruct news reports based on the quality of evidence presented and the reliability of sources; understand and apply these principles across all news media platforms
- Understand how journalists work and make decisions and why they make mistakes

APPENDIX S

Unit #13: The Internet & News

Concepts:

- Examine the new opportunities and responsibilities of digital age news consumption
- Think critically about how citizens are now the consumers and producers of news
- Apply the APCs (Authority, Point-of-View, Currency) in the analysis of web pages

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to discuss the pros and cons of news on the Internet
- Students will be able to identify the top news sites online
- Students will be able to understand that rank does not equal reliability in online news
- Students will be able to assess the reliability of online information sources

Guiding Questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between news on the Internet and other more traditional delivery platforms such as newspapers, radio, television and magazines?
- How can consumers be more skeptical about online news?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and contribute to recitation discussions
- Read *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr (2010)
- Complete news quiz
- Complete Email Homework assignment: Evaluate email, assess whether to pass it on, and explain decision-making process

Processes and Skills:

- Monitor current events
- Analyze an email hoax framed as a news story
- Recall and apply news literacy concepts
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate news quiz
- Evaluate Email Homework assignment
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Multimedia lecture slides, video news reports, email, and news articles

Course Outcomes:

- Recognize the difference between journalism and other kinds of information and between journalists and other information purveyors
- Understand how the digital revolution and the structural changes in the news media can affect news consumers; understand the new responsibilities of both publishers and news consumers
- Understand why news matters and why becoming a more discerning news consumer can change individual lives and the life of the country

APPENDIX T

Unit #14: The Future of News

Concepts:

- Discuss what it means to be news literate
- Review major news literacy concepts
- Assess the risks and responsibilities of posting information and images online
- Explore how to pay for investigative journalism in the digital age

Essential Understandings:

- Students will be able to explain the principles of crowdsourcing, citizen journalism, and audience fragmentation
- Students will be able to situate the introduction and expansion of online news within an historical context of other media technologies
- Students will be able to identify the three responsibilities of news literate citizens: 1) Stay informed; 2) Set an example when posting information and images online; and 3) Support high-quality and ethical journalism

Guiding Questions:

- How do the sweeping changes and economic problems in the news industry today affect the quality of journalism?
- Who will pay for watchdog journalism?
- Will new digital models and technologies make it more difficult—or easier-- to find reliable information?

Enabling Activities:

- Watch and listen to multimedia lecture and contribute to recitation discussions
- Complete Final Essay: For one month pursue reliable information on a topic that is of interest and employ news literacy tactics and tools to reach a conclusion, take an action, or make a judgment; Write a 1,000- to 1,500-word essay that states a conclusion and how and why the conclusion was reached

Processes and Skills:

- Evaluate information using news literacy techniques and frameworks
- Recall and apply news literacy concepts
- Express ideas through written communication and during in-class discussions

Assessments:

- Evaluate Final Essay
- Observe recitation participation

Materials/Texts:

- Multimedia lecture slides, video news reports, and news reports

Course Outcomes:

- Understand how the digital revolution and the structural changes in the news media can affect news consumers; understand the new responsibilities of both publishers and news consumers

APPENDIX U

Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods

	News	Entertainment	Promotion	Propaganda	Raw Information
Goal	To inform	To amuse or to engage people during their leisure time in activities which they are passive participants	To sell goods and services and talent/personalities by increasing their appeal to consumers	To build mass support for an ideology by canonizing its leaders and demonizing its opposition	To bypass institutional filters and distribution costs in order to sell, publicize, advocate, entertain and inform
Methods	Verification, independence and accountability	Storytelling, performance, the visual arts and music	Paid advertising and public relations activities. Press releases, public statements, staged events, sponsorship, product placement, web sites, viral videos, etc.	One-sided accounts or outright lies, relying on emotional manipulation through images, appeals to majority values and fallacious reasoning	Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, blogs, websites, chain email, text message forwarding, flyers, graffiti
Practitioners	Reporters, photographers/ videographers, editors and producers	Actors, musicians, writers and producers	Ad agencies, publicists, public relations experts, government spokespersons	Political operatives and organizations	Anyone with a web connection, photocopier or a can of paint
Outcomes	Empowers citizens by educating them	Distraction from or changed view of daily life. Reinforcement or critique of social norms	Increased sales of products and services or higher fees for talent being promoted	Helps a group seize or maintain power by influencing public opinion and motivating the public to take action consistent with its ideology	Outlet for self-expression, entertainment, promotion, advocacy, propaganda

Source: Stony Brook University, Center for News Literacy

APPENDIX V

"My Life As…" Flyer for Lydia Cacho

The "My Life As…" Series

Lydia Cacho

"My Life as a Mexican Journalist"

Monday, Oct 4, 2010

7:30 p.m. Staller Center

Please bring your student ID to receive extra credit

Mexico is the most dangerous country in Latin America for the news media. Since 1992, 44 journalists have been killed in Mexico. At least 19 were slain in direct reprisal for their work. Eight journalists have disappeared since 2005 (CPJ, 2010). Mexican journalist Lydia Cacho knows just how far Mexican authorities will go to shut journalists up. After her 2005 book, *Demons of Eden*, implicated powerful people in a Cancun child pornography ring, she became a target. Cacho had reported that a Cancun hotel owner was orchestrating a child pornography and prostitution ring.

Eight months after the book appeared, Cacho was arrested in Cancun by police from the state of Puebla. She was driven to a beachfront pier and told to jump. Fortunately, Cacho is savvy and well connected, and a flurry of urgent faxes to the government and human-rights groups was sent just in time to save her. The police backed down, and after being held in jail for half a day, Cacho was released unharmed. A few months later, audio tapes of Puebla's governor plotting to imprison and intimidate Cacho were anonymously provided to a national paper.

Cacho founded and directs the Refuge Center for Abused Women of Cancun and is the president of the Center for Women's Assistance, which aids victims of domestic violence and gender discrimination. Cacho won Amnesty International's Ginetta Sagan Award for Women and Children's Rights and received the 2010 Tully Award for Free Speech from Newhouse School of Public Communication at Syracuse University.

For more information, contact the School of Journalism at 631.632.7403 or journalism@stonybrook.edu

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APPENDIX W

“Open the Freezer” Logo

APPENDIX X

Deconstruction Guide

1. Summarize the main points of the story.
   - Do the headline and lead support the main point(s) of the story?

2. Assess the evidence supporting the main points of the story
   - What is verified?
   - What is asserted?

3. How close does the reporter come to opening the freezer?
   - Is the evidence direct or indirect?

4. Are the sources reliable?
   - Sources checklist:
     1. Named sources are better than unnamed sources
     2. Multiple sources are better than a single source
     3. Authoritative sources are better than uninformed sources
     4. Sources who verify are better than sources who assert:
        "I know" vs. "I believe"
     5. Independent sources are better than self-interested sources

5. Does the reporter make his or her work transparent?

6. Does the reporter place the story in context?

7. Are the key questions answered?
   - Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

8. Is the story fair?
   - Can you reach a conclusion, take an action, or make a judgment?

Source: Stony Brook University, Center for News Literacy

APPENDIX Y

Final Essay Directions and Assessment Rubric

Your Final Assignment:

Using News Literacy concepts
And information from news reports,
Answer a question that matters to you.

You will write your final essay after you spend a full month pursuing reliable information on a single topic or question that is of particular interest to you and is currently in the news .You will be expected to use multiple news outlets, and employ the News Literacy tools and principles you study in class to reach a conclusion, make a judgment or take an action.

What kind of question can you pursue? Here are a few examples.

- *"What impact would I have if I boycotted BP gas stations in protest of the spill in the Gulf?"*
- *"Has President Obama's stimulus plan accomplished more harm than good?*
- *"How well does the new Governor-elect's public record match my views on issues that matter to me?"*
- *"Is it safe to eat seafood from the Gulf Coast?*
- *Does the U.S. FDA adequately protect consumers from unsafe food?*
- *"Does Facebook do a sufficient job of protecting users' privacy?*

STEP 1: Your recitation instructor will help you shape your question. A good question will be interesting to you, reasonably narrow in scope and will give you the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of News Literacy skills.

Each instructor will set up his/her own process for refining your essay question, which he/she will discuss in recitation and post on Blackboard.

Your final essay, between 1,000 and 1,500 words, will be due at your final recitation.

You will be expected to not only state your conclusion, but *how* and *why* you reached that conclusion, with specific examples from the articles/videos you turned to while researching a variety of news outlets. Include what information you rejected, as well as what information you identified as reliable and "actionable." The grading rubric we use to judge the essays will be posted on Blackboard to help you revise and hone your work.

Final Essay Grading Guide

Every essay starts with 100 points and is then subjected to review in a number of areas, which are weighted to reflect course priorities. Students: We are giving you this information in advance to eliminate any surprises when you receive your grade.

I. **Advance work**: Student followed instructor's process for developing an appropriate question **(-10 possible)_____**

II. **News Literacy:** Essay demonstrates mastery of key news literacy concepts (as outlined in the syllabus, lectures, lecture slides, readings and homework assignments **(-30 possible) _____**

III. **Critical thinking**: Essay's arguments and conclusions are logical and expressed clearly. **(-20 possible)_____**

IV. **Research**: Essay shows clear signs the student pursued reliable information by engaging with multiple news outlets during the months of November and December in order, selecting specific examples that illustrate the student's key points. **(-20 possible)_____**

V. **Spelling, grammar and punctuation:** Essay adheres to standard rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation. **(-20 possible) _____**

VI. **Discretionary points:** may emphasize their assessment of the essay by awarding or subtracting up to 5 points in any of the above categories. If, for example, the writer's handling of News Literacy concepts is especially deft or off-base, the instructor may reward or penalize. **(+/-5 possible) _____**

Starting Value	**100**
Total Deductions	**-**
Final Raw Score	

APPENDIX Z

Final Examination

JRN 101B-103G News Literacy

Final Exam (Total points possible: 80)

Name_____ Section_____

PART I:Video News Clips

Analyze the TV news clips based on our guidelines and discussions. Be aware that any story can have strong aspects and weak aspects or elements of both, but in the end a news consumer has to make a judgment about the story. BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR RESPONSES AND SUPPORT YOUR CONCLUSIONS. Write legibly.

Baby Sling Controversy (15 Points)

1. Is there an example of direct evidence in this report? If so what is it? (3 pts)

2. Characterize the following sources and what weight you'd give them in reaching a conclusion about this report (little, some, great deal) and why. (6 pts)

Christina Bethea, (RayShawn's mother)

Stephanie Ovadia, (Attorney for the mother, Ms. Bethea)

Infantino (Maker of the baby sling)

3. Is this a fair report? Explain your answer, using the course definition of fairness or balance.

(3 pts)

4. Can you conclude from this report that this baby sling was responsible for the infant's death? Cite the evidence that supports your conclusion. (3 pts)

Man Has Warning For People Posting Online Reviews (15 Points)

1. Characterize these sources and what weight you'd give them in reaching a conclusion about this report (little, some, great deal) and why. (4 pts)

Michael Steadman, (the Ebay customer)

Lawrence Walters (Attorney)

2. What example of transparency is offered in this story? (2 pts)

3. Does the reporter provide adequate context? Explain your answer. (2 pts)

4. What is missing from this report? List the kinds of sources, evidence or other information that would make the story more reliable for a news consumer who might be an Ebay seller or buyer. In each case, explain what that addition would do for the reliability of the story. (3 pts)

5. What can you conclude about the risk of posting anything but a positive EBay "seller" review? Explain. (4 pts)

<u>Workers Criticize Oil Rig Safety Measures (15 Points)</u>
1. Characterize the following sources and what weight you'd give them in reaching a conclusion about this report (little, some, great deal) and why. (8 pts)

Worker 1, DeWayne Martinez

Attorney Tony Buzbee

Jeffrey J. Rachlinski, Cornell

TransOcean (statement to ABC News)

2. Cite an example of an assertion in this story. (2 pts)

3. Cite an example of context and explain how it helps you understand this report. (2 pts)

4. Is this a fair report? Explain your answer, using the course definition of fairness or balance.

(3 pts)

Part II: Print Story

<u>Documents Detail a Girl's Final Days of Bullying (35 points)</u>

Read the accompanying story before answering the following questions. Be aware that any story can have strong aspects and weak aspects or elements of both, but in the end a news consumer has to make a judgment about the story. BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR RESPONSES AND SUPPORT YOUR CONCLUSIONS. Hand the print-out of the story in with your answer sheet, with your name on both.

1. Identify two assertions in the story. (4 pts)

2. Identify two examples of verified information in the story. (4 points)

3. Cite an example of direct evidence in this story and explain what distinguishes it from indirect evidence. (4 pts)

4. Identify two reliable sources in the story and describe WHY they are reliable.(4 pts)

5. Identify two sources you believe are less reliable and explain WHY. (4 pts)

6. Cite an example of context and explain how it helps you better understand this report. (3 pts)

7. Cite an example of transparency and explain how it helps you evaluate the reliability of the reporting? (3 pts)

8. Find an example of how the reporter opens or tries to “open the freezer.” (3 pts)

9. Is the story fair? Explain your answer. (3 pts)

10. Based on the evidence in this story could a news consumer determine whether the school district knew what was going on and failed to protect a student in the district’s care? Explain your answer, using evidence from the story. (3 pts)

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