**Collaboration with English and Journalism courses**

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**Media Writing I and Media Writing II collaboration with biology students:**

The biology students of Duquesne University and La Roche College collaborate with students from Butler County Community College’s Media Writing I and Media Writing II courses to produce media content about the scientific research and its impact on the community outside the classroom. This collaboration provides the journalism students with experience reporting on issues beyond their own school. They must learn good interviewing skills to understand the biology research and accurately report on the projects in both writing and a multi-media presentation. The biology students, on the other hand, learn to communicate their research to the community in language that non-researchers can understand. They gain experience in working with the media to inform community stakeholders of the community issues and results of the ABSL projects.

Learning activities and objectives:

“Why Scientists and Journalists Should Talk More”

*Learning Activity*:

Biology students read two articles about science journalism and watch a series of short videos from a conference at Yale University, hosted by the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, and then respond to four questions.

*Objectives*:

* Increase students’ comprehension of the journalism’s function as applied to science.
* Prompt the application of the knowledge gained from the articles and video to interaction with journalists and also to anyone outside the scientific discipline.

*Assessment*:

Students’ responses will be scored according to the level of comprehension of the material and their ability to predict their response to journalistic inquiry.

“Interviewing and Multi-Media Production”

*Learning Activity*:

Media writing students prepare to interview the biology students and professors, visit the biology lab, and conduct recorded interviews with them. The information-gathering process between the students will continue on a Wikispaces blog.

*Objectives:*

* Media students learn to prepare for interviews through research so they can construct interview questions.
* Both Media and Biology students demonstrate oral and written communication skills and practice professional conduct.
* Biology students apply their knowledge of working with the media in an interview situation.

*Learning Activity:*

Students from both classes will photograph and video-record the research procedures and community involvement. The Media students will compose journalistic articles about the research and participate in the construction of online multi-media presentation.

*Objectives*:

* Synthesize the information into articles for print and scripts for audio recording. Students aid in the construction of the audio slideshow for publication on the Internet.

*Assessment:*

Media students will be graded on their ability to conduct thorough interviews, both in person and on the blog, and their ability to compose comprehensive and accurate articles and scripts in the journalistic genre. Biology students could be graded on the clarity and thoroughness of their posts.

**English Composition collaboration with biology students:**

Both the biology students and the English composition students will seek out published research on subjects they are studying, and this learning activity is designed to help them recognize the difference between good sources of research online and those that will not benefit them. The biology students will look for previously published information pertaining to the health of feral cats, and English students will look for previously published information on a subject of their choice. Both sets of students must understand the importance of evaluating the value and credibility of sources of information they find online. In other words, they must develop a sense of information literacy. Toward this objective, the students worked together to write an informative paper that provides practical instruction for selecting quality sources and eliminating unqualified sources. This informative paper is later published as guidelines for subsequent classes. As a result of the collaboration, each group learns to communicate the important concepts of information literacy in a peer-to-peer situation.

“Information Literacy”

*Learning activity:*

* English composition students write informational papers designed to guide students through the process of evaluating online publications’ value to student projects.
* Biology students review the informational papers and adapt them to make them specific to the needs of their scientific projects.
* Both the English Composition and Biology students evaluate pre-selected online sources of information for credibility, according to information literacy guidelines.

*Objectives:*

Students will develop their own standards for online sources and apply them as they evaluate sources for credibility. They will communicate their standards and evaluations in writing.

*Assessment:* Students will be assessed on their ability to determine the credibility of pre-selected websites, and their ability to communicate the standards of quality in writing.

**Technical writing assistance.**

I serve as a writing coach to the biology students as they prepare for their final manuscripts. I provide a detailed roadmap of a manuscript, which explains the purpose of each section. I also reinforce Dr. Trun’s existing biology writing exercises that are also designed to prepare them to write their manuscripts.

After students complete their manuscripts but before they hand them in, they edit them with an exhaustive checklist specifically designed for their scientific manuscript. The checklist may be used for peer editing, as well.