A PARADIGM FOR TEACHING COLLEGE JOURNALISM IN THE 21st CENTURY:

FROM A CLOSED TO AN OPEN SYSTEM

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about education reform within colleges and universities. Its primary goal is to provide suggestions to help advance undergraduate journalism education in particular. To reach that goal, this paper assumes that systemic changes are needed in order to provide a more relevant -- socially and academically -- environment to prepare students to function in the real world.

Other assumptions include: 1) Journalism education needs restructuring; 2) Restructuring requires a shared responsibility between faculty and students; 3) Students needs are no longer being met by past teaching paradigms; 4) Students' contemporary needs should be at the heart of the restructuring; and, 5) Most journalism programs have the creativity and skill to bring about the reform suggested in this paper.

A lot of what constitutes an open paradigm is a change in philosophy, more so than technique. No longer does the educator have all the answers. Rather, educator and student negotiate "answers" through dialogue and discussion.

Given that description, this paper will seek to answer the following questions: 1) What is an open teaching philosophy and how does it work? 2) Why is an open paradigm needed? 3) What are the paradigms used in the past? 4) Why is a new model preferable to the old ones? 5) How can an open paradigm be applied to the curriculum of journalism education?

The method of research used includes a qualitative approach. An extensive data base search was conducted on the Expanded Academic Index InfoTrac Search Bank. Historical and contemporary literature on journalism and journalism education were researched. Other literature consulted includes: Teaching models; critical thinking, problem-solving, inquiry and social skills models; educator-teacher relationships; modern

paradigms; post-modernism; curriculum; trends in journalism education; and, changing student values.

PREFACE

The role of journalism education in universities and colleges is being reassessed throughout the country. Many journalism departments are either merging with other programs or are shutting down all together. In 1992, there were about 8,400 fewer students who enrolled in journalism and mass communication programs than in 1991 (Becker & Kosicki, 1993).

Journalism programs, in particular, have attempted to deal with declines in enrollment by shuffling, merging, deleting or adding a course (Mencher, 1994). Guskin (1996) states that these kinds of "incremental" changes are no longer enough to meet the needs of contemporary students. Fundamental changes are needed.

"If we look holistically at the world around us and allow our intuitive skills to roam a little, it will soon enough become obvious that we cannot continue to practice our academic profession with dignity and integrity without fundamental changes" (p. 27).

This presents a great challenge to journalism educators. Fundamental change usually brings about some discomfort and takes time (sometimes a lot of time) to implement. Getting the needed support from university administration adds to the challenge.

A common notion shared among faculty in most educational institutions is that change should be the primary responsibility of the provost or president. University administrators tend to share this same understanding. However, administrator's past experience (whether positive or negative) of making incremental changes makes them leery of major structural changes (*Ibid.*).

Administrators exhort faculty to make incremental changes -- that really do not meet the institution's needs. Faculty members then are left with the decision to accept or

reject the exhortations. Acceptance leads to a temporary solution to a much bigger problem. Rejection may mean losing faculty and funding. Conflict and anxiety increase.

The perspective of this thesis is that *faculty* need to take the lead in restructuring education by changing fundamental teaching practices.

Journalism educators have spent nearly a century arguing over issues that involve incremental changes. Issues have included: What makes a good teacher -- one who has professional experience or one who has a doctoral degree? And, what courses ought good teachers teach -- a skills-based or a theory-based course?

Educators, researchers and theorists have a habit of pitting different approaches against each other, persuaded that they are incompatible. This type of dichotomous thinking is the result of using a modern teaching philosophy, which states that one method of inquiry must be rejected or exchanged for another.

Students' needs, meanwhile, have been overlooked. Consequently, students enter the real world unprepared to meet life's challenges. Critical thinking, problem-solving, inquiry and social skills have not been taught for the most part. Yet, these skills are necessary for existence and growth in a democratic society.

In a time when education programs as a whole are being "summarily shut down," accused of being "diploma mills," and when a bachelor's degree has "lost its meaning," it is time to look beyond the view -- a modern one -- that brought us to this point.

It is time for a change -- structurally and philosophically. The modern teaching paradigm -- that the teacher controls what and how the student learns -- no longer works in today's society. The modern model has created a passive learning environment which bores students and makes them lazy. Educators, in a sense, cater to students by spoon-feeding them facts that are to be regurgitated on a multiple choice test.

This style of teaching creates an environment where students want to quickly learn what the educator expects of them in order to make an A or just pass the class. The bigger picture -- how a class can be put to use in the real world -- is lost sight of.

The paradigm suggested in this paper -- an open one -- borrows ideas and concepts from a post-modern[1] paradigm. An open paradigm is presented as an effort to try something different, with the understanding that no individual paradigm will solve all classroom problems. In fact, to suggest such a thing contradicts the essence of an "open" system of thought. An open paradigm does, however, offer a different approach to the problems in journalism education and offers suggestions to deal with these problems.

Some of the ideas presented are old, some are new. Where the ideas came from and what world view[2] they hold is not an issue in this paper. An open paradigm uses whatever philosophies and methods work to make it an "open" teaching experience.

In order for fundamental changes to occur, journalism education needs more than a "quick fix." It needs a new philosophy that is created and implemented by *educators*. It needs a different way of teaching: One that sees the teacher as learner as well as guide, not merely purveyor of material.

It is time to put away various teaching orientations long enough to entertain a different method -- an open one.

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[1] It should be noted that an open paradigm is not equivalent to a post-modern paradigm. Rather, an open paradigm borrows many concepts from a post-modern paradigm and is, therefore, referred to as an "open" paradigm for this reason. An open paradigm also borrows thinking from a modern paradigm, theory-based and skills-based paradigms. In essence, an open paradigm uses whichever school(s) of thought are necessary to make it an "open" method of teaching.

[2] A world view is a comprehensive way of looking at the philosophies in the world and developing a personal system of thought about those philosophies and human life.

"It comes down simply to this: that we can't advance
as long as we're holding tight to what no longer works.
And we have to break the mold before a new form can emerge."
-- Kelly, 1993

INTRODUCTION

Looking to History for Answers

Most college educators have probably experimented with a variety of teaching models or methods and, perhaps, have settled into one that best suits them. Each semester (or quarter), educators probably pull out a course outline used from the previous session, change a few of the assignments, adjust due dates, and "presto," they have a curriculum.

The curriculum design probably is based on the educator's past experiences, textbooks, discipline frameworks and information from colleagues. Included are goals and objectives deemed essential to understand the subject at hand. Everything from the textbook used, to in-class exercises, term papers and exams, has been carefully selected and designed to help students reach the set-forth goals. At the end of the class, students receive a grade based on how well an educator believes students have comprehended the course.

This process of teaching and learning has been used for a couple of centuries, at least. That is why it has been termed a "traditional" method of teaching.

Under this method, also known as a "modern" method, student's play the part of spectator. Educators today tell students to "pay attention" or "listen carefully," while knowledge is imparted. Knowledge is assumed to be "out there," and the student has to "listen up" to receive the knowledge as it is conveyed. How well the student receives and masters this knowledge is mirrored in the grade.

This passive, spectator learning style has been criticized lately. Rorty (1980) and Toulmin (1982) have attacked this view, as well as many other theorists, educators and researchers (Doll, 1993; Joyce & Weil, 1996; Jencks, 1987; Aoki, 1983). One of the arguments centers on the idea that a passive learning experience is out of touch with the

way learning is practiced and used in our society. That is, most jobs (especially news media jobs) require the individual to take an *active* role in carrying out daily assignments. Journalists, in particular, must make decisions and value judgments even on a daily basis. They must have the ability to know where to gather necessary facts, have the communicative and social skills to do so, and then be able to analyze and question those facts to determine the validity.

Many of the tools used in a classroom, like a textbook, are outdated and are not written in the context of real world experiences (Glasgow, 1997). Instead, many textbooks are concerned with presenting certain concepts that students must master. Students are told exactly what to learn and then are expected to transfer that information to an exam.

To continue the example, many journalism classes require students to read a local newspaper and then are given current events quizzes. Many of the questions asked, at least in this author's experience, are not only irrelevant to the student, but are seemingly irrelevant to the course as a whole. If the information that is regurgitated in a quiz served some purpose other than to ensure students are reading the paper, perhaps this exercise could be better appreciated. Simply asking a student to "spit out" something they have already read does not challenge a student to expand his/her mind. Expanding one's mind requires the ability to think critically. Critical thinking does not occur naturally, it must be instilled and fostered in the classroom (Steiner, 1993).

That is not to say that learning concepts is unimportant or irrelevant to students. A case in point is the "5 Ws" (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) that every journalism student must memorize and use in news stories. These kinds of facts serve a useful purpose. Most reporting and writing classes are unique in this way because many of the facts learned *can* be useful. It should be pointed out, however, that just because a

journalism student memorizes and applies the "5 Ws" does not mean they automatically know how to think critically and analytically about these facts (Strohm & Baukus, 1995; Shoemaker, 1993).

The point is that many teaching styles are "stuck" in this memorization mode. While memorizing facts may help students perform well on an exam, it does not help students to think critically (Kurfiss, 1988). Furthermore, this style of teaching focuses on the *concepts* to be learned, not *students'* needs. It is time for philosophical and structural changes that foster these kinds of real-world skills that put the student first.

Putting the student at the center of curricular decisions is gaining popularity among educators. A "post-modern" paradigm, for example, shares this view. This paper, in fact, borrows some of post-modernism's concepts because of the student-centered angle. It should be noted, however, that some of post-modernism's concepts do not apply to this paper and have been left out for that reason. The "open" paradigm presented in these pages, therefore, should not be considered the same as a post-modern paradigm.

The premise of a post-modern model is that no one owns the truth and everyone has a right to be understood (Rorty, 1986). In this frame, a curriculum is designed through student-educator interaction. Learning and understanding come through dialogue and reflection (Glasgow, 1997). A post-modernist holds that if individuals *reflect* on and *talk* about decisions made, and allow time to critically think about those decisions, a new understanding will be gained from the activity (Hambermas, 1983). This concept is relevant to an open paradigm.

A passive learning environment has conditioned students to be lazy and do just enough in class to get by (Glasgow, 1997). Class time typically is spent having an educator relay information to students. A lot of subject matter is covered in the course.

Classes are typically short. Students, therefore, have no time to reflect, to think critically and to come to an understanding uniquely their own.

This paper maintains that because students come from such diverse backgrounds and perspectives, they must come to understand the subject matter in a way that relates to *their* experiences. Otherwise, most of the information learned in class will not be retained and used later on when students enter the real world (Halpern, 1993).

Because today's classrooms have grown in size and diversity, the homogenous method of teaching in the earlier part of this century no longer works. Classrooms in the 1920s were relatively small and homogenous. Most students went to school to learn basics, specifically the Three R's -- Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic -- so they could function as store clerks and ledger keepers. Careers in today's society are as specialized as the people who hold them, and require individuals to know more than the three basic components taught more than 70 years ago. Contemporary classrooms are anything but homogenous. The learning environment must, therefore, reflect these changes. That is the basis of an open paradigm.

In a nutshell, an open paradigm maintains that in order to meet the growing demands of a large, heterogeneous class, students must work with the educator to design a curriculum that meets and relates to their varied perspectives.

This open teaching methodology may seem uncomfortable, even ridiculous, at first glance. It may even appear a little messy and (im)possibly difficult to use.

Doll (1993) states: "As we leave our present century and paradigm for another century and paradigm, we need to develop a new set of criteria as to what constitutes a *good* curriculum. This is a prime task contemporary curriculum theorists have before them" (p. 156).

A comforting thought is that the modern method that has brought so much structure and comfort in the classroom *is* connected to the post-modern model. This is another reason an open paradigm borrows some of its ideas. The hyphen in post-modern is designed to connect the two models (*Ibid.*). In this way, the past does not disappear in the 21st Century, but is reframed to account for current thinking while building on what history has taught.

Before defining an open model, it would be helpful to understand how teaching paradigms have evolved. History provides the answer.

A historical look at paradigms.

A strong debate has waged for more than a century among researchers and educators over what a teaching paradigm[3] should consist of.

Nineteenth Century educators argued that educational paradigms should focus on personal qualities of the teacher. Horace Mann (1867), Secretary to the Massachusetts Board of Education, says in his "First Annual Report" (presented in 1838): "All teachers need to be paragons of virtue -- exerting their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth committed to their care and instruction the principles of sobriety, industry, frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance" (p. 421).

This view of the teacher as a personal role model remained a pervasive influence during much of the Twentieth Century.

Educators in the earlier part of the Twentieth Century advocated that educational paradigms must take into account industrialism because it permeated America. Cubberly (1916) states: "Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children)

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[3] "Paradigms are models, patterns, or schemata. Paradigms are not theories; they are rather ways of thinking or patterns for research that, when carried out, can lead to the development of theory" (Gage 1963, p. 95).

are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life" (p. 338).

Paradigms at the turn of the century did show a switch in emphasis -- from the teacher to the curriculum, particularly the "scientific" curriculum (Doll, 1993, p. 48). Because the number of pupils and schools were growing at such a rapid rate -- the high school population was doubling every decade -- education no longer focused on the particularities of individual teachers (*Ibid.)*. There was no time for that. This was America's melting pot era. Things were changing rapidly.

To handle the problem of change, America turned to its schools and used the model that made factories productive -- scientific management. More time could be saved and more goods produced if the workers -- in this case, educators and students -- would do as they were told. This was the key to efficiency and standardization (Kliebard, 1986, p. 2).

This new educational framework, known as the "modernist" paradigm,[4] answered America's questions about curriculum and provided a methodology, little did they know, to be used throughout the 20th Century (Doll, 1993, p. 51).

A modern paradigm was predicated on the notion that "science provides the intellectual, social, and educational answers that framed American life" (*Ibid.*, p. 2). At the heart of this scientific model was the idea that the truth could be learned by asking questions about the cause and effect of a certain behavior or phenomenon (Bronowski, 1978, p. 40).

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[4] It was termed a "modern" era because it was the first time in history that machines did the work of people (Doll, 1993).

Although there were strong countermovements to this scientific trend in the form of "child-centered, humanist and progressive thrusts," all movements ultimately succumbed to the allure of this "scientific" framework (Doll, 1993, p. 51). Doll holds that: "Scientific knowledge was not merely the knowledge of most worth, it was the only knowledge of worth" (*Ibid.*).

New voices and visions in the arts, literature and philosophy were being heard, however (Nielsen, 1991). The rigid formalism of the modern paradigm was being challenged by the "eclectic pastiche" of a post-modern one (Jencks, 1987).

It was Tyler (1950) who began the push to broaden the scientific paradigm, which became known as the "Tyler Rationale." He argued that a scientific, paradigm -- one that strictly looks at causes and effects -- was too narrow a view. This view, he argued, did not account for contemporary life-needs.

So, Tyler came up with the notion of separating educational goals from curriculum goals. Educational goals, he reasoned, would be broadly based and written in general terms. For example, a general goal might be: education should prepare one for life. Taking this approach, he argued, would win the support of a large segment of society -- an important factor when trying to win acceptance of such a paradigm.

As for curriculum goals, Tyler turned to Bobbitt's (1918) notion[5] of framing these goals in terms of practical and professional work needs of contemporary society. These goals were expressed in terms of the "Three R's" -- Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic. Each task was "geared to the needs of a developing industrial society" (Doll, 1993, p. 174).

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[5] It should be noted that even though Bobbitt introduced this idea 32 years before Tyler's Rationale, he was ridiculed by his peers and colleagues because he was so far ahead of current thinking (Doll, 1993).

Students learned to read for the function of reading sales slips and bills of lading. Writing was literally penmanship, using the Palmer (cursive) method. Arithmetic, not mathematics, was taught so that students could function as store clerks. The goal of the Three R's was to keep sales slips and ledgers accurate and neat. Problem solving entered into Tyler's Rationale; however, it was mostly associated with buying in an urban store.

Under this framework, clear explanations were needed. Curriculum goals, lesson plans and how students were to be evaluated were stated with precision. Tyler took this model so far as to prescribe "stop-watch" precision in delineating the steps an educator should take, and the time spent at each step, in order to have success in the classroom (Doll, 1993, p. 159).

The Tyler Rationale has been used in school curricula from its genesis in the 1950s to the present (*Ibid.*) Throughout the past five decades, the curriculum pattern has remained largely the same: The educator sets classroom goals, selects and directs the experiences of students to meet those goals and then evaluates students according to how well they achieved the goals.

Theorist Ted Aoki (1983) challenged the scientific paradigm. He asserts that the "scientific" tradition in curriculum is really a utilitarian orientation based on interest in "intellectual and technical control of the world" (pp. 11-12). He states that the scientific framework has little to do with the methods and procedures of science itself. Rather, its roots lie partly in modernism's fear of uncertainty and in its utopian vision of a better world through order and control.

Although his view of science seems a bit extreme, Aoki's work advanced the idea of a post-modern[6] paradigm, although post-modernism did not receive its name until later.

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[6] Researchers and educators have various labels for what has become known as the "post-modernist"

Because the post-modern paradigm is still evolving, educators and theorists are still debating its definition and parameters. The implications of such a model for journalism education are unclear. Even though no one seems to agree on what this paradigm should consist of, one thing they do agree on: "modernism . . . is dead" (Habermas, 1983, p. 6).

Debating whether modernism is dead or alive is beyond the scope of this paper. The point to be made is that a post-modern paradigm *is* alive and *is* affecting art, literature, mathematics, philosophy, political theory, science and theology (Glasgow, 1997; Doll, 1993; Schon, 1983; Habermas, 1983). Therefore, this paper will attempt to apply concepts of a post-modern paradigm that work for an open model of journalism curriculum.

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to define what is meant by an open paradigm, tell why one is needed, show how an open paradigm is preferable to a modern, or "closed" one, and then tell how it can be applied to the curriculum of journalism education.

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paradigm. For example, Kung (1988) calls post-modernism a "megaparadigm" to indicate the breadth of its sweep. Glasgow (1997) refers to the post-modern framework as a "student-centered, problem-based" learning model.

"Resonate to the learners. Feel their vibes. If you let them,
they'll pull you in the right direction."
-- David Hunt, 1973

CHAPTER 1

Introducing an Open Paradigm

Throughout history, people like Mann, Cubberly, Tyler and Aoki have embraced a wide span of teaching paradigms that reflect their beliefs and world views. Their views emphasize aspects of thinking and recommend different ways of teaching it. Despite their differing opinions, there seems to be agreement in the purpose of education: To teach students to learn. *How* an educator goes about doing that in an environment that is relevant to the student is where that agreement breaks down.

One of the problems with a modern paradigm is that its assumptions and concepts are outdated. Today's young people are different from those of the early 1900s. Today's young people watched *Sesame Street* in their formative years, and set standards learned by watching *Beverly Hills 90210*. Instead of reading Hemmingway or Shakespeare, students read *Cosmopolitan* and listen to Nirvana and Pearl Jam. What is more, students have been conditioned by an overly nurturing, hand-holding educational system (Sacks, 1996). In its most simplistic form, many educators and theorists have said that the closed method of teaching spoon-feeds students facts so they can regurgitate them on multiple choice tests (Glasgow, 1997; Sacks, 1996; Joyce & Weil, 1996; Doll, 1993).

Definitions

- A closed paradigm

In the academic arena there is a perceived mind-set for what a college classroom experience should be (Doll, 1993). Ever since kindergarten, most students come to expect an educational experience in which the educator's role is to distribute and interpret information for the students with lectures, assigned readings and selected activities. Educators also set the standards for assessment, evaluation and demonstration of mastery.

This teaching model is known as a "modern," "traditional," or "scientific" paradigm. For the purposes of this paper, it will be referred to as a "closed" paradigm. A closed paradigm is one in which the *educator* is responsible for making all the decisions about what students are to learn and how they are to learn it (Glasgow, 1997, p. 29). In other words, students have little or no say-so in curricular decisions.

In this paradigm, the educator dictates what resources will be used, what content is to be learned and how students are to be assessed. The entire curricular package, including assessment and evaluation, tends to be homogenous in practice. Although students' educational experiences may vary among teachers, classrooms and schools, they are generally standardized in actual practice. That is, educators tend to set course goals, select and direct students' experiences, and then evaluate the student's performance.

The advantage of this method is that, because the educator controls the entire educational experience, he/she can be certain that students are exposed to information and concepts the educator feels are appropriate for the class. The disadvantage is that not all students are homogenous in background, knowledge and experience. Nor are they homogenous in learning abilities, or in their pace and style of learning.

Another problem is that teachers usually cannot guarantee that students' educational experiences will be useful once they leave the classroom, since students are generally passive recipients who regurgitate on demand in a style of the educator's choosing (*Ibid.*, p. 34). In addition, because class material is typically presented from the educator's viewpoint, experiences and background, students end up with a one-sided curriculum. After all, it would be difficult for one individual to account for the varied cultures, religions and experiences that are unique to a group of students.

Using a closed teaching paradigm, Glasgow (1997) said: "A false sense of security may satisfy teacher, students and parents. It is familiar and comfortable. It is believed to be a valid method to dispense information and it is believed that students will incorporate the information. Grades are based on short-term mastery of the course with no assurance of longer-term mastery" (p. 32).

Another problem is that this model assumes the information used by the educator is the most current, correct and useful, and that the material is presented in a retainable format (Joyce & Weil, 1996). No one can predict which parts of the information the students have learned will eventually become obsolete or what students will forget. The abilities needed to find and evaluate new information are not fostered. Curriculum is content and information heavy (Glasgow, 1997).

To sum up the problem with using a closed paradigm, Schwab (1978) said: "The field of curriculum is moribund. It is unable, by its present methods and principles, to continue its work and contribute significantly to the advancement of education. It requires new principles . . . a new view . . . of its problems . . . [and] new methods appropriate to the . . . problems" (p. 287). A different paradigm, that accounts for these shortcomings, is needed.

- An open paradigm

One of the goals of a post-modern paradigm that works for the open model presented in this paper is that curriculum must become more lively and relevant so that students take on an active learning role. This goal is necessary in order to advance education. More specifically: An open paradigm nurtures students rather than controlling the sequence of learning. It facilitates learning in an environment that is organized to help students attain greater personal integration, effectiveness and realistic self-appraisal. In this

way, students are better prepared to meet the challenges of life, using the critical thinking and problem-solving skills obtained through an open system.

Stephen Toulmin (1982) says that post-modernism is still too new to define. However, Doll (1993) offers a "pedagogic creed" that sums up the purpose of a post-modern paradigm. It reads:

> In a reflective relationship between teacher and student, the teacher does not ask the student to accept the teacher's authority, rather, the teacher asks the student to *suspend disbelief in that authority,* to join with the teacher in inquiry, into that which the student is experiencing. The teacher agrees to help the student understand the meaning of the advice given, to be readily confrontable by the student, and to work with the student in reflecting on the tacit understanding each has (p. 160).

This creed provides a good start in conceptualizing an open paradigm. By drawing from the research of other theorists, an open paradigm can be taken one step further.

An open paradigm is one in which the learning experience is left to the discretion of the *student.*[7] The educator presents the student with situations to deal with, and what they learn, how they learn it, and sometimes how they are assessed, are up to the students. Control of learning within problems can range from students being responsible for all aspects of problem-solving, to more of a collaborative experience with a teacher providing part of the teaching and learning structure (Glasgow, 1997; Joyce & Weil, 1996).

In a closed paradigm, teachers typically will be responsible for acquiring resource materials. However, an open paradigm assumes that students learn by deciding what they

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[7] It should be noted that theorists and researchers have found that an open method of teaching works well for all age groups (Doll, 1993; Joyce & Weil, 1980 & 1996). In one instance, Glasgow (1997) gives an example of a sixth grade class that could not understand how to apply certain formulae to a mathematical problem. The educator, with the help of Glasgow, turned the activity around so that the *students* wrote the math problems, providing directions so that other groups of students knew how to go about completing the assignment. Glasgow said the assignment was a success. Not only did students come to understand how to apply a formula to a given problem, they now began to understand the elements to a mathematical problem. This, Glasgow said, was a far more valuable lesson to the students than learning to simply apply one formula to a given situation (taken from Chapter 5).

need to know to find success within the classroom (*Ibid.*). Although the educator may take considerable responsibility in facilitating investigative and discovery activities, it is expected that students will gradually take responsibility for their own learning.

With the necessary experience and guided practice, students will gain independence, with the teacher becoming more of a coworker. Teachers may prepare what they feel are appropriate learning objectives, learning resources, and evaluation materials that reflect their experience and knowledge. In a closed paradigm, these materials prescribe *what* students are to learn. In an open paradigm, these materials serve as guides and resources to be used and updated by students as they take responsibility for their education and learning.

An open paradigm does not assume that the closed paradigm is wrong or incorrect. Rather, it assumes the closed paradigm is *outdated.* Because the open paradigm does not discard a closed method of teaching, it is free to build on it. It "recycles" portions of the paradigm that still work for today's students. Concepts like cause-effect relationships, and control and order dominate a closed system of teaching. These concepts still can be applied to an open paradigm.

However, an open paradigm looks to concepts that underlie a post-modern paradigm, things like: problem-solving, reflection, critical thinking and social skills. These are constructs a closed system of teaching fails to adequately teach. Yet, these are the constructs the author of this paper deems essential to conceptualize an open paradigm.

In an open paradigm, students use problem-solving and critical thinking to deal with life's problems after finishing school. Learning how to learn pervades what is taught, how it is taught and the kind of place in which it is taught (Downey, 1967). Students

gather around learning problems and study how they think and make a conscious effort to learn to think more effectively.

An advantage to using an open method is that students "learn to learn" so they can meet challenges and problems they will encounter in the future (Glasgow, 1997, p. 37). The underlying problem-solving structure of the open model is transferable to current and future needs regardless of the subject, discipline or content. In other words, teaching students to think critically and to solve problems will make them more capable of assessing and handling problems in the future.

Because their learning is self-determined and acquired through their own "digging," students become active participants. Students make a personal investment in their education. The rewards become internal and less teacher dispensed. In addition, students acquire the ability to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses to determine their own needs and learn how to meet those needs (Doll, 1993).

Students and teachers share the burden to find up-to-date references and learning resources. This includes methods of obtaining and using information. Learning to become more self-directed and self-motivated is an informal goal within this open model (Graff & Lambert, 1996).

A disadvantage to an open paradigm is that it creates organizational problems. According to Glasgow (1997), "it can look messy and somewhat hard to manage" (p. 36). In addition, the open model can create insecurity in students and faculty (Joyce & Weil, 1996). Students worry about their ability to determine what they need to know and in what depth. Many students have learned to be passive learners and do not adapt easily to the more active "open" mode of learning.

Chapter 3 will suggest ways of organizing and conducting a classroom based on an open methodology. It also will suggest ways of helping students switch from the passive, closed paradigm, to becoming more active participants in their educational experience.

The open paradigm is especially useful to journalism education. It provides a fresh look at a debate that has been going on since the 1920s, and offers some suggestions for progress.

History of journalism education

While researchers and educators were busy over the past century debating what a teaching paradigm should consist of, journalism educators were busy with a debate of their own (Emery & McKerns, 1987). It began like this:

Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, the first president of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, 1912-13, identified three goals of journalism education: Teaching, research and service to the community. Frank Luther Mott, dean of the Missouri School of Journalism (1950), said it was Bleyer who first raised the banner for high standards in the field (*Ibid.*). Bleyer led the work in shaping principles and standards for journalism. It was Bleyer who specified a four-year undergraduate journalism program as one-fourth journalism and three-fourths sciences and humanities.

Bleyer taught journalism with scholarly concern and produced "leading teachers of journalism in this country" (p. 6). It was Bleyer who introduced new and challenging areas of study, from reporting public affairs to public opinion to content analysis. Research was at the heart of these endeavors.

Around 1913, Walter Williams, founder of the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism (AASDJ) in 1917, entered the field of journalism education. Prior to becoming a professor of journalism, Williams was busy in the

community. He taught Sunday School, wrote a new Missouri liquor law at the governor's request and traveled all over the country to teach, lead and advocate his particular way of life (p. 7).

While he was not a scholar in the discipline sense of the word, Williams was a scholar in the "self-taught, self-achievement sense of the word" (*Ibid.*). He taught history of journalism, as Bleyer did, but did not publish, as Bleyer did, because "his orientation was personal" (*Ibid.*). "He liked to do things face to face with people. Where Bleyer was a busy scholar, as well as a journalist, and had the training and capacity to encourage graduate students, Williams did his work in the community and achieved wide recognition" (*Ibid.*).

Professional education was Williams' base, while theory was at the heart of Bleyer's teaching. Williams was oriented to the practical aspects of journalism, while Bleyer concentrated on research. Williams and his staff taught students how to write and edit. Bleyer inspired graduate students to conduct independent research based on independent thought.

It was at this point that the century-long debate began over the goals of journalism education. One side fought for the practical, skills-oriented aspect, while the other side battled for a theoretical curriculum.

Bleyer hammered away at his more technical-minded colleagues about the need for research, which he stressed at an American Association of Teachers of Journalism (AATJ) meeting in Madison in 1924, where he said: "We believe that research is more vital for the continued success of teaching of journalism than it is in other subjects in which research has been carried on for longer periods" (p. 19).

Williams continued his professional teaching orientation because he believed that good journalists know how to write and edit.

In 1924, Bleyer was designated chairman of the "Principles and Standards of Education for Journalism" Committee of Classifications. Those standards were so well-stated that many schools still use them today (*Ibid.*).

Bleyer and his committee tended to state many of the standards in broad terms, such as students need "adequate preparation" and a "sufficiently broad" scope of study. When the committee dealt with the research aspect of teaching, however, standards become more specific in nature: "Not merely acquisition of knowledge but encouragement to independent thinking and fearless search for truth should be the purpose of all courses in preparation for the profession of journalism. Instruction in all subjects in the curriculum should be vitalized by research and contact with current developments, on the part of instructors."

This written standard for journalism educators heated the debate about what ought to be taught. Curtis MacDougall, for example, preached the "fundamentalist" view of journalism curriculum (p. 38). He feared journalism schools would eventually teach more about journalism than how to practice it.

Chilton R. Bush was the earliest social scientist who brought communication theory to journalism education in the 1920s. Ralph Nafziger pushed hard to integrate communication theory in journalism schools during the early 1930s. Social scientific language became the language used in most journalism schools.

Another debate stirred about the same time the journalism principles had been written: Bleyer and his committee had stipulated that "in all courses in journalism as in courses in other subjects, instruction should be given by teachers with adequate

preparation." They suggested that a teacher with adequate preparation ought to at least have a bachelor's degree "as well as practical journalistic experience."

The debate about qualifications of a journalism educator has since widened to whether journalism educators ought to have a doctoral degree, or whether an experienced journalist would be better suited to teach future journalists. The debate was termed the "green-eyed shades" vs. the "chi squares" during the 1960s, with professionals being lumped into the first category and theorists in the latter.

Since that time, countless articles have been written on the subject, and are still being written in the 1990s (Balk, 1994; Bowden, 1994; Bracey, 1996; Connor, 1994; Corrigan, 1994; Cunningham, 1994; Fritts, 1995; Geraghty, 1996). The topic has been hammered to death.

The emphasis on theory or basic skills is unnecessary. The argument has been carried on as if to do one would sacrifice the other. Otherwise reasonable people argue that if we teach theory we will undermine the ability to develop skills, or if we nurture the practical through drills and exercises, the mind will surely dull (Joyce & Weil, 1996). These arguments are a reflection of our past and are built on a closed method of teaching and thinking.

This debate sprouted during a time when educators believed in a scientific teaching model -- a closed paradigm. The mere idea of choosing one teaching method over another, finding one method "correct" and another "incorrect," is at the heart of this closed system.

Under an open paradigm, the idea of choosing one method over another is exchanged for the idea of choosing *whatever works best*, given a particular situation.

Dichotomous thinking must be put away if journalism education is to survive and transform to meet the needs of 21st Century students. The skills of writing and editing can be taught simultaneously with the values and analytic tools of scholars. Joyce and Weil (1996) sum up this dichotomy by saying: "As we enter this period of renewed emphasis on the teaching of thinking, let us not pit the cultivation of theory against the acquisition of skills and knowledge as if these goals were adversaries" (p. 141).

Rationale for an open paradigm in journalism education

One argument already given for using an open paradigm is that journalism educators must reframe the age-old debate (about teaching criteria) if journalism programs are to survive into and advance in the 21st Century.

- Reframing the debate

Dichotomous thinking no longer fits into an open paradigm, and the fact that journalism researchers and educators are still fighting over this issue is an indication of the continued frustration felt across the field.

Medsger (1996) makes this same point in her monograph, where she interviewed 1,041 print and broadcast journalists across the nation who had one to 11 years of journalism experience. She indicates that educators are frustrated and desire "philosophical and structural changes" (p. 5).

One problem with making changes, whatever the nature, is that individuals have to agree on what needs to be changed and how it is to be changed. In order for progress to occur, journalism educators and researchers must move away from the worn-out debate which began in the 1920s. To argue that an editor with 10 years of experience would be better in the classroom than an individual with a doctoral degree is an insignificant point under the open paradigm.

Under the open paradigm, "theory no longer precedes practice and practice is no longer the handmaiden to theory" (Doll, 1993, p. 162). "This is not to negate theory or to drive an inseparable wedge between the two. Nor is it to 'practicalize' theory. Rather, it is to ground theory in and develop it from practice" (*Ibid.*).

Doll said that "teachers and students need to be free, encouraged, *demanded* to develop their own curriculum in conjoint interaction with one another" (p. 163). He said that "determinacy comes through the curriculum development process that each local situation takes on as the heart of its educational process" (*Ibid.*). This is at the heart of an open paradigm.

The debate about educator qualifications also becomes unimportant under the open paradigm because the criteria for being an effective teacher is about whether the educator can conduct a class using the open method. The focus is no longer on the teacher. That is *not* to say that a teacher does not need to be educated or experienced under this model. In fact, it may be necessary under the open paradigm to retrain and re-educate educators so they have the skills and knowledge to conduct an open class.

- A closed system falls short

John Dewey (1922) urged us to create a democratic society where people take command of their lives through active involvement in the decisions affecting them. Journalists are presumed to be the "watch dogs" of society, who have the explicit task of informing the public. Yet, recent polls indicate that journalism students may not be trained and educated in a way that facilitates that role.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Associated Press Managing Editors, editors reported that new journalists from journalism programs "found it difficult

to handle their beats. They were not adequately trained to cover the police, government, taxes or budgets" beats (taken from Mencher, 1994, p. 74).

Mencher (1994) suggests that part of the reason students are unprepared to meet life's challenges is because educators are too busy teaching students the "basics of language use," and are not spending enough time teaching skills for the real world (p. 72).

Hernandez (1994) says that high schools are to blame because they are "dumping" their students into colleges without basic journalism writing skills (p. 14). This problem is further exacerbated when high school teachers often are uncertified and untrained to teach journalism.

Medsger (1996) suggests that another reason why students are finding themselves unprepared for real-world decisions is because accreditation[8] committees require journalism educators to produce scholarly research. Therefore, time spent on research takes away from time that otherwise could be spent in the classroom.

Whatever the cause, the consequence is that journalism students (let alone, journalism departments) are suffering.

Andrea Tortora (1994) former editor of the *Post*, Ohio University's newspaper, wrote an article in which she describes her undergraduate experience in a journalism department as falling short of real-world challenges. She writes: "No professor ever mentions what being an editor is really about" (p. 48). Tortora suggests that classes taught in journalism schools should be less theory and writing, and more about topics such as: "Damage control: How to explain journalism to readers without losing your temper and their advertising."

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[8] It should be noted that the accreditation council's research requirement is yet another perpetuation of a closed paradigm.

Tortora goes on to explain that no skills (writing or editing news stories) or theory class she took at Ohio University taught her how to handle peers and readers. Furthermore, she mentions that many professors "instill(ed) shame" when "grilling student reporters about their mistakes" (p. 37). This is a commonly used grading technique under a closed paradigm.

A closed method of teaching assumes the teacher is correct, and this instills shame and frustration on the student's part. This method of "grilling" student reporters by giving failing grades for not getting a source's middle initial (a requirement of some journalism schools) is one example of a closed method of teaching.

Tortora offers some ideas on how to better prepare students to meet real-world challenges, which includes a media law professor bringing an outside journalist into the classroom to relate their own experiences with libel. Tortora says that while "case studies and theory are important . . . they don't carry any weight when an angry source is at the door wanting an explanation and compensation" (p. 37).

Another idea Tortora suggested is for journalism students to use role playing to gain an understanding of real-world experiences. For example, students could role play decisions about whether to run a particular photo, so that students can look at not only ethical reasons to run (or not run) a photo, but practical reasons as well. To illustrate the point, Tortora tells a story of a mother who was outraged because a picture of a topless woman at a Washington DC rally ran in the newspaper. Tortora says she tried to explain to the mother the agony her staff went through in making the decision to run the photo. None of that mattered to the mother, Tortora said. She was angry because she caught her sons "ogling" the picture.

Whether or not role playing would have given students a mother's perspective with regard to this particular photograph is not the point. The point is that Tortora offers some very realistic and worthwhile ideas -- bringing professionals into the classroom, changing the professors grading approach and role playing -- that are all part of an open paradigm. Chapter two builds on this notion.

"The hard part of figuring out how to teach is learning when to keep your mouth closed, which is most of the time."
-- Carl Rogers, 1960

CHAPTER 2

Building on the Idea of an Open Paradigm

Tyler (1960) developed the Three R's as criteria for a closed teaching paradigm in order to connect students to a concrete, real-world experience. That experience consisted of reading bills of lading, writing sales slips and using arithmetic to function as a store clerk in the earlier part of this century. Each task was geared to the needs of a developing industrial society.

Since then, educators have expanded Tyler's criteria to include subjects ranging from accounting to psychology, and skills ranging from drawing to operating computers, in order to prepare students for real-life experiences. Tyler's Three R's have remained a curricular thread throughout the 1960s to the present (Doll, 1993). In the Introduction, the constructs of a closed model were delineated, which consisted of: order, linear cause-effect learning, transmitting ideas and finding truth through scientific methods.

The author of this paper has suggested that most of the constructs and criteria that framed the modern era are no longer applicable to our current "post" era, and must change to reflect the values and experiences of today's society.

Constructs for an open paradigm

- In an open paradigm, any teaching technique the educator chooses must allow students to be *active* participants.

Under the open paradigm, criteria must account for and respond to a philosophy that fosters a proactive learning style. Glasgow (1997) points out that "passive, unengaged learning with little personal ownership stymies students interest and inhibits motivation" (p. 21).

- In an open paradigm, the educator must account for larger classrooms made up of heterogeneous students.

Another phenomenon that an open paradigm must account for is the changing needs of students. In a closed instructional style, the educator "tells" the student what is "correct" and "incorrect." A more adaptable and flexible curricular style and instructional strategy are needed in order to meet the varied needs of today's student (Doll, 1993; Glasgow, 1997).

Besides these two factors, Glasgow says that today's students seem lazier than students of the early 1900s, and a closed method of teaching is partly to blame:

> It seems that each year, fewer (students) become active, motivated learners. More join the group of students who just seem to 'make do.' They become educational minimalists. This is not meant to cast a negative light on all other curricular models or 'traditional' programs. Many students still find success in more traditional systems. Their success, however, does not mean that the program was optimally tuned to the needs of all students (p. 15).

Again, a proactive teaching style will engage students by transferring the educational experience from the shoulders of the educator to the students' shoulders.

- Concepts such as critical thinking, problem-solving, inquiry and social skills must be fostered for an open paradigm to exist.

In order to prepare students for real world experiences, educators must conduct a class that fosters skills used in the real world, such as critical thinking and problem-solving. That is the foundation of an open paradigm.

Criteria for an open paradigm

Before such a paradigm can be implemented in the classroom, however, certain criteria must be met. These include a change in: The organizational process, goals and assumptions, evaluation and the educator's role.

- Changing the organization of a class

Having an organized curriculum and class is key to having a successful, productive class. Every curriculum and classroom must be organized in some way. Under the closed paradigm, order is gained by the educator taking complete control of most every aspect of the learning experience. The educator takes control of the discussion, hands down assignments and assigns grades.

Under the open paradigm, students determine what they learn and how they learn it. Therefore, it is partly up to the student to help organize the class. In order to organize a class under the open paradigm, several requirements must be met.

One requirement is perturbation (Doll, 1993). "A system self-organizes only when there is a perturbation, problem, or disturbance -- when the system is unsettled and needs to resettle, to continue functioning" (p. 163). As Piaget (1977) asserts, this unsettlement (disequilibrium) provides the driving force of redevelopment.

In other words, for students to challenge themselves and each other in their thinking, current thinking must be agitated. This agitation can lead to developing new ideas, or it can lead to chaos.

Doll makes the point that not every perturbation leads to redevelopment. "It is quite possible for a disequilibrated situation to lead to the sort of chaos that takes us not to a new and more complex level of order but to the abyss of destruction" (*Ibid.*).

There are certain conditions necessary for perturbation to become a positive factor in the organizational process.

Doll stipulates that the curriculum needs to be rich enough and open enough for multiple uses, interpretations and perspectives to trigger organization. Once students realize they have a say in curriculum decisions, and once they realize their perspective counts in the classroom, they will (more than likely) participate. An open system of

teaching allows every student to offer their perspective and present their interpretation. Normally, classes are conducted with only the educator offering his/her viewpoint. Some educators invite students to participate in class by offering their opinions. Many times, in fact, educators attempt to motivate students to participate by making in-class participation a percentage of the students' final grade. This type of "participation" presents problems under the open paradigm.

First, most of the questions to be answered in class originate with the educator. In an open paradigm, questions and problem situations are created and thought up by the students. Presumably, students will ask questions that are unique to their experiences and backgrounds. This alone gives students a much broader perspective and understanding of a given problem.

Second, many times an educator has an answer to a question already in mind and uses this participatory activity to meet that agenda. In an open paradigm, the primary agenda is to expand one's ability to learn and think critically. There are no preconceived answers, and no "answer" is considered to be correct or incorrect. Students are challenged to develop their thinking so they come one step closer to an understanding of a given situation. Gaining a complete understanding is presumed to be difficult. A better understand is presumed to be the outcome of participatory exercises in an open teaching environment.

Another criterion necessary for an organized classroom is a comfortable classroom atmosphere that puts the student at ease. If students do not feel completely at ease in offering their ideas, especially controversial ones, the open system will not work and organization will turn to chaos. Educators who use the open paradigm will need to reiterate that every student has a right to be heard, and that no student's opinion is right or

wrong. The educator also will emphasize that, from a given perspective, some opinions are *better* than others. Yet, everyone in the class has a right to be understood from their viewpoint.

Another factor for organization is that there must be adequate time to entertain the students' thoughts and ideas. Such a concept is not part of the Tyler Rationale, where students are taken through class in a step-by-step fashion of the educator's choosing. One of the frustrations felt by the author of this paper is that class time, in general, does not provide adequate time for students to thoroughly explore issues. In addition, most classes encountered by the author involve learning such an enormous amount of material that most concepts merely are glazed over.

In order for students to build trust with the educator, the educator needs to allow adequate time to entertain *all* ideas on a particular problem scenario. It is through this exploration that students gain critical thinking skills. The interesting point to be made is that when students concentrate on defining and analyzing a problem, knowledge of concepts emerges. Because the concepts were learned, not memorized, within the context of a problem that is unique to an individual, the concepts are retained (Strohm & Baukus, 1995). In a closed paradigm, students are taught concepts for the sake of learning concepts. Often times, these concepts are taught and learned outside a context that is relevant to the student.

- Changing goals and assumptions

Under an open paradigm, the educator's goal is to help students understand their own needs and values so that they can effectively direct their *own* educational decisions. Tyler's notion of setting general, or broad, educational goals is in line with the goal just expressed. That is, in an open teaching philosophy, educators set broad goals for the

students just like the one mentioned above. For example, "the goal of this class is to help students think more critically about reporting public affairs." Tyler, however, takes this activity of goal-setting a step further by stating that the educator must also set *specific curricular* goals. In an open philosophy, *students* set specific curricular goals and then determine how they will reach these goals.

Theorists have pointed out two misconceptions that exist with setting goals under the closed paradigm: 1) That an individual best develops planning skills by being a passive receiver or copier of another person's plan; and 2) That our universe is made of up simplistic laws and order (Doll, 1993; Dyke, 1988; Schieve & Allen, 1982).

The first misconception, that goals are copied, becomes evident by examining the curriculum of beginning teachers. During the course of her graduate experience, the author of this paper encountered three beginning instructors, all of whom used a closed model of teaching. That is, the instructor delineated specific goals of the class, provided resources to reach those goals and then assigned a grade based on mastery of those goals.

The instructor probably choose this particular model because it has been used so much in the past and is comfortable to enforce. In other words, it was copied.

As for the second misconception: When the universe is viewed as simplistic and well-ordered, goals often times can be stated in an equally simplistic, orderly way. This simplistic view predominated modernism (Dyke, 1988). It has only been in the last decade that we have begun to understand that our universe is more complex than that (Schieve & Allen, 1982).

An open system views the world as a complex system. It accounts for concepts not used in modernism, such as reflection, transformation and construction. In a system that recognizes these constructs, goals no longer arise purely prior to, but also from within,

action. This was a key point from Dewey (1963): Plans arise from action and are modified through actions. The two are interactive, each leading into and depending on the other.

Curricularly, this translates into course syllabi written in a general, loose and somewhat indeterminate manner. As the course proceeds, specificity becomes more appropriate and is worked out conjointly among teacher, students and text.

"Such conjoint planning not only allows for flexibility -- utilizing the unexpected -- but also allows for planners to understand themselves and their subject with a degree or depth not otherwise obtained" (Doll, 1993, p. 171).

Conjoint, developmental planning takes advantage of the unexpected, leads to grounded knowledge and helps the student acquire "an expanding repertoire of alternative descriptions" (Rorty, 1989, p. 39). Goals expressed in an open system, therefore, provide students with a broader understanding of the course, much broader than one educator's perspective.

- Changing the evaluation process

No curriculum would be complete without an element of assessment. Under the closed paradigm, a letter grade typically becomes the measure of how well the student has mastered the subject. Grades are usually compiled from exams, term papers, assignments or in-class participation. The problem with any grading system is that it is difficult to know whether the student's final grade is a realistic assessment of the student's knowledge and understanding of the course.

To complicate matters, some students care more about their grade than what they learn in the class. According to Glasgow (1997), "they (the student) want to learn the assessment system quickly to be able to manage the effort required in the class" (p. 15).

The problem with this method is that often times educators mistake an enthusiastic or motivated student as a measure of their curriculum. "Successful, self-directed, and motivated students can make poor or ineffective programs look good. Their success can still hide an underachieving curriculum" (*Ibid.*).

This becomes a problem in a closed paradigm because students are expected to simply adhere to the guidelines of the course. Typically, the only time students are expected to give feedback is at the end of the course, when students fill out teacher evaluations. Student-teacher interaction about the effectiveness of the course typically is not encouraged until the course's end. Instead, students are expected to adhere to a list of assignments, of the educator's choosing, that may not be helping the student incorporate course concepts and ideas into the student's world view.

Glasgow points out, however, that some students do find success in a traditional, or closed, teaching environment. Their success, however, does not mean that the program was optimally tuned to the needs of *all* students.

Doll (1993) states: "To think of evaluation in post-modern terms is virtually impossible, for school evaluation is almost always associated with grades and both are based on assumptions so endemic to modernist thought that without this thought evaluation loses its meaning -- at least its modernist meaning" (p. 172).

To understand how one can deal with evaluation in an open frame, it is necessary to understand the purpose of evaluation.

In a closed frame, evaluation is used to separate winners from losers. This is what grades do and what state, national and professional tests do -- they separate. In the past few decades there has been some emphasis on having tests and papers returned to the

student as a means of feedback for improvement. This procedure produces little or no positive results (Glasgow, 1997).

The problem with this method is that, once again, students are "told" what changes need to take place in order to "get the grade." Very little dialogue takes place. The dialogue that does take place is usually an educator "telling" the student why such a conclusion was made. In this way, tests are used as "demarcation points" rather than a place to begin dialogue so that learning and mental growth occur. (*Ibid.*).

In an open framework, evaluation could still serve this separation function, if that was desired. The process of assigning the grade would change, however. Perhaps a committee of people would be the evaluators. The committee could be made up of other educators in the department, the department head, professionals in the community and other students. That way the student gets a variety of perspectives to offer feedback.

This judging then becomes a *negotiation* process, with the educator playing a central role. This method of evaluation may present problems. For example, one might assume that a student cannot be objective about their grade, or that a student may desire a grade higher than the one earned.

The author of this paper took an undergraduate class in which the educator signs a grade "contract" with the student. On the first day of class, students are asked to write their name on a piece of paper as well as the grade they would *like* to receive in the class. Under that grade, students then are asked to write the grade they think they will be willing to work for or *earn*. After the first class, this paper's author went to the instructor and asked, "Does this contract really work? Won't every student say they want an A and say that they think they can earn an A?" The educator responded that this grading system has worked well because students tend to be realistic with themselves. While they may desire a

certain grade, each student knows how much work they are willing to expend to get that grade. The educator ended by saying that if students earn a grade that is less than what they desired, a negotiation process takes place. The educator attempts to help the student understand how the amount of effort put into the class did not measure up to the grade earned. This part of the "contractual" evaluation process is a little "hazy," in this author's opinion. If the student *believes* he/she put forth the effort to get the grade in the contract, the student probably believes he/she has *earned* that grade. This creates frustration for the student, and the author of this paper has personal experience that confirms this statement.

It is as though educators are sending a message to students that the *amount* of effort is immaterial to a final grade, if that effort does not translate into providing information that is in-line with the educator's expectations. Here again, is the reason many students work quickly to understand and provide what the educator expects of the student to make the grade.

One common misconception about grades assigned in a closed system is that if the student works hard and, yet, receives a less than desirable grade, it is the *educator's* fault (Sacks, 1996). Sacks asserts that the "consumer knows best" mentality that pervades our society is to blame. Students, he explains, view the educator as providing a service, and students are the consumers. If the student is unhappy with that service, the educator is to blame.

An open paradigm asserts that students will change their mentality on the topic of grades if they are given an opportunity to share the responsibility for their educational experience. If students take the lead on developing and exploring problem scenarios that are personally relevant, students will make a personal investment in their education and will take responsibility for their final grade.

Doll (1993) suggests that students work privately on class work and then receive a public critiquing of their work by the committee. Dewey (1963) also suggested this idea, and claims that such critiquing is "essential for the transformation of experience" (p. 35).

The author of this paper agrees with this type of assessment, but acknowledges the difficulty of implementing such an extensive system. Doll's and Dewey's notion of establishing a committee of people to perform the judging of a student's work is an idea worthy of consideration. Most humans, however, do not wish to have their work picked apart or challenged publicly. While it is true that students should be prepared to refute their ideas and opinions, it may not be necessary that this take place in front of the entire class.

A public debate might be a better option. A committee could meet once or twice throughout the semester, assess the students' work (whether it be term papers or tests), offer written feedback and then give the students a chance to tell why they chose the answers they did. Committee members would allow the student a class period to formulate their thoughts in order to effectively and confidently offer their ideas to the class. This could become a productive way of inducing dialogue. The student would feel as if his/her point of view had been heard, and would probably become more grounded in his/her beliefs as a result.

If it is impractical to get together a committee, the educator could use the same process of giving written feedback to the student, allowing the student to respond (either publicly or privately) and then negotiating a grade based on both viewpoints.

Whether the educator chooses to form a committee to provide student feedback or give feedback by him/herself, the evaluation process must remain open, including the actual written or verbal feedback to the student. For example, in a closed paradigm, an

educator might make the comment: "This paragraph is awkward," or "You need a transition here."[9] Comments like these are geared to the preferences of the educator. They are based on what the educator feels is "correct," and do not challenge the student to think for him/herself. In addition, such comments imply to the student that the educator is all-knowing, even though the educator may have very well misunderstood what the student was trying to communicate in the first place. In the open teaching method, mistakes like this are rarely made by the educator because the educator is constantly asking the student for clarification.

In an open paradigm, comments become less direct and more open-ended. For example, instead of saying, "This paragraph is awkward," the educator might ask, "How does this paragraph relate to the one you just wrote?" In other words, comments become a source of dialogue. They seek information. They imply to the student, "I may not completely understand where you are coming from."

This point demonstrates that a lot of what constitutes an open paradigm is a change in philosophy, more so than technique. No longer does the educator have all the answers. Rather, educator and student negotiate and explore possible alternatives through dialogue and discussion. Again, the assumption of an open paradigm is that no one owns the truth and everyone has a right to be understood.

- Changing the role of educator

Another criterion that must be present under an open paradigm is the changing role of authority. In an open paradigm, students learn to relate differently to the instructor.

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[9] It should be noted that these are typical comments the author of this paper has received on news stories written for various journalism classes.

This is probably one of the most important issues to educators. Being out of control and having no order in the classroom is a frightening situation. But control does not have to be imposed externally -- as in the closed paradigm -- in order for it to exist. In fact, under the open paradigm, an educator switches from dictator to leader, by developing control internally. Developing control internally is an important function of an open paradigm, since the assumption is that meanings are made (constructed) through dialogue. Here is how it works:

The educator's role is restructured so that questions of procedure, methodology and value are no longer decided in the abstract, away from the distinct needs of the students. Rather, decisions are made involving students so that personal traditions and cultures define what is learned. Students now learn in such a way that their own values are re-enforced, instead of taking on the values of the educator.

In this way, the educator's role becomes more critical than in a situation where the teacher enforces values on everyone. Under the open paradigm, the educator becomes a leader from within, instead of dictator from without. It is a challenging role, but one that needs to be confronted.

Under an open paradigm, an educator takes on a nondirective, or open, teaching style that puts the learner at the center. The nondirective teaching model is based on the work of Carl Rogers (1961, 1971). Rogers' view of therapy can be applied to education as a mode of learning. He believed that positive human relationships enable people to grow. Therefore, instruction should be based on concepts of human relations in contrast to concepts of subject matters.

From the nondirective stance, the educator's role is that of a facilitator who has a counseling relationship with students and who guides their growth and development. In

this role, the educator helps students explore new ideas about their lives, their schoolwork and their relations with others (Aspy & Roebuck, 1973). The model creates an environment where students and teacher are partners in learning. They share ideas openly and communicate honestly with one another.

The open model nurtures students rather than controlling the sequence of learning. The emphasis is on developing long-term learning, rather than short-term instructional or content objectives germane to a closed model (Neill, 1960). The nondirective, open-minded educator is patient and does not sacrifice the long view by forcing immediate results.

Under Rogers' nondirective counseling model, there is an assumption that the client is capable of dealing constructively with his or her own life, and that assumption must be respected and nurtured. Thus, in an open teaching atmosphere, the educator respects the students' ability to identify their own problems and to formulate solutions.

When operating nondirectively, the educator attempts to see the world as the students see it, creating an atmosphere of empathetic communication in which the student's self-direction can be nurtured and developed. During interaction, the educator mirrors students' thoughts and feelings. By using reflective comments -- instead of directive ones -- the teacher raises the students' consciousness of their perceptions and feelings, thus helping them clarify their ideas and think for themselves.

The educator also serves as a "benevolent alter ego," one who accepts all feelings and thoughts, even those the students may be afraid to express or may view as wrong (Joyce & Weil, 1996, p. 298). In being accepting and nonpunitive, the educator indirectly communicates to the students that all thoughts and feelings are acceptable. There is no right or wrong under an open paradigm, only ideas that need to be explored and advanced.

In fact, recognition of both positive and negative feelings and thoughts is essential to emotional and intellectual development (Rogers, 1961).

Under an open paradigm, the educator gives up the traditional decision-making role, choosing instead the role of facilitator who focuses on students' thoughts and feelings. The relationship between student and facilitator in a nondirective interview is best described as a partnership. Thus, if the student complains of poor grades, the educator does not attempt to resolve the problem simply by explaining the art of good study habits. Instead, the teacher encourages the student to express the feelings and thoughts that may surround his or her inability to concentrate. When these feelings and thoughts are fully explored and perceptions are clarified, the student then tries to identify appropriate changes and brings them about. Again, the *student* identifies the problem and provides possible options.

According to Rogers (1971), a kind of "growth syndrome" emerges as the student is allowed to release feelings, develop insight, followed by action, and then integrate that into a new orientation (p. 299). Rogers says that responding on a purely intellectual basis to students' problems inhibits the expression of feelings, which are at the root of the problem of growth. For example, if the student is struggling with writing, an intellectual response would be, "Start by making an outline." An empathetic response would be, "When I get stuck I often feel frustrated. How do you feel?" Without the release and exploration of these feelings, students will be unable to sustain real behavior changes (*Ibid.*).

The point to be made is that the educator takes a "back seat" in the educational process in an open classroom by allowing students to dialogue, reflect and come to possible alternatives ways of thinking and looking at things. There are other times,

however, when an open educator must take the lead for a student's learning process. The essential skill, however, is to lead without taking responsibility *from* the students.

Under the open paradigm, lead-taking remarks are stated directly in a positive and amiable manner, like: "What do you think about that?" "Can you say more about that?" or, "How do you react when that happens?" An open, nondirective approach is an effective way to get students in touch with themselves, help them think critically and then reflect (Joyce & Weil, 1996).

Interpretation on the part of an educator is used sparingly but is useful occasionally in moving a discussion forward. It should be used with caution, and only in situations which the educator feels confident that interpretations will advance rather than close a dialogue. Examples of interpretative openers are: "You do this because . . ." or "It sounds like your reasons for your actions this week are . . ." or "You are saying to me that the problem is . . . ."

One of the problems encountered under a closed paradigm is that students are dependent on the educator for approval, either from compliments made in class or a grade on a test or paper (Glasgow, 1997). In other words, the closed system of teaching fosters a lot of hand-holding. Under an open paradigm, approval is usually given only when genuine progress has been achieved. It must be used sparingly, or the open relationship is likely to drift rapidly into the traditional teacher-student relationship (Rogers, 1971).

In other words, the student will assume a subservient role to the educator and look for the educator's approval and/or evaluation. To prevent that from happening, thoughts like the following may be useful at times: "That's a very interesting comment and may well be worth considering again," or "That last idea was particularly strong. Could you elaborate on it some more?"

Direct comments on the part of the educator should also be used rarely. Comments such as, "Don't you think it would be better if . . ." directly suggest that the educator "knows better." These kinds of direct comments imply a relationship in which the educator attempts to change the ideas of the student or influence his or her attitudes. Even though these comments attempt to support the student or reduce anxiety, they do not contribute to problem solving.

It should be noted that openly taught students may also need to change, because they now share the responsibility of their education with the educator. The educator's goal is to help students understand their own needs and values so that they can effectively direct their *own* educational decisions. The fact that the educational experience is shared presents an interesting problem.

In most models of teaching, the educator actively shapes events and can picture the pattern of activities that lies ahead. In most open method situations, events emerge and the pattern of activities is more fluid. In addition, classroom dialogue is made up of a series of responses that occur in an unpredictable sequence. Thus, to master an open method of teaching, educators need to learn general principles, work to increase their sensitivity to others, master open teaching skills and then practice making contact with students and responding to them using skills drawn from a repertoire of open teaching techniques.

Chapter 3 will offer some suggestions of teaching techniques that can be used in an open classroom.

"If we get too comfortable, we stop growing. Students can put pressure on us to work within their comfort zones. Let's be kind about that. Kind enough to help them learn to be uncomfortable."
-- Herb Thelen, 1963

CHAPTER 3

Putting an Open Paradigm to Work

Deciding how to teach a journalism course is a difficult task. Outlining a curriculum using an open paradigm further complicates that task because an open curriculum, by its very nature, means that the educator does not prescribe what the student learns, or how the student learns it.[10] An open curriculum emerges through the action and interaction of the participants -- students and educator.

Instructional tools for an open curriculum

This chapter will focus on four instructional tools that may not be new, but that work well under an open system of teaching. Tools include: Role playing, group investigation, inquiry and problem-solving.

- Role playing

Journalism classes are not exempt from the notion that today's students have become more passive with their educational experience. It should be noted, however, that journalism classes, by their very nature, foster a more active learning environment than many other disciplines. Most writing and editing courses, for example, have students practice writing and editing skills. This activity in itself is a more "active" activity when compared to an educator giving a straight lecture.

One of the problems with teaching skills-oriented classes, however, is that social process skills -- believed to be an important element for intellectual development and success in the real world -- are not fostered (Hullfish & Smith, 1961). In other words,

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[10] Note: This section should not be viewed as a dogmatic schema. Rather, it should be considered a work in progress. An open paradigm is always open to critique and can be modified as needed for greater usefulness and effectiveness.

journalism students are taught how to function as a journalist in the strictest sense of the word (reporting and editing), but are not taught to think critically -- which is an important element of an open paradigm.

Most journalism classes, for instance, do not teach students how to deal with a difficult source, how to build trust, how to show sympathy to a source who just lost a loved one or how to deal with a complaining reader who does not understand why you as an editor would run a particular story or photo.

Three possible reasons that journalism educators do not foster social, problem-solving skills is that they assume most students already possess such skills; students will acquire the skills through real-world experiences; or, that such skills cannot be taught, and if they can be taught, it would be difficult.

Here is a case in point: In one of the classes taken by the author of this paper, several students complained about not knowing how to deal with a difficult interviewing situation. Some students asked the educator, "Can we at least role play some possible situations we may encounter in order to prepare us to deal with those situations?"

The instructor offered several reasons why role playing was not a good idea, one of which was the fact that role playing is difficult to set up and enact. The other reason the educator gave for not using role playing was that it "probably won't help because you cannot predict all the circumstances you may encounter once you enter the real world."

This last comment is a common misconception about role playing. If role playing is done well, real-life situations can be played out and analyzed during role playing (Joyce & Weil, 1996). There are two basic reasons why an educator might decide to use role playing with a group of students. One is that role playing provides students with social interactions somewhat similar to interactions they will experience in the real world. The

second reason is that it allows students to think critically about situations and reflect on them.

In role playing, students explore human relations problems by enacting problem situations and then discussing enactments. Together, students can explore feelings, attitudes, values and problem-solving strategies. Several teams of researchers have experimented with role playing, and their findings are remarkably similar, which include role playing as a forum for: Exploring emotional and intellectual processes; organizing and understanding individual belief systems; and, growing and changing from the activity (Shaftel & Shaftel, 1967; Chesler & Fox, 1966).

Role playing as a teaching model is rooted in the personal and social dimensions of education. It attempts to help individuals find personal meaning within their social worlds and to resolve personal dilemmas with the assistance of the social, role playing group. In the social dimension, it allows individuals to work together in analyzing social situations, special interpersonal problems, and in developing decent and democratic ways of coping with these situations. Role playing is an indispensable aspect of human development and provides a unique opportunity for resolving interpersonal and social dilemmas (Joyce & Weil, 1996).

On its simplest level, role playing is dealing with problems through action: A problem is delineated, acted out and then discussed and analyzed. Some students are role players, while others are observers. A person puts him/herself in the position of another person and then tries to interact with others who are also playing roles. As empathy, sympathy, anger and affection are all generated during the interaction, role playing, if done well, becomes part of life (*Ibid.*). This emotional content, as well as the words and the actions, becomes part of the later analysis. When the acting out is finished, even the

observers are involved enough to want to know why each person reached his or her decision, what the sources of resistance were and whether there were other ways this situation could have been approached.

The model assumes that it is possible to create authentic analogies to real-life problems and that through these re-creations students can "sample" life. Thus, the enactment elicits genuine, typical emotional responses and behaviors from the students.

A related assumption is that role playing can draw out students' feelings, which they can recognize and perhaps release. The Shaftels' (1967) version of role playing emphasizes the intellectual content as much as the emotional content. Under their version, analysis and discussion of the enactment are as important as the role playing itself. As educators, we should be concerned that students recognize and understand their feelings and see how their feelings influence their behavior. Under a closed paradigm, the emotional element is left out.

Another assumption is that the collective reactions of the peer group can bring out new ideas and provide directions for growth and change. The model de-emphasizes the traditional role of teacher and encourages listening and learning from one's *peers*.

A final assumption is that as students understand their own psychological, emotional and intellectual processes by using role playing, they will gain some measure of control over their belief system and organize it in this way (Shaftel & Shaftel, 1967).

The concept of *role* is one of the central theoretical underpinnings of the role-playing model. It is also a major goal. In order to teach students to become effective journalists, educators must teach students to use this concept, to recognize different roles, and to think of their own and others' behavior in terms of roles. (Joyce & Weil, 1996). Role playing is a common instructional tool used in mass communications programs, and

should be implemented to benefit students of journalism programs (Daly, Friedrich & Vangelisti, 1990).

The benefits of role playing depend on the quality of the enactment and especially on the analysis that follows. Benefits depend also on the students' perceptions of the role as similar to real-life situations. Role playing is not likely to be successful if the educator simply tosses out a problem situation, persuades a few students to act it out, and then conducts a discussion about the enactment.

In their book, "Role playing of social values: Decision making in the social studies," the Shaftels suggest that nine steps be taken to set up role playing: Warm up the group; select participants; set the stage; prepare observers; enact; discuss and evaluate; re-enact if necessary; discuss and evaluate; share experiences and generalize. Each of these steps or phases has a specific purpose that contributes to the richness and focus of the learning activity.

Step one, warming up the students, means the educator introduces students to a problem (of the students' choosing) that is recognized as an area in which everyone needs to learn to deal. For example, the educator might ask, "How do we deal with a difficult source?" Perhaps students are having a difficult time getting the source to loosen up in order to get good, meaningful quotes, or, perhaps students are having difficulty establishing trust. Whatever the case, the educator sensitizes the group to the problem and creates a climate of acceptance so that students feel that all views, feelings and behaviors can be explored without retribution.

The second part of the warm-up is to express the problem vividly through examples. These may come from descriptions taken directly from student stories (e.g., if the problem is about getting good quotes), but it is important for the educator not to

reveal the student's name. The last part of the warm-up is to ask questions that make the students think about and predict their outcome.

In phase three, setting the stage, the role players outline the scene but do not prepare any specific dialogue. They simply sketch the setting and perhaps one person's line of action. The educator may help set the stage by asking students a few simple questions about where the enactment is taking place, what it is like, and so on. A general setting is all that needs to be identified, so that participants feel secure enough in their roles to begin acting.

In phase four, preparing the observers, it is important that the observers become actively involved so that the entire group experiences the enactment and can later analyze the play. The Shaftels suggest that the educator involve observers in the role play by asking observers to select a task, such as evaluating realism of the role playing, commenting on the effectiveness and the sequences of the role players' behavior and defining the feelings and ways of thinking of the person being portrayed. The educator may offer some ideas for observer involvement, but students ultimately should choose a task that will help them become active observers.

At phase five, enacting, the players assume the role and "live" the problem situation spontaneously, attempting to respond realistically to one another. The role playing is not expected to be a smooth dramatization, nor is it expected that each player will always know how to respond. This uncertainty is part of life, as well as part of "feeling" the role. The Shaftels suggest the enactments be short. But the important point is that students need enough time to understand what the proposed behavior is. If the follow-up discussion reveals a lack of student understanding about the events or roles, the

educator can then ask for a re-enactment of the scene. Students may elect to choose different role players.

In phase six, discussing and evaluating, if the problem is important and the participants and observers are intellectually and emotionally involved, the discussion will probably begin spontaneously. At first, the discussion may focus on different interpretations of the portrayal and on disagreements over how the roles should have been carried out. This is a great opportunity for the educator to ask the person who disagrees to put themselves in the other person's shoes and tell how they would have handled the situation. No one person's idea is correct, and everyone has a right to express their idea.

In phase seven, re-enacting, the re-enactment may take place many times, if needed. The students and educator can share new interpretations of roles and decide whether new individuals should play them. The activity alternates between discussion and acting. As much as possible, the new enactments should explore new possibilities for outcomes. Students must be challenged to role play from *their* own perspective, not the perspective they think is "acceptable."

Students probably will not be able to immediately generalize about human relations during phase nine, sharing experiences and generalizing. Such generalizations require much experience. For example, if the role players are trying to gain the source's trust by showing themselves to be attentive listeners who truly care, observers may not be able to generalize that the problem with the scenario was the lack of trust. The educator should, however, attempt to help the discussion so that the students begin to generalize and talk about consequences. For example, the educator might ask, "Why was the reporter having such a hard time getting any good, relevant information from the source?" According to

Joyce and Weil (1996), students will be more likely to integrate learned principles into their own lives when the conclusions are more general.

The educator's questions and comments should encourage free and honest expression of ideas and feelings. Educators must establish equality and trust between themselves and their students. They can do this by accepting all suggestions as legitimate and making no value judgments. In this way, they simply reflect the student's feelings or attitudes.

Educators should accept student responses and suggestions, especially their opinions and feelings, in a nonevaluative manner. Educators should respond in such a way that they help students explore various sides of the problem situation, recognizing and contrasting alternative points of view. By reflecting, paraphrasing and summarizing responses, the educator increases the students' awareness of their views and feelings, as well as the views and feelings of others. Educators should emphasize that there are different ways to play the same role and that different consequences result as they are explored. There are alternative ways to resolve a problem. No one method is correct.

The role of the educator is that of being reflective and supportive. Everything from the problem to be explored to the role playing itself should be of the *students'* choosing. The educator may, however, need to assume a more directive role when students begin using role playing as a problem-solving strategy. As the class progresses and students become more experienced, the educator will direct less.

The materials for role playing are minimal but important. The major curricular tool is the problem situation. Using news broadcasts (such as Food Lion vs. ABC)[11] or stories

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[11] This 1997 case involved ABC *PrimeTime Live* using deception (hidden cameras and lying on a work application) to get a story about possible unsanitary food handling practices.

from a newspaper (such as the JonBenet Ramsey case),[12] would make excellent sources for problem scenarios. Selecting a problem situation requires several things from the educator: First, they must consider the ages of the students, their cultural backgrounds, the complexity of the problem situation, the sensitivity of the topic and the students' experience with role playing. In general, as students gain experience with role playing and develop a higher degree of group cohesiveness and mutual acceptance, as well as a close rapport with the educator, the more sensitive the topic can be. The first few problem situations should be matters of concern to the students, but not extremely sensitive issues. Students may develop a list of themes or problems they have either encountered or believe they may encounter once they are journalists in the real world. Then the educator can locate or develop specific problem situations that fit the theme.

The gender of the student and their ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds influence their choice of topic and, according to Chesler and Fox (1966), their expectations of the role play. Different cultural groups experience different sets of problems, concerns and "solutions." Most educators do not account for these differences in their curricula. Martindale (1993) states:

> Most journalism educators teach their students in essentially the same ways they themselves were taught. They teach the same news values and the same basic news-gathering techniques. They explain the who, what, when, where, why and how that should be answered in the lead. They teach the history of the media as the history of the mainstream White press and broadcasting outlets. The mass communication pioneers they discuss are outstanding White, usually male, journalists. They presume the same media audience of middle class, predominantly White, persons of European ancestry.
>
> But American society today is vastly different from the one in which today's mass communication faculty were educated, and is changing rapidly (p. 71).

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[12] This 1997 case involved an ethical dilemma when the *Dallas Morning News* printed a photograph of the murder scene of a six-year-old Denver beauty pageant entrant.

American society (let alone classrooms) is different from the one in which today's journalism faculty were educated. For example, by the year 2010, the number of U.S. minority young people below the age of 17 will increase by 4.4. million, while the number of White children will decrease by 3.8 million (presented in 1992 by the Center for Demographic Policy in Washington, DC, taken from Martindale, 1993, p. 71). That means in 30 years one out of every three Americans will be a member of a racial or ethnic group (*Ibid.*).

This is why problems that are typical for a particular ethnic or age group, gender or socioeconomic class, should become the basis of problem situations. This also is why it is important that the educator allow *students* to select the problem to be role played. The assumption is that students will probably choose problems that are unique to their backgrounds and experiences. Other students in the class, therefore, will gain exposure to and understanding from the varied problem selections.

Other ideas for problem situations can be derived from ethical dilemmas the students may encounter on the job, or social issues, such as racism or sexism.

Another consideration in choosing a problem situation is its complexity. When more than three or four characters are used, and the more abstract the problem issue is, the more difficult the situation will be to direct and analyze. There are no definite rules about levels of difficulty in problem situations, but intuitively it seems that the following sequence is a reasonable guide: As more characters and plots are added, the role playing becomes more complex and, therefore, students learn more about value themes, social and community issues. Using more than four characters, however, may create disorganization and frustration.

Educators must stress that the point of any role playing exercise is that students are not looking for a "resolution." Rather, they are looking for alternative outcomes based on the actions of the role players. This gives them an opportunity to understand how they might react or handle a similar situation once they become journalists and/or editors.

The role playing model is extremely versatile and applicable to several educational objectives outlined under the open model. Through role playing, students can increase their ability to recognize their own and other people's feelings. They can acquire new behaviors for handling previously difficult situations, and they can improve their problem-solving skills. Role playing also helps students to think critically about potential problem situations and helps them reflect on their actions.

In addition to its many uses, the role-playing model carries with it an appealing set of activities. Students will enjoy both the action and the acting, and may forget that the role play itself is a vehicle for developing the content of the instruction. The stages of the model are not ends in themselves, but they help expose students' values, feelings, attitudes and solutions to problems, which the educator then must help students explore.

- Group investigation

To prepare students for real life experiences, it is important that they work as partners in class. In the real world, students will more than likely be part of a team. Therefore, it is important that group investigation skills be learned and fostered in school.

There has been a great deal of research on cooperative learning that demonstrates the importance of teaching it in the classroom. For example, Johnson & Johnson (1995) have demonstrated that group investigative tasks can increase interdependence, empathy and role-taking ability. Research also has found that cooperative learning environments

increase positive feelings toward others, reduce alienation and loneliness, build relationships and provide affirmative views of people.

Working in cooperative settings also generates more motivation than do individualistic, competitive environments (Joyce & Weil, 1996). "Integrative social groups are more than the sum of their parts. The feeling of connectedness produce positive energy" (*Ibid.*, p. 67). Interacting with another individual produces cognitive as well as social complexity. When contrasted with solitary study (fostered in a closed system), cooperation creates more intellectual activity that increases learning (Sharan, 1990).

Cooperation increases self-esteem not only through increased learning but through the feeling of being respected and cared for by others in the group. As students learn to work in cooperative settings, their ability to cooperate improves and social skills increase (Slavin, 1990).

Researchers have found that cooperative tasks positively affect learning, and improve intergroup relations. The evidence shows that in classrooms where students work in pairs or groups, there is greater mastery of the material than the common individual-study-cum-recitation pattern, germane to closed teaching paradigms (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

The philosophical underpinnings of a cooperative method of learning is dominated by John Dewey, who wrote *How We Think* in 1910. Reflective thinking is conceptualized in this book. Group problem solving is one way to accomplish reflective thinking. Even as early as Heard Kilpatrick (1919) and Charles Hubbard Judd (1934), the concern with education's role was to improve a student's ability to reflect on concepts, beliefs and values that brought them to their decision.

It was believed that a society of reflective thinkers would be capable of improving itself and preserving the uniqueness of individuals. In order for students to function in a real-world, democratic society, it is necessary for them to acquire cooperative learning and reflective thinking skills.

Another reason to teach with a cooperative learning method is that intellectual growth and social skills are believed to be inextricably related (Hullfish & Smith, 1961). Hullfish & Smith assert that knowledge is constructed and reconstructed by individuals and groups. They stress that knowledge is conveyed through our sensory interactions with our environment, as well as the experiences we encounter. As a result, knowledge has a personal quality that is unique for each person. Thus, an individual's way of reflecting on reality is what makes their world comprehensible to them and gives them personal and social meaning.

The quality of an individual's ability to reflect on experiences becomes a critical factor in determining the quality of the world that individual will construct for him/herself. It is believed that a person who reflects will have a more richly constructed world than someone who is insensitive to their experiences and reflects far less. Therefore, it becomes critical for educators to sensitize students to many aspects of the physical and social environment so that students increase their capacity to reflect on that environment.

Hullfish and Smith maintain that individual differences are the strength of a democracy. Negotiating among these differences is a major democratic activity. The more fully students are required to reflect, the more students will develop a personal processing system. A democratic society requires that we work together to understand each other's worlds and develop a shared perspective that will enable us to learn from each other and govern ourselves while preserving a pluralistic reality (Martindale, 1993).

Education is meant to help students understand other people's viewpoints. Yet, under a closed paradigm -- where the educator makes all the curricular decisions -- alternate viewpoints are left out. Berger and Luckmann (1966) state that a student's ability to understand alternative frames of reference and alternative courses of action is essential to social negotiations. These are qualities that an open system advocates, which can be learned more easily and effectively in groups.

Organizing students into pairs or triads is easy and gets effects almost immediately. Working in groups will help provide social support so that students are stimulated to learn content and skills. Partnerships provide a pleasant laboratory where social skills, such as empathy and trust, can be developed.

Another feature is that students with poorer academic histories benefit quickly. Partnerships increase student involvement. It also has the side effect of reducing self-absorption and increases responsibility for personal learning (Joyce & Weil, 1996).

Some educators (and students) believe that students who are the most successful in individualistic environments will not profit from cooperative experiences. A mass of evidence contradicts this belief (Slavin, 1991; Joyce, 1991; Shaftel & Shaftel, 1967). Developing a partnership does not imply that individual effort is not required. And, successful students are not inherently less cooperative. In highly individualistic environments they are sometimes taught disdain for less-successful students -- to their detriment both in school and in the future.

Highly motivated students can be challenged in a group setting by taking on more difficult tasks or greater responsibility (Glasgow, 1997). The problem with this situation is that students who put greater effort into a group project, believe they deserve a better grade for that effort (*Ibid.*). That is why it is important for the educator to encourage

students to try on different roles within a group. Perhaps a highly motivated student will play the part of leader for one project and will relinquish control later on.

Working together in groups can be frustrating for students for many reasons. One reason is that it is difficult to clearly define the ultimate goal. Determining how to reach that goal, and who will do what, is also a frustrating process. More successful, take-charge, students might prefer doing all the work themselves to avoid this frustration.

Another frustration, briefly mentioned above, is that the entire group receives a grade based on the *group's* performance. If one person does not live up to the standard set by the group, the rest of the group has to make the decision to either pick up the slack or take a lesser grade.

One way to help students learn cooperatively is to provide practice in simpler, less frustrating, settings, such as groups of two or three. Then, as students get used to working in dyads and triads, educators may ask them to work in larger groups. Task groups larger than six are clumsy and require skilled leadership, which students cannot provide to one another without experience and training (Joyce & Weil, 1996).

There is the problem of being certain each student participates equally in the group. Kagan (1990) has developed some procedures to ensure this happens. An example is what he calls "numbered heads." Suppose that students are working in partnerships of three. Each member takes a number from one to three. Simple tasks are given (e.g., "Identify the nutgraph in each of the following news stories."). All members are responsible for accomplishing each task.[13] After a suitable interval, the instructor calls out

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[13] It should be noted that in the open paradigm students can develop what these tasks consist of. The educator can ask students to read newspapers or rely on their own experiences to come up with ideas that can be examined in groups.

a number, like "number twos." All the number twos in the groups raise their hands and the educator calls on one of them to report what they learned. All other persons are responsible for listening and checking the explanation of the person who reports. In other words, all the other "twos" in the group listen and check while one "number two" person speaks. It is then their responsibility to agree or disagree with the "number two" student, giving reasons why.

The procedure is designed to ensure that some individuals do not become the "learners" and "spokespersons" for their groups while the others are carried along for the ride. It will also help the educator and group when assessment time rolls along.

Sets of training tasks can be designed by educator, student or combination of the two. Students will learn to increase their stake in one another and to work diligently for learning by all.

In addition to increasing the quality of cooperative behavior, procedures for helping students become truly interdependent are also available. The least complex involve reflection on the group process and discussions about ways of working together more efficiently. For example, there are communication games where success requires taking the position of another. One person puts him/herself in the place of another to accomplish this task. One student may be asked to play the role of a journalist, while other members of the group play the part of a group of sports players who are in the locker room after losing a game. The journalist then conducts an interview of the losing players.

There are also procedures for rotating tasks so that each person moves from subordinate to superordinate tasks, and where members take turns as coordinators. The idea is to help students understand the viewpoints of others. By having a female student play the role of journalist in a male locker room, students will begin to gain an

understanding of how this might affect a group of men or the female journalist. Students should explore how the scenario changes when a black, male journalist interviews a white athlete, and vice versa. The same questions can be asked in both scenarios in order to examine answers based on cultural differences.

In order for students to be prepared to deal with real world situations, they must deal with them in class and be forced to think critically about their behavior and their beliefs and values that caused the behavior.

- Inquiry

Inquiry is a major part of what journalists do. Yet, few (if any) classes teach students the art and skill of inquiry -- aside from the 5Ws. Role playing and group investigation provide adequate and realistic forums for such teaching.

The closed paradigm assumes educators do a particular task to get a specific outcome from the learner. The open paradigm (and democratic process), however, assumes that the outcome of any educational experience is not completely predictable (Joyce & Weil, 1996). Educators who use the open paradigm reason that if they are successful in showing students how to inquire into the nature of their experiences, and how to develop their own ways of viewing the world, it will be *impossible* to predict just how they will face any given situation or solve any particular problem. Hence, students are taught an academic discipline that helps them create a frame of reference and a unique way of ordering reality that is unlike the discipline known by other students.

Thelen (1960) rejects the traditional classroom order that emphasizes values of comfort and politeness or of keeping the teacher happy. Rather, the classroom group concentrates on developing their *own* social order. Thelen suggests that a culture cannot develop without rules. Rules help create meaning.

The teacher's role is to participate in the activity of developing social order by asking questions. Students must be challenged to determine if their social rules are congruent with their attitudes, beliefs and values. The teacher does not try to influence the emerging social order, rather, brings out differences in the way students act and interpret the rules (*Ibid.*).

Each inquiry starts with a stimulus situation to which students "can react and discover basic conflicts among their attitudes, ideas, and modes of perception" (Thelen, 1960, p. 82). On the basis of this information, students identify the problem to be investigated, analyze the role required to solve it, organize themselves to take on these roles, act, report and evaluate the results. The group is concerned with its own effectiveness, and with its discussion of its own process as it relates to the goals of investigation.

Inquiry is stimulated by confronting a problem. Knowledge results from the inquiry. The social process of the group enhances inquiry and is itself studied and improved. The heart of group investigation lies in its formulation of inquiry. According to Thelen, the concern of inquiry is:

> To initiate and supervise the processes of giving attention to something; of interacting with and being stimulated by other people, whether in person or through their writing; and of reflection and reorganization of concepts and attitudes as shown in arriving at conclusions, identifying new investigations to be undertaken, taking actions and turning out a better product (p. 85).

The first element of inquiry is an event the individual can react to and puzzle over -- a problem to be solved. For example, a journalist educator might select the problem, "What are the ethical issues involved with printing information received off the record?" Simply providing a problem, however, will not generate the puzzlement that is a major energy source for inquiry. The students must add an awareness of self and a desire for

personal meaning. In addition, they must assume the dual roles of participant and observer. They must simultaneously inquire into the problem and observe themselves as inquirers. The conflicting viewpoints that emerge also energize the students' interest in the problem.

Although the educator can provide a problem situation, it is up to the students as inquirers to identify and formulate the problem and pursue its "solution." In order for students to take the scenario seriously, however, they must find the problem scenario believable (Glasgow, 1997).

Students can be asked to collect outside information on the topic before dialogue proceeds. They should be asked to look to past experiences of their own, and look to alternative consequences of their actions. Finally, they must develop the capacity for reflection and the ability to synthesize participate behavior. Students should be challenged to formulate explicit conclusions based on their rationale, experiences and resources. They should be challenged to "test" their conclusion based on other's experiences, resources and rationale. In this way, thoughts are reorganized into new and more powerful patterns.

By "trying on" various ways of looking at experience, students learn to reinterpret meanings into workable principles and concepts (Thelen, 1960). Groups provide an effective way to teach inquiry skills because the reactions of individuals in the group will vary widely. Differing world views will create the challenge of reconciling these differences, and the newly perceived alternatives will extend the student's experience by serving as a source of self-awareness and a source of curiosity.

Engaging in group inquiry helps students become aware of different points of view that help them find out who they are by seeing themselves projected against the views of

others. It also stimulates them. They want to know *why* differences exist and how they affect them.

Inquiry and group investigation require flexibility from the educator and the classroom organization. The educator is available for consultation but does not interfere with any individual group's activity. That is why these activities work best under an open paradigm, as opposed to a closed paradigm.

It should be noted that if students have not had the opportunity to experience this kind of social interaction in the classroom, it may take some time before they function at a higher level in the classroom, and later on in the real world. Educators can start with small-scale investigations that lead to larger-scale projects as the class progresses.

- Problem solving

Problem solving is basic to most real-world decisions. The problem solving approach, therefore, allows students to acquire knowledge and develop skills that may be necessary in many careers (Glasgow, 1997). When students are confronted with the task of understanding and "solving" a potentially real-life problem, the in-class activity affects them in more personally relevant ways. This is an important aspect of problem-solving. Many times, students see little relevance in closed classroom assignments beyond Wednesday's test or the latest essay.

By working with the unknowns that problems present, students are forced to develop possible outcomes and reasoning skills. Students must find information, analyze it, develop problem-solving designs and then adjust and re-evaluate the design and outcomes as more knowledge is gained. These are skills students can put to use for the rest of their lives.

When carried out as a group assignment, students learn the cooperative and social skills necessary to work in a group. When used as an individualized task, students gain autonomy and self-reliance. Once students apply knowledge to a problem situation, they begin to see the relevance of what they have learned.

Glasgow (1997) states that "this concept of learning is missing in much of the curriculum in which knowledge and information come before application" (p. xxii).

One of the problems with using problem solving is that its success depends on students being able to discipline themselves to work with the unknown and develop possible solutions. Because students are, for the most part, used to a closed-ended teaching style, coping with an open-ended learning situation that really has no "right answers" can be difficult, frustrating and confusing.

Another problem is that educators must have the necessary skills to orient and guide students through a problem-solving activity. The educator must switch from the role of provider of answers, to provider of questions and guidance.

There has been research to support the idea that a problem solving approach to learning does not directly increase a student's ability to pass standardized tests, especially when these tests call for isolated facts and concepts (Joyce & Weil, 1996).

Research indicates that problem solving does, however, enhance short- and long-term memory, helps students retain both simple and complex concepts and gives students the skills to understand the relationships among concepts (Ausubel, 1980; Barnes & Clausen, 1975).

There are two information processing models[14] that work well in introducing a problem scenario: the Suchman Inquiry model and advanced organizers. Each of these

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[14] Information-processing models focus on how learners sense and organize data, analyze problems and

models are outlined in Joyce and Weil's (1996) book, *Models of Teaching*, and provide educators with ideas to implement problem-solving activities.

- Suchman inquiry model

Richard Suchman (1964) developed the Suchman Inquiry model, which uses questions, or inquiry, to teach inductive and deductive reasoning skills. The underlying assumption of the model is that knowledge is tentative and must develop over time. The model is designed to teach skills in generating explanations and inquiries.

The key feature of this model is the way the educator presents the learning stimulus. For example, an educator asks students why a particular problem exists. Perhaps the educator uses an example from the local newspaper. The educator may ask, "Do you think ABC reporters were 'right' in the way they used deception to cover the Food Lion story?" The educator does not provide any answers, and his/her personal opinion is left out of the discussion.

Students then are encouraged to work together in small groups to formulate questions and explanations. When at least one group is fairly sure that they have an adequate explanation for the inquiry, the educator asks the rest of the class if they are ready to advance and defend their explanations.

Discussion then focuses, not on the rightness or wrongness of the answer or explanation, but on the relative strength or merit of the hypotheses or explanations. The hypothesis then is advanced with more questioning and explaining. Since the goal of the activity is to sharpen critical thinking and problem-solving skills, the hypothesis is viewed as a *temporary* explanation to a perplexing problem.

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generate solutions to problems (Joyce & Weil, 1986).

This goal will be difficult for students to understand and appreciate, since students have come to expect and education that provides certain right and wrong answers. Finding those answers has been at the heart of their educational experience, for the most part. Therefore, students will have to be reminded continually that this (and other) exercise(s) are an effort to make them think about things from different perspectives. The educator will have to remind students why understanding various perspectives is important.

In general, the educator's role is one of guide and catalyst. An educator will help students find sources of information to give explanations and make inquiries about a problem.

- Advanced organizers

A second information processing model that works well when designing problem-solving scenarios is an advanced organizer. David Ausubel (1963) is the primary architect of this model, which is formed around his theory of meaningful verbal learning.

Advanced organizers focus on the presentation, organization and internalization of information by using an analogy or narrative that can be referred to and expanded on throughout the course. The goal of this method is to give students the "big picture" up front of how a particular class relates to their lives in the real world. Ausubel maintains that information learned in classes will not be meaningful to students unless they first are prepared to receive the information in a way that makes sense to them.

For example, the educator begins the first day of class by presenting an analogy or narrative of the course being taught, like news media ethics. Perhaps the educator chooses a *dog* to make the point that journalists are to be the "watch dogs" of society. The educator then can tell the story of journalists on Capitol Hill who do not live up the their role as watch dogs. Instead, they have become "lap dogs," sitting on the laps of people in

the government, licking the faces of these individuals, being best friends with them and then lapping up (without questioning it) every bit of information that is thrown their way. Throughout the semester, the educator can teach ethics by referring to the analogy of the dog. Perhaps the educator can discuss with students the importance of preventive journalism. That is, journalists as watch dogs should be always on guard, always sensing and "warding off" approaching danger.

Educators can also draw students into the narrative or analogy by asking them to identify ways in which journalism is like a . . . . At the end of the discussion, the educator informs the students that the analogy will be referred to and used throughout the class. Class activities, films and discussions then center and build on this notion. Students are also asked to develop their own analogies. A writing assignment, for example, can be used to accomplish this task.

Bruner (1986) points out that a metaphorical, or narrative teaching device is interpretative and allows participants to "keep the dialogue going" (Ch. 2). A closed method of teaching that uses *lectures* to convey material largely is declarative. A narrative model assumes that meanings are made or constructed through dialogue. A declarative model assumes the information is already known and it is the responsibility of the educator to present the information.

Put another way, narrative models "help us see what we don't see," whereas declarative models "help us see more clearly that which we already see" (Doll, 1993, p. 169). A closed teaching method aims for closure. In Serres' (1983) words, "it kills." That is not to say that a declarative method of teaching is unnecessary. Students need, of course, to use their minds to think creatively and logically. They need to learn how to generate ideas and come to some sort of closure with those ideas. Whitehead (1898) said

that reality is experienced through the interplay of metaphors *and* logic. Educators, therefore, need to bring this interplay into their curriculums and classrooms.

Wolfgang Iser (1978) says that a good narrative should induce, encourage and challenge the reader or listener to interpret and enter into dialogue with the text. For a good story to accomplish this, Iser says that there must be just the right amount of indeterminacy. "It is the element of indeterminacy that evokes the text to 'communicate' with the reader" (p. 24).

As educators, the narratives or analogies that are chosen must encourage students to explore possibilities that can be generated from dialogue. This is probably the biggest challenge in using this particular problem-solving approach. Joyce & Weil (1996) make the point that a narrative approach works best if the educator has adequately conceptualized and presented the scenario.

In an advanced organizer, the role of the educator is that of director and facilitator. The educator helps students make sense of, and apply newly acquired information into, other areas of the students' lives -- an element of an open paradigm.

The first day

The first day of class is too important to simply be glazed over. The author of this paper has rarely experienced a college (both undergraduate and graduate) class where the educator does anything more on the first day than introduces him/herself, hands out a course outline and dismisses the class. Educators who simply put in an appearance, see if all the students are there, make an assignment for the next time and dismiss class early are missing an important opportunity.

This approach sends students away frustrated because they do not get their basic questions answered and the educator misses an opportunity to demonstrate his/her

commitment to the course and students. This section, therefore, describes ideas that can help educators productively use the first day of class.

Because the entire "open" class will be conjointly created by students and educator, it is important for the educator to communicate this point from day one. Because this is a fairly nontraditional approach to teaching, the educator will need to stress over and over to the students that the class is about meeting the needs of the *students* in order to prepare them for life. It may take time for students to understand just how much responsibility they will have to make the class work.

From the moment the educator walks into the classroom, students must understand that this is *their* class. Course objectives, classroom rules, work loads, exams and projects will be negotiated between student and educator. Therefore, the educator must come across as being easily accessible and easy to talk to. The educator will make statements such as: "No person's opinion overrides another person's in this class," "Everyone has the right to be heard, the right to be understood," "No one owns the truth in this class," "This class is about expanding our minds in order to function in the real world."

As students enter the class on the first day, this open approach may produce feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. The educator must demonstrate to students the importance of using such a learning strategy. He or she must show students how they will personally benefit from a class in which the student determines much of what makes up the class. This task will not be easy. The goal of the class will need to be expressed again and again so that students maintain their focus. Students will need to be told over and over that the class is about developing critical thinking, problem-solving and social skills -- all of which are necessary to function in the real world.

The educator will begin by giving students examples of what he/she means by critical thinking, problem-solving and social skills. For example, a recent case in the news, such as ABC vs. Food Lion, could set the stage. The educator could say to the class, "If you were a reporter for ABC and the editor came to you with the idea of hiding a camera in a wig, lying on an application and posing as a deli worker, what would *you* tell the editor?"

The educator could ask the class to break into groups of three and ask the group to assign roles to each member. One member could be the editor, the other two could be reporters. Or, one of the members may choose to be play "devil's advocate" by pretending to be a Food Lion executive. This exercise will be clumsy at first. Students may not know other students and may feel shy or awkward about breaking into small groups.

Since the class is about working conjointly, it is important to establish this point during the first day. To really make things interesting, the educator could ask a couple of practicing journalists to come in and talk about the scenario from their experiences and perspectives. It is important, however, that students be allowed to entertain the problem within a group before being given any other interpretations. Otherwise, students may get the impression that they are to sit back and take in someone else's (the visiting journalist's) viewpoints. This would contradict an open teaching paradigm and would be detrimental to putting an open method to work.

Before asking students to break into groups of three, however, it is important to get the students dialoguing about what they want the course to cover. If the topic is *Beginning Writing and Reporting*, coverage of the course would be limited, of course, to that area. Students may say something like they want to learn how to write and report news. The educator then encourages students to elaborate on that by asking, "What kind

of news do you want to learn to report?" If students do not understand what the educator means, the educator then asks students to grab a newspaper (perhaps the educator brings a few into class) and browse through it very quickly, identifying the kinds of news available. Students will then come up with ideas based on their observations and the class will begin from there.

After the class has broken into groups and has role played, the educator asks all the students who played the journalist's role to raise their hands. These students then are called on to give their point of view in this scenario. What *would* they tell an editor who has just asked them to go undercover and, perhaps, break the law to get a story? Then the educator asks all the "editors" to raise their hands. A discussion ensues, and so on. At the end of the dialogue, the educator explains to the class that this is one type of activity that will be done throughout the class to make it an "open" experience. The educator encourages students to think of other ways, as the class advances, to make the class interesting.[15]

As the class progresses, the educator tries more difficult activities. Students' ideas are always at the heart of these activities. In all the strategies and tools used in the classroom, it is important for the educator to make clear to students how these activities will help prepare them to be better journalists.

As for textbooks and course resources, students will be asked to provide one or two articles they personally find meaningful and helpful. Perhaps the educator can make

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[15] It is important to point out that, normally, the educator will ask the students for immediate feedback concerning an in-class activity. When using this activity for the first day of class, however, the educator will need to consider that students probably will *not* like this method of teaching over the other simply because the closed method is so ingrained in them. It is easier for students to sit back and play the part of spectator. This is why it will take time and reiteration on the educator's part to help students understand the importance of the open method. In other words, how an open classroom will help students will become a theme in itself.

copies of the articles for everyone in the class, or maybe each student could copy their articles for everyone, especially since there will be no textbook to purchase. Students then may be asked to talk about the articles by giving a brief overview and then eliciting dialogue by asking questions.

Students will need to be told that this is not simply an exercise done to complete the course. Rather, the exercise is designed to carry them through *life*. This, again, will need to be reiterated. Students are so accustomed to "check marking" assignments in order to finish a course, often times the relevance of that assignment is lost sight of.

Students should also be challenged to bring in articles that are unique to themselves -- their cultures, religions, experiences and backgrounds. Again, the educator will need to reiterate that part of the class is about learning diverse perspectives. In order to accomplish this goal, students will need to feel comfortable with presenting ideas that may not be congruent with the educator's.

By bringing in literature that is applicable and relevant to themselves, students will not only gain an understanding of other classmates perspectives, they will come to understand themselves to a greater degree.[16] Current belief systems will be tested and redefined. Critical thinking skills will sharpen. Social skills will enhance. Students will leave the class feeling better prepared to deal with life's problems.

The author of this paper has tested many of the instructional tools suggested for an open system of teaching. While teaching undergraduate public speaking at the University California Davis during the 1991-93 school years, the author of this paper found that

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[16] Research indicates that some White students may feel threatened when discussing or examining issues related to cultural or gender diversity (Cohen, Lombard & Pierson, 1992). Educators, therefore, should be sensitive to this problem by informing students of the "absolute necessity of acquiring multicultural knowledge and communication skills if they are going to succeed as professionals in today's -- and tomorrow's -- world" (Martindale, 1993, p. 74).

in-class activities where students were asked to role play, in particular, were appreciated by students much more than class lectures. For example, students were asked to develop a resume and then prepare to role play an interview. A professional human resources individual was brought to the classroom and conducted the interviews. Each of the resumes had been given to the interviewer prior to the interviews so that she could prepare her questions according to the kind of job the student desired. Questions, in this sense, were "real," and were designed to prepare students for a real interview.

The author of this paper received positive feedback from every student who engaged in this activity. Students said they appreciated the opportunity to "practice" an interview with an individual who asked difficult questions. Not only did students leave the class feeling more confident in their interviewing skills, they left the class with a resume in-hand, ready to be used in the real world.

Many other in-class activities, such as the one just mentioned, were experimented with by the author of this paper. In general, students always preferred activities that seemed useful for their lives. Students were, however, somewhat resistant at first to try some of these activities. Being asked to role play in front of peers can be an awkward request. Once students learned how the class worked, and how the assignments benefited them personally, the author of this paper no longer had to ask for volunteers because students volunteered themselves.

It is the opinion of this author that journalism educators will have the same success if they choose to employ activities that put the students needs first and engage students by fostering an open method of teaching.

"Throughout the course, the students should be moving from unexamined perceptions to ideas based on fact, from feeling threatened to becoming empowered, from being familiar with only their own culture to knowing something about others' cultures as well. Ideally, they will someday carry this knowledge with them into their professional work and will help impart this understanding to their readers and viewers."
-- Martindale, 1993

CONCLUSION

Asserting a need for change in journalism education is one thing, defining and bringing about that change is another. To complicate matters, it seems that every time an educator tries to move a little to the left or right of a traditional (closed) teaching model, students, faculty and university administration become uneasy (Doll, 1993).

Another problem with suggesting a change in curriculum is that a lot of authors spend whole volumes telling educators *what* should be taught, but say nothing about *how* to teach it. Even Doll, who has furthered the idea of a post-modern paradigm, went into great detail about *what* the paradigm entails and why it is useful, but failed to adequately tell *how* to implement it.

The author of this paper asserts that successful curriculum restructuring requires a partnership and shared purpose between educators and students. Educators, and learning institutions as a whole, need to be more responsive to students' need to function and be successful in the real world. Too many students leave a college or university without necessary, practical life-skills.

The author of this paper asserts that the closed teaching paradigm is based on the needs of students in the 1920s, and, therefore no longer works for today's and tomorrow's students. An open teaching paradigm teaches students critical thinking, problem-solving, inquiry and social skills so that they may handle real-world decisions and challenges into the 21st Century.

In an open teaching model, the educator assumes the role of guide and supporter, rather than purveyor of information. Every one has a right to be heard and understood in an open classroom, and no one owns the truth. Students are taught that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Rather, there are options and alternatives to be entertained

and explored from different viewpoints. Students are taught that these alternatives provide them with a better, but not a *complete*, understanding of a particular situation. This is how critical thinking and problem solving skills are fostered in the "open" classroom.

Students also are taught to work in groups. Being able to get along with and cooperate with others is essential to "making it" in the real world. Students learn to sympathize with and understand diverse perspectives.

Students also learn about decision-making by role playing. This provides another forum for students to "try on" other roles and perspectives in an effort to challenge their current viewpoint. By playing various roles, students are given the opportunity to see how life as a journalist (or editor, or photojournalist, or . . .) might be.

In this open frame, curriculum becomes process, not *a priori*. Learning and understanding come through dialogue and reflection. Ideas are no longer transmitted from educator to student, but are transformed by dialogue and interaction.

Doll states that the key to being an effective educator and learner is finding the right amount of tension between commitment and contingency. "Such a paradoxical blend becomes key if we are to make our future age better, not poorer, than the one in which we now live" (*Ibid.*).

The author of this paper holds that change can occur within journalism programs if educators will commit themselves to helping students understand themselves. Students need to be challenged to expand their thinking and to *grow* from their educational experience. Students can accomplish this task if educators will help make the learning environment more relevant to the needs of students by using a different system of thinking and teaching -- an open one.

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