Intellectual Pyramiding as Instructional Strategy for Teaching Campus Journalism Skills

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Abstract - Campus publication is like a heterogeneous classroom where students bring multiple perspectives to the informal classroom for budding journalists: diverse backgrounds, learning styles, experiences, and aspirations thus, teacher-advisers/moderators/trainers can no longer assume a one-size-fits-all approach. This study determined the effectiveness of intellectual pyramiding as instructional strategy for teaching campus journalism skills. This sought to find out the methodology of intellectual pyramiding, the different campus journalism skills that are developed, and the effectiveness of the strategy. This employed the descriptive method of research that made use of discourse analysis, qualitative analysis, and performance evaluation. Respondents were student-journalists who passed the qualifying examinations. Data were taken from student-journalists' submitted work which were based from previously-assigned topics. Campus journalism skills were measured using rubrics to evaluate and assess the degree of acquisition of skills. Performance skills were established using

results from campus journalism competitions in the regional and Luzonwide levels. To further quantify and qualify results, data were subjected to average weighted mean. Individual performance was assessed by comparing individual work. Group performance was evaluated using competition results. It is determined that intellectual pyramiding as instructional strategy is effective in developing and enhancing campus journalism skills; it boosts collaborative teaching, and increases students' ability to learn independently.

Keywords - Intellectual pyramiding, instructional strategy, campus journalism

INTRODUCTION

Teaching campus journalism skills is one task a campus paper adviser needs to accomplish when he accepts to become one. When applicants come for apprenticeship, high school campus journalism background or related courses in college, like mass communications or journalism are plus factors. The adviser's job turns into technical adviser. However, when passers in the qualifying examination have limited background, or are creative writers trying technical writing in the said field for the first time, the problem of teaching the basics and training the staff pose interferences. Students bring multiple perspectives: diverse backgrounds, learning styles, experiences, and aspirations thus, advisers can no longer assume the one-size-fits- all approach.

Collaborative teaching and learning becomes a potent tool because it is a reflective practice within a 'safe' environment made up of an accepting and diverse group of people who have a common interest or issue and need to make 'discoveries' or find possible solutions. With share knowledge and authority, the teacher-facilitator's role matches the diverse/heterogeneous groupings of students who may set goals, design learning tasks, and assess/evaluate their own learning, thus, providing all group members to have something to contribute that is of value and can be built upon by everyone in class. In addition, Jeff Golub (1988) pointed out that collaborative learning has as its main feature a structure that allows for student talk: students are supposed

to talk with each other, and it is in this talking that much of the learning occurs." Collaborative learning produces intellectual synergy of many minds coming to bear on a problem, and the social stimulation of mutual engagement in a common endeavor. This mutual exploration, meaning-making, and feedback often leads to better understanding on the part of students, and to the creation of new understandings for all of us.

Various names have been given to this form of teaching, and there are some distinctions among these: cooperative learning, collaborative learning, collective learning, learning communities, peer teaching, peer learning, reciprocal learning, team learning, study circles, study groups, coach coaching and work groups. But all in all, as adapted from Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991), there are three general types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study teams.

Peer teaching must be interactive and student-centered. Following the peer teaching session and the assessment, students are required to individually complete a reflective process which involves: planned collaborative peer teaching session; the assessment process (completed by the tutor, the peer teaching team, and four peer assessors); and an extended written reflective statement by individual students about the peer teaching process, with some reference to assessment of the team, the tutor and the peer assessors. Boud, Cohen and Sampson's (2001) notion of reciprocal peer learning best describes the peer teaching process which involves students learning from and with each other in ways which are mutually beneficial and involve sharing knowledge, ideas and experience between participants. The emphasis is on the learning process, including the emotional support that learners offer each other, as much as the learning itself.

Jeanne Bauwens and Jack J. Hourcade (1997) summarize possible teaching configurations for collaborative teaching. They suggest three approaches to implementing collaborative teaching: team teaching, supportive learning activities, and complementary instruction.

Beckman (1990) and Chickering and Gamson (1991) state students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Researchers report that, regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. Students who work in collaborative groups also appear more satisfied

with their classes. Smith and MacGregor (1992) defines collaborative learning as an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Defined as "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning" (Johnson et al. 1990). Brown, Collins and Fuguid's study (1989) suggested that learning is fundamentally influenced by the context and activity in which it is embedded.

Coach Coaching, another collaborative technique, involves giving hints or cues, providing feedback, redirecting students' efforts, and helping them use a strategy. A major principle of coaching is to provide the right amount of help when students need it, neither too much nor too little so that students retain as much responsibility as possible for their own learning. This also develops interpersonal skills which is as important as the learning itself. The development of social skills in group work, learning to cooperate, is key to high quality group work.

An important factor to consider is assessment. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1990) states that built into cooperative learning work is a regular "group processing," a "debriefing" time where students reflect on how they are doing in order to learn how to become more effective in group learning settings

Both in theory and practice, the most concentrated effort in undergraduate collaborative learning has focused on the teaching of writing. Whitman (1988) mentioned that in recent decades, peer teaching approaches have proliferated in higher education, under many names and structures. The Writing Fellows pioneered by Tori Haring-Smith at Brown University, is a peer teaching approach where upper-division students who are strong writers, after extensive training, are deployed to an undergraduate class. Haring-Smith calls this a "bottom-up approach" sustaining writing-across-the curriculum initiatives, particularly in large classes where many faculty flag at assigning writing because there are simply too many papers to which to respond. The terms **discussion group** and **seminar** refer discussions as processes, both formal and informal, that encourage student dialogue with teachers and with each other. (Christensen et al.,1991; Eble, 1976; McKeachie, 1986; Neff and Weimer, 1989).

Lyn Longaretti, Sally Godinho, Graham Parr and Jeni Wilson notes in their study of the perceptions of first year Bachelor of Teaching (B Teach) students (primary and secondary) and Diploma of Education

students (Dip Ed, secondary) about their peer teaching experiences in the subject, Curriculum and Assessment at the University of Melbourne that peer teaching involves three levels of assessment: teacher assessment, peer and self-assessment that were decided by the staff's determination to improve the quality of the peer teaching 'episodes', demonstrate to students that their involvement in all facets of their learning was considered important, model teaching beliefs about teaching, learning and assessment, and include authentic assessment tasks rather than just simulate or discuss these at a theoretical level.

However, Boud et al. (2001), posts peer teaching problems on some students spent on peer teaching was at the expense of teaching the course content, denoting the value some pre-service teachers still relegate to lecture style teaching. Likewise, group conflict was raised as a concern by a notable number of students because some claimed their group did not have the appropriate cooperative learning skills to work together effectively. Moreover, comments consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the assessment process of peer teaching like difficulty of assessing peers and the fact that assessments could easily be biased and inaccurate. Steve (2001) added that self-assessment sheets showed that students consistently ranked themselves very highly.

FRAMEWORK

Having multiple perspectives, campus journalists create an informal classroom of diverse backgrounds, learning styles, experiences, and aspirations. Therefore, teacher-advisers/moderators/trainers must deviate from one-size-fits-all approach in teaching and training. Intellectual pyramiding, a variation of collaborative teaching and learning, is employed as instructional tool to facilitate acquisition of knowledge and skills in campus paper writing. The adviser, aided by other supplemental sources, provides the fountainhead of cognition and skills and distributes them through a networking process. At the bottom of the pyramid, various assessment methods are employed to determine the validity of the approach. As the bottom group ascends to the next level in the pyramid, new group forms the foundation and receives the skills required. The cycle of intellectual pyramiding continues.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the effectiveness of intellectual pyramiding as instructional strategy for teaching campus journalism skills. Specifically, this included the following objectives: to describe the methodology of intellectual pyramiding; to determine which campus journalism skills are developed by employing intellectual pyramiding; and to assess if intellectual pyramiding is effective as instructional strategy for teaching campus journalism skills.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative analysis. The descriptive research design and discourse analysis were employed to assess outcomes. The research used the weighted mean.

This also employed the following range to determine the level of competencies:

3.25 – 4.00 – excellent
2.49 – 3.24 – good
1.74 – 2.48 – fair
1.00 – 1.74 – needs instruction

Scoring for competition performance is as follows:

1st - 10
2nd - 9
3rd - 8 and . . .
10th - 1

Forty-nine (49) student journalists of The Kingfisher, official campus publication of the Southern Luzon State University, Lucban Main Campus, were employed as respondents. They were bona fide staff of the publication for the period covered by the study, 1st and 2nd semesters AY 2006 – 2007 and 1st and 2nd semesters AY 2007 – 2008.

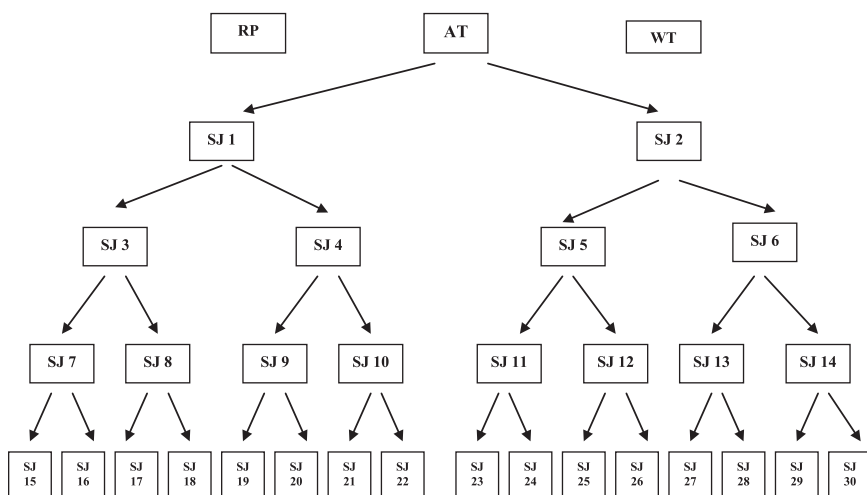# Sample Monitoring Device (combined for all monitors)

	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Collaborative functions	Does not participate in cooperative endeavors.	Does little participation in collaborative endeavors.	Conducts face to face collaboration for teaching and learning skills.	Able to lead a house for collaborative teaching.	
Share Information	Does not relay any information to teammates.	Relays very little information and only some relates to the topic and skills.	Relays some basic information and most relates to the topics and skills.	Relays a great deal of information and all relates to the topic and skills.	
Punctuality	Does not hand in any assignments.	Hands in most assignments late.	Hands in most assignments on time.	Hands in all assignments on time.	
Responsibility	Does not perform any duties of assigned team role.	Performs very little duties.	Performs nearly all duties.	Performs all duties of assigned team role.	
Responsibility as to own learning	Does not exhibit enhancement of ownership of the teaching and learning process.	Exhibits little enhancement of ownership of the teaching and learning process.	Exhibits some enhancement of ownership of the teaching and learning process.	Exhibits total enhancement of ownership of the teaching and learning process.	
Enhanced motivation	Does not show learning process and learning product.	Shows little learning process and learning product.	Shows nearly all learning process and learning product.	Shows all learning process and learning products.	

Improved cognition and social outcomes in learning	Does not display deeper level or higher-order thinking skills.	Displays little deeper level or higher-order thinking skills.	Displays some deeper level or higher-order thinking skills.	Displays outstanding deeper level or higher-order thinking skills.	

Intellectual pyramiding was employed in the teaching of campus journalism skills to campus paper trainees. Each leader of a level assessed and evaluated members of the group to determine the development of every member of the house. Each leader also determines the strengths and weaknesses of every individual within the group. Every individual member of the pyramid was evaluated by house leaders through performance and rubrics. At the end of a publication cycle, the staff members were evaluated by designated section editors as to their campus paper competencies. Added to the measure of assessment is the number of assignments completed and published. Moreover, performance in the tertiary campus paper competitions served as measure of skills acquisition.

In addition, an informal interview set in a Likert-scale type of questionnaire was administered to measure the effectiveness of the scheme. Data from the interviews were analyzed according to three broad categories: process, product and people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

AT – Adviser-Trainer
TW – Training/Workshops
RP – Resource Persons
SJ – student journalist

Figure. 1 Intellectual Pyramiding Model

Below is a list of the Activity Model.
1. Setting goals.
2. Designing learning tasks and monitoring measures.
3. Creating group tasks that require interdependence, division of labor, and formulation of tasks.
4. Making students perceive that individual tasks are integral to the group objectives and each one has individual responsibility for learning.
5. Creating tasks that fit each student's skills and abilities.
6. Restructuring tasks so that each group member makes an equal contribution.
7. Initiating interactions.
8. Monitoring and assessment.

Table 1. Campus journalism skills developed
using intellectual pyramiding

Campus Journalism Skills	Press Conferences		
	AY 2007	AY 2008	1st Sem. 2009
Desk Top Publishing	8	9	10
Editorial Writing	9	7	14
Newswriting	12	29	12
Development Communications	12	23	17
Feature Writing	9	19	5
Sports Writing	10	16	14
Layouting	3	17	23
Graphics	17	26	9
Literary Writing	7	37	8
Over-all	8	19	7
TOTAL	95	202	119

Table 1 presents the campus journalism skills developed and enhanced using intellectual pyramiding. The first column indicates the different skills under campus journalism which are tested during regional and Luzonwide press conferences at tertiary level among colleges and universities. The total points generated every academic year records a steady increase in performance. The 3rd column is only half of the current academic year.

Table 2 presents the effectiveness of using intellectual pyramiding assessing individual student journalist's skills in campus journalism.

The names written are twenty-three (23) of the forty-nine (49) student journalists who are taught campus journalism skills under the intellectual pyramiding scheme. Twenty-five (25) student journalists have already participated in regional and Luzonwide press conferences and twenty-three (23) of them have won.ed. Records reveal the increase in performance from five tertiary conferences held.

Table 2. Effective of using intellectual pyramiding for campus journalism skills

Student Journalists	Regional Press Conferences		
	AY 2007	AY 2008	1st Sem. 2009
Alvin Jabrica	20	15	2
Honey Mae Conteres	8	9	
Princess Cartherine Pabellano	20	12	
Leoben Miel		9	
Jan Lorie Robiel	22	25	
Maria Ellaine Saberola		10	10
Honey Mae Conteres		10	
Maria Lourdes Urgelles	7	23	
Reanne Maaliw	10	16	37
Essex Vladimir Samaniego	8	9	
William Lingon	21	3	
Aaron Orijuela	17		31
Cesar Arenas Jr.	9		
Shayne Pionilla	1		
Alteza Loren Desamparado			16
Kristinne Joy Galeon			4
Leoben Miel			6
Noland Landicho			21
Mark Louie Pardines			6
Leofoldo Vargas			15
Junius Free Fontamillas			6
Carlo Katigbak			19
Herlene Juniosa			10
TOTAL	143	150	183

Table 3. Assessment of intellectual pyramiding based
from monitoring devices

Intellectual Pyramiding Goals	Monitoring Devices in Percentage		
	Interview by AT	Editor In Chief	Peer
Collaboration	98.20	95.00	96.40
Communication Skills	90.00	91.25	80.00
Work as Team Member	95.00	92.00	90.00
Active Involvement in Learning Process	99.00	95.00	90.00
TOTAL	95.55	93.31	89.1

Table 3 presents the monitoring device assessment of student journalists' performance after subjecting them in intellectual pyramiding.

The records reveal that student journalists achieved the set goals of intellectual pyramiding based from the interview of the adviser/trainer of group leaders, editor in chief, and one student journalist from every house (group). The generated percentage from each device meets the required number to believe that the scheme worked well.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, it is revealed that: Intellectual pyramiding is a teaching and learning strategy that employs collaborative and peer teaching approaches in a pyramidal network scheme.

Intellectual pyramiding develops all aspects of campus journalism. Intellectual pyramiding is an effective instructional strategy for teaching campus journalism skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions, the researcher made the following recommendations:

Replicate the scheme using a formal classroom setting and academic subjects as cognitive and psychomotor objectives;

1. Devise a more comprehensive monitoring devise to validate outcomes;
2. Design specific lessons for teaching tasks to facilitate teaching-learning process; and
3. Include class time for group meetings with assessment of individual performance as key issue.

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