Creating data-savvy journalists

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1 How we started

2012

Bite-size chunks of data journalism (mostly infographics), are introduced in our curriculum. With input from our research group, currently named <u>Quality</u> <u>Journalism in Digital Transition</u>.

2014

Two major research outcomes are implemented in our revised <u>Minor Data Visualisation & Infographics</u>:

<1> data journalism works best in an interdisciplinary team with different (journalistic) skills <2> readers find it important that text, images and

<2> readers find it important that text, images and numbers are all clearly related to each other.

>> We notice there is a high demand in the field for data-savvy journalists. We therefore, with assistance from the research group and lessons learned from the minor, introduce data research classes in our new curriculum.



2017

Introduction of our new curriculum. In our second year all students take compulsory data research classes. Students have to:

<1> produce their own data visualisation. It needs to be an insightful addition to their multimedia story

<2> justify and explain their use of the data and they way it is visualised in a short research report that accompanies the multimedia story.

2018

Elective data journalism course in the upper years (3 and 4) for students who want to specialise in data. It includes basic programming and scraping.

>> During the data classes lecturers notice an uptick in students with maths anxiety. This is problematic. Data is everywhere. So, ideally, every student who graduates at our School should not shun a story that involves data – it is an integral part of the profession.



2019

We are granted a <u>Comenius Teaching Fellowship</u> to further investigate:

<1> how we can tackle maths anxiety in journalism students

<2> how to prepare all our students for the (tough) job ahead: a media reality in which data are unavoidable.

For a full year a group of students, with different levels of math anxiety, took part in workshops, bootcamps, guest lectures, online tests and more.

Before, during and after these sessions all students are interviewed. We asked them about the teaching methods used, the assignments, and at what point their anxiety set in.



2. What we discovered

<1> Pay attention to any display of math's anxiety in the classroom. Immediately tackle the problem, start a short conversation in which you give tangible examples of numbers and data in daily life (the price of student housing, social media likes, election results). Nudge them towards helpful sources, in our case this is a Canvas page* kept up to date by our Data Journalism coordinator.

<2> Bare numbers are a deterrent. Always provide a journalistic context. Ideally any data assignment the student produces is a journalistic production.

Ensure that while students are working on their production they can get to the end result taking small, successful, steps. For example, when they see how easy it is to create a visualisation, they quickly become more enthusiastic.

<*> The Canvas page includes tools, books and websites that the students in the project approve of. There are diagnostic tests for theory (a 'test yourself' to see where you stand), hand-outs, and tutorials.



<3> Make sure that the data lecturers are role models who are able to coach. While coaching, guide the student towards working independently. In addition, find data-savvy students to become a buddy for the student struggling to – for example - optimize a visualisation. They are keen to show tips and tricks.

<4> Show students the path you've set out for them within the curriculum. In our case: basics in year 1, more in-depth in year 2 (with 'heavy' coaching and coaching 'on demand') and independently using more complex data in the upper years. A student simply can't get away without using data in their stories (so you better get going... nudge, nudge).



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3 Where we are going

	First Year	Second Year - first period	Second Year - second period	Third or Fourth Year	Minor Datavisualisations &
Subject	Data research basics	Data-research advanced	Data storytelling	Data journalism production	Infographics + Master Data
Course	Audiovisual story telling	Slow: in-depth news report	Slow: multimedia production	Workshops Specialisation	Driven Design
Focus	What are data (qualitative/ quantitative), how do you collect data, where can you find data (intro Dutch statistical buro),	Introduction to statistics and how they work (or how some make them work),		Within a specialised area the	
	how can you use data in a story, how can you interpret data.	substantiate how and why you use data in	What is data storytelling, how to tell	student now combines all	
	Basic Excel tutorial. Toolbox with self-help tools and	a story, understanding and working with	a story using data, how to visualise	previously acquired skills in	Deepening and broadening
	tutorials. Understanding data is a part of our profession.	complex datasets, finding stories in data	data	interdisciplinary teams	(theoretical) knowledge
Tools	Dear Data Sprint (www.dear-data.com/theproject); Local		AESOP Story Engine		
	Focus (www.localfocus.nl)	CBS Statline	(https://aesopstoryengine.com/)	Customised.	
Extra	Creating/using pivot tables in Excel	Programming/ scraping	Programming/ scraping	International databases	
			The multimedia production includes a	Portfolio includes an	
			data visualisation and data research	independently produced	
Exam		The in-depth news report includes complex	report that justifies and explains the	and complex data	
	Portfolio includes an explainer video with data collected by	data research. The student receives heavy	use of the data. The student gets	production with a data	
	the student	coaching.	coaching on the go.	research report.	

Get (or stay) in touch!

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