

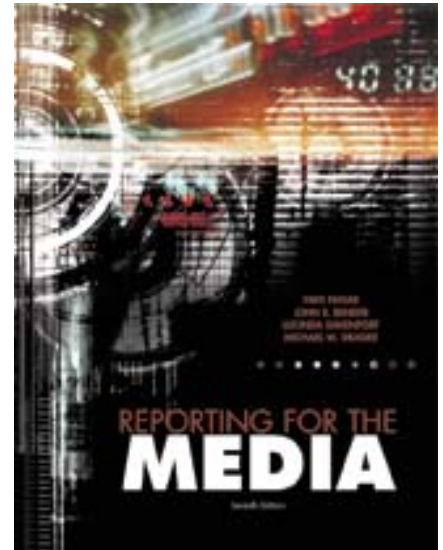


# American Communication Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1, Fall 2001

## Reporting for the Media

[Fred Fedler](#), [John R. Bender](#), [Lucinda Davenport](#),  
and [Michael W. Drager](#)  
[Harcourt College Publishers](#)  
Fort Worth, TX. (2001)



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Any book that has gone through six successful runs and is out in a seventh edition is evidently doing something right. The first edition, which was first published by Fedler in 1973, is now nearing its 30th anniversary as a book that has trained thousands of students interested in writing for the mass (print) media.

The text is for teaching writing and is a practical treatise on the “nuts-and-bolts” of the art of telling the story of human history. The authors spend some time with the “why” of writing, placing it in a broader context of human discourse. However, the real purpose is the “what” and the “how to” of placing thought as symbol on a page. The text is approximately sixty percent explanatory content and forty percent exercises for student work. Special features include “The Writing Coach,” “Checklists,” and “Summary Tips.” It is a text that allows for students to read the material and then practice the craft – and – then tear out and turn in the assignments for grading and evaluation. Actually, it is a rather nice document for those teaching writing and production courses who rely upon both theory and practice to guide both them and their students.

For those students desiring more of the theoretical underpinnings of the science and art of journalism, an excellent source list covers most if not all of the topics related to writing in practical, theoretical and philosophical terms.

Each of the authors is trained and experienced primarily in print journalism and that is the focus of the text. Although the title indicates “reporting for the media,” most of the content is print in its orientation. Very little time is spent with the nuances between the print and electronic journalistic endeavor. The electronic technologies require a different sort of writing style and the book does not address adequately the wide range of writing needed for a variety of new mediums of communication. Additionally, little time is spent considering the Internet and not a lot of material covers broadcast writing. The text seems to be “old school” journalism at the core, but seeking a more inclusive audience by a generic title. For example, the first seventeen chapters deal primarily with print journalism and then chapter eighteen (all of 24 pages) discusses writing for broadcasting. The differences between print and electronic forms of “writing for media” are more substantive than a small slice of a very large text book.

An element which is not discussed well enough is the impact of computer technology on the practice of writing. Not only in the practical sense of using a keyboard, but, more importantly, using the Internet for gathering data, interacting with sources, and distributing the journalist's work.

A few sections give the book greater depth and a context out of which journalists operate. Specifically, those sections introduce students to ethical considerations of a practicing journalist, a social context of law out of which a journalist works and a section of careers available to one who aspires to a career in telling the stories of a culture and who is able to master the ability of writing. Any attempt at allowing the next generation of journalists to write is wonderful and any text which challenges students to think philosophically and theoretically about their practice is of great value importance in their training.

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