

PREPARATION TIME: 30'

TEACHING TIME: 1 X 60'

ABSTRACT

This learning scenario introduces the concept of the ethics of journalism, that is, ethical principles and good practices that the responsible journalism rests upon. The discussion of the ethics of journalism relies chiefly on the *Code of Ethics* by the international Society of Professional Journalists. As described by this code, the four pillars of ethical journalism can be summarized as follows:

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT - ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

ACT INDEPENDENTLY - the highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.

BE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT - means taking responsibility for one's work and explaining one's decisions to the public.

MINIMIZE HARM - treat sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.

KEYWORDS

*Ethics, Journalism,
Morality, Accountability,
Transparency*

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- *Lesson on the Ethics of Journalism from mediactiveyouth.net*
- *Society of Professional Journalists **Code of Ethics** is one of the most influential and clearest expressions of ethical standards in journalism*
- *Their Code of Ethics is available [here](#)*
- *What is ethics? – short YouTube video*

LESSON AIM

The aim of the lesson is for students to understand the huge importance of ethical implications and ethics in and of journalism, and grasp that journalistic writing and reporting bares huge responsibility and has a significant social role, and thus need to abide to certain professional standards that rest on some ethical premises.

LESSON OUTCOME

Students will become familiar to the basic ethical principles of journalism, and understand why they are important; they will understand better the basic model

of communication and communication functions. They will grasp that journalistic writing and reporting bares huge responsibility and has a significant social role, and thus need to abide to certain professional standards that rest on some ethical premises.

LESSON IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Min 1-5 Warming-up: An effective way of involving participants and setting common expectations about what they will learn is to ask a few preliminary questions on the subject. The educator introduces the topic and class contents, prepares PowerPoint/Prezi presentation and Canvas app; various teaching methods: lecturing, discussion, self-reflection.

5-55 Collaborative learning – Use of web resources as learning material and collaborative learning – in the first 10 minutes participants talk about ethics and morality as concepts. The educator plays a short 90 second video about ethics, and discusses it with participants. In the following 10 minutes provides an example of a situation where, faced with a dilemma, you need to make the right choice. This aids the participants grasp the concept of ethics and think about right and wrong.

In the next 20 minutes, journalism ethics is introduced. The educator discusses the main principles with participants:

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT - Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information

ACT INDEPENDENTLY - The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public;

BE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT - means taking responsibility for one's work and explaining one's decisions to the public;

MINIMIZE HARM - treat sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.

In the last 10 minutes, the educator illustrates the role of journalism by mentioning the Watergate affair where the investigative writing of two young

Washington Post journalists led to the impeachment of the most powerful man in the world, Nixon, and the Snowden case – as he secretly contacted the Guardian journalists and they protected him.

Conclusion: Make a short summary of the lesson and ask a couple of questions which help underlying the most important messages you would like to give.

MATERIALS / TOOLS

Video projector, laptop/desktop, Internet connection, Moodle!

PowerPoint/Prezi presentation which is enriched with visual materials (images and video clips) and research based factual information.