

HANDOUT 7 EXAMPLE OF DIARIES

Introduction

The following two examples of diaries were written as part of an intensive three-day course at the University of Education, Freiburg, Germany. The course was delivered in April 2005 to 20 second and third year students and was titled 'Radio/Audio production in teaching: an introduction to radio journalism and media education theory'. The half-day session covered a general introduction, and an introduction to doing an interview and, like the rest of the course, integrated sessions of theory, instruction, exercises and reflection. The University specializes in educational theory and practice and students aim to qualify as teachers, adult educators and media trainers.

Students were assigned the daily task of recording their personal impressions and individual progress in a diary. These two examples are very complimentary to the lecturer, but the purpose of keeping the diary we ask you to keep is not to give feedback to the training team – however positive that might be - but to aid your own reflection and record your progress through the course.

The diary was introduced by the teacher as follows: please document your records of the day and describe your impressions of the respective course unit(s). Please make your diary entries every day after the course. In writing the diary, we would like you to compose an essay every day consisting of your thoughts and feelings and reflections about the course you are taking part in rather than to answer questions. What counts are your impressions, there is no "right" or "wrong" response. The aspects mentioned below are meant to give you some hints of what to tackle, they are not a schedule! Please feel free to address other aspects and topics which have been important for you.

Aspects which could be taken into account

- What were most important and interesting parts of the course for me today (highlights)? Why?
- What did I not like so much? Why?
- What difficulties/problems did I have to face today?
- How did I handle/solve those difficulties/problems?
- What was my greatest success in learning today? Why?

Schedule and structure of the course today:

- How did I like it?
- What did I like/dislike in detail? Why?
- What could and/or should be changed? Why?

Cooperation within the course:

- How did I like it? Why?
- What could or should be changed/improved?

And most important:

- everything else I regard as important to me and for me:

(1) Diary of CK

Day 1

The exercises have been very interesting for me, because normally you really never get the chance to interview somebody. As I couldn't join the course before noon I feel sorry to have missed the theoretical input, strategies and know-how which is important in preparing for a proper interview. However, while waiting to do my interview, I went through the handouts I found lying around, and I got a glimpse of the theory of doing interviews. Because of what I learned that way that my attention was drawn to things I presumably wouldn't have noticed as much without the specific knowledge, for example, the difference between open and closed questions etc.... The handouts are very interesting and in any case I will download them and study them thoroughly.

Doing my own interview in the beginning I had the difficulty of being nervous, simply because it was an unaccustomed situation to direct questions with a mike in hand. In the course of the interview, however, it became more and more easy and it was more and more fun.

The composition of the seminar group is harmonious and in my opinion works well. There is a good atmosphere in which you can work successfully. I am looking forward to the next two days!

Day 2

Referring to the structure of the course I liked the fact that there was not a big block of theory and another big block of exercises, but that it was structured in smaller modules thus providing variation.

The practical exercises were very interesting. It was very exciting to see how many different versions you can compose based on the same text and how many different effects the intonation and chosen vocabulary can provoke. However it was exhausting to pay the same concentrated attention while listening to all of the nineteen versions of the exercise.

The session on theory was very interesting. For me it was especially exciting to learn how to compose packages and how one uses or should use parts of the original interview in a package. I liked the examples (radio productions) for listening very much, because you understand the theory better while analysing examples. In the course of this work you notice how different are the impressions such productions make on people.

Day 3

The course was really great and I learnt very much (preparing and doing interviews, packages, information about radio). Today I liked the two exercises very much, especially as they lightened up the afternoon sessions. Composing the package I was a bit under time pressure, but on the other hand that was also really good, because that way you were forced not to lose too much time in discussion.

In the course of the three days I personally noticed that I gained more and more self-confidence in speaking into the microphone.

You really made the course eventful and interesting. Thank you very much!

(2) Diary of RK

Day 1

An intensive course (full time for 3 days) which I always felt to be very effective, concentrating on the topic of radio production which interests me in very much. My expectations today were fully satisfied. Certainly I already knew about some of the topics of the introduction because I had attended other seminars before and so had prior knowledge. However, many new ideas were added today. One of the most positive aspects of intensive courses also occurred: the small group of participants I was in, which was formed at the start, had, by the end of the day, become much more open because of the exercises which were done in small groups.

To get on to exercises very soon was very positive for me, since, due to the short preparation time, the focus was not too much concentrated on the quality of content! I expect more, however, in the next sessions when we work on different journalistic ways of presenting content, because today I had the impression that the reaction towards one of the interviews played for discussion – from the public radio - was very different. I was especially happy about the positive reactions to that interview, because you often get the impression that in many cases only the radio stations with very poor news bulletins are listened to.

For me, the difficulty in recording today was not so much speaking into the microphone but the fact that I've never before recorded something with so little time for preparation and not having defined the exact target group beforehand. The outcome, however, was surprisingly positive.

Because the group seems to get on well and, not least, because of the lively, refreshing manner of the lecturer I am confident that these three days will extend my interest in the topic.

Day 2

The session on theory today was very important for me. Backgrounds of radio and the radio system are very interesting to me and it is a pity that you normally learn very little about it. In most cases the topics are television or newspapers, which are

talked about as examples for the media. That is why I felt that the session on the history of radio was too short (I know that in the course of this seminar more was not possible). The information offered, however, was very informative. A lot of things I knew before, however, I never reflected on them in such a context (for example the reason for paying the normally much hated licence fee for public radio).

The exercises of course have been great fun for me and were profitable for my own reflection, especially because one's own text composed was read out.

The second part, the afternoon, was again very informative, because the journalistic techniques which are the backbones of every radio production often are not so transparent and you often do not reflect upon them. That is why the many listening examples of different radio stations presented by the teacher were so important.

When listened to and analysed in their effects those examples make clear to you a lot of correlations (editing, moderation etc.).

For me personally one "learning success" or inspiration was that radio above all is also journalism: I hadn't seen this before. Probably because of my own listening habits radio has been more drama, audio book, i.e. literature, classical music etc. I hadn't thought much about the technical work in the background as opposed to the different voices of the speakers. Probably that has something to do with "being a child of your time" and with seeing many things in a completely non-political way. This course, however, raised my "journalistic interest" while listening to the radio, although it will often be productions about literature or a reading which make me listen to the radio. But in school teaching especially journalism will be an important subject when talking about and producing radio.

The course as a whole – even though it is not yet finished - has attracted me very much and has wakened many interests.

Day 3

I would have been especially interested in editing the package. It was a pity but that was not possible within these limited three days. The outcomes of the packages composed were very good and the subjectivity underlying every production was very interesting.

The "working together" in the small group today, the last day, has turned out to be best yet. Because of the last two days it was not a problem at all to make connections with teaching methods and school situations. The ideas were very original and inspiring and encourage one to put them into practice.

All in all you today could feel the results of the first two days of the course for oneself and for the group. One of the best courses I have attended!