

Students' Reflections from a Media Literacy and Production Approach to Unam Echo: An Online Training Publication

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ABSTRACT--- *In this paper we describe the students' experiences in the implementation of the first online newspaper, UNAM Echo, produced and managed by media studies. This rewarding experience is in sync with the concept of media literacy as espoused by Brown (1998) and Zettl (1998) which has come to embrace production of traditional and new media content and away from its earlier fixation with critical analysis and appreciation of literary works and effective communication.*

Keywords--- Media Literacy, Training Publication, UNAM Echo, Namibia

1. INTRODUCTION

The plans to establish a training publication for the Media Section of the Department of Information and Communication Studies, University of Namibia [UNAM) kicked off with students of the 2013/2014 Management and Marketing of the Media module. They came up with a blueprint covering four areas: Editorial, design and production, marketing and advertising as well as management. The 2014/2015 class implemented the blueprint with the production of the first edition of the online newspaper *UNAM Echo* in April 2015 (see appendix - photographs 1 and 2). Since then the paper has been produced as a monthly during the semester and only goes on hiatus during the semester breaks.

Students are allocated beats which enables the paper cover the main campus and all twelve UNAM campuses. Other students market the newspaper, build buzz and engagement in the paper's online properties covering Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. In addition to covering the UNAM campuses, the paper carries news, lifestyle, devotional, sports, cartoons, gossip, features and opinions as well as regular columns such as *The Coffee Table* and *The Loud Mouth* etc.

Students gain experience in the following areas: Writing (features, news, opinion pieces etc.), photography, building online engagement and buzz, sub-editing, advertising, public relations and marketing, design, editing, ethics, interviewing, time management, teamwork etc. This is in sync with the concept of media literacy which has come to embrace production of traditional and new media content and away from its earlier fixation with critical analysis and appreciation of literary works and effective communication (Brown, 1998; Zettl, 1998).

Brown (1998:46) notes that some of the media projects transmit information and principles, some are participatory leading to discovery and realizations, most deal with concepts and reflective reasoning while many involve learning 'to emulate professional procedures and production practices to understand how media products are constructed and factors influencing them'. The production perspective usually takes expressive – when students can exhibit their creativity, and vocational forms – which would foster the growth of the media and communication industry with students picking up valuable skills; but the criticism here is that instead of a critical perspective, students simply ape industry production and practice (Hobbs, 1998).

But other scholars argue that the effort involved in production such as greater mental processing aids comprehension and makes for greater pedagogical effectiveness (Banerjee & Greene, 2006; Jeung, Cho & Hwang 2012). Banerjee and Greene (2006) document the advantages of the production component of media literacy: Assists in developing a critical understanding of the media, equips students with production skills and abilities, and fosters self-

esteem and expressiveness. It also unleashes the power of technology and fosters in students critical inquiry, self-reflection and creative expression (Hobbs, 1998).

The present study sought to test these advantages of the production component of media literacy by asking students who were responsible for managing and marketing the newspaper what they gained from this effort. The study, therefore, privileges the media literacy and production approach which involves creating content.

The rest of the paper examines the extant literature on media literacy, documents the research design, findings and conclusions as well as recommendations with emphasis on the pedagogical implications of the study.

Media Literacy

The concept of media literacy is contested from its definition to approaches (Brown, 1998; Christ & Potter, 1998; Hobbs, 1998; Jeung, Cho & Hwang, 2012; Meyrowitz, 1998). Hobbs (1998) details these to include media and health professionals who view the concept as a tool that negates the positive media portrayals of harmful substances on attitude and behaviour; it is used to expose students to the negative component of the commercial mass media system and; as different ways of analysing and being critical of media offerings. There are also differences of opinion on definition, classification, conceptual and application issues in media literacy (see Christ & Potter, 1998 for a review).

However, a common thread running through the various perspectives are specific knowledge and skills that aids understanding of the media and the uses of the media, fostering critical inquiry and analysis, awareness of media messages and their effect on attitude and behaviour, understanding of the deeper and more important meaning of media messages as well as media production skills (Jeung, Cho & Hwang 2012; Semali, 2006; Wan & Gut, 2008).

Greater interest in media literacy has been informed by the central role of the media and new media in our lives and the possibility of its misuse (Considine, Horton & Moorman, 2009; Cooper, 2011; Lin, Li, Deng & Lee, 2013; Wan & Gut, 2008). The media is arguably the dominant force that influences our outlook, our relationship with others and is critical in engendering a common culture (Carr, 2011). Carr (2011) argues that media literacy assists the cause of democracy greatly by conferring political literacy on citizens. Media literacy is also important in the development of informed and responsible citizens (Considine, Horton & Moorman, 2009).

However, if the media were neutral and value free, the urgent need for media literacy would not have arisen (Wan & Gut, 2008). For instance, in the context of climate change, climate deniers' sophisticated media use is said to have over-amplified their voice and delayed policy and action (Cooper, 2011). Another example is Western cultural products which have broad appeal among youths that have been used to shelter racism, sexism, classism and homophobia (Carr, 2011). However 'perceptual violence of a series of quick zooms and high-volume sounds' in a cartoon may go undetected even though its impact may be the same as sleek advertising messages meant to manipulate attitudes and choices (Zetl, 1998:83).

Constructivist media decoding has thus been used in classrooms to separate the wheat from the chaff (Sperry, 2012). This being the ideology that underlies the most basic of media literacy education – 'teaching students to question textual authority and to use reasoning to reach autonomous decisions.' (Hobbs, 1998: 23). Zetl (1998) argues that contextual media aesthetics should form the foundation of media literacy as it enables a fuller understanding of the media and its messages. And media literacy interventions are indeed meant to counter these harmful messages by impacting media-related beliefs and attitudes thus preventing risky behaviours (Jeung, Cho & Hwang, 2012).

Classification of Media Literacy

In addition to critical analysis and appreciation of media and their various forms, media literacy also embraces production of traditional and new media contents (Brown, 1998; Morrow, 1980; Wan & Gut, 2008; Zetl, 1998). Zetl (1998) refers to this as reading or decoding media messages and writing or encoding them.

Scholars acknowledge that literacy has become fluid having moved from the classic literacy of reading and writing to embrace audio visual (electronic media), digital (digital media) and now comprehensive - embracing internet and web 2.0 (Lin, Li, Deng & Lee, 2013). The latter with its focus on social communication and ideology has also being characterised as 'expanded literacy' (Lin, Li, Deng & Lee, 2013:161).

Meyrowitz (1998) uses three distinct metaphors to outline the typology of multiple media literacies: Media content literacy, media grammar literacy and medium literacy. Media content literacy is the most common conception of the media and is the locus of debates focussing on messages and its effects; media grammar literacy has to do with production values that interact with content to shape attitudes and perceptions while medium literacy is fixed features of each medium which impacts the nature and type of communication.

Paillotiet, Semali, Rodenberg, Giles and Macaul (2000:218) distinguish between media literacy activities and actions. They characterise the former as exercises that aids students' understanding of concepts through class discussions, production of media artefacts, simulation exercises etc. while the latter involves translating these learned concepts into practice that would impact them and others and these may take forms such as

personal growth; informed decision making; working to rectify unjust social conditions through community service; or writing to the local radio station, TV station, or local newspaper to express an opinion or objections to a bad situation. It might be generation of new texts and knowledge taught to others, or changes in beliefs, thought, and actions - like the increasingly frequent, astute student comments about media texts....

They cite as examples public service announcements and parodies of alcohol and tobacco advertisements produced by their students that challenged their peers to think critically about issues while inviting them to make changes in their outlook and lives.

This is, of course, part of what media literacy strives to accomplish in that it ‘advocates an understanding of various kinds of mass media available in contemporary society, an identification of the functions of the media, and an engagement that allows students to critically and consciously examine media messages’ (Banerjee & Greene, 2006:774). The behaviour change component, in their view, can take two approaches: One is analysis of tobacco messages, which was their case study, while the second is production of refutational arguments to pro-tobacco messages which would aid counter-persuasion.

Scholars argue that media literacy analysis approach uncovers the meaning in media messages that are directed at audiences with shared values and experiences, thus media literacy training is intended to assist in analysing and critiquing media outputs (Banerjee & Greene, 2006). At its core is asking hard questions about source, purpose and effects of media messages (Hinchey, 2003).

Production Approach to media Literacy

The other approach to media literacy education is applying the production approach to creating media contents as this helps in proper understanding of the workings of the media (Banerjee & Greene, 2006) and has increasingly become central to the concept (Hobbs, 1998). Scholars share the view that production unleashes the power of technology and fosters in students critical inquiry, self-reflection and creative expression (Hobbs, 1998).

Hobbs (1998:20) also notes that educators are of the view that vocational production instils in students the values of ‘collaborative teamwork, the growth of media production as an industry, and the ways in which many nontraditional learners may excel in tasks related to visual thinking, planning, editing, performing, or directing’.

There is broad agreement surrounding the deployment of this approach to students learning. It is said to foster greater enthusiasm, involvement and active class participation (Banerjee & Greene, 2006) as well as assisting students learn about themselves and the media system (Hobbs, 1998). It also fosters in students a proper understanding of the process of media production while engendering self-expression and self-esteem (Banerjee & Greene, 2006).

Hobbs (2005) documents a case study involving documentary production by teens in which they draw from their own experiences to tackle community issues and as a result the experience provided opportunities for personal growth and intellectual development in addition to picking up documentary production skills.

But question have also been raised about the value of the production component of media literacy. Most of the criticism centre on the lower education grade level primarily because it is felt that it is a distraction from the more critical skills of reading and writing (Hobbs, 1998). She also documents other criticisms which have relevance to University-level media and communication programmes which involves aping current professional practice, warts and all, without adding much value.

The present study thus set out to test the claims of the production component of media literacy by posing the following questions:

1. How did involvement in *UNAM Echo* equip students with production skills and abilities?
2. Does involvement in every stage of production, management and marketing of the paper foster critical understanding of the media, self-esteem and expressiveness among students?
3. Does engagement in the production of *UNAM Echo* foster enthusiasm, involvement, self-reflection and teamwork abilities?
4. Do students simply copy legacy media practice or do they chart a different path?
5. How did students’ involvement in *UNAM Echo* provide avenues for personal growth and intellectual development?
6. Does involvement in *UNAM Echo* unleash the power of technology and impact positively students’ creative expression?

2. METHODOLOGY

The study uses the interpretive paradigm in that it attempts to ‘understand how people in everyday natural settings create meanings and interpret the events of their world’ through the use of commonalities or themes derived from the study respondents’ views (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006:113). Being a qualitative study, it offered an opportunity to capture explanation in respondent’s own words while surfacing insights, unique logics and reasoning (Treadwell. 2014) about the area being investigated. The population of the study was the first cohort of students in the Management and Marketing of the Media module who had produced the first five editions of *UNAM Echo*. The 59 students offering the module were told to write down their reflections on their involvement and learning from the project. Their reports constitute the findings in the next section. The research proposal and instrument served at the University of Namibia Research and Publication Committee which issued an ethical clearance certificate that served as a basis for conducting the study.

3. FINDINGS

Most of the students felt that being part of *UNAM Echo* was very beneficial from the standpoint of journalism experience and better preparing them for the industry. A respondent remarked that it helped him to hone his journalism skills in addition to providing a platform that fostered teamwork skills and abilities. Another respondent felt that the experience of gathering and writing news stories assisted her in contacting and engaging with news sources thus enhancing her networking skills. She also said that the experience also made her interested in writing; a skill that she was not initially 'keen' on acquiring but now she is 'willing to do more writings.'

Still on improved communication and writing, another respondent said 'I learnt a great deal through conducting and searching for these stories and I would say my communication as well as writing skills vastly improved.' The same respondent argued for the continuation of the initiative:

I would say that this is a great way to get fourth-year students to practice what they are being taught as this also serves as a practical. When you are being lectured about the styles of writing, or the way you approach a possible interviewee, the first thing you wonder is, 'how am I actually going to do this?' This helped us put it into practice and I think it should become part of the course for every fourth year [student].

One student noted that a skill she picked up was the ability to 'write informative and original articles.' Another said being an introvert it was a challenge getting out of her 'shell' to speak to news sources but that being part of the reportorial team, she 'learnt to talk to people without being shy, to state my case and to follow up if no response was given.' Still another student noted that

I learned how to stick to deadlines and to make sure that all work is submitted on time to allow the editor and sub-editors time to review the work and ensure all grammar, spelling and fact checking is done and corrected if need be.

Another student described the process as being 'one of the best learning experience' that has given herself and her colleagues 'a good and stable foundation'.

Students also gained experience in the area of marketing. They came up with a 'marketing plan' said a respondent. She also said that in terms of implementation they amongst others 'booked an interview for the [marketing] team at UNAM Radio [the campus radio station] which enabled our team to have a platform where they could elaborate more about the publication.' They sent announcement about editions of the paper to the UNAM eLearning portal to sensitise students and made sure that the announcements were indeed featured. They also produced the advert rates for the paper. All in all, she felt that this was an avenue to put into practice what she had learnt in her corporate communication modules. Another respondent noted that they were able to 'build hype and anticipation' for the inaugural edition which was produced in April 2015.

A student who was involved in design, said that she digitalized the publication's logo; a duty she felt was 'exciting'. She also shared her thoughts on the process; particularly the work that went into the first edition 'at first I was overwhelmed at the responsibility of putting together an entire publication, this was something I had done only once before.' But by the second and subsequent edition things were easy because there was already a 'template'. So much so that

by the fourth issue I had gained so much knowledge on making it easy to compile the publication and make it look great. I, at this point, was spending less time putting it together. It took a day to lay out the content, change up the colours and layout overall, do the content page and choose a cover story, whereas the first issue took about a week to assemble and still had errors in it.

Due to the fact that there were very few photographs that would be used to illustrate the stories in the first edition, she had to shop for these online and she was careful to avoid images that were copyrighted. She also noted that in the second edition she had to provide for errata from the first edition and that 'this was a learning point for me to always thoroughly scan for any mistakes and crosscheck ... names of journalists...and not put the wrong by line.'

Another student who worked on the gossip page noted that he derived a lot of pleasure from his work and he felt a sense of fulfilment when he saw his write up on the pages of the publication. Another student who had covered a project in the Visual and Performing Arts Department, expressed the fulfilment she derived from writing the story: 'I covered this story with great passion as ...it offered me a great deal of satisfaction to be part of this.'

Some others felt that been part of the project gave them an overview of the newspaper industry. A respondent noted that he now has a better appreciation of how the various units of a publication functions. Another said that 'this practical task taught me how to persevere. I am very grateful for this task as it has [taught]... me how the profession of journalism works, as well as talking to people I do not know or that I am not comfortable in front of...' The exposure also helped the former's understanding of the business or operating environment and how to stay market relevant.

Another respondent wrote 'it has given us an idea as to how a newspaper is put together ... [from] the scratch.' To another respondent, the critical skill she picked up was the importance of meeting deadlines.

A student who produced cartoons for the paper felt that she learnt ‘skills of expressing a silent view of one or more parties or issues through visual culture as some issues may be too sensitive to write about.’ She was also of view that by exploring cartoon websites and producing the cartoons her ‘artistic skills were enhanced’. Another student said that she learnt how to be responsible for her section in the publication in that if she did not submit a story, the column would not feature. She noted that she had to undergo ‘the creative process of writing’, ‘fact checking’ and ‘going the extra mile to provide visual accompaniments to the story instead of just downloading one off the internet.’

One of the sub-editors of the paper complained about poor reporting noting that ‘use of inaccurate information, fabricated news stories and sources, lack of attributions as well as sources without second names’ negatively impacted her duties as she had to spend a lot time ‘verifying trivial information than on the actual editing of stories.’ But this did not take away from her learning and sense of fulfilment:

Each and every story I edited taught me a thing or two which made it more of a learning process than just editing to put the paper to bed. I subbed a total of 22 stories of which 16 were published. For me, this says a lot about my capabilities hence I am encouraged to take up writing as a profession.

Another sub-editor’s reflection on her role was that she learnt to reconstruct stories ‘without losing the gist or important information in the stories; merging of stories from two different writers and adding additional background information’ where these were lacking. She noted that some stories had potential but had to be ‘spiked because they did not adhere to ‘basic standards of writing’ Another respondent felt a sense of pride contributing to the paper noting that ‘people would read my article and give me feedback’ and that this ‘ultimately made me a better writer.’

Respondents also felt that the paper’s social media footprints were also quite useful in terms of their learning. Respondents noted that they gained experience from the contents they placed on the social media pages as well as in getting people engaged with the online properties. One of the respondents captured succinctly this sentiment:

Being part of the *UNAM Echo* ... has bettered my social media skills in the sense of uploading and running the magazine’s Instagram social media platform. The page gained followers and is still growing daily by uploading scenes from around UNAM, including pictures from the UNAM Cultural Festival and ‘seen around’ at UNAM Radio, and not just those specific to the magazine.

Another member said that his duty involved ‘tweeting our headlines and putting the link where our followers can read the whole stories ... interacting with them and alerting them when our next edition was coming out.’ Another said that she joined 32 groups/pages on Facebook to give wider publicity to the publication among UNAM students and that this was done ‘through links posted in all groups... teases of a story as well cover page of the editions accompanied with the link to the actual pdf format’.

A student who ensured the uploading of the paper onto the UNAM website had this to say: ‘Also, having assisted the team to liaise with UNAM web developers in order to have our publication on the University’s website makes me feel proud of my overall contribution...’ Another student who served in the ‘agony aunt section’ said she became more sensitised to ethics ‘so as not to violate rights ... and not to judge people based on their stories’. She felt that writing the column which involved approaching students to tell her their issues and providing advice ‘made me feel like a leader...’ Another student expressed similar sentiments: ‘I also got to discover my advice giving skills’. She also felt that being part of the agony aunt column ‘awakened that skill.’

Being a group project, teamwork skills and abilities was also another area that students felt that they had benefitted. Students produced a commercial and videos about the publication. One respondents noted said, ‘I will admit that I am not always keen at working in groups but I have done so and will acknowledge that one can learn a lot from others as much as you can from own research...’ . Another was of the view that they picked up valuable skills in addition to being ‘taught’ teamwork. One of the photographers noted that working with his colleagues enabled him to distinguish between good and bad pictures hence ‘motivating me to take better quality picture[s] for the paper’. He noted that ‘if there is teamwork then everything will go well...’ Another student remarked that she ‘learnt how to shoot professional videos ... upload them as well as how to edit video’.

A member of the design team was very emotional noting that he did not know that the publication would be in place during his time on campus and that ‘am really glad that I was part of the team that started it all. I have really learnt a lot and I will always keep *UNAM Echo* close to my heart.’ He commended members of the team for a job well done noting that ‘the legacy should continue’ as ‘indeed it was a great experience which I will never forget.’ Another student said that from first year they were ‘bombarded’ with theory and that *UNAM Echo* ‘gave us an opportunity to implement the practical phase...’ He was happy for the opportunity to gain some experience.

Students also had a variety of recommendations on how to improve the publication. A student recommended that advertising was one area needing attention. And he called for targeting of student-related businesses which presently use a Facebook forum – UNAM SAMPLES – to advertise in the paper as this would ‘drive more traffic to the paper and attract more readership.’ The same student recommended approaching national dailies to carry the paper as a pull-out in their weekend editions as this would give more exposure to the students and the university. Another commended, the posters placed on Campus to sensitise students about the publication, but recommended some improvements: ‘Firstly, the

posters do not state that it is a student publication, secondly that it is digital and thirdly that they can access it on our social media pages.’

One of the respondents called for a monthly editorial meeting to discuss story ideas as well as do post mortems of the preceding months’ editions. She also called for featuring of motivational pieces as well as a discussion of social issues in every second edition or every edition. Another felt that the coverage should extend to all the higher education institutions in the country instead of the present focus on the University of Namibia. She also felt that the paper should have a fixed date for its release as well as obtaining feedback from the target audience about the contents of the paper so as to assist the paper in better reaching out to its primary market - students.

A student recommended that a proper publication office should be put in place ‘for students to be able to experience the real atmosphere of a newsroom.’ She also called for ‘google analytics’ to ensure that the paper has a good idea of who online readers are. Another student who handled social media for the publication had this to say:

For the social media, I recommend that dedicated teams attend all UNAM functions where possible to provide material for all the social media platforms. The magazine can also make use of the newer social media platforms such as a magazine blog as well as subscribing to Snapchat. The blog could be opinion-based on what is happening in and around campus and could tackle issues relating to the institution from a student’s perspective... As a social media practitioner in the workplace, the Snapchat application is gaining more and more popularity in Namibia and appeals to the youth as stories uploaded only last for 24 hours before they are deleted from Snapchat’s servers. One student could be assigned to the Snapchat social media platform and thus should be allowed to attend all UNAM events to upload videos and pictures of the event as they occur. The platform only allows for ‘live’ feeds/updates unlike Facebook, Instagram and Twitter where you can upload material after the fact.

Other respondents want a finance column to provide financial advice to students, a Q and A column where students can engage with the University administration. Another student felt that a module dealing only with the production of *UNAM Echo* should be in place because ‘practical skills such as how to produce live reports – via text, via Twitter, layout and using InDesign can help students significantly in a job market that requires experience and skill.’

Another recommendation was the need for more aggressive marketing to attract advertisers and getting UNAM management to pay for the printing of the paper. A student who was part of the ‘agony aunt’ column said that some students felt uncomfortable telling their issues directly to members of the team and called for a dedicated cell phone number, which should be advertised in the paper, where SMSs can be sent.

In terms of design, a respondent felt that the grooming process for a new group of designers should start early so as to make the transition easier. She also felt that there was need for consistency in terms of colours so that the publication is easily recognizable by readers. In the same vein, another student felt that the third year students should ‘shadow’ the fourth-year students so that when it is their turn to take over, it would be a seamless transition. She also called for rotation of responsibilities so that everyone has a feel of each section. One respondent called for a ‘flash mob’ to sensitise the campus about the newspaper. She also advised the paper’s photojournalists to always be on the lookout for campus events and cover such without waiting to be instructed to do so.

A respondent called for the involvement of all students in the media section as ‘it will help them improve their skills and ... it is something [to] include even in their CVs.’ Another student who had been denied entry into some events even when she had presented a press pass called for ‘recognition’ of the paper by the University so that the era of harassment by guards and confiscation of press passes will be a thing of the past. One of the respondents felt that the net for writers and contributors should be widened beyond the media studies’ students as there also good writers in other fields of study at UNAM.

A respondent felt that the publication should be distinct from the legacy publication in the Namibian media ecosystem:

We as *UNAM Echo* need to continually strive to consistently ... [publish] material that is not only relevant but thought-provoking too. We need to set our publication apart from the ones that are currently here, [by] continuously challenging the status quo while advocating and voicing out the truth in a balanced yet entertaining manner – considering that we are a campus publication targeted at young adults

One of the paper’s sub-editors called for the ‘use of emphatic words to give prominence to the stories ... [and] use of concrete language and active voice to give readers hope.’

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study prove the claims of the production component of media literacy in that fostered enthusiasm among students while equipping them with production skills and abilities. They produced five editions of the publication, put these online on social media platforms and were able to engage audiences. In addition, they produced a commercial heralding the inaugural edition which was uploaded to YouTube and shared on various media platforms as well as posters that were placed around the main campus featuring the cover page of each edition amongst others.

It was not very apparent that students had developed critical understanding of the media going by their reflections. This skill seems best suited to the analysis component rather than the production component of media literacy. But it must also be acknowledged that Banerjee and Greene (2006:788) did find in their study that ‘the production strategy worked better in conferring resistance to smoking persuasion and was more effective in changing attitude over time.’ However, their study involved both analysis and production unlike in this instance where students did not have to analyse other media and their contents. However, one of the respondents did call for doing things differently but her call for thought provoking contents as well as fairness and balance while entertaining the audience did not really offer a different path from what legacy media presently offers.

The study respondents did demonstrate greater self-esteem as well as personal growth and intellectual development going by some of the sentiments they expressed. They felt that their involvement had boosted their knowledge of the media and its workings, made them better writers and imparted writing, editing, design, social media and production skills. In short, they felt that their involvement had better prepared them for the world of media and communication work and they expressed a sense of pride in their various achievements. This also intersects with the findings of Banerjee and Greene (2006:786) who also found out that “the idea of creating their own medium (posters) for messages to peers or younger students may have resulted in active searching of other knowledge schemas”. A good example is the paper’s cartoonist research efforts and her attempt to give a voice to the voiceless

Expressiveness, creativity and self-reflection skills are apparent in respondents’ breaking out of their ‘shell’ and being able to cultivate and engage news sources, fostering of better writing and communication skills through their involvement with the publication as well as in the various recommendations they made for improvement of the training publication. Their use and engagement with audiences as well as producing content using still and video cameras as well as *InDesign* all point to the realisation of the unleashing the power of technology claim of the production approach to media literacy.

A pedagogical implication of these findings is that the production approach breathes new life into teaching and gets students excited in that they are able to put into practice their learning by demonstrating skills and abilities across various platforms going by the sentiments this group of respondents expressed (Banerjee & Greene, 2006; Hobbs, 1998). This also gives them self-confidence and fosters self-esteem which is in line with the extant literature. The approach also makes them job-ready by giving them an overview of the media and communication industry and the experience that should make their entry into the industry smooth and seamless.

Like every study, this also has limitations. The focus was on the students who were taking the module – Management and Marketing of the Media. While it is true that they provided most of the contents of the paper as well as designed and marketed the publication, there were also contributions from students at other levels of study. The views of this latter group is not reflected in this paper. This, we hope to do in the future using a different research design other than a write-up involving students’ reflections. We will consider a more interactive approach like focus group discussions or in-depth interviews. All in all, the study does make a contribution to the production component of media literacy by testing and proving its claims albeit from the perspective of students involved in producing this training publication.

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