



STUDENTS AS CO-CREATORS

Curriculum Design Collaborations (CDC)

Bridging the Divide: Uniting Multimedia Journalism through Community Reporting

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Bridging the Divide: Uniting Multimedia Journalism through Community Reporting

Project Summary

This Students as Co-Creators project explored how the two specialist pathways within the MA Multimedia Journalism programme (Print and Online Journalism and Broadcast Journalism) might be better connected through authentic community reporting without compromising the professional identity of either route.

Working alongside the Westminster Waves team and academic staff, students participated in roundtable discussions, collaborative workshops and practical journalism activities centred around community reporting at Regent Street Cinema's Silver Screen programme.

The project moved beyond asking whether the pathways should be merged and instead investigated a more nuanced question: how can students collaborate around shared stories while continuing to develop distinct professional identities?

Project Outputs

The collaboration generated a range of practical and evaluative outputs:

- Community reporting content produced for Westminster Waves.

Podcast:

https://universityofwestminster-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/w2172043_westminster_ac_uk/IQBrGQLjLS69QZGRKUrwfh5eAVaA899LCOawYenJb9VvF5A?nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOncmVmZXJyYWxBcHAI0iJPbmVEcmI2ZUZvckJ1c2luZXNzIiwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXciLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJNeUZpbGVzTGlua0NvcHkifX0&e=NKG794

Articles:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/news/westminster-students-speak-to-regent-street-cinemas-monday-classic-matinee-community-at-dont-bother-to-knock-screening>

- Student-led roundtable discussions exploring curriculum development.
[MMJ summary of Padlet and roundtable.docx](#)
- Collaborative Padlet activities documenting ideas and reflections.
https://padlet.com/university_of_westminster/assessment-thinking-u6niog0h205w23pi
- Attached: article due to be published on Westminster Waves website

Origins of the Project

The MA Multimedia Journalism programme already provides students with opportunities to develop specialist skills in either broadcast or print journalism. However, discussions with students suggested that the distinction between pathways could sometimes create unnecessary barriers, limiting opportunities to learn from one another despite working towards similar professional goals.

This project sought to explore whether Westminster Waves could provide a shared publishing environment in which students could collaborate around common community stories while producing outputs appropriate to their chosen discipline.

Community journalism offered an ideal focus for this exploration. Working with Regent Street Cinema's Silver Screen initiative enabled students to engage with local audiences, produce journalism for genuine public consumption and reflect upon the relationship between journalism, civic engagement and professional practice.

Project Development

Rather than presenting students with a completed proposal, the project invited them to become active partners in shaping future curriculum design.

Roundtable discussion examined the strengths and limitations of the existing course structure and encouraged students to consider alternative approaches to assessment and collaboration. Further ideas were generated collectively through Padlet activities. Practical journalism tasks linked to Westminster Waves tested the ideas.

Students produced content across multiple formats while simultaneously reflecting on their experience of working across traditional pathway boundaries. The emphasis in discussion was on experimentation and shared problem-solving rather than evaluation against predetermined solutions.

This process revealed that collaboration was valued most when it emerged naturally around a common reporting subject rather than through identical assessment requirements.

Reflections on Partnership

One of the most significant findings was that students did not perceive specialisation and collaboration as opposing concepts. On the contrary, they viewed pathway identity as one of the programme's greatest strengths and actively resisted suggestions that broadcast and print journalism should become a single generic course. Students proposed a model that more closely reflects contemporary newsroom practice: journalists working together on a shared story while contributing through different media formats and professional expertise.

The discussions also highlighted the importance of authentic learning environments. Westminster Waves was consistently identified as a motivating platform because it offered real audiences, creative freedom and opportunities to develop professional portfolios beyond assessed coursework. Students appreciated producing journalism with a purpose rather than creating assignments intended only for marking.

At the same time, the project revealed practical barriers to collaboration. Print students often reported lower confidence when using audio equipment and broadcast technologies, while broadcast students identified opportunities to strengthen their writing and long-form feature skills. These differences were viewed not as weaknesses but as opportunities for reciprocal learning.

Anticipated Impact on Learning and Teaching

The project provides a clear direction for future curriculum development.

Rather than redesigning the programme around a single assessment model, the findings support the creation of linked live briefs built around community reporting themes. Students would collaborate through shared stories and audiences while completing pathway-specific outputs assessed against professional standards relevant to their specialism. In addition, the project identified opportunities to strengthen interdisciplinary learning through shared technical resources, optional digital skills training and collaborative newsroom experiences that better reflect contemporary multimedia journalism practice.

The project also demonstrates the value of Westminster Waves as an authentic publishing platform capable of supporting journalism education beyond traditional classroom activities.

What We Learned

Several consistent themes emerged from the project:

Students value authentic projects that engage with real communities and produce work for public audiences. Community reporting increased motivation, strengthened ethical awareness and encouraged deeper engagement with journalistic practice.

Students emphasised that collaboration requires appropriate preparation. Shared projects are most effective when all participants possess a common foundation of digital and technical skills, allowing partnership to become genuinely collaborative rather than dependent on one pathway providing specialist expertise.

Assessment design influences willingness to experiment. Participants felt more confident testing unfamiliar approaches when activities carried lower stakes, indicating that formative production tasks could play an important role in supporting interdisciplinary learning.

Finally, the project reinforced the importance of co-creation itself. The most valuable curriculum insights emerged not from asking students whether they liked existing modules, but from inviting them to imagine alternatives and collectively design new possibilities. Their recommendations have provided a clear evidence base for future assessment development and strengthened the partnership between students, academic staff and Westminster Waves.

Rather than dissolving disciplinary boundaries, the project demonstrated that meaningful collaboration is most effective when different specialisms retain their identity while contributing to a shared purpose. In doing so, it offers a sustainable model for authentic, community-focused journalism education that is rooted in partnership and professional practice.