

Journalism &  
Mass  
Communication

# Educator

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**BEYOND THE SCHOOLROOM GLOBE: Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, South Korea, and West Africa as Substantive Elements of Curriculum Pedagogy and Cultural Understanding**

**PEER REVIEW: The Case for Hands-on Constructivism**

**IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM?**

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*Peer Review editor Lisa R. Lattuca returns, this time with Joe Marren, looking for a constructivist pedagogy. International perspective frames research from H. Leslie Steeves, Nancy Graham Holm, Mark Deuze, and Tom Kelleher and Michelle O'Malley. From the Graduate Teaching Academy, Paul Mihailidis focuses on Sweden. A David Abrahamson essay on literary journalism. Review editor Don Heider's genre selections include news writing, technology, magazines, law, and women – as journalists, as the subject of journalists, and as the under-represented faculty of journalism education. Editor's Note asks how journalism and mass communication educators can join a national nonpartisan movement to better prepare students for college and career success.*

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**Devoted to Research and Commentary  
in Journalism and Mass Communication Education**

# REVIEWS

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## Books

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- Storycrafting: A Process Approach to Writing News*  
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MAURINE BEASLEY AND SHELLA GIBBONS

■ Angeletti, Norberto and Alberto Oliva (2004). **Magazines that Make History: Their Origins, Development and Influence.** Gainesville: University Press of Florida. pp. 408.

■ Evans, Michael Robert (2004). **The Layers of Magazine Editing.** New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 353.

The tortuous path that leads to the establishment of successful magazines is a generously littered one. Failed ideas, impoverished concepts, and, perhaps saddest of all, uncertain execution—poor writing, poor editing, and/or poor art direction—clutter the landscape. These are just a few of the problems, large and small, that can befall a magazine in gestation, and while they may be easy to identify long after the tragic fact, coming up with a workable cure, especially in real time, is a

considerably more demanding task. Underlying it all, the most central question is: What makes a magazine work?

It is a topic complex enough to warrant an entire book, and two new publications, *Magazines that Make History* and *The Layers of Magazine Editing*, lucidly and comprehensively tackle, from two very different perspectives, this very issue with clarity and verve. The unifying thread between them, however, is a deep-rooted reductionist faith in the fundamental idea so ably aphorized by Le Corbusier: God, most assuredly, is in the details.

Norberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva's *Magazines that Make History: Their Origins, Development and Influence* is a "how-to" manual disguised as a coffee-table book. Ten magazines, splashed in two bold rows across the book's cover, are dissected with surgeon's precision. Perhaps the book's best example, the analysis of *Time* magazine, offers an astonishing amount of information regarding the thinking (arguments as well as final decisions) behind the creation, development, launch, and impact of the title. In a section entitled "The Evolution of *Time*," the authors accompany a historical rendering of the publication's cultural arc with scores of *Time*'s covers from previous decades. In an homage to one of *Time*'s most ingenious editorial inventions, the magazine's "Man of the Year" covers are placed separately in a special section. More tutorial sections, however, are equally compelling; for example, "How to Write an Article in '*Time* Style'" offers an inside glimpse of the writing style.

Every detail, from the magazine's mission statement to the artists who

design the covers, is stylishly presented and gracefully revealed. For a useful comparison, an analysis of the German magazine *Der Spiegel* and French publication *Paris Match* lend a cosmopolitan touch. And the inclusion of *Life* provides an example of how changing times can negatively affect a once-successful magazine.

The strongest element of the book is its wealth of practical information, crammed into sidebars, captions, charts, and graphs. The reading experience, which might begin as a casual flip-through, quickly turns into a dedicated scouring of every image and concept. *People's* cover-selection philosophy is a wonderful example. "Young is better than old, pretty is better than ugly, television is better than music, anything is better than politics" speaks volumes not only about the magazine itself, but the American audience to which it caters so successfully. The authors' ability to package so much information so efficiently makes reading straight through it a fascinating process. Each documented magazine reveals new issues, new information, and new ways of thinking. Far from an overview, each selection delves headfirst into the belly of the beast, and resurfaces with far more than a thorough chronology. Four-hundred pages and ten magazines later, the personality and individuality of each publication stands out with commendable vividness.

Michael Robert Evan's *The Layers of Magazine Editing*, while lacking the coffee-table heft of *Magazines that Make History*, offers its own unique system of information presentation. Although the details of the editorial infrastructure of magazine-making (sentence structure, grammar, etc.) is

reviewed, the book clearly aspires to encompass the larger view as well. It opens with a consideration of the big picture, and then becomes more focused the deeper you read. Three sections—"The Big Picture," "The Big Questions," and "The Small (but Important) Stuff"—provide insight into the structural minutiae. Most important, the author then goes beyond the simple facts to address the real-world applications that can be extrapolated from this knowledge.

The macro-micro range of the work is one of its major accomplishments. Chapters detailing the ins and outs of freedom of the press, the essentiality of connection with the readers, and, eventually, those grammatical tar pits that sink so many fine sentences, enliven the reading considerably. Moreover, the author's explicitly expressed opinions are nicely tempered by the candid, but always constructive, comments from various contemporary editors.

The book's structure also lends itself particularly well to the sensibilities of the college-journalism student. This is where the book's true potential has a chance to be realized. By placing the more strategic concerns ("The Big Picture") at the beginning of the book, the author portrays the world of magazine editing as a challenging, complex, and enticing one. College students also often respond well to self-deprecation sprinkled with hope, which is just what the book offers. After debunking the myths of editors as party animals; bookworms; or chest-puffing, cigar-chomping nightmares, Evans states that "editors are pretty much like everyone else." Students can feel comfortable identifying with this sort of person while at the same time reaffirm-

ing the attraction of a lifestyle shrouded in what Evans himself calls a “remarkably varied, intellectually challenging, and unusually fun.”

What both books have in common, one suspects, is a passion for a passionate subject: the making of magazines. Both radiate an energetic, entrepreneurial aura which seems a perfect match for the subject matter. And the promise to the reader is that, if, as every magazine editor should, you *really* pay attention, professional accomplishment will be yours. In *Layers*, for example, one particularly clever touch is the “Confusion Rains!” section, which lists more than fifty groups of commonly misused words (like affect v. effect). Similarly, *Magazines that Make History* is filled with writing stipulations, formats, rules, and guidelines of the ten magazines it reviews, often taken straight from the publication’s guidebook.

Although Angeletti and Oliva’s book and that of Evans may seem very different, the *raison d’être* of both works is the same, because both celebrate the same craft for the same reasons. At the heart of both works lies a core precept and central tenet of the magazine profession. For the best editors on the best magazines, it is an article of faith. Simply put, it is a deep and profound belief in the very special nature of magazine editing—and the very special sense of intellectual accomplishment that is the reward for anyone who masters the same.

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