

Think First

JEA
press rights
commission

Free expression
through
responsible
journalism

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Title:
Informed Consent

Overview and Rationale:

The practice of journalism involves responsibility not only to readers, but also to sources. This lesson prepares students to deal with sources in an ethical manner through class discussion and role-playing in situations they may be called upon to address.

Goals for Understanding:

Essential question:

How do I make sure my sources understand the consequences of being interviewed and quoted?

Critical engagement questions:

What stories might present issues with sources?

What do I owe my sources?

How does educating sources affect our publication?

Overviews and Timeline:

Activity 1 (one class or meeting period)

Students will be introduced to privacy and consent issues through the instructor's PowerPoint presentation.

Activity 2 (one class or meeting period)

Students will review past issues of their publication or other publications – selected in advance by the instructor – to identify stories in which consent of sources was or could have been a challenge. Through role-playing exercises, they will consider these stories from the perspectives of reporters, editors, readers (students, teachers, administrators), sources and parents of sources.

Activity 3 (two classes or meeting periods)

Students will evaluate their upcoming story budgets to identify stories in which consent of sources could be an issue. They will develop an action plan for dealing with these situations. The action plan will feature a checklist of items to discuss with sources (the topic of the story, how quotes will be used, etc.). It also will include policies on using anonymous sources and seeking additional consent from parents (including what situations might warrant additional consent). Students will draft a consent form for sources to sign.

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Materials were produced for this Web site by the Journalism Education Association (<http://jeapressrights.org>) and the Center for Scholastic Journalism <http://jmc.kent.edu/csaj>.

Free expression through responsible journalism

Activity 4 (one class or meeting period)

Using the checklist, students will role-play to develop strategies for obtaining consent from sources – and, when necessary, their parents.

Assessment:

The action plan will be permanently posted in the classroom or meeting area and the master consent form will be filed where students can access it quickly and easily. Grading will be based on participation in class discussions and demonstrated ability to analyze situations in a mature, logical fashion.

References:

“Law of the Student Press”

Samples of student-produced publications (scholastic and local newspaper)



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