



City Research Online

City St George's, University of London

Citation: Cooper, G. (2026). The Journalist Always Rings Twice? Preparing Journalism Students to Interview Those Caught up in Trauma. Journalism Practice, doi: 10.1080/17512786.2026.2693187

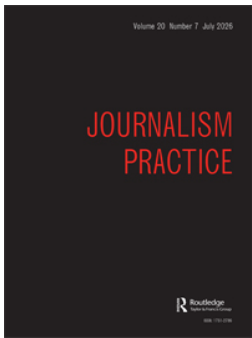
This is the published version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version. To cite this item please consult the publisher's version.

Permanent repository link: <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/37958/>

Link to published version: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2026.2693187>

Copyright and Reuse: Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, unless otherwise indicated, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way. For full details of reuse please refer to [City Research Online policy](#).



The Journalist Always Rings Twice? Preparing Journalism Students to Interview Those Caught up in Trauma

Glenda Cooper

To cite this article: Glenda Cooper (28 Jun 2026): The Journalist Always Rings Twice? Preparing Journalism Students to Interview Those Caught up in Trauma, Journalism Practice, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2026.2693187](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2026.2693187)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2026.2693187>



© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 28 Jun 2026.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 103



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

The Journalist Always Rings Twice? Preparing Journalism Students to Interview Those Caught up in Trauma

Glenda Cooper 

^aDept of Journalism, University of London, City St George's, UK

ABSTRACT

Journalism frequently throws up difficult ethical issues for journalists to confront in pressurised situations. This is particularly true of the “death knock,” where journalists interview family and friends in the aftermath of a sudden death (Duncan 2012). These stories, because they are stressful and disliked, are often given to young, inexperienced journalists (Cooper 2012), but the consequences can be devastating for both family and journalist (Newton and Duncan 2012, 2014).

This paper argues that by using the approach of forum theatre (Flores 2000), in which situations are both acted out and interrogated, journalism students could have a simulated experience of confronting such issues in a brave space. It examines three workshops carried out with final year undergraduate journalism students as part of a core ethics module between 2023 and 2025. Students discussed the ethical questions raised by death knocks, before sessions in which they used forum theatre techniques to imagine and experience the roles of journalist, photographer and family member, while questioning how best to do it. At the end of the sessions, students reported a better understanding of the issues involved and the potential threats to their own mental health, as well as more confidence in carrying out such interviews.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 12 November 2025

Accepted 17 June 2026

KEYWORDS

Journalism; forum theatre; trauma; death knocks; interviewing; ethics

Introduction

In January 2023, in the north of England, a woman called Nicola Bulley suddenly vanished while taking her dog out for a walk. It was a story that gripped the UK: a photogenic victim, hints of problems in her past and a mystery as to her fate. Her body was not recovered from a nearby river until a month later, by which time her story had dominated the news headlines for weeks and caused a frenzy among legacy media journalists and on social media. After her death was finally confirmed, her family issued a statement that was excoriating about reporters who had covered the story. They said that broadcasters had even contacted them, the day Nicola's body was found, when they had expressly asked for privacy, adding:

CONTACT Glenda Cooper  Glenda.cooper@citystgeorges.ac.uk  <https://www.linkedin.com/in/glenda-cooper-b19a937/>

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

It is shameful they have acted in this way. Leave us alone now. Do the press and other media channels and so-called professionals not know when to stop? These are our lives and our children's lives. (Stanley and Horsburgh 2023)

Bulley's case brought to the fore the fact that journalism frequently throws up difficult ethical issues for journalists to confront in pressurised situations. This is particularly true of the so-called "death knock," where journalists interview grieving family and friends in the aftermath of a sudden death (Duncan 2012).

Yet, perhaps surprisingly, the consequences of not approaching family and friends can equally be distressing. Bereaved relatives who were interviewed by Newton and Duncan (2012) on this subject believed the story of their loss was theirs, not that of journalists, and therefore to exclude them from participating in the reporting of their dead relative, even if done with the best of intentions to spare them pain, was "arguably an act of arrogance ... They believed that should be their decision, not the journalists" (Newton and Duncan 2012, 61).

What all would agree on is that the consequences of getting it wrong can be devastating for both families and journalists (Newton and Duncan 2012, 2014). There is little time to sit and debate what should or should not be done in this situation, and these stories, because they are stressful and disliked, are often given to the youngest and most inexperienced journalists in the newsroom (Cooper 2012). Yet it is the experience of those working in higher education that journalism students often express a lack of confidence and show reluctance when it comes to the core skill of interviewing generally; interacting with those who have just suffered a traumatic loss or experience is even more difficult to deal with (Adams 2012; Maxson 2000). While educators attempt to cover such issues in the classroom, they often are discussed in modules which may have a more academic approach, rather than offering practical skills to cope with such situations.

Therefore, we asked whether, by using an approach such as forum theatre, journalism educators could give students a simulated experience of confronting such issues in a safe/brave space for learning, as has already been tried out in other vocational degrees such as nursing (Middlewick, Kettle, and Wilson 2012) and in schools (Day 2002; Gourd and Gourd 2011).

The paper will thus examine the following research questions:

RQ1: How can forum theatre techniques aid journalism students in understanding the issues surrounding interviewing people caught up in trauma?

RQ2: How can forum theatre techniques help journalism students develop better interviewing skills in trauma situations?

Literature Review

Death Knocks and Newsroom Culture

People have memorialised the death of loved ones for millennia through music and storytelling; journalism is relatively new to this ritual. Yet in a secularised world, the death knock and subsequent articles have become part of this ritual in remembering the dead.

From the days of the town crier to the grisly reports of murder in the early newspapers, stories of death and destruction were popular. It is not until the early eighteenth century that we see an innovation; however, where ordinary people's experience of trauma is

implemented when the journalist Daniel Defoe seeks out first-hand accounts in the aftermath of the Great Storm of 1703, placing advertisements in the *London Gazette* and the *Daily Courant* asking for eyewitnesses to contact him with their personal accounts of the hurricane (Duncan and Newton 2017)). The concept of the “death knock” itself, as we would understand it, however, did not come into being until the early years of the twentieth century, particularly thanks to Alfred Harmsworth and the growth of the tabloid press in the UK with its focus on human interest for a newly literate audience. Duncan and Newton (2017, 23–24) cite the case of Annie Wallis, killed by an autocar in 1914 and whose death was reported in the *Hull Daily Mail* on 19 February. Unlike previous stories, which focused on the sensationalised details of the death itself, in this case, the journalist concentrates on Wallis’s personal life (her job, her boyfriend, her day-to-day routine) as well as tributes from her grieving parents, whose quotes about losing her could fit easily into similar stories today. With others following down this path, reporting tragedies over the years frequently became a competitive business, with journalists resorting to subterfuge, harassment, and often hard cash to scoop their rivals to the story. Concerns about such behaviour and the ethics of the press followed – from the first Royal Commission in 1947 to the Leveson Inquiry into phone hacking (triggered by the way journalists had treated the grieving family of Millie Dowler, a child who had been murdered at the age of 13).

Large public events such as the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997, the 9/11 attacks of 2001, and humanitarian disasters such as the 2004 tsunami also meant that public norms around grieving adapted – the laying of flowers, social media tributes – and journalists continued to be a part of this memorialisation.

Yet the way in which journalists learned the skills of doing journalistic labour, interviewing bereaved relatives was rarely part of the growing number of journalism courses.

Instead, the ritual of death knocks was often inculcated as part of newsroom norms and cultures. How journalists are socialised into certain customs and norms has occupied theorists for decades. As Singer (2004, 841) notes, “Journalists are socialised not just to feel part of a particular group but to do things a particular way and to see that way as natural and desirable.” This can result in being introduced into the profession in a way that may seem informal. While most media organisations now offer induction and training processes, there remains a sense that, alongside explicit written/spoken policies, such things may be bypassed during a story when “real life” occurs and has to be adapted to. Often, this appears to happen by a kind of osmosis, absorbing unspoken news policies (Breed 1955) or as a kind of “journalistic inbreeding” (Willis 2009, 15). That is, journalists observe closely how other reporters operate, who proves “successful” (by seeing their byline in print/online or their audio/video package on screen) and how they managed in such circumstances.

The codes of practice in the UK – both for print/online (IPSO) and broadcast (Ofcom) do refer to issues around intrusion into grief and shock, but these are guidelines only, without practical suggestions about how to do this. For example, the IPSO Code clause 4 reads:

In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively. These provisions should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

The Ofcom code (Section 8) is more detailed by describing the requirement not to put people under pressure to speak or to avoid breaking news of a death.¹ However, this still leaves journalists without formal training on how to do this.

What most reporters would agree on is that death knocks, however, are a particularly stressful form of journalistic labour. In addition to the usual editorial and legal restraints on them, they have the capacity to do harm by approaching a family that is already in a state of trauma. Those who are the subjects of death knocks are often not celebrities, but ordinary people thrust suddenly into the spotlight without the protection and support that those in the public eye get when they find themselves the subjects of media attention. This paper, therefore, posits that journalists would benefit from training in how to do such interviews rather than relying on the informal norms and socialisation of the media industry itself. While this is often discussed in theoretical ways in postgraduate and undergraduate journalism courses, this may leave journalists without the practical tools. Adapting a commonly used tool in other pedagogies – forum theatre – appears to be a possible solution.

Role Play in Journalism Education

Journalism education has long tried to both teach students practical skills (how to write, film and edit, for example) but also to understand the norms and reality of reporting on the ground (Tulloch and Mas i Manchon 2018 ; Wright 2011). As such, some form of role playing is commonly used in journalism pedagogy – for example, in simulated newsdays to teach students how to produce bulletins to deadline, or create a newspaper/magazine/online blog from scratch where students act as editors, designers, reporters and anchors (McCalib 1968; Dracup 2012; Eberholst, Hartley, and Olsen 2016; Hearn-Branaman 2022).

Within these exercises, there is the assumption that these student reporters will learn newsroom behaviours and produce journalism of a broadcast/publishable standard within an agreed time limit, but teaching specifically around ethics is usually discussed in greater detail in other specific modules (Sanders et al. 2008) unless there is a particular crisis that occurs as part of the simulation (for example, a complaint from a guest).

In consequence, the way researchers have examined journalism students' attitudes to ethical dilemmas thrown up by news work has usually been based on surveys (Ball, Hanna, and Sanders 2006; Detenber et al. 2012; Sanders et al. 2008), but again these questions are frequently based around standard newsroom routines, rather than interviewing those who have lost loved ones; although, as Eberholst, Hartley, and Olsen (2016) note, the greatest lessons are often learned when students are encouraged to reflect in more depth.

There is also the suggestion that traditional role play, in which a scenario is played once, can leave journalism students with anxiety and unresolved trauma, as found in the work of Simpson (1995). As such, the challenge was to think about how best to engage students in learning about this difficult part of journalistic labour in a way that would marry both the theoretical and practical sides of journalism education, while providing an exercise that would not leave them with unresolved anxiety or traumatic feelings. One approach that therefore seemed useful was forum theatre, which has been used in other educational settings to cover difficult topics, as outlined below.

Use of Forum Theatre in Education Settings

This paper, therefore, draws on the work of Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed in the 1970s (Freire 2009), from which Boal (2005, 2014) developed the concept of Theatre of

the Oppressed, of which the central concept became Forum Theatre. Freire's pedagogy, developed in the post-colonial and dictatorial regimes of South America, tried to change the way students were educated, breaking down the accepted wisdom of the teacher as the fount of knowledge and the student as an observer, and challenging the model which assumed that "the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire 2009, 163).

Boal built on this to contest the elite approach to theatre. In particular, the idea of Forum Theatre was that spectators would be given "the opportunity to uncover their own solutions to problems" (Flores 2000, p.42). Boal (2005) and subsequent theorists imagined Forum Theatre as one where spectators (those who watch) are transformed into "spec-actors" (one who watches and takes action). This means that the spec-actors can stop the theatrical presentation at any moment when they feel there is a solution that is not being implemented (Flores 2000, p. 42). The scene is then run again with new solutions being proposed, with one person acting as facilitator or, as Boal termed it, "the joker."

Forum Theatre has thus proved popular and useful in dealing with flashpoint issues such as refugees and homeless issues (Day 2002), gender violence prevention (Mitchell and Freitag 2011) and bullying (Gourd and Gourd 2011). But, given its links and history to Freire's pedagogy, it has also been used in educational environments, such as communication in healthcare education (Middlewick, Kettle, and Wilson 2012) and community-based environmental science (Sullivan and Lloyd 2006). This dialogic method allows students to learn by discussing, acting out and critically reflecting on dilemmas they encounter in work situations (Nordentoft and Olesen 2023, 1).

It is particularly relevant for journalism students because of the work of Adams (2021) and Adams and Cooper (2024) on the new field of "live journalism" (the conjunction between theatre and journalism), the use of creativity in journalism research (Witschge, Deuze, and Willemsen 2019; Coffee 2011) and the affinity between journalism and drama (Fulford 1999; Postema and Deuze 2020; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2013) with both being seen as a "creative, created space" (Bernbaum 2010).

In journalism studies, this also speaks to the "affective turn" in journalism studies and the contribution of news to the "emotional public sphere" (Richards and Rees 2011; Wahl-Jorgensen 2020). This acknowledgement of emotion in both the subject of a journalistic piece, and the journalist that carries out such emotional labour (Richards 2007; Huxford and Hopper 2020) has become increasingly important to how journalists are trained (Jukes 2017; Cooper 2018). Looking at how journalism students can learn to better interact with people who have been part of a traumatic story could add to this work.

Methodology

Forum Theatre aims to create "a dynamic learning environment enabling students to try out different communication strategies within a safe setting" (Middlewick, Kettle, and Wilson 2012). It provides a safe space to stimulate debate and discussion and has been used by different pedagogical areas (Boal 2005; Day 2002; Cooper 2004). It allows students to investigate issues that may be difficult – such as exploring values, beliefs and thinking about diversity and power. These are all relevant to the common but difficult concept of death knocks.

Following Middlewick et al. (2012, 140), the forum theatre technique in education has been described as follows: beginning with a specific practical dilemma and a pre-written script that ends in an unsatisfactory way for the subjects involved. As a consequence, there is facilitated discussion in small groups, followed by the scenario being re-enacted, in which students are invited to halt the proceedings, step in, and re-run the action with their own suggestions.

For this research, I spoke to two experts in forum theatre: the playwright Diego Lourenco and the director/lecturer at East 15 Acting School, Zois Pigadas and I then worked directly with River Ujhadbor, a facilitator in Theatre of the Oppressed and Forum Theatre, who ran an experimental workshop with a small group of postgraduate students in 2022 as a pilot for this study. As part of that, we used a combination of trust-building games and exercises, a chance to discuss motivations to take part, agreement of boundaries (a “brave space” rather than “safe space”) before the forum theatre exercise itself, focusing on the death knock itself, which we devised together to be in keeping with forum theatre practice, but without employing outside actors in order to let the students themselves humanise the three characters in the exercise.

The main research took place as part of a core third-year undergraduate journalism ethics module in 2023, 2024, and 2025. This module is the last core module that all students are required to take and was designed as preparation for the workplace. Before this particular session, students had already taken classes that looked at basic philosophical approaches to journalism ethics (e.g., utilitarianism, deontology, relational ethics), picture selection, relationships with sources, conflicting loyalties between employers and their audiences, and ethics around court reporting. In subsequent classes, they went on to look at the challenges of being a foreign correspondent, ethical dilemmas around consumer journalism and finally, a return to safeguarding their own mental health for the final session.

Because of the nature of this workshop, students were told in advance that it would deal with death knocks, and unlike other sessions in the course, they were given the option whether to take part or not (for example, one student in 2023 had suffered a bereavement only two weeks earlier and decided not to participate). The project was developed in line with the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA 2018) as the gold standard for this type of research. Ethical consent was obtained from the journalism department’s research ethics committee (ETH 2122-0786), and all students were emailed participant information forms and consent forms a week before the workshops, explaining that they had the right to withdraw from the study before publication; the research would be anonymised; and data would be stored securely.

Using forum theatre in an academic context also means that the facilitator has to balance both learning objectives and consider the students’ varying conditions and needs. I also had to consider that, as the module leader, I was in a position of authority. There is also a need for the facilitator and the group to consider whose voices are being heard before deciding whether to intervene and also to maintain a safe/brave space for reflexive learning (Nordentoft and Olesen 2023; Olesen and Nordentoft 2013). As such, in emails to the cohort before the class and also at the start of the session, I reiterated that this did not form part of their assessment in any way, what the point of the session was, and the fact that this was described as a brave space in which differing views would be respected, as well as reminding them about the participant information and consent forms.

In terms of assessing the data from the workshop, a participatory action research (PAR) approach was highlighted as the most appropriate. PAR can harness the experience of students and educators, “positioning them as architects of research rather than objects of study” (Galletta and Torre 2019). It also supports participants’ knowledge and experiences through creative and artistic methods of self-expression (McIntyre 2008). The researcher collaborates with participants in investigating issues with the aim of bringing about positive changes (Tacchi 2020) and can be used in education to improve practices and outcomes for the participants (Kemmis 2006).

This sits well with a Forum Theatre approach to interviewing people in the aftermath of trauma or disaster. The key component of the interviewing exercise is empowering the students to stop the action, re-run it and work out more appropriate and ethical choices when covering such stories.

Key PAR methodologies include interviews and diaries. Dwyer (2004) also uses quotations from video recordings, notes, and workshops. Crucial to this process was giving students the chance to reflect on their practice and what might be future practice for them – while maintaining a brave space for reflexive learning (building on Nordentoft and Olesen 2023; Olesen 2021).

The sessions themselves were held in a modern and large raked lecture theatre resembling a stage as much as possible, in order to give the sense of a performance going on. The format of the sessions began with a general discussion around how they themselves perceived the death knock and its role as journalistic labour, taking the death of Nicola Bulley as the starting point and also a case of five young people who had been killed in a car crash in Cardiff, Wales, but where the wreckage had not been found for 48 h, leading to a similar media frenzy (Anderson and Robinson 2023). The students then divided themselves into small groups (4–5 students), and in Exercise A addressed the following four questions, writing them down on flipchart paper with markers provided:

- What emotions do you think the family would feel?
- How do you think the journalist feels?
- What three words do you associate with death knocks?
- What would you want the outcome to be?

For the main Forum Theatre exercise itself (Exercise B), I began by reading aloud a journalist’s recollection of doing a death knock. This was taken from a longer interview that I had done about the experience of death knocking. The account ran as follows:

I did my first death knock for my local paper, The Kentish Gazette. I was terrified but also excited. I knew I had to do it. I had been prepared for it at journalism college and even at a local paper, you knew what you had to do and that meant do what the editor said. It was sink or swim.

I turned up outside the house of the sister of two young men killed in the construction of the Channel Tunnel. It was in the heart of Kent’s former mining community and my paper had been against the mining strike. The village was in decline, and our paper was not liked. The snapper [photographer], a veteran of many years standing, refused to get out of the car because he knew we would be abused, and our door knock unwelcome. The family had just been told of the double death. I knocked and they opened the door and the family dog escaped. It was one of those painfully prosaic moments in the midst of a human tragedy as I and the sister, in her slippers, ran around trying to contain the barking dog (Cooper 2012).

Following this, the students were tasked with creating a persona for the sister (the students named her “Lucy” in Workshop 1, “Sam” in Workshop 2, “Jessica” in Workshop 3), and writing answers for her relationship status, education, career, likes, dislikes, secrets and relationship with her (deceased) brothers. They also did the same exercise for the journalist “Richard”/“Molly”/“Emma” and the photographer “Felix”/“Steve”/“Max”. They were given the following cues to discuss in their groups.

- Who is the sister? Is she older or younger?
- What does she do as a job?
- What are her brothers’ names? What did they mean to her?
- What are her hopes and fears?
- Is she single or in a relationship?
- What is her favourite food/drink/reality show?

Similar questions were asked of the journalist and photographer, substituting the questions about the brothers with what their motivations are, where they are in their careers, and what are their favourite shows on Netflix.

Once this had been established, students took it in turns to play the roles (as well as one student electing to play the dog in the first and third workshops). The students were also encouraged to intervene to stop and start the scene to question and discuss how best the interview should proceed, with the other journalism lecturer and myself acting formally as the “joker” to facilitate such interruptions. When the scene was stopped and students suggested alternative questions/approaches the journalist/sister/photographer should use, those students replaced the previous ones in the scene.

Students playing the part of the characters were referred to by the character names at all times (e.g., “What do you think Emma would say now?” “I think that Lucy would react in this way”) in order for students to be less self-conscious about the way they were performing the improvisation (see also Dracup 2012).

An important part of the session was the final discussion, which took a Story Circle approach - a warm and welcoming space where participants are encouraged to share experiences in a non-judgemental way and use deep listening (Hamada, 2020) while maintaining a brave space for reflexive learning (Nordentoft and Olesen 2023; Olesen 2021; Olesen and Nordentoft 2013). Students were asked to reflect on three questions: (a) what did you feel about deathknocks before the class – and has that changed at all subsequently? (b) what are some practical things you would do differently if sent on such an assignment? (c) what would you never do? This was led by me, and the other lecturer and I took contemporaneous notes of what was said. Students were also given the opportunity to fill in an anonymous form afterwards, asking the same three questions if they preferred to do that. Most students preferred to discuss in the session, although some did send in further comments.

Results

In Nordentoft and Olesen’s use of Forum Theatre in a health educational setting, they concluded that its significance was in encouraging students to pursue a critical-reflexive stance “by inviting discussions on the reflexivity of professionals’ thoughts, actions and

the institutional context” (2023, 3). Drawing on Bakhtin (2010), in their models, they held up the idea that there could be contradictory and competing voices - e.g., a nurse might both want to listen to a patient’s experience but also respect her professional knowledge. This tension could also be explored in a journalistic setting, where a journalist may both want to feel respectful towards a grieving family, and yet feel that the story is one that should be told for the greater good.

Certainly, at the beginning of the workshops, there was similarly a sense of uncertainty and hesitancy among some participants, which reflected the earlier experimental work with postgraduate journalism students. Students were aware of the Bulley case and were uneasy about the role that journalists had played in the development of this story and thus whether the death knock was a valid part of journalistic labour. Comments from students in Exercise A included “I’m worried about overstepping the mark, being an invasion of their privacy in their crisis”; “I wanted to try and learn how to do [it] in a way that was respectful”; “For me it’s worrying about insensitivity and just generally making the situation worse”; “[I want] to make it less terrifying ... some tips for the real world.”

Yet, as Nordentoft and Olesen argue, such uncertainties and emotions can be used as a method of inquiry, “which means we look at emotions as data and not mere ‘tales and anecdotes’ about emotionally challenging incidents” (Nordentoft and Olesen 2023, 6), while Heen (2005, 2070) claims that emotions “convey quite accurate information about the outer world.”

When asked to produce words, the students associated with the family’s experience of death knocks, they frequently reflected what they saw as a lack of agency on the bereaved’s part: words that were used included “overwhelmed”, “helpless”, “speechless”, “vulnerable”, and “violated”. Negative emotions such as “anger”, “angry”, “distressed”, and “annoyed” suggested an anticipation by the journalists that a request for an interview with the family would be seen as an intrusion and unwelcome. Only two words, “heard” and “publicity,” suggested that there might be some benefits for the family (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Students’ suggestions of families’ reactions to death knocks.

In comparison, the emotions associated with the journalist were primarily identified with a sense of shame – “dread”, “guilt”, “pressured”, “dreadful”. Other adjectives suggested extreme discomfort on the part of the journalist carrying out the interview – “nervous”, “stressed”, “anxious” recurred. However, a small number did reflect the ambivalence that journalists may have – “proud”, “excited”, “driven for story” – given that such stories may be high up the news agenda if successful (Figure 2).

In Exercise A, many of the class was extremely opposed to doing any form of death knock. When asked the three words that they associated with death knocks, as well as the familiar “intrusive” and “insensitive,” intimidation” and a reference to Milly Dowler (coverage of whose murder has become a shorthand for bad journalistic practice after it triggered revelations of phone hacking), one group wrote in large letters on their flipchart in response to the three words describing death knocks as “1. Just 2. Say 3. No.” (Figures 3 and 4)

However, there was a more considered attitude when the students tried to think about what the outcome of a death knock might be. “A productive, sensitive conversation”, “Justice”, “understanding” and “finding a compromise” were all mentioned (Figure 5).

With Exercise B (the forum theatre), after some hesitation, the students were enthusiastic in creating the personas for the three characters in the scene, although, given that they were groups of students with diverse heritage, this was not always reflected in the personas. In the first group, “Lucy” obviously related to the students’ own personae. She was described as a middle child “a rose between two thorns” who worked as a lash technician and whose favourite show was *Bridgerton*. “Richard,” the journalist’s description, however, reflected their ambivalence towards this form of journalism, characterising him as “posh,” “arrogant,” a member of the Soho House private members’ club, and his favourite shows to watch being *Love Island* and Andrew Tate. In comparison, the photographer “Felix” was seen as a more sympathetic character – self-made, with two children that he wants to provide for. Interestingly, in the second workshop, while “Sam”’s cultural references were similar to the students’ (favourite TV was the Netflix series *One Day* and

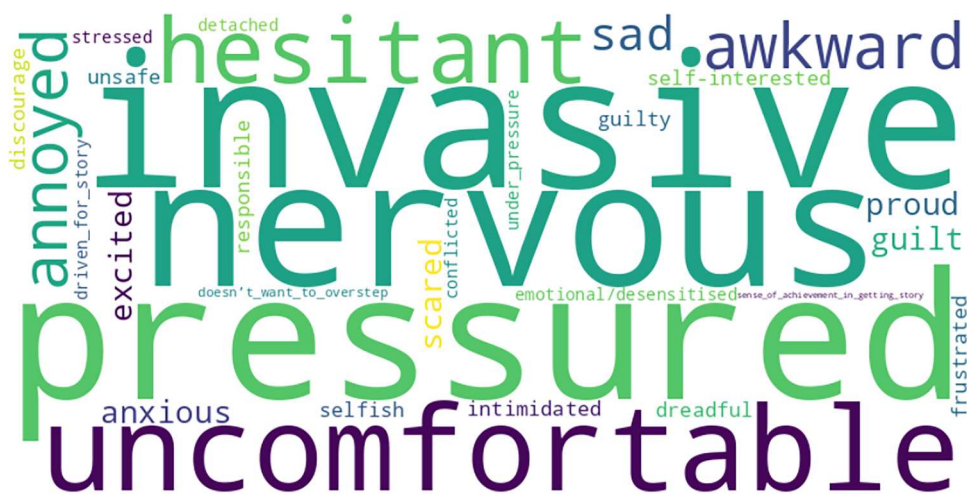


Figure 2. Students’ suggestions of journalists’ reactions to death knocks.



Figure 3. Students' suggestions of three words to describe death knocks.

Bridgerton again), she was characterised as being slightly older and a single mother, while "Molly," the journalist, was closer to their own age and reflected a lot of their hopes and fears (seen as a freelance, wanting to make a name for herself). The most unsympathetic character in the second workshop was the photographer, "Steve", who was described as a



Figure 4. Students' reaction to death knocks – just say no.

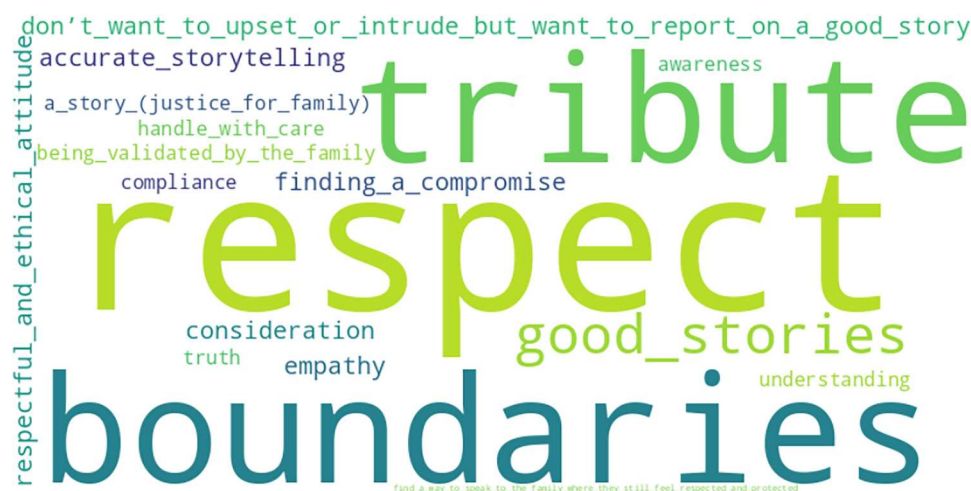


Figure 5. Students' hopes for death knocks' outcomes.

23-year-old “wannabe TMZ paparazzi” desperate for a scoop. Finally, in the third workshop, the sister “Jessica Smith” was again clearly modelled on the students’ own experiences, suggesting they identified most closely with this persona. The journalist (“Emma Reynolds”, 24, oldest sibling, eight months into her career) was presented as the most conflicted of the three journalists – “she has high aspirations – but does what the editor says ... may prioritise ethics personally but will listen to the editor”. Finally, “Max” the photographer was once again seen as an older journalist and family-friendly (Table 1).

Each group designated a spokesperson who described their created character to the other group. Much of the discussion was facilitated between students and with the lecturers during this description, and the forum theatre exercise helped students engage in the idea that these were three-dimensional characters and that both the journalist and the interviewee would not be coming to this situation without preconceptions and stresses. For example, the students decided that “Jessica” had previously lost her father: that provoked a debate about how a second tragedy in the family might have affected her and whether the journalist would know that information beforehand, and how that might also affect the questioning.

While the more confident students were the first to engage in the Forum Theatre exercise, forming a scene in which the journalist knocked on the door and tried to engage the sister in conversation. But as the scene stopped and re-ran, more of the students got involved (roughly three-quarters in each group). The use of the third person was particularly helpful here: students were more confident to engage when they felt the way they were trying to conduct the interview was how “Emma”, “Richard” or “Molly” would have done it, rather than revealing their own inexperience or less-than-ideal choices (e.g., asking the sister to comment on her brother’s deaths before they had even introduced themselves correctly).

This triggered fruitful questions from students in the final Story Circle discussion about how best to approach death knocks. These ranged from the seemingly mundane (for example, should a journalist accept a cup of tea to help bond with an interviewee in

Table 1. Students' characterisations of journalist, sister and photographer over three workshops.

Year	Journalist	Sister	Photographer
2023	Richard , male, white, 25, British, took a gap year in Bali, posh and arrogant and likes Love Island and Andrew Tate. Likes: being the best and impressing girls, going to the pub, and frequenting Soho House.	Lucy , the middle child and lash technician, has brothers named Jonathan and Mark. She wants to be a celebrity artist and work for the Kardashians. Her favourite show is Bridgerton. Biggest fear is losing her job	Felix , who is passionate and caring, has two kids, is middle class, and is British, and he watches Seaspiracy and Paw Patrol. The most important thing is caring for his kids.
2024	Molly , 25, a Virgo from Leeds. Dreams of making a name for herself as a journalist or local reporter. Interested in walking, running, and travelling. Thinks she's a foodie, but likes fish and chips, lasagne, Sunday roast, and cookie dough ice cream. Workaholic, giggly, cat woman, single, and close with family. Likes British crime shows and 'CSI'. Dresses in business casual flowery clothes.	Samantha , 41, right-leaning, reads the Mail, shops at Urban Outfitters, supports Tottenham. Single mother of a six-year-old boy, a Leo. Motivated by her son, money, and truth. Career peaked in the early 2000s, affected by the 2008 crash. Likes Naked Attraction, Bridgerton, One Day, and crime docs.	Steve , a wannabe TMZ paparazzi, 23, postgraduate, wants to get a scoop. Favourite food is a McFlurry or a fruit bag from M&S. Likes Drag Race, One Day, Money, and smug relations.
2025	Emma Reynolds , 24, the oldest sibling, 8 months into her early career, has high aspirations but follows the editor's direction. Personally prioritises ethics but listens to the editor. Supports the mining strike but is career-oriented. Her favourite is Joe and the Juice spicy tuna, brownie, matcha, and white chocolate. She feels guilt, likes walking, and is in a situationship.	Jessica Smith , 22, comes from a close-knit family with protective brothers, Kieran (rebel) and Kai (financially responsible). She is a hairdresser who wants her own salon and is single after a recent break-up. She has a Parson terrier with ginger spots named Spark. She watches Pretty Little Liars, GG (Good Game), EastEnders, and the Kardashians. She is not socially or politically aware. She is traumatised by her father's death. She Googles everything.	Max , 45, English, married with two kids, bills to pay, family to provide for. One child has an illness requiring medication. There was abuse from locals. Watches David Attenborough docs. Favourite food is fish and chips, and drinks beer and coke. Hobby is fishing. Uses Uber Eats.

the situation? Is it a good idea to say something nice about a pet dog?) to the one about journalistic norms (at what point should a journalist start a formal interview? When should the photographer come in, and what kind of "collects" [pictures from the family] should be requested?). By the end of all three workshops, many of the students who had been opposed to the idea of death knocks were open to why, in certain circumstances and approached responsibly, these might be seen as key journalistic labour.

Students then reflected on what they might do differently as a result of this. One of the key themes that emerged was about taking time to consider how best to cover the story. As one student put it:

If I were sent on a death knock assignment, there are several practical things I would do differently, based on what I've learned in this class. First, I would make sure to research the deceased and their family before attempting to approach them. This would include finding out as much as I can about the person's life and death, as well as any cultural or religious customs that might impact the way that the family would like to be approached.

Another spoke about introducing themselves in a way that creates more distance between themselves and the potential interviewee, and thus hands a modicum of control to the interviewee.

I would try to contact the bereaved person first before turning up at their door e.g., send a letter through the post or email them that I would like to speak to them.

There was also a fruitful discussion about timings in order to obtain some interviews. While there is clearly an issue with deadlines and a story being at the top of the news agenda, students also considered whether to discuss with their news editor the benefits of delaying an interview.

I would give the family adequate time to grieve before attempting to make contact. This might involve waiting sometime after the event, depending on the situation. It's important to approach the family when they are emotionally ready and willing to speak, rather than trying to force an interview too soon after their loss.

Students also reflected on the kind of questions that they would want to ask and the possible benefits that doing such an interview might have. The humanising of the subject remained a strong theme, as the following students related:

I would also ask questions which encourage the bereaved person to give the reader/ viewer an idea about who the person who died was e.g., their favourite memories with them. On the other hand, if the person was killed in a crime, spreading awareness and bringing justice to the victim could be the priority instead.

I learnt from my classmates' acting that compassion is the way forward when dealing with death knocks. Seeing how they would conduct a death knock gave me ideas on how I would carry the task out... I would be more compassionate and try to show that with body language, words and actions.

Finally, in terms of reflection on issues that had been covered earlier in the ethics module, students did articulate the conflicting loyalties between media organisations and interviewees (the need to "get the story" to please the news desk and the impact on their own careers if they chose not to); the importance of photographs; and the interaction with sources (in this case, the bereaved family). A couple mentioned in passing theoretical concepts such as utilitarianism, but the discussions tended to focus much more on what they saw as practical solutions.

Discussion

At the end of the class and in subsequent interviews, students articulated that this approach had made them consider the death knock from the bereaved person's point of view, rather than focusing on their own distaste for the work. As one student said: "Before I felt that death knocks were not a necessary thing to carry out. However, I can see that in some situations, it is important to get information out."

To begin with, the students undoubtedly found it easier to articulate the downsides for the journalist in having to do interviews like this: "high stakes," "nervousness," "responsibility," and what they wanted – getting the story," "for subjects to speak their truth," "personal achievement," "not to make things worse," but as the workshop progressed, they became interested in discussing the fact that many bereaved relatives respond positively to a death knock because they want their family member to be commemorated (Duncan and Newton 2017) – something they had not previously considered. They also started to raise wider questions than I had originally expected (e.g., asking "could I put an arm round

someone?”, “what if the media organisation has been hostile in the past?”, “how would I cope with bringing a camera in?”), which allowed wider discussions.

After the Forum Theatre exercise itself, in discussion and interviews, many students articulated that they would now have a change in approach if asked to do a death knock. One student who had been sent on such a story before said that they would do it differently:

Previously I would get a bit nervous, and I'd be like, let's get in, get out like a smash and grab, get that sound bite, go. And actually, it doesn't need to be like that ... We should take the time to kind of make sure that they're not suspicious of us. And you know, basically don't rush it don't rush any of it.

Another person, who had never had any experience of doing a death knock, raised the issue of authenticity and being honest with the interviewee.

I'm going to tell them it's my first time. It makes them, maybe both of us feel at ease cause they're also a bit uncomfortable as well. Yeah. Cause, if you kind of own the fact that you are being a bit awkward, it's more authentic.

This suggests that RQ1: *How can forum theatre aid journalism students in understanding the issues surrounding interviewing people caught up in trauma?* And RQ2: *How can forum theatre help journalism students develop better interviewing skills in trauma situations?* are addressed by allowing students to not only role-play but also take an active role in intervening in situations. This allows the students to reflect on previous approaches, look at how other journalists approach the same situation, and try out in a brave space different ways of interviewing people caught up in trauma.

As mentioned above, students talked about researching the families before approaching them – both to see if there was anything they could find out about the deceased to make their questions more apposite, but also if there were any cultural issues that might impact the way the family would like to be treated. For example, one student said that they would accept a cup of tea if it was offered. Another recognised how they could seek common ground through making conversation about the family dog or family photos on the wall. Both used those as means of creating camaraderie with “Lucy,” “Sam,” and “Jessica” in the forum theatre exercise.

This suggests that the aspects of forum theatre that lend themselves to journalistic interviewing (RQ2) may not be as the students thought previously as the “big” question asking about the deceased family member, but the smaller questions that establish a relationship and basis of trust. Similarly, the student who said that they would be honest about their lack of experience with the bereaved interviewee was something that came out of the exercise.

The students themselves were positive about taking a more creative approach to this subject. While, as noted above, there was some hesitancy and nervousness in the early part of the workshops, by the end, most students were willing to take an active role and, in particular, re-create the scene to allow themselves to “play” the part of the journalist carrying out the death knock. As one student noted:

Before the class, I was curious how a death knock worked in reality and also how all parties in the situation feel. After, I had a clearer understanding of what was involved in a death knock and the potential feelings that may arise from all those involved. ...

The students also reflected on safeguarding their own mental health if they were asked to do such a task. Students talked of being clear in their motives for doing this; for example, taking a genuine approach rather than “doing it for a promotion,” or being aware that there could be an emotional impact on the journalist themselves—something they had not considered before—and that by pressurising a potential interviewee, it could have ramifications for their own mental wellbeing as well. Students commented:

I would prioritize my own well-being and emotional health throughout the process, making sure to seek support and take breaks if needed. From this class, I learned that while death knocks can be an important part of journalism, they can also take a toll on the journalist conducting them, and it's important to have the tools and resources to manage any emotional impact that may arise.

I also appreciate the emphasis that this class has placed on the potential emotional impact that conducting a death knock can have on journalists themselves. Overall, I now have a better understanding of the importance of death knocks and the delicate nature of this aspect of journalism.

I had a clearer understanding of what was involved in a death knock and the potential feelings that may arise from all those involved, including the journalists.

However, there are limitations to this study. First, these were students who had agreed to take part in such a workshop, which suggests that they would be likely to be more engaged and take a more positive view of this. Second, this was offered as a workshop within a core module. While this has benefits, as it meant that it was open to the whole cohort to engage with if they so wished, plus it was made clear that the workshop was optional and had no bearing on the assessment. But there should be some caution around the students' statements given they are communicated to an instructor who occupies a position of authority. Finally, there needs to be careful thought about how large a group can engage with this at any one time. While Rae (2011) suggests a group of 6–8 is optimum, Mitchell and Freitag (2011) consider a much larger group more fruitful. My personal feeling is that Banks et al. (2014), who suggest a group between 6 and 20 with an optimum size of 12–16, are probably right.

Conclusion

Forum theatre has been used successfully in other education settings, such as healthcare education, and in addressing issues such as gender, homelessness, and bullying (Day 2002; Gourd and Gourd 2011; Mitchell and Freitag 2011). Meanwhile, Kumrai, Chauhan, and Hoy (2011, 527) conclude that forum theatre can bridge the gap between practice-based and academic-based learning in higher education and help balance cognitive and rational approaches to learning and reflection.

Following Kumrai, Chauhan, and Hoy (2011), I therefore recommend that these workshops could form a link between theory-based and practice-based journalism classes, in particular when considering interviewing people caught up in traumatic situations where they have lost a loved one. Students themselves said that they felt more confident about how they could prepare when being sent on these assignments, empathising with the interviewee, and by watching others, and in the discussion, they had picked up practical tips about how to navigate death knock interviews.

More research needs to be done on a wider range of students in order to validate and replicate these results. But while these workshops focused specifically on death knocks in a domestic situation, the subsequent discussions suggested that students would enjoy using these techniques on a wider basis in their degrees. For example, those who wished to become international correspondents or work in the press offices of aid agencies would find this useful when dealing with the aftermath of a humanitarian disaster; journalists who approach such survivors may not treat them as sensitively as needed (Cooper 2017).

Yet, with students increasingly reporting that interviewing generally is something that they feel nervous about (Adams 2012), a forum theatre approach where role play is utilised and situations are run and re-run could be used to help students more widely. It could be used to think about how they would go about other interview situations such as talking to MPs, public figures or even for lifestyle journalists. This would give them the confidence and empathetic ability to perform their job better.

Note

1. The Ofcom Code (section 8) is more detailed: Suffering and distress.

8.16: Broadcasters should not take, or broadcast footage or audio of people caught up in emergencies, victims of accidents or those suffering a personal tragedy, even in a public place, where that results in an infringement of privacy, unless it is warranted, or the people concerned have given consent.

8.17: People in a state of distress should not be put under pressure to take part in a programme or provide interviews, unless it is warranted.

8.18: Broadcasters should take care not to reveal the identity of a person who has died or of victims of accidents or violent crimes, unless and until it is clear that the next of kin have been informed of the event or unless it is warranted.

8.19: Broadcasters should try to reduce the potential distress to victims and/or relatives when making or broadcasting programmes intended to examine past events that involve trauma to individuals (including crime) unless it is warranted to do otherwise. This applies to dramatic reconstructions and factual dramas, as well as factual programmes.

In particular, so far as is reasonably practicable, surviving victims and/or the immediate families of those whose experience is to feature in a programme, should be informed of the plans for the programme and its intended broadcast, even if the events or material to be broadcast have been in the public domain in the past.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to River Ujhadbor for their work on the pilot workshop

Author contributions

CRedit: **Glenda Cooper:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Competing Interests

There are no competing interests to declare.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

No funding was received.

ORCID

Glenda Cooper  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2367-8626>

References

- Adams, C. 2021. "News on Stage: Towards Re-configuring Journalism Through Theatre to a Public Sphere." *Journalism Practice* 15 (8): 1163–1180.
- Adams, C., and G. Cooper. 2024. "'I Felt I Got to Know Everyone': How News on Stage Combines Theatre and Journalism for a Live Audience." *Journalism Practice* 18 (3): 744–761. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2052345>
- Adams, S. 2012. *Interviewing for Journalists*. London: Routledge.
- Anderson, S., and Robinson. 2023. *Cardiff Car Crash: Three People Found Dead in Hunt for Five Missing After 40 h* Mail Online. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11824991/Three-people-dead-hunt-five-missing-people-South-Wales-car-crash.html> [Accessed 19 October 2023].
- Bakhtin, M. M. 2010. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, A., M. Hanna, and K. Sanders. 2006. "What British Journalism Students Think about Ethics and Journalism." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 61 (1): 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580606100105>
- Banks, S., F. Rifkin, H. Davidson, C. Holmes, and N. Moore. 2014. *Performing Ethics: Using Participatory Theatre to Explore Ethical Issues in Community-Based Participatory Research*. Available at: <https://dro.dur.ac.uk/17720/1/17720.pdf> [accessed 2 Sept 2022].
- BERA. 2018. *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. Available at: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018> [accessed 31 August 2022].
- Bernbaum, J. 2010. *What They Said: Verbatim Theatre's Relationship to Journalism*. Doctoral dissertation, Carleton University.
- Boal, A. 2005. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. London: Routledge.
- Boal, A. 2014. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Routledge.
- Breed, W. 1955. "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis." *Social Forces* 33 (4): 326–335. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2573002>
- Coffee, S. 2011. "Exploring Creativity through Freelance Journalism: Testing out the Systems Model." *Altitude: An e-Journal of Emerging Humanities Work* 9:1–16.
- Cooper, C. 2004. "'A Struggle Well Worth Having': The Uses of Theatre-in-Education (TIE) for Learning." *Support for Learning* 19 (2): 81–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0268-2141.2004.00325.x>
- Cooper, G. 2012. "Facing up to the Ethical Uses of Facebook." In *The Phone Hacking Scandal: Journalism on Trial*, edited by R. Keeble and J. Mair, 353–230. Bury St. Edmunds: Abramis.
- Cooper, G. 2017. *Virtual Doorstep: Journalists, Social Media and the Victims of Tragedy*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/virtual-doorstep-journalists-social-media-and-the-victims-of-tragedy-78357> [Accessed: 3 August 2021].
- Cooper, G. 2018. *Reporting Humanitarian Disasters in a Social Media Age*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Day, L. 2002. "'Putting Yourself in Other People's Shoes': The use of Forum Theatre to Explore Refugee and Homeless Issues in Schools." *Journal of Moral Education* 31 (1): 21–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240120111418>

- Detenber, B. H., M. Cenite, S. Malik, and R. L. Neo. 2012. "Examining Education and Newsroom Work Experience as Predictors of Communication Students' Perceptions of Journalism Ethics." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 67 (1): 45–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695811428884>
- Dracup, M. 2012. "Designing Online Role Plays With a Focus on Story Development to Support Engagement and Critical Learning for Higher Education." *Journal of Learning Design* 5 (2): 12–24. <https://doi.org/10.5204/jld.v5i2.104>
- Duncan, S. 2012. "Sadly Missed: The Death Knock News Story as a Personal Narrative of Grief." *Journalism* 13 (5): 589–603. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884911431542>
- Duncan, S., and J. Newton. 2017. *Reporting bad News: Negotiating the Boundaries between Intrusion and Fair Representation* (No. 1). New York: Peter Lang AG.
- Dwyer, P. 2004. "Making Bodies Talk in Forum Theatre." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 9 (2): 199–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1356978042000255076>
- Eberholst, M. K., J. M. Hartley, and M. B. Olsen. 2016. "Between Ideals and Practice." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 71 (2): 189–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695815626302>
- Flores, H. 2000. "From Freire to Boal." *Education Links* 61:41–42.
- Freire, P. 2009. "From Pedagogy of the Oppressed." *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 2 (2): 163–174.
- Fulford, R. 1999. *The Triumph of Narrative: Storytelling in the age of Mass Culture*. Toronto: House of Anansi.
- Galletta, A., and M. Torre. 2019. "Participatory Action Research in Education." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, edited by K. Hytten. <https://doi.org/10.1093/9780197851425.001.0001> [Accessed 24 March 2026].
- Gourd, K. M., and T. Y. Gourd. 2011. "Enacting Democracy: Using Forum Theatre to Confront Bullying." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 44 (3): 403–419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2011.589275>
- Hamada, R. 2020. Taking a story full circle. Available at: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/blog/2020-01-10/taking-a-story-full-circle> [Accessed: 2 August 2021].
- Hearns-Branaman, J. O. 2022. "Teaching Gatekeeping Theory through Role-Play Activities." In *Journalism Pedagogy in Transitional Countries*, edited by D. Garrisi and X. Kuang, 47–64. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Hesmondhalgh, D., and S. Baker. 2013. *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Huxford, J. E., and K. M. Hopper. 2020. "Reporting With Emotion: A Comparison of Journalists' Engagement in Emotional Labour across Media Types." *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies* 9 (1): 39–60.
- Jukes, S. 2017. "Affective Journalism—Uncovering the Affective Dimension of Practice in the Coverage of Traumatic News." Doctoral dissertation, Goldsmiths, University of London.
- Kemmis, S. 2006. "Participatory Action Research and the Public Sphere." *Educational Action Research* 14 (4): 459–476. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790600975593>
- Kumrai, R. R., V. Chauhan, and J. Hoy. 2011. "Boundary Crossings: Using Participatory Theatre as a Site for Deepening Learning." *Teaching in Higher Education* 16 (5): 517–528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2011.570443>
- Maxson, J. 2000. "Training Journalism Students to Deal With Trauma: Observing Reporters Behave Like 'Creeps'." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 55 (1): 79–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580005500109>
- McCalib, P. T. 1968. "Role-Playing Can Provide "Real" Experiences in Journalism Classes." *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (2): 339–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769906804500222>
- Mcintyre, A. 2008. *Participatory Action Research*. Thousand Oaks California: Sage.
- Middlewick, Y., T. J. Kettle, and J. J. Wilson. 2012. "Curtains up! Using Forum Theatre to Rehearse the art of Communication in Healthcare Education." *Nurse Education in Practice* 12 (3): 139–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2011.10.010>
- Mitchell, K. S., and J. L. Freitag. 2011. "Forum Theatre for Bystanders." *Violence against Women* 17 (8): 990–1013. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801211417152>

- Newton, J., and S. Duncan. 2012. "Hacking into Tragedy: Exploring the Ethics of Death Reporting in the Social Media age." In *The Phone Hacking Scandal: Journalism on Trial*, edited by R. Keeble and J. Mair, 208–219. Bury St. Edmunds: Abramis.
- Newton, J., and S. Duncan. 2014. "Journalists and the Bereaved: Constructing a Positive Approach to the Teaching of Death Reporting." *Journalism Education* 1 (2): 59–67.
- Nordentoft, H. M., and B. R. Olesen. 2023. "Should I Intervene or Not? Reflexive Learning in Forum Theatre: A Peer Dialogue on a Facilitator's Dilemma." *Teaching in Higher Education* 28 (6): 1412–1427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1900812>.
- Olesen, B. R. 2021. "Should I Have Said 'No'? Critical Reflections on Tensions in Forum Theater." *International Review of Qualitative Research* 14 (3): 483–496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940844720948074>
- Olesen, L. B. R., and H. M. Nordentoft. 2013. "Walking the Talk?: A Micro-Sociological Approach to the Co-production of Knowledge and Power in Action Research." *International Journal of Action Research* 9 (1): 67–95.
- Postema, S., and M. Deuze. 2020. "Artistic Journalism: Confluence in Forms, Values and Practices." *Journalism Studies* 21 (10): 1305–1322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1745666>
- Rae, J. 2011. A Study of the Use of Organisational Theatre: The Case of Forum Theatre (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University). Available at: <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/3268/> [Accessed 25 June 2026].
- Richards, B. 2007. *Emotional Governance: Politics, Media and Terror*, 57–71. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richards, B., and G. Rees. 2011. "The Management of Emotion in British Journalism." *Media, Culture & Society* 33 (6): 851–867. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443711411005>
- Sanders, K., M. Hanna, M. R. Berganza, and J. J. Sánchez Aranda. 2008. "Becoming Journalists." *European Journal of Communication* 23 (2): 133–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323108089219>
- Simpson, R. 1995. "Enhancing Empathy in the Trauma Victim Interview: What Was Learned from Journalism Students." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the association for education in journalism and mass communication (78th), Washington, D.C., August 1–12, 1995.
- Singer, J. 2004. "More than ink-Stained Wretches. The Resocialisation of Print Journalists in Converged Newsrooms." *Mass Communication Quarterly* 81 (4): 838–856.
- Stanley, E., and L. Horsburgh. 2023. Nicola Bulley: Ofcom 'Extremely Concerned' by Family Media Complaints. BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-64713045> [Accessed 19 October 2023].
- Sullivan, J., and R. S. Lloyd. 2006. "The Forum Theatre of Augusto Boal: A Dramatic Model for Dialogue and Community-Based Environmental Science." *Local Environment* 11 (6): 627–646. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549830600853684>
- Tacchi, J. 2020. "Digital Engagement: Voice and Participation in Development." In *Digital Anthropology*, edited by H. Horst and D. Miller, 225–241. London: Routledge.
- Tulloch, C. D., and L. Mas i Manchon. 2018. "The Classroom Is the Newsroom: CNA: A Wire Service Journalism Training Model to Bridge the Theory versus Practice Dichotomy." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 73 (1): 37–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695816686590>
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. 2020. "An Emotional Turn in Journalism Studies?" *Digital Journalism* 8 (2): 175–194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1697626>
- Willis, J. 2009. *The Mind of a Journalist: How Reporters View Themselves, Their World, and Their Craft*. London: Sage Publications.
- Witschge, T., M. Deuze, and S. Willemsen. 2019. "Creativity in (Digital) Journalism Studies: Broadening Our Perspective on Journalism Practice." *Digital Journalism* 7 (7): 972–979. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1609373>
- Wright, K. 2011. "Reality Without Scare Quotes." *Journalism Studies* 12 (2): 156–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2010.509569>