

STAFF NORMS

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As interpersonal connections grow, so will productivity, quality, and work ethic. We can debate newspaper sizes and classroom set-ups for ages,, but what makes the most difference is behavioral. Fostering any inclusive, tight-knit environment needs a practical framework. Here are a few of my ideas we can start out with!

In this proposal:

1. Focus on community and culture
2. Specialization
3. Communication

➤ Focus: Community, culture

- Design lesson (starting 11.8.2018)
 - What: Learn how to use InDesign, work with our squads. This model can be applied in the future to Bootcamp beyond design - returners can work with new staffers.
 - Why: In order to specialize, staff members must a) know how to design properly, and b) see if they enjoy or are good at it.
 - How:
 - Mentees for each group sit in close proximity. Mentors will hover around them at all times (even more than usual!) to give specific instructions and answer any questions.
 - OC will go through the design lesson step by step. Instructions on how to create a page, set up the dimensions, format the basic elements, etc.
 - Every so often, we will need “checkpoints”
 - OC will ask staff to, for example, upload a picture of a dog into a oval-shaped frame, or paste some text from Google Docs with justified spacing and proper indentations. It will be a mini-evaluation - we will NOT walk through the steps!
 - Mentors will step back, observe where the gaps are, bring everyone back up to tempo.
 - When: First lesson 11.8.2018, but a similar strategy which is both teacher- and mentor-led can be incredibly useful in the future.
- True Colors Personality Test Activity
 - What: Better understand our own preferred learning styles, become aware of differences throughout the staff, and start working and thinking collaboratively.

- Why: We need to promote a staff culture. This definitely doesn't cover that, but it's a good step to take in understanding inclinations and strengths.
- How:
 - Give every staff member a copy of the Test to fill out (approx. 5-10 minutes).
 - Instructions: across each row, rank what fits you best ranging from 4 (this sounds just like me!) to 1 (this isn't me at all). Not all the adjectives have to fit - just get an overall sense of the box. When you're done with all five rows, add up the scores as instructed in the boxes at the bottom. Remember, it's not what you aspire to be but what you are.
 - Printable test: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=134RGmH9F4nc1KozaMqL7NrnFla20LUPy>
 - Separate the class into the four color quadrants. Let every group come up with adjectives that describe their learning style, what excites or epitomizes them, etc.
 - Answers <https://truecolorsintl.com/what-is-true-colors/>
 - Regroup as a class, summarize the traits for orange, green, blue, and gold.
 - Line up numerically from highest to lowest in each color group.
 - e.g. Gold: 16, 15, 15, 13, 10...
 - Discussion: What WORKS/DOESN'T WORK for you in a news cycle? What's your biggest pet peeve when working in a team?
 - Hand in worksheets.
 - Optional: use data to create graphical representations to share in the classroom.
 - In the future: incorporate color traits into discussions. What will help you to make this job easier as a blue? Or what is the best way to figure this out using the mindset as a gold?
 - Objective: better mutual understanding and collaboration.
- When: Sometime within the next two weeks. Takes less than one class session.
- A typical work day schedule
 - Most days will be loud and boisterous and exciting and productive. Some days we will need to devote to silent work time.
 - Editors: all up! Everyone up!
 - When sitting to work, editors will need to be positioned throughout the room.
 - More in the "Expectations" proposal
 - Try to enforce a rule of not doing outside homework

➤ Specialization

- What: Dividing the staff into individualized roles for each issue. They may want to do something they enjoy, or try something new.
- Why: Why did mass production work so well for increased quality and quantity? Parts specialization. If it works for nearly every business and institution on Earth, there's no reason we should aim for something different.
- Why, part 2: Currently, our system is spread incredibly thin. A few people are trying to manage a lot, and we end up with horizontal work. It's surface level, and could be much better. Specialization allows us to go vertical at more points, carve out with better, deeper quality, in less time, ultimately shortening the news cycle.
- How:
 - Divided into three sections: Reporters/Designers/Photography, Social Media, and Advertising Team
 - Reporters: our beloved writers!
 - Designers: will likely focus on creating a queue of online pieces in the first part of the cycle before transitioning to print design for the majority of the cycle.
 - Photography, Social Media, and Advertising: would have to-do lists with expectations, or missions of what needs to be accomplished. Dependable jacks-of-all-trades, if you will.
 - Grades are not based wholly on drafts, but workload in an allotted amount of time.
 - For example, a Reporter's first deadline would be a draft, with the interview transcript.
 - A deadline for a Designer could be:
 - Half an in-print infographic
 - Two online pieces
 - A deadline for a Photography, Social Media and Advertising Staffer might be:
 - Reach out to five businesses and sell at least one ad.
 - Set up a standalone fundraiser.
 - Write two timely and two timeless social media posts with accompanying photos.
 - At the beginning of each issue, see what stories need what to be done. (Infographics, interviews...)
 - Will first be outlined in an editor's meeting, will then be extended to an in-class discussion
 - Lay out the open positions. We need x writers, y designers, etc. Staffers will sign up based on interests for that issue. If they don't choose, they will be assigned as necessary.
 - I must reiterate that this does not limit any staffers! If someone wants to write AND design, we will HELP them achieve that in a timely, well-executed fashion. Anyone can absolutely do what they choose to, in addition to initial volunteered/assigned plans.

➤ Communication

- Two-minute standing updates (Monday)
 - Verbally, in mentor/mentee squads, after main-group announcements
 - What is the last thing you did?/What do you need to do?/How will you do it?
 - Opportunity to catch up, plus keep accountability!
- Exit slips (Wednesday)
 - We may start with weekly Wednesday slips, but the frequency can be increased
 - I need to do.../How will I accomplish this?/When will I do it by?/Do I need any help?
 - Editors will look at exit slips outside of class to gauge the speed of things
 - This can count as a grade, as well as a way to keep staff on track in the middle of the week. If they set a deadline and it's not met...
- Permanent clipboards/bulletin board
 - Daily/weekly agendas
 - To-do lists, down to specifics
 - e.g. "I need help with this one cheerleading caption - identify, get a quote" - someone can then take care of it
 - Can be organized by:
 - News/Opinion/Feature/Sports/Online/Miscellaneous
 - Interviews/Writing/Design/Photography/Advertising
- GroupMe
 - Entire class group chat
 - Mentor/mentee group chats
 - Possible writing/design team group chats - would vary for each issue
 - Photo updates of clipboards/bulletin board
- Other potential options
 - Slack, Discord, Trello
 - Paper chain links - a unique idea, perhaps more useful to incorporate into YB