

Audio file

[Episode 3 Student Journalism](#)

Transcript

00:00:00 Kimberly Inman

ChatGPT launched in late November 2022, and by January 2023 it had reached over 100 million users. From that launch date, competing generative AI platforms have exploded and been on the minds of students and teachers alike ever since.

00:00:19 Kimberly Inman

What are their concerns? What are the benefits? Is this the end of human intelligence and creativity?

00:00:26 Kimberly Inman

How do we foster critical thinking and innovation in the era of reliance on artificial intelligence?

00:00:34 Kimberly Inman

Welcome to Connecting Classrooms, a podcast for educators and their students that brings experts at Shawnee State University directly to your classroom. I'm your host, Kimberly Inman, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at SSU.

00:00:48 Kimberly Inman

In this series, you will hear from my colleagues who love to share their passion for teaching and research.

00:00:54 Kimberly Inman

We seek to support teachers with supplemental resources for their lessons and to inspire their students to want to learn more. In this episode, "Student Journalism: Developing Skills for a Lifetime," I'm excited to welcome Doctor Christy Zempter and current SSU History major Hannah

00:01:10 Kimberly Inman

Kline.

00:01:11 Kimberly Inman

Doctor Zempter is Assistant Professor of Communication and the faculty advisor for SSU Student news site the Chronicle. Hannah is also pursuing a journalism minor, currently taking the Advanced News Writing and Reporting class, and has published about a dozen stories for the Chronicle. As folks rely more on generative AI,

00:01:32 Kimberly Inman

Doctor Zempter and Hannah have been exploring how journalism builds the creative, evaluative, and analytical skills that distinguish our graduates in an increasingly artificial and virtual world.

00:01:45 Kimberly Inman

Now let's connect with Doctor Zempter and Hannah.

00:01:50 Christy Zempter

Journalism, especially local journalism, has long been a means not only of keeping members of the community informed about what's going on around them, but also a way of creating and sustaining a sense of community before social media, obituaries and wedding and birth announcements in the local newspaper kept us connected to our neighbors and the major events of their lives.

00:02:11 Christy Zempter

The sports section helped us follow the struggles and successes of our high school teams.

00:02:16 Christy Zempter

And the front page took us into the workings of our local governments and the events and trends that affected our daily lives.

00:02:23 Christy Zempter

A strong argument has been made that local journalism is even more important in the social media age to build community cohesion in a time of increasing polarization and to provide verifiable information through responsible reporting.

00:02:37 Christy Zempter

But the benefits of journalism don't extend only to the audience. Journalists themselves build highly sought transferable skills in the reporting and writing processes.

00:02:48 Christy Zempter

So student journalism, the kind Shawnee State students practice at our news site, the Chronicle,

00:02:53 Christy Zempter

is a great way for young people to gain communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills that they can apply in virtually any career they choose to pursue.

00:03:04 Christy Zempter

As the faculty advisor for the Chronicle, I get to work with great students from a range of majors every semester as they build those skills.

00:03:12 Christy Zempter

Hannah Kline is one of our current Chronicle staff writers, and she's had about a dozen stories published during her time in our two news writing classes here at SSU.

00:03:20 Christy Zempter

I'm happy to have her here today to provide her perspective on that experience as a student.

00:03:26 Christy Zempter

Hannah, do you mind telling us a little bit about yourself? Maybe your major, your hometown, and anything else you'd like to

00:03:31 Hannah Kline

Share. Sure I am a History major and I am minoring in both Journalism and British Literature.

00:03:41 Hannah Kline

I am from Lucasville technically, but it's pretty much Minford.

00:03:47 Christy Zempter

I'm also from Minford, so that's a nice coincidence. So, Hannah, can you tell us a little bit about what motivated you to pursue the Journalism minor here at Shawnee State?

00:03:57 Hannah Kline

Whenever I first came to Shawnee, I didn't know what I wanted to do. And I was in the General Ed program for my first two years and I

00:04:07 Hannah Kline

was advised to think about what I really wanted to do and what I enjoyed. And I realized I started taking a lot of history classes and I realized that history was what I was passionate about.

00:04:21 Hannah Kline

So, when I was talking about possible careers, I brought up librarian and my advisor said my advisor asked me what I thought about minors that would help with my career path that would fill it out a lot better. And she mentioned journalism.

00:04:41 Hannah Kline

And I said, hey, that sounds nice. And as I got to start writing in your class, I realized that journalism is pretty much what I do in my everyday life because I am so nitpicky about the questions I ask and I'm so

00:04:58 Hannah Kline

specific about what I want to ask. I have to write it down. So I love that process of having the questions I want to ask already written down and ready to go out and ask the people and get the answers I'm looking for.

00:05:10 Christy Zempter

Awesome. That's great, Hannah.

00:05:12 Christy Zempter

What do you think you've enjoyed the most about the news, writing and reporting classes that you've

00:05:16 Hannah Kline

been taking? Definitely getting - being able to explore a lot of local events, a lot of stuff I probably wouldn't have attended. I'm not in Portsmouth that much at the moment, only on usually Tuesdays and Thursdays because that's the

00:05:33 Hannah Kline

majority of my class load.

00:05:36 Hannah Kline

And being able to go out and write these stories and have a reason to be out here and go to the farmers market and beer fest and all those places has been really wonderful to get to know a little bit about the community that I wasn't really aware.

00:05:50 Hannah Kline

of until I took your class.

00:05:52 Christy Zempter

What kinds of challenges have you experienced in the reporting process for your stories?

00:05:57 Hannah Kline

I would say the major one would be having to get over my fear of

00:06:03 Hannah Kline

just going up and asking people for interviews or even emailing them.

00:06:07 Hannah Kline

Whenever COVID hit, I isolated myself a lot and got really scared about just talking to people. So going out into the world again has been a great reward and challenge at the same time.

00:06:22 Christy Zempter

Yeah, I think that is definitely one of the one of the skills that we build as journalists is just those social skills, the capacity to to get over our shyness and have conversations with people. So again, building those communication skills, those oral communication skills as well as written communication skills.

00:06:42 Christy Zempter

So I want to focus on one particular story that you wrote actually last semester in the initial news writing class.

00:06:49 Christy Zempter

And that story really focused on faculty and student perspectives on the use of generative AI platforms like ChatGPT. How did you come up with the the idea for for that particular story?

00:07:02 Hannah Kline

ChatGPT. I was thinking about planning my stories ahead of time about what I wanted to research and be able to publish.

00:07:15 Hannah Kline

And...

00:07:16 Hannah Kline

I thought, well, what's a great way to brainstorm things? And ChatGPT came to mind. So, I put in ChatGPT, "What are some good story ideas?" And the very first one that popped up was a story on AI. And I'm like, you know what, AI? You're right. A story on AI would be great.

00:07:36 Hannah Kline

So that's what set it in

00:07:37 Hannah Kline

motion.

00:07:38 Christy Zempter

Ohh and it did turn out to be a great story.

00:07:41 Christy Zempter

And the reporting process for that story was pretty interesting for you. So, in addition to actually interviewing faculty and students about their opinions about the use of generative AI like ChatGPT, you actually put together a survey and distributed a survey to get a broader sense of people's opinions on Shawnee State University's campus -

00:08:01 Christy Zempter

about the use of generative AI in academic contexts. Can we just kind of walk through the reporting process for that story? So, can we start by talking about how you developed that survey and how you distributed it, how you got it out to folks to get their responses?

00:08:16 Hannah Kline

Yeah. So one of my

00:08:19 Hannah Kline

major questions I wanted to ask so top question I had to ask was what class are you in? Because I felt that maybe that was going to be a big distribution about maybe the older, older students thought that you shouldn't use it because they maybe weren't as used to it as younger students.

00:08:38 Hannah Kline

And I found out that wasn't quite the case.

00:08:41 Hannah Kline

In fact, I found out that there was an equivalent of 13 freshmen and 13 seniors that all varied within their opinions about AI. When it came to distributing the survey, I relied mostly on the SSU app, but then I also happened to be with Chandler, who was another writer, and was a distributor of “Bear Buzz,”

00:09:02 Hannah Kline

which went out every Monday to students and staff.

00:09:05 Hannah Kline

So his link to my survey also helped with responses a lot. And that was my two main sources of income for my survey.

00:09:16 Christy Zempter

OK, so how did you identify the specific people that you wanted to interview and get a more in-depth response from?

00:09:24 Hannah Kline

My last question on my survey was just asking if anybody wanted to be interviewed. I didn't really care if they had a negative or positive. The survey was anonymous unless you added your e-mail, so I wouldn't know who you are or what you answered unless your e-mail popped up at the bottom of the questionnaire.

00:09:41 Hannah Kline

And I ended up having nine responses, so I ended up having nine people that I interviewed that were just students cause I also went on to interview 2 professors as well.

00:09:54 Christy Zempter

OK. So then once you had all that information, you had the data from the survey you had the responses from the people that you interviewed. How did you then

00:10:02 Christy Zempter

organize all of that information together to create your final story?

00:10:06 Hannah Kline

I try my best to rely on the inverted pyramid where I put the major information at the top and some of like the smaller details that maybe if you weren't reading all the way to the bottom, it wouldn't really matter. But if you do read it, I hope you read to the end.

00:10:21 Hannah Kline

So, I started with how many participants I had and then I broke down into the different thoughts about what students had, and I tried to get a little bit of the positive, a little bit of negative and also what the professors thought majorly on their students usage of AI and their own opinions about it.

00:10:41 Christy Zempter

So what in addition to the AI story, I presume. It was one of my favorites, so I'm going to presume it was one of your favorites too. What other stories have been your favorite stories to work on?

00:10:47 Hannah Kline

Thank you.

00:10:52 Hannah Kline

I've loved all of the history ones that

00:10:54 Hannah Kline

I have done.

00:10:55 Hannah Kline

A lot of the stuff I heard about through Dr. Andrew Feight and would follow up on that for a story.

00:11:04 Hannah Kline

But I also, like I said before, getting to go to the community-based stories that I did this the events like the farmers market and Beer Fest, and I even went to the Flatwoods event in Kentucky.

00:11:17 Hannah Kline

A lot of that was just fun to just interact with small businesses and vendors and get to see

00:11:21 Hannah Kline

what

00:11:23 Hannah Kline

what their perspective was from how they set up, and what they were selling, and what they expected and everything like that.

00:11:30 Christy Zempter

You just mentioned enjoying covering events related to history, local programs around local history and things like that. And as a History major, that's certainly understandable. But have you learned anything through reporting those stories that you wouldn't otherwise have known about? Some of these events or some of these historical

00:11:50 Christy Zempter

Time periods through the that process of interviewing people and and conducting the reporting for your stories?

00:11:57 Hannah Kline

Sure. So as I said before, a lot of the information I got through Dr. Andrew

00:12:01 Hannah Kline

Feight. But then there was also certain spots around Portsmouth related to the Underground Railroad that seeing those places in person... on I have a story about the Underground Railroad and just the tour that Dr. Feight took some people through. And he will also be doing it on February 24th...

00:12:23 Hannah Kline

So,

00:12:25 Hannah Kline

being able to actually look at those buildings and see where conductors would help runaway slaves, or "freedom seekers," as they are now known as.

00:12:34 Hannah Kline

It was really impactful to be able to see that and report on that and know that their stories are getting memorialized and known today, even though the historical record was severely lacking back in the day.

00:12:47 Christy Zempter

So kind of on the flip side, how much do you feel like being a History major kind of helped you in the research processes for these stories, especially the ones that had a connection to local history?

00:12:59 Hannah Kline

So, the Scioto Historical is a big website slash app that I relied on when researching a lot of this, so a lot of my pictures I would, with permission from Dr. Feight, use in my stories and be able to pull some information if I was looking for like a little bit more that

00:13:20 Hannah Kline

maybe wasn't said.

00:13:21 Hannah Kline

For my story, I would pull some bits from that and it's really reliable and based for Scioto County, so it was very important for me to be able to use that.

00:13:31 Christy Zempter

Yeah. So a good source of background information for your stories.

Hannah Kline

Yes.

00:13:37 Christy Zempter

What specific skills or knowledge do you think you've gained from the news writing and reporting classes?

00:13:43 Hannah Kline

Like I said before, definitely being able to

00:13:47 Hannah Kline

be comfortable with talking to people and asking people for interviews and stuff like that. Which if you're not a reporter, obviously you're not going to be asking people for interviews usually, but it's still a good skill to have just in general, especially if you're a very shy person like I am.

00:14:04 Hannah Kline

And being able to just get out there and do that has been nice, but also just learning a whole new writing style has been very interesting. I never thought twice about every single news source having AP style as what they write about. And now whenever I see it, I'm like ohh that that all that stuff does line up with every single other news source.

00:14:24 Hannah Kline

They follow the exact same format, or sometimes they don't and then I

00:14:28 Hannah Kline

make fun of them.

00:14:31 Christy Zempter

So how have you used some of those skills in other contexts? Or I know you're looking forward to potentially being a librarian. How do you imagine you might use some of the skills that you've built through your student journalism in your profession as a librarian?

00:14:46 Hannah Kline

Definitely being able to help patrons with either, whether that be writing style or research.

00:14:52 Hannah Kline

I feel like I've definitely gained a lot of knowledge on being able to back up information and sources and everything. So, if I talk to somebody and they say,

00:15:03

“Well,

00:15:04 Hannah Kline

this is going to happen *this* place.” Well, I can go figure out - Is it really that place and is it really

00:15:10 Hannah Kline

that

00:15:10 Hannah Kline

time? So I feel like that's very important to be able to verify.

00:15:14 Hannah Kline

Which is one of the top things that we learn that we need to.

00:15:16 Christy Zempter

So, yeah, I will absolutely verify that, as

00:15:21 Christy Zempter

the advisor of the Chronicle, being able to verify information, confirm that the information that you have is accurate is a fundamental skill that you really need to build to be a good journalist. But I think also it's a skill that will benefit you in a lot of different situations as well.

00:15:38 Christy Zempter

So just to wrap up now, Hannah, can you tell me what kind of advice you might give to a student who might be debating whether or not to participate or to get involved with the Chronicle or with the student news organization in their in their own high school?

00:15:52 Hannah Kline

I would say definitely just go for it. Just do it. You will enjoy it a lot. You will build your social skills. You will be able to be more confident and also just get your writing out there in the world, which is something I never even thought about even doing whenever I first came to Shawnee. And now I've got

00:16:12 Hannah Kline

several stories that anybody in the world can read, but especially the community,

00:16:18 Hannah Kline

has seen and has seen my name attached to the stories. It's just unbelievable.

00:16:23 Christy Zempter

Yeah. So that I think is another just kind of nice benefit for students to actually have published stories out in the world that people can read. Thank you so much, Hannah. As our conversation indicates, the Chronicle and other student news organizations are great

00:16:38 Christy Zempter

sites for hands on learning.

00:16:40 Christy Zempter

But even in high schools without a formal outlet for student journalism activities and exercises that draw on the basic practices of journalism can be built into classes ranging from English to History to even natural sciences, like Biology.

00:16:54 Christy Zempter

We placed links on the Connecting Classrooms website to resources from Journalism Plus Design and Science News Learning that can help teachers who are interested in exploring student journalism in their own classes.

00:17:07 Kimberly Inman

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00:17:28 Kimberly Inman

R. Beery.