

# Midcareer Training of Journalists: Evaluating Its Impact on Journalistic Work

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## **Midcareer Training of Journalists: Evaluating Its Impact on Journalistic Work**

Journalists around the world, and particularly in Western countries, participate in a variety of training programs once they begin employment. These programs—often referred to as midcareer training—can be offered by the employer, by formal educational institutions, or by independent training organizations. In some countries, journalists enjoy the right to training as a result of contracts and labor legislation. The training can be for a variety of skills related to journalistic performance.

Despite the prominence of these training programs for working journalists, they have received little attention in the literature on journalism education and journalistic work. As a consequence, little is known about their effectiveness. Yet there is much speculation, particularly among those who offer these programs, that they do, in fact, have impact.

Proponents of midcareer training argue that journalists who participate in them actually acquire new skills and that they use these new skills on the job (see, for example, Thien, 1993). Journalists who participate in these programs are expected to be more highly motivated and to perform differently from those who do not, to gain stature in the newsroom, and to advance in their careers. In addition, the trained journalists are expected to share their experiences with others in the newsroom, resulting in improved performance of the news organization at which they are employed. In this way, the actual practice of journalism should be improved.

This paper reports on the evaluation of two journalistic training programs operating in the United States. One is designed to internationalize the experience of U.S. journalists through exposure to experts in an international setting. The second is designed to improve the ability of reporters to cover health and medical issues. The second program had two components: a two-week, intensive program and a four-month-long in-depth program. The programs are treated as exemplars. Any evidence of their impact supports arguments about the value of these training programs for journalistic practice.

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### **Literature Review**

Winter (1993) listed five objectives for newspaper training: improving jobs skills, preparing for new assignments, providing job enrichment, preparing for special assignments or handling special projects, and renewing employees' enthusiasm (p. 155). Most of those five objectives could be applied to mid-career job training across media industries. The evidence is that journalists actually want more training opportunities. Hart (1990) said journalists expect more from their jobs and want satisfaction from their work and that midcareer training opportunities offer a "way to recharge their motivation, sustain interest and avoid burnout" (p. 41). Russ-Mohl (1993, p. 11) said journalists are interested in continuing education for professional growth and self-realization. The consensus of those who have written on the topic is that while training offers personal benefits to the individual reporters, the employers that offer more training also benefit. In fact, in this view, training benefits the individual, the media employer and the entire industry.

Several studies designed to find out from journalists what they want from their jobs found that training is a top priority. Ramsey (1990) sent a survey to journalists asking them which areas they were interested in receiving more education. The categories included economics, ethics, international affairs, legal topics, and science. The science category included health topics. The top three choices for midcareer training were health care, health care economics, and the environment. The environment category included health-related issues such as pesticides, toxic waste and waste disposal. Voss (2002) in a survey of mid-Western health reporters, found that 83 percent said they had no training. The respondents identified several key issues that they found particularly difficult: understanding key health issues, putting the news in context, writing balanced stories, and analyzing statistics. Voss (2003) argues that health reporters get coverage wrong because they lack necessary job training. Detjen, Fico, Xigen, Li and Kim (2000) found similar results in a study of environmental reporters. More than 60 percent of the respondents said training was their greatest need. Newspaper reporters were more likely to say training was a major need than reporters working for magazines or newsletters. Overall, Detjen, Fico, Xigen, Li

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and Kim (2000) found that fewer than half of the respondents reported having specific training to cover environmental issues.

Newton (1993), in a survey of newspaper journalists throughout the United States, found that journalists generally, not just those in special beats, wanted training, however, they were not receiving it. The study found that regular training being offered at newspapers helped with the basics, such as writing, reporting, and editing. Training even in those areas was scarce, however, and there was even less training offered for more specialized topics such as the environment and medicine. Half of the respondents said they preferred outside training programs to internal ones. The Knight Foundation (2003), in a follow-up to The Freedom Forum's study, found that journalists cited lack of training as their number-one source of job dissatisfaction. More than two-thirds of the journalists in the country said they do not receive regular training. According to the study, the media industry made steps toward offering more training in the decade between the two studies, but the report concluded that journalists were still ill-equipped for their assignments. The Knight Foundation report estimates that American companies in general spend about two percent of their payroll for training, while the news industry spent about half that.

Newton (1993) estimated it would cost \$107.2 million to send every journalist working at a daily newspaper in the country to an outside training program (p.15). That represents about one percent of the revenue collected through advertising every year in the newspaper industry. If 20 percent of the workforce left over a span of five years, it would cost the industry about \$100 million. In other words, it would cost about the same amount to replace a fifth of the workforce as it would cost to develop and better satisfy the staff members it already has in place (p. 15).

The range of training programs offered to journalists in the U.S. and Europe, at least, is quite broad (Buchloh and Russ-Mohl, 1993; Russ-Mohl, 1994). Included are study-trips for journalists in France, week-long residential training on editing in the United Kingdom, language training for Danish journalists taught in the countries where the languages are spoken, and immersion seminars of seven-

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weeks in length in Italy. In Denmark, journalists have won the right to training as part of their union contracts.

While, at present, there is little direct evidence that midcareer training actually impacts the work of journalists, indirect evidence exists. Becker and Lowrey (2000) reported that journalism training programs in 11 countries around the world had impact on working journalists there. In addition, Becker, McConnell and Punathambekar (2002) found that these programs also impacted the trainers, working journalists themselves. Berger (2001), in a study of trainees who had participated in a variety of journalism programs in southern Africa over a two and a half year period, found that trainees reported that they had gained from the programs, that female trainees had more impact on their newsrooms, that some were frustrated they could not implement their skills because of the work environment, and that training took time to have impact.

In addition, research in other fields shows the impact of training. Lam, Kuipers and Leff (1993), in a study of nurses, for example, found that the nurses gained knowledge about schizophrenia and that their beliefs and attitudes changed in the desired direction as a result of training. This study showed that the benefits of training were maintained over time, and that the significant gain in knowledge in the first test held through the nine months of training. The analysis took into consideration the nurses' ages, job positions, and years of work experience. The researchers concluded that none of the demographic variables correlated significantly with a gain in knowledge or a change in attitudes and assumptions. A study of HIV/AIDS education counselors by Britton, Rak, Clmini, and Shepherd (1999) found those participating in training felt more confident in their work and felt better prepared. A follow-up survey showed that the effect held up over time. Wilkinson, Gambles and Roberts (2002), in a study of cancer nurses, found that the health training did have a positive affect on the nurses' communication skills when working with patients. O'Donovan and Dawe (2002) in a literature review of research on training effectiveness, particularly in the psychotherapy field, found little evidence suggesting that gender, age, or ethnicity influence training effectiveness.

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### **Theoretical Context of Findings**

The literature on news construction sees news as a manufactured good (Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1979; Fishman, 1980; Shoemaker and Reese 1991, Schudson, 2003). News is viewed as a daily work product that is affected by economic, political, social, and organizational influences. The construction and selection of news tend to follow a predictable pattern that stays fairly consistent under similar circumstances (McQuail, 2000). Journalism has established a set of ethics and standards as a profession that those in the field are taught to follow. Outside influences such as sources, money, resources and time can all contribute to how the news is constructed within that day-to-day routine.

As Becker (2003) has noted, the field of mass communication generally, and the news construction literature specifically, have given scant attention to the impact of journalism training on the news product. Midcareer training is just one of many possible influences on the construction of a news story. Training may change the way a reporter thinks about the news, gathers the news and, finally, puts the news together each day. Newton (1993) argues that “People weave what they learn in training into their day-to-day routine until it becomes part of the fabric of their industry. What we don’t know is just as likely to be woven into our daily routines, though we often don’t realize it” (p.13).

### **Background of Study and Expectations**

The Society of Professional Journalists (JournalismTraining.org. 2004) in the United States lists 274 training providers consisting of 197 journalism organizations, 44 colleges and universities, and 33 not-for-profit training institutions. General topics range from technology and photojournalism to management and career development. Writing topics vary greatly from education to the environment to sports to transportation.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, located in Miami, Florida, in the United States, funds 12 of the midcareer training programs listed by SPJ (Knight Foundation, 2004).

<http://www.knightfdn.org/default.asp?story=journalism/midcarer.html> Included is one operated by the

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Salzburg Seminar, headquartered in Middlebury, Vermont, USA. Another is operated by the Centers for Disease Control, in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

This study treats these two midcareer training programs as exemplars, that is, in a general sense representative of types of midcareer training programs offered to journalists, at least in the United States.

The U.S. journalists participating in the Salzburg Seminar were given the opportunity to broaden their perspectives as well as gain knowledge about a particular topic. It is reasonable to expect, then, that journalists participating should have come back to their work settings inspired and motivated to use that experience in their work. This should have resulted in writing with new insights, the sharing of ideas with others, and similar consequences. This specific expectation is tested here.

The CDC program provided journalists with the opportunity to gain knowledge about the CDC and to broaden their understanding of various aspects of public health. It is reasonable to expect, then, that journalists who participated in these two programs should come back to their jobs with new knowledge, to be in a position to share that knowledge, and to use their insights in reporting. This expectation also is tested in this study.

### **Methods**

#### ***The Salzburg Seminar***

The Salzburg Seminar itself has a long and distinguished history (Russon and Ryback, 2003). The first seminar was held in the summer of 1947 in what was then war-ravaged Europe and included such luminaries as anthropologist Margaret Mead. Over time, the format and approach of the seminar, though not its location or general goal of fostering international exchange, have evolved. The current goal of the Salzburg Seminar is to “promote global dialogue on issues of pressing international concern” (Salzburg Seminar, 2004). This dialogue involves the “free exchange of ideas, viewpoints and understanding in a neutral, cross-cultural environment.”

During the course of a year, approximately 1,000 professionals from more than 100 countries gather in an Austrian castle outside Salzburg for approximately 20 individual programs each on a variety

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of topics (Russon and Ryback, 2003). Recent examples cut across the fields of international relations, law, journalism, the arts, education, and economics (Salzburg Seminar, 2004).

Participants in the Salzburg Seminar either pay to participate, or receive a Fellowship to do so. Beginning in 2001, the Salzburg Seminar, through a grant from the Knight Foundation, began offering scholarships to journalists to join the Salzburg Seminar. Journalists selected a seminar of interest and applied for participation. The journalists then joined the seminar discussions, interacting with experts interested in the discussion topic from around the world.

The goal of the Fellowship is to provide for the journalists “a unique international experience” and “an opportunity to interact with senior practitioners and participants from as many as 40 countries worldwide” (Salzburg Seminar, 2004). Consistent with the overall goals of the Salzburg Seminar, journalists should broaden their perspectives and thereby gain insights of value to them in their journalistic work.

Twenty-nine journalists participated in one of 10 different seminars as part of this program from August, 2001, through October of 2002. The range of seminar topics was quite broad. While nine of the 29 journalists were participants in a session on the professional responsibility of journalists, others were in sessions on human rights, ethnic pluralism, the politics of popular culture, global economics, entrepreneurial cities, the introduction of the Euro currency, transnational legal services, adapting literature to film, and the politics of water.

Beginning in January of 2003, these journalists were contacted by telephone and interviewed by trained staff of the James M. Cox Jr. Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research, a unit of the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia. The interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and contained questions on such things as professional and personal impact of the seminar on the journalist, story ideas or sources developed through the program, and most useful topics covered during seminar. Twenty-eight of the 29 journalists

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actually agreed to be and were interviewed. The interview was taped and later transcribed. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

As part of the interview, the journalists were asked to provide the name and contact information for their supervisory editor. Twenty-one of the 28 journalists actually provided the name of such a person. One journalist provided the name of an alternate contact. The others were unable to provide such a contact person. Trained interviewers were able to complete 19 telephone interviews with the identified 22 supervisory editors. These interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes and contained questions about the work of the journalists who had participated in the Salzburg Seminar. The interviews were taped and later transcribed.

At the end of the interview with the journalists, each was asked to send to the interviewer copies of stories they had written after completing the Salzburg Seminar. Fourteen of the 28 journalists interviewed actually provided at least one story. These stories were analyzed to determine what the journalists actually wrote once they returned to their work. A list of the topics covered by these stories is in Table 2.

### ***CDC Training Program***

The Knight Public Health Journalism Fellowship began in 2000, and the Knight Public Health Journalism Boot Camp started two years later. All training participants now begin with the Boot Camp. The Boot Camp and Fellowship are for journalists interested in public health. The 10-day Boot Camp includes courses in statistics, presentations on public health issues, case studies and lab tours (CDC Foundation, 2004). The Fellowship has a similar purpose, but the journalists are able to cover more in this four-month program.

Specifically, the goals of the Boot Camp are to teach journalists the skills they need to be able to “analyze health risks, evaluate the importance of clinical studies, and improve their reporting on a wide range of public health issues” (CDC Foundation, 2004). The participants spend time in seminars, discussions, and taking tours. Journalists in print, broadcasting and Internet are invited to apply.

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According to the application, preference is given to journalists who have more than five years experience and who cover health, science or the environment.

The Knight Fellowship program is similar to the Boot Camp, but its goal is to offer a “more in-depth experience” (CDC Foundation, 2004). This training extends nearly four months beyond the Boot Camp. Besides the time element, the Fellowship is also distinct from the Boot Camp because it offers fieldwork and hands-on experience. In the course of the program, the participants 1) accompany officers in an investigation of a disease outbreak, 2) participate in research projects with CDC scientists, 3) work in the field with public health officials, and 4) participate in classroom discussions. The time in the classroom is spent learning about epidemiology and biostatistics, public health interventions, public health structure, and health reporting (CDC Foundation, 2004). Like the Boot Camp application, the application for the Fellowship program also welcomes journalists in print, broadcasting or the Internet. Journalists need at least five years experience, and preference is given to those with a background in covering science or health/medicine.

In 2002, 12 journalists participated in the Boot Camp program. That year, six Fellows joined the Boot Camp program (making total participation in the Boot Camp 18 journalists) and then continued on for the four-month Fellowship. The demographic characteristics of the participants in the CDC Boot Camp program and the CDC Fellowship also are summarized in Table 1.

Beginning in January 2003, interviews were conducted with all of the 12 participants in the Boot Camp Program. These telephone interviews were conducted by trained staff in the Cox Center and lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews covered individual elements of the program and what impact, if any, the program had on them once they completed it. The interview was taped and later transcribed.

As part of the interview, the journalists were asked to identify their supervisory editor and provide contact information for her or him. Ten of the 12 journalists provided this information. The remainder were freelance writers and, therefore, could not provide names of supervisory editors.

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Eight of the 10 editors granted interviews. Interviews were conducted in April 2003 with these eight editors or direct supervisors by trained staff members in the Cox Center. These interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes and covered such topics as what impact the Boot Camp had on the participants as well as what impact, if any, it had on the stories written by the participants, sources used and instances of sharing knowledge. These interviews also were taped and later transcribed.

Beginning in June 2003, trained staff members in the Cox Center contacted the six journalists who participated in the Knight Public Health Journalism Fellowship Program from June to October 2002. Interviews were completed with all six of these Fellows. The interviews, which lasted approximately 45 minutes to three hours, were taped and later transcribed. The interview covered components of the Fellowship and Boot Camp programs. The Fellows were also asked questions about what impact the training had on their work.

Of these six Fellows, five identified their supervisory editors. One Fellow was a freelance writer and was unable to provide a name. The editors were contacted in September 2003 and interviewed by telephone by trained staff members from the Cox Center. The interviews, which lasted approximately 10 minutes, were taped and later transcribed. The interviews covered what impact the training had on the participants.

Journalists who participated in the Boot Camp or Fellowship Program were asked at the end of the interview to send copies of articles they had written after completing the Knight CDC Program. Seven of the journalists from the Boot Camp program and all six of the Fellows actually provided copies of stories. These stories were subsequently analyzed. Table 3 lists the topics of the stories written by the participants after the program at the CDC.

### **Findings**

#### ***Salzburg Seminar***

All the participants interviewed gave overwhelmingly positive comments regarding the management and organization of the seminar and also praised the accommodations. The setting of the

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Salzburg seminar is truly unique, and it is used artfully by the Seminar organization. Seminar participants interact with each other throughout the sessions both in formal and informal settings. The opportunities for the participating journalists to learn about the others present are quite extensive. An analysis of the participants' responses across the items reveals three major outcomes of the Salzburg Seminar. First, the seminar provided the participating journalists an opportunity to develop an international network of professionals with expertise in the topic covered by the seminar. Second, the seminar exposed the journalists to different views of the United States around the world. Third, the seminar provided the journalists an understanding of the complexity of various issues affecting other parts of the world. Table 4 shows the most important outcomes reported by the participants, based on one of the questions in the interview.

The differences in what the respondents reported as new knowledge gained at the seminar reflected the broad variety of topics and the participants' professional backgrounds. Half of the journalists who participated in the Salzburg Seminar indicated that they had published stories based on ideas they got during the sessions, and two others said they had stories in the works when interviewed based on the new knowledge accumulated at the seminar. The stories cover a wide range of issues – from water conservation to globalization and from American pop culture to the Salzburg Seminar itself – reflecting the diversity of topics discussed during the sessions.

All the respondents said they shared their seminar experiences with others, either by giving presentations and writing articles or in more informal conversations with colleagues and friends. Nearly all the editors confirmed that this had taken place.

Most of the participants said the seminar did not have a direct influence on their professional status, but that it would impact their future both professionally and personally. The editors also said that the participation in the Salzburg Seminar did not have an immediate impact on the journalist's status in the newsroom, but many of them were certain that the seminar would have an impact on participants in the future.

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Most of the respondents were satisfied with the topics covered by their session. In some cases, they said they found some of the individual discussions to be interesting, but not particularly useful for their specific jobs. Many participants found it hard to make suggestions to improve the seminar, because they said they had a very positive experience.

During the first 15 months of the programs, journalists participated in two different types of sessions. One was focused entirely on journalism and its practice around the world. The other was on topics of interest to journalists, but not on journalism itself. The data suggest that the impact of these two types of sessions was different. The first made the fellows more reflective on journalism and its practice, both in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. The second provided them with story ideas, contacts for those stories, and new knowledge about a specific topic. Journalists across seminars, however, reported the seminar made them think more globally. That is no small consequence and one that ought to pay dividends for the practice of U.S. journalism in the future. Some of the journalists characterized the experience as “life-changing.”

#### ***CDC Bootcamp***

All the 12 participants in the Knight Boot Camp at the CDC in the 2002 program were journalists who had covered some aspect of health. Most of them said they had not been on their current assignment very long. The time ranged from several months to four and one-half years.

An analysis of the participants' responses across the questions reveals three major outcomes of the Knight Boot Camp at the CDC. First, the participants gained valuable information and in-depth knowledge on several ongoing health topics, such as chronic diseases, obesity and diabetes, and on some “hot topics,” such as bio-terrorism, anthrax, and West Nile virus. Second, the journalists developed working relationships with researchers and with the press office at the CDC. These contacts have been helpful to their reporting. Third the Boot Camp provided the participants a better understanding of public health and public policy issues, and of the day-to-day activity of the Centers for Disease Control. Table 5

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shows the program activities found most helpful by the participants in the CDC program, based on one of the questions in the interview.

All the Boot Camp participants emphasized the importance of the dialogue they were able to share with public health officials. They said that it was an opportunity for them to learn more about these people's responsibilities and that it was an occasion for the health experts to better understand the journalists' work.

Some of the respondents recommended a decrease in the number of topics covered or a narrowing of the focus of the sessions to allow more time for discussions and questions on each issue. The topics recommended by the participants in the CDC program to be included in the training are listed in Table 6.

The participants said they had published stories, or at least had pitched story ideas as a result of the Boot Camp. West Nile virus, bio-terrorism, and smallpox planning were subjects of some of the stories. In addition, several of the respondents mentioned that they had helped other reporters contact CDC sources to aid in their reporting. For the most part, the editors who were interviewed indicated that their reporters came back with story ideas and had written stories that stemmed from ideas they got at the Boot Camp.

Seven participants in the Knight Boot Camp shared examples of their work as part of the evaluation. They sent a total of 23 articles that had been written after attending the program at the CDC. The content of the articles support the reporters' statement during the interviews that they had used story ideas from the Boot Camp in their work following the program. The Boot Camp covered chronic diseases, infectious diseases, health emergency training, international projects and prevention. The articles sent by the participants cover all these areas.

Almost all the journalists indicated they shared their Boot Camp experiences with other friends or colleagues, either verbally in staff meetings or by writing memos. For the most part, the editors also said

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the reporter had shared contacts and story ideas after returning from the Boot Camp and had informed colleagues about her or his Boot Camp experiences.

Most of the Boot Camp participants said that the program had some influence on their professional status, mostly on new reporting assignments rather than on direct job promotions or pay increases. All the editors interviewed said that the Knight Boot Camp at CDC gave reporters a broader knowledge and more expertise in the health area and that the program would have an impact on the reporters in the future.

Most of the respondents found the topics covered by the program useful. Some of them suggested that the statistics session should be focused more on how to interpret statistical reports than on mathematical calculations learning. All participants agreed that chronic diseases, infectious diseases, and bio-terrorism should be included again in the Boot Camp in the next sessions. They recommended adding more coverage of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.

In general, the evidence suggests that the Knight Public Health Journalism Boot Camp at the CDC is well-run and has an impact on the participants, on their newsrooms, and on the quality of health reporting.

#### ***CDC Fellowship Program***

Four of the participants in the 2002 Fellowship Program were journalists who had covered some aspect of health prior to the program. One was a general staff writer and one was a freelance reporter. Most of them have been on their current assignment for several years.

An analysis of the participants' responses across the questions reveals five major outcomes of the Knight Fellowship at the CDC. First, the participants said they gained a better understanding of the mission and operation of the CDC and of the public health system. Second, the Fellows developed working relationships with CDC personnel and medical professionals. These contacts have been valuable to their reporting. Third, the participants gained in-depth knowledge on health topics, such as mycotic

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diseases, HIV/AIDS, mad cow disease, diabetes, epidemiology, bio-terrorism, anthrax, and water cleanliness in the third world. Fourth, the bio-statistics education that the Fellows gained during the program has given them the expertise to assist other colleagues in understanding and interpreting data for their stories. Fifth, the program enabled CDC personnel to better understand how journalists approach stories and how they view scientific data.

The Fellows' responses had a wider range of variation than the responses of the participants in the Boot Camp Program. The Fellows devoted nearly four months of time to attending the training program. The level of commitment as far as time likely raised the Fellows' expectations, and they were therefore likely to be more critical.

The Fellows began their program as participants in the Knight Public Health Journalism Boot Camp at the CDC. In general, they gave this program high marks. Table 6 shows some of their comments about the Boot Camp. All six of the CDC Fellows said they had turned ideas from the program into stories when they returned to their newsroom. They provided evidence in this regards by sharing with the Cox Center examples of their work following the program. They sent a total of 24 articles. Almost 90 percent of the articles that they had written upon their return to work covered health-related topics. Various CDC experts were quoted in these stories. Other sources throughout the stories included public health officials, physicians, professors, and medical journals. Half of the editors who were interviewed confirmed that their Fellow reporter had turned story ideas from the program into stories or had story ideas she or he planned to write about in the future.

All the participants indicated that they had shared their Fellowship experience and the knowledge they had gained with other journalists. All their editors said the Fellows had shared her or his experiences with their colleagues either through informal conversations or through a formal presentation. Some said the Fellows were also a resource for other reporters or helped other journalists in the newsroom explain statistics in stories.

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Three of the four editors interviewed said that the participation in the Knight Program at the CDC positively affected the way the Fellows did their work. All the editors mentioned that the Fellows gained expertise that had been helpful since they had returned to work. The editors also believed the participation in the program would have a positive impact on the Fellows in the future.

The evaluation was limited to the six Fellows in a single year. For these six individuals, the evaluation shows that the program had a significant impact on the participants, on their newsroom, on the quality of health reporting, and on the understanding of journalists' work by scientists and health workers.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

These two evaluations of midcareer training programs in the United States supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation lend support to the argument that training of working journalists has impact on them, on their work, on their news organizations, and, by inference, on the practice of journalism generally.

Specifically, the studies show that participants in the two evaluated programs gained new ideas from the programs, learned of new sources for their news stories, and developed new knowledge that they could use in writing stories in the future. In addition, they came back from the workshops with a new sense of purpose and a new spirit. The participants said they used this information in their own work and shared their knowledge with others in the newsroom—consequences largely supported by the observations of their supervisory editors.

The evidence of impact is limited to what the reporters and their editors felt had happened. Certainly there is reason to be cautious about taking this at face value. The journalists had just invested time in the training enterprise. It is always difficult to say that such an investment was wasted. The same can be said for the editors, who had to get by without the work of the journalists while they were in the training programs. The editors had in this way also invested in the programs, making it difficult for them to label them a failure.

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Two arguments, however, speak against the conclusion that the effects of the programs were illusory. First, for the Salzburg Seminar participants and the Knight Boot Camp participants, considerable time had elapsed between the training experience and the reports on impact. This time should have lessened the sense of commitment and led to a more realistic sense of what had happened. Second, the journalists and editors were not only asked if there were impact, but they were asked to give specific examples. This probing methodology, used in earlier evaluation work of journalists (Becker and Lowrey, 2000), makes it more difficult to simply report impact. A general statement of impact without specific explanation makes the interviewee appear an untrustworthy source—something few of these journalists would be expected to feel comfortable with.

Nonetheless, the design is a limited one, and more convincing evidence of the impact of the training programs on actual work product can come about only from a closer examination of that product itself. Such a design has been employed in a secondary phase of the evaluation of the CDC programs. Stories written by the participants before and after they joined the program are being content analyzed and compared with stories written by a constructed control group. In addition, focus group panels will be asked to read and evaluate products of the journalists written before and after the training activities.

Considerable variability exists in the types of training programs available to journalists, even in the United States. Some of the programs supported by the Knight Foundation, for example, are at universities and last nine months without a fixed curriculum. Others, also lasting nearly a year, have very fixed curricular goals. Some training currently available in the U.S. is self-paced. Others are for periods as short as a day. Some training is offered by employers; others are provided by professional training organizations. The impact of these variations on the effectiveness of the training certainly is important for exploration.

The findings from these two evaluations suggest an examination of the impact of the training of working journalists is important in understanding the work of journalists. As such, they argue for incorporating this area of study into the broader range of topics examined in the general area of news

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construction. They also argue that those interested in improving media performance give consideration to the possibility of supporting journalistic training.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Journalists in Training at CDC and Salzburg Seminar

	<b>CDC Boot Camp N=12</b>	<b>CDC Fellowship N=6</b>	<b>Salzburg Seminar N=28</b>
<b>Age - median (range)</b>	40 (range 32-50)	28.5 (range 27-47)	49 (range 29-64)
<b>Female (%)</b>	10 (83%)	4 (67%)	9 (32%)

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<b>Education (<math>\geq</math> Masters Degree)</b>	6 (50%)	0	10 (36%)
<b>Work Experience - median (range)</b>	15 (range 3.5-25)	6.5 (range 3-25)	12 (Range 2-35)

Table 2. Stories Written by Salzburg Participants after Seminar

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Reference to Salzburg Seminar</b>
Water conservation issues	5	4
U.S. military engagements, Afghanistan, Iraq	5	
Globalization and airlines	4	
Salzburg Seminar	2	2
European politics	1	1
Russia	1	
Influence of American pop culture	2	1
Media (international news)	1	
Coverage of international news by media	1	1
Local, national (U.S.) stories	34	
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>9</b>

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Table 3. Stories Submitted by CDC Boot Camp Participants and Fellows after Programs

<b>Topic</b>	<b>CDC Boot Camp Participants</b>	<b>CDC Fellows</b>	<b>Total</b>
Animal Diseases	2	1	3 (6%)
Diabetes	1	1	2 (4%)
Pediatrics	2	2	4 (9%)
Water Issues	1	2	3 (6%)
SARS	2	1	3 (6%)
Smallpox	0	3	3 (6%)
West Nile Virus	2	2	4 (9%)
Television	0	3	3 (6%)
Other	13	9	22 (48%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47 (100%)</b>

Table 4. Outcomes of the Salzburg Seminar Reported by Participants

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Number and Percentage N=28</b>
Made Great Contacts in Other Parts of the World	7 (25%)
Broaden Perspectives and World View	6 (21%)
Exchange Ideas with other People	5 (18%)
Expose to how Other Cultures View the U.S.	2 (7%)
Other	8 (29%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>28 (100%)</b>

Table 5. Program Activities Found Most Helpful by Journalists at CDC

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<b>Activity</b>	<b>CDC Boot Camp N=12</b>	<b>CDC Fellowship N=6</b>
Discussing Issues	4 (33%)	2 (33%)
Meeting Scientists	5 (42%)	
Learning about CDC	2 (17%)	
Learning Epidemiology		4 (66%)
Other	1 (8%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>12 (100%)</b>	<b>6 (100%)</b>

Table 6. Topics Recommended by Journalists to be Included in Training at CDC

<b>Topic Recommended</b>	<b>CDC Boot Camp N=12</b>	<b>CDC Fellowship N=6</b>
Infectious Diseases	12	6
Chronic Diseases	12	6
Bioterrorism Training	11	5
Disease Prevention	10	5