The Effects of Television Newscaster Style on Short-Term Viewer Retention

Eric Harlan
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THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION NEWSCASTER STYLE
ON SHORT-TERM VIEWER RETENTION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of
Communication and Broadcasting
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Eric E. Harlan
August 1990
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THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION NEWSCASTER STYLE
ON SHORT-TERM VIEWER RETENTION

Recommended 8/15/90
(Date)

Dr. Carl Kell
Director of Thesis

Approved August 15, 1990
(Date)

Elmer Gray
Dean of the Graduate College
Samples of several populations, made up of both traditional and non-traditional students attending the University of Tennessee at Martin were shown different "newscasts," each newscast depicting a different style of news presentation. One style was the "Formal" newscast, and the other was the "Informal" style.

The Formal style is characterized by direct eye-camera contact by the newscaster, a direct style of presentation, and no interaction between newscasters. The Informal style is characterized by interaction between newscasters, a more informal presentation of the facts, and a relaxed atmosphere as the newscast progresses. The study attempted to find whether either style increased short-term retention of the news facts via a questionnaire administered following a video tape of a newscast.

One group was shown an Informal newscast, while another separate group was shown a Formal newscast made up of the same stories. The questionnaire was administered following the completion of the tape. An analysis of the results...
shows there is no significant difference in retention of facts between the styles of newscasts. The only difference was an observed increase in interest with the Informal newscast, but this observance was not quantitatively analyzed and awaits further study.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Informing the general public about news events that affect their lives is the mission of every news organization around the world. Every day, citizens of every nation watch or listen to or read the news about events in their own countries and elsewhere. Whatever constitutes news, be it either government sanctioned, or the free dissemination of facts, what we call "news" is a vital link in shaping public opinion. At this moment, literally billions of bits of information from thousands of different sources are bouncing off satellites orbiting the earth. With satellite technology, less expensive receivers, and the integration of the world economy, more and more persons receive the majority of their news information from television.

Putting the facts before the people is becoming easier every day. But do the people understand what they see? And if the viewer understands, how long will this understanding be retained? This study seeks to answer these questions.
In the United States there are dozens of companies that specialize in consulting with broadcasters to help them attract viewers to local newscasts by changing the way the news is presented. These consultants are paid by the station owners to find the formula, the magic ingredient to produce the ratings which are so important to the profits. The two major consulting firms are Frank N. Magid Associates, Iowa, and McHugh and Hoffman, Inc., Washington.¹

They are hired by local news stations to determine what sort of audience the station has, the size of the audience, and the audience's demographics and how to increase the station's share of that audience. Their recommendations often are based on how other stations in similar circumstances have succeeded in other cities.²

The consultants contend they never make any recommendations on the content of the news program—merely the packaging. Al Primo, who was vice-president of news for ABC Owned & Operated stations in 1974, said, "The job of an outside consultant is not to give journalistic advice, none is taken. The job of an outside consultant is to measure

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²Ibid.
the impact of your news program on the audience it serves." 3

Local newscasts are the most important locally produced programs contributing to the profits of an individual television station. Every day these newscasts must be timely, precise, and informative to the viewing public. But just reading facts, while showing pictures of events, falls short of informing the public if the public does not understand or recall the news events portrayed on the small screen.

In many of the larger cities in the United States, several television stations serve the citizens of the area with news coverage of local events, with some world and national news mixed in for good measure. Each station serving the same community will usually cover the same local news items. The difference in how the events are presented has to do with the station's image or format. This format is concocted by the station owner, the news director, and/or the consultant brought in to help with the station's image. The format of the newscast, it is hoped, appeals to the greatest number of viewers in the immediate area. Simply put, the more viewers a station has, the greater profit potential the station has both for itself and the station's advertising clients. But, what does this format do to the

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Ibid.
viewer's recall of news events?

If viewers cannot recall events of the day, then they cannot make informed choices and decisions about what actions to take in governmental affairs, in purchasing safe consumer goods, even in the protection of the air and water. Finding the answer about how viewer's recall material is important to governmental bodies in that, armed with this information, officials could best determine how to reach the American public with information that the public needs to know. Academia can use this study's results to show how information is transmitted and received by individual persons.

Lastly, television stations can see how their newscasts affect public opinion and whether their viewers understand the newscasts. If not, how they can reach a greater number of persons? This information would be invaluable not only to the news departments, but would aid sales departments too. If viewers can understand what they see, they are more likely to watch a particular television station.

Any information gained from this study benefits the television news industry in determining which format to utilize to present the news for the greatest viewer impact. It will also help provide another clue as to how the individual processes information presented in the
multi-channel modality of television.

Today, many people use television as their only source of world, national and local news. As a consequence, many studies have been done in the area that this study will attempt to explore, namely the understanding and recall of television news. In 1977, E. Katz and others conducted a study in which persons in Jerusalem participated in a random phone survey that asked them to recall any item within a newscast within one hour of the newscast's end. Most of the persons called could not recall a single item from the newscast. Of the ones who did recall some of the events from the news, the "better educated group of respondents" could recall more news items from television, than could recall the same items done over the radio. Among the persons asked, television news commanded a greater attention span for the news than did radio news. They also found that stories dealing with events within Israel were recalled more often than events outside Israel. As far as story format is concerned, the use of pictures aided recall much more than the mere reading of the story. Also, the longer a story was reported on the news, the greater the story's chance of being recalled. Katz reported that "Interviews effected recall more because they took more time."

Overall, these conclusions stood out from the data:
1. Recall is selective.\textsuperscript{4} It is effected by the same criteria that determines the inclusion in the first place. (Gatekeeper effect) The more prominent, the better remembered.

2. Visualization, apparently, is able to improve the recall of the less inherently "attractive" things, such as foreign affairs.

3. Low and middle educated viewers do not understand basic concepts used in daily news programs. Education level does not improve comprehension when compared to non-viewers.\textsuperscript{5}

4. Pictures increase recall, but have no effect on comprehension.\textsuperscript{6}

A study on television viewer recall of news stories done by Barrie Gunter in 1979, looked into the role of how the story was presented and how viewers' recall changed with the addition, or elimination of different elements of fact presentation. In this study, "thirty subjects were divided into two groups. Twenty were allocated to the video, ten to the audio. In the video portion, the groups were split again so that each group saw a different type of news story."\textsuperscript{7} In the "video mode," the viewers saw one of three different news stories. Each story was shown in one of three ways:

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid.
1. "Film Clip"—The newscaster was out of sight and presented a brief news report over a short sequence of film footage.
2. "Still Inserts"—The report was read over a slide.
3. "No Inserts"—The newscaster simply read the news story on camera, without any other video source. 

In the "audio only" mode, the same stories were read without the screen visible to the subjects. Each group of subjects saw or heard the same five blocks of news items, and the results came as expected:

The highest mean proportion of correct responses occurred for film-clips, with the lowest being in the No-insert. The differences were less marked in the audio modality. Therefore, it seems that picture content features seem to have profound effects upon learning of brief television news items. But it is not known whether picture content operates at encoding, or retrieval. The Dual coding hypothesis is perhaps most amenable to the findings. (i.e. if one code were not available or forgotten, the other one could be used to memorize or learn the facts.)

Obviously, more than just film-clips, slides, and sound (or audio) fight for the viewers' attention during a newscast. A format with more visual stimuli asserts itself in the viewer's mind. Several other factors in the retention of newscast material would seem to affect the overall viewer understanding of that to which he or she is exposed. In many studies, this does not seem to be the

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
case. For example, one factor is the educational background of the viewer: W. Russell Neuman writes in *Public Opinion Quarterly* that education makes "basically no difference" in the retention of televised news.\(^{11}\)

In the Neuman study, several groups of persons with educational backgrounds ranging from elementary to college level were asked questions dealing with what they remembered from a newscast seen previously. The answers to the questions were divided into several categories depending on how much the subject knew. First, the subjects were asked a question dealing with a story on the news. If they could answer the question right away, that was noted as total recall. If the subject could not answer the question, then hints were given to jog the subject's memory. If the subject then answered the question, it was noted as aided recall without details. Finally, if the subject still did not know the answer, then parts of the story were given to the subject until the answer was given. That was noted as aided recall with details.\(^{12}\)

Neuman concludes that "television could become the 'knowledge leveler' of the future" because he found that

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\(^{12}\)Ibid.
persons on all economic levels, educational levels, and motivational levels respond almost equally to news recall unlike newspapers and magazines which persons of lower educational levels tend not to read, or understand what they have read.\textsuperscript{13} By analyzing the results of this study, it can be assumed that educational levels should have little, if any, impact on the portion of a newscast recalled or understood.

Another factor that could have some affect on viewer recall of the news is source credibility. Studies have shown that if a viewer feels comfortable with a newscaster, and trusts what that person is telling him, then the viewer will recall more of what is said. However, a study done at Louisiana State University found that if the newsperson is unknown to the viewer, source credibility and recall is not effected by whether that person is a "local" or "network" newsperson.\textsuperscript{14}

The study referred to became the doctoral dissertation for Donald Mott. In this study, several different groups of persons were shown taped news reports done by the same person. Some groups were told that the person was a network

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14}Donald Ray Mott, "The Effects of Wide Screen Television on Local and National Newscaster Credibility: An Experimental Study" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1984).
reporter, others were told that the person was a local reporter, and still others were told that the person was the reporter that the network was trying out to see how people would respond to him. Mott found in his conclusion that "viewers do not appear, as a group, to have any predispositional attitudes dependent upon specific criteria toward the credibility of either type of newscaster." 15

In the same study, the same reports were shown to the subjects on different size television screens. The stories appeared on small portable televisions, nineteen-inch screens, and large-screen televisions. No visible effect on viewer recall of the television material was found regardless of the screen size.16

Another possible factor in viewer retention of information in a newscast is the order in which the stories appear in the newscast. However, a study done by C. Edward Wilson in 1974, found the ordering of the particular news stories has no effect on viewer retention.17 Rather, according to Wilson:

15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
It is up to the receiver of the information to decide what is important. Usually it depends on whether or not the news stories in question 'pertain' to the viewer directly. The more it pertains, the more interest and retention is generated. After all these studies have been published, there are still questions left unanswered as to viewer retention of the news. This study explores the effects of the different formats on viewer retention of the news facts. This variable has yet to be fully explored.

As the "information age" continues, and more and more persons receive their primary news and information from television (both locally and from the established networks) finding the key to retention of the news presented will be invaluable to the persons responsible for getting the news to the public.

This study deals with different stations' "styles" of news presentation and how that affects viewer retention of the facts. Each station has its own unique style or format to news presentation. Thus style or format identifies the station's image to the viewer, and helps build ratings for the newscast.

The two styles of news presentation that this study will deal with are the "Informal News," and the "Formal News" styles or formats. Examples of these two styles can

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Ibid.
be seen every night in cities that have more than one television station.

The "Informal News" format is characterized by friendly-appearing newscasters, friendly chit-chat between stories, and a personal approach to the news. A considerable amount of time is spent explaining how the event affects the viewer. In the "Formal News" format, the approach is somewhat different. In this format, the news is delivered in a deliberate tone, and just the facts of the event are presented. Some time may be spent showing the effect of an event (such as a natural disaster) on the persons involved. But, the story's effect on the viewer is left up to the viewer's interpretation of the facts.

In their "Guide to Television News Viewing," Halina J. Czerniejewski and Charles Long characterize both formats:

**Formal Format** - (1.) Godlike, Doomsday. (2.) Olympian. (3.) Format in which the anchorperson sits in front of the camera and reads the news . . .(4.) No conversation between on-the-air personalities. (5.) No nonsense. (6.) No off the cuff or scripted remarks about recent haircuts, vacations, cute stories . . . etc.

**Informal Format** - (1.) on air personalities may show they have personality. (2.) On air personalities permitted to look at each other and exchange comments . . .

19Ibid.
CHAPTER 2
PROCEDURES

In this study, two different groups of persons will be shown two identical newscasts (each newscast will present the same basic facts). The only difference between the two newscasts will be in the way the news is presented. One group will be shown a newscast using the "Informal news" format. In this newscast, the anchors will read the news with interaction between themselves and the camera, and plenty of banter between stories. The other group will see the same facts presented in the "Formal news" format. Each group will see the newscasts in different locations to minimize contact between groups, taking into account any contamination of the study that would occur if members of the different groups communicated with each other. Immediately after viewing these newscasts, the subjects will be given a post-test to determine the extent of comprehension generated in each individual by the newscast. The stories that will be shown to the test subjects are as follows:
1. A Federal Grand Jury hearing drug and weapons charges against four Warren County, Kentucky, men.
2. A unanimous vote by the Bowling Green, Kentucky, City Commission to award a contract to a local construction firm to build a ten-inch water line to the planned Municipal Golf Course in the Hartland Community.
3. Taxi drivers in Bowling Green helping local police stop crime by providing extra sets of eyes to watch for crime while the drivers make their rounds.
4. A report on Barry Sadler, the man who wrote and performed the hit song "The Ballad of the Green Berets" and his problems since being shot in the head during a robbery attempt.

The events are the same, the persons involved are the same, and the outcome of the events are the same. The only difference is how each broadcast approached the subject based on its individual news format. Both videotapes of the newscasts contained the above mentioned four stories in exactly the same order. To determine if there was a difference in retention of the facts, the author used a type of laboratory experiment in which the tapes were shown to individuals from the same group. To get a picture of how different age, educational, and economic groups would be affected by the differing information, different groups were shown the tapes. For example, several daytime classes made up of undergraduate students were evaluated, along with several night classes made up of non-traditional students at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Each group was split
with half moving to another location to view the tape. One half saw the "Informal News," while the other half was seeing the "Formal News" tape. Since the stories presented in each program were identical, identical questionnaires were then handed out to each group. The questionnaires were printed on different color paper according to format which facilitated coding the results. With the events the same, the persons involved in the events the same, and the outcome of the events the same, the only difference in the stories was the way in which the story was presented. Also, with the samples coming from the same groups, the socio-economic strata of the persons involved in the study were roughly the same.

The questionnaires were then handed out after the tape had been completed. After the questionnaires were completed, they were then handed back to the tester. Each person's answer were then codified and compared with the answers from the other half of the particular group that viewed the other tape. With every other variable as close to being equal as possible, the answers to the questionnaires could then be compared according to the different formats. The group with the higher percentage of "right" answers could then be construed as the group/format that generated the highest retention of the news facts.
That difference was determined by computer analysis of the pre-coded information included on the questionnaire. By comparing the results gained from the two different groups, a reasonable case could be made as to which format, if any, is more conducive to viewer retention.

The "newscast" containing the previously mentioned information for this study was shot using the video facilities of the University of Tennessee at Martin. The video crew consisted of students currently enrolled in the television production program. The anchor team consisted of two senior members of the broadcast journalism program. Both have interned in large television markets, and have extensive television reporting experience. Cary Martin, one of the anchors, interned at the Independent News Network (I.N.N.) and, at the time of the study hosted "West Tennessee Weekly," a news-magazine program that aired every Thursday night on WLJT-TV Channel 11.

The other member of the anchor team, senior Felicia Lightner, hosted the interview segment on "Friends," the weekly public affairs program aired on WLJT. Felicia has experience reporting news in both styles on radio and television. Felicia not only interviews persons for "Friends" in the "Informal News" format, but is also chief investigative reporter for "West Tennessee Weekly."
Recently, Felicia completed a two-part series on the over-crowding of West Tennessee prisons for "West Tennessee Weekly" that is being considered for several state, and national journalism awards.

For reasons previously mentioned, the newscast for this study, was staged. The anchor team had no prior knowledge of the stories presented in the newscast. The writer acted as producer/director and coached the anchors on how to relate to the camera, to each other, and to the stories as they were presented. The newscast was shot and edited on three-quarter inch U-matic videotape. The newscast was also shot with one camera in the so-called "film style" of direction. This means the newscast was shot in segments, with the final version put together in post-production.

The "film-style" production gives the director more creative control over the content of the program, and allows for greater flexibility with the relation of the anchors to the camera. Once production was complete, the author edited the best "takes" from the studio session onto a final master tape. The edited master was then recorded onto one-half inch video tape in the VHS format to allow easier presentation to the study groups.

The study groups selected for this project included several groups of persons included within the student body
of the University of Tennessee at Martin. These groups included persons who live in places as diverse as Memphis, the fifteenth largest city in the United States, and small towns with populations of less than one thousand. They also came from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

To account for the age of viewership included within a particular television station audience, both traditional students (persons who enter college just out of high-school) and non-traditional students (someone who re-enters college, or who starts college after working for a period of time) were used for the focus groups in this study.

To reach the conclusion of this study, the author surveyed fifty-one traditional and non-traditional students. These students were enrolled in various classes at the school, and their instructors gave the author permission to perform his experiment during class time. The students ranged in age from eighteen to forty-six, and ran the economic gamut from unemployed to successful business owners. But, they all had one thing in common. All of them watched television news.

The test subjects were told that they were participating in a market survey to determine how well a "new" news-anchor team worked together, then they were shown one of the two videos (the "Formal" news or the "Informal" news).
Immediately after the conclusion of the particular tape, the questionnaires were handed to the participants, along with a final page given to them to gain demographic information. The final page was different depending upon whether or not the student was traditional or non-traditional. The subjects were told that participation was strictly voluntary, and no attempt was made by the author or the instructor to encourage continued viewing. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the students were thanked for their help and were allowed to leave.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Tabulation of the results revealed some interesting answers. Using the same stories, and the same questionnaires, the following tables illustrate how the subjects fared in answering the questionnaire pertaining to the stories.
Table 1.--Mean Number of Questions Answered Correctly on Post-Viewing Questionnaire by the Entire Test Population. ("n" indicates the number of questionnaire respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FORMAL NEWS</th>
<th></th>
<th>INFORMAL NEWS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE FEDERAL GRAND JURY</strong> (Out of Five Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.52 (50.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.50 (50.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE HARTLAND WATER LINE</strong> (Out of Three Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>.871 (29.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.15 (38.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAXI CRIME WATCH</strong> (Out of Four Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.87 (71.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.60 (65.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BARRY SADLER</strong> (Out of Four Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.10 (52.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.85 (46.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***NOTE: n = 51.

The results shown above show there is little or no difference in short-term retention of facts presented in a television newscast. The slight differences shown between retained facts for both styles indicate a slight edge in retention for the "Informal" news, with a significance level of p < .05 using the t-test.
But what if the results are broken down even further, to include not only differences in styles, but differences in gender? A breakdown of the test results by gender yields the following results:
Table 2.--Mean Number of Correct Answers on the Post-Viewing Questionnaire by the Test Population. Results have been Broken Down by Gender.

***NOTE: n = Number of Questionnaire Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FORMAL NEWS</th>
<th>INFORMAL NEWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE FEDERAL GRAND JURY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.73 (54.7%)</td>
<td>2.83 (56.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.31 (46.3%)</td>
<td>2.00 (40.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HARTLAND WATER LINE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>1.07 (35.5%)</td>
<td>1.25 (41.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>0.69 (22.9%)</td>
<td>1.00 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAXI CRIME WATCH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.53 (63.3%)</td>
<td>2.67 (66.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>3.19 (79.7%)</td>
<td>2.50 (62.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARRY SADLER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>1.87 (46.7%)</td>
<td>1.75 (43.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.31 (57.8%)</td>
<td>2.00 (50.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Males: n = 27  Females: n = 24
Here an interesting pattern begins to emerge. The male members of the test groups retained more of the news presented in the Informal News Style than the female members, whereas the females score slightly higher retention rates when the news is Formal with a significance level of $p < .05$ using the t-test.

A comparison of the retention rates of the test subjects by gender, and by age is used to get a final idea of how this translates across the demographic spectrum.

Table 3.--Mean Number of Correct Answers on the Post-Viewing Questionnaire (THE FEDERAL GRAND JURY STORY) by the Test Population. Results are broken down by Age and Gender.

***NOTE: "n" = Number of Questionnaire Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FEDERAL GRAND JURY</th>
<th>AGE 18 to 22</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>(Out of Five Possible Correct Answers)</th>
<th>FORMAL NEWS</th>
<th>INFORMAL NEWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.38 (47.5%)</td>
<td>3.00 (60.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.38 (47.7%)</td>
<td>1.86 (37.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE 23 &amp; ABOVE</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>3.14 (62.9%)</td>
<td>2.60 (52.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.00 (40.0%)</td>
<td>3.00 (60.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.--Mean Number of Correct Answers on the Post-Viewing Questionnaire (THE HARTLAND WATER LINE STORY) by the Test Population. Results are Broken Down by Age and Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age &amp; Gender</th>
<th>Formal News</th>
<th>Informal News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE 18 to 22</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>0.87 (29.1%)</td>
<td>0.71 (23.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>0.62 (20.5%)</td>
<td>1.14 (38.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE 23 &amp; ABOVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>1.29 (42.9%)</td>
<td>2.00 (66.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>1.00 (33.3%)</td>
<td>*0.00 (00.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Respondents missed all three questions on the post-test.*
Table 5.--Mean Number of Correct Answers on the Post-Viewing Questionnaire (THE TAXI CRIME WATCH STORY) by the Test Population. Results Have Been Broken Down by Age and Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAXI CRIME WATCH</th>
<th>AGE 18 to 22</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>(Out of Four Possible Correct Answers)</th>
<th>FORMAL NEWS</th>
<th>INFORMAL NEWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.50 (62.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.57 (64.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>AGE 18 to 22</td>
<td>(Out of Four Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td>Num. right 3.15 (78.8%)</td>
<td>2.86 (71.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>AGE 23 &amp; ABOVE</td>
<td>(Out of Four Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td>Num. right 2.57 (64.3%)</td>
<td>2.80 (70.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>AGE 23 &amp; ABOVE</td>
<td>(Out of Four Possible Correct Answers)</td>
<td>Num. right 3.33 (83.3%)</td>
<td>*0.00 (00.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Respondents missed all four questions on the post-test.*
Table 6.--Mean Number of Correct Answers on the Post-Viewing Questionnaire (THE BARRY SADLER STORY) by the Test Population. Results are Broken Down by Age and Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BARRY SADLER</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AGE 18 to 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAL NEWS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>1.63 (40.6%)</td>
<td>2.00 (50.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMAL NEWS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.39 (59.6%)</td>
<td>2.14 (53.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AGE 23 & ABOVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num. right</td>
<td>2.14 (53.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Males (18 to 22) n = 15. (23 & above) n = 12
Females (18 to 22) n = 20. (23 & above) n = 4.

The results of each of the different demographic categories of the test subjects show that no one format increases short-term viewer retention of the facts for all persons. The test results show that males retain more of the facts in a newscast if the facts are presented in the Informal Style with a significance level of $p < .05$ using
the t-test. The age of the person is not a significant variable. Females, on the other hand, retain more of the facts in a newscast if those facts are presented in the Formal Style with a significance level of $p < .05$ using the t-test. Again, age is not a significant variable.

While the tape was being played to the audience testing the different styles of newscasts, the author observed a greater interest on the part of the viewers who were exposed to the Informal news, as compared to the Formal news. The Informal news subjects seemed to be paying more attention to the newscast. This observation is based on both the author's and the various class instructors' observations of the verbal and non-verbal cues given by the test subjects while the tape was playing.

The perceived greater interest on the part of the Informal viewers, however, does not translate into greater short-term retention of the newscast facts, by all members of the audience. Also, since the interest of the viewer was not part of the parameters of this study, no quantified data was collected. There seems to be a greater interest in the viewer of Informal news, but that will have to be the subject of another study.

The results of this study indicate to the television industry that newscast format does not affect
short-term retention of news facts in all viewers. On the subject of short-term retention of facts, the management of each television station, using information gained from the ratings services, must decide what demographic category their individual station appeals to. Each television station's commitment to news coverage should reflect not only how many, but also who, is watching.

If a television station's news commitment extends to all members of the potential viewing audience, perhaps a mixture of the two formats (Formal and Informal) will not only appeal to the greater number of persons, but will also increase each viewers' understanding of the news.
APPENDIX 1

THE QUESTIONNAIRE
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: Either a pen or a pencil may be used to complete this questionnaire. All of the questions may be answered by simply placing an X in the appropriate box. Please ignore the numbers beside the questions and answers; they are for machine tabulation only. Thank you in advance for your help.

A. STORY INTERPRETATIONS

Please answer the questions based on the stories you just saw by placing an "X" in the square beside the answer that comes CLOSEST to the facts presented in each story:

A. THE FEDERAL GRAND JURY

a. The Men in the story were accused of:
   [ ] Violating federal drug and weapons laws
   [ ] Violating state drug and weapons laws
   [ ] Violating county and city drug and weapons laws

b. How many men were arrested and charged?
   [ ] Three
   [ ] Six
   [ ] Four

c. The Men in the story were arrested by the Bowling Green Organized Crime-Drug Enforcement Task Force after how long an investigation?
   [ ] Two weeks.
   [ ] Two years.
   [ ] Two months.

d. If indictments are returned against the men, they will appear in court:
   [ ] Later this year.
   [ ] Later this month.
   [ ] Later this week.

e. If the men have to appear in court, they will be arraigned:
   [ ] In District Court.
   [ ] In Federal Court.
   [ ] In Federal District Court

THE HARTLAND WATER LINE

a. The Water line will run:
   [ ] Thirty Miles.
   [ ] Two and a Half Miles.
   [ ] Three Miles.

b. The decision to proceed with the water line was made by:
   [ ] The Hartland Community Council.
   [ ] The Hartland/Bowling Green City Council
   [ ] The Bowling Green City Council.
c. What will the water line be used for?
   [ ] Watering the grounds of the community.
   [ ] Landscaping purposes.
   [ ] Watering the golf course.
   [ ] Watering the golf course and the grassy medians.

TAXI CRIME WATCH

a. If a cab driver spots a crime being committed he or she:
   [ ] Radios the Police.
   [ ] Arrests the suspect.
   [ ] Radios the dispatcher who then calls police.

b. The cab drivers already do this service, in part by:
   [ ] Reporting fires and suspected drunk drivers.
   [ ] Reporting rapes, assaults and other crimes.
   [ ] Reporting fires, drunk drivers, and other crimes.

c. What other Kentucky city is this program already in place?
   [ ] Louisville
   [ ] Covington
   [ ] Colesburg

d. What is this other program called?
   [ ] Drivers On Patrol
   [ ] Taxi's Against Crime
   [ ] Taxi's on Patrol

BARRY SADLER

a. Where was the Veterans Hospital where Sadler was a patient?
   [ ] Guatemala City
   [ ] Cleveland
   [ ] Columbus

b. Why was Sadler in the Hospital?
   [ ] He was recovering from a gunshot wound to the stomach.
   [ ] He was recovering from a gunshot wound to the head.
   [ ] He was recovering from a gunshot wound to the face.

c. Why did Sadler's wife file suit against him?
   [ ] To establish a guardianship for him because he could not take care of his affairs.
   [ ] To divorce him because he could not take care of himself or his business.
   [ ] To make her Sadler's guardian because he could not take care of himself or his business affairs.

d. When was the last day Sadler was seen?
   [ ] Monday
   [ ] Saturday
   [ ] Sunday
Now let's hear your opinions on the news anchor(s) that you just saw. Please indicate the how closely each one of the following words best describes the person(s) you just saw on the newscast by placing an "X" in the blank that comes closest to your opinion of the newscaster. Here's an example: If the newscasters that you just saw were very fat, here is what you would mark:

Fat  X : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Skinny

If they were somewhat fat, here's how you would answer:

Fat ___ : X : ___ : ___ : ___  Skinny

If they were neither fat nor skinny, here's how you would answer:

Fat ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Skinny

If they were somewhat skinny, here's how you would answer:

Fat ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Skinny

If they were very skinny, here's how you would answer:

Fat ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Skinny

Now let's begin. Were the newscasters you just saw:

Uninformed  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Informed  25
Subjective  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Objective  26
Sincere  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Insincere  27
Unskilled  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Skilled  28
Serious  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Joking  29
Fast  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Slow  30
Friendly  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Unfriendly  31
Confident  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Unsure  32
Educated  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Uneducated  33
Unprofessional  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Professional  34
Expert  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Ignorant  35
Unreliable  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Reliable  36
Competent  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Incompetent  37
Experienced  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Inexperienced  38
Unclear  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Clear  39
Colorful  ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Dull  40
Effective ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Ineffective 41
Uncomprehendable ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Understandable 42
Efficient ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Inefficient 43
Intelligent ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Unintelligent 44
Incapable ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Capable 45
Authoritative ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Unauthoritative 46
Dependable ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Undependable 47
Biased ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Unbiased 48
Believeable ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___  Unbelieveable 49

Now let's find out a little about you. This information will be kept confidential. It is just for statistical purposes only.

Age: ___ 51
Sex:  M    F 52
Are you currently employed? Yes  No 53
Full or Part Time?________________________ 54
What is the approximate yearly household income for you and your spouse before taxes?

___ Under $10,000
___ $10,000 to $20,000
___ $20,000 to $30,000
___ $30,000 to $40,000
___ $40,000 to $50,000
___ Over $50,000.
Now let's find out a little about you. This information will be kept confidential. It is just for statistical purposes only.

Age:____

Sex:  M    F

Are you currently employed?  Yes    No

Full or Part Time?____________________

If your annual income is derived mainly from your parents, what is their average yearly income? (Both parents combined)

____ Under $10,000
____ $10,000 to $20,000
____ $20,000 to $30,000
____ $30,000 to $40,000
____ $40,000 to $50,000
____ Over $50,000

If you and (or) your spouse provide the majority of your income, what is your (your combined) yearly income before taxes?

____ Under $10,000
____ $10,000 to $20,000
____ $20,000 to $30,000
____ $30,000 to $40,000
____ $40,000 to $50,000
____ Over $50,000

Again, thank you very much for your cooperation and help with this project. Your help has been invaluable to the success of this study!
APPENDIX 2

THE NEWSCAST SCRIPTS
GOOD EVENING I'M \__________________________, AND I'M \__________________________, WITH THE WKYU-TV EVENING NEWS.

TODAY A FEDERAL GRAND JURY HEARD THE DRUG AND WEAPONS CHARGES AGAINST FOUR WARREN COUNTY MEN. THE MEN WERE ARRESTED DECEMBER TENTH BY MEMBERS OF THE BOWLING GREEN ORGANIZED CRIME-DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE, AFTER A TWO-MONTH INVESTIGATION.

ACCORDING TO ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY RANDY REAM, IF INDICTMENTS ARE RETURNED AGAINST THE FOUR, THEY WILL BE ARRAIGNED IN U.S. DISTRICT COURT HERE IN BOWLING GREEN LATER THIS MONTH.

THE HARTLAND PLANNED COMMUNITY IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO HAVING ITS OWN GOLF COURSE THANKS TO A UNANIMOUS VOTE BY THE BOWLING GREEN CITY COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION ACCEPTED A 223,765 DOLLAR BID BY LANPHEAR CONSTRUCTION TO INSTALL A TEN-INCH WATER LINE TO THE PLANNED MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE IN THE HARTLAND COMMUNITY. THE LINE WILL CARRY WATER THE THREE MILES FROM THE BARREN RIVER TO THE GOLF COURSE. THE LINE WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE WATER TO THE STREET MEDIANS IN THE
RESIDENTIAL PORTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE LANDSCAPING. BOWLING GREEN CITY MANAGER CHUCK COATES SAYS THE LINE WILL CROSS LAND OWNED BY SIX TO EIGHT PERSONS. COATES SAYS PROPERTY EASEMENT APPRAISALS ARE BEING CONDUCTED.

BOWLING GREEN POLICE CAN HAVE EXTRA SETS OF EYES WORKING FOR THEM IF THEY CHOOSE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM. TAXI DRIVERS WORKING FOR YELLOW CAB COMPANY IN BOWLING GREEN HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO ASSIST POLICE IN SPOTTING CRIME AS THEY MAKE THEIR ROUNDS THROUGH THE CITY. IF A CAB DRIVER SPOTS A CRIME IN PROGRESS, HE OR SHE CALLS IT IN ON THEIR TWO-WAY RADIO, AND THE DISPATCHER NOTIFIES POLICE. BOWLING GREEN YELLOW CAB GENERAL MANAGER STEVE MILLER SAYS
Drivers normally radio in reports of fires, or suspected drunk drivers, but normally do not call in crime reports as they would if they participated in a crime watch program. Taxi drivers in Covington are currently taking part in a program called Taxi's on Patrol, watching for accidents, rapes, assaults, or other crimes as they transport patrons. Police there say this program should compliment neighborhood watch programs and assist police. Bowling Green Police Sergeant Bernie Cox says police would be interested in getting help from the drivers. They would help because, he says "we just don't have the number of people to be everywhere we're supposed to be." The program would cost
TAXPAYERS AROUND
ONE-HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS
PER DRIVER TO TRAIN THEM
AS CRIME WATCHERS.

AND FINALLY, BARRY
SADLER, WHO SANG
THE NUMBER-ONE SONG
"BALLAD OF THE GREEN
BERETS" IS MISSING.
SADLER HASN'T BEEN SEEN
SINCE SUNDAY WHEN
HE WAS DISCHARGED FROM A
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION
HOSPITAL IN CLEVELAND.
SADLER WAS SHOT IN THE
HEAD DURING A ROBBERY
ATTEMPT AT HIS HOME IN
GUATEMALA CITY IN
SEPTEMBER. SADLER'S WIFE
FILED A LAWSUIT YESTERDAY
TRYING TO ESTABLISH A
GUARDIANSHIP FOR HER
HUSBAND. SHE SAYS HE'S
"UNABLE TO ATTEND TO HIS
BUSINESS AFFAIRS, MAKE
RATIONAL DECISIONS, OR
CONTROL ALL OF HIS BODILY
FUNCTIONS."

THAT'S THE NEWS FOR NOW,
THANKS FOR JOINING US

I'M ______________________

AND I'M ______________________

GOOD NIGHT FROM ALL OF US

AT WKYU-TV NEWS.
A VERY PLEASANT GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY
I'M __________________ AND
I'M ____________.
CONSTITUTED PROBABLE
CAUSE FOR THEIR ARRESTS.
ACCORDING TO ASSISTANT
DISTRICT ATTORNEY RANDY
REAM, IF INDICTMENTS ARE
RETURNED AGAINST THE
FOUR, THEY WILL BE
ARRAIGNED IN U.S.
DISTRICT COURT HERE IN
BOWLING GREEN LATER THIS
MONTH.

IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO
LIVE IN THE NEW HARTLAND
COMMUNITY HERE IN
BOWLING GREEN, THEN YOU
ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO
HAVING YOUR OWN GOLF
COURSE THANKS TO THE
BOWLING GREEN CITY
COMMISSION. THE
COMMISSION VOTED
UNIANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT A
223,765 DOLLAR BID BY
LANPHEAR CONSTRUCTION
TO INSTALL A TEN-INCH
WATER LINE TO THE GOLF
COURSE. THE LINE WILL
RUN THREE MILES FROM THE
BARREN RIVER, TO THE
COURSE TO PROVIDE
IRRIGATION IN THE SUMMER.

THE LINE WILL ALSO
PROVIDE WATER FOR THE
GRASSY MEDIANS IN THE
RESIDENTIAL PORTIONS
OF THE COMMUNITY TO
PROVIDE LANDSCAPING.

CITY MANAGER CHUCK
COATES SAYS BEFORE THE
LINE CAN BE INSTALLED,
PROPERTY EASEMENTS MUST
BE OBTAINED FROM THE SIX
TO EIGHT PROPERTY OWNERS
TO ALLOW THE LINE TO
CROSS THEIR LAND.

YOU KNOW, THAT WOULD BE A
GOLFERS DREAM. HAVING A
GOLF COURSE RIGHT IN MY
BACK YARD... I HOPE THAT
GOES THROUGH. THAT IS
WHERE I'D LIKE TO LIVE.

I DON'T KNOW, I'VE SEEN
YOU PLAY GOLF. I DON'T
THINK THE PEOPLE IN YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD COULD AFFORD
THEIR HOMEOWNERS
INSURANCE AFTER YOU DRIVE
OFF THE FIRST TWO TEES.

THAT'S NOT FAIR! I'LL
HAVE YOU KNOW THAT WHEN I
PLAY GOLF I HAVE TO HAVE A HANDICAP!

REALLY? WHAT'S YOUR
HANDICAP?

A WICKED SLICE TO THE
LEFT EVERY TIME I HIT THE
LONG BALL (((LAUGHTER)))

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW
WILL GET A LITTLE LONGER IN BOWLING GREEN IF POLICE AGREE TO AN OFFER BY LOCAL CAB DRIVERS. TAXI DRIVERS WHO WORK FOR YELLOW CAB HERE IN BOWLING GREEN HAVE OFFERED TO HELP POLICE BY PROVIDING EXTRA EYES LOOKING OUT FOR CRIME. HERE'S HOW IT WORKS...IF A CAB DRIVER SPOTS A CRIME BEING COMMITTED WHILE HE OR SHE IS MAKING THEIR ROUNDS, THEY JUST CALL THE REPORT IN TO THEIR DISPATCHER, AND THE DISPATCHER THEN NOTIFIES POLICE. BOWLING GREEN YELLOW CAB GENERAL MANAGER STEVE MILLER SAYS DRIVERS ALREADY CALL IN REPORTS OF FIRES, OR SUSPECTED DRUNK DRIVERS. BUT IF THEY PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM, THEY WOULD ADD CRIME REPORTS TO THE LIST. THIS SYSTEM IS ALREADY IN PLACE IN COVINGTON, KENTUCKY.
WHERE IT'S KNOWN AS "TAXI'S ON PATROL." THERE TAXI DRIVER'S WATCH OUT FOR ACCIDENTS, RAPES, ASSULTS OR OTHER CRIMES AS THEY MAKE THEIR NORMAL ROUNDS. POLICE THERE SAY THIS PROGRAM WORKS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAMS ALREADY IN PLACE. BOWLING GREEN POLICE SERGEANT BERNIE COX SAYS POLICE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN GETTING HELP FROM THE DRIVER'S. COX SAYS THE EXTRA EYES WOULD HELP BECAUSE, "WE JUST DON'T HAVE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO BE EVERYWHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE." THE PROGRAM WOULD COST TAXPAYER'S ONE-HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS PER DRIVER TO TRAIN THEM AS CRIME WATCHERS.

YOU KNOW THERE ALREADY IS A PROGRAM IN PLACE LIKE THAT HERE IN BOWLING GREEN...THE PEOPLE WHO DRIVE TRUCKS FOR THE ELECTRIC COMPANY, AND VOLUNTEER FIRE
DEPARTMENTS, AND EVEN TOW TRUCK DRIVERS HELP THE POLICE WATCH FOR CRIMES.

THAT'S TRUE. BUT ADDING THE EXTRA EYES OF THE TAXI DRIVERS TO EVERYONE ELSE CAN ONLY HELP THE POLICE. THE POLICE CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE SONG THE BALLAD OF THE GREEN BERETS?

SURE, A GREAT SONG, AND A GOOD MOVIE TOO. JOHN WAYNE STARRED IN THAT MOVIE DIDN'T HE?

THAT'S RIGHT...AND OUR FINAL STORY THIS EVENING HAS TO DO WITH THE MAN WHO BOTH WROTE AND SANG THAT SONG.

A robbery attempt at his home in Guatemala City last September. Sadler's wife filed a lawsuit trying to establish a guardianship for her husband. She says he's "unable to attend to his business affairs, make rational decisions, or control all of his bodily functions."

That's the six o'clock report. Thanks for joining us. For WKYU-TV News, I'm ___________.

And I'm ___________. Have a good evening, and we'll see you again at ten.
WORKS CITED


