

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
GRADUATION PROJECT 2019

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Reflection on 2018 Department Magazine Production

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LOD: 2018 Department Magazine
2018 Fall-2019 Spring

Reflection on 2018 Department Magazine Production

2018 Department Magazine, a one-year project instructed by Professor Donna Tong, is composed of five sections: news section, campus life section, poetry and fiction section, art and life style section and that of travel. There are totally twenty five articles—the most of them were written by students in the magazine production class yet there were also some articles composed by other students in English Department. Each of the eleven students in this class had to compose at least two articles and copyedit another two written by others. Among the eleven students, there was one chief editor, five section editors, one web editor and one designer of both print version and website. The students, with the professor's instruction and direction, cooperated and helped each other to accomplish the production of 2018 Department Magazine.

Among the twenty five articles, I composed two articles and copyedited another three articles from campus life, news and fiction and poetry sections. The two articles I wrote are “Reducing Plastics: Sugarcane Straws and the Ban on Plastic Straws” in news section and “How can English Majors Balance Their Time to Develop Interdisciplinary Competences?” in campus life section respectively. The first one discusses the new banning policy on plastic straws enacted this July and whether sugarcane straws, the possible substitute for it, are really of help in environment protection and sustainability. The second articles provided some time management tips based on the book *Time Management Golden Rules* by Lu Chung-Hsin, a professor at National Taiwan University as well as some suggestions from two students who once had multitasks like having a double major or attending school club in English Department. With a good time management skill, students can thus manage their time to develop a second profession or pursue a double major or a minor in order to be more

competitive.

The reason why I wrote the first article was that I have always been caring about the environment protection issues and was excited to see the enacting of the plastic straw banning policy. Thus, I decided to dig more about the plastic straw and to see whether there are substitutes for it and the environmental sustainability. For the second article, as an English major, I have been pondering what kinds of job we are able to do in the future; while searching online, I found that if we have a second profession, then plus our language ability, it certainly would increase our competitiveness. However, to develop interdisciplinary competences, a good time management is a must; otherwise having more courses or sparing more time to learn other skills might turn out to be a burden. As a result, I would like to find out more time management skills and share with other students.

Even though composing these articles gave me an opportunity to explore and learn more about the topics I have been interested in for quite a time, I still encountered some difficulties while writing these articles. One of the difficulties I faced was information collection. In order to be neutral and keep the accuracy of the article, I read several references regarding the topics as well as browsing through many a website before I started writing so that I could have a more complete picture about the whole issues. This process took me some time to finish and it also took me time to think about how to present my ideas in the articles as the more references I read the harder I could decide which aspects should I put into the articles. Another difficulty was the credit of pictures used in articles. As the magazine was to be sell, it was prohibited to just download any photos online and put them in our articles. Could not find suitable ones from the websites that allow free download for commercial use, I finally decided to take pictures by myself, using the materials around me so that there would not be problems about credibility.

Similarly, copyediting others' articles was a good chance to read some different topics; yet still it was not an easy job to copyedit others' articles. The biggest difficulty, for me, was

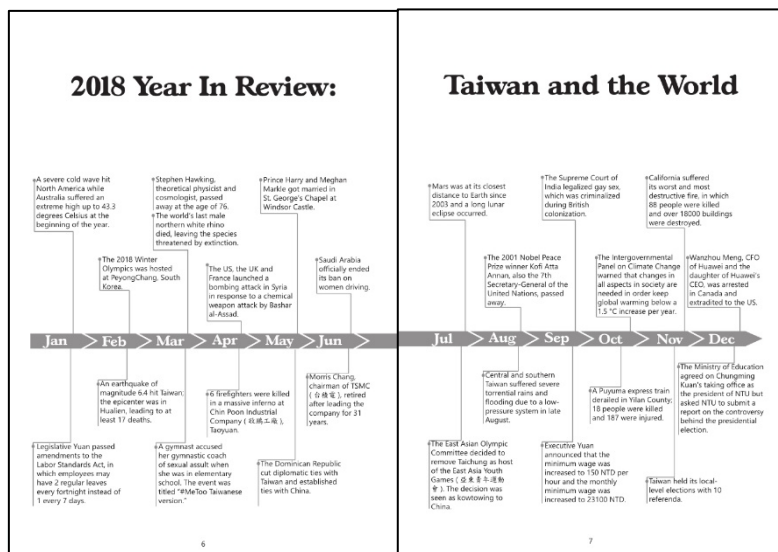
the use of words. As I am not a native English speaker, there are chances that I could get confused with the correct usage of words. In order to make the article natural and professional, I put every phrasal verbs, phrases and even vocabulary that I was not sure about the correct usage into Google search to search for articles that also contained these words and see how native speakers use these words even though I have known their definitions in Chinese. In addition, the logic of the article was another challenge for me. Since everyone was an individual, each of us would have our own way of thinking; and I understood that there was no definite answer of whose way of thinking, organizing paragraphs was more correct. As a result, when finding out there was something illogical or could be re-organized to make it clearer, I usually hesitated to correct it because I was worried about whether it was really a problem of logic or it was just a different way of thinking from mine. The way I dealt with this was to highlight, instead of directly crossing it out, the parts I thought not logical and left my opinions and comments then let the writer to decide which one was better.



▲ “#MeToo Movement” cover page

In addition to be one of the writers and copyeditors, I was also the editor of new section. My main responsibilities were to develop the concept of the section, to do the layout of all news section articles, to edit articles when needed, to find sponsorship for the magazine and to make sure the writers in news section stick onto the schedule and meet the deadline. Besides, I as well made a two-page 2018 year in review: Taiwan and the world to highlight the most important events happened in each month during 2018 in

Taiwan and other corners in the world, such as the cold wave in North America at the beginning of the year and the local election and referendum held in Taiwan in November. The



concept of news section was “to make the world a better place” as the five articles in news sections all centered on issues happening in the world, such environment and animal protection, feminist movement and speech freedom and so on.

▲ 2018 Year in Review

The layout of the articles were similar in order to make the whole section consistent—a picture on the top followed by the content and one or two quotations related to the topic of that article. The article “#MeToo Movement” was especially added a cover page and printed in color as it was chosen as the feature article of 2018 Department Magazine.

As this was my first time being an editor, there were several things I needed to conquer. For instance, the hardest thing for me was to edit the writers’ articles. It was difficult to cut off the articles when they were too long and did not fit the margin not only because they were the writers’ efforts but also because it might make the articles look lacking of something. To deal with this, I tried to cut the articles into smaller paragraphs to fill the blanket or to find a quotation with proper lengths to make the layout perfect. Only when both ways failed did I delete some parts of the articles. On the other hand, the biggest challenge for me was to learn how to use Adobe InDesign. Since I have never used any layout software, it took me really a great time to get familiar with the functions. However, fatigue as I was when I used this application, it did be a good chance for me to dabble into a new field. Another obstacle encountered during the production process was to find sponsorship for the magazine.

Nonetheless, as having been discussed in class, this was due to our not following the schedule, which eventually resulted in too many English Department events asking for sponsorship at

the same time and thus increased the difficulty to get sponsored for our project.

Besides the obstacles I encountered, other students also mentioned some aspects that could be improved in the next department magazine production when we were doing the final report in the last two classes. In addition to the obstacle of finding sponsorship and meeting the deadline, the most mentioned problem was that of the job distribution. The student in charge of print design turned out to be the one who had the heaviest loading due to the fact of that not only the magazine visual design but also the final integration of all pages were all her job. One of the solutions we discussed in class were to have more people in charge of this job; and another possible way to solve this was to divide this position into smaller positions so that one would not be responsible for too many tasks while few of the other students did not have that much work.

During the whole production process, I had more chance to practice not merely writing but also grammar and vocabulary check either when writing my own articles or copyediting others'. Since we did not have CC class in senior year, attending magazine production class helped in keeping me practicing English writing and sharpening my sense of word use. Also, because of the layout, I learnt to use a new software, Adobe InDesign. I believe if my future career is related to editing or writing, knowing how to use In Design would be of help in work. Next time, if I have opportunity to produce another magazine or any other articles, I would like to try more interview articles because interviewing other people is really a good way to get to know others' opinions and learn from them. In brief, this is a good experience for me since I have never attended any publishing production before. This class for sure lets me know more about the publishing field and gets experience writing and editing a magazine article.