



**THE ASSIGNMENT** – The 16-year-old “gap year” students in NewsBrands Ireland’s Press Pass program - <http://presspass.ie/> - were challenged to give 10-year-olds an introduction to what they’ve learned about journalism and news/media literacy.

**THE RESULT** – ANNE BROWNE’S ENGLISH CLASS AT MOVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, COUNTY DONNEGAL

*By Fionnuala DeBrun, Ronan Mc Carron, Nathan Connolly and Peter Grant*

Our English teacher didn’t give much notice when she asked for volunteers to present a media liteacy class to first years. In fact when we accepted the challenge, we had only one day, less than 24 hours, to plan our lesson. So you could say we were dropped into the deep end, but we knew we would be able to swim.

We were signed out of class for a few hours to prepare the lesson. We worked together to decide who was going to do what. We made posters about each newspaper part. We used the Press Pass categories of Features, Sport, Comment, Photojournalism and News. Our teacher then gave us KWLsheets and we decided to ask the students to tell us what they already knew, what they would like to know and then at the end of the lesson what they had hopefully learned. We wrote out a plan, which included who would present each part of the lesson, which we had divided into six parts..

On the actual day of the lesson we were all very nervous. There was a room change announcement to facilitate the sixth year exam timetable, this felt like an initial setback, as we had booked Chromebooks for the lesson in the upper building and we were not sure if these would still be available in the lower one. Luckily enough for us this did not turn out to be the case. But it wasn’t exactly the smoothest of starts.

So when we finally got set up, we distributed the KWLsheets to the students. Ronan started off by introducing us all and asking the first years to write down on their sheets what they already knew about news and media. He also asked them how they accessed news whether it was usually on their phones or by listening to the radio. Fionnuala then explained the Press Pass Awards to them. We thought we should mention Jessica Moir who is a fifth year student in our school, as she won first place in the Features category last year. Nathan read out Jessica’s piece. The students seemed particularly interested in her story. Ronan then described the charcterisics of a good sports journalist, After that, Peter and Ronan read out their own match reports: ‘*St. Columbas See Off Movice After Extra-Time*’ and ‘*Winner Wonderland*’. The first years seemed really impressed by the work we had put into the entries for this years competition.

In the Features category we explained that a Feature can be a piece of personal writing Nathan read out a classmate’s article called “ On the Spectrum”. which has been entered into this year’s competition. This feature reflects both her own and her family’s battle with

autism.. We think the students were quite shocked at the difficulties posed by this condition but equally amazed by Samantha's ability to articulate her own feelings so clearly in such an amazing piece of writing.

The next category we discussed was Photojournalism and we showed the first years the photos which are being entered into this year's competition. They were once again very impressed at the high standard of entry. We also then spoke briefly about the Comment section and read out Adam Mc Cormick's opinion piece on how fake news can destroy democracies This tied in perfectly with our Media Smart message which we then explored. We taught the strategy Stop, Think, Check and emphasised why it is so important to check the sources of all information and how to deifferentiate between real and fake news..

We concluded our lesson with an activity. We asked students to research the Kobe Bryant tragedy using reliable sources on the Chromebooks we had supplied. Stidents worked in pairs. They really enjoyed this enjoyed working and found a lot of information on different websites. We then discussed which sources were trustworthy and the reasons why we all need to be critical readers. At the very end of the lesson we asked the student to write down on their KWLsheets what they had learned from us. They had absorbed so much information I think we even surprised ourselves!. Ms Mullan praised us highly and said we were all natural teachers. That made us very proud. We loved the opportunity to impart the skills we had learned throughtout our own Press Pass journey and we hope to do this again very soon.

