

*VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE
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NAAC ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE*

Topic: Interpretative reporting

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Interpretative Reporting :

Interpretative reporting interprets facts. Reporter tries to balance the writing with reasons and meanings of a development. Reporter provides the information along with an interpretation of its significance. He uses his knowledge and experience to offer the reader an idea of the background of an event and explain the results it could led to. Besides his own knowledge and research, the reporter also takes the opinions of specialists to support the report.

According to Curtis D. MacDongall, author of book Interpretation Reporting, the first important inputs to interpretative reporting was provided by World War-I. When the First World War broke out, most Americans were taken by surprise. They were unable to explain its causes. This resulted in changes in the style of reporting. In 1939, when the Second World War started, an overwhelming majority of the Americans expected it or at least knew it was possible.

MacDongall says an interpretative reporter is aware of the fact that a news item is not an isolated incident, but an inevitable link to a chain of important events. An interpretative. reporter cannot succeed if he is hampered by

prejudices and stereotyped attitudes, which would bias his perception of human affairs. Interpretative reporting thus goes behind the news, brings out the hidden significance.

The interpretative news writer puts the event in its context. By putting an event in context, we mean that the interpretative writer's job is to place the news event in the stream of cause and effect. An event that is isolated for news story is plucked from a larger cycle or stream of related events. The interpretative story puts the news back into this cycle or stream. Interpretative reporting often come in the form of articles, sometimes in the form of columns called news analyses, which ever the form these write ups give the causes and consequences of events.

The interpretative writer reads the fine print of news story in order to answer the readers' question: what does it mean? He writes to keep the news events in focus by showing its comparative importance. He not only writes about: what's going on? He goes beyond this to ask and answer the question: what does it mean? He knows that nothing just happens without antecedents and other surrounding circumstances. He looks for news beyond the spot news. Deadpan reporting of events, even when the source is reputable and newsworthy, may be misleading to the extent that the event doesn't give the readers the "whole" or

“essential” truth. The interpretative report makes up for the weaknesses of dead pan reporting.

Readers demand, today, more than drab objective reporting following the five W’s and H. they demand contextual reporting expanded beyond the five W’s and H.

The reporter of today must therefore prepare himself to meet the increasing need and demand for “subsurface” or “depth” reporting, to take the reader behind the scenes of the day’s events and activities, relate the news to the reader’s own framework and experience, make sense out of facts, put factual news in perspective, print out significance of current events, put meaning into the news, and so on.

Interpretative writing therefore covers a diversity of format that are commonly described as depth reports, a term that gained general acceptance after Neale Copple of the University of Nebraska published a book called “Depth Reporting” in 1964. Copple defined depth as the opposite of deadline dictated superficiality. Copple swept aside a lot of semantics over interpretation, feature writing, backgrounding and investigative reporting and says that we

can as well forget about these categories; depth reporting includes them all.

Depth means thorough, explanatory or descriptive reporting. It requires an investigative attitude, a lot of hard work and the ability to tell a story in terms of what it means to the reader. The depth report may be as long as a magazine article, or even longer, but it lacks the subjectivity so often found in magazine, articles or editorials and other opinion columns.

In conclusion, interpretative writing is a term that suggests a detailed perspective well beyond the basic facts of the traditional news story. The interpretive story interprets by adding detailed information and authority to the news. When carried out with competence and grace, it shows readers, through the benefit of evidence, rather than telling them what to think.