

Multilingual Journalism Course evaluation

May 2022 | By Dalila Hussein, Research Assistant

This is a co-publication of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (SWRSDP), Ridgewater College, and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission. CURA and SWRSDP provided project funding.

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Executive summary

In the city of Willmar, in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, almost one-third of the population comes from the bilingual, non-native-English-speaking community. The immigrant population is challenged by having an equitable access to information in their native languages. Ridgewater College and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission joined forces through a proposed solution to Willmar's communication dilemma. The Multilingual Journalism Program was proposed to increase the availability of native language communication by equipping leaders in the Willmar immigrant community with journalistic skills. Project partners envisioned that community members would participate in a Multilingual Journalism Course where they would learn how to collect, produce and disseminate information in languages other than English. The program aims to build a network of course graduates who are fluent in journalistic communication, to either volunteer or work in making the Willmar community more welcoming through inclusive media. The program's core activities were the creation of the Multilingual Journalism Course curriculum, recruitment and training of community leaders, and building a network of trained journalists.

Methods

A pilot round of the course was conducted in March and April 2022. Participants were recruited through community centers such as the Area Learning Center (ALC) and through community organizations. Five participants showed interest, four started the course, and three of them successfully graduated the course. As part of the course learning and development, an evaluation was planned to infer successes and areas of improvement of the pilot course for future course deployment. The evaluation was formatively designed, which is an evaluation approach usually undertaken early in the development of a program to inform providers and stakeholders about the trends in results and to identify the barriers and facilitators of implementation. The evaluator collected multiple quantitative and qualitative data points during the course and after course completion from course graduates, potential course participants, and the program team.

There were limitations to the evaluation design such as the use of convenience samples where research participants self-select to participate in the research. This creates what is called a selection bias, as responses of those who chose to participate in the evaluation research might differ significantly from those who do not. Also, due to the limited number of course participants, the sample size was minimal, compromising the validity of the data. In addition, social desirability bias is another limitation, as participants might respond in a more favorable way even in anonymous surveys. Lastly, qualitative interviews were conducted virtually, which causes a limitation to having a fully engaged in-person interview.

Findings

- Course recruitment

Participants found the communication during recruitment to be clear and effective. The Area Learning Center (ALC) recruitment was interactive, as a representative from the program team was present to explain the course objectives and answer questions, which was well-accepted and appreciated. The application to participate in the program was through an online written form. As an improvement for future courses, other methods of application could be deployed such as recorded videos or face-to-face or online interviews to diversify the inclusivity of applications. In addition, specific course components should be advertised during recruitment, such as guest speakers, the final application project, and in-class discussions and workshops.

- Course participants

Participants were from Willmar's Hispanic community ranging from 17 to 42 years old. They were community members interested in journalism and motivated to participate in the course for different reasons such as learning new skills for work assignments, getting course credits for school, wanting to learn about reporters' skills, and learning how to tell a story through writing. Through the pilot course, the program team identified two types of participants for the course: participants recruited through specific partner agencies and participants recruited through general community outreach activities. Both types have the same objective to serve their community through journalism; however, the course design and recruitment strategy may differ. The team envisioned a mini boot-camp design for agency recruits which would be more focused and time-intensive, while the community members' design would be broader and more relaxed. The ideal number of course participants is four to eight, keeping an even number for dual-collaboration projects, with a planned attrition rate of twenty percent.

Overall, participants were satisfied with the course and anticipated deploying the lessons through volunteering in their community and in communications at their work. Participants described the course as, "a great opportunity," and "an addition to my toolkit." Furthermore, participants reported that they would recommend the course to people in their circle who are interested in helping their community and to those who want to better their community by contributing to solving their problems. One participant stated, "The course gives you a sense of purpose, but you have to follow through."

- Course content & delivery

Participants were satisfied with the course content. Some found it to be dense and time-intensive, commenting, "having a review session at the start of each lecture would be supportive." Nonetheless, they appreciated receiving extra resources to revise or dive deeper into the content, if needed, on their own time schedule. Participants found class discussions and the final

application project to be especially beneficial for their learning journey. They also enjoyed the rawness and honesty of guest speakers in sharing their Journalism careers, with their challenges and achievements. The program team suggested setting a dedicated time commitment for guest speakers to keep them accountable and not run over time in their lectures. In addition, they suggested giving the guest speakers specific talking points prior to their lectures to be well-prepared. The instructor was found to be well-organized, knowledgeable, and supportive, creating a relaxed and accepting learning environment.

Discussion

The Multilingual Journalism Course was a success in terms of meeting participants' expectations and achieving intended learning objectives. Graduates felt that they are well-equipped with tools, skills and knowledge to be active change-agents in their native community. However, as a small pilot course, the number and demographics of participants is not fully representative of the focus audience.

Based on an enhanced understanding of the focus audience, the program team suggested having a two-track course. One track would be for agency employees or volunteers recruited through agency partnerships. This track would be condensed in the form of a mini-boot camp, as participants would coordinate course attendance with their employer organizations. Participants of this track would be anticipated to deploy course learnings in their work with non-native English-speaking community members.

The second track would be for bilingual, English-speaking community members who self-select into the program through recruitment efforts at central community locations such as the Area Learning Center (ALC). This track is expected to be more relaxed in terms of the time commitment. For the community members' track, it is essential to understand the opportunity cost incurred by members to participate, such as childcare costs or lost wages. The team suggested ways to incentivize participation, such as a fixed stipend or transportation fees. Another suggestion was to coordinate the final application project with a community agency so that the outcome would be a compensated project for the course participants from a specific client.

For both tracks, the Multilingual Journalism program team would need to develop an outreach strategy for relationship-building with agencies and community organizations. This is a fundamental step for building trust and credibility with community members. In conclusion, the pilot course was a success. However, a focused outreach strategy and differentiation of focus audience are needed to provide an inclusive, convenient course design for different community members.

Introduction

Background

In a state with nearly half a million immigrants, the city of Willmar, Minnesota, hosts one of the most diverse populations in Greater Minnesota. According to the 2016-2020 US Census Bureau, 24% of the Willmar population above five years old speaks a language other than English at home. Of Willmar's population, 24% are Hispanic or Latino, 9.9% are Black or African American, and 1.5% are Asian as per the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS). Almost a third of the Willmar population are non-native English speakers. Willmar's racial diversity underscores the importance of having full access and comprehension of information for its immigrant population and being treated equally, especially in housing, employment, and education issues.

With a relatively large non-native English-speaking and/or multilingual community, a need for native, first-language dissemination of news and other important information is on the rise. To create an inclusive community, Willmar residents would benefit from learning about local, state, and national news and resources in their native languages. In recognition of Willmar's diverse multilingual community, the Ridgewater College Customized Training & Continuing Education, supported by the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, proposed the Multilingual Community Journalism Program. The program aims to design a new course that provides journalism skills to Willmar area residents, and residents in similarly ethnically diverse communities, who are bilingual in both English and Spanish, Somali, Karen or other languages, empowering them to serve as key communicators within their linguistic population in the local community.

Goals and objectives

At the broad level, the Multilingual Community Journalism Program has two main objectives: to design and deliver the Multilingual Journalism Course to bilingual English-speaking community members, and to equip proactive members of the community with the tools needed to disseminate important and relevant information to their respective communities in their native languages.

Note: Several participants were native speakers of English in addition to native speakers of another language. For simplicity throughout this report, "native language" will be used to refer to the participants' non-English language.

In order to arrive at these objectives, the Multilingual Journalism Program has the following goals:

1. Develop a specialized, condensed Multilingual Journalism Course in collaboration with community stakeholders, tailored for bilingual English-speaking community leaders.

2. Recruit and train passionate community members committed to actively attending and participating in the Multilingual Journalism Course and dedicated to contributing positively to their community by sharing essential information in their native language.
3. Build a network of course graduates committed to at least 12 months of building and sharing content while serving as key communicators within their linguistic communities.

Activities

Multilingual Journalism short-term course curriculum development

To achieve the first program goal, a curriculum for the Multilingual Journalism short-term course was developed in collaboration with community stakeholders. The program identified an instructor from Ridgewater College for curriculum development and facilitation. The program ran a pilot course to evaluate the curriculum with the focus population from Willmar's bilingual English-speaking community. Participants provided information and feedback on the course through the evaluation research. Finally, the program aims to identify a multi-media studio or other resources for use in the community and a sponsoring stakeholder to empower the course graduates with the means to practice course lessons and produce communication content for their native community.

Bilingual English-speaking participants recruitment and training

The program recruited participants who are bilingual English-speaking and interested in using journalism skills to assist their communities and disseminate relevant information. The program aimed to teach participants how to produce audio and video content in their native language. The training course was scheduled to take place over a 5-week instructional period through five 6-hours sessions. Throughout the course, participants participated in sessions related to journalism ethics, professionalism, and multi-media training. Participants also learned about media editing and how to share their content with the public. The course instruction incorporated practical applications through professional guest speakers, assignments, and a graduation project. The course is structured around discussion-based learning where both class lectures and participants' discussion sessions are deployed to create an inclusive classroom space and allow participants to express and exchange ideas.



Photo 1: In-class shooting rehearsals
Photo credits: Dalila Hussein, Evaluation Research Assistant

Build a network of journalists who can communicate information in their native languages

Program graduates are expected to commit to at least 12 months of building and sharing content while serving as key communicators within their linguistic population. Graduates will be added to a resource list to be shared with community stakeholders and agencies to act as a resource in times of emergency and assist with sharing essential information to local communities. As part of the course work, participants are anticipated to work with agencies/stakeholders to build content in their native languages.

Staffing and participants

The Multilingual Journalism Program operates through the joint efforts and coordination of the Ridgewater College and the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission. In the pilot session, the program's core team were Dayna Latham, Training and Outreach Manager at the Ridgewater College Customized Training; Michelle Marotzke, Economic Development Professional at Mid-Minnesota Development Commission; and Larry Mixon, Training Program Manager at the Ridgewater College Customized Training, who serves as both the curriculum developer and instructor of the course. Major funding was provided by the Willmar Area Community Foundation. Other partners of the program include the City of Willmar, Pioneer PBS, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, University of Minnesota Extension, and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

The program's pilot course took place between March 3 and April 8, with a goal to recruit four to six active members of the community as participants, committed to actively attending and participating in the Multilingual Journalism Course, and dedicated to sharing essential information in their native language. The team initiated discussions and connections with community leaders and schools about the course in the fall of 2021 after receiving the first grant from the Willmar Area Community Foundation. Official participation recruitment started three weeks prior to the course start date and



Photo 2: Course Graduation
Photo credits: Dalila Hussein, Evaluation Research Assistant

organizations with the high priority groups were contacted, such as the Willmar Area Learning Center (ALC). In addition, partners and collaborators were contacted to advertise the pilot course with their networks. Participants were required to fill out an application form with personal

contact information and a short description of their interest in attending the Multilingual Journalism Course. Five participants were selected to attend the course. Four of them started the course, and three of the four graduated the course, with varying attendance rates. All four participants belonged to Willmar's Hispanic community; however, they represented different ages, education, and career backgrounds. Graduates received a media kit to use to build content upon course graduation. They also participated in stakeholder discussions as needed through the evaluation research. Course graduates are expected to show a one-year commitment to continue to address the gap of information in their community by sharing valuable relevant information in their native language.

Evaluation scope

From the program evaluation scoping phase with the program team, the evaluation was decided to take a formative and developmental approach as it looks at a program that is emerging. Formative evaluations look into whether a program is operating as planned. It looks at the process and implementation of the program to enhance its programmatic design and inputs. Formative evaluation is usually undertaken early in the development of the program to inform the providers and stakeholders about the trends in results, whether the goals of the program are likely to be fulfilled, and to identify the barriers and facilitators of implementation.

Developmental evaluation is an emerging evaluation approach that supports social innovators in developing social change initiatives in unfamiliar, often complex, situations. The Ridgewater College and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission meet this description as they have a goal of equipping bilingual English speakers with the journalistic tools necessary for them to become active leaders in their communities. They are looking to graduate individuals who would contribute to their local communities through the dissemination of important information in their native languages. The Multilingual Journalism Course is the primary tool to achieve this goal.

In light of the early development stage of the program – conducting a pilot course for a limited number of participants – the evaluation was formatively designed to infer strengths, improvement, and challenges (see Appendix II: The Design Matrix). Through the evaluation, stakeholders provided insights about whether the goals of the course are likely to be fulfilled with the current design. In addition, stakeholders identified barriers and facilitators of implementation, giving room for the results to be incorporated to improve program implementation. The evaluation process was approached through developmental evaluation, gauging unclear situations through reflexive feedback, and flexible evaluation design in consultation with the program team. Reflexivity is a continual process in which researchers recognize, examine, and understand how their positionality and assumptions affect their research practice.

Evaluation research questions & sub-questions

The research questions and sub-questions below outline the scope of the evaluation through measurable indicators.

Question 1: How satisfied are the participants with the course?

- What motivated the participants to attend the course?
- What is the feedback of the course participants on course content, modules, instruction, and course work/projects?
- How likely are course graduates to recommend this course to their peers in the community?

Question 2: What are the areas of strengths and improvement of the Multilingual Journalism course?

- What are the strengths of the course? What went right?
- What are the areas of improvement in the course? What went wrong or could be changed?
- What are the challenges that stakeholders encountered during the course?

Question 3: To what extent did the course content meet the needs and expectations of the participants?

- What are the needs of community members to be able to deliver community-relevant information?
- How were the course participants recruited? What were their expectations of the course?
- To what extent did the course meet the participants' expectations?
- What is their vision for deploying the course skills after graduation?

Multilingual Journalism Course stakeholders – influence and interest mapping

Mapping the interest and influence of stakeholders helps prioritize stakeholders in terms of their interest in the project and their potential influence. In addition, it is useful in outlining the areas of information needed and how it would be used per stakeholder group.

Course stakeholders	Interest/information needed	The use of information/influence
1. Course Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The extent to which participants are satisfied with the course● Feedback from participants● The strengths and areas of improvement of the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To judge the efficiency of the course● To modify the current course design if needed● To affirm and document strength elements of the course

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The extent to which graduates would recommend the course to their community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To plan future action
2. Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The extent to which the course output met staff and instructor expectations ● Anticipated effect on the community ● Feedback on rolling out the full course to the community ● The challenges and best practices of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To inform judgment of the effectiveness of the course ● To highlight and respond to challenges in future course implementation ● To plan future action

Methods

Research methodology

The methodological research approach used to address the key research questions and sub-questions aims at understanding the feedback from participants, as well as how to improve the content, delivery, and programmatic design of the course. The evaluation design adopted a mixed-methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitatively, pre-and post-tests and feedback surveys were distributed to course participants to capture feedback anonymously in a timely and accurate fashion. Qualitatively, individual interviews were conducted with course graduates and potential participants to capture opinions, motivations, and sentiments about the course and to create room for reflective feedback in a semi-structured, open conversation format. In addition, a focus group discussion was facilitated with the program team to reflect on the course design starting from participant recruitment to course graduation. The focus group discussion was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and to allow the program team to reflect on the course deployment collectively and critically. The research analysis employed data triangulation, in which different data sources were used in the analysis to increase the validity and reliability of the results, inferring robust evaluation results.

Sampling & data collection

Due to the limited number of participants in the pilot course, all course participants were contacted for participation in the data collection phase. First, course participants were given an anonymous, self-administered feedback form after each session to document their satisfaction with the session content, instruction, and activities. In addition, course participants were given a pre-and post-skills test at the start and end of the course to track their knowledge and skills acquisition level. Upon course completion, course graduates were invited to participate in

semi-structured interviews emphasizing the anonymity of participation and after acquiring their formal participation consent (see Appendix VI: Research Participation Consent Form). Participants were contacted in person during the final course session to schedule individual interviews with the course evaluator via a virtual meeting platform. To minimize social disconnection of digital conversations, participants were asked to turn their cameras on before the meeting and to be present in a connection-stable area. In order to methodologically minimize the effects of social desirability and confirmation bias, the following considerations were undertaken:

- The surveys were kept anonymous with the exception of the pre-and post-tests to track participants' improvement from the start of the course to the graduation.
- The evaluator served as a third-party facilitator to administer interviews and focus groups.
- Use of neutral tone phrases and indirect questions.

Out of the three participants who completed the course, two showed their interest to participate in the individual semi-structured interviews. Both interviews took place via a virtual meeting platform three days after the course graduation day. Both of the interviewed participants were from Willmar's Hispanic community. In addition, two potential participants who showed interest in the course were contacted for an individual online interview to document the reasons behind their interest and their anticipation of the course. One of the two potential participants was responsive and had a successful interview. The interviewee was from Willmar's Somali community. As for the program team, a focus group discussion was facilitated after the course graduation to document challenges, lessons learned and areas of improvement.

The data collection tools used were pre- and post-test form (see Appendix IV), session feedback form (see Appendix V), participants' semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix VII), potential participants' interview guide (see Appendix VIII), and program team focus group discussion guide (see Appendix IX).

Data management plan

Because the Multilingual Journalism Course ran a pilot program with a limited number of participants, participation in the interviews may not be fully anonymous due to the limited pool of data input. Nonetheless, to maximize anonymity, data was handled through a third party – the evaluation graduate research assistant. Stakeholders and external organizations could access de-identified data only. De-identification is a data management method where data is redefined so that no information can be used alone or in combination with other information to identify individual responses. The purpose of data de-identification is to encourage participants to speak authentically about their experiences in the Multilingual Journalism Course without fearing repercussions or impacts on their continued relationship or work. A generated code or other means of anonymous identification was added to the data after removing all personal identifiers to be able to anonymously re-identify single response data points. Data collected is stored in the

evaluation graduate research assistant's university-managed cloud folder, which will be deleted after three months of data collection and after submission of required data analysis and evaluation reports. In addition, data backups will be stored through local data storage.

A consent form explaining data management strategy and privacy standards was shared with the course participants for transparency, clarification, and trust-building. Questions regarding data privacy matters were addressed with participants before the interviews. The above-mentioned protocols were followed to maximize anonymity of research participants, preventing any specific quotes or feedback from being directly associated with one single respondent.

Analysis – methods & protocol

- Develop a comparative list from the pre-and post-skills test that features the change in perceptions of participants about their journalism skills and general knowledge.
- Complete a numerical analysis from sessions' feedback survey data.
- Analyze the interviews and focus group discussion results through qualitative data coding method, and outline responses for each question under broader questions that respond to the evaluation questions and research objectives.

Limitations

- Convenience sample and sample size
 - Representation of sample: The representativeness of our sample will be limited by the sample size of course participants. Ideally, we would be able to reach a variety of respondents who represent the focus audience of the Multilingual Journalism Course as outlined by the Ridgewater College and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission. However, due to the small sample size, sections of the focus audience are overrepresented or underrepresented in our sample. Our sample is both small in size and does not fully represent the diversity of the focus population from the Willmar area immigrant community. This limits our ability to generalize to the broader focus population.
 - Perspectives of individuals who consented to be interviewed and/or responded to surveys may systematically differ from those who did not wish to be interviewed and/or did not respond to surveys. A major limitation of convenience sampling is that there may be a difference between those who do not respond and those who do.
- Observational opinions (inability to separate out empirical effects)
 - A major factor of this evaluation is that we will not be able to directly evaluate a causal relationship and determine whether the course contributed to creating a more welcoming Willmar community. The Multilingual Journalism Course will

directly lead to educating Multilingual community members about tools and techniques for data dissemination through journalism. Thus, our evaluation will be measuring the observational opinions about course satisfaction and room for improvement. Measuring the larger impact effect of the course calls for a longer-term summative evaluation to study whether the program satisfies its mid-and long-term outcomes.

- Confirmation bias and social desirability bias

Another limitation of surveys and interviews is the tendency towards positive responses. In the case of confirmation bias, the respondent may have chosen to participate in the Multilingual Journalism Course because they thought it was useful, therefore they may be less likely to remember or value negative reactions to the course. Furthermore, participants might have implicit motivations to attend the course that might not be directly captured through data collection. Additionally, even with anonymous surveys, social desirability bias may cause the participants to respond in a more favorable way. In interviews, we also may tend to see patterns of social desirability bias and/or external influence with respondents.

- Limitations of a virtual format

There are potential limitations associated with a virtual conversation. First, virtual formats could be seen as less engaging than in-person formats. There may be more potential for distractions, especially when physical interactions are absent. Additionally, although some non-verbal communication will be captured remotely, there might be a loss of off-screen body language indicators (such as foot-tapping, crossed arms, etc.). Another limitation on engagement is the potential for technical issues such as audio/visual delays. Engagement was encouraged by discussing some preferred practices and general expectations for focus group participants (e.g., turn the video on, mute when not speaking, etc.)

Findings

The following section outlines the findings from the data sources listed above with course stakeholders, participants, potential participants, and the program team.

Recruitment

Course participants were recruited either through the Willmar Area Learning Center (ALC), or through partner organizations that shared the news about the course. During the Willmar ALC recruitment, a representative from the program team was present to explain the course objectives, set expectations, and address students' questions. Participants expressed how this "interactive" recruitment was effective and motivational, especially because they were able to get their questions answered right away. Participants expressed that course objectives and goals were clearly communicated. For future course recruitment, participants suggested advertising for the course at other high schools or colleges where potentially interested participants could learn about the opportunity. They also suggested that a wider outreach to the community could be attained through online advertising such as the Ridgewater College Facebook page, and offline marketing in spaces where community members frequently go, such as at the gym.

From the program team's perspective, a deeper reflection was undertaken regarding recruitment. The team agreed that establishing partnerships with community organizations is an important step in having a successful recruitment process. More partnerships could be established with community organizations that work with bilingual English-speaking community members. Organizations that were suggested for collaboration were United Community Action Partnership (UCAP), Pact for Families Collaborative, and Carris Health. The team expressed that participants recruited through these organizations would be from a mature, goal-driven pool of people who are the focus audience for this course. One way to outreach for those community organizations is through success stories from the pilot course graduates, who could share their experience of the course to provide a concrete description of what to expect. In addition, the team suggested connecting with a champion from these organizations who could promote the course, providing credibility and reliability to the course recruitment process.

As a way to improve course recruitment, the program team highlighted that the specific course activities should be outlined in advertising for the course, such as guest speaker lectures, participants' class presentations, and the final graduation project, to present a better vision of what to expect from the course. Furthermore, to be more inclusive, the team suggested having alternative application methods in addition to written applications to allow diverse communities an expression mechanism that they are comfortable with. A few suggestions in that regard were submitting a video with their application, having a casual conversational interview, or hosting an online interview to hear from course applicants about their interests and goals.

Course participants

All course attendees were from Willmar's Hispanic community. Only one potential participant from the Somali community was recruited, but the course dates did not suit his schedule. Participants came from different backgrounds and age categories, ranging from 17 to 42 years old. Participants were interested in attending the course for different reasons such as learning new skills for work assignments, getting course credits for school, wanting to learn about reporters' skills, and learning how to tell a story through writing. One participant shared that they expected the course to be lecture intensive. However, they were surprised to find the sessions engaging through discussions, guest speakers, and mini lectures.

Thinking of the ideal participant for the course, the program team shared some qualities that make up that persona. The ideal course participant ought to be mature, have a passion to support their community, and have clear goals regarding how they would apply the lessons from the course. Participants are expected to be eager to learn and have an open-minded mentality. The ideal number of course participants range from four to eight participants, with an emphasis on having an even number of participants for dual-class collaborations. Ridgewater College estimates a soft attrition rate of twenty percent, which should be taken into account during participant selection.

Based on the recruitment process and participants' discussions, the program team highlighted two types of participants: participants recruited through partner agencies and participants recruited through community outreach activities. Both participant types have the same objective: serving the community better through effective multilingual communication. However, their means to do so are different. In addition, the program team suggested that the course delivery could be split into two tracks, one for each participant type, where time commitment and application projects would vary – to be further discussed in the next section.

Course content & delivery

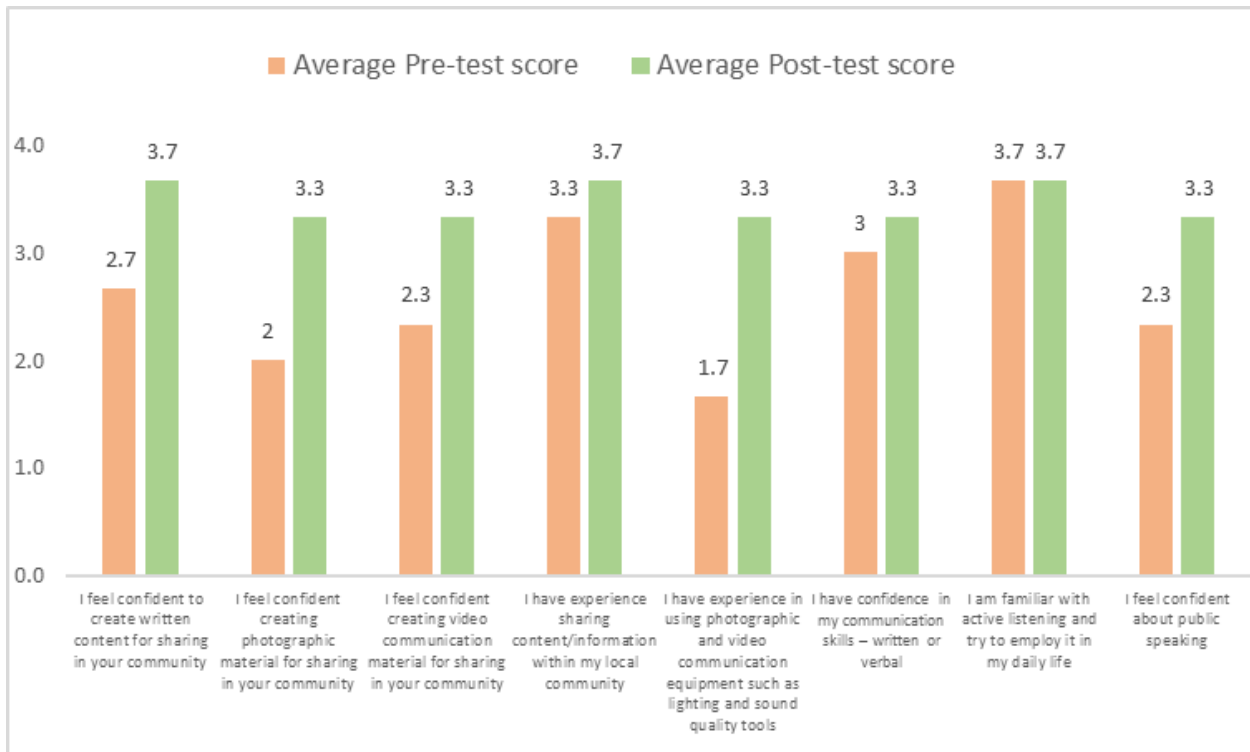
Course content

Participants found the course to be well-structured, practical, and realistic. Guest speakers shared their work experiences, providing real-life knowledge about their journalism work, while class projects provided participants with practical, hands-on experience. Participants particularly enjoyed learning how to conduct an interview, research methods for journalism, dos and don'ts of journalism, and how to communicate news efficiently. They also highlighted the benefit of getting a resource guide for the course modules in case they wish to dive deeper into one of the topics. When asked which element contributed to their learning the most, respondents highlighted class discussions and the application project. One participant found class discussions to be enriching to their understanding of class material and wished to have more time to express themselves in class. Another participant benefited the most from the application project, as it was a means for them to practice the tips they learned in class.

When asked about obstacles to learning, one participant shared that course content was dense and that they struggled to find the time to review the material and follow up during the week between sessions. They elaborated that this was primarily due to the challenging nature of their job. In follow-up, the participant was asked how the course design could support them in overcoming this obstacle. They answered that “having a review session at the start of each lecture would be supportive.”

Participants were asked to fill out a pre- and post-test measuring their self-assessment of their confidence and knowledge of journalism activities such as writing, photography and videography. On average, participants recorded an increased level of confidence and knowledge about those items from the start to the end of the course. The questions were measured on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 meant strongly disagree and 4 meant strongly agree (see Appendix IV). Figure 1 shows the change in participants’ self-assessment of their journalistic skills for the three course graduates.

Figure 1: Average pre- and post-test results of participant self-assessment (n=3)



Course delivery

Participants found the course instructor to be well-organized, easy-going and accepting. The course used various teaching methods to deliver the content such as video and audio segments, which were found to be useful and engaging. They found a good balance between classroom lectures and discussion, with a request to dedicate more time to group discussions. Participants appreciated having group brainstorming sessions in class, in which they experienced peer-to-peer learning. In addition, course participants found the learning environment to be accepting and not rigid, which made it easy to receive and digest information, as quoted by one of the participants: “It is good to be in a classroom where you feel you are not judged.”



Photo 3: Guest speaker session from Pioneer PBS
Photo credits: Dalila Hussein, Evaluation Research Assistant

Furthermore, guest speakers were found to be honest and helpful, providing raw, non-scripted information about their work. The program team also appreciated the guest speakers' contributions. However, as an improvement, they suggested providing specific talking points and a clear timeframe for guest speakers prior to their session contribution. This would help guest speakers commit to their designated lecture time and stay focused on topics most relevant to the course participants.

From a programmatic perspective, one participant expressed that having more course days with shorter session periods would be a good improvement. The participant found the time between weekly sessions to be too lengthy when they needed to follow up with technical questions regarding their application project throughout the week. The course instructor also shared that designing the course to be condensed would yield better learning outcomes. However, dedication of the condensed time commitment would be an obstacle. In addition, the participant shared that they had to skip sessions due to work commitments. They suggested hosting classes via a virtual meeting platform and/or recording classes for participants to catch up on what they miss. However, another participant was against having a hybrid class format, explaining, “If you are not there, things would slip over.” Finally, the course instructor found that dedicating time to more in-class exercises and role-playing would be an addition to the learning outcome.

Participant satisfaction

Interviewed participants were satisfied with the course and found it to be relevant to their goals. (see Appendix X: Aggregated Sessions Feedback results). In the course, they got new ideas

about how to support their community, learned how to use media for communication, and learned about journalistic writing, communication skills and body language. When asked how they would utilize the course learning after graduation, one participant shared that they would now be able to support their community through volunteering. They elaborated that they feel comfortable creating media content regarding issues that are important to the Hispanic community, such as advertising for a fundraiser. Another participant said that the course outcomes would support them at work in written communications. They will especially use what they learned in the course about how to proactively listen to people's stories, how to address different situations efficiently, how to conduct successful interviews, and how to get the story. Participants described the course as "a great opportunity," and "an addition to my toolkit."

Finally, participants would recommend the course to people in their circle who are interested in helping their community and those who want better for their community by contributing to solving their problems. One participant stated, "The course gives you a sense of purpose, but you have to follow through."

Areas of improvement

The program team reflected on the course design and suggested a number of improvements that could be introduced to rethink the course design. The program team suggested having a two-track course. One track would be for agency employees or volunteers recruited through agency partnerships. This track would be condensed in the form of a mini-boot camp as participants would coordinate course attendance with their employer organizations. Participants of this track are anticipated to deploy course learnings in their work with bilingual non-English-speaking community members.

The second track would be for bilingual English-speaking community members who self-select into the program through recruitment efforts in central community locations such as the Area Learning Center (ALC). This track is expected to be more relaxed in terms of the time commitment.

The team emphasized how essential it is to understand what opportunity cost is paid by community members to be able to self-select into the course. Community members are more likely to incur direct and indirect costs to attendance than agency employees, such as childcare costs, transportation expenses, and lost wages. Thus, incentivizing community members to attend the course is advised and could be approached in various ways. First, a direct financial incentive for attendance could be delivered. However, there is a concern that upon

"I think it is important to consider what expenses are being incurred by people directly or indirectly to be able to commit to the program even alongside getting a lot of tangible and intangible benefits, but they also need to make day-to-day choices about cost, again tangible and intangible"

course completion and with the absence of this incentive, graduates would not be able to follow through after the course by giving back to their community. Second, a transportation stipend could be provided to offset any incurred expenses by participants. Third, the application project could be a community-focused project, proposed by a community organization, where participants would be compensated for the quality of their work on the project. Community organizations would submit project proposals in advance that the course participants could choose to work on. In addition, the project criteria could be externally reviewed in collaboration with a partner organization. To preserve participants' rights, consultancy contracts could be developed with partner organizations for the scope of the project and anticipated compensation.

Another area of improvement that the program team suggested is to have participants work on a bilingual final project: one project in English to be reviewed by the course instructor and another in their native language that is ready to share with their community. Finally, the team suggested having a group project to motivate peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.

Conclusion

The Multilingual Journalism Course was a success in meeting the expectations of participating community members. Participants found an interest in learning about journalistic communications, gaining new experiences, and fulfilling school credit through course attendance. Participants found it to be a great opportunity to develop their journalistic knowledge and skills, and they foresaw ways in which they could apply the lessons learned in their job and/or through volunteering with their community. Even more, participants were motivated to recommend the course to community members who are passionate about helping their community through effective communication.

Participants especially appreciated class discussions, which allowed for peer-to-peer learning. They requested to have more in-class discussion time. They also enjoyed the guest speakers who provided practical experiential knowledge and complemented the in-class lectures. Furthermore, participants highlighted that the class environment was not rigid, but instead was accepting and open, which made them feel welcome and receptive to information. Some participants were challenged by the density of in-class information and were unable to follow up with lessons from one session to another. Nonetheless, they referred to the resources given in class as a great supportive resource for them to recall the course content. Finally, instead of designing course sessions over five weekly sessions, some participants recommended having sessions twice a week for shorter class periods. They found this design to be better to follow up with class assignments and lessons more frequently.

As for course programmatic design, there were a number of recommendations suggested by the program team:

- First, the team suggested planning for a more detailed recruitment process. The recruitment would outline specific course expectations such as guest speakers, projects, and in-class presentations. In addition, success stories from the pilot course graduates could be documented to be used during recruitment.
- Second, to be more inclusive, the team suggested providing multiple channels for applying to participate in the course, such as written application, recorded video, or face-to-face interviews.
- Third, the team suggested having a two-track course. The first track would be for agency employees or volunteers recruited through partnerships with community organizations. The course could be delivered in a condensed mini boot camp format for this focus audience. The second track would be less time-intensive, designed for community members recruited through community outreach activities.
- Fourth, the team suggested incentivizing the community members' course track either through a stipend, transportation reimbursement, or a paid final course project. The paid project would be developed for a community partner that submits requests for proposals to the program team. Course participants would work on the project for their final delivery, get assessed for the quality of their work, and get financially compensated accordingly.
- Lastly, the program team suggested having a bilingual final project, one in English to be assessed by the instructor and one in the community's native language to be shared with the community.

In conclusion, the Multilingual Journalism pilot course benefited the focus audience in Wilmar and served as a guideline for course development and future implementation. The evaluation results encourage the program team to start by developing agency partnerships as a more focused recruitment strategy, and to look into the course design in order to serve different community members in ways that are both convenient and inclusive.

Acknowledgement

Many thanks to the partners of this evaluation research for their guidance, support, and valuable input, including Anne Dybsetter (Executive Director of Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership), Michelle Marotzke (Economic Development Professional at Mid-Minnesota Development Commission), and Dayna Latham (Training and Outreach Manager) and Larry Mixon (Training Program Manager) from the Ridgewater College.

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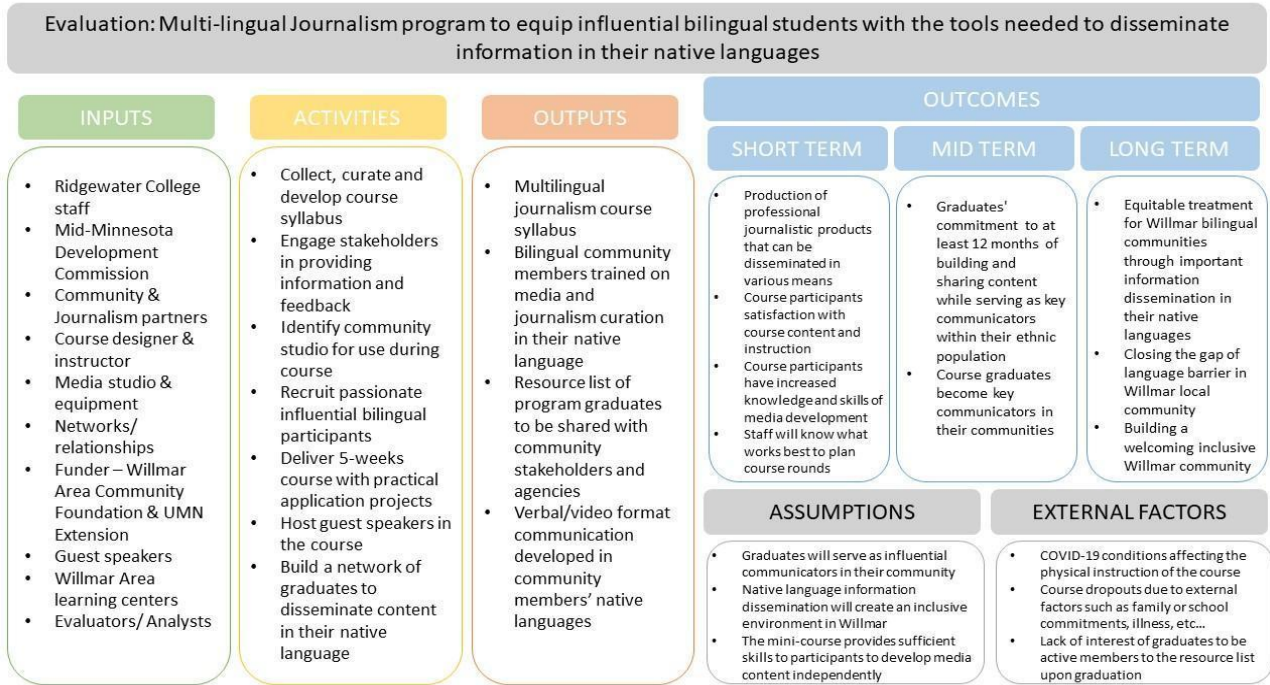
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Appendixes

Appendix I. The Logic Model



Appendix II. The Design Matrix

Researchable Question	Information Required & Sources	Methods	Limitations	Potential Findings
What question are you asking? Can it be answered?	What information is needed to answer the question and what is your planned source?	How will each question be answered?	What are the limitations of the methods?	What will this analysis allow you to say?
How satisfied are the participants with the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-structured interviews with course participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary participation in the interviews - Low number of pilot participants which might affect community representation 	The level of satisfaction of the participants of the course in light of their attendance motivations and background
What are the areas of strengths and improvement of the Multilingual Journalism course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course participants - Course instructor (& potentially guest speakers) - Course staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Session feedback form - Pre and post skills test - Attendance records - Semi-structured interviews with course participants - Semi-structured interviews with course instructor & staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary participation in the interviews - Low number of pilot participants which might affect community representation 	The extent to which the course was well designed and suggestions for improvement
To what extent did the course content meet the needs and expectations of the participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Session feedback form - Semi-structured interviews with course participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary participation in the interviews - Low number of pilot participants which might affect community representation 	The extent to which the course design is tailored to meet the needs/capacity of participants
To what extent is the Multilingual Journalism course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course graduates - Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys - Focus group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outreach to community leaders that are 	The extent to which the Multilingual

relevant (compelling/coherent) to the needs of Willmar non-English native speaking community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaders - Program partners and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-structured interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> representative of their communities - The level of engagement of program partners to render judgment/opinion 	Journalism course serves a need in Willmar non-English native speaking community
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Appendix III. Course Registration Form

Thank you for your interest in applying for the Multilingual Journalism course. Please complete all the required sections

Basic Information

1. Name
2. Best contact e-mail
3. Phone number
4. Age
5. Education level
6. School name/employer
7. Home address
8. Which of these do you associate yourself with? (You can select more than one.)
 - African American/ Black
 - Hispanic or Latino/a/x
 - Asian/Asian American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other (please specify)
9. Which language do you consider your native language? (Please pick one only.)
 - Spanish
 - Somali
 - Karen
 - Other (please specify)
10. How would you rate your English language proficiency?
 - Speaking - 1: Elementary proficiency, 2: Limited working proficiency, 3: Full professional proficiency, 4: Full fluency (bilingual)
 - Reading - 1: Elementary proficiency, 2: Limited working proficiency, 3: Full professional proficiency, 4: Primary fluency (bilingual)

- Writing - 1: Elementary proficiency, 2: Limited working proficiency, 3: Full professional proficiency, 4: Primary fluency (bilingual)
 - Listening - 1: Elementary proficiency, 2: Limited working proficiency, 3: Full professional proficiency, 4: Primary fluency (bilingual)
11. Please check all the software that you are familiar with
- Microsoft Word document
 - Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
 - Adobe PDF reader
 - Adobe Premiere rush
12. Please list other software that you are familiar with (consider photography and videography editing software).

Essay questions

13. Please state any experience you have with journalism (photography, videography, writing, etc...) - personal social media account experiences are accepted
14. What issues are you most passionate about and engaged with in your community and why?
17. Give an example of a time you made a positive impact/took a leadership initiative in your community
18. Why are you interested in the Multilingual Journalism course?
19. What are your expectations of the course?
20. Are you available on Fridays from 9 am to 3 pm on the 25 of February?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe, I am not sure

Appendix IV. The Pre-and-Post Test Form – (for course participants)

Please answer the below questions to the best of your knowledge. There is no right or wrong answer. These questions will help course instructors tailor the course content to participants needs.

Name:

Date:

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel confident to create written content for sharing in your community				
I feel confident creating photographic material for sharing in your community				
I feel confident creating video communication material for sharing in your community				
I have experience sharing content/information within my local community				
I have experience in using photographic and video communication equipment such as lighting and sound quality tools				
I have confidence in my communication skills – written or verbal				
I am familiar with active listening and try to employ it in my daily life				
I feel confident about public speaking				

Appendix V. Sessions Feedback Form

Date:

Location:

Instructor:

1. Please answer the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please elaborate if you disagree or strongly disagree
The session					
The session objectives were clearly stated and met					
The session was well organized					
The time duration of the session was well used and managed					
The content					
The information and/or skills presented were relevant and useful					
The activities and/or workshops of the session were relevant and useful					
The session increased my knowledge about journalism					
Instructor and guest speakers					
The instructor was well organized and prepared for the session					
The instructor provided adequate time for questions and answered them sufficiently					
The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject					
The guest speakers contributed positively to the session					

2. Please elaborate three things that you liked/learned in the session.
3. Please elaborate at least one thing that you would change/improve in the session.
4. Additional feedback.

Appendix VI. Research Participation Consent Form

In sending out requests for interviews to course participants, a consent form will be sent that discusses the purpose of the interview, how their information will be used, and our data privacy practices. Sending this form is important to ensure that participants are fully informed to willingly participate.

Consent form template:

“I volunteer to participate in an interview discussion conducted by Southwest RSDP Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Minnesota from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs – Dalila Hussein). The purpose of this interview is to gather reflection about the Multilingual Journalism Course, feedback, what worked well and what needs to be improved. The findings from this interview will help Ridgewater College, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and RSDP to better assess the course and render decisions on course improvement and future funding.

I understand that...

- Participation is voluntary and will not negatively or positively affect my relationship with Ridgewater College, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, or RSDP.
- I have the right to refuse to answer a question and/or withdraw my participation from the interview discussion at any time.
- For documentation purposes, notes will be taken during the interview discussion. A recording and transcript of the Zoom meeting will also be saved.
- Notes and recordings of the interview discussion will be stored in a secure file that will not be shared outside of the core evaluation team: Anne Dybsetter and Dalila Hussein.
- Recordings and notes that contain any identifiable information (for example: name, occupation, etc.) will be permanently deleted by May 31.
- Information gathered from this interview will be de-identified and coded into a report for Ridgewater College, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and Southwest RSDP that outlines the main themes and topics discussed.

- I may be contacted by the evaluation graduate research assistant up to a month after the interview discussion for follow up questions or clarification purposes. Response to any follow up questions is optional.

Appendix VII. Course Participants Interview Questions Guide

Hello, this is Dalila, the course evaluator. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As you know, the Multilingual Journalism Course is the pilot trial phase, thus it is essential for the team to get your feedback on the course as part of the first group of participants in order to improve the course for future participants. Your answers reflect your opinion, and will be anonymously reported, thus please feel free to express your mind openly.

1. Could you tell me a little bit more about yourself?
2. How **did you hear** about this course?
 - a. What would be **the best way to learn** about the course in the future?
3. Why were you **interested** in participating in this course?
4. What were your **expectations** for the course?
 - a. What were the elements that you expected to learn from this course?
 - b. Were they fulfilled? If yes, how? If no, why not?
 - c. How did the course achieve or not achieve your expectations?
 - d. Do you feel course expectations were well communicated?
 - e. If yes, how? If no, why not?
5. What are the strengths of this course?
6. What parts of the course supported your learning the most?
7. How did you find the course instructor method of teaching?
8. How did you find the lecture guest speakers? Which guest stood out to you the most and why?
9. What are things about the course that could be improved to better support your learning?
10. What parts of the course would you consider obstacles to your learning?
11. What was **challenging** about the course for you?
 - a. Logistically
 - b. Administratively
 - c. Attendance, etc.
 - d. What would **reduce** these barriers for you?
12. What are your **recommendations** for improving this course?
 - a. Time & date
 - b. Location
 - c. Teaching mode (hybrid, asynchronous)
13. How satisfied are you with the course? Why?
14. How do you anticipate using the learnings of this course from now onwards?
15. Describe the Multilingual Journalism Course in one word or sentence

Appendix VIII. Potential Course Participants Interview Questions Guide

Hello, this is Dalila, the Multilingual Journalism Course evaluator. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. The Multilingual Journalism Course is the pilot trial phase; thus it is important for our team to speak with potential participants who showed interest in the course to understand their points of interest and develop a relevant experience for their needs. Your participation is voluntary and will not affect your potential participation in the course. Your answers reflect your opinion, and will be anonymously reported, thus please feel free to express your mind openly.

1. Could you tell me a little bit more about yourself?
2. How **did you hear** about this course?
 - a. What would be **the best way to learn** about the course in the future?
3. Why are you **interested** in participating in this course?
4. What are your **expectations** for the course?
5. What were the barriers for you to attend the course?
 - a. How can we support you to overcome those barriers?
6. What could be changed in the course format to better suit your schedule?
 - a. Time & date
 - b. Location
 - c. Teaching mode
7. Do you think members in your community would be interested to attend the Multilingual Journalism Course? Why? Why not?
8. What would be the best method to advertise this course for them?

Appendix IX. Program Team Focus Group Discussion Questions Guide

1. *I would like us to reflect on each of the stages of the Multilingual Journalism Course, thinking about what went right, what went wrong, and what could be enhanced for future improvements*
 - a. Course recruitment
 - b. Participant selection
 - c. Course curriculum
 - d. Guest speakers selection and content
 - e. Logistics (time, date, duration, location, etc.)
 - f. Graduation
2. What could have been done differently to avoid having dropouts?
3. What is the ideal number of course participants?
4. What are the successes of the course (if not mentioned yet)?
5. What are the areas of improvement of the course (if not mentioned yet)?
6. How do you anticipate the graduates/participants of this course using the learnings of this course from now onwards?

Appendix X. Aggregated Sessions Feedback Results

The below section outlines the sessions feedback results on an aggregated level. Attendance rate differed from session to the next where participants number is indicated by “n”. The questions were measured on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 meant strongly disagree and 4 meant strongly agree

Figure 2: Aggregated feedback on the session organization and logistics

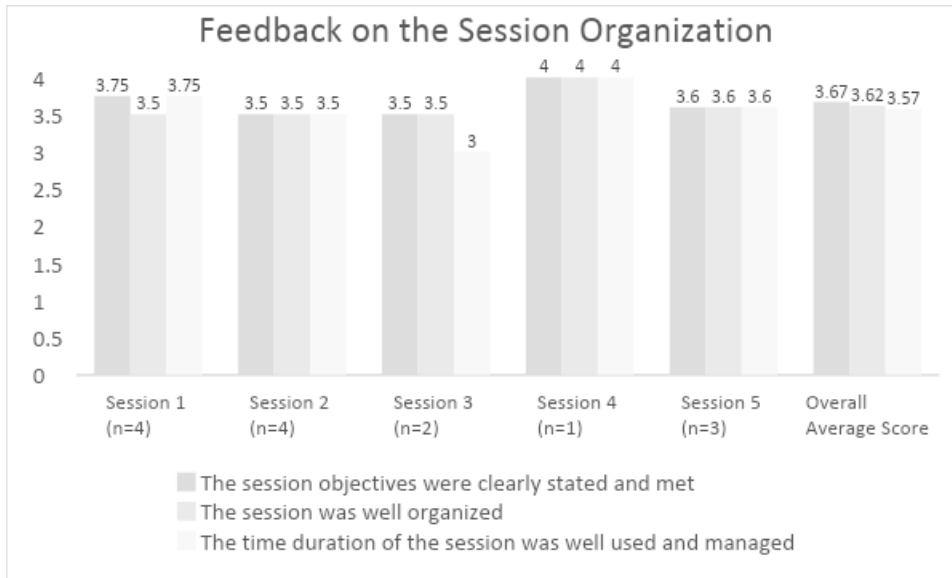


Figure 3: Aggregated feedback on the sessions content

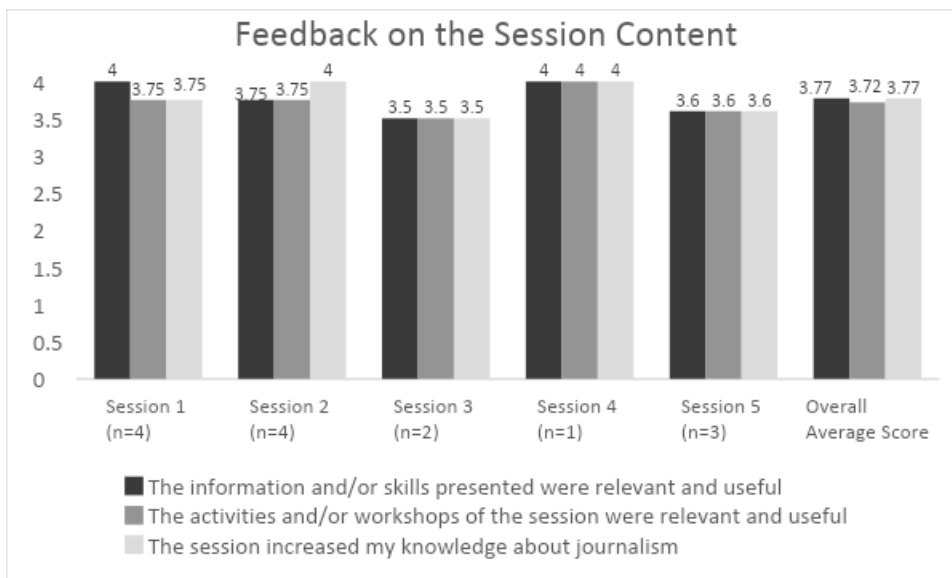


Figure 4: Aggregated feedback on the instruction & guest speakers lectures

