

Developing Great Stories: The Leadership Role

Purpose of Coaching:

Individual Writers

- Helps writers see their writing as a whole
- Encourages writers to improve their work habits
- Improves communications between writers and editors
- Establishes collaborative relations for fast reporting and editing
- Builds a common vocabulary for discussion of writing and editing
- Saves time: It takes just 5 minutes to focus a story, but several times that to rewrite it

For the Staff as a Whole

- Helps writers see their work as part of the larger goals of the news organization
- Keeps leaders in close touch with the challenges of their staffs
- Helps coordinate the entire team
- Promotes learning from each other

Basic Principles of Coaching

- Let the writer talk; the coach asks questions and listens
- Seek things to praise
- Focus on major problems, only a few at a time (don't overwhelm the person)
- Focus on the audience (the reader) as the beneficiary of the conversation
- Help writers express their problems with precision to improve search for solutions
- Take your time
- Don't use red pens