TIMELY TIPS

Coverage

Who Are We Missing?

OBJECTIVE

Students will evaluate who has and has not been included in their yearbook coverage, identify students who need more opportunities to appear and create a specific plan for covering students in their grade.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- One portrait for every student in the school, printed and cut apart
- A master student list or portrait key for the adviser
- Envelopes, folders or containers for organizing portraits by grade
- Current yearbook coverage records, if available
- Paper and pencils or a digital planning resource

PART 1 WHO DO WE KNOW?

Place the cut-apart student portraits in a pile where everyone can access them.

Tell students:
Your yearbook should tell the story of your entire school. Let's find out how well we know the people whose stories we are responsible for telling.

Have staff members work together to identify as many students as possible. As students are identified, use the master key to confirm their names. Set unidentified portraits aside.

Ask:
- Who was easiest to identify? Why?
- Which students were more difficult to identify?
- What might happen to students our staff members do not already know when we make coverage decisions?
- Where might these students currently appear in the yearbook?
- **Make the connection**: The students left in the unidentified pile should immediately get the staff's attention. If yearbook students do not recognize them, staff members may be less likely to naturally seek them out for interviews, photos, quotes and stories.

PART 2 FROM RECOGNITION TO COVERAGE

Explain the difference between recognizing a student and covering a student.

A student appearing in the portrait section does not automatically mean their experience has been represented throughout the book. Likewise, appearing in one group photo does not tell readers much about who they are.

Have students consider the different ways a person might contribute to coverage:

- Candid photo
- Caption
- Quote
- Q&A
- Feature
- Sidebar
- Club or activity coverage
- Academic coverage
- Student life coverage
- Sports coverage

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PART 2 FROM RECOGNITION TO COVERAGE CONT.

DISCUSS:

- Which students naturally receive a lot of attention from the yearbook staff?
- Who might be easy to overlook?
- Are we repeatedly going to our friends or the same familiar students for quotes and photos?
- How can we intentionally broaden our reporting without forcing students into stories where they do not belong?
- Important reminder: The goal is not to give every student identical coverage. The goal is to make intentional reporting decisions instead of allowing familiarity, convenience or habit to determine who appears in the book.

PART 3 GIVE EVERY PORTRAIT A PLAN

Sort the unidentified or potentially under-covered portraits by grade.

Assign each staff member a manageable group of students from their own grade. The staff member's job is not simply to “get them in the book.” Instead, students should learn enough about each person to identify authentic opportunities for coverage.

For each assigned student, create a simple coverage plan:

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

What do we need to learn about this student?

_____

_____

Possible coverage opportunities:

- Student life
- Academics
- Clubs/activities
- Sports
- People/portrait coverage
- Other: _____

A staff member who will make content: _____

One next step:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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PART 4 COVER THE WHOLE SCHOOL

Bring the staff back together and look at the portraits still needing a plan.

Ask:
- What did we notice about the students we did not immediately recognize?
- What coverage opportunities did we discover once we looked beyond our usual sources?
- Which grade levels need more attention?
- What upcoming assignments give us opportunities to reach students we have missed?
- How can we keep this activity going instead of treating it as a one-time check?

Pay particular attention to your largest grade levels. At many high schools, freshmen make up a substantial part of the student body, but they can be easy for older staff members to overlook because students have had less time to become familiar across grade levels.

If freshmen are a large part of your school, assign freshman portraits intentionally and look for authentic opportunities to bring their experiences into student life, academics, activities, sports and other appropriate coverage.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

***Yearbook Suite* Curriculum | Coverage: The Heart of the Yearbook:** Use the Coverage unit to reinforce the principles behind complete, intentional yearbook coverage and help students think beyond the people, activities and stories they already know.
Mid-Year Coverage Analysis Activity – Extend this activity by reviewing completed spreads and the ladder to identify groups, events and activities that are missing or underrepresented, then make adjustments before upcoming deadlines.
Club Coverage 101 Training Series: Use these training videos and classroom activities to help students move beyond traditional group photos, ask stronger questions, track club coverage throughout the year and find deeper stories within clubs and organizations.
Adding Flair to Your Portrait Pages Activity – Explore mods and sidebars as additional opportunities to feature student voices through quotes, polls, lists and other secondary coverage while focusing on broad representation.