A Reporting Simulation Using Toolbook

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For a number of reasons, computer simulation of news reporting assignments provides significant benefits. The computer environment allows beginning students to gain much needed practice in the task of accurate note taking from both face-to-face and telephone interviews, without the anxiety induced by the need to ask for information from strangers who may not always be cooperative. Furthermore, the instructor need not continually depend on the goodwill of local sources of news as each new group of students goes through the learning process. “Newsroom” is a work in progress which aims to provide novice newswriters with a convincing simulation of the news gathering process, from initial assignment to completed story. The student can ask questions and take notes from filmed responses or from telephone “conversations” initiated either by the student or by sources. Interviews can be recorded for quote checking when deadline pressures permit.