**Lesson Title:** Reporting (Burnham Style)

**Description of the lesson:** Reporter David Burnham used a specific approach when handling a “beat” or subject to encourage in-depth coverage and thoroughness. He developed an approach which have been linked to five steps, according to Blur by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel.

* Identify the stated goals of the agency you are covering.
* Identify what information would help you tell whether the agency is meeting those stated goals.
* Follow what the data, the product of the agency, tells you.
* Measure whether the output suggests the agency is doing its job and, if not, ask why not and what job it is doing instead.
* Question the participants to get their views on what the evidence shows.

**Objectives*by the end of this lessons, students will be able to ..***

* Understand Burnham’s approach to covering a “beat.”
* Identify a story’s potential value and understand how to address issues or concerns that may arise.

**Procedures:**

Before beginning, read the following:

* + - Blur, Chapter 8
    - [Beat Reporting: What Does it Take To Be The Best?](https://www.poynter.org/news/beat-reporting-what-does-it-take-be-best)

Activity

1. Pick your beat. Choose from the following list of beats (based on your location; example: city or village) to complete the activity below.
   1. City Council
   2. Law Enforcement
   3. Education
2. Using Burnham’s five steps, develop a plan on how to cover each beat.
   1. Use the graph below to help you get started.
3. In a Word document, explain how using an approach like this can help you develop better, more complete stories.

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| **Identify the stated goals of the agency you are covering.** | **Identify what information would help you tell whether the agency is meeting those stated goals.** | **Follow what the data, the product of the agency, tells you.** | **Measure whether the output suggests the agency is doing its job and, if not, ask why not and what job it is doing instead.** | **Question the participants to get their views on what the evidence shows.** |
| What are the agency’s responsibilities? | Is there research available? | Do the numbers (budget or otherwise) add up? | Who should you ask? | Go through the evidence and build your questions. |
| Yearly goals? | Are meeting held to determine goal achievements? | Have programs been implemented as promised? What’s missing? | Who’s responsible? | How can you develop the right questions to get the right answer? |
| Budget goals? | Documents available to determine how the agency is thriving? Problems? Needs? | Follow the paper trail. |  |  |