

## Work Reflection Essay Connor Boulet

Throughout my four years at North Greenville University, I've received many opportunities to apply the talents I've learned in class in ways that have prepared me for my post-graduation world. Working with various Adobe software, managing the on-campus radio station, and networking with professionals in broadcasting have been invaluable experiences. My audio practicum courses, South Carolina Public Radio internship, and attending the CMB and NRB conferences

North Greenville University's audio practicum classes concentrated on preparing me for working at the on-campus radio station. I took my first audio practicum class in my second semester at North Greenville University. My professor, Andrew Stevens, instructed us to record our voices to learn about how to speak and enunciate clearly on-air, had us shadow and intern existing Vision Radio staff for 10 hours overall. I asked the on-air talent questions about how they ran the show, made guest appearances on their show during the interning process, and learned how to run the NextGen Automation System and schedule an hour of songs, music, and breaks. Once I reached audio practicum 2 in my first semester of junior year, I applied what I'd learned from my broadcast announcing and broadcast programming classes to how I developed my show on the radio station. An audio production class I'd taken helped me to produce the various liners, promos, and PSAs I was required to create for the class. I also learned how to format my first show, Afternoon Adrenaline, by choosing an alternative rock format and focusing on trending topics on social media for my talk sets. I got experience in keeping my talk sets short enough to avoid taking up the whole hour and filtering myself to provide my audience with only the most essential information. With another staff member, Sarah Wetherbie, we decided to introduce Facebook Live to on-air talent's radio shows to give people an opportunity to engage a larger audience through video. Since radio stations now are becoming multimedia

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platforms to engage as many audience members as possible, we wanted to follow this trend. In audio practicum 3, I learned from Elizabeth Nelsen and Harley Watkins, the then current staff members of Vision Radio, how to perform administrative duties like running the hot clock, adding new music to the station, and guidelines for inserting new music. I had the opportunity to produce an audio drama with the other audio practicum classes that gave me a chance to learn more about how to use Adobe Audition and multi-track recording, editing, and mixing with the software. Throughout this and audio practicum 4, I was able to try a variety of different times and days to host a radio show, giving me experience with show prep and time management in a variety of different contexts. In audio practicum 4, I became station manager, which means the responsibilities Elizabeth Nelsen and Harley Watkins had before were now mine. I received the keys to the back of the radio station to provide emergency maintenance if necessary. Although daunting at first, learning firsthand how to use the automation system and performing maintenance during a hard drive crash with the help of an out of state technician helped me master the systems in question. This experience has provided me with the most experience in music radio out of all my opportunities as a student, and I am extremely grateful for all the time I've spent working on it.

My South Carolina Public Radio internship provided an interesting blend of audio production and broadcast journalism. With the help of my talented and energetic fellow intern Lee Wardlaw, our Program Director John Gasque tasked us with brainstorming story ideas, scheduling in-person interviews relevant to those stories, and writing a web and radio script for each one. We created five stories for South Carolina Public Radio, and I learned a lot from my fellow intern and from my reporter mentor, Tut Underwood, about taking compelling pictures for the web article, maintaining poise during interviews, and asking questions that give reporters

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memorable quotes to use in their stories. On the audio side, I learned about South Carolina Public Radio's unique approach to mixing audio and their calm, storybook-style method of voicing their stories. It's an interesting blend of a professional reporter and the way a grandfather might tell a story to his grandkids. It took several tries to get right and John Gasque's advice was invaluable to getting the read's right. Finding a good balance between ambient noise that set the scene and transitioned from point to point and avoiding distracting sound cues that took away from the script was also a challenge. Overall, living and working in Columbia for 2 months over the summer helped me mature as a person and as a broadcast radio professional.

Finally, the broadcast conferences I attended representing North Greenville University as a student have provided me with numerous professional contacts that will help me land a job as I move into the professional world. At the Christian Music Broadcasters conference, I attended several workshop sessions and toured the influential Christian radio station WAY FM in Nashville Tennessee and Capitol Music Record's headquarters. The WAY FM tour showed us how radio stations are producing video and web content for social media to help expand their brand and bring in listeners who use all types of media platforms. The conference itself paired us with mentors and other students from a variety of schools to create a multi-media marketing plan for a non profit organization called Compassion International in 18 hours. Under the guidance of our mentor Josue Villa, we put together graphics, a power point, and audio commercials which I was responsible for. A PSA I co-produced with another student received high praise from Villa, who I've kept in contact with me and who wrote me a letter of recommendation recently. The experience taught me valuable tidbits about the status of the Christian radio industry going into 2020. At NRB, I had the opportunity to submit a couple of my student audio productions for the radio station to NRB. I won first place for best imaging drop for one of my commercials. I also

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participated in the 24-hour audio challenge with Justin Brown and Autumn Lowry, and we learned a lot about scripting and creating a compelling audio drama with a varied soundscape. Film producer Phil Cooke gave us a bunch of amazing tips about how to excel in the professional world, and I had the opportunity to network with many different people at the exhibit hall. I really pushed myself to get out of my comfort zone during this time and improved my skills as a communicator.

As my time at North Greenville University ends, I feel like I've been treated like a professional, and I've learned hands-on tips about working professionally before I've even graduated. Applying these skills to my work after graduation is going to be an amazing experience.