Infographics

Entry Skills Assessment
The purpose of this assessment is to gauge your knowledge and application of the skills necessary to create the infographic project that is the summation of this unit. Answer all items as fully as possible in order to gauge what skills need to be buoyed up before the final project.

Part I. Headline Writing
Read the following article, write a headline for it, and then compose a 3-5 sentence rationale of the choices you made for the headline and what headline rules and purposes guided your decision-making.

Schools across Illinois are feeling the effects of budget cuts in different areas of their district. Mattoon High School’s teachers, faculty and students are experiencing the lack of money in a more emotional setting: not having trained psychologists and social workers on scene full time.

For MHS and Mattoon Middle School social worker Tracy Perry, the effect is personal as she feels herself being spread thin across the district.

“I’m assigned to the middle school and high school and other duties outside of the school system, but I feel like there are a lot of needs that can’t be met as far as needs for kids,” said Perry.

Although there is still a trained social worker available, other faculty members and students have to adjust to her not always being accessible. Positions such as hers are beneficial for students maturing at this age.

“It’s important that [the school] has staff available in order to assist students with their needs,” said Perry. “But we do need more support staff available—social workers, counselors, and psychologists—because they’ve all been cut.”

Other independent sources outside of the district are options, but they have seen money shortages, as well.

“Parents and students need to be aware of outside agencies they could go to, but they’ve been cut, too,” said Perry. “I refer students to them, but they can be put on waiting lists for months because of lack of personnel.”

MHS discipline secretary Tammy Munyon agrees that the lack of funding has created difficulties.

“Obviously the [budget] cutting that has been done has developed a problem in the school system,” said Munyon.

The funding provided can offer a sense of security for some students who may need help.

“I think it’s important that they have money for that type of help because people go through random losses all the time, like suicide. They need someone there to help them through a traumatic situation like that,” said MHS senior Brooke French.

While this does present a problem, faculty members should take it upon themselves to do what they can to support the students they work with, according to Munyon.

“Teachers and faculty have to have a passion for kids and education, and teachers need to step up and do what they have to do,” said Munyon. “It takes a lot of the right kind of people to raise kids the right way.”

Not only do teachers and students have to be held accountable for students who need emotional help, but the district does, too.

“The district should see the need for certain programs to be implemented for the types of needs the students have,” said Munyon.

Although the district hasn’t added any new programs, the high school has instituted one that has appeared to help in the 2013-2014 school year: B.I.O.N.I.C.

“[B.I.O.N.I.C. has] helped,” said Munyon. “I’ve watched freshmen and transfer students come in and not know what to do. I think this program gives them a sense of security.”

Compared to recent years, Perry has also seen a decrease in the amount of students who need assistance with issues the B.I.O.N.I.C. program helps.

“It seems like I have spent less time with kids this school year who are having social crises like bullying and girlfriend and boyfriend issues than I have in years past,” said Perry.

In contrast, French believes this organization could go farther to help meet needs.
“I don’t think it really helps those with serious issues but instead with the freshmen who are lost,” said French. “I haven’t heard a lot from my transfer kids about it helping them because after a while they find their way.” Regardless if it’s due to B.I.O.N.I.C. or not, staff agrees it still provides a better overall school setting. “It’s so cool to see students want to volunteer their time and give back without expecting anything in return,” said Munyon. Perry agrees with the outlook Munyon has. “It seems this year that the overall culture of the school is better,” said Perry. While all the positions to help students cannot always be met due to the monetary budget, teachers, faculty and students should still support each other emotionally, according to Munyon. “Teenagers are not problems meant to be solved,” said Munyon. “They’re resources to be developed.”

Part II. Newsworthiness

Read the following story summaries and list any elements of newsworthiness that those summaries include.

1. Although Mattoon High School is always working toward improving its environment, a recent respect survey conducted by the MHS administration gives Assistant Principal Michael Shaffer hope for the future in the way students and faculty treat each other. Every five years, The North Central Accreditation (NCA) administers the respect survey to MHS students as part of the accreditation approval process. This survey idea is what prompted Shaffer and other administrators to take a closer look at the respect issues in MHS and also to create a similar survey for faculty members. “[The survey’s] results may seem like little things, but they speak volumes for our school,” said Shaffer. Surprisingly to Shaffer, the results between the student survey and the faculty survey, both agreed on the biggest causes of disrespect in MHS. Students and faculty observed disrespect from teacher to teacher and also student to teacher. After taking an even closer look at the results, Shaffer noticed many of the surveys pushed for a change in how administrators deal with disrespect and disciplinary issues.

Elements of newsworthiness:

2. Many residents in the Mattoon, Charleston area are learning of the burdens their neighbors carry—in this small community, approximately three in every 10 families are struggling to make ends meet. Students are starting to understand that 263 students—more than the entire Class of 2014—in Mattoon High School go to a home where dinner isn’t guaranteed. Recognizing this menace in Coles County is the first step to influencing change, but according to Kris Maleske, principal of Williams Elementary School, this information has to be extended before it makes a difference. “It’s the action behind it that matters,” said Maleske. Maleske said Coles County’s poverty levels don’t have a quick solution, but overcoming it requires action from the entire community. “It takes the village to solve the village’s problems,” said Maleske. However, alleviating these issues requires more than just writing a check or donating money to an organization. “It’s going to take continuous involvement from our community to help others in need,” said Maleske. “It’s about being willing to help and communicating with groups to address their specific needs.” The stories shared by Mattoon’s Gentry family, MHS food pantry volunteer Madonna McKittrick, advocate and educator behind the data assistant sociology professor Michael
Gillespie and Maleske paint a picture of these issues, but between the lines and lessons of the stories are tangible ways institutions, businesses and individual people can defeat the poverty and hunger existing in Coles County.

Elements of newsworthiness:

3. Mattoon High School has recently acquired a new vending machine – not the typical vending machine, but it’s one that carries every school day necessities. It contains a variety of products, including notecards, deodorant, gum, pencils, pens, headphones, tide to-go erasers, portable tooth brushes, hair ties and water-flavoring packets. Michele Sinclair, MHS principal, said the idea was sprouted last year from Dillon Tate-Bierman, a 2013 graduate. Bierman had suggested a vending machine with convenient materials inside it. Recently he and Corey Arthur, another 2013 MHS graduate, started a business called B.A. Vending to make that possible. “[Bierman] approached me with the idea, and I thought it was a good idea. I felt like I would have used a vending machine like this a lot when I was in high school if it would have been at my disposal,” Arthur said. “It’s like a small convenient store for the students. When picking the items to be sold, I tried to find items that would occasionally be needed throughout the day,” Bierman said. So far, MHS is the only school in Illinois to have the B.A. Vending Machine, but Tate-Bierman and Arthur plan to start expanding to surrounding schools.

Elements of newsworthiness:

Part III. Layout and Design

For the following page, write a short paragraph describing three positive layout and design technique decisions and three negatives regarding the choices made, using appropriate language.
Part IV. Internet Searches
For the following topic, locate four different possible logos or pieces of clip art (icons) that could represent the concept well. Please include the source for each image as well.

The Green Wave

1.

2.

3.

4.