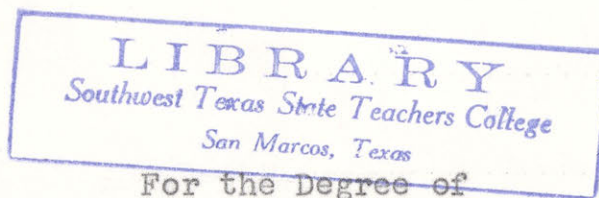


THE NEED OF JOURNALISM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of
Southwest Texas State Teachers College
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements



MASTER OF ARTS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

It is the hope of the writer that the material contained herein will present the need for journalism in the high school curriculum. An effective journalism program in the high school starts the students toward an early development of logical thinking, concise writing, and a training in observation of their surroundings that is invaluable in every walk of life.

More and more schools are developing and expanding their programs in journalism. Administrators realize that journalistic training, with its concomitant work on the school paper, presents an unparalleled opportunity for training pupils in the desirable character traits of dependability, accuracy, promptness, loyalty, and thoroughness.

B. Importance of the Problem

With the world drawing closer together each year, the need for trained journalists increases. More and more people depend on the newspapers with their facts, analyses of world events, and interpretations of the happenings of the day to aid them in forming their opinions.

Almost every community has a newspaper, whether it be daily or weekly, and many people regularly read the news of world events as well as the news concerning their neighbors. Because of this increased interest in the world and the knowledge that has been forcibly impressed upon many people, and because the events in Korea or Russia or Italy are of vital importance to everyone, trained journalists are in increasing demand.

Every high school requires three or four years of English. In these classes, the student learns to express himself through the written word. In a journalism class, however, the student is given the additional training that enables him to state all pertinent facts in a sentence or two. Journalism training teaches the individual to get all available facts and write them clearly and succinctly. It also develops logical processes of thought and individuality of expression.

It is never too early to start the development of the individual's ability to present information in a distinctive way. High school journalism gives the talented individual the opportunity to show his ability.

C. Sources of Material

The material used in this paper was obtained from many sources. One of the most valuable was the returns from the

questionnaire, a copy of which is given in the Appendix of this study. Books on journalism were consulted as well as courses of study in journalism, and the works of DeWitt C. Reddick were of inestimable value. Another source of material was found in volumes on school public relations and in the research theses from Southwest Texas State Teachers College and from the University of Texas.

D. Procedure

A questionnaire was sent to 150 selected high schools, chosen from the Texas Almanac, 1950-1951, with regard to geographical location and school population. Since the writer is primarily concerned with the smaller high school, only a few large school systems were included. Through the cooperation of the teachers in the schools, 113 copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned. From this number, because of incomplete answers, eleven were discarded. This study will concern itself with the 102 completed questionnaires. The material is presented in Chapter III.

Some of the material used or suggested in Chapter IV, which is a discussion of the journalism program in the secondary schools, is based on the writer's experience in teaching journalism and sponsoring a school newspaper.

E. Limitations

This study was restricted to small high schools for several reasons. The principal reason was that the writer has had several years of experience sponsoring the publication of a school paper and teaching the journalism classes in a small high school. What is applicable to the small secondary school would not necessarily apply to the large school, or might prove inadequate for the journalism needs of a large student body.

Another important factor was the hope of encouraging the small high school to start a journalism course by showing the value to be gained from such a course of study. As previously stated, these values are varied but accrue to the students who participate in the journalism program and to the school through aroused public interest developed by a school newspaper, which is an accompaniment to the journalism course. In most schools it was found that the community enjoyed and watched for the school paper, especially when important items of general interest were included together with the school news.

It was with the hope that small schools would be encouraged to start or expand their journalism curriculum that the writer undertook this study.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

A. Journalism as a Profession

The daily newspaper is an important part of the American scene. From the earliest days of the republic, writers supported their views and tried to mold public opinion by way of the press. The rapidly expanding field of journalism makes it more and more imperative that adequate training be given journalists in order to develop new writers with greater maturity and a wider background of culture and experience. Nearly everyone can read writing, but few can write reading.

The Commission on Freedom of the Press, headed by Robert M. Hutchins, former Chancellor of the University of Chicago, says:

The American press probably reaches as high a percentage of the population as that of any other country. Its technical equipment is certainly the best in the world. . . . Whatever its shortcomings, the American press is less venal, less subservient to political and economic pressure than that of many other countries. The leading organs of the American press have achieved a standard of excellence unsurpassed anywhere in the world.¹

¹Commission on Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, p. 52.

This rapid growth of the newspaper as a medium of communication has caused the daily paper to print material formerly spread by gossip and by word of mouth. The early newspapers were designed for the serious-minded literary person with little attention given to violence or sensational news. The Commission on Freedom of the Press goes on to state: "The American newspaper is now as much a medium of entertainment, specialized information, and advertising as it is of news."²

In regard to what constitutes news in the paper of today, this definition has been given:

The journalist means by news something that has happened within the last few hours which will attract the interest of the customers. The criteria of interest are recency or firstness, proximity, combat, human interest, and novelty. Such criteria limit accuracy and significance.³

With its widespread influence, the newspapers have a responsibility to the people they serve. The fact that there must be a never-ending publication of news, whether there is any news or not, often leads to the degradation of big events into a series of vignettes or news bulletins.

Just as Rome was first in so many fields, it is believed that that city had the first newspaper, the Acta Diurna, which

²Ibid., p. 53.

³Ibid., pp. 54-55.

was in the form of a bulletin board and was a "compilation of short official bulletins of battles, games, elections, and religious ceremonies, which kept the citizens informed. . . ." ⁴

One of the first newspapers in the United States was just a single sheet. It was published in 1689 in Boston with the title of The Present State of the New-English Affairs. ⁵ In 1690 came the first real paper, also published in Boston. The Publick Occurrences announced this design:

That the Countrey will be furnished once a month
(or if any Glut of Occurrences happen, oftener,) with an account of such considerable things as have arrived unto our notice. ⁶

The first daily newspaper was the Pennsylvania Packet and American Daily Advertiser, which began in 1784. ⁷ With all the early papers, slowness of transportation made news months old at the time of publication. Invention of the telegraph did much to shorten the time between the happening of an event and its publication.

Thomas Jefferson was responsible for many articles in the newspapers of his day designed to sway the people to acceptance of the American Constitution. At the time of the

⁴Neil MacNeil, Without Fear or Favor, p. 6.

⁵Ibid., p. 7.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

Civil War, the elder James Gordon Bennett was plugging for freedom from slavery, and his paper was widely influential throughout the North. By the outbreak of the first World War, the average man had so expanded his interests that the news from France was headlined ahead of local happenings although the latter might be almost catastrophic in nature. The depression and the second World War increased newspaper importance and the people's understanding of the fact that what happened in India influenced the price of grain in Kansas City.

The opportunities open in the field of journalism are almost unlimited. Although it has been held up to ridicule and scorn by the movies and radio, journalism in all its phases is finally coming into its own as a profession rather than just another way to make a living. Some of the most outstanding writers on the American scene have been editors, columnists, and reporters. The late Adolph Ochs of the New York Times and Joseph Pulitzer are two who helped the field of journalism to attain a degree of respect it did not always enjoy.

Because the field of journalism is a wide one, it is possible to succeed in any one of many phases from cartooning to editorial writing. The American Society of Newspaper Editors has set up some "Canons of Journalism" with the following preamble:

The primary function of newspapers is to communicate to the human race what its members do, feel, and think. Journalism, therefore, demands of its practitioners the widest range of intelligence, of knowledge, and of experience, as well as natural and trained powers of observation and reasoning. To its opportunities as a chronicler are indissolubly⁸ linked its obligations as teacher and interpreter.

Newspapers need more men trained to cover government and economy. They should have some special knowledge in the field they write about and some experience in writing to back up the theoretical knowledge. Of course, these reporters must have training in gathering facts and winnowing the important facts from the filler, and a wide cultural background.

In almost every instance, reporting the news is the first job that anyone holds on a paper. Neil MacNeil, night editor of the New York Times, calls the reporter:

The anonymous historian of the present who supplies the data for the historian of the future; but of the two he is the most important, for he is dealing with the living, moving life about him and he knows its personalities and events first hand.⁹

MacNeil goes on to enumerate the necessary qualities of a good reporter:

His daily work involves intelligence of a high order, wide information of men and events, a sound educational background, and sure judgment. It also

⁸Leon Svirsky, editor, Your Newspaper, p. 195.

⁹MacNeil, op. cit., p. 46.

demands good character, sobriety, high purpose, and industry.¹⁰

DeWitt C. Reddick, Director of the Interscholastic League Press Conference of the University of Texas, wrote:

. . . It has been said truly that "you can't learn to write by reading a book."

Skill in writing can be cultivated only by consistent and painstaking practice. . . . One learns to write certainly, through his own experiences of trial and error; but he may also profit by the experiences of others.¹¹

B. Trade Papers

Trade papers are what their name implies, papers published at regular intervals by members of an industry. The druggists, motor companies, and many other groups keep their far-flung members informed on what is of current and common interest with papers published for that sole purpose. These trade papers or house organs are designed to interpret company policies to the public and to all employees, to make officials human to the employees, and in other ways to build loyalty in the employees toward the company. Work on a trade paper is very valuable training though all the writing is

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹DeWitt Carter Reddick, Modern Feature Writing, p. 21.

aimed at one goal rather than at a diversified picture.¹²

Some trade papers are widely known both in and out of the particular group they are designed to serve. The Ford Motor Company magazine is one outstanding example. The writer has seen this magazine, which is about the size of Quick, in doctors' offices and schools as well as in the homes of Ford employees.

C. Magazines

Writing for magazines is, in itself, a specialized form of journalism. The material must be timely, as in a newspaper, but there is not the pressure of a deadline daily or hourly. Stories are longer and build to a climax as in novels rather than using the inverted pyramid style of the newspaper.¹³

D. School Journalism

One of the principal elements of any school journalism project is the school newspaper. When doubt arises as to the benefits derived from the publication of a school paper, one should reread the purposes set down in most high school

¹²Hazel Carter Maxon, Opportunities in Free-Lance Writing, pp. 30-36.

¹³Ibid., pp. 10-12.

textbooks on journalism and see the good work habits built up in the students of journalism.

The school press is not an extra-curricular, but an allied-curricular activity, with both academic and vocational values. . . . The school publication is not the ward of any single department, but is an asset to all departments and the school as a whole.¹⁴

The training given the students as a result of working on a school publication is summed up by Reddick as follows:

To give the students an understanding of the place a newspaper occupies in the life of the community and an understanding of the different types of newspapers in order that, no matter what profession they enter, they will be able to read newspapers intelligently.¹⁵

Reddick gives this purpose for the study of journalism in the schools:

To give students an understanding of what work in journalism involves in order that they may, before entering college, determine to some extent at least, whether they would like to follow journalism as a profession.¹⁶

Not only does the course in journalism give the student a picture of journalism as a possible career, but it gives him a clear picture of the necessity for cooperation with others for the achievement of a goal. All through life,

✓¹⁴Lambert Greenwalt, School Press Management and Style, p. 18.

¹⁵DeWitt Carter Reddick, A Suggested Course in Journalism for High Schools, p. 3.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 5.

people have to work together, each dependent on others' efforts to succeed. The individualist or the nonconformist who thinks first of himself and then of others defeats his own ends. High school training in journalism inculcates the desirability of group effort for success at an age when the pupil can see and compare the results of cooperation and what happens when one person falls down on the job. Dependability is one of the cornerstones of success in any field of endeavor, and the high school journalism course is one of the best methods of instilling the need for dependability in the high school student.¹⁷

Mary J. Wrinn, teacher of journalism and author, gives this excellent definition of journalism training:

Journalism gives reality to written expression. It says to the student: There is great drama going on about you and you are part of that drama. Your environment teams with riches. The open sesame is an inquiring mind. Your world challenges the eye to see, the ear to hear and the heart to understand.¹⁸

The values of journalistic training in high schools are almost endless but there is a lack in the training of teachers of journalism. Walter H. Richter says:

. . . Providing a thorough understanding of the contents of a good text in high school journalism

¹⁷Earl English and Clarence Hach, Scholastic Journalism, pp. 7-9.

¹⁸Mary J. J. Wrinn, Elements of Journalism, p. 63.

for the prospective teacher is a worth-while goal in itself.

Unfortunately, instruction by teachers colleges in the training of prospective student publication supervisors at the present time seems to be inadequate. Although such training has been shown in this study to be the recognized responsibility of the teacher training institutions as well as the outstanding justification for journalism in the teachers college, only seventeen or one-fourth of the sixty-eight institutions investigated made provision for a supervision course.¹⁹

If only one-fourth of the teacher training institutions are placing emphasis on the supervision of student publications in the journalism courses, then this fact gives all the more reason for the teaching of journalism to start in the high school. Early training in journalistic writing and the problems of publishing a school paper may well inspire some high school pupils to go on and prepare themselves for teaching journalism in high schools. If there is sufficient demand for supervisory course work, the colleges will offer it.

In many schools, especially the smaller schools, the journalism teacher not only sponsors the school paper but also the annual. However, it is not in the experience of

¹⁹Walter H. Richter, "A Study of Course Offerings in Journalism in State Teachers Colleges," Unpublished Master's thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Texas, 1939, pp. 22-23.

this writer that such a situation has occurred. Because of the demands of the school newspaper, usually the journalism teacher supervises that publication and the work on the annual is undertaken by another teacher.

CHAPTER III

JOURNALISM IN SCHOOLS

A. Survey

The possibilities for eliciting information in any type of survey are unlimited. This knowledge made the work of compiling the survey questionnaire used as the basis of this study a difficult task. The writer was desirous of making the questionnaire as short as possible and still obtaining much pertinent information. The form also must be simple to complete since the teacher of journalism has a great many demands on her time and may toss to one side a questionnaire that requires much time to answer. Too, many graduate students are in the process of sending out questionnaires and the teacher one interrogates may have previously been asked to complete a questionnaire, or several of them, and not have time for long answers.

All told, the questionnaire was sent to one hundred fifty schools, most of them in smaller school districts. It was necessary to limit this study in some way, and that seemed one of the most practical methods of limitation. As far as possible, the writer selected schools from various parts of the state of Texas in order to get a representative group.

A few of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire wrote on it that they taught both English and journalism. Since this was not on the questionnaire and the information was voluntary, it has not been tabulated. If this question had been included, it would probably have shown that a large percentage of the teachers in small high schools teach one or more classes in English as well as the journalism courses.

Of the 102 schools responding to the questionnaire, it was found that ninety-three offered one course in journalism. This was 91.2 per cent of the schools that answered. Seventy-one of the responding schools offered two years of journalism training. This is only 69.6 per cent of the 102 schools responding. To this writer, the percentage of schools offering only one year of journalism is disproportionate since, for the work to be of the utmost value to the student, there should be a second course in journalism to supplement and implement the fundamentals taught in the first year. It could be compared to taking one year of a foreign language without having to complete the second year of the same language. Half of the effectiveness of the training is lost. Seven of the schools offered additional journalism credit to the extent of the third year. Sometimes this was credit for extra work on the school paper or annual. Table I is an analysis of this information.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING COURSES IN JOURNALISM

| Number of Courses in Journalism | Number of Schools | Percentage of Schools |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 93 | 91.2 |
| 2 | 71 | 69.6 |
| 3 | 7 | 6.9 |

Of the schools that offered one year of journalism, 74.7 per cent, or seventy-six of the schools, allowed the substitution of one year of journalism for one year of required English. Apparently the percentage of schools permitting such substitution is large because many of the smaller high schools are not preparing a large percentage of their pupils for college. From the schools which offered two years of journalism, only two permitted the substitution of these courses for English. Of the seven offering three years of journalism, none permitted the substitution of English for journalism. This information is shown in Table II on the following page.

TABLE II
 NUMBER OF SCHOOLS PERMITTING SUBSTITUTION OF JOURNALISM
 FOR ONE OR MORE YEARS OF ENGLISH

| Number of Courses in Journalism | Number of Schools Allowing Substitution | Percentage Allowing Substitution |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | 76 | 74.7 |
| 2 | 2 | 1.9 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |

From the answers of the teachers to the question relating to training of teachers of journalism, it is indicated that about half of them have a minor in journalism in their undergraduate work. The teaching of journalism was incidental to the work in English, and many later took some academic work in the teaching of journalism in high school. The teacher of journalism in the high school needs training in this field since there is a difference in the literary expression of ideas and the conciseness of newspaper reporting. A small number of teachers of journalism had had no course in journalism. These were usually beginning teachers who indicated that they planned to take some work in the teaching of journalism to supplement their English work. In only one

case did the teacher say that she would not take a journalism course and did not want to teach journalism another year. This seems unusual to the writer because usually a little experience in the teaching of journalism courses leads to a desire to expand in the field.

Table III below shows the number of schools that publish a school paper, the frequency of publication, and the method of printing. It is interesting to note that all of the responding schools publish some type of school newspaper, although only ninety-three schools offer one or more courses in journalism. Although the questionnaire did not elicit this information, it is assumed that the school paper is issued in connection with the English classes in schools where journalism is not taught. In such a case, some of the primary elements of journalism must be included in such classes.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS PUBLISHING A SCHOOL PAPER, FREQUENCY OF PUBLICATION, AND METHOD USED

| | Number |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Schools Publishing School Paper | 102 |
| Frequency of Publication | |
| Weekly | 2 |
| Biweekly | 89 |
| Monthly | 11 |
| Method of Publication | |
| Printed | 93 |
| Mimeographed | 9 |

Most of the schools printed their papers or had it done by an outside printer, and the largest number, eighty-nine or 87.3 per cent, published a school paper biweekly. All of the schools that put out a paper but did not offer classes in journalism indicated that their paper was mimeographed, and two of the papers published biweekly were mimeographed.

An interesting comparison can be made by examining Table IV below and comparing the figures with those of Table III. Table IV shows the methods employed in distributing the school paper.

TABLE IV
METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE SCHOOL PAPER

| Method | Number |
|------------------------|--------|
| Subscription | 23 |
| Individual Copies Sold | 32 |
| Given to Students Free | 47 |
| Total | 102 |

Only the nine schools that did not offer a journalism class indicated that the students selected the staff of the school paper. In all other cases, the staff was selected by the journalism teacher, although in four cases the students were allowed to vote on a selected group for some of the minor positions on the paper. Teacher selection of the staff is the most common because of the realization that the sponsoring teacher is more likely to judge the students on the basis of ability, whereas other students are likely to select a staff on the basis of personal popularity. Table V below shows the methods employed in the selection of the staff for the school paper.

TABLE V
METHODS EMPLOYED IN THE SELECTION OF THE STAFF
FOR THE SCHOOL PAPER

| Method | Number |
|--|--------|
| Selected by Journalism Teacher | 89 |
| Selected by Journalism Teacher with Some Assistance from Students | 4 |
| Selected by Students | 9 |
| Total | 102 |

All of the responding schools indicated strong student body support of the school paper. From the number of schools offering courses in journalism and their apparent popularity, it would seem that there is strong school interest in the publication of the school paper. All of the schools that sell the paper, whether by subscription or by individual copies, indicated that at least ninety-seven per cent of the student body bought a paper. The students would not be so completely behind the project if the school paper were not full of news of general interest.

Of the schools that distributed the paper without charge, it is harder to judge school support although the answers to the questionnaire were unanimous in their opinion that the paper had the full support of the student body.

The questionnaire responses also indicated strong community support of the school paper. This was indicated by the number of schools that sold advertising and wholly supported the cost of the paper in this manner. Ninety-three of the responding schools said that they sold advertising in the community regardless of the method of distribution of the paper. Any additional funds were used to improve the journalism department or to increase the size of the paper. Also indicative of school support was the complete response to subscription and single issue sales of the papers.

An examination of Table VI below will give a visual analysis of the response of the student body and the community to the school paper.

TABLE VI
STUDENT BODY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF THE
SCHOOL PAPER

| | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------|
| Schools Selling Advertising | 93 | 91.2 |
| Student Body Support | | 97.0 |
| Community Support | | 90.0 |

Without exception, all of the teachers felt that the school paper was a great help in furthering school-community relations. It was the one question to which many appended a comment to the effect that publication of important community events in the school paper has been of great interest to both the students and the community. Some, perhaps fifteen, indicated that many people in the community bought the school paper even though they did not have children in

school at all or their children were still in the elementary grades.

In examining the results of this survey, inadequate as it was in many ways, the writer is led to the belief that interest in journalism courses in the small high school is increasing each year. The school that now publishes a small, mimeographed paper in connection with its English classes will probably soon expand to offering first one and then two years of work in regular journalism courses. [The experience of writing for a school newspaper is invaluable to every student, and almost every student has some unrealized potentialities of expression that can best be developed with journalism training.] Such a program of expansion will undoubtedly have the full support of the community and the school administration as the value of a school paper to the school and to the community has been demonstrated.

B. Public Relations Growing from the School Paper

"Public relations is coming to be recognized almost universally as a powerful force."¹ This quotation from Glenn Griswold and Denny Griswold is true of public relations

¹Glenn Griswold and Denny Griswold, Your Public Relations, p. 256.

from the smallest one-room school to the large New York City school system. They go on to say:

Attempts to tell the public relations story through schools should be based upon a clear understanding of modern schools. Like every other vital institution of our time, schools are in the process of change. Schools are changing because of new scientific insight into the learning process. In this age of jet propulsion and atomic energy, it is important for the public relations worker to note that already discarded by modern educators are such practices as (1) a handful of subjects for each pupil, (2) a single text-book for each subject, (3) rote drill for everyone regardless of interest or ability, (4) talking about things rather than doing them, and, (5) the idea of punishments and rewards as motivating devices.²

The rapid growth of school systems has necessitated the growth of public relations between school and community. The early schools were small affairs, and everyone for miles around knew the teacher and had a word in the selection of this very important individual. Now, even the small schools are large enough that teachers must be selected by the administration and may be strangers to the community.

Only a democracy fosters public schools for everyone, and the public schools in turn must aid in making democracy workable. The journalism courses offered in the high schools and work on the school newspaper are in the front in training high school students in critical thinking and in concise

²Ibid., pp. 256-257.

expression of logical reasoning. These high school years are of great importance since the student is old enough to plan for the future and to see the relationship between present learning and future earning. Journalism teaches the pupil to read the newspapers with an analytical mind that will ultimately result in an acceptance of responsibility and efforts toward the better working of democracy.³

The school newspaper, as an agency by which the projects of the school and community are disseminated, can both wield influence and sway opinion in and out of school. In direct ratio to the amount of space given community affairs in the school paper, one finds community interest in the school and in the plans and ideas of the school system. The journalism students with their paper and frequent contacts with the public have an outstanding opportunity to present ideas for future expansion in the most favorable light.⁴

Reddick speaks of the need for public relations in the school as follows:

In student life as in community life public opinion plays an increasingly important part. In a democracy

³W. J. Iverson, "Using Current Materials," The English Journal, XL (March, 1951), 166-168.

⁴Leon Nelson Flint, News Writing in High School, passim.

education must function to train future citizens in exercising an interest in civic and public affairs.⁵

The course in journalism in high school gives the students an opportunity to form mature opinions of public issues and trains them to a recognition of the methods used to influence the thinking of the newspaper reading public.

It is one of the functions of the school paper to present school plans, student or administrative, in such a way that the community will reach a sympathetic understanding of the school system it supports. On the reverse of the coin, the school paper has the responsibility of displaying civic projects in the most favorable light to win the fullest support of the students and their parents. When the students are aware of the value of community enterprises, they can bring influence to bear upon relatives and friends. As shown in the survey, ninety-three of the schools sold advertising in the school paper to the community merchants. This would indicate a very strong interest in the school paper on the part of the merchants and would build valuable good will among the students and their parents.

Aside from training students in journalism methods, the chief function of the well run school newspaper is to

⁵DeWitt Carter Reddick, Journalism and the School Paper, p. 226.

bring to public attention, both student and community, all worthwhile projects that may engage the attention of either group. It aims to build a solidarity founded on mutual respect and liking and a wholesome appreciation of what each group is trying to accomplish.⁶

⁶Paul Reese, Prevailing Practices in the Administration of High School Newspapers in California, pp. 26-40.

CHAPTER IV

A SUGGESTED TWO-YEAR COURSE OF STUDY IN JOURNALISM

This suggested course of study is based on the two-semester system with each semester divided into three six-weeks periods. This division was chosen because it seems to be the one in most common usage.

A journalism course must include a laboratory period in addition to a regular classroom period. In schools where there is a regularly scheduled activity period, this time is often used by the newspaper staff in preparing the material for the paper. Where laboratory time is insufficient for the necessary work on the paper, students will often be given the writing of their columns or news as an outside assignment for the journalism class. In the beginning class in journalism it will be necessary for the students to try various kinds of writing in order that they, and the teacher, may find out what type of material is done best by each student.¹

From the very beginning, it is essential that the students develop reliability in meeting deadlines and in turning

¹Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, A Course of Study in Journalism for Secondary Schools, pp. 3-8.

in assigned stories or interviews. Dependability is one of the most important characteristics of the journalist, since the paper is built up and space assigned on the basis of a certain amount of material. If one person fails in this assignment, then an additional burden falls upon someone else.

The very nature of the work with the school newspaper means that frequently the week begins at some other day than the first day of the week. The deciding factor will be the day on which the school newspaper goes to press. On that day, one set of assignments ends and the students are ready to begin anew the work of getting out the paper.²

It is the business of the sponsor to assign each student every type of writing during the semester. Even though one person may be responsible for a definite job with each issue of the paper, he should also take on various additional writing projects in order that his view will not become one-sided. Such variety enables the students to develop new facets to their writing and may develop in the individual many different types of writing ability.³

²Edith Hortense Fox, "A High School Course of Study in Journalism in Texas," Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1931, pp. 10-12.

³Earl English, Exercises in High School Journalism, p. 9.

Reddick has made the following statement:

The high school paper is an instrument of education. It affords a training ground for students interested in newspaper work. It encourages creative writing on the part of students who wish to do this kind of work. ⁴It educates the average student in the resources of his school and in its needs. The school paper educates the fathers and mothers of the community by informing them of the school system and its operation.

With the foregoing quotation in mind, the writer has set up a tentative course of study in journalism for the high schools.

A. First Year Course of Study

Part I--News Writing

1. What Constitutes News?

This first survey of the course in journalism would include an outline of the work offered in journalism with special emphasis from the beginning on the need for each student to be alert to the happenings about him for stories that would be news. A study of the daily paper would enable the students to learn the types of news covered by a large publication. Discussion of back issues of the school paper would give pointed examples of what is school news. Studying consecutive issues of the paper would show

⁴DeWitt Carter Reddick, Journalism and the School Paper, p. 7.

the development of stories from one issue to the next. The make-up of the school paper should be discussed as well as the responsibility of each pupil toward the school paper. The teacher should assign each student a news story to write, either on some particular topic or on a subject to be chosen by the student.

2. Types of News

Many things make news and each student should learn, by study and discussion, the various subjects covered by a paper. Each paper should devote some space to prominent local names, sports, amusements, advertising, columns, and editorials. In this discussion of types of news the pupils should find that names, humor, unusualness, drama, locality, and importance make a story news as well as the timeliness of a story.⁵

Early in the course of journalism, the student must realize the services that the school newspaper can render to the community and to the school. [Throughout the course, the teacher must emphasize the values of the journalism course so the pupils will develop the character qualities stressed in a course in high school journalism.]

⁵Ibid., pp. 59-62.

3. Qualifications and Work of the Reporter⁶

The good reporter on the school paper should have or should develop the necessary qualifications. These qualities are the ones that make the members of any profession desirable members of society and are found with more explicitness in the work of a reporter on the school newspaper.

- a. Accuracy. To be of value, a news story must have the facts as they are, not guesswork or hearsay. To be believed, all statements must be accurate.
- b. Dependability. It is essential that the reporter turn in an assignment on time. Regardless of vocation, the quality of reliability is essential to success in life. Training in dependability is one of the fundamentals in a course in journalism and such training gives the student preparation for success in life.
- c. Loyalty. A grumbler cannot achieve much in the business world. To be liked and admired, the individual must be loyal to his friends, his co-workers, and his superiors. Any reporter that constantly criticizes his assignments or his editor

⁶Ibid., pp. 62-65.

lacks stability of character and soon finds he is lacking in friends.

- d. Promptness. "Better late than never" does not apply to a reporter. An assignment must be done on time without excuses. Many jokes and adages are written about the person who is always late. Lack of promptness is only a habit but a very destructive habit to the individual. The high school journalism course is of great value in making promptness a habit.
- e. Thoroughness. The reporter must do his work completely. Elimination of part of the facts will spoil a story.
- f. Work of the Reporter. The reporter is the first on the scene to represent his paper. His job is to tell the story completely, factually, and quickly. As the students explore further into the field of reporting, the characteristics of the good reporter will take on new meaning and new value to them.

4. Writing a News Story⁷

- a. Form. The news story is written to give all pertinent information in the first two or three sentences. The reasons for giving the facts first are obvious. One of the most important reasons is that the story

⁷Ibid., pp. 90-93.

is then easy to shorten by cutting at the bottom. News stories are written to give a hurried reader the details quickly and by telling "Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How" in the beginning; the reader then knows whether he wants to finish the story. The "inverted pyramid" is the name of this form of writing.

- b. The Lead. A good lead, the first paragraph, sets the tone for the whole story. The most important element of the story should be the first thing mentioned. The class might use the front page of the paper to pick out good leads and determine which of the five W's was selected and why.
- c. Method. The first step in writing any news story is to set the facts in the order of importance. One should write the story based on the facts in order of importance, compressing the telling into the fewest possible words while still retaining coherence and smoothness.
- d. Kinds of News Stories. Most news stories are a straight narration of actual happenings. Since the primary purpose of the newspaper is to keep people informed as to the happenings of the world, the first task of the reporter is to relate the facts.

Another type of news story is the story that is based on the quotation of some well-known person. This type of story will express the views of the person quoted even though such ideas may be in direct contradiction to the policies of the paper or to the feelings of a majority of the readers.

Part II--Style

1. Definition of Style

Each paper has its own definite style. Style is the way in which figures are written in a story, the use of titles of respect, the kind and number of abbreviations that are to be used, the form for writing addresses, capitalization, dates, quotations, superlatives, and other mechanics of correct writing. Style may vary from paper to paper, but it should be consistent within one publication.⁸

2. Mechanics of Writing the News Story

All stories should be written on the typewriter, if possible, double-spaced, and with wide margins. If one student is writing several stories, the stories should be on separate sheets of paper, not all run

⁸Orval C. Husted, High School Journalism Workbook, pp. 131-139.

together. The student's name should be in the upper left-hand corner of the page. If the story runs to more than one page, the word more should be written at the bottom of the page. The student should write his name and the page number on the upper left-hand corner of every page but the first. On the first page the page number is omitted.⁹

Part III--Types of News Stories¹⁰

1. Informative Interview

This story is an interview with a prominent person designed to elicit certain definite views of the individual. In this type of story, quotations may be used freely and, if the person interviewed is an authority in some field, often these quotations add much to the interest of the story.

The form may be either straight essay or in the style of question and answer. If it is a long report, the question and answer form tends to become very dull and repetitious.

⁹Ibid., pp. 68-69.

¹⁰Mary J. J. Wrinn, Elements of Journalism, Chap. IX.

2. The Human Interest Interview

Such an interview is usually with someone who has had an unusual experience, either good or bad. The winner of the sweepstakes and the survivors of a disaster are both good material for the human interest interview. Such an interview is usually written in short essay form.

3. Speech Reports

Here again, the student follows news story style in giving a write up of a speech. If there is no particularly important element, a short paragraph will suffice. If the speaker is an authority and is speaking in a field of general interest, the speech may be reported in full. A speech on the state of the nation by a President gets full coverage where a few lines will give a report of a speech by a student to one class.

4. Meeting Stories

This type of coverage depends on the importance of the meeting. A mere announcement may suffice, or it may be desirable to give several facts about the meeting. Good examples of this type of story are to be found on the woman's page of a magazine where meetings of various organizations are covered.

5. Personals

This heading is a misnomer since it refers to stories about personalities rather than the short

"Personals" column found in the classified advertising section. In a school paper, these would be stories about students, unusual trips, or other material that affected either the students or the faculty. The study of exchange papers from various high schools is a good source of personal stories that are interesting not only in one school but in many others. These personal articles are frequently sketches of famous or unusual personalities who are often found in schools. Two that appeared in a school paper this past year were similar. One was about a pupil, a Scotch boy, who jumped ship in Houston and was adopted by a family there. The school paper wrote a feature on his experience. Another was about an English war bride who was teaching in the elementary school. The school, in each instance, had good material for the personal story.

6. Advance Stories

These articles are the story of some event to come. The reporter tries to build interest in the coming event by presenting it in its most attractive light. Football games are a frequent source of the advance story as are plays and school parties.

7. The Follow-Up

These stories are the write up of the event after it has taken place. With the senior class play, the

paper may be full of advance stories, from selection of the play, the cast, rehearsals, who is doing costumes and scenery, to the follow-up story in the next edition of the paper which may review the play and give a quoted opinion of the success of the event. The senior class play has been used as an example only.

Part IV--Special Types of Writing¹¹

1. The Crime Story and the Dangers of Libel

These stories are seldom found in the school newspaper unless some crime is committed in the community or should, by unfortunate chance, involve some member of the community. The school newspaper is no place for crime reporting.

2. Sports Stories

School athletics are a good training ground for the school journalist. All of the students are interested in the competition; intramural and interschool activities are unfailing sources of good stories. The good sports writer knows the school's players and the opponents with their good and bad aspects. He has a flair for finding a timely idea or unusual aspect of the story even though

¹¹Ibid., Chap. XIII.

the game may be several days old before the next copy of the school paper is published. School athletics aim to build sportsmanship, team spirit, and school loyalty, and these goals are paralleled in the journalism department. Aside from the school interest in sports of all kinds, the reporter of sporting events has constantly in front of him the results of mutual effort for the good of the whole school.

Part V--Editorial Writing¹²

1. Definition of an Editorial

"The editorial is the mouthpiece of the school paper. In no other place is the character and personality of the paper so clearly shown."¹³ A study of the editorial deserves more than passing attention on the part of the journalism students. It is the one place where personal opinion enters into the school paper, and where campaigns for improvement are frequently waged. Consideration of the editorials is one of the factors in awards by the Interscholastic League competition, regardless of the size of the paper. Editorials, well-planned, bring results

¹²Reddick, op. cit., pp. 198-207.

¹³Ibid., p. 198.

and the writing of editorials is definitely creative writing.

2. Qualities of the Good Editorial

The quality of writing is of paramount importance. The good editorial is well and interestingly written. Mere preachment accomplished nothing in recorded history. To be effective, an editorial should be brief and pithy. Here again the quality of writing and ability for apt expression enter in. A long editorial will fill up space, but it is doubtful that anyone will read all of it. The third quality of the good editorial is force. It must have an evident purpose in being written which, in turn, involves a great deal of thought on the part of the writer. A good editorial is not dashed off in a hurry to fill an assignment the last few minutes before the bell.

3. Planning an Editorial

The first step in writing the editorial is to be sure one understands the subject about which he has chosen to write. This information can come from personal experience and observation or from research. In familiarizing oneself with the causes of a given problem, it is well to be sure of underlying factors. Perhaps these will not be mentioned, but the writer can express himself

better when he understands the causes. The student should decide whether the editorial is to explain a situation already existing or in the making, to resolve the readers to a course of action, or merely to amuse. When it comes to the actual writing of the editorial, the student should try to present his facts in the most striking way possible in order to reach the reader and rouse a response. The editorial writer must avoid preaching to the students. When something needs correcting it is harder, but better to rouse the students to the desire for improvement. Anyone gets tired of constant criticism.

4. Choosing the Subject for the Editorial

The student writing an editorial should choose a specific subject that can be given personal application. "Honesty" is too general for the school paper unless there is some specific phase of dishonesty that has come to the attention of the writer. Seeking a local angle is another consideration in choosing a subject if the editorial is of greater than local significance. The editorial page of the school paper should contain editorials discussing several different topics in each issue. There is no need to have all the editorials of a given issue on the same subject.

The journalism class should spend some time at intervals during the year discussing editorials and possible subjects. Student surveys and student polls on various subjects frequently furnish material for excellent editorials. These surveys should not be confined to the journalism class but should be taken throughout the school. Editorial writing differs from straight news reporting in that the editorial is frequently an expression of opinion rather than a factual basic account of some happening. Many students are able to report straight news; but it takes a knack for creative writing, a turn of phrase to write an effective editorial.

Part VI--News Reviews

1. Book Reviews

The writing of book reviews is excellent practice for the student in journalism since it calls for development of critical analysis of the writing of others. However, since space on the school paper is limited, this form of writing is one of the hardest for the student. Book reviews in the school paper should cover books available to the students, should include something of the content, and should give the writer's opinion of the worth of the book.

In studying this phase of journalism, the teacher can use the book review columns of most Sunday papers as a text for her students. Here again, in this aspect of the journalism course, the student is presented with the necessity for logical thinking and analysis that is so essential to later mature development.

2. Humorous Essays

These bits of whimsy are purely creative writing based on bits of experience. They should be written to amuse rather than to enlighten.

At the end of the first year of journalism, it will be necessary for the teacher to spend at least two weeks reviewing the material studied in the course and discussing its application to the school paper. Here is the place where the student can evaluate his growth in the qualities that make him a good student and a good citizen as well as a good journalist.

This course has been designed to aid the student in his maturation by giving him values of achievement and then guiding him with his work to achieve the goals he has set up.

B. Second Year Course of Study

Because the work for the second year is much more technical, it is essential that the material be taught from a

textbook with which the teacher is familiar. Of necessity, the outline for this part of the course in journalism will be much less detailed since it is not feasible to write the contents of a textbook in the writer's words. The following outline concerns the organization of a newspaper:

1. The Business Department

This part of the school newspaper is concerned with the financial matters of the school paper. The business manager is charged with the responsibility of receiving all money and paying all bills, as well as purchasing supplies and, above all, keeping an accurate accounting of all money received and disbursed. In the business department are the following:

- a. Advertising manager. Whoever is in charge of the advertising is responsible for directing the students who sell advertisements to the local merchants. In consultation with the faculty advisor, he is charged with setting the advertising rates, keeping account of advertising sold, keeping records of the money collected, and seeing that those who buy advertisements are satisfied. His records on finances must be written and turned over to the business manager.
- b. Circulation manager. The circulation manager is responsible for seeing that subscribers get their

papers. If the paper is sold by the copy, it is his responsibility to sell the paper. He is to carry out promotion projects for the school paper, such as selling projects and advertising schemes designed to build circulation.

2. Copyreading

The copyreader on the high school newspaper is responsible for accuracy in stories, just as the copyreader on a daily paper must check for error.

- a. Copyreading marks. These are a standardized set of marks that the copyreader must learn. They are used to keep the printer from misunderstanding corrections to be made.
- b. The copyreader must watch for errors in grammar; errors in spelling, especially in proper names; errors in style; and any other obvious mistakes that come to his attention. He should eliminate unnecessary words and occasionally will have to rewrite stories.
- c. On a school newspaper, the copyreader and the proofreader are often the same person. The proofreader must catch any mistakes made by the printer and correct them before the paper is finally printed. The teacher should spend at least two weeks seeing that all of the students know and can properly use the

copyreading and proofreading marks so that they can act in any capacity called on in the rotating work of the school paper. Knowledge of these marks is useful later in life if the student does any writing at all.

3. Headlines

Headlines are used to identify the most important stories on the front page and give the most salient facts in one or two lines. In writing headlines for the school paper, the historical present should be used even when the event is history, to make the news seem more immediate. At least one verb should always be used to every deck of the headline. The headline should always be active unless the person involved is more important than what happened. Articles should not be used in the headline, and only very well known abbreviations should be employed. The teacher should emphasize that one should not divide or hyphenate a word at the end of a headline. The most important aspect of writing a good headline is to see that the important facts are in the headline with the best possible choice of words. All of the students in the journalism class should practice the skill of writing good headlines with due observance of the rules. The instructor should spend a sufficient amount of time on this phase of the

work, using it or coming back to it for review in conjunction with other phases of newspaper work.

4. Make-Up of a Newspaper

Most of this material will be based on the make-up of the first page with additional attention given to special feature pages such as the woman's page, sports, and features.

5. History of Journalism

Some time should be devoted to the history of journalism in the United States in order to develop in the students an appreciation of the part played by the press in the growth and development of this country and its government. Study of the outstanding names in journalism will renew the student's need for development of the qualities that make good citizens as well as good journalists. Journalism in high schools is needed to supplement the work done in the other departments of learning. Many fields of study teach one or two of the most desirable traits of character, but the writer believes that many desirable traits are taught in the journalism course. Work on the school paper is invaluable training to any student in building personality and in developing a cultural viewpoint and ease of expression that will always be valuable.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary

Material has been presented in this study in an effort to show that the journalism program should be expanded in high schools.

In the first chapter the writer showed the importance of the study of journalism in high schools and gave the sources of material used in this research. Some discussion of procedures was given. The study was limited to small high schools since that field was within the personal knowledge and experience of the writer.

In Chapter II, the history and nature of journalism were traced briefly from the early days of the United States. Both quotations and digests of material were given to show the expanding horizons in journalism and its growing importance as a profession. The survey of the literature also attempted to show the value of the study of journalism in the high school and its value in training youth.

The first part of Chapter III was devoted to the results of the survey made among small high schools in Texas. It was found that all of the responding schools published some type of school paper although only ninety-three of them

offered courses in journalism. The last part of the chapter emphasized the value of the school paper as a public relations asset to further school-community harmony and understanding.

The course of study presented in Chapter IV is merely suggestive and could be expanded indefinitely. A great many of the ideas included were garnered from Reddick's writing and from the work of Mary J. Wrinn. The textbooks on journalism which were consulted gave much the same organization with varying detail. Such a living, vital study as journalism is always in a state of change and only a few broad principles can be laid down.

B. Conclusions

Based on experience in teaching journalism and the consensus in the research done for this study, the writer is more strongly convinced than ever that there is an ever-growing place in the high school curriculum for the study of journalism. The students need the valuable habits of industry, accuracy, and reliability which they develop at the same time they are developing the talents of lucid explanation and concise statement.

A generation of pupils raised on war and threats of war needs to learn understanding of cause and effect. They need

journalism training to teach them to read and to find the meaning of what they read. The pupils need the critical approach to news and how to distinguish propaganda from fact.

It is this writer's opinion that the student who has had journalism training in high school makes a better college student and a more responsible member of the community.

C. Recommendations

A wider publicity program emphasizing the value of journalism training for the high school student should be undertaken. It is always amazing to find a number of students in a school who have no idea of what the course in journalism offers or teaches. To many it merely means work on the paper without any understanding of the many other aspects of writing and learning that are presented. In the writer's experience, most of the outstanding students in a high school take a journalism course and work on the school paper. The integrity inculcated by the journalistic training makes them leaders of the student body.

It is also recommended that the schools investigate further the public relations potentialities of the school paper. Many schools do use the paper for a public service, but many confine their columns merely to school news or to outstanding events without recognizing the fact that small items of community interest would be of value.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer all questions on this questionnaire by checking either yes or no through the word itself. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

1. Does your school regularly include one or more classes in journalism in the curriculum? Yes _____ No _____
2. Does your school permit the election of one year of journalism instead of one year of English? Yes _____ No _____
3. Is the journalism teacher trained in the field or is she an English teacher who also takes the journalism classes? Yes _____ No _____
4. Does your high school publish a school paper? Yes _____ No _____
5. Is it printed? Yes _____ No _____
6. Is it mimeographed? Yes _____ No _____
7. Do you select the staff? Yes _____ No _____
8. Do the students select the staff? Yes _____ No _____
9. Do you sell advertising? Yes _____ No _____
10. Do you give the paper away? Yes _____ No _____
11. Is the paper sold on subscription? Yes _____ No _____
12. Is the paper sold by individual copies? Yes _____ No _____
13. Frequency of publication: Weekly _____ Biweekly _____ Monthly _____
14. Does the student body, as a whole, support the school paper? Yes _____ No _____
15. Does the community take an interest in the school paper? Yes _____ No _____
16. Do you feel that the school paper serves to improve school-community relations? Yes _____ No _____

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