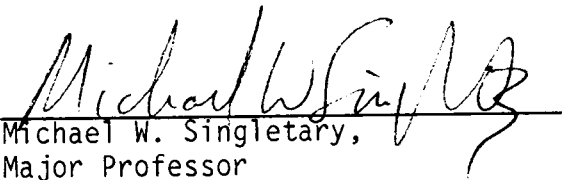
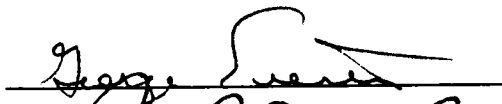
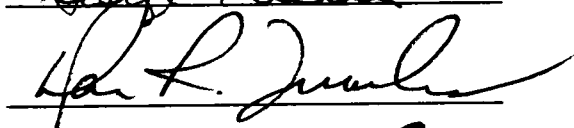
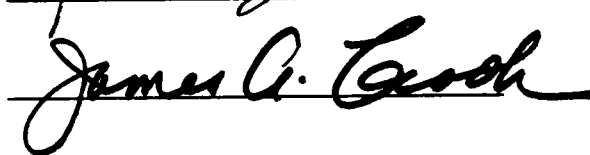


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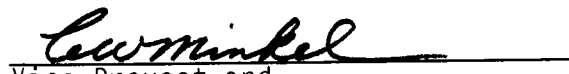
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Cynthia De Riemer entitled "A Comparison of Education Coverage in Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communications.


Michael W. Singletary,
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Provost and
Dean of the Graduate School

A COMPARISON OF EDUCATION COVERAGE IN AWARD-
WINNING AND NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Cynthia De Riemer
December 1986

ABSTRACT

A review of research on media coverage of education news indicated that over time education has received scant attention when compared to other news topics and that education news content tended to focus on traditional topics, such as school board meetings. Assuming that newspapers that had been recognized for award-winning education news coverage could provide insights into how education news may be covered more effectively, a content analysis of education news stories was designed to examine the difference in education news coverage in award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers.

Ten newspapers were selected for study on the criterion of their award-winning records based on annual awards given by the Education Writers Association (EWA). Five newspapers were frequent award-winners. These newspapers were compared to five non-award-winning newspapers which were similar in location and circulation. Initial data collection included all education news stories appearing in randomly selected issues over a five-year period. Two of the five years were later deleted from the analysis because these years did not represent award-winning years for the EWA-designated newspapers. Using only award-winning years for comparisons served to further delineate any education news content differences which existed in those years recognized for outstanding news coverage.

Fourteen hypotheses were developed to study both quantitative and qualitative aspects of education news content. Quantitative

aspects included average length of news stories and accompanying graphics; comparison of newshole devoted to education news; page treatment and placement of education news; educational level and geographic region covered by education news; use of locally-bylined and wire service-bylined news stories; and use of 21 content categories, including 12 designated by the EWA as important and nine representing traditional education topics. Qualitative aspects were measured by use of the news direction scale and by use of interpretative news reporting. A total of 3,116 news stories was analyzed.

Data analysis indicated that there were no differences between the award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers, except in a few areas. It should be noted that the few, existing differences often disappeared when re-examined using a more conservative significance level to counter the effect of large sample. The major conclusions are summarized as follows:

1. Award-winning newspapers do not publish more education news stories nor do they give the news stories they do publish more attention relative to accompanying graphics, headlines and page placement. They do not devote a greater proportion of their newshole to education news and did not have significantly more news stories in most of the 21 content categories studied. Lastly, award-winning newspapers did not appear to emphasize any one level of education. Non-award-winning newspapers, on the other hand, published significantly more news stories overall and gave greater

emphasis to stories dealing with secondary and middle school topics than did award-winning newspapers.

2. Award-winning newspapers published slightly longer education news stories. Award-winners did publish more stories with either a local byline or a wire service byline and tended to emphasize state and national coverage rather than local. It should be noted that significance for use of national news disappeared when the $p < .01$ was applied. Evidence of more frequent use in seven of the twelve categories of interpretative reporting was present. However, when a more conservative significance level was used, four of the seven categories showed no significant differences. The non-award-winning newspapers continued to show a significant use in the category of Exposition. Moreover, non-award-winning newspapers published a larger number of news stories in three of the categories, although this larger number was not statistically significant.

The few differences between the two types of newspapers lead to diverse interpretation of the data. On the one hand, award-winning newspapers may differ from their counterparts in matters of style and approach, rather than more readily quantifiable aspects. Conversely, the differences (or lack of differences) may be explained by the prize-seeking behaviors of the award-winning newspapers, a factor not directly addressed by this study. Follow-up interviews with editors and education reporters did reveal that personnel from award-winning newspapers said their organizations had a high degree of commitment to education reporting signified by

allocation of time and resources. Interview information corroborated the major findings of this study, particularly relating to the use of bylines, geographic region covered and approach to interpretative reporting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
Theoretical Foundations	9
Social responsibility of the press.	9
Social learning theory.	11
Agenda-setting.	12
Media dependency.	14
Need for study.	15
Statement of Problem.	17
Assumptions	18
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.	19
Introduction.	19
Education News and the Role of Newspapers	19
Factors Affecting Coverage of Education News.	24
Role of news editors and publishers	27
Role of education reporter.	35
Role of educational personnel	42
Content Analyses of Education News.	46
Critique of content analysis research	61
Summary	64
III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES.	66
Statement of the Problem, Related Questions,	
Hypotheses.	66
Question 1.	66
Hypothesis.	66
Question 2.	67
Hypothesis.	67
Question 3.	68
Hypothesis.	68
Question 4.	68
Hypothesis.	68
Question 5.	68
Hypothesis.	69
Question 6.	69
Hypothesis.	69
Question 7.	69
Hypothesis.	69
Procedures.	69
Procedures for obtaining newspaper microfilm.	80
Survey research process	81

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	83
Introduction.	83
Education Coverage--Amount, Treatment and Content . .	87
Summary	98
Interviews with Newspaper Education Editors or Reporters	100
Summary	111
V. CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	112
Conclusions	112
Discussion.	119
Implications.	124
Recommendations	126
REFERENCES.	130
APPENDICES.	141
APPENDIX A	142
APPENDIX B	150
APPENDIX C	152
VITA.	154

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Comparison of Mean Size of Education Stories, Graphics and Percent of Newshole Devoted to Education News in Ten Newspapers over Three Years.	88
2. Comparisons of Byline and Wire Service Use/Page Placement and Multi-Column Headlines in Ten Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers	90
3. Comparisons of Education Level and Geographic Location Covered by News Stories in Ten Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers	92
4. Use of "Traditional" Categories of Education News Content in Ten Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers. . .	94
5. Use of EWA Categories of Education News Content in Ten Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers	95
6. Comparative Use of Interpretative Reporting Elements in Ten Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers	97
7. Comparisons of News Direction Scale Values Assigned Education News Stories in Ten Award-Winning and Non-Award-Winning Newspapers	98

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An educated citizenry has been a cornerstone of the American democratic system since its inception. Universal education has been traditionally viewed as a means of erasing inequalities and promoting access to full citizen participation in the process of governance through general literacy. Thomas Jefferson envisioned education's critical role in American society when he called for a "new aristocracy of talent to replace the old aristocracy of inherited power" (Hechinger, 1976, p. 11). Few would refute the importance of education to the vitality of the nation's life. A 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, titled "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform," restated the importance of education's role in American society by criticizing its current state. "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (A Nation at Risk . . . " 1983, p. 11).

The education enterprise is a key component of not only the nation's political and social life but its economic life as well. An educated work-force has a direct effect on the competitiveness of American business in the world marketplace. Beyond this issue, however, is the fact that education itself is big business. Jerry

Sass (Journalism in the 1990s, 1983) of the Gannett Foundation has observed that "The amount of money, federal, state, local and personal--invested in education is staggering." Often a community's biggest employer is its school system. Moreover, the everyday activities of the local schools often directly affect the lives of the majority of the community's members. In Tennessee, for instance, the 1981 enrollment for all state-supported schools (from elementary through postsecondary) was 1,414,110 and the number of faculty employed by the state was 49,021 (Vickers, 1983). Added together, these figures represent 32 percent of the total population of the state in 1980. Moreover, these figures do not encompass the administrative and supporting staff employed by the state or the number of parents and relatives associated with the schools via their offspring. The total expenditure for education in Tennessee in 1981 was \$1,525,889,000 (Vickers, 1983) or 40.3 percent of the state budgetary expenditures for that year.

Considering the profound and far-reaching impact the schools have on many aspects of our lives, the observation by veteran education writer Mary Ellen Schoonmaker (1985) that education is the beat nobody wants is disturbing at the very least. Schoonmaker states, "Somewhere in the collective unconscious of American journalism is the recognition that education ought to be seriously covered. In fact, it isn't" (p. 37). She suggests that the events surrounding education often are not considered newsworthy by editors and the publics they hope to reach. Although difficult to

define, newsworthiness is often thought of in terms of the news value of a particular news item or event. One of the traditional news values identified by journalism textbooks is consequence. Yates (1981) measures the consequence news value by "the number of people affected by an event" (p. 15). Another textbook (Harriss, Leiter and Johnson, 1981) states: "An event that causes or is capable of causing a great sequence of events affecting many persons is obviously newsworthy" (p. 30). Considering sheer numbers of persons involved, an education story has obvious consequence news value.

Regardless of the school's impact on society and its inherent newsworthiness, education does not gain a large share of the media's newshole. Hechinger (1976-77) observes that news editors and directors give little space or time to the education story.

In true chicken-egg fashion, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine whether the media ignore education because the public lacks interest or whether the public lacks interest because the media ignore education. (p. 15)

Evidence exists to support the notion that the general public, as well as specialized publics, is becoming more interested in the process of educating and the educational enterprise. Pollster George Gallup (1984) states that the American public has not lost interest in education.

Americans are more favorably disposed toward the public schools today than at any time in the last decade. . . . Americans continue to feel that public education contributes

more to national strength than either industrial might or military power. More than eight in 10 say that developing the best educational system in the world will be "very important" in determining America's future strength. . . . (p. 24)

Davies (1978) found that citizen participation in the schools went beyond traditional parent-teacher involvement. "There are also thousands of active city-wide multipurpose groups with some school-related activities. These include leagues of women voters, urban leagues, businessmen's groups and political activist groups" (p. 2). A 1976 Gallup Poll of the public's attitudes toward the schools asked a question related to the respondents' interest and willingness to serve on school-related citizen advisory committees. Ninety percent of the poll's respondents, many who had no direct contact with the schools, said they would be willing to serve on such committees (Linking Schools, 1977).

Interest in the educational enterprise is not confined to those involved with the public schools. Big business now has an increasingly larger stake in the educational process. According to a recent Carnegie Foundation report titled Corporate Classrooms: the Learning Business, American business spends more than \$100 billion a year educating its workers "partly because traditional schools aren't doing the job adequately" (Mitgang, 1985). Tension between traditional educational institutions and the corporate establishment will undoubtedly increase. This conflict and its consequence must possess some inherent news value.

Educators have become aware of criticisms leveled at the performance of schools in the past decade. Interestingly, many education commentators have suggested turning to use of mass media channels of communication to better tell the education story. Hechinger (1976) postulated that educational institutions have a critical imperative to effectively use these communication channels. "At stake is nothing less than the survival of American democracy" (p. 11).

Without projecting a compelling, forward-looking agenda, education's leaders cannot hope to arouse the American people from the self-centered preoccupation with their own economic troubles. The public will not help to rescue the schools and colleges unless these institutions spell out once again what they can do for the American people. (p. 18)

Flynn (1977) identified ten factors contributing to public disaffection with the schools. He concluded:

Confidence must be restored in order to continue good public relations in education. Most of the factors listed here can be resolved with aggressive leadership. Such leadership must focus on effective communication. (p. 26)

Byrne and Powell (1976) further articulated the need for public-oriented communication. Pifer (1976) urged educators to "do a much better job of explaining the wide variety of functions" performed by educational institutions. "The more effective they can be in demonstrating their broad public role, the less they will be in the unhappy position of always seeming to plead a self-interest" (p. 67).

Public school salesmanship is, unhappily, a necessity in a society that has made a fad of debunking its own institutions. In the final analysis, the astute school administrator knows he is his own best advocate. Obviously he is familiar with the school's accomplishments, and he must enthusiastically explain them for parents and the press or even the most glittering successes will go unheralded. (p. 52)

Gerbner (1963) noted that voters who were personally involved with the schools were twice as likely to vote favorably on school bond issues than those citizens who relied on the mass media for information. Gerbner concluded that "schools have much to do in the way of improving their relations with mass media and of improving the quality of educational reporting, even if there is little they can do about vested editorial interests" (p. 205).

With more persons involved with education, either through participation in or conflict with educational institutions, it appears that mass media channels will be utilized as a means to send and receive vital information concerning issues, problems and events surrounding education. There are indications that the public's desire for education-related news and information is increasing dramatically.

One indication is the increase in the number of educational publications currently in circulation. An examination of the education-related periodicals listed in the tenth edition (1964-65) of Ulrich's Periodicals Directory revealed a total of 516 publications. In the twenty-third edition (1984) of Ulrich's, the number of education publications had increased to 2,864, an increase of more

than 500 percent in twenty years. New publications on education-related topics continue to appear. The Harvard Graduate School of Education recently announced its publication of a newsletter titled the Harvard Education Letter ("Newsletter on Education," 1985). A magazine targeted for college admissions officers called Careers Magazine recently noted that its circulation had begun at 75,000 and is currently at 500,000 ("500,000 Copies and Still Not Enough," 1984).

Well-established publications on education continue to thrive. The Chronicle of Higher Education grew from 4,000 subscribers in 1962 to 36,000 in 1975 (Currie, 1975). Its current circulation is 70,000 (Ulrich's, 1984). The education supplement of the London Times, which apparently has no similar counterpart in this country, started in 1926, expanded throughout the years, and currently has a circulation of 132,000 (Ulrich's, 1984).

Despite the increased interest in education-related information, the news media and particularly newspapers have done little to respond to this trend. An extensive study conducted by Gerbner (1964) analyzed media content of education in film, broadcast and print from 1930 to 1960. Among Gerbner's findings was that approximately 4 percent of all news in the nation's daily newspapers was about education (Gerbner, 1964, p. 3). Other studies on the education content of the news media are more extensively discussed in Chapter III; however, even a cursory glance at a few representative analyses reveals that nothing much has changed over time. Ryan and Owen (1976) conducted a content analysis of metropolitan coverage of

social issues. These researchers found that less than 2 percent of the newspaper content studied dealt with education. Ross (1983) analyzed the content of the Los Angeles Times from 1960 to 1975 and found that the average percent of newshole given to education stories was 3.5 percent. Dominick (1984) studied the education-related content of network newscasts and found that about 2 percent of all news time was devoted to education stories.

While varied factors seem to indicate that the American public is not only attentive to the topic of education but more often than not has a vested and direct interest in the educational enterprise, the nation's news media have not responded significantly through increased coverage to this growing interest. Newspapers are particularly non-responsive to this trend, considering that the print media have comparatively more time and space in which to cover education news.

Gerbner (1964) has suggested that successful newspapers find ways to effectively balance varying client demands.

No paper is sustained by selling information, or even entertainment, to its readers. The principal sustaining service of the newspaper is the creation and cultivation of a reading public of consumers concentrated in a market area which provides the base for the profitable operation of the chief supporting clientele, the advertisers . . . These market functions require the newspaper to attract readers by amusing, exciting, provoking, and selling, as well as informing them. (p. 39)

Theoretical Foundations

Several theoretical perspectives inform this study's construction and implementation.

Social Responsibility of the Press

The twentieth century has seen a shift away from a strictly libertarian view of press responsibility to a social responsibility theory of the press. Siebert (1963) articulated the underlying premise of this theory. "Freedom carries concomitant obligations; and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under our government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society" (p. 74). Three of these essential functions include the following:

1. Servicing the political system by providing information, discussion, and debate on public affairs;
2. Enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government;
3. Safeguarding the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog against government. (p. 74)

Education is a direct responsibility of state and local governments since the majority of schools are publicly supported. Moreover, the entire education enterprise, whether public or private, is heavily influenced by legislation and government regulation. The

news media's obligation to cover education fairly, thoroughly and completely seems to be well within the functions outlined above.

Gallup (1975) suggests that the news media have a direct role in keeping the public informed about events and issues influencing the educational delivery system. "Democracy works best when it responds to the views of an informed citizenry. And only when people formulate opinions on the basis of facts can they be informed" (p. 3).

Siebert noted that attacks on press performance, in view of the news media's responsibilities, have gathered strength and force in this century. Two major themes of criticism center on the press's resistance to social change and on the observation that "the press has often paid more attention to the superficial and sensational than to the significant" (p. 78).

Hechinger (1976-77) places the blame for public misperceptions about education squarely on the news media's shoulders.

There is no question in my mind that the news media--not all but in composite--often err both by way of wrong emphasis and inadequate coverage . . . Sensational attacks are too often allowed to outdistance reasoned response . . . Sounds from the soap boxes of the left and the right are allowed to drown out the voices of the liberal center. The public is left with a distorted view of the realities that confront the academy and the teachers. (p. 15)

If Hechinger's observations are valid, then it becomes even more important to study how newspapers which do not succumb to these failings manage to do a more effective job of covering the complexities of education. Analyses of successful news coverage may do much

to guide less effective newspapers in altering the style and content of education coverage. Hechinger believes that "we in the media share the responsibility for dispelling" public ignorance about the issues surrounding education (p. 15).

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) presented a general theory of human behavior which he called social learning theory. Unlike previous learning theories, social learning theory allows for both direct and observational learning. It is this latter type of learning that encompasses learning from the mass media.

Since most of us are limited in what we can directly observe during our daily routines, much of what we learn is observed from the mass media, particularly the visual media. The mass media can significantly enlarge the scope of what we could learn by exposing us to modeling events that we would otherwise not have any contact with. Also, the mass media can transmit new behavioral and thought patterns simultaneously to large groups of people. Social learning theory considers the media to be primary socialization agents alongside family, peers, and classroom teachers. (Tan, 1981, p. 206).

As possible socialization agents, the mass media, including newspapers, can do much to shape our thoughts and behaviors toward the education enterprise, whether we act as participants, observers, critics, skeptics, or the quietly uninvolved. Maccoby and Markle (1973) observed that much of learning from the mass media is incidental learning--that is, learning that was not planned or designed for intentionally.

It may well be the amount of incidental learning that takes place in the communication situation is far greater than the amount of direct or formal learning...We learn when we read newspapers or magazines, when we watch television or films, or when we listen to the radio just as surely as when we read textbooks or journal articles or listen to lectures. And we learn not only information, such as what happened and who were the participants, but also attitudes and opinions. Furthermore, the attitudes and opinions we learn are often not formally specified or planned for; the learner may not know how he has acquired these attitudes, nor may he be able to specify what they are. (p. 158)

Education is a critical component of the American way of life, and how the news media handle education-related content may well deeply influence how we choose to manage public education--what its goals will be, how it will be funded and administered, who will and will not participate in the education enterprise, and a host of other equally profound decisions.

Bernard Kilgore, president of the Wall Street Journal (1966), stressed this critical learning-teaching role of contemporary newspapers.

I want to suggest that the newspaper of the future must become an instrument of intellectual leadership, an instrument of intellectual development--a center of learning. One of its main functions will be to continue the education of an educated community.

In short, and to translate this into terms more familiar perhaps to newspapermen of today--the newspaper editor of tomorrow will be an egghead. I really mean it. (p. 7)

Agenda-Setting

Although agenda-setting theory was not formally defined until 1972, Cohen in 1963 wrote that the press "may not be successful

much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (p. 120). McCombs and Shaw (1972) formally defined the agenda-setting function of the mass media as:

. . . a relational concept specifying a strong positive relationship between the emphases of mass communication and the salience of these topics to the individuals in the audience. This concept is stated in causal terms: increased salience of a topic or issue in the mass media influences (causes) the salience of that topic or issue among the public. (p. 177)

Dapper and Carter (1962) studied the content of education news coverage in some 19 major newspapers. They found that athletics were "covered with precision, diligence, authority and completeness" (p. 84), but that other perhaps more important issues were not granted such thoroughness. "If you depend on your local newspaper for information on education, chances are you have virtually no information or perspective on the major national issues in education and only the most fragmentary view of even local school picture" (p. 84). The recent criticisms of too much emphasis on school athletics may be connected with the overemphasis of athletic coverage in the news media, if the agenda-setting function is operative. Nonetheless, an examination of complete, accurate and adequate education coverage may help define the dimensions of outstanding education reporting as it, in turn, affects the public's education agenda.

Media Dependency

De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach (1975) developed a theory of media dependency which postulates that there exists "a high level of dependence of audiences on mass media information resources in urban-industrial societies" (p. 261); that "the greater the number and centrality of the specific information-delivery functions served by a medium, the greater the audience and societal dependency on that medium" (p. 262); and that "in societies with developed media systems, that audience dependency on media information increases as the level of structural instability (societal conflict and change) increases" (p. 263). They theorized that persons exposed to mass media would expand their belief systems. That is, "the idea that people's knowledge and belief systems expand because they learn about other people, places, and things from the mass media" (p. 269). They also theorized that mass media messages could influence audience members to do something they would ordinarily not do (activation) or conversely, not to do something they ordinarily would have done as a result of media messages (deactivation).

Media dependency and its effects on the public's behavior and attitudes toward education issues have been widely discussed. The role of the media in giving the public information about the educational enterprise is a critical one. Hechinger (1976-77) commented on the public's dependence.

It would be dishonest of me to discuss the public's perception of education without reference to the news media. More than ever before, the line between what is and what the media actually report is blurred. Except for the students', their parents', own worm's eye view of education, the public knows only what it is told in print and on the screen. (p. 15)

What the public knows also has an effect on how the public will support education. Anderson (1981) noted, "Citizens who are more involved in the schools and who have higher levels of knowledge about them consistently give them support, have a higher regard for management, think the schools are more concerned about their welfare, and desire increased two-way communication" (p. 3). Pool (1973) observed that "the mass media serve to cement a community in which public opinion operates. They serve to establish a consensus on underlying conceptions and on the definition of issues..." (p. 794). Apparently, the public's dependency on the mass media for information about education and the public's subsequent opinions about how the education enterprise should be managed are intrinsically linked. Mass media messages about education may have far-reaching effects on how the public perceives education issues.

Need For Study

Referring to the lack of solid education reporting, Schoonmaker (1985) suggests "one way to draw up a report card on the nation's newspapers is to examine how a major issue was covered" (p. 38). Gans (1983) proffered several categories of news research for the future which he believed should be undertaken. He said,

"The last, but logically the first, task awaiting news researchers is a revival of qualitative content analysis, to understand what various news media say, show, assume, and value about a range of major issues and institutions in U. S. life" (p. 181). One method of conducting a qualitative content analysis of education news coverage is to examine how newspapers which have been cited for excellent education reporting cover education.

To identify these excellent newspapers, a logical first step would be to ascertain what newspapers have received journalism prizes or awards for their outstanding news coverage. The Pulitzer Prize and the Sigma Delta Chi Distinguished Service Awards are two well-known journalism awards. However, these awards have rarely been given to examples of education reporting. Hohenberg (1980), who has written two histories of the Pulitzer Prizes, compiled a list of the largest categories of Pulitzer Prize awards. He identified fourteen major categories, none of which were education-related. Similarly, the Sigma Delta Chi awards are given for news stories in the major categories of General Reporting and Public Service in Newspaper Journalism. During the last five years, only one of these awards was given for education reporting.

Awards for outstanding education reporting have been given annually by the Education Writers Association (EWA). This association was organized in 1947 by a group of newspaper reporters for the purpose of improving education reporting. Membership in this organization is open to those persons who spend "a substantial

portion of their time reporting about or interpreting education" (Education Writers Association, 1984). Since the 1960s, the association has conducted their National Awards for Education Reporting. The competition is open to all news reporters, print and broadcast. Entries are judged "according to their contribution to the better understanding of education" (Education Writers Association, 1984).

Journalism prizes have come under criticism recently because many of these prizes are sponsored by commercial groups with vested interests. As Zinman (1970) observed, "The names of the award-giving groups read like a national lobbyists convention" (p. 37). Zinman suggests that news reporters divest themselves of prizes from commercial groups and rely on journalism awards given by their peers. The EWA awards represent just such a peer group and are not related to any commercial entity. Newspapers which have received EWA awards, particularly frequent winners, may provide excellent insights into how high-quality newspaper coverage of education is conducted. Considering that previous content analyses of education coverage have not examined how outstanding newspapers cover education, this study addresses this previously unexplored area of investigation.

Statement of Problem

Do award-winning newspapers, when compared to non-award-winning newspapers of similar size and geographic location, cover education-related issues differently? Do award-winning newspapers offer more extensive education coverage and is this coverage

qualitatively and quantitatively different from non-award-winning newspapers?

Assumptions

1. Newspapers are a major source of education news, and it may be assumed that the manifest content is meaningful to the community served by the print news media.

2. Newspapers publish a quantity and quality of education-related news that is measurable.

3. Public opinion about education-related issues is affected by the quantity and quality of education news coverage.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

News and information about education, regardless of the level, source or location, depends heavily on the news media, particularly the print media, for dissemination. Because a guiding concern of this study centers on how the news media, especially newspapers, cover the nation's educational enterprise, the review of the literature primarily focuses on three areas directly related to this concern.

First, this review will discuss the role which newspapers fulfill in the education news process. Secondly, factors affecting education news coverage inside and outside of the news organization will be outlined. Thirdly, an analysis of research studies dealing with how the news media covered education issues will be included.

Education News and the Role of Newspapers

In recent years, when a number of large metropolitan daily newspapers began to go out of business, a common perception was that the newspaper industry was suffering, possibly dying. While newspapers may be facing increased competition, they are far from destitute. As a recent article in the trade magazine Editor and

Publisher pointed out, advertising as a chief source of revenue for newspapers was on the rise. Consoli (1985) observed that, "National advertising in newspapers grew 11 percent in 1984, retail ad revenues were up 12 percent, and classified revenues rose 25 percent. . . . In all, advertisers spent \$23.7 billion on newspaper advertising in 1984" (p. 11). Circulation figures reflect steady growth patterns as well. Radolf (1985) reported that daily newspaper circulation increased by 190,000 (a 0.3 percent increase) in 1984 while Sunday editions were up by 790,000 (a 1.5 percent increase).

Circulation figures alone do not tell the whole story regarding the public's use of newspapers for information. Bogart (1968-69) discussed the results of a national survey on the public's news interests and sources. The survey found that people do not necessarily attend to one news source to the exclusion of other sources. This study also found that "four out of five read the newspaper on the average weekday, but three out of five watch news from television and over half listen to news on radio, so obviously there is a tremendous overlap" (p. 561). Respondents in this survey also indicated that community news was more interesting than national news and that the better educated respondents relied on more than one medium for news but tended to rely most heavily on newspapers. Bogart concluded:

Newspapers are still the greatest medium yet devised for making all the people of a community alive to the common interests and problems they have each day. This happens only through the newspaper's unique and now often challenged capacity to explain and even to create news

as well as to report it, to evoke excitement, to arouse and channel indignation, to force civic crises and to present thoughtful solutions. (p. 573)

In a 1975 study of newspaper readership, Bogart also found a significant degree of consistency.

The newspaper-reading habit has an amazing consistency. Three-fourths of all newspaper readers have their papers delivered at home. . . . Eighty-two percent of all the people who read a newspaper today will read five out of seven issues of the paper this week. (p. 36)

Bogart's observations were echoed by Witt (1983) who believed a "news-hungry" America exists that uses "multiple sources for news" (p. 47). He points out that the television viewing public is also the newspaper reading public and hearing about a news story on the television or radio "actually increase the likelihood that a person will read about that even in a newspaper."

Yes, Americans pick up those 62.4 million newspapers that are sold everyday and read them--for news, sports, for the comics, for Ann Landers' column, for a whole variety of reasons. And even that circulation figure may drastically understate readership; one study of 37 major markets put the average number of readers per paper at 2.7. (p. 48)

McCloskey (1967) offered a similar assessment. Addressing school administrators, he commented

Newspapers are a major means of informing people about schools and generating discussion of education. . . . Newspapers are valued sources of information which have substantial influence on public opinion about public services and problems. . . . While results of various studies differ in detail, all show that newspaper circulation is rising and that news pages continue to be cloaked with the prestige and credibility most people ascribe to the printed word. (p. 433)

Bloom (1965) surveyed over 2,800 community leaders who were members of the Rotarians and the Certified Grocers of California.

He found that over 80 percent of both groups believed that the most effective medium for education news was the local newspaper. Frum (1967) surveyed some 328 newspaper editors and 346 school superintendents and also found that both groups believed that the newspaper was the best medium for news about the schools.

In counseling educators on how to disseminate school information, Bettinghaus and Miller (1976) stated that "the success of any program which might be controversial in nature will depend in part on the reaction and reporting given the program by the various news media" (p. 49). Anderson (1981) conducted a statewide survey of Washington voters on their opinions regarding educational management at the district and school levels. He found that highly involved voters tended to use personal sources of information about the schools while the less involved, a greater majority of the respondents, relied heavily on the news media for information (p. 3).

Nicodemus (1982) studied the sources of public school information of residents in a North Carolina county. She found that respondents depended significantly on mass media information and that they "want more information about schools than they are now getting" (p. iii).

Education historian Diane Ravitch (1983), commenting on the negative influences which the "New Right" is having on the schools, particularly in areas such as textbook selection and sex education, identified the "best answer" to this growing problem.

In sum, the best answer to unfair attacks on the schools is the scrutiny that a free press can bring to bear. Half-

truths, distortions, rumors, and innuendoes wither in the bright glare of full disclosure. . . . The best defense of intellectual freedom lies in the exercise of intellectual freedom and the best support for the public schools is an informed public. (p. 9)

Graber (1984) studied how average citizens processed news information and assigned such information as high or low priority in allocating their attention. She found that her research subjects were consistently attentive to education news. Graber observed

A major prerequisite for success is a good education. Therefore, every citizen must have the opportunity to be well-educated. The notion that education is the key to a better life is, as Laue has pointed out, "the humanistic 'religion' of the West." Since education leads to better jobs, better citizenship, and reduced asocial behavior, most of our panelists believed that society ought to supply all members of the public with an ample array of educational opportunities. Stories related to public education readily captured attention, even for people who had no school-age children. These stories were always evaluated from the perspective that the best type of education ought to be provided for all who can benefit from it. (p. 171)

Kindred, Bagin and Gallagher (1984) recently identified press relations as a key component to effective school-community relations.

As the number of taxpayers with school age children decreases, newspapers will most likely become an even more important source of information about school news for many people. This view is contested by some who feel that newspapers have played a key role for many years only because school officials were slow to recognize that other, more personal communication techniques were easily available. . . . Whatever the role will be tomorrow, the newspapers are here today, and the astute administrator will not underestimate the power of the press.

A 1985 study of newspaper readers conducted by the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation ("Oklahoma study: readers want more local

news") found that respondents wanted "local school news, with more emphasis on non-sports activities and academic achievements" (p. 96).

Criscuolo (1985) surveyed parents, school superintendents and legislators in Connecticut regarding the relationship between news media coverage of education news and their attitudes toward education. He found that 63 percent of the parents studied, and 100 percent of the superintendents, believed that education news coverage influenced their views as well as the views of others regarding education. Criscuolo concluded

In as much as a high percentage of respondents indicated that national, but not local, educational issues are covered adequately and accurately, it is apparent that readers are interested in having newspapers publish more articles that discuss local educational issues and it is recommended that they do so. (p. 17)

Factors Affecting Coverage of Education News

Criticisms on how the news media, especially newspapers, have covered education remains consistent over time and is often acerbic and pointed. In 1960 Fleming conducted an analysis of studies on what the public has said they want in educational news coverage contrasted with what the American press actually printed. After examining available research on these two topics, Fleming concluded:

Much evidence was produced to indicate that the press is still emphasizing, especially in news stories and photos, the extra-curricular activities in schools and the personnel in such activities, in spite of the claim

by readers and even metropolitan editors that such topics are not of primary concern. . . . In-class news stories and features having to do with such supposedly-popular topics as pupil achievement and student human interest receive far less than their just due. . . . That such a contradictory situation exists is even more illogical inasmuch as a number of studies quoted claim that much of the material--the wrong type of material--is prepared within school systems. (p. 97)

Commenting on perceived gaps in educational journalism, Smith (1964) said, "Amazing as it may seem, there is not enough being written and published about many important issues in higher education and there are a few qualified writers capable of preparing serious and thought-provoking articles for the educational press" (p. 333).

Dennis and Sadoff (1976) examined media coverage afforded children and concluded that such coverage was scant. Since children are a large portion of the subjects of education news, the apparent conclusion is that news media coverage of education is also scant. These authors concluded:

More likely the best explanation is neglect. There is no evidence that reporters (whether in education or other areas) have much understanding of their audience or potential audience. Not to understand the audience, parts of which are children and parents, is not to understand the need for coverage of children and childhood. (p. 53)

Addressing the tendency for the news media to concentrate on negative news stories relating to education, Raywid (1985) offered a less than encouraging view of the potential relationship between the educational establishment and the news media. She observed that, "Journalists feel required by the highest professional standards to take an adversary posture, in order to

function as the public's watchdog. Watchdogs are never likely to prove particularly friendly" (p. 7). Raywid believes that the news media have a crucial role in promoting a public dialogue on the goals and directions of public education. "The media could contribute a great deal to such an exploration, but it seems improbable that things will work out this way" (p. 8).

Criscuolo (1985) offered a similar viewpoint. "Press coverage of educational issues by newspapers has come under attack by educators who complain not only of the scant attention newspapers give to education but also of opinionated and inaccurate articles with an accent on 'sensationalism'" (p. 17).

These criticisms considered together share a common element. Each appears to target primarily those who control news media as the perpetrators of poor education news coverage. Hage, Dennis and Ismach (1976) have suggested that any public affairs news story is subjected to five levels of decision-making. These are:

1. Data assignment: who decides what is worthy covering and why?
2. Data collection: who decides when enough information has been gathered?
3. Data evaluation: who decides what is important enough to be put into a story?
4. Data writing: who decides what words to use?
5. Data editing: who decides which story gets a big headline and goes on the front page, which stories to cut, which stories to change. (p. 5)

These levels of decision-making imply that members of the news media organization such as the editors, the publishers and the reporters each play a role in deciding how a particular education story will or will not be covered. The following discusses research and

commentary which focuses on the role of editors and publishers have in selecting education news, and how they perceive sources of such news.

Role of News Editors and Publishers

Editorial decision making in general has come under attack even by fellow editors and publishers. Stephen McNamara, whose weekly tabloid the Pacific Sun went from a circulation of 2,500 to 11,500 in five years commented:

I'm not certain what it is that has caused newspaper editors, once an exceedingly lively breed, to come on these days like so many insurance agents. They are surely endangering their livelihood by doing so.
 . . . (p. 13)

.....

Traditional papers are not meeting the needs of an important part of their audience: the affluent, the well-educated, the involved. Many of these papers fail in three main areas: they sell their readers short, they sell their employees short and they sell their advertisers short. (p. 11)

Bogart (1968-69) suggested that one way editors may be short-changing their audience is by way of the editors' perceptions of what is interesting to that audience. After surveying readers on numerous topics of potential news, Bogart found that, "There is almost no category of news item which does not have a great deal of interest to at least some people, but the reverse is also true. Even those stories which are of great interest to a large proportion of the public have little or no interest for a substantial minority" (p. 564).

Bogart coupled this audience interest ambivalence with an observation on how editors react.

Consciously or unconsciously newspaper editors may recognize that the public turns to television for the stories of war, politics, and disaster and to newspapers for human interest stories, the background items, and the details on events of local or specialized interest. . . . But vast publics are made up of small minorities, and the newspaper's strength lies precisely in its capacity to serve diverse and segmented interests. (p. 569)

Deciding on what news items to serve up to such a diverse audience, particularly with the traditionally low coverage afforded education news, confounds many publishers as well as editors.

Some evidence exists that publishers avoid conflict-creating stories on education which they do not perceive as serving their publication's interest. Fowler (1978) investigated how newspaper publishers in various-sized communities viewed the constraints on their newspaper's selection of content when the story in question may prove disrupting to the community. The researcher found a high correlation between the publisher's perception of the effect which a particular story would have on the newspaper, not on the community, and whether that effect would be of benefit to the newspaper. Non-beneficial news stories were the only source of conflict in deciding on news content for the publishers studied.

Tuchman (1978) suggested that newspapers subscribe to a system of territoriality by which only specific editors are given the authority to dispense reporters to certain stories. She describes an incident where an education reporter wandered into the press room of a City Hall to cover a news conference on a university basketball team.

News releases alerted the education departments, sports departments, and City Hall bureaus of all metropolitan newspapers to the intended event. The education editor of one paper sent a stringer from City College, who wandered into the press room to ask the location of the Blue Room and did not bother to check in with the City Hall bureau chief. (This seeming amenity enables the bureau chief to know which members of his newspaper's staff are theoretically available to him at any moment because of their presence in the building.) Additionally, the bureau chief had two of his own young reporters available for the story. Furious, the bureau chief phoned the education editor to inform him of the bureau's rights and abilities. He quickly shepherded one of his own reporters to the Blue Room, only to learn that a sportswriter from his paper was also there. Firmly, he telephoned the education editor and sports editor to announce the double foul-up and to remind them that their reporters were never again to set foot in City Hall without his fore-knowledge. (p. 267)

The type of territoriality described above may curtail how and why certain education stories are covered or not covered.

Other factors influencing how editors decide to cover education topics center on editorial attitudes toward education-related news and toward the source of that news--the schools. Frum (1967) surveyed news editors' opinions toward a major source of education news--the school superintendent's office. He found that while editors were generally satisfied with their relationship with the superintendents, the editors complained that the superintendents wanted to control the school news and that news releases coming from the superintendent's office had to be rewritten. These editors found that the superintendents disliked criticism from local newspapers regarding school issues.

Broderick (1972) interviewed daily and weekly newspaper editors as well as news directors for television and radio stations

in Washington state. He asked his subjects to examine a list of 39 items of school information and to rate their interest in covering the item as news stories. Only three of the items--taxation, special levy and superintendent school board policy were rated as interesting to all four types of media executives.

Epstein (1977) observed that education stories often do not have clear, definitive conclusions that an editor can easily turn into a standard news story. Education stories are often complex and ambiguous. "There's a need for a headline, for a lead, first paragraph, and it's very difficult to get anything into the paper that says, 'Maybe this--maybe that!'" (p. 3).

Dickson (1975) conducted a survey of publishers, editors and education reporters on how education coverage may be increased in local newspapers. His respondents indicated the following: 57 percent agreed that their newspaper's local coverage of education was sufficient at the present time; 55 percent disagreed with the statement that local educators exaggerated the public's interest in education; 79 percent agreed that most daily newspapers should employ a full-time education writer; and 77 percent agreed that increased coverage of education would improve their community's understanding of school problems; however, 55 percent of the publishers in this sample disagreed with the statement that local coverage of education should be equal with coverage of sports. As one respondent indicated, the problem in getting more education coverage lies not in quantity but quality. One of Dickson's respondents said:

Putting education copy against sports copy isn't very realistic--it's like the old saw of money for guns or butter. I'd rather talk about what can be done in the space now allocated to education--the kinds of issues we tackle (too many are frivolous), the tendency of too many education writers to become boosters for the educational establishment instead of somewhat removed commentators. (p. 199)

Hynds (1981) also conducted a survey of newspaper editors to ascertain if educational coverage was undergoing any changes in the nation's newspapers. Hynds asked questions about the editor's approaches to educational coverage, amount of coverage, comparison of education coverage to other types of coverage such as business and sports, types of coverage and changes and trends in education coverage. Hynds obtained the following information:

- 49 percent said they were devoting more space to education stories than five years ago;
- 49 percent were devoting the same or greater percentage of the newshole to education;
- 80 percent said they devoted at least 5 percent of their newshole to education stories;
- 91 percent of the newspapers devoted more space to sports, 67 percent more space to women's (family) news, and 68 percent more space to editorial pages; most devoted about the same space to education news as to crime news;
- 82 percent used interpretative stories to cover education issues; 77 percent used investigative stories; 62 percent used round-ups and 36 percent used columns;
- Sources of education news included first staff members with 59 percent of the respondents stating that staff members produced between 75 percent and 90 percent of the education copy; other sources included Associated Press (66 percent); public relations representatives (58 percent); syndicates (42 percent) and other news services (41 percent). (p. 72)

Hynds concluded that while most of the editors had increased the amount and type of education coverage in their newspapers more

study was needed on "how well they are doing these things and whether their efforts are leading, or could lead, to better schools" (p. 75).

Although Dickson (1975) concluded from his review of research that "newspapers continue to be highly resistant to both internal and external criticism of their reportorial performance" (p. 72), the need for useful research, if not criticism, continues to be of major concern to editors and publishers. Haskins (1970) conducted a national survey of newspaper publishers to find out their greatest information needs relating to newspaper research. Of his respondents, 53 percent indicated the area of newspaper image was a "great need"; 52 percent indicated journalism education; 48 percent indicated research; and, 42 percent indicated editing/content/selection as areas of information needs. Respondents also indicated that the research topics of product improvement for current readers and to attract new readers were very important.

The need for concrete information continues to be paramount for editors and publishers. Schweitzer (1980) commented that editors do not find research produced by academics to be very useful. According to Schweitzer, editors want answers to straightforward and action-oriented questions such as "Are newspapers dull and distant and if so, why?" (p. 20). Any study of newspaper coverage of education must be cognizant of the pressures editors and publishers face in deciding newspaper content and their interest in improving the newspaper product.

Education professionals and commentators have long viewed the print media as vital to the telling of the education story. Gross (1956) cited the press as the major medium in relating information about the schools.

It [the press] usually constitutes the most important single channel of communication through which the community learns about, and interprets, the policies, programs, and activities of its schools. (p. 12)

In a landmark study on how voters made decisions regarding school bond issues, Carter (1960) found that voters depended primarily on newspapers for information about education and the schools. However, the print media apparently failed to provide potential voters with the right amount of school information as Carter found that those voters most likely to vote "yes" to a bond proposal listed school officials as primary sources of information. Carter concluded that voters desired increased information about the schools, but that this desire was not being adequately met.

In 1964 the National Opinion Research Center conducted a national survey of public opinion on education. The survey included a series of questions on sources of information about school affairs. Chaffee (1967) reported that a majority of the survey respondents named newspapers as being "helpful" or "very helpful" in obtaining information about education. Chaffee observed that "newspapers are, on the whole, doing a better job of informing the public about schools than are school personnel, or formal organizations presumably established for that purpose" (p. 731). Chaffee found that many of the survey respondents indicated that the mass

media were the only source of information about the schools and that less educated respondents rated the mass media as a better source of information than both formal organizations, like parent-teacher associations, or personal contacts. Chaffee concludes the following:

But the newspaper is providing the public with more school information than any other source, and the mass media seem to be perceived as more neutral information source than other agencies. Also, mass communications provides an impersonal mode of citizen contact with schools that may help transcend social barriers. (p. 733)

Evidence exists to support the proposition that the dominance of newspapers as a news source is even more critical in smaller communities served by weekly or semi-weekly newspapers. Olien, Donohue and Tichenor (1980) found that citizens in smaller communities are exposed to substantially less public affairs information than those living in communities with daily newspapers. These researchers postulate that the differences in exposure "may have a number of outcomes for level of citizen understanding and participation in public issues" (p. 399).

Shaw (1978) studied readership patterns in small cities in Tennessee. He found that small city residents relied heavily on local newspapers as a main source of community news. His findings included that small city residents were "faithful" newspaper readers and rated newspapers "superior to television in thoroughness, usefulness and importance of content" (p. 2).

In broad terms, newspapers as a mass medium fulfill an undeniable role in community life. Citing studies indicating how citizens who advocate increased public affairs information in the mass media rarely read such information, Pool (1973) observed that, "The verbal commitment is highly significant for it tells us that the norms of this society value public opinion and public involvement in public affairs. People feel some pressure of conscience to be involved, even if they do not live up to their standards" (p. 795). Education is a topic of obvious public affairs interest, and as such, relies on print media coverage and exposure if general public knowledge is to be fostered.

Role of Education Reporter

The decisions of a newspaper's editor and publisher in determining the extent and amount of education news are implemented by the education reporter or editor. Therefore, the role of the education reporter is a key component in understanding how education is covered. Gerbner (1964) and Hohenberg (1968) both credit Time magazine with being the first publication to assign a full time writer to education reporting in 1923. However, it was the launch of Sputnik in 1957 that prompted more newspapers to devote at least the efforts of a part-time reporter to the education beat. As Hohenberg commented:

But in education, as in other underdeveloped areas of journalism progress as a rule has come with terrifying slowness-even in New York City and Washington, D. C. It takes the shock of a Sputnik, and worse, to cause a very

large section of the press and its electronic rivals to adjust to a new phase in history. (p. 193)

In 1961 Gerbner (1964) interviewed education reporters and editors from 119 daily newspapers with circulations of 100,000 or more to learn how these individuals viewed their reporting jobs, assignments, status and problems. Gerbner found that few newspapers in his study assigned a reporter to full-time coverage of education--most education writers covered education as one of their many assignments. Many of Gerbner's respondents complained of having to handle trivial tasks often only peripherally associated with the education beat. (As Gerbner's report related one such complaint:)

"Any title sounds pretty silly in my case," said a young woman reporter for a large midwestern daily. "I spend part of my working day writing obituaries, taking office notes, rewriting police items. Our city staff is shorthanded and younger members and women are assigned to what we refer to as 'the junk.'" (p. 2-10)

Much of this "junk" is also part of the hundreds of news releases, publications and publicity items that education reporters receive from state, national and local sources.

Gerbner's respondents also had mixed views of their status in the reporting hierarchy of their newspapers. Most believed that their relative status was little better than a general assignment reporter with special recognition given for being the education reporter or editor. Gerbner concluded:

"Status" in the news room appeared to increase with the length of time the position has been in existence and the tenure of the reporter holding the position. There were,

however, few "old timers." The average tenure on the job was about 2-1/2 years. Half of all education reporters responding have been in their position one year or less.

Although the steps of the "status hierarchy" in educational reporting are ill-defined, there is little doubt that at the top sits the prestigious education editor of long tenure at an authoritative metropolitan daily paper such as the New York Times. (p. 1-16)

Hohenberg (1968) did concur. "In education, however, the old-time 'school reporter' is still operating at the bottom of the journalistic totem pole . . . Outside the better papers and the news magazines, news of education is too often considered dull stuff" (p. 192). Hodenfield (1968) is equally pointed in his assessment of education reporters.

In no other field in the vast arena of mass communications is such a dramatic, exciting story being told with such drab, run-of-the-mill reporting. . . . All too often, the education beat goes to the greenest cub on the staff, and he considers it a real jump up the ladder of newspaper success when he is promoted to covering the city sewer commission. (p. 11)

In choice of news stories, Gerbner also found that the "hard-news, local angle" approach to education reporting prevailed with his respondents. As one reporter explained:

We pursue what I would call a "hard local news" policy on educational subjects. This means first of all that we cover . . . all committee meetings and full board meetings. . . . We try to maintain some surveillance of the school boards of suburban communities and common school districts in the metropolitan area, and give them highlight coverage. We give cordial treatment to story suggestions volunteered by the schools, colleges and universities--expansion programs, new techniques, features on faculty and students, etc.--but we do not cultivate the field regularly to develop such material. In the realm of "pure" education--papers, studies, new books, "foreign" convention discussions and actions on the philosophy,

technology and other generalities of education--we cover only to the extent that such developments get themselves into the wire service file (unless there is some local application). (p. 2-17)

This penchant for "hard news" is mediated by traditional newsroom values. As Gerbner observed:

Implicit in these views is the assumption that the reporter's job is to emulate and cultivate the outlook of the average "citizen and taxpayer" whose "right to know" he guards. His main qualifications include the ability to do that simply, compellingly, and within the pattern of news value priorities outlined by the policy of the management and enforced by the ethos of the newsroom. (p. 2-19)

The complexities of education reporting as discussed above often result with good reason in less than adequate education news. As Smith (1964) observed, "But the mass media must cover the entire spectrum of education, from preschool nurseries to the most erudite post-doctoral program. It is unreasonable to expect a reporter racing from city school board meeting to experimental grade school classroom, to university laboratory--all under the pressure of deadline--to write deep and penetrating studies of the educational scene" (p. 334).

Hage, Dennis and Ismach (1976) suggest that education reporting become an area of specialized public affairs reporting, similar to business and science reporting. They point out the need for education specialists who build open relationships with education personnel by being "a reporter of proven responsibility" (p. 259). Education specialists are also needed because "genuine understanding of educational problems, trends, and developments requires a

concentration that is physically impossible for the generalist" (p. 259).

Hage et al. list the three major objectives of the education assignment:

1. To tell readers about the student in the classroom from kindergarten to college seminar.
2. To inform readers and interpret for them new developments in education generally.
3. To report and interpret the substance and progress of proposed legislation and of court actions concerning schools on both the state and federal levels. (p. 259)

The impressions of how education reporters view their performance and workload are indicated in three surveys conducted by Duncan (1966), Jacobson (1973) and Hynds (1981). Duncan questioned education reporters at 52 major newspapers. Of his respondents, he found that 55 percent had full-time education reporters, but that most of these were relatively new to their jobs having been in the position three or less years. The majority of Duncan's subjects were college graduates, 25 percent had master's degrees and none had Ph. D. degrees. Respondents said that their principal source of education news was personal coverage followed by information from campus news bureaus and then by wire service stories. Only 30 percent of the education reporters indicated that they visited the campuses they covered on a regular basis.

Jacobson (1973) surveyed both education writers and the entire membership of the Education Writers Association. Respondents included education writers for newspapers, press associations,

magazines and radio and television stations. Jacobson asked respondents to rank order items on a list of methods devised to improve the coverage of education news. His subjects indicated that the following items were "most urgently needed":

1. Increase the number of staff assigned to cover education in the mass media;
2. Increase the salaries for education writers;
3. Conduct seminars for education writers;
4. Offer college courses to prepare specialists in education reporting;
5. Conduct research on problems of education reporting;
6. Offer college courses to educate school administrators in communication. (p. 274)

In examining the comments of his respondents, Jacobson concluded that, "Management controls purse strings and allocation of staff. It would seem that many media managers have yet to be convinced of the arrival and significance of education news" (p. 275). Dickson (1975) also found a similar disparity between the views of education reporters and their editors and publishers. He reported that satisfaction with current levels of education coverage increased as organizational authority and influence increased, and that, "Publishers and editors in the study did not perceive increased traditional local coverage of education as feasible to the extent perceived by education reporters" (p. 224).

Hynds' 1981 survey of newspaper editors revealed similar information when compared with the Duncan and Jacobson studies. The editors who responded to his query reported that fewer than a fourth of their number had education editors and less than half had one person assigned full-time. Few of the education editors had a

background in education with 3 percent having graduate degrees in education and 2 percent with undergraduate degrees in education. Seven percent had teaching or other experience in education. Over one-third of the respondents indicated that they had increased the amount of space devoted to education news and had expanded their use of interpretative-investigative reporting and of pictures and artwork. Forty-nine percent of the editors recommended holding seminars to educate school personnel in dealing with the news media. Only 17 percent believed more education writers should be added to their staffs and 12 percent indicated that education writers should be paid more.

An examination of the number of reporters listed in Working Press of the Nation indicates that in 1963 a total of 431 education writers or editors were listed, but in 1984 the total was 838--nearly double. Considering the growth in education news and the need for education specialists, it appears that American newspapers have responded to this trend by hiring more education writers. However, quantity does not necessarily mean quality. As Schoonmaker (1985) said, "There is only a handful of career education writers--perhaps a dozen or two--currently working for U. S. newspapers" (p. 37). Even these, she said, are "mostly underequipped, overworked, and encouraged" (p. 37). Given the continuing disparity between how education reporters and their editors and publishers view education coverage, the prognosis for significant change in this area remains questionable.

Role of Educational Personnel

While education reporters, editors and publishers are indeed critical to the education news process, mention must also be made of the role which education personnel play in disseminating such news. The ongoing relationship between educational institutions and the news media has potentially far-reaching influence in determining what news the public will receive.

Aronoff and Baskin (1983) address the need for educational institutions to become active in telling the education story.

Anyone who doubts the need for public relations practice in the administration of elementary and secondary schools today need only glance at the headlines. School-bond issues are being voted down, teachers are striking, students are suing schools because they have graduated and still cannot read, parents are demanding that school curricula return to the "basics," students and teachers are being attacked in the classroom; the list of problems in our schools could go on. Most large school districts have now come to realize that part of their responsibility as a publicly-funded agency is keeping taxpayers and other publics informed about their operations.
(p. 291)

This responsibility and how education officials view their role has been the subject of study and commentary over the period of several decades.

Carter (1954) polled public school superintendents, asking them to rank seven categories of school news in terms of the public's need and interests. He found that the superintendents believed the public was most interested in administrative news dealing with finances, school buildings and the board of education. The superintendents believed that the public was excessively

interested in sports and student activities and least interested in educational programs, student welfare and teacher's activities.

The respondents felt that most of the news that gets into the local newspapers about the schools was of little interest to the public.

Gerbner (1964) found that education reporters thought school public information services to be "indispensable" to their work even if they disliked the volume of news releases and "junk" they received. Gerbner also found that news reporters had three primary problems with education personnel. He identified these problems as:

1. Newsman's feeling of secretiveness, lack of confidence in the schoolmen;
2. Problems of occupational jargon, obscure or abstract language;
3. Different concept of "news value." (p. 2-25)

Frum (1967) noted evidence that school superintendents did indeed have misconceptions of the news media and the news gathering process. He found that the superintendents he surveyed complained that news editors did not obtain the facts about the schools and that they sensationalized school news. The superintendents in this study also did not want the news media to criticize the schools or to print news detrimental to the school system; however, they did want the news editors to get school related news from their offices.

Hodenfield (1968) commented similarly:

Too many superintendents believe their job is to cover up the news, not disclose it. They would rather be misunderstood than to create any waves. They consider public relations as high pressure tactics from Madison Avenue, and they adopt the doctrine that "no news is good news."
(p. 12)

When educational institutions support and maintain an active relationship with the news media via their public relations offices, however, the news coverage their institutions receive is of higher quality and quantity. Rings (1971) used a content analysis of local newspapers to study if school systems with public relations directors received different news coverage than systems without such directors. Rings divided news content studied into sports, public affairs, school administration and student affairs. He concluded the following from his data:

The school districts with public relations personnel did receive significantly more news coverage than districts without the public relations directors. This included the numbers of different stories as well as the amount of space. . . . Likewise, the majority of coverage in the public relations directors' districts was of non-sports articles. In contrast, the majority of coverage in the non-director districts was devoted to athletic activities. (p. 65)

Jacobson (1973), in a survey of education writers, found indications that school personnel are perceived at odds with news reporters in terms of news values. It was noted that the respondents rated "accuracy" and "interest to the readers" as the highest news values, but at the same time they felt that the dominant news value of educators was "usefulness to source" (p. 276). Jacobson's respondents also expressed the view that educational personnel do not believe that their activities should be held up to public scrutiny.

Often this reluctance to allow the news media free access to information about their institutions stems from how the administrators

view the role of the news media in community life. Gwartney (1982) surveyed school superintendents in Oklahoma and found that they did view the community and the news media as separate entities to be communicated with in differing ways. This sense of separateness, however, does not always lead to accurate role perceptions. Kocher (1984) studied if whether or not confidence in the schools increased as familiarity with the schools also increased. The study focused on a segment of the general public, public school administrators and newspaper reporters in Pennsylvania. Kocher found that of the three groups, school administrators showed a pattern of having more confidence in the schools than either of the other two groups. The general public and the news reporter samples did not have significantly different levels of confidence in the schools. Kocher concluded that, "The journalists' viewpoint merely reflected that of the public at large" (p. 3536-A), and that the administrators were the ones out of step.

The complex array of factors affecting how education news is gathered and reported, as discussed in the preceding section, provides a basic overview of the influence which publishers, editors, news reporters and educational personnel bring to bear on the dissemination of news information about education. In the final section of the Review of the Literature, attention will turn to a discussion of what content analyses of education news coverage have revealed about the quantity and quality of that news.

Content Analyses of Education News

The research on education news coverage stretches across three decades to the present. The predominant methodology used has been content analysis, with varying degrees of sophistication and range. In this section, a review of the studies is undertaken chronologically followed by a general critique of the research designs and procedures utilized to study how the news media have covered education related issues.

One of the pioneers in studying education news content was Farley (1929) who compared a list of education topics placed in priority order by respondents with a content analysis of those newspapers serving the respondents. His subjects indicated that education news on such topics as pupil progress and achievement, methods of instruction, pupil health, courses of study, value of education, discipline and behavior of pupils were of most interest to them. However, when Farley conducted a content analysis of the newspapers, he found the following:

There is a tendency to supply readers of school news with the largest amount of information upon topics in which they have the least interest. The six topics of lesser interest get 75 percent of the news space. (p. 65)

Farley found that 47 percent of the news content he studied was devoted to athletics and extra-curricular activities.

Monahan (1960) studied the school-related content of eight daily and 15 weekly newspapers in Michigan for a period from

September through November 1959. He excluded large metropolitan daily newspapers from his sample.

Because Monahan was one of the first researchers to develop extensive content categories on education news coverage, it is useful to list Monahan's classifications. They are as follows:

1. Adult education
2. Illustrations, other
3. Editorial comment
4. Social news
5. Social illustrations
6. Student activities
7. Student activity illustrations
8. Honor roll
9. Finance
10. School board
11. School operation and construction
12. Teaching methods
13. Conferences and institutes
14. Curriculum
15. Athletics
16. Athletic illustrations
17. PTA
18. Transportation
19. Safety
20. Miscellaneous

Monahan found that the categories of athletics and athletic illustrations comprised 53.2 percent of the total content studied. The remaining top four categories were miscellaneous, 7.4 percent; illustrations, other, 6.3 percent; curriculum, 6.0 percent; and finance, 5.7 percent.

Dapper and Carter (1962) examined every education story appearing in 19 newspapers from across the nation during the month of September 1961. After reviewing over 4,000 stories, they too found that athletics received the most news attention. Dapper and Carter concluded, "On the whole, it would seem that education problems are treated in the same manner as death and taxes, something to bring forth a slew of complaints, but something about which very little can be done" (p. 105).

Gerbner (1964) studied the New York Times index to obtain a measure of how this newspaper covered education topics from 1913-1962. Gerbner counted the number of columns occupied by listings under the topics of schools, high schools, colleges and universities, education and teachers. He found that although the number and proportion of education items increased 10 times over the 50 year period, "the percentage share of relevant listings out of all items indexed exceeded 3 percent only in 1958 and 1961" (p. 1-6). Thus, while the actual number of education-related stories increased, the percent of total stories remained relatively the same.

Haught (1965) used the twenty categories of education news content developed by Monahan (1960) to analyze education-related

news in six daily and twelve weekly newspapers in Oklahoma for the period August 1964 through May 1965. Haught's findings showed that athletics and athletic illustrations made up 48.4 percent of all the school content in the daily newspapers studied. It was also found that four categories comprised 57.4 percent of the remaining news space devoted to education news. These categories were miscellaneous, student activities, student activity illustrations and other illustrations. Despite the fact that athletics and assorted categories of photography and artwork comprised most of the education news, Haught concluded the following:

Newspapers in Oklahoma publish news about the public schools in sufficient quantity and variety that readers can be well informed about the operations and activities of local schools, as well as national, state and local issues affecting education. (p. 2)

Studying the content of education news related to higher education, Laakaniemi (1966) conducted a content analysis of news releases written by state university news bureaus in Michigan and compared this content with news stories appearing in five Michigan newspapers for a one-month period. Laakaniemi divided content categories into the two general classifications of immediate and delayed rewards. Content classified under immediate reward included stories on sports, human interest, controversy, announcements, non-academic activities, appointments, internal, miscellaneous, and reviews. Delayed reward content included stories on authorship, educational trends, applied learning, support, growth and controversy.

Laakaniemi found that educational news ran from 5.5 to 11.7 percent of all news, but about one-third of the news printed about

the universities in the study pertained to sports. Additionally, this research indicated that 75 percent of all stories were of the immediate reward variety. Laakaniemi concluded that such an emphasis on immediate reward stories tended "not to have values which would cause it to be remembered or relied upon in building an understanding of the values of higher education" (p. 54).

As the research described indicates, ~~the~~ the content analysis of education news was beginning to move away from only counting column inches and categories to introducing evaluative elements to the coding scheme. Hogan (1966) also used an expanded content analysis in studying how four Chicago daily newspapers covered that city's schools in 1961 and 1962.

Hogan first used thirteen general content categories consisting of auxiliary services, communications and human relations, curriculum, finance, instruction, organization, personnel, program of adult education, program of higher education, program of special education, school board, school physical plant and students. In addition to measuring the column inches of each news item falling into these categories, Hogan also classified each story by source, education level of story, school personnel identified, direction of editorial comment (positive or negative) and attitudinal characteristic of the material (controversial, non-controversial or human interest). Hogan found that the most prevalent topic in the newspaper studied was personnel followed by organization, school physical plant and school board.

Gordon (1966) took education news content studies one step further. He paired content analyses with interviews of parents of school children, non-parents and school officials in order to ascertain reader interest in education news as well as relative order of interest as compared with actual news coverage. Gordon's sample included newspapers from 70 cities across the nation.

Gordon used twelve content categories as follows: pupil health; curriculum; business management and finance; pupil discipline, behavior, attendance; methods of instruction and student learning; administration and the board of education; teachers, non-teaching personnel, parent-teachers association; the value of education; pupil achievement and progress; extra-curricular activities; school sports; and school buildings.

After coding some 3,588,000 column inches of newspaper print, Gordon found that 1.75 percent of all news he studied was education-related and 52 percent was devoted to athletics. Of the reader groups he surveyed, Gordon concluded that their interest in education news topics were very similar irrespective of age, sex, occupation or geographic location. However, Gordon also found a negative correlation between readers' relative interests and actual school news coverage.

Similar to the Gordon study, Scannell (1966) conducted interviews with community leaders and the general public in two South Dakota cities to determine their interests in education news on higher education. These interviews were also accompanied by a

content analysis of the newspapers serving these communities. Newspapers were randomly drawn from 1964 issues. Scannell's content categories included dances and queens; scholarships and awards; financial situation; athletic events; student organizations; classroom space situation; music and drama events; enrollment now and in the future; homecoming and special events; problems of what is taught; speakers on campus; religious activities; alumni mentions; commencement; legislative; political; buildings; faculty and activities; research; extension; and other.

Respondents to Scannell's questionnaire were asked to indicate their degree of interest in news stories on the content categories listed. While Scannell's findings did not include an estimate of higher education news as compared to the total newshole of the newspapers studied, he did find that the highest number of stories were on alumni, faculty and activities, extension and student organizations. His respondents indicated that they were either very interested or have interest in news stories in the following content categories: On problems of what is taught; on enrollment now and in the future; on athletic events; on classroom space situation; and on financial situation. Only the category of athletics matched reader interest with actual news coverage.

Izard (1969) used content analysis to study education issues coverage in twelve general circulation magazines and four educational journals during the years 1956, 1958, 1962 and 1966. The content categories used were composed of ten general educational issues

which were each subdivided into more specific topics. The ten general categories were aims and objectives; educational problems of national significance; method and content; teachers and teaching; students; administration; financial matters; schools in general; miscellaneous topics; and other. In addition, Izard's coding form included information level of education written about, source of information as well as word counts.

Izard found that the categories receiving the most attention were education problems of national significance (21.7 percent), miscellaneous topics (16.7 percent) and method and content (13.5 percent). Of the subtopics, school desegregation received the most attention followed by curriculum, aims and objectives and the general education of children. Izard also found that no two years studied emphasized the same educational issues and that when the general circulation magazines and educational journals were compared, Izard observed: "A major strength was that magazines apparently are discussing the issues to which educators grant importance," but "magazines overemphasized educational problems of national significance" (p. 234).

Showalter (1969) conducted a study of newspaper coverage of higher education issues as disseminated by three Washington, D. C. metropolitan dailies in a one month time period. Showalter coded articles in seven content categories: receiving the most column inches of coverage were athletics (50.8 percent), self-government (10.5 percent), teaching methods (6.3 percent), faculty-administration relations (6.9 percent) and education of Negroes (4.2 percent).

Barron (1969) studied the education news content of two daily and one weekly Oklahoma newspapers for three months during 1967. She also interviewed newspaper publishers, reporters and school superintendents associated with newspapers studied. Barron used nine categories of education content including sports, social activities, student editorials, financial news, school club activities, special events, school board news, recognition news and miscellaneous. It was found that 6 percent of the available news space was devoted to education news and, like other studies, athletics made up a majority of that news information.

Respondents to Barron's interviews indicated that school systems should make every effort in employing public relations personnel to help disseminate education news. The researcher also concluded that much of the news about education lacked depth and few efforts were made to apply state and national trends to local schools. Specifically Barron stated:

Newspapers must strive to make school news coverage complete and comprehensive. . . . Newspapers must go beyond athletic coverage to get the story about the outstanding teacher or the new methods or the unusual student project. These stories are there for the digging, but they are not scheduled like athletic events. (p. 65)

Westland (1969) conducted a content analysis of the Memphis Commercial Appeal's coverage of education in the years 1938, 1948, 1958 and 1963. Content on athletics and social activities were excluded. Other content categories included the following: workshops or seminars, public programs, curriculum, finance, faculty,

administration, student, PTA, alumni and miscellaneous. This researcher reported only raw frequencies, and concluded that private education was covered three times more than public education and that over half of the articles studied were about higher education. Administration and student activities categories received the most attention with curriculum, finance and workshops and seminars receiving the least.

Sanders (1969) also studied the content of three Tennessee newspapers--a weekly, an urban paper and a metropolitan paper--to analyze the amount and content of education news. Selecting issues from the years 1960 and 1966, Sanders reviewed news stories, news pictures, editorials and letters to the editor which referred to public school education, preschool through grade 12. Sanders used eight content categories, namely facilities, transportation, finance, leadership, curriculum, personnel, parents, and miscellaneous. His results indicated that newspaper coverage of education did increase in 1966 from 1960 and that the metropolitan newspapers devoted more space and items to education news. Sanders also found that most editorials were favorable to public education.

Continuing in the research of newspaper coverage in a single state, Cannon (1971) analyzed Mississippi daily and weekly newspapers for education content. Cannon selected newspaper issues from September through November 1970 and used the twelve content categories developed by Gordon (1966) and added two additional categories of school desegregation and guidance-counseling services.

Cannon concluded that there were no differences between how weekly and daily newspapers covered education. Athletics again received a majority of the coverage followed by news about school desegregation and miscellaneous information.

Turning to analysis of the editorial page of newspapers, Sullivan (1972) examined the editorial stance on education topics which appeared in two St. Louis newspapers from 1960 to 1969. Editorial stance was coded as favorable, unfavorable, neutral, or doubtful (undecided). Editorials were also coded for education level covered, geographic area and whether the editorial referred to private or public education. Sullivan found that 6 percent of all editorials studied dealt with education and that the most frequent editorial topic was elementary and secondary personnel (17.3 percent) followed by school-community topics (10.3 percent) and higher education financing (8.3 percent).

Sicking and Harris (1976) compared the amount of newspaper coverage given the Metropolitan Community Colleges of Kansas City, Missouri during two years when the college district submitted bond issues to the public. In 1965, one of the years studied, the bond issue passed but in 1975 it did not. The researchers wanted to ascertain if news coverage differed in these two years. Sicking and Harris did find that there was a "drastic decrease" in coverage when 1965 was compared to 1975 and that there was a 70 percent decrease in education-related human interest stories from 1965-1975.

Ryan and Owen (1976) studied how well eight large metropolitan dailies with circulations over 300,000 covered social issues. The eight newspapers chosen for study were the Chicago Daily News, the Chicago Tribune, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Cleveland Press, the Detroit News, the Milwaukee Journal, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Washington Post. Ryan and Owen content analyzed these newspapers for coverage of nine social issues--health, housing, education, crime and law, poverty and welfare, ecology, racism and sexism, mass transportation and drug abuse. Six issues of each newspaper during March 1975 were randomly selected for study. They found that education received 1.4 percent of the average newshole and only exceeded 2 percent in the Milwaukee Journal (2.1 percent) and the Washington Post (2.8 percent). This research also included an analysis of news stories on the basis of issue versus event orientation. Results indicated that the metropolitan dailies use more issue-oriented stories for the nine social issues studied, except for news stories about crime and mass transportation.

Baker (1980) examined education news content in the Des Moines Register during 1976. Content categories were based on those used in Farley's 1929 study, except athletics were excluded. Stories were also coded as to whether they were favorable, unfavorable or neutral. Baker found that extra-curricular activities received most of the news coverage (16 percent); programs received 12 percent; finances and costs, 10 percent. Ninety-two percent of the over 1,288 stories coded were judged as being neutral in tone.

In querying news editors as to the topics of news stories written during the preceding year, Hynds (1981) found that stories on the needs and programs for the disadvantaged was used by 90 percent of his respondents; 88 percent used stories on programs for the gifted; 81 percent used drug and alcohol related stories; 79 percent used stories on teacher inservice programs; 52 percent used school integration stories and 48 percent used stories on venereal disease and youth.

Berthelot (1981) analyzed the content of three news magazines during 1977-78 to determine how education was portrayed. The magazines chosen for study were Time, Newsweek and U. S. News and World Report. In addition to measuring column inches devoted to education, Berthelot examined journalistic treatment and approach, topic focus, level of education covered, geographic region, type of institution (private or public), broad themes (excellence, economics and equality) and problems cited in article (taken from the 1978 annual Gallup Poll of education).

Berthelot's research indicated that approximately 2 percent of the total editorial space was devoted to education stories. Over half of the education stories dealt with higher education, particularly private colleges and universities. Likewise, a disproportionate amount of coverage, considering concentration for school enrollment, was afforded educational institutions in the East. Regarding the findings, Berthelot concluded:

Just as coverage seemed rather narrow and far removed from the bulk of the public in terms of levels of

education, types of institutions, and geographic regions, so it seemed somewhat remote from major educational problems perceived by the public, as reflected in the 1978 Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education. . . . In the present investigation approximately half of the education items did not relate to the top 10 problems cited by the public, and the ranking of frequency of attention was sometimes quite different from the ranking of importance by the public. (p. 128)

Ross (1983) examined issues of the Los Angeles Times from 1960 through 1975 for treatment of education content. Fifteen issues a year were selected randomly for study. A total of 2,496 articles were identified for coding in seven major content categories as follows: social issues; method and content; administration; student activity; finance; development; and miscellaneous. The seven categories were also divided into 35 categories.

Ross found that the average amount of education newshole was 3.5 percent. The category of administration received the most amount of coverage with 26.2 percent of the total number of column inches devoted to this topic. The student activity category (which included athletics and student dissent) received 26.1 percent of the news space. The third most frequent category was miscellaneous with 15.7 percent. According to the researcher, "Areas which received almost negligible coverage either in inches or number of articles were teacher education, crime on campus, drugs on campus, media and technology, and testing results" (p. 351). Ross also found that only 12 percent of the articles were written by designated education reporters.

Dominick (1984) conducted one of the few content analyses of television news coverage. A total of 600 newscasts from each of three major networks (ABC, NBC and CBS) were randomly drawn from the time period of January 1973 through December 1982. Education stories were coded for general content in 15 categories, duration in minutes, prominence of story in newscast, and whether story was covered by an out-of-studio correspondent. Dominick found that approximately 42 percent of all education stories occurred in the third quarter of the newscast and rarely were education stories the lead story in a newscast. The categories which received the most time in the network newscasts were segregation, discrimination and busing receiving 34 percent of the total news time. In second place was the crime, demonstration and violence on campus category with 9 percent of news time. High school and college sports received 8 percent of the news time.

Dominick's results also showed that 53 percent of the stories were handled by out-of-studio correspondents indicating that the networks had no single specialist to cover the education beat as they do for science and business. Dominick concluded, "Perhaps the most obvious conclusion from these data was that relatively little attention was paid to education by the three networks in their evening newscasts" (p. 88).

Criscuolo (1985) studied the education coverage of six newspapers during a two-week time period in October 1983. The newspapers selected for study were the Washington Post, the New York

Times, the Hartford (Conn.) Courant, the New Haven (Conn.) Register, the Ansonia (Conn.) Evening Sentinel and the Milford (Conn.) Citizen. All education articles appearing during the time period studied were examined for education level discussed, nature of issues discussed (state, local, regional, national or international) and whether story was positive, negative or neutral.

Criscuolo found that the average number of education related articles appearing in the newspapers studied was 3.5. Seventeen percent of these articles dealt with elementary education, 25 percent with secondary schools and 25 percent with universities and colleges. Eighty-seven percent of the education articles were either positive or neutral in tone and 12 percent were negative.

Critique of Content Analysis Research

In 1968 Chaffee and Ward conducted an exhaustive review of the research which had been conducted to date on school-community relations, including news media relations. These authors observed that the research reviewed was often "disappointing" because of methodological and theoretical weaknesses. These weaknesses are summarized as follows:

1. Many of the studies involve comparisons of only a few school districts, or are simply one-community case studies. Since the ostensible purpose of most of these studies is simple description of current practices or conditions, they almost necessarily lack generality. (p. 3)
2. Most generally, N=1 too often: one city (or state), one election, one medium of communication. (p. 3)

3. In all, the studies tend not to culminate . . .
most of the studies do not relate to one another,
so that synthesis is difficult. (p. 4)

Chaffee and Ward's criticisms can be applied readily to the content analysis research reviewed in the previous section. First considering the problem of one-community or one-state-studies, it is noteworthy that of the twenty studies reviewed, over half studied newspapers in one location, community or state (Monahan, Laakaniemi, Hogan, Scannell, Showalter, Barron, Sanders, Sicking and Harris, Baker, Cannon and Westland). The time period used for study is a second problem. In eleven of the content analyses reviewed, the time period chosen was one year or less. The following summarizes time periods used for these studies:

1. Monahan--3 months
2. Dapper and Carter--1 month
3. Haught--10 months
4. Laakaniemi--1 month
5. Scannell--12 months
6. Showalter--1 month
7. Barron--3 months
8. Cannon--3 months
9. Ryan and Owen--1 month
10. Baker--12 months
11. Criscuolo--2 weeks

The dual problems of studying only one location over a short time period denote inherent weaknesses in the research results. Trends

in data cannot be determined nor can comparative data be collected. These factors might provide needed insights into how different newspapers cover education issues in differing times and places.

The lack of cumulation cited by Chaffee and Ward is also evident in the studies reviewed. Only Haught, Cannon and Baker used content categories previously developed by other researchers. Many of the studies, notably Dapper and Carter, Laakaniemi, Gordon, Izard, Westland, Sanders, and Criscuolo did not explain how they derived their content categories nor were the categories defined or rationale for their use sufficiently explained. This lack of clear explanation make replication of the studies difficult if not impossible, thus compounding the lack of cumulation problem cited previously.

A methodological problem also found in many of the content analyses was the lack of coder reliability tests, often associated with the fact that the researcher did his or her own data collection and did not use independent coders. Reliability coefficients were not reported in twelve of the twenty content analyses reviewed (Dapper & Carter, Laakaniemi, Hogan, Gordon, Izard, Showalter, Barron, Westland, Sanders, Cannon, Berthelot and Criscuolo).

The seriousness of this problem is underscored by observations made in leading research textbooks on content analysis.

If research is to satisfy the requirement of objectivity, measures and procedures must be reliable, i.e., repeated measures with the same instrument on a given sample of data should yield similar results. (Holsti [1969], p. 135)

The ultimate aim of testing reliability is to establish whether data obtained in the course of research can provide a trustworthy basis for drawing inferences, making recommendations, supporting decisions, or accepting something as fact. In this ultimate aim, reliability is an attribute of all relevant distinctions within the data and is called data reliability. (Krippendorff [1980], p. 146)

Lacking a test of data reliability, many of the content analyses reviewed also lack any measure of objectivity, making their results questionable at the very least.

Summary

This review of the literature indicates that the factors affecting the collection and reporting of education news are complex and varied. Media decision makers such as editors, publishers and education beat reporters all affect the education news process. News media relations with educational institutions and sources of information also affect what education news will be disseminated.

Content analyses of education news conducted over the past several decades indicate that nothing much has changed in the amount of education news found in the average newspaper. While some education topics have received varying degrees of attention depending on news events of the day, newspapers in various locations and of various sizes rarely devote more than 4 percent of their newshole to education stories. Athletics continues to be a predominant content category found in education news covered.

Regardless of the lack of change in reporting education news, the number of reporters assigned to education has increased.

Individuals inside and outside the news media still look to newspapers as a primary source of news about the schools and about education. For this reason, additional research must be undertaken to investigate how newspapers with reputations for effective coverage of education news accomplish this feat given the array of competing factors that appear to limit such coverage. This study focuses on a systematic analysis of how such newspapers cover education news.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Statement of the Problem, Related Questions, Hypotheses

A content analysis was designed to determine if newspapers that were recognized for outstanding education coverage by the Education Writers Association differed in the amount and kind of news coverage granted education when compared to similar newspapers that had not been so recognized. The content analysis was followed up with a survey of the newspaper editors and education reporters associated with the selected newspapers to gain further insights into the results.

The study was designed to answer the following seven questions with related hypotheses.

Question 1

Do award-winning newspapers cover educational issues with greater depth and variety signified by the number of education stories, the length of these stories, the treatment of these stories relative to presence of graphics, size of headlines and placement on the page?

Hypothesis

1.1. Award-winning newspapers will publish education news stories of significantly more average column inches than non-award-winning newspapers.

1.2. Award-winning newspapers will use larger graphics to accompany education news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.

1.3. Award-winning newspapers will place education news stories in the upper two quadrants of the newspaper page significantly more often than non-award-winning newspapers.

1.4. Award-winning newspapers will utilize significantly more attention-getting headlines signified by multi-column width for education-related news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.

1.5. Award-winning newspapers will cover more educational levels than non-award-winning newspapers.

Question 2

Do award-winning newspapers grant more coverage of issues designated by the Education Writers Association as important or noteworthy than non-award-winning newspapers? Do award-winning newspapers cover a wider range of education news topics?

Hypothesis

2.1. Award-winning newspapers will publish more education stories in nine categories of traditional education news content than non-award-winning newspapers.

2.2. Award-winning newspapers will grant a significantly greater amount of education coverage to issues designated by the Education Writers Association as important than non-award-winning newspapers.

Question 3

Do award-winning newspapers use more bylined education-related stories than non-award-winning newspapers?

Hypothesis

3.1. Award-winning newspapers will use more locally bylined education-related stories than non-award-winning newspapers.

3.2. Award-winning newspapers will use more bylined education-related stories disseminated by the wire services than non-award-winning newspapers.

Question 4

Are there differences in the locus of education news stories for award-winning newspapers and non-award-winning newspapers?

Hypothesis

4.1. Award-winning newspapers will have significantly more local education news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.

4.2. Award-winning newspapers will have a significantly larger number of regional education news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.

Question 5

How does the number of column inches devoted to education coverage when compared to the total newshole of an individual newspaper issue differ between award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers?

Hypothesis

5. Award-winning newspapers will have a significantly larger ratio of education-related news when compared to the total newshole than non-award-winning newspapers.

Question 6

Do award-winning newspapers use more interpretative reporting than non-award-winning newspapers in covering education issues?

Hypothesis

6. Award-winning newspapers will use interpretative reporting significantly more often than will non-award-winning newspapers.

Question 7

Do award-winning newspapers use more "bad news" in covering education than non-award-winning newspapers? Do these newspapers rely more heavily on sensational, negative education news?

Hypothesis

7. Award-winning newspapers will use more bad news in covering education-related issues than non-award-winning newspapers.

Procedures

Krippendorff (1980) has defined content analysis as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (p. 21). He lists the steps in content analysis as (1) data making--unitization, sampling and recording;

(2) data reduction; (3) inference; and (4) analysis (p. 52). Each of these steps will be discussed below.

Unitization involves establishing separate units of analysis to be studied. Unitization for this study involved a two-step process. First, newspapers were selected for study; next, newspaper articles dealing with education were identified for analysis.

As a selection criterion, newspapers which received an award for outstanding news writing in education from the Education Writers Association (EWA) were identified. These awards for outstanding education reporting have been given annually by the EWA. This association was organized in 1947 by a group of newspaper reporters for the purpose of improving education reporting. Membership in EWA is open to those persons who spend "a substantial portion of their time reporting about or interpreting education" (Education Writers Association, 1984). Since the 1960's, the association has conducted their National Awards for Education Reporting. The competition is open to all news reporters, print and broadcast. Entries are judged "according to their contribution to the better understanding of education" (Education Writers Association, 1984).

Journalism prizes have come under criticism recently because many of these prizes are sponsored by commercial groups with vested interests. As Zinman (1970) observed, "The names of the award-giving groups read like a national lobbyists convention" (p. 37). Zinman suggested that news reporters divest themselves of prizes from commercial groups and rely on journalism awards given by their

peers. The EWA awards represent just such a peer group and are not related to any commercial entity.

Kosicki, Dunwoody and Beam (1985) studied individual and organizational predictors of journalistic prize-seeking. They found that regardless of whether a journalist or a journalistic organization believed such prizes to be either "good" or "bad," seeking prizes was just as likely. "Journalists who valued prizes were just as likely to seek them (or not) as were reporters who considered prizes to be wastes of time" (p. 17). These authors further found that "a reporter could profess a real wariness of prizes as evaluative mechanisms for the occupation but might participate wholeheartedly in the prize seeking process if she felt prizes had some utilitarian value for her personally" (p. 17). Thus, prizes are considered by most journalists as part of the "normative fabric of the occupation," and as such, are reasonably useful in separating effective or outstanding journalism organizations from the not so effective or outstanding.

To select award-winning newspapers, lists of winners of the annual Education Writers Association (formerly the National Council for the Advancement of Education Writing) awards were examined. Names of newspapers that had received a first or second prize for education coverage, from 1969 through 1984, were tallied. Many newspapers won awards for only one year; however, fifteen newspapers received awards for three or more years. The researcher then sought first to select the most consistent award-winners and secondly, to

select award-winners in as varied locales as possible, given the limit of five newspapers to be studied.

Of the fifteen newspapers identified by tally, five had received awards for five or more years. Although the New York Times and the Washington Post were both in this group, they were not selected for study because of their national constituencies and comparably vaster resources. The researcher sought to ascertain how newspapers in average American cities cover education issues, not how nationally known, "flagship" newspapers handle this area. The remaining three of this group, the Louisville Courier Journal, the Detroit Free Press and the St. Petersburg Times, were selected for study.

To select the last two newspapers, the researcher examined newspapers winning awards for four years. Of the original fifteen, five newspapers met this criterion. Since the previous three selections were from major metropolitan areas, the researcher chose two newspapers representing different types of constituencies. Thus, the Clarion Ledger was chosen for its smaller circulation and southern location and the Journal Times for its small size and rural, Midwestern location.

These five award-winning newspapers selected for study, their locations, circulation and number of award-winning years follow. The non-award-winning newspapers which were matched with these five newspapers are also listed below. The non-award-winning matches were selected on the basis of their location, circulation size and

other similarities to the paired award-winning newspapers, as well as their availability. (Circulation figures are from the 1985 IMS/Ayer Directory of Publications.)

1. Clarion Ledger, Jackson, Mississippi, 68,947, winner for four years

MATCH: News-Free Press, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 55,010

2. Journal Times, Racine, Wisconsin, 35,796, winner for four years

MATCH: Leader-Telegram, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 36,001

3. Detroit Free Press, Detroit, Michigan, 647,130, winner for six years

MATCH: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 479,075

4. Louisville Courier Journal, Louisville, Kentucky, 327,875, winner for five years

MATCH: Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio, 482,564

5. St. Petersburg Times, St. Petersburg, Florida, 251,880, winner for five years

MATCH: Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta, Georgia, 227,755

It should be noted that the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Plain Dealer and the Atlanta Constitution have each won one EWA award, but were chosen for study for locale, circulation size and the fact that their award-winning matches had received consistently more awards over time.

In determining the years to be selected for study, the researcher first identified the three most current award-winning years

for the EWA newspapers and the two most recent non-award-winning years. These five years were selected for study with the newspapers' respective matches being studied for the same five years. The following years were selected for study for each pair of newspapers, the asterisk indicating award-winning years:

1. Journal Times/Leader-Telegram--1977*, 1978*, 1981, 1982, 1983*
2. Clarion Ledger/News-Free Press--1980, 1981*, 1982*, 1983, 1984*
3. Detroit Free Press/Post-Dispatch--1980*, 1981*, 1982, 1983, 1984*
4. Louisville Courier Journal/Plain Dealer--1975*, 1981, 1982*, 1983, 1984*
5. St. Petersburg Times/Atlanta Constitution--1978*, 1981*, 1982, 1983*, 1984

In determining sample size, Stempel's (1952) research on newspaper sample size was considered. After drawing random sample sizes of 6, 12, 18, 24, and 48 from a daily newspaper, Stempel measured the column inches of pictures. He concluded:

Our results indicate that for the single category all five of the sample sizes tested do an adequate job and that increasing the sample size beyond 12 does not produce marked differences in the results. (p. 333)

Because the research reported here is of a more complex type than Stempel's, the sample chosen for study was somewhat larger. For each year chosen for study, a random sample of 36 issues was selected. The issues were stratified by month so that three issues

were chosen for each of the twelve months in a particular year. The total number of newspaper issues studied was 1,810.

The next step in the content analysis research process was the development of the content categories to be studied. Because the focus of this proposed research was award-winning newspapers as selected by EWA, initial content categories were derived from the association's publication titled Covering the Education Beat (1980). This publication identified and discussed the major educational issues and legislation of which education reporters should be aware. Using information provided in the publication on these topics, twelve categories were defined. These twelve categories are as follows:

1. Back to Basic Movement
2. Compensatory Education
3. Student Competency Testing
4. Declining Enrollment
5. Desegregation
6. School Financing
7. Education for Handicapped
8. Parent Activism
9. Teacher Negotiation/Bargaining
10. Violence and Vandalism
11. Prayer Recitation and Bible-Reading
12. Vocational Education

After the EWA-related content categories were developed, the researcher then reviewed the content categories used in a total of

20 content analyses of education coverage in the news media, which have been completed from 1950 to the present. A review of this previous research yielded an additional nine content categories:

1. Pranks, Fads, Lifestyle
2. Textbook Controversy and Censorship
3. Student Activities
4. Administration/Management
5. Teachers
6. Methods of Instruction and Learning
7. School Buildings and Physical Plant
8. Health and Safety
9. Sex Education

See Appendix A for a copy of the coding instrument. It should be noted that the content area of athletics and sports is not analyzed in this study. The rationale is based on the arguments of Dapper and Carter (1962) who found that school and collegiate sports "are covered with precision, diligence, authority and completeness" (p. 84) unlike other topics related to education. Editorials, letters to the editor and advertisements are not a part of this content analysis because this newspaper content is not traditionally considered part of the newshole, and therefore, under direct editorial control. Only news stories directly related to education were studied.

In defining the content categories used for study, Holsti's (1969) observation that exhaustive definition is the goal, if not, the actual reality was noted. He said

Most content categories, however, do not lend themselves easily to exhaustive definition, especially if units larger than words or symbols are used. . . . At best we would try to define each of these concepts as precisely as possible by characterizing its major properties; these would serve as the rules by which coders would judge whether content units fall within its boundaries. The better the category definition, the more likely it is to conform to the requirement of exhaustiveness, but even the most carefully designed study is likely to fall short of completely satisfying this requirement. (p. 99)

In addition to the content categories studied, the coding instrument contained two other sections--one on measurement and one on the affective qualities of the news stories analyzed. Coding categories in both sections were suggested by other research conducted on the content of news stories. The researcher sought to find out not only what content categories were present, but how much space was afforded these categories, and how were these categories reported, with what depth and with what orientation.

The measurement section compiled data on the number of column inches of stories, newshole, pictures and illustrations; on headline size, as measured by the number of columns (a standard column being two inches in width) a particular headline goes across; on byline; on level of education covered; and on geographical area related to the story. Appendix A gives a complete description of each category in the measurement section of the coding form.

The affective qualities section analyzed content first on its degree of good news-bad news using the news direction scale developed by Haskins, Miller and Quarles (1984). This scale was far superior to other commonly used scales present in many of the studies reviewed.

Content was also analyzed, in this section of the coding form, for elements of interpretative reporting developed by De Mott (1971). De Mott sought to discern the difference in content between stories identified as straight news stories and those that were labeled interpretative news stories. De Mott found that the presence of six elements of information, namely, opinions expressed by the reporter, statements of ignorance by the reporter, exposition, background information, description and mention of events elsewhere were useful in determining how interpretative a particular news story was or was not. Using De Mott's coding procedures, six areas of interpretative content were used to ascertain if the education stories coded contained any elements of interpretative reporting. No attempt was made to classify the news stories coded as straight news, interpretative news, round-up story, etc.

In a test of De Mott's classification scheme, Rhoades (1973) used these categories of interpretative news stories to construct a group of news stories with all possible combinations of interpretative news characteristics. He asked a group of news and wire service editors to rank order the stories from those that most explained the meaning of the news event to those that least explained the news event. The top ranked stories contained all four of de Mott's categories--background, reporter's opinion on cause-effect, reporter's speculation about the future and commentary by others. Stories that were ranked lowest contained none of these characteristics. Rhoades concluded that "journalists attempting to better explain the meaning of the news would concentrate on

providing the reader or viewer with more knowledge about the background of the event and pay more attention to the comments of those associated with the news event" (p. 73).

The use of interpretative news writing elements might be particularly applicable to education news, which often contains complex information. As Berry (1976) pointed out:

The strongest reason, of course, for interpretative reporting is its essentiality. The simple facts of most stories are like the framework of the building; they are merely the basis upon which to construct other necessary parts. Hence if the writer is to present the full story, he must interpret. (p. 57)

The coding instrument was pretested to determine whether the content categories were reasonably all-inclusive of education topic areas. After pretesting, coder's instructions were prepared and are contained in Appendix B.

All coding was completed by independent coders who were trained in the use of the coding instrument. Intercoder reliability tests were conducted by first selecting a random sample of the original content analysis sample of newspaper issues for recoding. Holsti's (1969) formula for obtaining reliability coefficients was used. Because the interval and ordinal level data represented estimates on the part of the coders, these data were converted into nominal form for reliability tests. Results of the reliability tests are contained in the following chapter.

Maintaining an acceptable level of intercoder reliability, according to Krippendorff, is a problem faced by every content analyst. He suggested the following standard:

. . . We adopted the policy of reporting on variables only if their reliability was above .8 and admitted variables with reliability between .67 and .8 only for drawing highly tentative and cautious conclusions. These standards have been continued in work on cultural indicators and might serve as a guideline elsewhere. (1980, p. 147)

This research adhered to these guidelines for establishing an acceptable level of intercoder reliability.

The final steps of the content analysis research process-- that is, data reduction, inference and analysis were completed using computer analysis and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Data are stored in the Hewlett Packard 3000 computer located at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Procedures for Obtaining Newspaper Microfilm

This research relied primarily on the interlibrary loan network to obtain microfilmed copies of the newspapers studied. In two cases, the Chattanooga News-Free Press and the Atlanta Constitution were readily available at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Lupton Library. Likewise the Louisville Courier Journal was available at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville library. In one instance the lending policy of the host library was very generous, allowing an entire year of microfilm of the Clarion Ledger to be loaned at once for a three-week period. However, this lending policy was the exception as the majority of libraries, if they agreed to lend microfilm, would only lend three to six reels in one order. In the case of the St. Petersburg Times, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Detroit Free Press and the Cleveland

Plain Dealer, the researcher took a team of eight coders to the libraries housing the needed microfilm in order to collect the data because these newspapers were not readily available or could not be loaned at all. This effort was further complicated by the fact that the microfilm collections were at scattered libraries. Thus, the St. Petersburg Times was coded at the University of Florida library; the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Detroit Free Press were coded at the University of Kentucky library. The entire effort to code 1,810 newspapers took seven months. A total of eighteen coders, who were all communication majors at The University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, were employed during the project duration. Coders spent an average of 45 minutes to code a particular newspaper resulting in 1470 hours of work. Expenses included an average fee of \$4.00 per newspaper coded (including recoded newspapers) for a total of \$7840. For out-of-town coding trips, coders were paid for lodging, travel and meals. In addition, coders were paid \$4.00 an hour for training.

Survey Research Process

The final phase of the research involved a telephone interview with the person at each newspaper studied who was most responsible for education coverage at that newspaper. In most cases, names of interviewees were obtained from the listing of education editors contained in the Working Press of the Nation (1984). Newspapers without education editors were contacted and the name of the person most responsible for education coverage was ascertained. The purpose of the interviews was to gather anecdotal information

on how experienced personnel at the newspapers studied viewed the restraints, challenges, problems and rewards in gathering and reporting education news. Interview information also related the findings of the data analysis on the content of education news to the actual practices of the newspapers studied. The interview questions are contained in Appendix C.

Questions asked during the interviews were primarily based on the hypotheses guiding this research. Question content was also based on surveys of education reporters and editors previously conducted by Duncan (1968), Jacobson (1973) and Hynds (1981 (see pages 39-40 of Review of Literature). The demographic questions were based on similar questions asked by Duncan and Hynds. Questions 13 through 15 were based on similar queries from the Jacobson survey. Results of the interviews are found in Part II of Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Newspapers have been cited repeatedly as a major source of information for news related to education. Yet, American newspapers have not appeared to increase their coverage of education either in quantity or quality (refer to Gerbner (1963), Ryan and Owen (1976), Ross (1983). "Somewhere in the collective unconscious of American journalism is the recognition that education ought to be seriously covered. In fact, it isn't" (Schoonmaker, 1985, p. 37). To investigate how newspapers do cover education issues, a content analysis was undertaken of five newspapers which have been recognized for outstanding education news coverage. These newspapers were paired with similar newspapers which had not won consistently awards for education news coverage and had not won awards in the years selected for study. The resulting analysis sought to describe and compare the education news of both sets of newspapers for a five-year period.

Initial data collection included all education news stories appearing in randomly selected issues over a five-year period. Two of the five years were deleted from the analysis because these years did not represent award-winning years for the EWA-designated newspapers. Using only the award-winning years for comparisons served to further delineate any education news content differences which

existed in those years recognized for outstanding news coverage. Thus, the following analysis discusses results derived from data collected in three award-winning years for each of the award-winning newspapers and their respective, non-award-winning matches.

As noted above, the primary unit of analysis was education news stories. A total of 3,116 news stories were coded using the coding instrument in Appendix A. Each story was measured for a number of content categories. Chi-square was computed for all non-parametric comparisons using nominal level data. T-tests were computed for news length, the size of accompanying graphics, news morbidity and the difference between proportions of the newshole devoted to education news stories. The .05 level of significance was established for all statistical analyses.

All coding was completed by coders trained in the use of the classification scheme. Each coder participated in a two-hour training session in which information and instructions were provided on how each of the three sections of the coding instrument was to be completed. In addition, coders were trained in the use of the News Direction Scale (as developed by Haskins, 1984) and in the identification of interpretative reporting content as developed by De Mott (1971). (See Appendix B for Instructions to Coders.) A total of 18 coders was employed in the data collection process.

To analyze the degree of intercoder reliability, a random sample of issues of each newspaper studied for recoding by separate coders was selected. After instances of photographs without news

stories were eliminated and issues without news stories were deleted, 255 news stories were then analyzed for intercoder reliability. The nominal level data on the coding forms was analyzed using Holsti's (1969) coefficient of reliability. The result of this analysis indicated a .91 coefficient. Because the interval level data in the coding instrument represented estimated values of measures (refer to Appendix B, Instructions to Coders), commonly used reliability tests for this level data were deemed inappropriate. Thus, to obtain a coefficient of intercoder reliability for the interval level data, these data were converted into nominal form by first determining whether or not recoders were within a 10 percent range of agreement with the coders on interval level coding decisions. News direction values were also converted into nominal form by noting intercoder agreement when values were within one point of difference on the same direction on the scale (positive or negative). A reliability coefficient was then calculated using the Holsti formula. A .799 coefficient of reliability was obtained. The two coefficients considered together meet sufficient reliability standards.

Analysis of the newspapers centers on comparing the differences between award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers. Data for each type of newspaper are grouped by award-winning and non-award-winning aggregates. Data analysis efforts sought to investigate whether or not evidence could be found to support the following hypotheses. For ease of presentation, the hypotheses are listed in the order each is discussed in the pages to follow.

- 1.1 Award-winning newspapers will publish education news stories of significantly more average column inches than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 1.2 Award-winning newspapers will use larger graphics to accompany education news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.
5. Award-winning newspapers will have a significantly larger proportion of education related news stories compared to the total newshole than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 3.1 Award-winning newspapers will use more locally bylined education-related stories than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 3.2 Award-winning newspapers will use more bylined education-related stories disseminated by the wire services than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 1.3 Award-winning newspapers will place education news stories in the upper two quadrants of the newspaper page significantly more often than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 1.4 Award-winning newspapers will use significantly more attention-getting headlines signified by multi-column width for education-related news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 1.5 Award-winning newspapers will cover more educational levels than non-award-winning newspapers.

- 4.1 Award-winning newspapers will have significantly more local education news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 4.2 Award-winning newspapers will have significantly larger number of regional education news stories than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 2.1 Award-winning newspapers will publish more education stories in nine categories of traditional education news content than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 2.2 Award-winning newspapers will grant a significantly greater amount of education coverage to issues designated by the Education Writers Association as important than non-award-winning newspapers.
- 6. Award-winning newspapers will use interpretative reporting significantly more often than will non-award-winning newspapers.
- 7. Award-winning newspapers will use more bad news in covering education-related issues than non-award-winning newspapers.

Education Coverage--Amount, Treatment and Content

Hypotheses 1.1 through 1.5 deal with the amount, variety and treatment of education news in award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers.

Table 1 shows that the award-winning newspapers ran fewer stories and devoted less space to education news, but had a slightly

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF MEAN SIZE OF EDUCATION STORIES, GRAPHICS AND PERCENT OF NEWSHOLE DEVOTED
TO EDUCATION NEWS IN TEN NEWSPAPERS OVER THREE YEARS

	AWARD-WINNERS	NON- AWARD-WINNERS	t	p
Total Education News Stories	1411	1705		
Estimated Mean Size of Each Issue's Newshole in Column Inches	2554	2737		
Mean Size of Stories in Column Inches	9.78	9.02	-2.46	.014*
Mean Size of Graphics in Column Inches	11.56	11.50	.06	.951
Percent of Newshole Devoted to Education News	.059	.072	1.01	.314

*Significant at $p < .05$.

AWARD-WINNERS

Clarion Ledger
Detroit Free Press
Journal Times
Louisville Courier Journal
St. Petersburg Times

NON-AWARD-WINNERS

Atlanta Constitution
Chattanooga News-Free Press
Cleveland Plain Dealer
Leader-Telegram
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

longer average story length. Table 1 depicts the results of the t-tests on the column inch length of news stories, accompanying graphics and the average proportion of newshole devoted to education news. Results reported in Table 1 indicate that, although differences were small, Hypothesis 1.1 is supported. The mean length of education news stories was slightly longer for the award-winning newspapers, even though a smaller number of stories was published.

Hypothesis 1.2 is not supported, as results in Table 1 indicate. There appears to be no significant relationship between being an award-winning or non-award-winning newspaper and the use of larger average-size graphics.

In examining whether award-winners devote a significantly greater percent of the available newshole to education news, the results in Table 1 do not support Hypothesis 5. Both award-winners and non-award-winners devoted an average of less than 1 percent of their newshole to education news stories. There appeared to be no significant differences in amount of education news when compared to total newshole.

Table 2 shows the frequency for bylines, wire service copy, placement of news stories in the upper quadrants of the page and use of multi-column headlines. Award-winning newspapers used both local bylines and wire service bylines more but did not appear to grant education news stories more reader attention through use of page placement of multi-column headlines.

Hypotheses 3.1 and 3.2 deal with the use of bylined education news stories. Table 2 displays the results of the chi-square analysis

TABLE 2

COMPARISONS OF BYLINE AND WIRE SERVICE USE/PAGE PLACEMENT AND
MULTI-COLUMN HEADLINES IN TEN AWARD-WINNING AND
NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

	AWARD-WINNERS		NON-AWARD-WINNERS		χ^2
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	
Local Byline	691	.49	558	.33	85.6*
Wire Service Byline	432	.31	411	.24	16.59*
Upper Quadrants	1058	.75	1336	.79	.79
Multi-Column Headlines (6-12 Columns)	186	.13	156	.09	.06

N = 1411 (AW) and 1705 (NAW) news stories

*Significant differences at $p < .05$.

df = 1 for all comparisons.

between use of bylines in education news stories published by the award-winners and non-award-winners. As the results indicate, both hypotheses were supported. Award-winning newspapers use significantly more locally bylined news stories and more education news with wire service bylines.

Table 2 shows that the placement of news stories in the upper quadrant of the newspaper page was not different for award-winning newspapers ($\chi^2 = .69$, N. S.). Upper quadrant stories include those placed above center, right top or left top. Thus, Hypothesis 1.3 is not supported. Similarly, the use of multi-column headlines was not statistically different for the two types of newspapers, although award-winning newspapers had a higher frequency of use. Hypothesis 1.4 is not supported by the data.

The data displayed in Table 3 show the level of education covered in each news story and the geographic location. These levels included Higher Education, Secondary, Middle, Elementary, Pre-School and Adult. As the data indicate, two of the six levels showed significantly different frequencies but not in the predicted direction. Non-award-winning newspapers had a greater percent of use for two levels--Secondary and Middle. Moreover, using a significance level of .01 would yield no differences between the newspaper types. Hypothesis 1.5 is not supported in light of these findings.

Table 3 shows the results of frequency comparisons for education news stories dealing with five types of geographic locations--Local, State, Regional, National and Foreign. Hypotheses 4.1 and 4.2

TABLE 3

COMPARISONS OF EDUCATION LEVEL AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION COVERED
BY NEWS STORIES IN TEN AWARD-WINNING AND
NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

Education Level	AWARD-WINNERS		NON-AWARD-WINNERS		χ^2
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	
Higher Education ^a	494	.35	583	.34	.20
Secondary	755	.54	974	.57	4.09*
Middle	582	.41	777	.46	5.87*
Elementary	587	.42	762	.45	3.04
Pre-School	38	.03	53	.03	.42
Adult	37	.03	37	.02	.51
TOTAL	2493 ^b		3186 ^b		
Locus	-----				
Local	655	.46	976	.57	36.6*
State	425	.30	360	.21	33.6*
Regional	37	.03	53	.03	.74
National	242	.17	246	.14	4.33*
Foreign	19	.01	17	.01	1.03
Other	27	.02	41	.02	.96
TOTAL	1405	.99 (rounded)	1693	.98 (rounded)	

*Significant difference at $p < .05$.

^adf = 1 for all comparisons.

N = 1411 (AW) and 1705 (NAW) news stories.

^bFrequency is larger than number of total stories because single story could contain multiple education levels.

postulate that award-winning newspapers cover local and regional education to a significantly greater degree than non-award-winning newspapers. The results do not support an acceptance for either of these hypotheses. As Table 3 indicates, non-award-winning newspapers cover local education to a greater degree in this study, but award-winning newspapers had a significantly higher percent of state and national news than non-award-winning newspapers. Again, using the more conservative .01 significance level, the difference in frequency of national news would not be significant.

Tables 4 and 5 report the results of the use of specific content categories of education news. The coding instrument contained 21 content categories--nine categories suggested by previous studies (as shown in Table 4) and twelve categories suggested by the publications of the Education Writers Association (as shown in Table 5). Although data were collected on extensiveness of use of each category within a given news story, the data on these tables have been aggregated.

The analysis of the use of nine categories of traditional education news content indicate that overall only one category was used to a significantly greater degree by either set of newspapers. This category was Administration, and the chi-square analysis indicated that award-winning newspapers had significantly greater use of this category. The results do not warrant support for Hypothesis 2.1.

TABLE 4

USE OF "TRADITIONAL" CATEGORIES OF EDUCATION NEWS CONTENT IN TEN AWARD-WINNING
AND NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

	AWARD-WINNERS		NON-AWARD-WINNERS		χ^2
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	
Pranks, Fads, and Lifestyle ^a	47	.03	40	.02	3.06
Textbook Controversy	16	.01	11	.01	2.42
Student Activities	270	.19	368	.21	2.87
Administration	532	.36	557	.32	8.67*
Teachers	164	.11	221	.12	1.19
Methods of Instruction	202	.13	217	.12	1.61
School Buildings	88	.06	136	.08	3.28
Health and Safety	63	.04	64	.04	.83
Sex Education	5	.00	5	.00	.00
TOTAL	1387		1619		

N = 1411 (AW) and 1705 (NAW) news stories.

*Significant differences at $p < .05$.

^adf = 1 for all comparisons.

NOTE: Frequency is not equal to total number of news stories because single story could contain varying content categories (from none to all).

TABLE 5

USE OF EWA CATEGORIES OF EDUCATION NEWS CONTENT IN TEN AWARD-WINNING
AND NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

	AWARD-WINNERS		NON-AWARD-WINNERS		χ^2
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	
Back to Basics ^a	14	.01	15	.01	.84
Compensatory Education	15	.01	5	.00	7.32*
Competency Testing	63	.04	50	.03	5.34*
Desegregation	159	.11	195	.11	.00
School Financing	336	.23	401	.23	.02
Education Handicapped	28	.02	28	.02	.67
Parent Activism	64	.04	93	.05	1.33
Teacher Negotiations	117	.08	119	.07	1.83
Violence and Vandalism	104	.07	99	.07	3.07
Enrollment	138	.10	181	.10	.51
Prayer and Bible Reading	22	.02	28	.02	.00
Vocational Education	19	.01	37	.02	2.65
TOTAL	1079		1251		

N = 1411 (AW) and 1705 (NAW) news stories.

*Significant differences at $p < .05$.

df = 1 for all comparisons.

NOTE: Frequency is not equal to total number of news stories because single story could contain varying content categories (from none to all).

When examining the results in Table 5, it can be seen that only two of the 12 EWA content categories showed significantly different use when the award winners and non-award-winners are compared. These significant categories include Compensatory Education and Competency Testing. (The latter category would not be significant at the .01 level, however.) The award-winning newspapers had significant differences in these categories. Although inconclusive, the data analysis does not indicate support for Hypothesis 2.2.

Table 6 shows the data analyses of twelve content categories centering on interpretative reporting elements used by the two sets of newspapers. Hypothesis 6 centers on the question of whether award-winning newspapers have greater use of interpretative reporting examined in this study. Seven of the twelve categories showed a significant difference in use between the award-winning newspapers and the non-award-winners. Of these, six were in the predicted direction. These six categories are Background, Description, Reporter's Reaction, Reporter's Judgment, Solution to Problems, and Reporter's Prediction. Chi-square analysis showed that award-winning newspapers had significantly more frequent use in each of the six categories. Non-award-winning newspapers used the Exposition category to a greater degree. If the .01 level of significance is used requiring a χ^2 of 6.6, four of the six categories would not be significantly different for the two newspaper types. Although evidence exists for support of Hypothesis 6, it is inconclusive. Award-winning newspapers do appear to use some of the interpretative

TABLE 6

COMPARATIVE USE OF INTERPRETATIVE REPORTING ELEMENTS IN TEN AWARD-WINNING
AND NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

	AWARD-WINNERS		NON-AWARD-WINNERS		χ^2
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	
Background ^a	1074	.76	1215	.71	9.13*
Exposition	451	.32	665	.39	16.43*
Mention of Events	617	.43	711	.41	1.36
Statement of Ignorance	26	.02	19	.01	3.29
Description	515	.36	538	.32	8.35*
Reporter's Opinion	144	.10	156	.09	.95
Reporter's Reaction	38	.03	29	.02	3.95*
Reporter's Prediction	268	.19	277	.16	3.96*
Reporter's Judgment	47	.03	34	.02	5.10*
Solution to Problems	7	.00	2	.00	4.07*
Evaluation of Sources	19	.01	14	.01	1.98
Reporter's Advice	7	.00	8	.00	.00
TOTAL	3148		3658		

N = 1411 (AW) and 1705 (NAW) news stories.

*Significant differences at $p < .05$.^adf = 1 for all comparisons.

NOTE: Frequency is not equal to total number of news stories because single story could contain varying content categories (from none to all).

reporting categories more frequently, but these differences may not be practically significant.

Table 7 depicts the results of the t-test analysis of the differences between means using news direction scale values. Hypothesis 7 postulates that award-winning newspapers will focus on more bad news--news of a more negative nature--in covering education news. The results indicate that award-winning newspapers do not concentrate on bad news but on news that clusters more in the neutral to slightly good news ranges of the continuum. Hypothesis 7 is not supported by the data.

Summary

An analysis of 3,116 education news stories randomly selected from five award-winning newspapers and five non-award-winning newspapers was undertaken in relationship to fourteen hypotheses. When differences in the approach to education news coverage were investigated, the following profile emerged. Award-winning newspapers do not publish more education news stories nor do they devote more of their newshole to education coverage. Award-winning newspapers do not give education news larger headlines or higher page placement. However, award-winning newspapers do publish longer news stories, on the average, and use locally-bylined and wire service copy to a significantly greater degree. Award-winning newspapers do not primarily concentrate on local education news stories, but cover state and national news stories more frequently than their non-

TABLE 7

COMPARISONS OF NEWS DIRECTION SCALE VALUES ASSIGNED EDUCATION
NEWS STORIES IN TEN AWARD-WINNING AND
NON-AWARD-WINNING NEWSPAPERS

	AWARD-WINNERS	NON-AWARD-WINNERS
Number of Stories	1377	1633
Mean Values	4.22	4.30
t	2.25	
p	.025*	

F value = 1.04; df = 3008

*Significant difference at $p < .05$

NEWS DIRECTION SCALE

1. Extremely bad news
2. Very bad news
3. Slightly bad news
4. Neutral news
5. Slightly good news
6. Very good news
7. Extremely good news

award-winning counterparts. Additionally, award-winning newspapers do not cover a variety of education levels as postulated; non-award-winning matches actually covered some levels of education to a significantly greater degree.

When content of news stories was examined, the data showed that there were few significant differences between award-winners and non-award-winners in the general topics covered in education news. Award-winning newspapers do use interpretative reporting elements to a significantly greater degree than non-award-winning newspapers, yet education stories in award-winning newspapers were also judged to be more neutral when compared to news stories in non-award-winning newspapers.

Interviews with Newspaper Education Editors or Reporters

Interviews with the person most responsible for the education coverage at each newspaper studied were conducted during June and July 1986. Appendix C contains the general questions asked during the interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to gain added insights into the similarities and differences between the award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers, particularly as these relate to this study's hypotheses and the results of the data analysis.

The following persons were interviewed. (The asterisk indicates award-winning newspapers.)

Lee Anderson, editor, Chattanooga News-Free Press

Pat Anstett, assistant city editor, Detroit Free Press*

Jane Hansen, education reporter, Atlanta Constitution

David Hardin, executive editor, Jackson, Mississippi Clarion Ledger*

David Hawpe, managing editor/news, Louisville Courier Journal and Times*

Bill Kelley, education editor, Eau Claire, Wisconsin Leader-Telegram

Janet Kolodzy, education writer, Cleveland Plain Dealer

Pat Meisol, staff writer, St. Petersburg Times*

David Thome, education reporter, Racine, Wisconsin Journal Times*

Dale Singer, education reporter, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The demographic background indicated that all the newspaper personnel but one had a bachelor's degree and two had master's degrees. None of the education writers or editors had any previous experience as a classroom teacher or school administrator. Two interviewees had participated in college level seminars as guest instructors. Newspaper work experience ranged from four years to 44 years with the majority of interviewees having been on a newspaper staff for ten or more years.

All the newspapers studied assigned education beats, usually divided into elementary/secondary and higher education categories, but not all assigned full-time reporters to these beats. While four of the award-winning newspapers had two full-time education reporters (the Detroit Free Press*, the Clarion Ledger*, the Courier

Journal* and the Journal Times*), three of the non-award winners (the Chattanooga News-Free Press, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the Atlanta Constitution) did not regularly assign a person to education as a full-time beat. Lee Anderson explained that "the city schools are so connected to the city government that we assign one man to cover both." Dale Singer (St. Louis Post-Dispatch) observed that "Nobody is full-time to anything here." Jane Hansen (Atlanta Constitution) said education reporters at her newspaper had other duties. David Thome of the Journal Times* explained that he was assigned full-time to education but had other duties such as labor news and restaurant reviews.

None of the newspapers studied had a written policy on covering the education beat, but the Clarion Ledger* had a job description which outlined education beat duties. In discussing the newspaper's general approach to education news, marked differences emerged.

David Hawpe of the Courier Journal* stated:

I consider education reporting our first priority. If we don't succeed in reporting education, then we have failed. . . . I place education beat at the top of our list of priorities. . . . I established that priority because it is my conviction that the educational system has more to do with the quality of life and the community we serve than anything else we cover.

Pat Meisol cited a "mandate" from the now deceased founder of the St. Petersburg Times*, Nelson Poynter, as the basis of that newspaper's commitment to education coverage. She said, "Anyone who is someone at this paper has covered education." David Hardin of the Clarion Ledger* gave the education beat equal status to any other

beat at his newspaper saying education was a "major beat." David Thome of the Journal Times* said the precedent at his newspaper was that the education reporters had a "free hand" to cover education as they deemed appropriate. The Detroit Free Press's* Pat Anstett spoke of a constant commitment to keep informed of education trends by "reading all the time" in such sources as educational journals.

The non-award winning newspapers' approach to education was not as consistent, although Janet Kolodzy of the Cleveland Plain Dealer spoke of her own commitment to remain up-to-date on education--a commitment that was shared by her immediate superiors who had all been education writers or editors at one time. Bill Kelley of the Leader-Telegram also said that the education beat was "equal" to other beats at his newspaper. However, equal and high priority may not be the same as Lee Anderson (News-Free Press) commented:

We try to cover every world, national and state interest that's significant, that is in the news. Then in addition to that, we try to cover heavier than anybody else on what's happening locally. That's where we get down to the local subjects of which education is one.

Dale Singer observed that education news at his newspaper, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, is judged along traditional, newsworthiness lines. He said:

Education news follows certain fashion trends. In 1983 when the Nation at Risk report came out, education was real hot. You could put the word "school" in a story and it would automatically get on the front page. After a while it wears off and other items take prominence. . . . News is going to be whatever your readers find interesting.

Considering the editorial organization and approach sketched above, a further explanation of the data analysis is revealed in the

interviewees' comments. Regarding the finding that award-winning newspapers had longer average but fewer stories, Pat Anstett (Detroit Free Press*) pointed out that her newspaper had a tendency to "write longer, issue stories" rather than shorter, breaking-news items. The Chattanooga News-Free Press, the newspaper with the greatest overall number of education stories in this study, adhered to a different approach. Editor Anderson said, "We don't cover one type of education news. We blanket the community with everything we can think of that is of interest to our public." Bill Kelley (Leader-Telegram) and Dale Singer (St. Louis Post-Dispatch) spoke of trying to cover a mass of school and college board meetings on a regular basis. In Kelley's case, there were 14 county school boards to cover; Singer spoke of trying to cover the "city school districts, 23 county school districts, special school districts, archdiocesan school districts and the private schools." David Hawpe (Courier Journal*) observed that covering school board meetings, as significant as they are, is not enough. "We try to break through the mindset that education can be covered at school board meetings. We try to get ourselves into the classrooms to find out what the teachers are doing and how the children are reacting."

The data analysis also indicated that award-winning newspapers did not cover local and regional news significantly more than non-award-winning newspapers, as hypothesized. Personnel interviewed in four of the five award-winning newspapers indicated a commitment on their part to expand local coverage to include issues

and events which have an impact statewide. Pat Meisol of the St. Petersburg Times* observed that while education coverage at her newspaper was primarily local, "I do a lot of state news because in Florida there is a significant amount of control at the state level. All money issues are decided there. All property tax monies go to the state, which then redistributes it. What they decide in Tallahassee is very significant to us."

Pat Anstett (Detroit Free Press*) similarly stated that her newspaper was "a state newspaper . . . I feel strongly that the news media here tend to ignore upstate Michigan. I try to make a point of assigning stories that have statewide interest." David Hardin (Clarion Ledger*) pointed out that his newspaper was located in the state capital and, "There is so much happening here regarding statewide issues . . . that we give as much if not more to state and regional coverage as we do to local education."

Comparatively, Dale Singer (Post-Dispatch) identified his newspaper's emphasis on local coverage. "We're trying to sell papers in St. Louis and people are always more interested in what's going on in their hometown. People look at it as concentric circles, the circle in the middle being the local schools . . . that would get more coverage than the regional which in turn would get more coverage than national." Bill Kelley (Leader-Telegram) also emphasized that his education coverage centered on "keeping readers informed about what the schools and school boards are doing." Lee Anderson (News-Free Press) said the home-delivered edition of his newspaper always

emphasized local news, and Janet Kolodzy (Plain Dealer) said local news often received the most attention at her newspaper by virtue of the fact that the local schools had been in a serious deficit spending situation for the past several years. Jane Hansen (Constitution) also viewed local news as a primary emphasis at her newspaper, although Atlanta, being the state's capital, generated state-related stories.

The fact that award-winning newspapers did not appear to cover more levels of education than non-award-winning newspapers was discussed by the interviewees. Comments by reporters and editors at the award-winning newspapers, while not conclusive, indicated a tendency to maintain an expanded view of education news coverage. Pat Meisol (St. Petersburg Times*) said that her newspaper did not emphasize one level of education over another. She said education coverage at her newspaper was "very broad, there are no rules." David Hardin (Clarion Ledger*) pointed out that education coverage depended on the "agenda" which was frequently "tied up with money matters" affecting all levels of education. Pat Anstett (Free Press*) said her newspaper did not favor one level over another. David Thome (Journal Times*) said his newspaper did concentrate most of its education coverage on kindergarten through high school. Jane Hansen (Constitution) observed that the school reform movement of the early 1980's was primarily focusing on elementary and secondary schools, thus news coverage at her newspaper was concentrated on these levels. Considering that the non-award-winning newspapers

appeared to cover school board meetings thoroughly, the data indicating emphasis on middle and secondary schools corroborates this priority.

Turning to the use of locally bylined and wire service bylined education news stories, all the interviewees observed that it was the rule rather than the exception that local education reporters would regularly receive bylines for stories written. However, most of the interviewees also indicated that length of story and amount of effort expended by the education reporter also were factors determining use of bylines. Pat Anstett (Free Press*) said that a story which was locally produced and was more than four column inches would receive a byline. "The average person who reads the paper often has no idea where news comes from," she said. "In an attempt to provide creditability and an understanding of how news is produced, we tend to prefer a byline when some effort is expended on the part of the reporter."

The fact that the data indicated that significantly fewer non-award-winning newspaper stories did not have local bylines may be a factor related to the shorter average length of these stories overall. As Dale Singer (Post-Dispatch) pointed out, "If the story is a rewrite or a press release or text of a speech, then you take the information you are given and shave it into a news story, generally you would not have a byline on that story." All the interviewees indicated using wire service education stories and giving a byline when such material was published. The majority of

the personnel interviewed also used wire service copy for story ideas and local angles. The fact that award-winning newspapers had a significantly greater use of wire service bylines may be attributed to careful use of such material. Pat Anstett's (Free Press*) use of wire service copy is an example. "We do have a policy here not to slap our byline on a wire service story after maybe we've done one insert. We are diligent in crediting wire services even when we use only two paragraphs of information."

In examining award-winning and non-award-winning use of the 21 content categories studied, it appeared overall that neither type of newspaper emphasizes a specific category of content with the exception of three categories. Comments from the interviewees supported this data. Topics covered in education stories appeared to revolve primarily on local or state events affecting the community. David Hawpe (Courier Journal*) said that his newspaper "tried to cover both events and trends. We try to get into the schools as well as into the bureaucracies." Pat Meisol (St. Petersburg Times*) likes "to go outside routine board meeting coverage." Dale Singer (Post-Dispatch) tries "to cover things that we think are going to result in good stories." David Hardin's (Clarion Ledger*) staff cover daily or weekly education meetings as part of the routine coverage, "but we do a number of follow ups, sidebars . . . we take a story and expand upon what it means. There's very little we consider insignificant concerning education." Bill Kelley (Leader-Telegram) frequently takes school board actions and looks for "outgrowths, human interest

angles." Janet Kolodzy (Plain Dealer) also uses school board agendas for follow-up story ideas.

The use of interpretative reporting by award-winning newspapers emerged from the data analysis. Interviews with the newspaper personnel revealed some divergence of viewpoint on this topic. Lee Anderson (News-Free Press) said that his newspaper had a definite policy against interpretative reporting. "We don't play 'gotcha' journalism. . . . We are in favor of what I call straight reporting. Real reporting ought to be holding a mirror up to what happens. . . . I tell every news reporter that I want you to write your story so that when people read it they won't have any idea what we think about anything." Bill Kelley (Leader-Telegram) said he was "not supposed to do interpretative news reporting" and that his job was to simply keep the readers informed. Dale Singer (Post-Dispatch) said his newspaper confined interpretative reporting to the news analysis section of the paper. The Journal Times* reporter David Thome said his newspaper had a policy that "reporters should keep their opinions out of their stories."

Four of the five award-winning newspapers, however, were in favor of using interpretative reporting in education coverage. David Hardin (Clarion Ledger*) observed, "You end up getting a lot of analysis in education stories . . . if you just cover meetings, you are going to get bland, bureaucratic statements, but what does it really mean?" David Hawpe (Courier Journal*) viewed interpretative reporting as "essential" to education coverage. "Whether you

do (interpretative reporting) in a story labeled news analysis or not, is in a way, beside the point. The important thing is that facts about the schools be placed in context, so that the significance of those facts be made clear. I am very much in favor of interpretative, analytical reporting." Pat Meisol (St. Petersburg Times*) observed that issue-oriented stories required more news analysis. "In education you are frequently writing about expenditures of public money. There always seems to be an issue, the sides of which we would like to know about. . . . If there's a controversy erupting, then that's part of the story." Meisol commented that interpretative reporting was "in demand" in her community. Pat Anstett (Free Press*) believed the use of interpretative reporting by award-winning newspapers was an important finding and should not be "downplayed." "The very best we can do is to be smart and analytical, to provide perspective . . . too often the news media look at things without perspective, in a narrow way, particularly in regard to education. It is important to digest for the reader what this means, what is the significance of any particular development."

The final hypothesis addressed in this study was the presence of good news versus bad news in reporting education issues. The data indicated that education coverage tended to be more positive than negative for both award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers and that award-winning newspapers had a greater degree of neutral news. Comments from the newspaper personnel interviewed revealed an effort to report both the good and bad aspects of

education. Lee Anderson (News-Free Press) spoke of looking for the good in education and "giving it lots of notice." David Hawpe (Courier Journal*) observed that with all news reporting, "We tend to focus on the deficits, the shortfalls, the problems. When things are going along as they should, we have a tendency not to notice; therefore we have to make ourselves notice." David Thome (Journal Times*) noted that "Education reporting should be balanced and accurate. There should be a balance not only with what's wrong but with what is right with the schools."

Summary

The preceding interviews were conducted in an effort to illuminate and further explain the context in which the education stories analyzed were published. Education editors and reporters corroborated the data analysis findings with comments on how education coverage is conducted at their respective newspapers. Chapter V discusses the conclusions, implications and recommendations from this study's findings.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study are based on the findings of the research as related to fourteen research hypotheses.

Hypotheses 1.1, 3.1 and 3.2 were supported by the data. Evidence existed for support of Hypothesis 6, but was inconclusive.

The following conclusions are based on findings from a systematic content analysis of 3,116 education news stories published over a three-year period in ten newspapers. Five newspapers studied were selected on their award-winning record based on annual awards given by the Education Writers Association. The award-winning newspapers were the Clarion Ledger (Jackson, Mississippi), the Detroit Free Press, the Journal Times (Racine, Wisconsin), the Louisville Courier Journal and the St. Petersburg Times. Five non-award-winning newspapers were selected on the basis of their similarities in location and circulation to the award-winning newspapers. These newspapers were the Chattanooga News-Free Press, the Atlanta Constitution, the Leader-Telegram (Eau Claire, Wisconsin), the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Wherever possible and appropriate, the following conclusions are compared to results of studies reviewed in Chapter II. An attempt is made to add to the cumulation of research data which Chaffee

and Ward (1968) observed was so sorely lacking in this area of inquiry.

1. Award-winning newspapers do not publish more education news stories, nor do they give the news stories they do publish more prominence relative to accompanying graphics, headlines and page placement. However, award-winning newspapers do publish slightly longer education news stories. While statistically significant, this difference in news story length may not be substantive.

Although few of the content analyses reviewed in Chapter II of this study compared length of education news stories to other types of news stories in a particular newspaper, observations made by Izard (1969) and Berthelot (1981) indicated that the news media do not generally publish longer news items related to education when compared to other news categories. The award-winning newspapers may be supporting the observation made in the Hynds (1981) survey which found 49 percent of respondent newspapers were devoting more space to education news than in the previous five years. This study's results do indicate a tendency toward using longer education stories.

2. Award-winning newspapers do not appear to emphasize one level of education coverage over others. The data indicated that only the non-award-winning newspapers displayed a significant emphasis on middle and secondary school news stories. This emphasis may be

a result of their greater reliance on school board meeting news as a main source of education news.

The absence of clear emphasis on specific levels of education by the award-winning newspapers represents a departure from previous content analyses of education coverage. Izard (1969), Westland (1969) and Berthelot (1981) found evidence of a strong emphasis on higher education in education news content. Sullivan (1972) found a greater emphasis on elementary education, and Criscuolo (1985) noted an even division among stories on elementary, secondary and higher education in his study.

3. Award-winning newspapers, when compared to non-award-winning newspapers, do not publish a significantly greater number of education news stories in either traditional content categories of education coverage or in content categories designated by the Education Writers Association as important.

This study found that of the 21 content categories analyzed, only three received a statistically significant degree of emphasis. These categories were Administration, Competency Testing and Compensatory Education. Award-winning newspapers did give greater emphasis to these categories than non-award-winning newspapers. When this study's content categories are compared to previous content analyses of education coverage, results reveal both similarities and differences. Other than athletics, which was not examined in this study, the most prevalent content categories in previous research are

summarized as follows: Monahan (1960), Izard (1969) listed a content category labeled "miscellaneous" as the most used category of content in their studies; Laakaniemi (1966) listed human interest content as the top category in his study; Hogan (1966) found personnel and news stories on the school organization to be most prevalent; Gordon (1966) found stories on teachers and other non-teaching personnel to be a frequently covered topic; Scannell's (1966) study of higher education news content showed that alumni news received the greatest emphasis; Showalter (1969), also studying higher education news content, found self-governance to be a top content category; Westland (1969) and Ross (1983) identified the category of administration as receiving the most news media attention in their studies; school desegregation was a primary topic of news content in studies conducted by Cannon (1971) and Dominick (1984); Baker (1980) found the extra-curricular activities category received the most attention in her study. It appears that the broad category of administration is the single category most commonly found in both the study reported here and in previous research.

4. Award-winning newspapers do publish education news stories with a local byline or a byline from the wire services significantly more often than non-award-winning newspapers.

The growth in the number of education writers and editors at America's newspapers has been documented elsewhere in this study (see p. 41). Hynds' (1981) survey of newspaper editors showed that

a majority of his respondents indicated education news was primarily produced by staff writers employed at the respective newspapers and that 66 percent of Hynds' respondents relied on wire services for education news. Some evidence exists that despite this trend, education copy is not often bylined. For instance, Ross (1983) found that only 12 percent of the 2,496 education news stories she analyzed from the Los Angeles Times were bylined by an education reporter. The variation in byline use by award-winning newspapers in this study indicates a departure from prevalent practice.

Interviews with personnel at the newspapers studied revealed a tendency to publish more news stories with bylines, particularly with stories of more than a few column inches. Award-winning newspapers may adhere to such a practice more consistently as a possible result of their greater prize-seeking activities or as a result of publishing slightly longer stories.

5. Award-winning newspapers do not emphasize local or regional news coverage as hypothesized, but cover state and national news to a significantly greater degree than non-award-winning newspapers.

Newspapers' propensity toward the hard news-local angle approach to education news coverage was best articulated by Gerbner (1964) in his study of education editors and reporters. Dickson (1975) found in his survey that newspaper publishers did not perceive a need to "increase traditional local coverage of education" (p. 224). Barron (1969), however, concluded that the tendency to cover only

local school news resulted in education news that lacked depth with little effort being made to apply state and national trends to local schools (p. 65). Although Criscuolo (1985) concluded that readers in his study were interested in more local educational news, award-winning newspapers appear to broaden the scope of their news to include issues and events beyond their local community.

Again, the more active, awards-seeking behavior of the award-winning newspapers may account for these observed differences. It is expected that journalism prizes for education writing would most likely be awarded to well-developed, local angle news stories. Although this study did not obtain a measure of the differences between the number of times each newspaper had applied for an award, such a measure may further explain the results found in this study.

6. Award-winning newspapers do not devote a significantly different proportion of their newshole to education news than non-award-winning newspapers.

The newspapers in this study did not devote more than 1 percent of their available newshole to education news, regardless of the award-winning or non-award-winning status. Content analysis studies reviewed previously in this study consistently found that newspapers devoted less than 4 percent of their newshole to education news, even when athletics and sports news were included. When such news was excluded, the percent of education news shrank to less than 2 percent (Ryan and Owen, 1976). Award-winning newspapers are not devoting more space to education news than other newspapers; in

fact, all the newspapers studied in this research appear to be maintaining the traditional amount of education news as compared to total newshole. Award-winning newspapers may be devoting more time and effort, not newshole, to seeking journalism prizes. Prize-seeking behavior was not a variable in this study, but the lack of differences between the newspapers points to the need for further investigation.

7. Award-winning newspapers show a tendency to include more interpretative reporting in covering education news; and their reporting was judged to be closer to neutral on the news direction scale than education news in non-award-winning newspapers.

News direction values for education news stories from both the award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers studied fell within the neutral to good news continuum, on the average. Moreover, the news stories studied did not depict predominantly bad news as had been predicted or observed by educational writers such as Raywid (1985), who felt that the news media concentrated primarily on negative news (p. 7). Baker (1980) conducted a content analysis of education news which included a qualitative judgment as to whether stories were favorable, unfavorable or neutral and found that 92 percent of the 1,288 stories she coded were also neutral in tone.

Again, differences between the two types of newspapers were statistically but may not be substantively significant. Interviews

with personnel from both types of newspapers showed a desire to communicate positive aspects of education to the public which may account for the news direction scale values.

Although comparative content analysis research had not examined the use of interpretative news reporting previous to this study, Ryan and Owen (1976) did find that metropolitan dailies tended to use more issue-oriented rather than event-oriented news stories, in covering topic areas such as education. Issue-oriented news stories are more likely to contain interpretative news, perhaps accounting for its more frequent use in award-winning newspapers.

Another possible explanation of these differences centers on the prize-seeking philosophy and behaviors of the award-winning newspapers. It is assumed that award-winning news stories would contain a larger amount of indepth information. However, many of the differences between the two types of newspapers disappeared when a more conservative significance level was applied.

Discussion

The conclusions outlined above indicate that award-winning newspapers are not very different from their non-award-winning counterparts, except in a few areas. These areas include using slightly longer education news stories, which are more frequently bylined than not, covering state or national news to a higher degree; and, using some interpretative reporting more and having a more neutral approach to news reporting. It should be noted that differences in use of

national news and in using interpretative reporting categories disappeared when a more conservative statistical test was used. Award-winning newspapers are not devoting more newshole space to education coverage or even publishing more news stories, on the average. The few, clearcut differences between the two types of newspapers in this study do not lend themselves to ease of analysis. The evidence presented here may be interpreted in two, distinct ways. First, the data may indicate that award-winning newspapers show a tendency to use space allocated to education news differently in qualitative ways than non-award-winning newspapers. Another equally plausible explanation may be the few differences which did surface between the newspapers point to a factor not addressed by this study; that is, the prize-seeking behaviors of the award-winning newspapers may offer a more comprehensive explanation for these differences and the lack of differences. Interviews with the editors and reporters associated with the newspapers studied perhaps provide the best clues as to which explanation provides the most accurate interpretation of the data.

Anecdotal data, obtained during telephone interviews with editors and education reporters employed at the ten newspapers studied, indicated that award-winning education news writing may be dependent first on an editorial commitment to cover education by allocating adequate resources to the education beat. All but one of the award-winning newspapers had full-time education reporters whose sole responsibility was education writing. In the case of one award-winner, the St. Petersburg Times, the education staff writer

interviewed had just spent the last six months working exclusively on a major series of news stories on the state's vocational and technical education institutions. This must be considered in contrast to the practices at three of the five non-award-winning newspapers, which assigned duties other than education coverage to education beat reporters.

The emphasis at the award-winning newspapers, as indicated in the follow-up interviews, was to go beyond the traditional school board news stories, to cover the issues which most affected the communities. Pat Anstett, of the Detroit Free Press, for instance, warned against the obstacle of covering only hard news.

Education is so important that there are a lot of things that could be covered. You can't do everything. The mix of stories is also important because there is so much breaking news that these stories can dominate a beat to a point you don't get at some of the other stories.

The lesser reliance on traditional education news coverage by award-winning newspapers could result in longer, issue-oriented news stories, which by their nature require more indepth reporting. All but one of the award-winning newspaper editors or reporters interviewed indicated that interpretative, (or what some called "analytical") reporting was absolutely essential to education news coverage. Accurate, balanced news coverage of education was also emphasized by the interviewees, on both the award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers.

Award-winning newspapers showed a tendency to cover state and national news more frequently than non-award-winning newspapers. Interview data again indicated that these newspapers placed

education news in a broader perspective with local education being tied inextricably to decisions made at the state and national levels. Although the commonly covered topic of administration did appear frequently in this study, other traditionally dominant topics, such as student and teacher activities, did not receive significantly different emphasis in either the award-winning or the non-award-winning newspapers. However, the local angle focus of education coverage did appear to dominate at the non-award-winning newspapers.

Previous content analyses of education coverage had indicated a disproportionate emphasis on higher education as the level of education most covered. This study's results indicated that neither the award-winning nor the non-award-winning newspapers covered this level of education to a greater extent. The award-winning newspapers appeared to have no particular emphasis on any one level of education while the non-award-winning newspapers appeared to emphasize middle and secondary education, possibly due to their greater reliance on traditional education coverage of school boards.

Some may observe that the only real differences between award-winning and non-award-winning newspapers may not be attributed to differences in their news coverage but to their tendency to seek journalism prizes. Interview data on the award-seeking policies of the newspapers studied revealed mixed results. Three of the non-award-winning newspapers (the News-Free Press, the Leader-Telegram and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch) indicated that there was no policy,

written or otherwise, on prize-seeking; moreover, there was no editorial encouragement or even attention paid to submitting material for journalism awards. The other two non-award-winning newspapers observed a greater newsroom emphasis on prize-seeking. Jane Hansen of the Atlanta Constitution noted a strong emphasis on prize seeking at that newspaper with the editorial staff frequently submitting news stories written by staff reporters to prize competitions without the respective reporters being involved in the submission.

Similarly, staff members on three of the five award-winning newspapers, the Detroit Free Press, the St. Petersburg Times and the Journal Times, indicated that there was no policy or editorial emphasis on journalism prize-seeking at their respective newspapers. Pat Meisol of the St. Petersburg Times said that journalism prize submissions were decided by the editors with the reporters rarely knowing if their work had been submitted. Pat Anstett of the Detroit Free Press said, "We just aim to do a good job. It's always nice when someone cites what we've done as laudatory. I personally look askance at anybody who sits down and says this is going to win me a Pulitzer Prize." Two award-winning newspapers, the Louisville Courier Journal and the Clarion Ledger, did indicate a systematic editorial approach to prize-seeking. David Hawpe of the Courier Journal said his newspaper had a written policy on seeking awards with the newspaper having a list of approved contests that may be entered by staff members. He said, "I am in favor of seeking recognition of our work. Obviously, I am particularly happy when we

receive recognition for our coverage of education. We tell our staff members that we have to be very careful not to write or edit our work for the purpose of winning prizes, but if prizes come as a result of our work, then it is a bonus we enjoy."

David Hardin of the Clarion Ledger noted similarly that his newspaper would seek out journalism competitions which may be appropriate for news stories he considers particularly well done.

In summary, differences in seeking journalism prizes do not appear to be a strong distinguishing factor among the newspapers studied.

Implications

When asked what constituted excellent education news reporting, David Hawpe illuminated some of the major implications of this study. He said that excellent reporting required:

The reporter must share a sense of mission that education is essential to the health, growth and general welfare of the state. Education gets short shrift at other papers because people think it's boring and that's the first obstacle that has to be overcome. Reporters become eager to do it if they realize that they are going to get good pay and they are going to get the bucks and a few other things too. Education reporting takes a special intellect, too, because the reporter has to be aware of how different things relate to each other.

Award-winning newspapers in this study appear to first grant education reporting a place of importance in the newspaper's hierarchy, giving both the resources and personnel needed to adequately cover this beat. This conclusion is similar to Crook's

(1963) study which concluded that emphasis on education was more a function of editorial commitment than other factors. Rather than assigning the education beat as one of many assignments, award-winning newspapers tended to allow education writers to focus exclusively on their beat. Moreover, award-winning newspapers did not tend to assign this beat to the "greenest cub" on the staff as Hodenfield (1968, p. 11) observed, nor do education writers at award-winning newspapers operate "at the bottom of the totem pole" as Hohenberg (1968, p. 192) said. For instance, David Hawpe of the Louisville Courier Journal pointed out that his newspaper chose education reporters very carefully, engaging in national searches to identify the best candidates and often taking months to find the right reporter for the job.

A pervasive editorial emphasis on high quality education reporting must eventually lead to measurable differences on how education news stories are identified and written. In this study, the award-winning newspapers appeared to write somewhat longer news stories, although they published fewer education news stories overall. In consonance with their approach to selecting and supporting education reporters and editors, the news stories published by award-winning newspapers were consistently bylined. The content of the education news published, while not exclusively focusing on specific topic areas for the most part or on specific educational levels, contained more interpretative news reporting.

These news stories were also judged to be more neutral in content. Award-winning newspapers also appear to replace the hard news-local angle approach to education reporting with a broader perspective which included state and national education issues.

Interviews with personnel at award-winning newspapers also indicated a view of audience interest in education news as more specific and discerning. Whereas editors and reporters from the non-award-winning newspapers spoke either of "blanketing" the readers with all types of education news or focusing on only fast-breaking, hard news, staff members at award-winning newspapers sought to provide their readers with information about what was behind the major issues and events surrounding education news. Pat Meisol of the St. Petersburg Times observed that although the majority of her readers were older, often retired persons, they were viewed as highly interested in education news--a viewpoint underscored by her publisher's strong emphasis on education coverage. Publishing in a state beset by poorly funded education, David Hardin of the Clarion Ledger spoke of a need to keep his readers constantly up to date on the progress of educational reforms in his state. These indicators show how award-winning newspapers appear to both lead and follow reader interests in education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have grown out of the major findings of this study and are developed for journalists and their

editors and publishers, for education personnel and for communication scholars.

1. Education is a cornerstone of American culture and as such deserves priority as a major journalistic beat on all news media. This priority must be first articulated by the ownership and management hierarchy in each news media organization. Commitment from the top is an essential first step in creating excellent education news coverage.
2. The education beat should be assigned to experienced personnel who are granted the time and resources needed to adequately and accurately report on the events and issues surrounding developments in education.
3. Education reporting should be more equally divided into covering both breaking news and news which focuses on major issues. News stories which help readers understand the background and implications of events and issues surrounding education are more likely to serve the public's interest and information needs.
4. Newspaper editors should reconsider an overemphasis on local school news, particularly if this emphasis results in the ignoring of larger state and national issues which have an impact on local education. Newspapers have continued to allocate a small percent of the

available newshole to education. Since evidence exists that this space allocation policy will continue in the foreseeable future, education editorial emphasis should be shifted toward providing indepth, high quality education reporting. Perhaps fewer stories should be produced in favor of better stories.

5. Education personnel, both teaching and non-teaching, must recognize their own role in helping the news media understand and report on the major issues and events surrounding education news. Neither an adversarial nor a pure public information approach is a suitable role to undertake in representing the needs of the educational system to the public via the news media. Educational personnel must be sensitive to the barrage of information which education reporters must decipher and devise strategies to inform the education news media of critical issues affecting education.
6. Further research is required on the use of interpretative or analytical reporting relative to education news. This research must combine qualitative and quantitative methods in order to determine the role such reporting plays in creating, disseminating and communicating the major issues which have an impact on education.

7. Education and communication scholars should concentrate on continuing research on the interrelationships among the news media, the educational establishment and the average American media consumer, making a special effort to conduct research which is replicable and cumulative in nature and scope.
8. Further research is needed which extends the basic premises of agenda setting and gatekeeping to include investigation on how publishers and editors can be particularly influential in both interpreting and creating reader interest, especially on social issues such as education.

Results from the study have shown that education news reporting is approached differently by those newspapers which have been recognized as award-winners in this critical news area. The data, however, show no conclusive evidence as to whether these differences are stylistic or substantive. Further research is required to determine the best means to improve reporting education news.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

I. MEASUREMENT

1. Name of Newspaper _____
2. Date (Day and Month) _____ Year _____
3. Total Newshole Estimate (in column inches) _____
4. Story Headline _____

5. Size of Headline (width in column inches) _____
6. Beginning page of story _____
7. Placement on page ABOVE CENTER RIGHT TOP BELOW CENTER
LEFT TOP
8. Total column inches of story _____
9. If pictures or graphic material accompany this story, what is their total size in column inches? _____
10. Does the story have a byline? YES NO
If YES, name of bylined author _____
Is this a AP, UPI or other wire service story? ____YES ____NO
11. Level of education covered (check all that apply)
____a. Higher: community or junior college; college or university; graduate or professional school; technical schools
____b. Secondary 10-12
____c. Middle or junior 6-9
____d. Elementary K-5
____e. Pre-elementary
____f. Adult
____g. Other, please explain _____

12. Geographical area related to story

- ___ a. Local ___ d. National ___ f. Other, please explain
 ___ b. State ___ e. Foreign _____
 ___ c. Regional (pertaining to surrounding states)

13. Picture only--size in column inches _____

II. AFFECTIVE QUALITIES

1. Using the news direction scale below, assign a rating to the story's content:

- 1) Extremely bad news
 2) Very bad news
 3) Slightly bad news
 4) Neutral news
 5) Slightly good news
 6) Very good news
 7) Extremely good news

RATING _____

2. Use of background information

USED EXTENSIVELY		USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
1 2 3 4 5			

3. Use of exposition

USED EXTENSIVELY		USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
1 2 3 4 5			

4. Mention of events, related to story, which happened elsewhere

USED EXTENSIVELY		USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
1 2 3 4 5			

5. Statement of ignorance

USED EXTENSIVELY		USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
1 2 3 4 5			

6. Use of description of persons, places or things

USED EXTENSIVELY		USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
1 2 3 4 5			

7. Presence of reporter's opinion about cause/effect of news event

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

8. Presence of reporter's reaction to news event

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	

9. Reporter's prediction of future events

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

10. Reporter's Judgment of persons in the news

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

11. Reporter's proposals for solving problems

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

12. Reporter's evaluation of news sources--i.e., interviewee, report, conference, speaker, etc.

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

13. Reporter's advice to readers

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

III. CONTENT CATEGORIES

1. Back to Basics Movement

____ Returning to traditional methods of teaching with emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics

____ Returning to traditional use of classroom time and away from open classrooms, mini-courses, etc.

____ Reduction of non-essential courses and non-essential spending

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

2. Compensatory Education

- ☐ The Elementary and Secondary Education Act which gives funds to school systems to upgrade education of culturally and economically disadvantaged students
☐ Bilingual education programs; English as a second language

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

3. Student Competency Testing

- ☐ Requiring students to pass test to qualify for a high school diploma
☐ Requiring students to pass a test before being promoted from one grade to another
☐ Preparing students to take competency tests or standardized tests
☐ Test scores

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

4. Desegregation

- ☐ Busing to balance number of minority and non-minority students within a school system
☐ School re-districting to balance racial population of schools
☐ Numerical breakdowns of school population and employees by race
☐ Improved educational opportunities for all students regardless of race
☐ Discrimination
☐ Court orders, cases and judgments relating to desegregation; legislative regulations and directives

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

5. School Financing

- ☐ Revenues for school operation from local, state and federal sources
☐ Tax revenues and bond issues for schools
☐ School budgets--drafting, approval, discussions, administration
☐ Funding formulas for schools
☐ Financing school building program
☐ Use of grants, donations, etc.
☐ Economics of education; costs per student; tuition and fees
☐ Budget pressures, limitations and ceilings

6. Education for Handicapped

- ## 7. Parent Activism

- ## 8. Teacher Negotiations/Bargaining

- ## 9. Violence and Vandalism

- _____ School crime; school-related homicide; student assaults on other students, teachers or school employees
- _____ Costs and results of school vandalism to physical plant and school operation
- _____ School discipline and methods of handling disruptive students; due process for disciplined students

- ☐ Use of security systems and security guards
- ☐ Changes in design of school buildings to reduce opportunity to vandalize
- ☐ Reducing school enrollment and class size as method of reducing school violence
- ☐ School policies regarding violence and vandalism
- ☐ Corporal punishment of students
- ☐ Laws and court decisions on school violence
- ☐ Cheating and truancy

USED EXTENSIVELY USED VERY LITTLE NOT PRESENT

1 2 3 4 5 0

10. Enrollment

- ☐ Number and kinds of students enrolled in schools
- ☐ School openings and closings due to changing enrollment
- ☐ Overcrowded classrooms or school programs
- ☐ Undersubscribed school programs or services due to falling enrollment
- ☐ Shifts in enrollment patterns; issues relating to enrollment patterns

USED EXTENSIVELY USED VERY LITTLE NOT PRESENT

1 2 3 4 5 0

11. Pranks, fads, lifestyle

- ☐ Current trends relating to student or school life
- ☐ Living patterns of school attendees or school employees

USED EXTENSIVELY USED VERY LITTLE NOT PRESENT

1 2 3 4 5 0

12. Textbook controversy and censorship

- ☐ Banning of books, recordings, films, etc. from schools
- ☐ Controversy over textbook or course content in schools
- ☐ Censoring sexual, violent or anti-social content of school materials or school courses

USED EXTENSIVELY USED VERY LITTLE NOT PRESENT

1 2 3 4 5 0

13. Student Activities

- ☐ Dances and social events; special events on campus or in schools
- ☐ Non-athletic competitions
- ☐ Student organizations and attendant events
- ☐ Student scholarship and awards

- ☐ Band news, plays, debates, concerts, assemblies, addresses
 and open houses
☐ Alumni news and relations to school

USED	EXTENSIVELY			USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5
					0

14. Administration/Management

- ☐ Administrative aims and objectives
☐ Administrative rulings and procedures
☐ School boards; governing boards--activities and directives;
☐ Board of Education; policies and election or appointments
☐ Administrative personnel--i.e., principals, superintendents,
 presidents, and other non-teaching personnel; hiring,
 promotion and termination

USED	EXTENSIVELY			USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5
					0

15. Teachers

- ☐ Profiles of individual teachers or faculty members
☐ Faculty activities--presentations, awards, addresses,
 meetings, conferences
☐ Teacher education, hiring, promotion and retention

USED	EXTENSIVELY			USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5
					0

16. Methods of Instruction and Learning

- ☐ Teaching methods and effectiveness
☐ Pupil progress using specific methods
☐ Organization of courses; classes offered
☐ Curricular content
☐ Value of specific program of study
☐ Credit and non-credit courses of study
☐ Reports of research ideas or opinions regarding instruc-
 tional methods

USED	EXTENSIVELY			USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5
					0

17. School Buildings and Physical Plant

- ☐ New buildings and renovation of existing structures;
 building programs and plans
☐ Use of school buildings
☐ Maintenance and repair of school buildings
☐ Destruction or closing of school buildings

- ☐ Land purchase and use relating to physical plant
☐ Building equipment and design; architecture

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

18. Prayer Recitation and Bible-Reading

- ☐ Use of prayer during school time
☐ Bible instruction and classes
☐ Religious activities during school day
☐ Study of comparative religions
☐ Church-State conflicts in the classroom

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

19. Vocational Education

- ☐ Broadening the number and types of careers for which students might prepare
☐ Including more female and minority students in vocational education classes
☐ Involving more representatives from business and industry in planning vocational education curriculum
☐ Testing student ability and interest in various career fields; career education

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

20. Health and Safety

- ☐ Use of drugs or controlled substances by students or school personnel;
☐ School bus safety
☐ Immunization; control of communicable diseases among school population
☐ Safety of students in labs and on school grounds

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

21. Sex Education

- ☐ School sponsored instruction on sexual reproduction, birth control and family planning
☐ School sponsored instruction on sexual lifestyles including dating, co-habitation and marriage
☐ Teenage-pregnancy as related to education institution

USED	EXTENSIVELY				USED VERY LITTLE	NOT PRESENT
	1	2	3	4	5	0

APPENDIX B

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CODING

1. A coding form should be completed for EACH separate news or feature story and/or photo. Photos that accompany a news story should not be coded separately, however.
2. Code only those stories or photos that DIRECTLY relate with an educational institution. For example, do not code a wedding announcement simply because John and Mary Jones once attended Hometown High school.
3. All measurements should be made to the nearest column inch--round up or down as necessary.
4. You will be making an estimate of total newshole for each issue. When calculating total newshole, use the following procedure:
 - a. For each page of the newspaper examined, estimate the percent of the total page which is advertisement and record this percent.
 - b. Determine the number of column inches (a column inch is one column of a six column format by one vertical inch) which is advertising by multiplying the percent times 120 (total column inches on an average newspaper page). Record this number for each page. (Note: Comics are considered editorial space.)
 - c. Next, add up the total column inches of advertising space for each issue.
 - d. Calculate the total column inches available by multiplying the number of pages in the issue times 120 (total column inches on an average page).
 - e. Subtract c. from d. and record number to nearest column inch in #3 of coding sheet.
5. All issues studied should be weekday newspapers. If the coder is assigned a paper that is a Saturday or Sunday edition, use the next available weekday issue for coding. Be sure to inform research director of change.

6. If you are uncertain of the geographical location of the story, consult a state map of the region in question. Code a story local only if the story takes place in the immediate metropolitan area.
7. Different newspapers use different column formats. However, for this research all estimates will be based on a six column format, with one column measuring approximately 2 inches. Remember we are only estimating to the nearest column inch.
8. DO NOT CODE sports pages or stories, community or event calendars, editorial pages or any advertisements.
9. Be sure to write your name at the top of each coding form completed.
10. Finally, after you are familiar with the coding form, coding should be fairly routine. Do not agonize over any given decision to code one way or the other--rely on your first impressions. If you read a story's headline and first paragraph and it is not clearly an education related story, go on. Do not read the entire article.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS RELATED TO FINDINGS

1. Does your newspaper have a written (or unwritten) policy on the gathering and reporting of education news? Please explain.
2. Does your newspaper have a policy on prize-seeking for journalism awards?
3. Does your newspaper have a public relations representative who actively helps seek journalism prizes?
4. Does your newspaper concentrate on reporting routine news or special news in dealing with education issues? How is this emphasis decided?
5. What do you think determines when a particular story will have a byline and when it won't?
6. Does your newspaper have a policy on use of wire service copy?
7. How do you decide what education level--i.e., higher education, secondary, elementary, pre-school, etc--will be covered most by your newspaper?
8. Do you think your newspaper concentrates on specific geographic locations, such as local news, or state news or regional news or national news, in covering education? Why or why not?
9. What topics do you feel you regularly cover in reporting education news? (If necessary, read list of 21 categories and ask which ones are most covered.) How do you decide?
10. Do you (or your reporters) engage in writing interpretative news--that is news which attempts to explain the meaning and impact of events beyond the facts of the story? Can you give an example? Do you have a policy on when a reporter may engage in interpretation?
11. Does your newspaper have a regular education beat? Is a full time reporter assigned to this beat?
12. What makes excellent education news coverage?

13. What are the major obstacles you face in reporting education news? How do you attempt to overcome these obstacles?
14. What changes do you think are most urgently needed to improve education news coverage?
15. If you could accomplish anything you wanted in the area of education reporting, what would you most like to do?
16. Demographics
 - a. What is your educational background:
 - b. Do you have any teaching or administrative experience in education?
 - c. How long have you been in your current position?
 - d. Have you ever competed for any journalism prizes? Any in education reporting? Does your newspaper have a policy regarding journalism prize competitions?

VITA

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