

A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS

by 6791

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B. S., Kansas State University, 1949

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

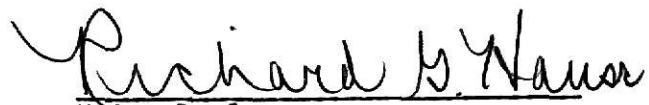
MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1971

Approved by:

  
Major Professor

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY . . . . .	1
2. REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH . . . . .	3
3. METHODS AND MATERIALS . . . . .	11
4. ANALYSIS OF DATA . . . . .	14
Introduction . . . . .	14
School Information . . . . .	14
Adviser Data . . . . .	15
Financial Facts and Figures . . . . .	17
Staff Data . . . . .	20
Writing and Production Methods . . . . .	20
Problem Areas . . . . .	21
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	31
APPENDIX . . . . .	32

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special "thank you's" must be expressed to Dr. Richard G. Hause, whose calm suggestions and comments helped to crystalize certain areas of the author's thinking, to members of the author's immediate family for their patience, and to that oft unpraised parent of future journalists, the newspaper adviser.

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

During the nearly twenty years the author has been a newspaper adviser, he has had occasion to talk frequently with other advisers about their problems. One question asked years ago still appears today with monotonous regularity and with slight variation: "How can I as a typing teacher put out a good school newspaper when I have had no journalism training whatsoever?"

The question has been asked by business teachers, coaches, English teachers and a host of others. The answer remains the same: "If you don't have journalism training, get it fast in a summer session or a workshop. In the meantime, learn on the job as quickly as you can. For the time being, stay away from stories that would knock the school in any way. Avoid gossip like the plague. Concentrate on stories that will promote, boost, and build the school." (4)

It is extremely difficult to find any published research dealing with journalism in Kansas high schools. The objective of this research project is to find out the present situation in Kansas high schools that offer journalism in hopes that the findings will indicate weak areas in journalism. It is further hoped that the findings will lead to eventual improvement of journalism programs.

In recent years the author has been active in the Kansas Organization of Publications and Advisers as member and president. Increased opportunity to work with Kansas journalism advisers presented itself, and the problems of



twenty years ago still exist. This might suggest that the journalism situation in Kansas high schools should be looked into.

Many of the problems listed by advisers center on such areas as financing, staff selection, class size, lack of training, administrator interference and printing and production methods.

The question arises as to whether these are indeed legitimate, widespread complaints, or are they isolated incidents? Is there a need for revision of some of the commonly accepted "journalistic" practices now found in Kansas high schools?

Newspaper, as used in this report, means any regularly published paper carrying school news, printed under the jurisdiction of the school and an adviser, whether in a definite course with credit or as an extra-curricular activity with no credit. Journalism refers to the editorial and business performance designed to produce a newspaper.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

*There is a variety of opinions concerning the purpose of a school newspaper. Paul Swensson, then executive director of The Newspaper Fund, Inc., took school administrators to task in a speech given at the El Paso (Texas) Administrator-Teacher Journalism dinner in 1967 (9). He indicated he had found that 25 percent of the nation's high school principals and superintendents " . . . at times openly oppose student journalism even as a learning laboratory; . . . they could hardly care less about student publications, . . . they consistently fail to support the journalism teacher and the publications program."*

*About 45 percent of the administrators do better in that they give journalism average support, comparable to that they give other student activities. The remaining 30 percent of the administrators are rated by their teachers as staunch supporters of journalism, putting it at the top as "the best or one of the best programs in the school."*

*Another criticism by Swensson dealt with the "Battle for Time to Do the Job Well." He indicated many conscientious teachers donate 10 to 40 hours a month in uncompensated overtime on journalism classes.*

*Other criticisms touched on financing, lack of equipment and teaching materials, and administrator censorship. The criticisms they make of administrators have the purpose of trying to raise standards in journalism and to teach desirable goals.*

According to Swensson, administrators have trouble:

1. Recognizing journalism as a valuable part of the curriculum,
2. Treating it as a publications laboratory for the students,
3. Honoring it as a reading-thinking-writing discipline for all youths, especially the college bound,
4. *Encouraging it as an incubator for careers in writing,*
5. Supporting it at curricular and extra curricular levels,
6. Understanding its essential role in student, school and community life, and
7. Using it honestly and honorably as a public relations tool for education and incidentally for themselves.

Swensson indicates the shortcomings mentioned above are common in all 50 states, and cites some evidence of improvement in Texas: the number of journalism graduates has been increasing; the enrollments in journalism are up in a dozen colleges and universities; the calibre of students is improving. He also comments favorably on the creation of a co-ordinator of publications position in El Paso, and the existence of several intelligently-run high school press associations.

A difference of opinions of the purpose of a school newspaper also was found by The Kansas Organization of Publications and Advisers. This state journalism organization conducted a survey in 1969 (5). Approximately 55 high school journalism advisers and their administrators in KOPA member schools responded to a questionnaire which asked, among other things, to rate in importance the roles of the high school paper. Advisers and administrators were each asked to designate one of the following:

- a. to inform readers about school activities.
- b. to express opinions about controversial issues.
- c. to serve as a laboratory experience for students interested in journalism.

A difference of opinion was shown when advisers chose option (a) over option (c) by two votes--16 to 14. On the other hand, administrators chose option (c) over (a) by a wide margin--20 to 6. Advisers and administrators were more nearly in agreement on (b). Only one from each group ranked this of first importance.

A broad survey was conducted in 1968 by the Quill and Scroll Foundation of Iowa City, Iowa (2). Laurence R. Campbell reports the Foundation received questionnaires from 548 public and 68 non-public schools listed in the state directories of Maine, Virginia, Ohio, Missouri, Texas, and California. The Foundation hoped to identify the current business policies and procedures of high school newspapers in the United States and to determine whether such an appraisal could be used to achieve standards in both education and journalism.

Offset production was found to be the most popular in 258 instances, with duplicated numbering 163, and letterpress reporting 157. Schools not reporting numbered 38.

The prospect for journalism courses with credit appeared to increase as the enrollment increases, but from one-third to one-half of the high schools with less than 1,000 students offered journalism courses. Not one high school in Maine reported journalism classes with credit. Only four percent of the schools in California reported this situation.

Extent of instruction in journalism courses with credit was: no courses, 160; 1 semester only, 34; 1 year only, 132; 2 years, 135; more than 2 years, 99; and others not reporting.

The extent of background in college journalism courses taken by the advisers was: no hours, 203; 1 to 6 hours, 142; 7 to 12 hours, 70; 13 to 18 hours, 39; 19 or more hours, 137; others not reporting.

Nearly one-sixth of the reporting newspapers reported deficits of more than \$100. Approximately 40 percent made a profit.

The conclusions indicate that many of the high schools have problems dealing with financing their newspapers, whether it be by student support, subsidies, or by advertising.

Another problem arises in the business management side of running the paper because the staff is more interested in the editorial activities, and few advisers have specific preparation in proper business procedures.

In general, the Foundation concludes that in those schools where the adviser has at least a minor in journalism there will be more success than those lacking such advantages.

Campbell says, "Chances for success of the business side of the school press are greater if

1. The principal cares--cares enough to see that the staff can produce a newspaper at least every two weeks under circumstances that enable it to work effectively.
2. The adviser is prepared--prepared not only by experience, but also by at least a minor of eighteen semester hours in college journalism.
3. The students are prepared by a curriculum program in journalism in which they can participate for two consecutive years in the study of student publications and mass media."

A survey was made in 1968 by Sharon Smith, who sent one hundred questionnaires at random to Kansas high schools having newspapers or journalism advisers listed with the Kansas State High School Activities Association (8). From this listing it was determined that 263 of the 458 high schools listed had journalism. Fifty-four or 21 percent of the journalism programs were in Class AA schools (2599-515 enrollment); 51 or 19 percent in Class A schools

(512-208 enrollment); 77 or 29 percent in Class B schools (207-101 enrollment); and 81 or 31 percent in Class BB schools (100-21 enrollment). The questionnaires were sent to the schools on the same percentage as the programs: 21 to Class AA schools; 19 to Class A schools; 29 to Class B schools, and 31 to Class BB schools.

Fifty-nine of the questionnaires sent were returned. Two of these had to be disregarded in compiling data because the journalism programs had been discontinued that year.

Adviser experience was found to range from first year advisers to advisers with approximately 40 years experience; but 63 percent of the advisers had five or less years experience in journalism. Only 11 percent of the advisers had 20 or more years experience.

Adviser preparation appeared to be for the most part in areas other than journalism, but incomplete information on returned questionnaires made this difficult to tabulate accurately. Advisers lacking training included a speech teacher with one journalism hour, and a Kayette adviser with no hours, who had inherited the newspaper because the Kayettes published it.

At the time of this report, six hours of college preparation was the minimum number required for a journalism teacher. Eighteen percent of the advisers had only the six required hours, while fifty-three percent had more than six hours. Twenty-five percent of the advisers were performing with less than six hours, and nine percent had no college hours in journalism.

It was difficult to tabulate the number of hours spent working on publications because in many cases it could not be determined whether the hours spent included class time or if this time was spent every week or only during the week of publication. The hours listed were from one and a half to two

hours per month, ranging to a maximum of 50-60 hours per week.

Printing productions varied with the most common printing method being mimeograph in 30 percent of the schools. Commercial offset ranked second, with commercial letterpress third.

Newspaper financing showed wide variation, with 17 different formulas for financial support. Thirty-two percent of the school papers depended on school board finance. Advertising provided funds for 49 percent of the papers, but only 3.5 percent of the papers listed advertising as their only source of revenue.

Only 21 percent of the papers showed a profit; 23 percent broke even, and 28 percent showed a loss. Financial balances were unreported by 28 percent of the schools; however, 88 percent of these are financed entirely by the school board, so it can be assumed that these broke even.

Profits ranged from four to four hundred dollars, and losses varied from twenty-five to one thousand dollars. The primary source of covering losses was from the school board.

Among the major areas of concern in Kansas schools as shown by this report were those dealing with finance, the work-time factor, and adviser training.

Too many papers showed deficits. Perhaps in a few cases additional income could be derived from other advertising sources, but often the papers were using all their regular income sources to the fullest extent. Smith suggests, "If the journalism program is contributing to the school curriculum, serving the school as a public relations media, or helping guide the community of students, the program warrants financial backing from the school board in regularly budgeted funds."

The study shows a need for more released time and extra pay to compensate teachers for the extra time spent on journalism activities. Adviser training is perhaps the largest problem in Kansas journalism shown in this study. Smith indicates that too many teachers from other areas are being drafted to serve as journalism advisers and teachers. The adviser's low training and interest is reflected in the quality of the newspaper.

A similar survey was conducted also in 1968 among the Iowa high schools (1). William H. Skip Boyer sent questionnaires to 100 schools, with 25 being returned. The school size ranged from 205 to 1,920 students.

From his scant returns he reported a move toward the offset method of production (11 schools) with only 4 schools still using the mimeograph. Two schools claimed they had no typewriters. Boyer wonders how one can put out a newspaper without a typewriter.

Eleven of the answering schools offered no course work in journalism. Ten had one beginning course. Only two offered a beginning and an advanced course, and only one school offered three semesters of journalism. In one school journalism was a part of an English course.

Six of the advisers had no training in journalism. Six had degrees in journalism--two of those were M. A.'s. B. S. degrees other than journalism included degrees in secondary education, business administration, economics, history, speech, theater, and English.

The average adviser spent 7.3 hours per week on his publication and had been doing it for the past 8.5 years. Years of experience ranged from first year teachers to highs of 27 and 40 years.

Thirteen of the advisers received extra pay for their work, averaging out to \$197 annually and ranging from \$75 to \$500.



Financing was a problem in the Iowa schools. Ten reported losses ranging from \$30 an issue to \$200, \$500, and \$2,000 per year. Three papers broke even. Four reported profits, the highest being \$40 per issue. The paper losing \$2,000 per year was from a school of 1,450 students. The adviser was a man with a degree in economics.

Making up the deficits fell to the school board for nine of the papers. Other sources included yearbook surplus, additional student body fees, more advertising, or a higher percentage of the activity fund.

Boyer concludes that major improvements in the Iowa high school journalism will come if more teachers are trained in journalism. The job must be made attractive, with good equipment and attractive salaries. Released time and extra pay should be a standard part of the contract. He also suggests offering more journalism courses in the high school curriculums.

In conclusion, the available research indicates there seems to be some confusion in the role of the school newspaper in relation to the curriculum as a whole. If the paper is to be part of the curriculum, student journalism should be supported actively by administrators the same as any other academic subject. The adviser should be as well trained as for any other subject. Equipment and teaching materials should be available so that a quality product can be presented. Newspaper financing should be considered in relation to its contribution to the total school picture.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

A questionnaire was constructed carefully, keeping in mind the objectives of the research, with all items of the multiple choice type with an "other" option. The questionnaire was then sent for comment and criticism to selected individuals in the journalism departments of several of the state colleges and universities. All comments and criticisms were duly considered, and the revised questionnaire was printed on both sides by the offset process. A single sheet of paper measuring 11 inches by 17 inches was used. Folding it in half made a four-page instrument of conventional size,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 11 inches.

The Membership Directory, 1970-1971, published by the Kansas State High School Activities Association of Topeka, Kansas, was used to determine the extent of the mailing. The Association uses enrollment of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades to determine the classification of the schools. The top 16 schools in number of students are placed in Class 5A, the next 32 schools are 4A, the next 64 are 3A, the next 128 are 2A, and the remaining number, in this case 172 schools, are grouped into Class A (3).

Several religious and military schools were listed in the Directory, but they were not numbered in their respective classifications because of non-participation in basketball tournaments. However, some of these schools do offer journalism, and it was decided to list them within their proper classification to give a true picture.

It was determined by actual count that there were 412 public, religious,

and military high schools in Kansas, with 263 of them listed as offering courses in journalism. It was decided to send the questionnaires to a sample of 50 percent or 131 of the schools offering journalism. The schools were randomly selected by using "A Table of Random Numbers from Selective Service Numbers" developed by J. G. Peatman and R. Schafer (7).

Classification of schools, the number of schools in each classification, number offering journalism, and the number sent questionnaires are shown below in Table 1.

A letter of transmittal was drafted and signed by Dr. Richard G. Hause of the College of Education, Kansas State University (Appendix A). The letter explained the objectives of the questionnaire and asked the recipient to take a few moments of his time for journalism. The letter was reproduced by offset and enclosed with the questionnaire. A letter of explanation from the author was printed on the questionnaire itself and included an offer of a copy of the results (Appendix B).

The letter of transmittal, the questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to the selected journalism teachers on January 27, 1971. A deadline of two weeks from the mailing date had been given the recipients, and at the end of three weeks it was determined that 102 questionnaires, or 77 percent, had been returned. A follow-up letter was prepared and printed and mailed on February 27, 1971 (Appendix C). In approximately three weeks a total of 119 questionnaires or 90 percent was reached. No effort was made to contact the remaining 10 percent.

The data then was compiled and tabulated by a computer.

Table 1  
Questionnaire Distribution and Response

Class of School	Listed in Directory	Offering Journalism	Number Sent	Number Received
5A	16	16	8	7
4A	32	32	16	15
3A	65*	54	27	26
2A	130*	88	44	41
1A	<u>174*</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>30</u>
Totals	417*	262	131	119

\*Includes religious and military schools.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The six sections in Chapter 4 discuss the responses of the 119 advisers who responded to the journalism questionnaire. Four of the advisers indicated they had no journalism program or school paper although their schools were listed as having them in the Membership Directory. One of these advisers indicated this was due to a cut in funds. This left a total of 115 responses to be used in analyzing the data.

The multiple choice type answers were designed to allow for easy circling of the response, but in all but three instances an adviser neglected to circle at least one response, making some tabulations very difficult to complete. Wide margins made it easy for the advisers to jot comments on the questionnaire, and some of these comments are quoted in the analysis.

#### School Information

Of the 115 advisers indicating the class of school, 39 (33.91 percent) said their school was Class 2A. Class A schools numbered 28 (24.35 percent), Class 3A claimed 26 (22.61 percent), Class 4A totaled 15 (13.04 percent), and Class 5A amounted to 7 (6.09 percent).

Public schools numbered 105 (91.30 percent), parochial schools counted 9 (7.83 percent), and there was 1 (0.87 percent) private school.

Of the high schools reporting, 86 (74.78 percent) were 4-year schools, 23 (20.00 percent) were 3-year, and 6 (5.22 percent) were 6-year combination

junior-senior high schools.

### Adviser Data

Female advisers outnumbered male advisers two to one, numbering 77 (66.96 percent) female and 38 (33.04 percent) male.

A total of 26 (22.61 percent) of the advisers had no college hours in journalism. Twenty-one (18.26 percent) had from 1 to 6 semester hours, 30 (26.09 percent) had from 7 to 12 semester hours, 12 (10.43 percent) had from 13 to 18 semester hours, and 20 (17.39 percent) had 19 or more semester hours. Only 3 (2.61 percent) had a master's degree in journalism. Another 3 (2.61 percent) declined to indicate their number of hours.

Among those advisers with no college hours in journalism was a business education major who had been an adviser for at least 5 years. He was putting out a monthly duplicated paper every four weeks and broke even financially last year. Another adviser was an English major without college training in journalism but with 7 years experience working on a newspaper. She had at least 10 years as a newspaper adviser. Her offset paper was published every 2 weeks, winding up last year with a deficit of \$350. Another adviser with no college training commented candidly that one of her problems was "not knowing the subject matter." Another, a beginning teacher, commented, "Our class is called 'Advanced Senior Composition' as I was the only English teacher willing to take on this responsibility." She also stated, "I feel inadequate as instructor and wonder if I am teaching the proper things at all for journalism. I've learned a lot and hope the students have gained something." She also made a deficit last year but gave no indication of the amount.

Journalism was the college major for 13 (11.30 percent) of the advisers. English majors numbered 67 (58.26 percent), business majors totaled 12 (10.43

percent), history majors tallied 4 (3.48 percent), and the remainder had such varied backgrounds as education, speech, music, physical education, and psychology. One adviser with at least 2 years experience was an administrator with a history major. He comments, "As the administrator here, I was forced to either do this work myself or have no publication." His duplicated paper comes out one per semester this year only and is supported by school board subsidy.

Adviser experience was nil for 25 (21.74 percent) of those who returned the questionnaire, indicating that this was their first year as a newspaper adviser. Forty-five (39.13 percent) said they had from 2 to 4 years experience, 21 (18.26 percent) said they had 5 to 9 years, 9 (7.83 percent) indicated 10 to 14 years, 5 (4.35 percent) reported 15 to 19 years, and 1 (0.87 percent) was in the 20 to 24 year bracket. Six (5.22 percent) showed experience ranging from 25 years to a maximum of 37 years, the latter reported by an English major with at least 7 semester hours of journalism training. Three (2.61 percent) declined to answer. Approximately 60 percent of the advisers had 4 years or less experience, and approximately 80 percent had 9 years or less.

Only 11 (9.57 percent) of the advisers did not need to spend extra hours of their own time on journalism duties outside of regular class time. Twenty-six (22.60 percent) worked up to two hours per week extra, 35 (30.43 percent) (30.43 percent) put in 3 to 4 hours extra weekly, 26 (22.61 percent) worked 4 to 5 hours extra a week, and 14 (12.17 percent) said they worked from 6 to 20 hours extra per week. Three (2.61 percent) did not answer. One male adviser indicated he spent no extra hours of his own time, commenting, "We have 2-hour classes--plenty of time." Another male adviser said about extra

hours, "This is not computable. As student publications officer, this includes the yearbook, all catalogues, a slide show, and other miscellaneous but journalistic-related duties." A female adviser checked the 3 to 4 hours extra time option and added, "My administrator allows me to take one school day before each issue of the newspaper to take students to \_\_\_\_\_, Kansas, to make up the newspaper."

Most of the advisers received no extra pay a year for journalism activities, 60 (52.17 percent) indicating this was the case. Two (1.74 percent) said they received under \$50, 5 (4.35 percent) were paid from \$50 to \$99, 18 (15.65 percent) received from \$100 to \$199, 10 (8.70 percent) obtained \$200 to \$299, 12 (10.43 percent) were paid from \$300 to \$399, and 6 (5.22 percent) gave varying replies ranging from \$278 to \$600 extra per year. Two (1.74 percent) declined to answer. One female adviser commented, "I get one hour 'production time' for students to come in for non-credit time to put out the newspaper and yearbook. This hour is in place of an hour of English class." A male adviser commented that he received 3 percent of his base pay for yearbook work, but when he asked for 3 percent for the newspaper work, the matter was taken "under advisement."

#### Financial Facts and Figures

From 30 to 40 percent of the advisers were reluctant to get specific about profit or loss figures, which made it difficult to arrive at precise figures. In general, school papers appeared to break even as reported by 38 (33.04 percent). Twenty-three (20.00 percent) made a deficit the preceding year, and 13 (11.30 percent) showed a profit. Forty-one (35.65 percent) declined to answer. One adviser commented, "We do not involve ourselves with any financial objectives. The primary objective is to produce a good news-



paper on time . . ." That newspaper is supported by a school board subsidy.

School newspaper profit was non-existent for 56 (48.70 percent) of the advisers last year. Four (3.48 percent) made under \$50, 2 (1.74 percent) cleared between \$50 and \$100, and 5 (4.35 percent) closed out the year with a profit of from \$100 to \$200. Thirteen (11.30 percent) showed a profit up to \$600 or indicated the newspaper and yearbook funds were kept together, making it difficult to determine newspaper profit. Thirty-five (30.43 percent) did not respond.

School newspaper deficit was non-existent for 56 (48.70 percent) of the advisers for the preceding year. Three (2.61 percent) showed a loss of under \$50, 3 (2.61 percent) indicated a loss of from \$50 to \$100, and 6 (5.22 percent) lost from \$100 to \$200. Thirteen (11.30 percent) of the advisers replied that their deficits ranged from "unknown" to a top of \$1,100. That adviser was quick to say, "I inherited the debt." When responding to the question as to how the deficit was made up, she said, "It hasn't been made up."

The deficit question was not applicable to 49 (42.61 percent) of the advisers. Forty (34.78 percent) chose not to answer the question. "School system subsidy" and "Other source" tallied 10 (8.70 percent) responses each, but this is somewhat misleading since several advisers listed such things as "School Board" and "Activity Account" in the "Other source" option. Yearbook funds accounted for 4 (3.48 percent) responses.

When asked about the source of most of their newspaper income, advertising counted for 42 (36.52 percent) of the responses. Next was school board subsidy with 36 (31.30 percent), activity fee 10 (8.70 percent), and subscription sales 9 (7.83 percent). Thirteen (11.30 percent) circled the "Other" response and indicated they needed no income because their paper was printed as

part of the local newspaper or their paper was mimeographed using classroom supplies. Strict interpretation of the latter might place this as a school board subsidy. Other sources included money from patrons and sale of single copies of the paper. Five (4.35 percent) of the advisers did not answer.

It was determined that 45 (39.13 percent) of the papers do not have advertising. One (0.87 percent) charged less than 49 cents per column inch per one issue, 16 (13.91 percent) charged from 50 to 99 cents, and 19 (16.52 percent) charged from \$1.00 to \$1.49 per inch. "Other" responses varied from \$5.00 per 1-1/4 inches to \$2.00 for an ad stating the sponsor's name to a complicated formula listing "High honor, \$25; Honor, \$10 to \$20; and Booster, \$5.00." Eleven (9.57 percent) did not respond.

Semester subscriptions were not sold in 64 (55.65 percent) cases. Four (3.48 percent) charged less than 49 cents, 21 (18.26 percent) set their prices at from 50 cents to 99 cents, 9 (7.83 percent) charged from \$1.00 to \$1.49, and 10 (8.70 percent) charged \$1.50 or more per semester. Seven (6.09 percent) did not answer.

Fifty-three (46.09 percent) received no subsidy, 37 (32.17 percent) received some assistance from school system funds, 4 (3.48 percent) received money from student body funds, such as student council or classes, and 2 (1.74 percent) took money from yearbook funds. Seven (6.09 percent) chose the "Other" option and indicated they could get money from school funds or the activity fund "if necessary." One adviser said he could get money from the Alumni Association of his school. Another could count on a board subsidy of \$1,000 and another \$500 from the student activity fund. Twelve (10.43 percent) declined to answer.

Advisers received money from several other sources for their newspapers.

These included 11 (9.57 percent) who received funds from student activity cards, 6 (5.22 percent) from sales of photographs, 2 (1.74 percent) from selling food, such as hot dogs and popcorn, 3 (2.61 percent) from social events such as dances, and 1 (0.87 percent) from selling novelties. Twenty-two (19.13 percent) listed other sources of income from such things as subscription sales, advertising, a carnival, a variety show, a car wash, and selling mums for homecoming. Seventy (60.87 percent) did not answer.

#### Staff Data

The girls outnumbered the boys nearly two to one on the newspaper staffs. It was determined that the total number of girls reported was 1,080, while the boys numbered 617. An average class would contain approximately 6 boys and 11 girls. Seven (6.09 percent) did not indicate the numbers in their staffs.

Twenty-two (19.13 percent) of the advisers said they had 10 or less on their newspaper staff. Forty (34.78 percent) indicated they had from 11 to 15 members, 27 (23.48 percent) reported they had from 16 to 20, 14 (12.17 percent) said they had from 21 to 25, and 8 (6.96 percent) had 26 or more members. Four (3.48 percent) did not indicate the size of their staffs.

#### Writing and Production Methods

At least one course in beginning journalism was taught by 84 (73.04 percent) of the advisers. Eleven (9.57 percent) indicated they also offered an intermediate, 19 (16.52 percent) made available an advanced course, and 12 (10.43 percent) offered journalism as a section of English. A total of 16 (13.91 percent) had no journalism. Items listed in the "Other" category totaled 9 (7.83 percent), and most of the advisers here indicated there was no

journalism course because the local newspaper took care of the school news. Two (1.74 percent) of the advisers did not respond. The above totals come to more than 100 percent because several advisers offered more than one course.

Most of the advisers, 47 (40.87 percent) use the printed offset means of production, although 44 (38.26 percent) use a duplicated method such as mimeograph or spirit duplicator. Sixteen (13.91 percent) use the printed letterpress method of production of the paper. Four (3.48 percent) had their school paper appearing as part of the local newspaper. One (0.87 percent) did not know the method of production since "we sent it east to a printing company." Three (2.61 percent) of the advisers did not answer.

Publishing the school newspaper was a weekly chore for 12 (10.43 percent) of the advisers. Thirty-eight (33.04 percent) came out every two weeks, 18 (15.65 percent) appeared every three weeks, and 24 (20.87 percent) published every four weeks. Twenty-two (19.13 percent) of the advisers published at various times, ranging from 5-week intervals to once a semester. One physical education major with no journalism course in his high school candidly stated that they publish "whenever enough material is gathered." Another adviser published every three weeks the first semester but was forced to cut back to every four weeks second semester because of financial problems. He says, "The school board reluctantly makes up deficits." Another adviser published every three weeks "because of competition with two parochial high school papers and a college paper. We can't finance a paper more often." One (0.87 percent) adviser failed to indicate the frequency of publication.

### Problem Areas

The greatest problem of the adviser is developing a good staff, according to 55 (47.83 percent) of those answering the questionnaire. Financing the

newspaper presented problems to 22 (19.13 percent) of the advisers, 18 (15.65 percent) listed physical production of the paper, 4 (3.48 percent) needed improved facilities and space, and 3 (2.61 percent) thought their greatest problem was administrator censorship. Eleven (9.57 percent) listed other problems. One adviser found it a problem of keeping the paper interesting to the student body. Along the same lines another instructor stated that their typewritten copy was due at the printer's two weeks before the paper publication date. Two of the advisers mentioned that they had no carry-over from year to year, starting each year with a totally new staff. Another simply stated, "I'm not qualified." Others spoke of having problems getting the cooperation needed from administration and faculty. Another told of having trouble with photography. One adviser did not have typewriters available during class time. Another had problems in getting the school administration to realize "that journalism is a worthwhile endeavor."

Four advisers said their greatest problem was finding time to produce a quality newspaper. One adviser also coached two plays each year, produced the yearbook, and taught five preparations. Five of the advisers checked each one of the choices dealing with problems, and two others checked all but number 5, which dealt with administrator censorship.

Several advisers commented on administratorship. One said, "We, the students and I, resent what we consider unfair censorship. We can't print anything that is not laudatory to the administration. We especially resent it since we work for the love of expressing ourselves and a sense of accomplishment, rather than for class credit or for monetary gain. We feel that our judgment is good and that we are demeaned by administrator censorship."

Another adviser said, "The school has had several problems this year

that the staff felt should be reported. The administration does not feel that school problems should be reported in the school paper."

Another said, "He (the administrator) says it's not censored, but there have been several 'sensitive situations.'"

Another adviser looked at the multiple choices on the questionnaire and commented, "These are all great problems. Censorship in the last year has become a major problem as well as finance due to the tight money."

An adviser from one of the larger systems said, "Ad sales are getting more difficult, but we always manage to come out in the black, some years by \$100 to \$200. The most distressing thing is uncollectable ad accounts, but an attorney friend has recently volunteered to do some collecting for me without charge. (His daughter was on the business staff, and she told him how bad some businesses are at paying.)"

Only 2 (1.74 percent) of the advisers failed to indicate any journalistic problem.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research was undertaken with the objective of finding out the present day journalism situation in Kansas high schools. As reported in Chapter 2, previous research had been conducted several years ago in other states by the Quill and Scroll Foundation and by Boyer, and in Kansas by Smith. These researchers found certain problem areas in journalism dealing with adviser *preparation, much overtime for advisers, lack of formal journalism courses,* and financial problems for many high school newspapers.

The present research was conducted in 1971 and surveyed 50 percent of the high schools in Kansas offering journalism. With a return of 90 percent of the questionnaires, there is a broader base on which to evaluate the results and on which to base conclusions. The responses come from the advisers themselves, those who most intimately know the problems and the worth of a well-run journalism program.

Journalism often has been called the "stepchild" of the school curriculum. But since approximately 262 of the more than 400 high schools in Kansas offer a course called "Journalism," it behooves the educators to give this "stepchild" the tender loving care it deserves.

It is somewhat disconcerting to learn that nearly one-fourth of the journalism advisers in Kansas have no college training at all in journalism. Approximately 2-1/2 percent have a master's degree in journalism. Many of the ill-prepared advisers are quick to recognize their own shortcomings due to

lack of training and are not at all reluctant to say so.

One finds that English majors account for more than 58 percent of the advisers, although both English and journalism instructors agree that, while the two courses may be similar, there is a wide difference in the subject matter taught and in the teaching techniques used. Both English and journalism deal with words, but quite often those words are shuffled around a little differently. This is like saying that basketball and marbles are the same because they both use spheres to make points.

The English student writes many themes, making liberal use of fiction. The journalism student is taught to hunt for facts and to leave the fiction to an occasional column. The English student writes for an audience of one--the teacher. The journalism student has no way of knowing the extent of his audience--or how many years his story will be around. What he writes becomes public information, and there is much pressure caused by that printed information being read, quoted, and criticized by others. Students take school newspapers home, and a single hastily written story can anger an entire community.

It appears that the typical adviser is short on years of experience in journalism. More than 60 percent of the advisers have four years or less experience, and approximately 80 percent have 9 years or less.

Journalism duties for Kansas advisers usually command extra hours of duty. Less than 10 percent said they did not need to spend extra time on their journalistic duties. Thirty percent put in from 3 to 4 hours extra per week. Perhaps extra pay for extra work should be the rule, but more than 52 percent of the advisers received no extra pay. Approximately 15 percent received from \$100 to \$199 a year extra.

Advisers appeared to be reluctant to write about the financial status of



their newspapers. In general, about 33 percent of the papers broke even, but others indicated losses ranging up to a high of \$1,100 for the previous year. School system subsidy and other sources such as yearbook funds occasionally were used to help make up the deficit in approximately 9 percent of the cases.

Nearly 37 percent of the newspaper income over the state came from advertising. School board subsidy accounted for approximately 31 percent. Approximately 39 percent of the papers did not have advertising, while approximately 17 percent charged from \$1.00 to \$1.49 per column inch per issue.

Semester subscriptions were not sold in approximately 56 percent of the schools. Approximately 18 percent charged from 50 cents to 99 cents per semester.

Some advisers found it necessary to supplement their newspaper income by selling photographs, food, or novelties, or by putting on special events such as a carnival, variety show, or car wash.

Newspaper staffs were made up with more girls than boys in nearly the same ratio that newspaper advisers listed more females than men--nearly two to one. Approximately 35 percent of the advisers indicated they had from 11 to 15 members on their newspaper staff. An average class would contain approximately 6 boys and 11 girls.

Approximately 73 percent of the schools responding to the questionnaire offered at least beginning journalism. Approximately 27 percent offered further instruction, while approximately 10 percent offered journalism as a part of the English course. Nearly 14 percent indicated that they had no formal journalism course, using office practice or typing classes or letting the local newspaper take care of the school news.

Nearly 41 percent of the schools in Kansas print their newspapers by

offset, while approximately 38 percent use a mimeograph or a spirit duplicator. Nearly 14 percent use letterpress.

Approximately 10 percent of the school newspapers were published weekly, with approximately 33 percent publishing every two weeks, and approximately 20 percent publishing every four weeks.

Advisers have problems in many areas, the greatest of which is developing a good staff, according to approximately 48 percent. Financial problems bothered more than 19 percent, approximately 16 percent listed physical production of the paper as a problem, more than 3 percent were concerned with facilities and space, and nearly 3 percent thought their major problem was administrator censorship. Approximately 10 percent listed other problems dealing with student interest, early deadlines, lack of carry-over from one year to the next, finding the time to do a good job, and getting cooperation from administrators and faculty members. Only two (1.74 percent) of the advisers failed to indicate any problem in journalism.

Certain conclusions center upon the adviser's training--or lack of training. At this writing the state requirement for teaching a course in journalism is a minimum of six college hours in journalism; however, nearly one-fourth of the advisers in Kansas are teaching with no hours. As a part of the curriculum, journalism should be taught by advisers who have been as well trained as English or typing or history teachers have been trained in their subject areas.

Perhaps the situation will improve due to the efforts of the Kansas Organization of Publications and Advisers, who have been in touch with the Kansas State Department of Education in Topeka. This state organization of journalism advisers has recommended to the Kansas Advisory Council on Education

that the certification for journalism teachers should be upgraded. The present six-hour requirement, they state, is no longer adequate to qualify instructors to teach an academic course in journalism. The KOPA recommends that qualified journalism teachers have 12 hours of journalism by 1973 (6).

Being a journalism adviser has a certain reputation for being "hazardous duty," partly due to the permanence of a printed page containing a remark felt to be detrimental to an institution or individual. The author has heard many times that the average journalism teacher can look for a tenure of three years in a typical Kansas high school, but unfortunately cannot find a source for that remark. It might be interesting to do a study on the length of tenure for a Kansas journalism teacher.

Although more than 90 percent of the advisers put in extra time on their journalistic duties, more than half of the advisers receive no compensation financially. Few teachers would object to donating an hour or two now and then, but some advisers put in an extra 20 hours per week. There should be enough time available to do a good job during the school day. Failing that, there should be extra compensation for overtime work.

Financial problems concerned about two-thirds of the advisers, and although approximately 33 percent broke even, twenty percent showed a deficit the preceding year. Because 41 (35.65 percent) chose not to respond to this item, it was difficult to arrive at a conclusion. The twenty percent who showed a deficit were examined in greater detail. Nine (7.83 percent) sold both advertising and subscriptions and still made a deficit. Six (5.22 percent) sold ads but no subscriptions. Five (4.35 percent) sold subscriptions but no ads. It might be interesting to pay further attention to the methods and efficiency of the advertising and subscription sales campaigns, as well as

adviser training in the business side of running a student publication.

Girls outnumber boys on newspaper staffs by about two to one, nearly the same ratio as women to men advisers. Girls appear to be more academically inclined than boys and readily accept the discipline required in learning how to use the written word. It may be that by the time a boy gets to be a junior or senior in high school, former English teachers have soured him on anything that looks like English.

Further research might investigate the proportion of journalism high school students who eventually become newspaper advisers.

Nearly one-fourth of the schools contacted offered journalism as part of English or not at all. If journalism is offered by the school as part of the educational program, it should be listed in the curriculum of the school.

A continuing trend toward offset printing is shown by the nearly 41 per cent who use this method of newspaper production. Although high in initial cost, the offset process is more versatile and allows a greater use of photographs. There may be some relationship between the method of production and the financial status of the paper. It also might be interesting to look at the frequency of publication in reference to financial problems. Nearly one-third of the papers publish every two weeks.

Among all the problems of the adviser, developing a good staff was listed by nearly half of those responding to the questionnaire. Part of the problem of developing a good staff may come from instances where only one course is offered in journalism. This cuts out any of the experienced staff members who might return another year. To an adviser, this is comparable to a coach starting a new season each year with a brand new bunch of boys who had never played the game before.

It appears on the basis of this study that journalism advisers do have legitimate, wide-spread complaints, and there is a need for revision of some of the commonly accepted "journalistic" practices now found in Kansas high schools. Journalism advisers need to be trained the same as a business teacher or a math teacher. Further research might investigate to see how willing a school would be to hire a journalism teacher with no college training, and then find out if that same school would (or could) hire an English teacher or a business teacher with no college training.

Would an administrator who censors a school paper extend this power into other fields, such as home economics and sex education, or censoring a drama production?

Does a deficit in a journalism class receive the same attention given to a deficit in the music department or the drama department?

There appears to be no single, clear-cut solution to the dilemma of the journalism adviser in Kansas, but part of the solution may well lie in further education of the student, the adviser, and the administration as to the functions and the possibilities of the high school newspaper.

When qualified, enthusiastic advisers have the time, money, and staff, they will publish a quality newspaper that will be a credit to their schools and communities.

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## APPENDIX A



KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY *Manhattan, Kansas 66502*

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
HOLTON HALL  
PH 522 6764

Dear Teacher of Journalism:

Mr. Ray Booth, a journalism teacher for many years at Clay Center Community High School and a graduate student in the College of Education at Kansas State University, is conducting a survey of journalism education in the high schools of the state of Kansas. His findings and conclusions will constitute a Master's report to fulfill the requirements of the Master's degree. Ultimately, his findings and conclusions should be of help to you in your planning for future journalism classes and in helping to determine future certification requirements in journalism education.

Please take a few moments to fill out the enclosed questionnaire in order that he may have complete coverage on which to base his recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard G. Hause".

Richard G. Hause  
Associate Professor

RGH:mcs

Enclosure



## **APPENDIX B**

# Clay Center Community High School

1630 9TH CLAY CENTER, KANSAS 67432  
913 ME 2-2131

EDWIN L. BUTTERFIELD, PRINCIPAL

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 378  
CLAY COUNTY

Dear Colleague:

In my work with the Kansas Organization of Publications and Advisers the past several years as member and president, I have become increasingly aware of certain problems in Kansas high school journalism.

This survey is designed to take a look at the present conditions in Kansas. The findings will be made available to the KOPA and to you upon request.

In the interests of better journalism, please give me about 10 minutes of your time, circle your responses, and return the questionnaire to me in the enclosed stamped envelope.

May I look for your return within two weeks?

Sincerely,

*Ray Booth*  
Ray Booth

## JOURNALISM QUESTIONNAIRE

**DIRECTIONS:** Please circle the response that identifies your situation. Feel free to use the "Other" response where applicable. Your comments are invited in the margins.

- | NAME OF PAPER                  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. The class of our school is: | 5. The newspaper is published:   |
| 1. AAAAA                       | 1. Weekly  |
| 2. AAAA                        | 2. Every 2 weeks   |
| 3. AAA                         | 3. Every 3 weeks   |
| 4. AA                          | 4. Every 4 weeks   |
| 5. A                           | 5. Other; specify _____  |
| 2. Our school is:              | 6. I have this number of semester hours (quarter hours) in journalism: |
| 1. Public                      | 1. none  |
| 2. Parochial                   | 2. 0-6   |
| 3. Other; specify _____        | 3. 7-12  |
| 3. Our school is:              | 4. 13-18   |
| 1. 4-year high school          | 5. 19 or more  |
| 2. 3-year high school          | 6. masters degree  |
| 3. Other; specify _____        | 7. Specify if these are:   |
| 4. My sex is:                  | 1. semester hours  |
| 1. female                      | 2. quarter hours   |
| 2. male                        |  |

8. My college major was:
  1. Journalism
  2. English
  3. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
9. Our newspaper income is mostly from:
  1. Advertising
  2. Activity fee
  3. School board subsidy
  4. Subscription sales
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
10. A subsidy is received from:
  1. Nobody
  2. School system funds
  3. Student body funds (student council, classes, etc.)
  4. Yearbook funds
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
11. Other sources of income are:
  1. Student activity cards
  2. Photographs
  3. Food, e.g., hot dogs, popcorn
  4. Soft drinks
  5. Pay assemblies
  6. Social events, e.g., dances
  7. Selling novelties
  8. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
12. Financially our school paper last year:
  1. Made a profit
  2. Broke even
  3. Made a deficit
13. Our school newspaper profit last year was:
  1. Non-existent
  2. Under \$50
  3. \$50—\$100
  4. \$100—\$200
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
14. Our school newspaper deficit last year was:
  1. Non-existent
  2. Under \$50
  3. \$50—\$100
  4. \$100—\$200
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
15. The deficit was made up by:
  1. Not applicable
  2. Student body subsidy
  3. School system subsidy
  4. Yearbook subsidy
  5. Other source; specify \_\_\_\_\_

16. The advertising rate per column inch per one issue is:
1. We do not have advertising.
  2. 0—\$.49
  3. \$.50—\$.99
  4. \$1.00—\$1.49
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
17. The number of students on the newspaper staff this year is:
1. 1—10
  2. 11—15
  3. 16—20
  4. 21—25
  5. 26 or more
18. The newspaper staff consists of: (number)
- \_\_\_\_\_ boys  
\_\_\_\_\_ girls
19. Our school newspaper is:
1. Duplicated
  2. Printed Offset
  3. Printed Letterpress
  4. Don't know
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
20. Semester subscriptions are sold for:
1. Not sold
  2. \$.49—or less
  3. \$.50—\$.99
  4. \$1.00—\$1.49
  5. \$1.50—or more
21. We offer these journalism courses:
1. Beginning
  2. Intermediate
  3. Advanced
  4. Section of English
  5. None
  6. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
22. I have had this many years as a newspaper adviser counting this year:
1. one
  2. 2—4
  3. 5—9
  4. 10—14
  5. 15—19
  6. 20—24
  7. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_
23. I spend this many extra hours of my own time per week on journalism duties outside of regular class time:
1. None
  2. 1—2 hours
  3. 3—4 hours
  4. 4—5 hours
  5. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_

24. I receive this much extra pay a year for journalism activities:

1. None
2. Under \$50
3. \$50—\$99
4. \$100—\$199
5. \$200—\$299
6. \$300—\$399
7. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_

25. The greatest problem of the adviser is:

1. Financing the newspaper
2. Developing a good staff
3. Improving facilities and space
4. Physical production of the newspaper
5. Administrator censorship
6. Other; specify \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

# Clay Center Community High School

1630 9TH CLAY CENTER, KANSAS 67432  
913 ME 2-2131

EDWIN L. BUTTERFIELD, PRINCIPAL

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 379  
CLAY COUNTY

Dear Colleague:

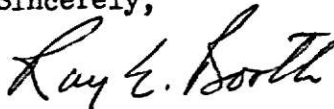
I am taking the liberty of again sending you a journalism questionnaire with the thought in mind that the first one has gone astray.

Quite possibly this letter and your questionnaire are going to cross in the mail, but I would sincerely appreciate having your information.

Again I enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope along with the questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ray E. Booth".

Ray E. Booth

**A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS**

**by**

**RAY E. BOOTH**

**B. S., Kansas State University, 1949**

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**AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT**

**submitted in partial fulfillment of the**

**requirements for the degree**

**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

**College of Education**

**KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas**

**1971**



During the nearly twenty years the author has been a newspaper adviser, he has heard the same complaints from fellow advisers over and over again. These dealt with such things as lack of training for the adviser, financial problems with the newspaper, writing and production problems, and administrator censorship.

A sample population of the high schools in Kansas which offered journalism were examined to determine pertinent information about the current situation. The findings would indicate weak areas in journalism, thus leading to eventual improvement.

A questionnaire of 25 points was constructed with all items of the multiple choice type with an "other" option. After revision the questionnaire was printed by offset on both sides of a single sheet of paper, resulting in a four-page instrument of conventional size measuring 8-1/2 by 11 inches. The questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 131 (50 percent) of the advisers in Kansas who were listed in the Membership Directory published by the Kansas State High School Activities Association, Topeka, Kansas. A second mailing was sent to the non-respondents and resulted in a total of 119 (90 percent) returns. Of these, four of the advisers indicated they had no journalism program or school paper this year. This left a total of 115 responses to be used in analyzing the data. Wide margins and much white space were used in the questionnaire, and advisers responded freely with many comments. This gave a deep insight into adviser problems.

The data was key punched on cards and then was tabulated by a computer.

The answers were grouped into the following categories: School Information, Adviser Data, Financial Facts and Figures, Staff Data, Writing and Production Methods, and Problem Areas.

Represented in the survey were 105 public high schools, 9 parochial schools, and 1 private school.

There were nearly twice as many women advisers as men. Nearly one-fourth of the advisers in Kansas had no college training in journalism. English majors accounted for more than 58 percent of the advisers. Other advisers had backgrounds in such unrelated fields as business, education, speech, music, physical education, and psychology.

Approximately 80 percent of the advisers had 9 years or less experience in teaching journalism. Approximately 90 percent indicated they put in extra hours on journalistic related duties, but more than 52 percent received no extra pay.

Advisers were reluctant to write about the financial status of their newspapers, but it appeared that about one-third of the papers were breaking even.

Newspaper staffs showed about twice as many girls as boys who were enrolled in journalism. An average class contained approximately 6 boys and 11 girls.

Approximately 73 percent of the schools offered at least one course in beginning journalism, another 27 percent offered further training, and 10 percent tied in journalism with an English course.

Approximately 41 percent of the schools printed their papers by offset, and about 38 percent used mimeograph or spirit duplicator. Only 10 percent of the papers were published weekly, with approximately 33 percent publishing every two weeks, and 20 percent appearing every four weeks.

Advisers commented on many problems, the greatest of which was developing a good staff, according to 48 percent of the respondents. More than 19

percent were concerned with financial problems. Approximately 16 percent listed physical production of the paper as a problem, more than 3 percent were concerned with facilities and space, and nearly 3 percent thought their major problem was administrator censorship.

Other problems mentioned included student interest, early deadlines, lack of carry-over in staff, finding the time to do a good job, and getting cooperation from administrators and faculty members. Only two (1.74 percent) of the advisers failed to indicate any problem in journalism.

A summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research are included in the report.