THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

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THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

THESIS

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

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

180182
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Fort Worth, Texas
August, 1950
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Newspapers are becoming a tradition in an increasing number of elementary schools.¹ This fact has implications for all elementary schools today, for if the school publishes a newspaper, it is serving as a determining influence in the life of the school. The manner in which it is published, and the purposes which it has will determine whether it is a good or bad influence. The extent of that influence is suggested by the fact that Taylor found in a study in 1941 that over 3,000 elementary schools in the country were publishing school newspapers.²

Statement and Purpose of the Problem

The problem in this study is to determine the educational value of the school newspaper in the elementary school. The elementary school newspaper is a comparatively new development in the elementary school program.

Many elementary schools are now publishing newspapers


²William Taylor, "Journalism, An Important Discipline," School and Society, LIII (February 8, 1941), 185-186.
of some kind, but many others have no publication at all. Many plans and organizations are to be found in those schools publishing papers. The purpose of this study is to determine what educational values, if any, for the student and the school may be derived from the school's sponsoring of such a publication. It is hoped that this study will be of benefit in setting up a newspaper in elementary schools which have none; and that it will be of benefit in appraising the educational values of the school newspaper in elementary schools which now have such publications.

Sources of Data

The data for this study were obtained from questionnaires answered by elementary school principals of fifty schools in Texas, selected at random, and from books and magazine articles written about the elementary school newspaper. A copy of the questionnaire used is incorporated in the appendix of this study.

Terminology

For the purposes of this study the terms "school newspaper" and "publication" will be used interchangeably. Either term will be taken to mean a school-sponsored periodical issued for the purpose of disseminating news and furnishing a creative outlet for student writing.

The term "mimeograph" is used for any process by which written or typewritten matter is reproduced or duplicated.
The mimeographed newspapers are produced with a number of different trade-makes of apparatus.  

Limitations

This study was limited to the investigation of school newspapers in thirty-five elementary schools in Fort Worth, Texas, five elementary schools in Orange, Texas, four elementary schools in Austin, Texas, two elementary schools in Denton, Texas, and one elementary school each in Arlington, Texas, Birdville, Texas, Grapevine, Texas, and Pecan Springs, Texas. The schools range in size from city schools to a two-teacher rural school.

Procedure of the Study

A survey of educational literature on the subject was made and a questionnaire constructed. Related studies, general educational books, and magazine articles were read, and are reported on in Chapter II. The material in Chapter II is included in order to determine the value placed on the elementary school newspaper by the current thinking of educational leaders who contribute the professional literature of the times.

Questionnaires were submitted to the principals of Texas elementary schools, selected at random. The results

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of the questionnaire were tabulated item-by-item and are analyzed in Chapter III. Because of the large block of Fort Worth schools included, replies of Fort Worth principals were compared with replies of principals of schools in other cities.

Related Studies

Keener evaluated the student-published school newspaper in one elementary school in an evaluation covering four phases.⁴ These phases are: number of articles submitted for publication; distribution of articles by school grade; interest manifested by those who managed the paper; and attitudes of pupils and teachers in general toward the school newspaper.

Some of the conclusions reached by Keener are:

1. The number of articles for the four papers issued during the spring semester covered by the survey increased from twenty-six in the March issue to forty-two in the April issue, to forty-three in the May issue, and to sixty-six in the June issue.

2. In the first issue the eighth-grade class that managed the paper submitted eighty-eight per cent of the articles, and in the last issue only thirty-three per cent. The range of grades contributing to the last issue was from the kindergarten to grade eight.

3. The interest of the class that managed the newspaper grew rapidly during the semester.

4. Both students and teachers were found to be very favorable to the publication of the paper.⁵


⁵Ibid.
Ferguson gathered data from fifty Oregon elementary schools by questionnaire and analysis of copies of the school newspapers. The study covered values given by principals and an analysis of content and other mechanical aspects of the individual papers. The conclusions reached by Ferguson are:

1. Elementary school principals and teachers who work with the school newspaper believe that a school paper has a number of values, the most important being that it provides a means of self-expression and informs parents of school activities.

2. The wide variation in form and style of the papers suggest that research is needed in all areas of the elementary school newspaper "make-up."

Thomas made a study of fifty-five elementary school newspapers, which were collected by means of a form-letter request sent to principals in various parts of the country. The principals were also asked to contribute statements about their school newspapers, covering purposes, organization, financing, publication, and distribution of the newspaper. The papers were analyzed according to their standards of excellence mechanically and journalistically, and from the statements by the principals, some general principles guiding the publication of newspapers were formulated.

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6 K. R. Ferguson, "The Elementary School Newspaper in Oregon," National Elementary Principal, XXII (December, 1942), 92.

7 Ibid.

Lacey made a survey of 217 schools, representing seventy-seven cities located in thirty states. Criteria for judging pupil publications were formulated from the data gathered in this survey.

Lacey concludes that the value of a pupil publication depends upon:

1. The continuity of its evident purpose, to fit the needs of the school and the community which it serves.
2. The suitability of style and pleasing make-up.
3. The degree to which pupils participate in its management under successfully subordinated but clearly defined faculty supervision.
4. The extent to which the whole school actively contributes to the project.
5. The stability of its financial basis.
6. Its standard of workmanship.
7. The extent to which it gives a perfect reflection of the life of the school.

The writers of the related studies reported on agree that there are many educational values which the school newspaper provides. These values are presented in greater detail in Chapter II.

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9 Georgia Hensley Lacey, "Pupil Publications," The Principal and His Community, Eleventh Yearbook, Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association, pp. 350-359.

10 Ibid., p. 359.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSPAPER RELATED TO THIS INVESTIGATION

"Schools that do not publish some type of newspaper never realize what the school and community miss."¹ Although not the most important educational activity in the elementary school, the school newspaper is recognized by educational writers as very valuable.

Taylor says that where he found a school that had a school newspaper, it was, generally, a progressive school doing a good job of keeping abreast of a rapidly changing civilization, a school that was turning out boys and girls with a better foundation for standing the shocks of life, and with the ability to fit themselves into their niches in modern living with greater ease.²

Quoting L. L. Perry, director of information and publications of the Georgia Department of Education, Taylor says:

I believe the two greatest shortcomings of the public schools are the failure of the schools to develop on the part of the child wholesome reading habits, which is the chief permanent means of self-improvement and the failure on the part of the school to develop within the individual the power of fluency.

¹F. M. McCarty, "Every School Should Have a School Newspaper," The Texas Outlook, XXIX (July, 1945), 42.

²Taylor, op. cit., p. 185.
of self-expression. The experiences in wholesome reading and self-expression could be made tangible for the majority of our school children through the school paper.3

Many values and purposes have been ascribed to the elementary school newspaper by educators throughout the country. The fact that most of the professional literature surveyed for this study was written by elementary school principals rather than the newspaper advisers would seem to add authority to the statements. It is felt that the principals would more readily see and publicize the faults of the school newspapers than would the teachers who help produce them. Furthermore, it is assumed that the values placed on the newspaper by the principal are more valid and fit more appropriately into the entire school pattern.

Objectives

Since the elementary school newspaper is an educational device of the schools, the objectives of a school newspaper must come as an outgrowth of the aims and purposes of the particular school in which it is published.

Lacey says of the objectives of the school paper:

The aims and purposes must be definitely and specifically formulated so that all efforts may be directed to achieve them.

In general, the aims will be to meet the child's needs and at the same time make the project educative, to provide a natural stimulus for written composition, to inspire a united desire to promote the ideals of the

3Ibid., p. 186.
school, and to make the publication so worthwhile as a means of interpreting the school to itself and to its community that the expense in time, effort, and money will be justified.  

Fretwell highlights the objectives of the elementary school newspaper by stating:

The newspaper can, and in many schools does express the achievement, the life, the joy, the enthusiasm and idealism of the school; this expression is not by a direct preaching on these subjects, but by a clear write-up of the manifestations of these qualities.  

Hildreth lists the following objectives:

A school paper run by the pupils under the direction of teachers affords many values—opportunities for children in several grades to work and plan together, chances to develop and practice leadership, a means of building school spirit, an incentive to improvement in expression, an outlet for creative expression in language and art, and a means of establishing contacts with the parents.  

Emphasizing one objective, Lee and Lee say:

The main function of the school newspaper is to provide children with an opportunity for creative expression. At the present time, comparatively few elementary schools are utilizing this effective language outlet.  

Thomas lists specific objectives for the elementary school newspaper, given by principals of elementary schools participating in a survey:

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4Lacey, op. cit., p. 356.


Specific purposes given by contributors include: to develop closer contact and cooperation between home and school and the community at large; to train and develop the character habits of honesty, judgment, responsibility, tact, courtesy, and self-control; to promote a spirit of cooperation and teamwork within the school; to give boys and girls a chance to develop qualities of leadership and to assume responsibility; to give everyone an opportunity for self-expression; to create an incentive for literary work; to build better school morale and citizenship; to encourage pupil participation; to give children opportunity for real-life experiences and for suitable expression of their interests and abilities; to bring a closer relationship between the school and the home.

Combining the items most often mentioned in the foregoing statements of objectives, it is possible to formulate six general objectives for the elementary school newspaper as an educational medium.

1. To encourage creative expression by all students.

2. To interpret and solidify school and community relations.

3. To motivate written expression.

4. To build school morale and unify the separate functions of the school.

5. To aid in building character.

6. To serve as a socializing force within the school.

Mechanical Aspects of Producing the Elementary School Newspaper

The actual mechanics of producing the school newspaper raise one of the major problems in connection with this

\[8\text{Thomas, op. cit., p. 479.}\]
learning device in the elementary school. Many educators base their strongest objections to the school newspaper in the elementary school on the mechanical difficulty of producing such a publication. However, other educators point to the mechanical techniques as a means of giving children additional real-life experiences in learning skills and general business information which they would never encounter in ordinary classroom situations.

Some educators pessimistically and dogmatically state that elementary school children cannot learn to cut stencils and operate a mimeograph machine and that the school newspaper will place an additional burden on teachers or office personnel.

Wood and Freeman found in an experiment conducted over a period of one school year that elementary school students could learn to operate the typewriter efficiently at a speed equal to their handwriting speed, with no loss of efficiency in handwriting, and with an increased motivation for written expression.⁹

Many educators report that the mimeographing, at least, for each issue of the school paper is done entirely by their elementary school students.

⁹Ben D. Wood and Frank N. Freeman, An Experimental Study of the Educational Influences of the Typewriter in the Elementary School Classroom.
Keener says:

Before the end of school, the students were eager to manage the various phases of the publication. The last issue of the paper was produced almost wholly by the pupils. They secured the articles, edited them, typed them, arranged them in columns, cut the stencils, operated the mimeograph machine, stapled the sheets together, sold the papers and kept an accurate record of their cash accounts. It is hardly surprising that they learned a great deal, not only in the ability to use English correctly, but also in the office skills and in the exercise of initiative, reliability, and industry.\(^\text{10}\)

Mackintosh states:

Regardless of the form of the product, the experience of planning, organizing, and executing is as valuable a result as is excellence of appearance and content.

\[\ldots\]

For each issue certain boys and girls had the responsibility of assembling material, organizing it into a 'dummy', running the mimeograph, assembling the separate sheets for stapling, and managing the sale of the publication.\(^\text{11}\)

Analyzing the school paper in his own school, Baker reports:

Ideally the work of cutting the stencils might be done by the children. Pupils do some of the mimeoscope work but as a general practice the school secretary prepares the stencils. The pupils do run the copies off on the mimeograph. Assembling the mimeographed sheets into complete copies of the paper, stapling the sheets together, inspecting each copy, and counting out the number of copies needed to supply the various classrooms are other duties performed by special committees or by individuals designated by the group in charge. In other words, this project is such that a great many

\(^{10}\)Keener, op. cit., p. 455.

\(^{11}\)Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 370.
individual children have certain specific tasks to do, all working together to produce the final copy of the paper.\textsuperscript{12}

Thomas refutes the idea that elementary school children cannot learn the mechanical skills necessary for producing the school newspaper, saying, "The entire publication of the mimeographed newspaper can be carried on by the children within the school."\textsuperscript{13} Thomas also says:

Other members of the newspaper staff should print the paper on the school duplication machine. Collection of money for subscriptions and actual distribution of papers to rooms and children may be handled by a business staff.\textsuperscript{14}

It appears that the school administrator who states that the elementary child cannot perform any of the mechanical skills necessary to produce a school newspaper is grossly underestimating the children's capabilities. Furthermore, such unyielding judgment of student abilities without at least an honest experiment seems to cheat the children in those schools of a rich and valuable learning medium.

The mimeographed newspaper is by far the most popular and desirable type for the elementary school because of its cheapness, availability, and learning opportunities.

Lee and Lee state:

School newspapers have been thought of as an activity to be carried out in the secondary school.


\textsuperscript{13}Thomas, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 475. \textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 476.
The excellence of mimeographed copy makes possible the production of a newspaper in practically all schools.

Most of the elementary school papers are mimeographed which seems to be the best method of reproduction for use in the elementary school. It means that students can take part in more of the processes of reproduction, the paper can contain more illustrations, it is cheaper, and in most cases it can be distributed free.\textsuperscript{15}

Thomas says: "One advantage of the mimeographed type of school paper is that it is issued quite frequently during the school year."\textsuperscript{16}

McKown says:

Many schools which probably could and should never publish a printed paper can just as happily and educatively publish one in duplicated form. Not only has such a paper the advantage of being inexpensive and comparatively easy to produce, but also it can very accurately and completely imitate the printed paper in organization, material, and make-up.\textsuperscript{17}

McKown also states:

There are several forms of school newspapers, varying from the oral to the printed, and each of these is quite appropriate for certain types of schools. This is only another way of saying that every school can and should have a newspaper of some kind.\textsuperscript{18}

Financing and Distributing the School Paper

Another problem facing the school which publishes a

\textsuperscript{15}Lee and Lee, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 271-273.

\textsuperscript{16}Thomas, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 477.

\textsuperscript{17}Harry C. McKown, \textit{Activities in the Elementary School}, p. 324.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 322.
school newspaper is the question of how to pay the necessary costs. The problem of distribution of the papers once they are produced is closely connected with financing it. The method of financing the paper will determine in great part the effectiveness of the distribution.

Some schools meet the costs of producing a paper by selling copies to the students. Others sell advertising in the newspaper. A third method, used least frequently, is for the school to include the costs of the paper in the school budget as a desirable means of student education.

While the cost of producing a mimeographed newspaper is slight, the money must come from some source, and many educators resist the idea of adding the cost to the school budget. Others cite the disadvantages of sales and advertising and advocate having the school meet all costs.

Lacey says:

The publication should be self-supporting. This may be achieved through subscription sales and advertising, though ideally the board of education finances the undertaking and all pupils receive copies free of charge.19

Thomas says:

The question of soliciting paid advertisements from local merchants or others in the community is one on which there has been considerable debate. The tendency is to eliminate this method of school newspaper support. Even those elementary-school papers that must depend upon this source of support have reduced the amount of advertising included in each issue.20

19 Lacey, op. cit., p. 358. 20 Thomas, op. cit., p. 498.
The greatest objection to financing the school paper through sales and advertising is that some students who do not have the money to buy a copy are thus deprived of whatever educational value the publication may possess. Advertising takes the place of material which may have more value to the students and tends to be considered as a donation by the merchants.

Baker, analyzing the school paper in his school, states the case for school support of the elementary school newspaper in this way:

One other policy with respect to our school paper deserves emphasis. Every child in the school receives a copy of it without charge. The materials for the paper are purchased from the regular budget for public education and no child is denied a copy because he cannot pay for it.21

Another elementary school principal, quoted by Thomas, says:

We use no advertising. We do not feel that we care to demand money from friends and neighbors unless we know that we can give value received. Everyone knows all of the stores in our small town of 1,300. Any advertising we might secure would be of doubtful financial value to the person who paid us for it. If our publication has educational value, it should be paid for from regular school funds as a regular part of the school program.22

McKown says:

In some schools the newspaper is not sold to the pupils, but given to them, being financed by the council, the activities ticket, the board of education,


22Thomas, op. cit., p. 499.
or other means. Probably this practice represents the desirable ultimate development.\textsuperscript{23}

Emphasizing the value of 100 per cent circulation, Thomas says:

To have the greatest influence, the newspaper should have as wide-spread distribution as possible. The aim should be to reach every family. Even better, if every child might secure a copy for study in the classroom, the newspaper would have greater interest for all the children. The real value of the newspaper as a stimulus for other activities in the school cannot be attained until every child feels that the paper is a part of his school life.\textsuperscript{24}

Contents of the Elementary School Paper

What type of material should be contained in the elementary school newspaper? Who should do all the work? What is the source and purpose of the contents of the paper? These and other questions are of concern to educators who are charged with the responsibility of the elementary school newspaper.

McKown says:

In any case, one principle is very important—the elementary school publication should not be a slavish imitation of the corresponding publication of the high school or college, nor should it attempt to rival or outdo these. It should develop naturally out of the local setting and be appropriate for it.\textsuperscript{25}

Lee and Lee state:

The newspaper at the elementary level needn't be a model of a commercial journal. The test of the

\textsuperscript{23} McKown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 341. \textsuperscript{24} Thomas, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 497. \textsuperscript{25} McKown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 318.
successful school paper should be its representativeness of the children and their curriculum—not how closely it approximates professional journalism. Instead of a few reporters selected for their competence in writing skills, the writing of the 'news' should be done by children of all classes, clubs, or activities. The school newspaper should be something more than an outlet for a talented group of children. 26

Highlighting this idea that the content of the school paper should be an outgrowth of student life within the school, a bulletin of the Seattle Public Schools states:

"Good written expression, like good oral expression, depends upon a wide range of interests and the need of community ideas. Moreover, clear thinking, an essential for effective writing, is possible only if the ideas about which a child writes are within his own experiences and concern those things which he really understands." 27

Thomas says, "A school newspaper should be based upon the needs of the children in the school. The type of contents should vary between schools in different districts." 28

Taylor says of the source of content:

"This relatively new discipline [journalism] is a vital force in progressive education. Journalism says to the pupil: 'There are a great many dramatic events going on about you, and you are a part of that dramatic world. Your environment teems with riches. Your world challenges the eye to see, the ear to hear, and the heart to understand.'" 29

There seems to be general agreement that contributions to the elementary school newspaper should come from all levels of the school.

Thomas says:

The newspaper should be a project of the entire school. All children should have the chance to contribute items for the paper. Selection will be on a basis of adaptability for use.

The most effective school papers are those which represent all of the activities in the school. Parents read these papers with considerable interest. The entire community keeps acquainted with all of the developments in the school.  

Baker states:

Material for the paper comes usually from every class group in the school, even from the kindergarten groups where the children dictate something that is written up by the teacher. The paper is published in such form that credit can be given to class groups or individuals for almost all the material included.

Barnett reports that children who lacked writing skill or desire to express thoughts on paper were aided by dictation, personal conferences, and development of group stories.

Pugsley concludes that the work of the lower grades should receive greatly increased attention in school publications and that elementary schools should evaluate critically the content of their publications.

Aside from other considerations of the contents of the 

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30 Thomas, op. cit., p. 477.  
32 Margaret Barnett, "Our Class Newspaper," Creative Schools, Twenty-Third Yearbook, Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association, p. 27.  
school paper, the actual writing of the articles by the pupils is of supreme value.

Taylor says:

The younger alive to the commonplace soon realizes that, to present his discoveries to his fellows, he must acquire a power over words; he must master a technique that has grown up about this experience-sharing practice, as the most forceful and economical method of setting down what the individuals do and feel and think. He is adventuring with life; he must adventure with language, too, and he has a motive for doing it. 34

According to Thomas, "To make composition work purposeful, pupils must write because they have something to say to someone who is really waiting to read what they write." 35

The newspaper should contain articles about things of interest to the pupil, and about things which are meaningful in the school. Gossip, clipped jokes, and senseless patter lower the dignity of the newspaper, and serve no purpose. Through the use of effective and interesting presentation, serious and valuable aspects of the school can be included in the newspaper, and still retain the interest of the child.

McAndless says: "The school newspaper should highlight the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the World Charter; and it should make the Four Freedoms meaningful." 36

34 Taylor, op. cit., p. 186. 35 Thomas, op. cit., p. 479.

The newspaper should not become a dry textbook of information, however. The articles should be about things the children are doing and have done and should strive for the gaiety and liveliness of children themselves.

Another phase of the content of the school newspaper is the amount of pupil participation that is evident in the writing of the material for the newspaper. The relationship between the teacher and the students in this respect is all-important. Some educators object to the newspaper in the elementary school on the grounds that the teachers will have to do all of the work of producing the paper. Most educators who have written professionally on the subject insist, however, that pupil participation is the very essence of the school newspaper and strongly urge that the teacher keep hands off the actual writing of the articles.

Thomas says:

Even at the beginning, the newspaper should be largely the product of the children. It should not be merely a medium thru which the principal may disseminate publicity about the school. Neither should the material be written largely by the teachers. It will take some time for children to become skillful in the preparation of articles for the newspaper, but their efforts should be accepted even tho they fall far short of the standards which have been set. 37

Lacey dwells lengthily on this subject of pupil participation and teacher subordination:

Pupil participation is the *sine qua non* of every successful school publication.

In order to achieve the benefit of an exceedingly valuable experience to the greatest number of children, the entire school should contribute material to the school publication. There is grave danger in defeating its purposes if the contributors represent a small and active minority rather than the whole student body, if special children of superior ability are exploited, if the publication expresses the ideas of the small group who edit it, or if too many contributions come from the upper grades rather than allowing the publication to be used as an incentive for English composition in the lower grades as well.

Strong and enthusiastic faculty supervision has been recognized universally as a determining factor in the success of a publication. It is well to canvass carefully with the teachers the merits, dangers, and problems of the scheme, and enlist their interest and cooperation.

A live, competent teacher, interested in publishing a school paper and capable of working with others without friction should take charge. . . . Such advisers should have complete authority to supervise the publication, with plenty of freedom as well as responsibility. The principal must keep in touch with all plans since in his hands rests final authority, and since he alone can determine the relation of the school publication to every phase of the school's needs owing to his unbiased perspective.

To make the publication of a school paper a truly educative project by enlisting the greatest possible degree of pupil participation, requires that its supervisors become masters in the art of guiding pupil activities while remaining in the background. 38

Keener found:

At first many pupils were reluctant to submit articles either because they were not interested, or because they felt that they were unable to write for publication. When they had read articles written by their classmates, however, they were encouraged to make a try at writing. 39

38Lacey, op. cit., pp. 356-357.

39Keener, op. cit., p. 453.
Thus the school newspaper written by the teacher or dominated by the principal as a vehicle for his own publicity is of little value. It is a poor medium for publicizing the school, since the hand of the teacher or principal will be easily discernible, and reader interest of both parents and pupils will be at a low ebb.

Educational Values

Educators are in rather general agreement that the school publication in the elementary school offers some values to the school and the student. While some school men give grudging admission that some values may accrue, others are extremely enthusiastic in praising the values of this educational medium. Nowhere in the reading survey for this study was found a direct criticism of the school newspaper in the elementary school. All the authors who wrote on this phase of education found values in the enterprise. Certain values were so strongly emphasized that they stand out in bold relief. One such value is the creative outlet furnished to all students in school by the school newspaper.

Thomas says:

The school newspaper may serve to coordinate many of the other undertakings of the school. It may help to interpret other socializing opportunities to the school as a whole as well as to the community. The most important purpose of the school newspaper, however, is to provide an opportunity for the creative expression of the children in the school.40

40 Thomas, op. cit., p. 473.
Reporting the results of a survey among elementary school principals, Thomas found:

The most frequently discussed value of the school newspapers is that children are stimulated to creativeness in the fields of written expression. Most of the contributors [principals] feel that no other activity of the elementary school accomplishes as much to motivate the written expression of so many children. The newspaper gives a real experience.\textsuperscript{41}

Lacey says:

The importance of creative work, no matter what the field of endeavor may be, cannot be overemphasized. Pupil publications may be welcomed as one means of fostering creative expression of the literary type.\textsuperscript{42}

Taylor says:

His [the young reporter's] adventure in the field of junior journalism will stimulate the creative impulse to write, the scientific impulse to analyze and discover, and the critical impulse to read discriminately—especially the daily papers.\textsuperscript{43}

Another outstanding value of the school newspaper is its service in interpreting the school to the home and the community. Many educators find this to be the most valuable function of the school newspaper in the elementary school. Best results are not necessarily obtained when the principal deliberately sets out to load the paper with publicity, however. Most authorities point to the work of the pupils included in the paper as the most effective and interesting means of interpreting the school to the community.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 476. \textsuperscript{42} Lacey, op. cit., p. 359. \textsuperscript{43} Taylor, op. cit., p. 186.
Thomas says:

The chief value of the school newspaper as a medium for interpreting the school to the community lies in the material which children write for the paper in connection with their regular school work. A composition which is printed in the school paper because of its excellence helps to raise the standard for composition work and also presents actual school work to parents.

The newspaper should not make the mistake of serving merely as a medium for dissemination of publicity or propaganda about the school. The best way to interpret the school and the community to each other is to include interesting facts and descriptions about both of them.

The most important factors in the success of the school newspaper in school-community interpretation are (1) presentation of facts, (2) description of actual, interesting school events, (3) continuous publication during many years, and (4) frequent issues during the school year.  

Fretwell emphasizes that parents will read the school newspaper with a great deal of interest, because many items concerning their own children are printed. Therefore, the paper should have items about all children in school.

Pointing out the special community contacts made by the school newspaper, Mackintosh lists parent-teacher organizations, Red Cross and Community Chest drives, local elections, and school policy meetings as areas where the school newspaper can serve most effectively. The school paper thus fills a need of the school in meeting its public.

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44 Thomas, op. cit., pp. 489-492.
45 Fretwell, op. cit., p. 301.
46 Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 369.
Pulliam explains the public-relations value of the school newspaper in this way:

It gives to pupils, parents, regular newspapers, and other interested parties authentic news of the school and its activities--news which in its entirety could probably not be disseminated in any other way. In this way it serves to counteract the half-truths and distorted views of school life that the local papers sometimes disseminate.47

Jorgenson says:

The school paper has been a powerful influence in molding a fine community spirit. It has won for the school many good friends, and has brought school and community together.48

Citing the need for good public relations, McKown says that a chasm exists between the public schools and the community.49 The school newspaper can be used to bridge the gap caused by the fact that the parents visit the schools only when some extracurricular activity of the entertainment type is being sponsored and that the teachers almost never visit the homes of the children.

Kyte emphasizes student work in public relations:

Class newspapers, school newspapers, pupils' booklets to commemorate events and anniversaries, and pupils' special accounts of interesting experiences or observations constitute a specialized kind of material to be sent to the homes. They should

47Roscoe Pulliam, Extra-Instructional Activities of the Teacher, p. 235.


49McKown, op. cit., p. 319.
illustrate the nature of the good learning activities which the school is endeavoring to sponsor. Children as well as parents read school and class newspapers with keen interest and are influenced with respect to the school aims and procedures.50

A bulletin of the State School Superintendent of Illinois states:

Every school should have a newspaper. This will help to acquaint the parents with what is going on in the schoolroom. Furthermore, it may acquaint the children of the schoolroom with what is going on in the community. It is very essential that much public relations work be carried on. Every school, regardless of size, can have its own newspaper.51

Selby says:

Of late years the school newspaper has taken its place as a medium of publicity in the elementary schools. In general, the greatest value of the paper is in presenting in varying degrees of excellence, typical examples of the composition work of children, and the projects that are being undertaken by them.52

The idea, hammered home by most of the authors cited, that examples of student work are more valuable as public-relations agents than deliberate attempts at informing the public through articles written by the principal is probably not as well recognized by the average principal as it should be.

50 George C. Kyte, The Principal at Work, p. 413.


The motivation of written expression and usable language skills through a real-life experience is another value of the elementary school newspaper emphasized by writers.

Pulliam says:

It [the school newspaper] provides the very best kind of motive for learning to produce correct and interesting written English work, inasmuch as it creates a real need for such work on the part of the pupils who contribute in any way to the making of the paper.53

Lacey states:

For training in English composition this project is unexcelled. Although not attempting to produce metropolitan journalism, the newspaper should try to abide by correct English standards from the first and strive for language which is fluent, spontaneous, and correct.54

Thomas says, "The production of the paper is as much a learning situation for many children as any other activity in which they engage."55

McCarty emphasizes the motivation value of the school newspaper, stating, "There is no better way to develop the students' abilities to express themselves in writing, and this unquestionably is one of the skills that all who expect to be successful need badly."56

A committee report of the National Council of Teachers

53 Pulliam, op. cit., p. 234.
54 Lacey, op. cit., p. 359.
55 Thomas, op. cit., p. 486.
56 McCarty, op. cit., p. 42.
of English, lists values of the school paper in motivating language skills:

The class newspaper or magazine is a stimulating source of vital and varied writing. There are provisions for (1) variety of subjects for composition, (2) pupil planning and direction, (3) functional teaching of language skills, and (4) pupil evaluation of results.57

The report also lists specific outcomes:

A felt need is created for acquiring a skill in proper form and a well-organized, rich content in English expression. Children are trained to express their thoughts in the fewest words possible. Original work in stories, poems, riddles, school jokes, and editorials is encouraged.58

Describing the newspaper of a fifth-grade group, Mackintosh says, "As a result of the year's work the boys and girls developed increased ability to organize their ideas and to evaluate their finished product."59

Another important value of the school newspaper is its use as a socializing force within the school. It gives recognition and credit to desirable activities carried on within the school, publicizes the advancement and development of the school, and is invariably called upon to support any undertaking started by any other activity of the school. Mackintosh says:

Of the many values that can be derived from the

57 Angela M. Broening, Conducting Experiences in English, Committee Report of National Council of Teachers of English, p. 175.

58 Ibid., p. 187.

59 Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 370.
newspaper, those which come from giving children the opportunity to work cooperatively in a social group, unifying the school thru having all groups share the responsibility for the success of the paper, giving the child a chance to spell, write, and draw for a purpose which is real to him, and providing a clearinghouse for other school interests and activities, are outstanding. 60

Mackintosh concludes: "If the teachers and principal have a vision of the wide usefulness of such an experience, the newspaper can be the most alive and absorbing interest of the school." 61

Baker says:

This project is such that a great many individual children have certain specific tasks to do, all working together to produce the final copy of the paper. This working together, assembly-line style, where there is dependence upon one another and where the quality of all work is checked upon by members of the group, has proved to be rather an unusual and valuable experience for our elementary-school pupils. Each finds that his work contributes to the final product and quickly understands that he must do his best if the final product is to be good. 62

Thomas says of this socializing force:

The school newspaper serves to coordinate and to unify the activities of the school. As much as any of the other activities of the school, the newspaper brings together the sometimes dissociated elements that tend to reduce the school's effectiveness. 63

Robbins explains the socializing force of the school newspaper in its effect on other agencies of the school:

It sees how all the school experiences and activities fit into the whole picture of the school. There

60 Ibid., p. 368. 61 Ibid., p. 372.
is no other group in the school which has such opportunity to see this relationship and then stimulate each organization to do its job. It is a distinct motivating force in activating school organizations and school programs.  

Wells summarizes the socializing force, stating:

The newspaper becomes the voice of the school. It unifies the school and encourages the best enterprises. It builds and influences school opinion, promotes scholarship, and develops good citizenship.  

Another value closely akin to that of the socializing force is that of creating morale within the school. The school newspaper is a dynamic force in shaping this vital and changeable state of mind of the students. This value alone would seem to make the newspaper a necessary component of the elementary school. Several authors rated the value to the morale of the school as one of the most important.

Berry says:

Many administrators have still to realize the proper function and true value of the school publication. They have failed somehow to note that a good paper is one of the strongest forces in creating school spirit, that it is the ideal means by which sound morale may be established. . . .  

Taylor states:

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64 Edward F. Robbins, "School Newspaper Trains for Citizenship," The Texas Outlook, XXVII (September, 1943), 58.

65 Wallis W. Wells, "Publishing the Grade School Paper," The Texas Outlook, XXV (September, 1941), 46.

While there are many more values that the individual may obtain from the publication of a school paper, there are others of a less personal nature that are of great importance—values that can not otherwise be realized quite so well as by the elementary-school newspaper.

One of these values may be the building of school morale. The elementary school newspaper can be made one of the most useful influences in building morale in the school. 67

The spirit of the entire school including the children, teachers, and principal is greatly influenced by the school paper, to the end that administrative efforts become cooperative enterprises. 68

Pulliam says of the school newspaper, "It provides an instrument through which public opinion among the pupils may be molded and crystallized for the good of the school." 69

McAndless gives some specific information about the manner in which school morale is built:

To insure mental health, every child needs security; every child needs to be useful to others; every child needs to think well of himself and his work. Every child needs an opportunity to feel responsibility. The school newspaper can help each child to gain the recognition he needs. 70

High morale leads into the final value listed by most authors—the building of character by the school newspaper. This is an often-cited value, and, indeed, should be a value

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68 Broening, op. cit., p. 188.
69 Pulliam, op. cit., p. 234.
70 McAndless, op. cit., p. 246.
of any activity in the school. Because the good school newspaper touches all children in the school in greater or less degree, it is particularly effective in training for citizenship. Many of the educators stress the character building or citizenship training phase of the school newspaper.

Baker says:

School newspapers may be published in many different ways. If the center of thinking concerning the paper and its preparation is in the school principal's office and detailed assignments are made there as to the expected performance of individuals in the preparation of the paper, such procedure doubtless stands low on the scale of democratic action. If, on the contrary, most of the thinking, planning, and preparation for the school paper come from the children and teachers working together, with children doing most of the planning and work, such procedure probably should rank high on the scale of democratic action.\(^{71}\)

Thomas states:

In its most advanced stages of development, the newspaper gives practice in those real situations in which children must exercise all of the desirable traits.

The school newspaper develops character thru the experiences it offers in pupil participation. Children learn to plan. They must work together to create a product which will adequately represent the whole school. They learn something of the value of service to others which the newspaper offers. They learn to appraise the product of their efforts. They accept responsibility for constantly improving their product.\(^{72}\)

Robbins emphasizes a special aspect of the citizenship value of the school newspaper:

\(^{71}\)Baker, op. cit., p. 443.

\(^{72}\)Thomas, op. cit., pp. 480-481.
One needs only to make a casual observation to be convinced that the school newspaper does actually train for citizenship. More than that, the work of producing the school newspaper is in itself the work of good citizenship, now. To me, this is an important point, for upon educators rests the responsibility of leading young people to be good citizens today as well as training them for tomorrow.

Another trait the paper develops is doing a worthwhile citizenship job without securing unusual recognition. Newspaper staffs do not perform before applauding throngs. It is an extremely important citizenship lesson to learn that our deeds are not forever based upon the recognition which we receive.\textsuperscript{73}

Wells says:

The school newspaper has a definite educational value to the student. Through his work on the staff the student becomes conscious of his individuality; begins to make choices; learns the value of honesty, courtesy, and tact; understands the meaning of 'school spirit' and 'school ethics'; learns to cooperate with his fellows; becomes conscious of the fact that he is a member of a body of people, of a community.\textsuperscript{74}

McKown says:

The newspaper offers a surprising array of excellent opportunities for the development of initiative, responsibility, leadership, cooperation, accuracy, promptness, thoroughness, industriousness, patience, perseverance, appraisal, judgment, and other traits or qualities basic to good character. ... the publication cannot be justified on the basis that it provides these educational experiences for the few members of the staff alone, and it need not be. The reader himself can be also benefited. He, too, can develop fairmindedness, tolerance, judgment, appraisal, cooperation, and other qualities through his reading of and reactions to the newspaper and the causes which it promotes.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{73}Robbins, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 58-60.

\textsuperscript{74}Wells, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 46. \textsuperscript{75}McKown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 321.
This idea that the newspaper must be a medium for citizenship training for all students rather than just the staff is sometimes overlooked by the proponents of the newspaper in listing values for it. McAndless also emphasizes this point, stating:

The school newspaper can no longer justify its existence on the basis of citizenship values accruing to the staff. The citizenship program must be made school-wide, community-wide, world-wide. 76

Taylor sums up the value of the school newspaper as a means of building character with a very strong statement:

The elementary school newspaper is not an activity in the sense in which we usually think of activities. It is becoming more than that; it is becoming a sort of necessary concomitant to the development of children. 77

An excellent summary of the many values of the school newspaper in the elementary school, as well as techniques for evaluating and improving school newspapers, is contained in the suggestions for producing school newspapers, compiled by Thomas:

1. Every elementary school should provide desirable socializing experiences by publication of a newspaper of some type.
2. The most effective newspapers are organized and the material is prepared under the supervision of a group of teachers called the teachers' staff.
3. The preparation of material, production, and distribution of the newspaper, particularly of the mimeographed paper, may well be a pupil enterprise.

76 McAndless, op. cit., p. 242.
77 Taylor, op. cit., p. 186.
4. The content of the newspaper should be as largely the actual work of children in the school as possible, with articles by principal and teachers using only a small part of the space.

5. The pupil staff should be carefully selected and should include those children especially qualified for such work.

6. The content of the newspaper ought to represent the whole school in the activities described, the material selected, and the interest aroused.

7. The newspaper might help to integrate the otherwise unrelated activities of the school; it may serve frequently as a unifying agency for the school and the school-community.

8. There is considerable value in selecting a central topic for each issue of the paper, around which most of the content may be planned.

9. The subscription price of the newspaper should be as low as possible, so as to insure widespread distribution.

10. A minimum of paid advertising is desirable. If the subscription price can be kept to one or two cents per copy without the use of advertisements, it is wise to eliminate the ads entirely.

11. It is desirable that the elementary school newspaper not be produced for profit.

12. The newspaper should be read by every child in the school and should go into the homes of all the children.

13. The newspaper may well be issued as frequently as possible, up to a frequency of ten times each year.

14. Plan the newspaper to provide a distinct community influence.

15. The life of the school may well be interpreted through the school newspaper in news articles, illustrations, original poetry and stories, and general descriptions of practices.

16. An attractive style of publication is important in either printed or mimeographed form.

17. The newspaper may well contain a number of illustrations or drawings.

18. Every copy of the newspaper should have the name of the paper, date of issue, the name of the school, the volume and issue number, and the price on the front page.

19. Names of the children and teachers on the staff should appear in each issue.

20. It is undesirable for the paper to be too large in size.
21. Each issue should contain four or more pages, but should not be so large as to necessitate a curtailment in the number of issues each year.

22. The content must be perfectly legible, even though the newspaper is mimeographed.

23. The names of the contributors should be attached to all articles.  

It is hoped that the opinions about the value of the elementary school newspaper expressed in professional books and journals will be of value to any school publishing or planning to publish a school newspaper.

The values have been found to be many and varied and are such that the elementary school newspaper can serve as a highly satisfying and rich learning experience for all the students in the school.

CHAPTER III

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSPAPER
THROUGH A LIMITED NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES
DISTRIBUTED TO TEXAS ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

This study presents the opinions of fifty Texas elementary school principals, selected at random, concerning the educational values of the elementary school publication. Questionnaires were sent to sixty-six principals, and replies were received from fifty.

Forty-eight questionnaires were sent to principals of Fort Worth elementary schools, with thirty-five being returned. Five questionnaires were sent to principals of Orange elementary schools, with five being returned. Five questionnaires were sent to principals of Austin elementary schools with four being returned. Four questionnaires were sent to principals of Denton elementary schools, with two being returned. One questionnaire was sent to principals of elementary schools in each of the following Texas communities: Arlington, Birdville, Grapevine, and Pecan Springs (suburb of Austin). Each of the last-named schools returned the questionnaire.

Representing a wide-spread geographical distribution,
the schools range in size from the two-teacher rural school of Pecan Springs, through small towns, "Small" cities, and large city schools. Twenty schools reported having some sort of school publication, and thirty had none.

Space was provided in the questionnaire for individual comments by the principals, in addition to the specific questions asked.

Comments by Fort Worth Principals

Of the eight Fort Worth principals reporting a school publication in their schools, only one made individual comment in the space provided. This principal said:

Parents love our school paper. The children all work to get their articles 'run'. It is a wonderful way to let children tell parents what is happening and why.

Of the twenty-seven Fort Worth principals reporting no school publication in their schools, six made individual comment. Five of the six offered comments opposing the use of newspapers in the elementary school. The sixth said:

We have, at different times, had a school publication and we found the results most satisfactory.

The most critical of the principals said:

Everything the school does is 'public relations,' but the cheap-looking, poorly-arranged paper might not be good public relations. The best public relations a school can have is to teach a good school and I don't think that it teaches honesty for teachers to run a paper and give the pupils the credit, and the children cannot run a paper. I have no paper and do not plan one in the elementary school.
Another principal commented:

Far too many elementary children cannot read a school paper. We have used a large print for the first three grades and even comic strips to build up interest.

Another said:

I don't feel that the time is right for a school paper. The elementary schools of Fort Worth do not have the time under our present curriculum to work this in right now, as it should be.

Another principal commenting on the problems of a school paper, said:

Sufficient time is not allowed the teacher-sponsor. The sponsor spends hours reading, correcting, and rewriting. Not desirable, no, but necessary.

Commenting on the work involved, another principal said:

Unless a very enthusiastic and capable sponsor was selected, I feel that a paper is not worth the extra load it adds to the school office. It takes many hours of the already burdened school secretary's time in preparing and mimeographing the paper.

Most of these comments criticizing the school paper appear to be at variance with the opinions of principals writing in professional books and magazines, reported on in Chapter II.

Comments from Principals of Other Cities

Of the twelve principals in other cities reporting a school publication in their schools, five made individual comments, listing values of the school paper. Of the three principals of other cities reporting no school publication in their schools, none made individual comments.
Commenting on the values derived from the school publication, the principal of a two-teacher school said:

My first issue four years ago carried a 'Wanted list', listing a movie projector, slide film projector, magazines, radio, record player, public address system, etc. I have all the above and many more things. This week I will get a recorder for use in musical programs. All the equipment listed has been secured through my newspaper publicity.

I have only a small rural two-teacher school, and began my work here with 'nothing.' Now I have an attractive environment: pastel green interior, nice blackboards, asphalt tile floors, venetian blinds, all new seating equipment, musical equipment of all kinds. The Texas Outlook, October, 1949, will give you an account of the part the school newspaper played in building my 'school library.'

Too much cannot be said about the value of the school newspaper.

An Austin principal commented:

A paper is an excellent method of promoting interest in contests, school-ground activities, classroom projects, and excursions. My class especially enjoyed selection of pictures, cartoons, jokes, and editorials. Each pupil received a real satisfaction in seeing his name in print.

Another Austin principal commented: "I think elementary children profit from making contributions to a small mimeographed paper, but do not feel it would be worth the money or time for a regular printed newspaper."

Results of the Questionnaire

The table on the next pages presents the findings of opinions of the principals answering the questionnaire. The table includes replies made by Fort Worth principals and principals of other cities, classified according to those having a newspaper and those having no newspaper.
TABLE 1

COMPARATIVE SCORES OF FORT WORTH PRINCIPALS WITH THE PRINCIPALS OF OTHER CITIES AND OF SCHOOLS HAVING A NEWSPAPER WITH SCHOOLS HAVING NO NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Fort Worth Schools Having Newspaper</th>
<th>Fort Worth Schools Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having a Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Should the elementary school have a school publication of its own?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are elementary children old enough to gain value from reading a school publication?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Will elementary students learn desirable traits and skills through producing a publication?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Would you limit the workers on the paper to the upper grades?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Port Worth Schools Having Newspaper</th>
<th>Port Worth Schools Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having a Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Will the small children gain experiences in contributing to the school paper?</td>
<td>8 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>21 Yes, 5 No</td>
<td>12 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>3 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>44 Yes, 5 No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Will students, rather than teachers, have to do all the work?</td>
<td>7 Yes, 1 No</td>
<td>21 Yes, 5 No</td>
<td>12 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>3 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>43 Yes, 6 No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Should creative expression be more important than dissemination of news?</td>
<td>3 Yes, 1 No</td>
<td>8 Yes, 2 No</td>
<td>7 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>2 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>20 Yes, 3 No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should be of same importance :</td>
<td>4 Yes, 16 No</td>
<td>5 Yes, 1 No</td>
<td>1 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td>26 Yes, 0 No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Should the school paper be used to gain support for the principal's projects?</td>
<td>3 Yes, 3 No</td>
<td>13 Yes, 14 No</td>
<td>5 Yes, 6 No</td>
<td>3 Yes, 1 No</td>
<td>24 Yes, 24 No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Should the principal refrain from censoring each issue of the paper?</td>
<td>6 Yes, 2 No</td>
<td>16 Yes, 10 No</td>
<td>11 Yes, 1 No</td>
<td>2 Yes, 1 No</td>
<td>35 Yes, 14 No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Fort Worth Schools Having Newspaper</td>
<td>Fort Worth Schools Having no Newspaper</td>
<td>Other Cities Having a Newspaper</td>
<td>Other Cities Having no Newspaper</td>
<td>Totals</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Should a teacher be appointed advisor and given complete responsi-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>bility for the contents, with no interference from principal?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Should there be a faculty censor instead of only a responsible</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student in charge as editor? ..</td>
<td></td>
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<td>12. Is the cost of producing a paper too little to interfere with an</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>elementary school's publishing one? ..</td>
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<td>13. Should the school budget include provisions for producing a school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>paper as a definite and desirable medium of education? ..</td>
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<td>Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Are the relatively cheap mimeographed papers of about equal value with printed papers for the elementary school?</td>
<td>36 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Would you rather have a neat mimeographed paper than none at all?</td>
<td>39 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Should the paper be financed by advertising and/or sale of copies to students?</td>
<td>29 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Do you have a school publication in your elementary school?</td>
<td>20 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How often is it published?</td>
<td>(See Table 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Is your paper produced as part of some regular class activity?</td>
<td>16 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1--Continued**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Fort Worth Schools Having a Newspaper</th>
<th>Fort Worth Schools Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having a Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. May all students in school submit contributions to the paper? .......</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Does the paper encourage and use creative writing? ....................</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Is the paper making worthwhile educational contributions to your students?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Should the elementary school publication serve as a &quot;public relations&quot; contact with the home?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 reveals that 84 per cent of the Fort Worth principals having a school paper, 58 per cent of the Fort Worth principals having no school paper, 88 per cent of the other cities' principals having a school paper, and 76 per cent of the other cities' principals having no newspaper believe that the elementary school newspapers have educational value. The total results show that 73 per cent of the principals answering the questionnaire find educational value in the elementary school newspaper.

Seven of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, sixteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, twelve of the other cities' principals having a paper, and three of the other cities' principals having no paper believe that the elementary school should have a newspaper of its own. Eight of the Fort Worth principals having a newspaper, twenty-five of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, twelve of the other cities' principals having a paper and three of the other cities' principals having no paper think elementary school children are old enough to gain value from reading school publications. Only two of the principals felt that elementary children are too young to profit from such an activity.

Eight of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, twenty-five of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, twelve of the other cities' principals having a paper, and
three of the other cities' principals having no paper believe children will learn desirable traits and skills through producing a school newspaper. Five of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, fifteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, three of the other cities' principals having a paper, and two of the other cities' principals having no paper would limit the workers on the paper to the upper grades. Eight of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, twenty-one of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, twelve of the other cities' principals having a paper, and three of the other cities' principals having no paper think the small children in the elementary school will gain valuable experiences in contributing to the school paper. Only five principals, all from Fort Worth schools having no paper, felt that the small children would gain nothing from working on the school publication.

Seven of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, twenty-one of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, twelve of the other cities' principals having a paper, and three of the other cities' principals having no paper say the students, rather than teachers, can do the work of producing the school paper. Six of the total number of principals felt that teachers would have to do the work.

Three of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, eight of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, seven
of the other cities' principals having a paper, and two of the other cities' principals having no paper list creative expression as more important than dissemination of news. Four of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, sixteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, five of the other cities' principals having a paper, and one of the other cities' principals having no paper think that creative expression and dissemination of news should be of the same value in the school publication.

The principals were divided equally on whether the school paper should be used to gain support for the principal's projects, twenty-four saying yes and twenty-four saying no. Six of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, sixteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, eleven of the other cities' principals having a paper, and two of the other cities' principals having no paper believe that the principal should refrain from censoring each issue of the paper. Fourteen of the principals, ten of them from Fort Worth schools having no paper, think the principal should censor each issue of the paper.

Six of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, eighteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, eleven of the other cities' principals having a paper, and two of the other cities' principals having no paper say a teacher should be appointed adviser and given complete responsibility
for the contents of the paper. Forty-nine of the principals say there should be a faculty censor, rather than just a responsible student in charge as editor.

The cost of producing a school newspaper is too insignificant to interfere with a school's publishing one, according to seven of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, eleven of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, twelve of the other cities' principals having a paper, and two of the other cities' principals having no paper. Twenty-six of the principals believe that the school budget should include provisions for producing a school paper as a definite and desirable medium of education. It is significant to note that all the other cities' principals believe the cost of the paper should be included in the budget.

Seven of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, eighteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper and eleven of the other cities' principals having a paper think the mimeographed papers are of equal value with printed papers. Thirty-nine of the principals indicated they would rather have a neat mimeographed paper than none at all.

Five of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, seventeen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, six of the other cities' principals having a paper, and one of the other cities' principals having no paper think the paper should be financed by advertising and/or sale of copies to
the students. Twenty of the principals reported that their schools have newspapers and thirty have none. Six of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, and ten of the other cities' principals having a paper say their paper is produced as a part of some regular class activity. Most of the papers are produced as part of a language arts class.

Seven of the Fort Worth principals having a paper and ten of the other cities' principals having a paper report that all students in school submit contributions to the paper. Only three of the principals say that contributions are limited to a select group of students.

Creative writing is encouraged and used by eight of the Fort Worth schools having a paper and by eleven of the other cities' schools having a paper. Only one principal reports that creative writing is not used. All the principals of schools having a paper believe the paper is making worth-while educational contributions to their students.

Six of the Fort Worth principals having a paper, eighteen of the Fort Worth principals having no paper, ten of the other cities' principals having a paper, and two of the other cities' principals having no paper believe that the elementary school publication should serve as a public-relations contact with the home. Twelve of the principals, nine from the Fort Worth schools having no paper, do not believe that the paper has value as a public relations medium.

The answers given to the questionnaire by the fifty
principals and the percentages of the total responses indicate that the principals of schools having a paper are more favorable to the school newspaper than are those principals of schools having no newspaper. Outstanding values of the school paper cited by the principals are that students learn desirable traits and skills; students have an outlet for creative expression; students learn to work together as part of a group; school spirit is strengthened and unified; and the paper forms a valuable link between the school and the home.

One of the most important values of the school newspaper is the development of desirable traits and skills by the students in producing and contributing to the school paper. The school newspaper on the elementary level is invaluable in motivating language skills and other skills of lesser importance, which the students learn they must have in order to produce an acceptable publication.

Table 2 on the next page presents the traits and skills which the school newspaper develops, as listed by the principals on the questionnaire. The traits and skills are tabulated according to Fort Worth schools having a paper, Fort Worth schools having no paper, other cities' schools having a paper, and other cities' schools having no paper. The traits and skills are listed in numerical order of the total times listed by the principals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits and Skills</th>
<th>Fort Worth Schools Having Newspaper</th>
<th>Fort Worth Schools Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having Newspaper</th>
<th>Other Cities Having no Newspaper</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Expression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact finding and organization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group participation and cooperation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of good citizenship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Spirit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making writing interesting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-wide interests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in a job well done</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Records</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to think</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional living situations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the newspaper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The development of language skills, including reading, writing, grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and vocabulary, was listed by thirty-four of the principals as an outcome of the school newspaper. Nineteen of the principals named creative expression on the part of the students as an important skill developed through work on the school paper.

Fact-finding and organization of material was listed by seventeen principals, and group participation and cooperation was listed by fifteen principals. Eight principals listed the development of responsibility as an important trait. Seven principals listed the promotion of good citizenship and development of school spirit as traits coming out of the work on the paper.

Three principals listed making writing interesting and developing school-wide interests. Several traits and skills were listed twice by principals, including: motivation, development of arithmetic skills, pride in a job well done, and development of art skills.

The following traits and skills were listed by one principal: keeping records, self-confidence, use of the library, leadership, sportsmanship, ability to think, functional living situations, learning about the newspaper, and public relations.

According to the frequency of listing, the principals believe that the development of fundamental language skills
and creative expression are the most important skills provided by the elementary school newspaper.

Principals having school papers were asked to state the frequency of publication of their papers. Sixteen of the twenty principals of schools having papers responded to this section of the questionnaire. The frequency of publication of the papers is shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**

**FREQUENCY OF PUBLICATION OF SCHOOL PAPERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-monthly</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every six weeks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No certain publication dates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular frequency of publication of the elementary school newspapers was monthly, listed by eight principals. Three papers were published semi-monthly, two every six weeks, two had no certain publication dates, and one was published bi-monthly. Four of the principals having school papers in their schools did not indicate frequency of publication.

**Examples of Creative Writing Found in School Newspapers**

The value of the school newspaper as an outlet for the creative expression of the students was emphasized by the
authors of professional books and articles and by the principals contributing to this study. Examples of creative writing found in copies of school newspapers included by principals answering the questionnaire are included here to show how some school papers are utilizing this educational value. The samples are taken at random and are not necessarily better than other examples of creative writing found in the papers included. Most of the papers using creative writing gave the student's name and school grade.

The following poem was written by a second-grade pupil:

Christmas Is Coming

On Christmas Jesus was born.
That was Jesus' birthday.
He helped others.

A fifth-grade pupil wrote the following:

What I Like About Christmas

I like Christmas because it is fun to play
Santa Claus, and to recite Christmas poems. I
like the night when the trees are filled with toys
and candy. I like the joy of the children in the
morning when they wake up and find presents under
the tree. I like to give to the children that have
nothing; to watch them play and have lots of fun.
Oh! The merriest time in all my life is when Christ-
mas comes, once a year, and I can hear voices cheer.
'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.'

The next poem was written by a sixth-grade pupil:

A Wish for Spring

Oh, how I long for the smell of Spring,
When the bees shall buzz and the birds
shall sing,
When the flowers bloom, and the grass
is green,
All the world is fresh and clean.

The following prose selection is by a sixth-grade pupil
reporting on a class activity, and yet it is definitely
creative expression.

Tracks

We found a number of different kinds of tracks
on our hikes. Some of us poured plaster of paris in
the tracks and made molds. We let them dry for sev-
eral hours then went and picked them up and carried
them back to camp. We got books on tracks and named
the tracks we found. We made more tracks from the
molds to give to Uncle B and to bring back to camp.
We found some deer tracks, turkey tracks, kildeer
and rabbit tracks. We had lots of fun making the
new casts from the old molds.

The following prose poem was written by a sixth-grade
pupil:

Fire Safety Poem

Now Sally is a cute little girl but liked to
play with fire. Put candles on her Christmas tree,
and thought it great attire. Leaned back into her
armchair and then was fast asleep. The tree was
soon on fire, and the blaze was hot and steep. Sally
heard a little crackle and woke up with fear and
fright. She hopped into her slippers, and ran out
into the night. She raced over to her neighbors;
that's where her mother was. They both ran back to
their own home, put out the fire with gloves. The
tree had fallen over, burned a hole clear through the
floor. But now that she knows better she plays with
fire no more.

A fourth-grade pupil wrote:
The Turtle

Turtle, turtle, slow as can be,
Turns around, then he sees me.
Then he turns around and sees,
Just a little bit of big old me.
When he sees enough of me,
He turns around and starts to flee.
Then he catches sight of a bee,
And turns around to run to me.

Another poem by a fourth-grade pupil:

The Butterflies

The butterflies flutter everywhere,
As they go flying through the air
With their pretty colored wings
Past the church where the old bell rings
Past the place where the children sing
Flying in a great big ring.

A third-grade pupil wrote the following poem:

My Rooster

I have a rooster, his name is Benny.
I wouldn't sell him for a big brown penny.
His bill is yellow and his toes are red,
I feed him mash and yellow corn bread.

The following prose writing is by a third-grade pupil:

Everything So Sweet

God made the little birds to sing so sweet.
They sing you to sleep at night. God made us to
play and to always be kind to little birds and
chickens because they can do you no harm. So
please don't harm them.
I like to go out in the woods and hear the
birds sing and see the pretty flowers. The roses
are so sweet. I like to see the duck swimming
with her babies. I saw some black birds flying
over the sky. They looked like black clouds. Then
I went home and said my prayers and went to sleep.
Although far from perfect examples of prose and poetry, the examples of creative expression show that the children are being allowed to express their own thoughts, to exercise their creative imagination. The occasional grammatical mistakes and awkward construction indicate that the writing was actually done by the pupils rather than by the teachers. Many other selections of creative writing were found in the copies of school publications which the principals included with their questionnaires. The freshness, originality, and sincerity of the selections cited indicate that surely those pupils received a valuable learning experience in contributing to the school paper. The selections, coming directly from the lives of other pupils, would surely be read with interest by most students in the schools.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The information gathered from the professional literature consulted in connection with this study and the findings of the questionnaire indicate that the following conclusions concerning the elementary school newspaper are warranted:

1. A majority of the principals believe every elementary school should have a school newspaper. The mimeographed newspaper is the most popular form used in the elementary school, and it is just as effective as a printed newspaper. The cost of producing a mimeographed paper is too little to interfere with a school's having a publication.

2. The elementary school newspaper is a valuable educational medium for motivating written expression and teaching fundamental language skills.

3. The elementary school newspaper offers valuable training in citizenship. Opportunities exist for group participation and cooperation, for developing responsibility, for developing pride in a job well-done, for forming and leading student opinion in the school, and for unifying the various agencies of the school.
4. The elementary school newspaper encourages and furnishes an outlet for creative expression on the part of the students.

5. The elementary school newspaper is one of the most important means of bringing the school and the community closer together. The paper should not be filled with propaganda by the principal, but should contain examples of the work actually being done by the students.

6. The elementary school newspaper serves as a very important element in the building of student morale. School spirit is developed and unified through the work of an excellent student newspaper. The newspaper also serves as a socializing force within the school.

7. Elementary school children are old enough to gain value through producing and reading a school paper. The children will learn desirable traits and skills from producing and reading the school paper. Elementary school children can do most of the work of producing a paper.

8. An enthusiastic and capable teacher-sponsor is necessary to guide the production of a school newspaper. The teacher should not do all the work, especially the writing and rewriting. The principal should refrain from censoring each issue of the paper, but should be informed about major issues involved. There should be a strong spirit of cooperation between the principal and the teacher-sponsor.
9. The school budget should include provisions for producing a school paper as a definite and desirable means of educating boys and girls.

10. All students in the school should be able to contribute to the school paper. No limited group should have a monopoly on producing the paper. The values accruing from a school newspaper must apply to the entire student body, rather than just to a picked group of staff members.

11. Principals of schools having a newspaper recognized more educational values of the activity than did principals of schools having no school paper.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That elementary school principals survey the conditions in their schools to determine if it is not possible to provide their students with the rich learning experiences provided by a school newspaper.

2. That elementary school principals having a newspaper in their schools evaluate the newspaper to see if the maximum in educational value is being provided by the school newspaper.

3. That the teacher-sponsor who works with the pupils to produce the school newspaper be given some school time to do the work involved.
4. That students be allowed to learn some of the mechanical processes involved in producing the paper, including cutting stencils and operating the mimeograph machine.

5. That creative writing be encouraged and used in all elementary school publications.

6. That the costs of producing the school paper be included in the school budget, so that the paper can be distributed free to all students.

7. That the support and assistance of all students and teachers in the school be sincerely solicited, so that the paper will belong to the entire school-community.

8. That a conscious effort be made to use the school newspaper as a means of bringing the school and the home closer together.
APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Dear Principal:

I am seeking to compile information for a thesis on the educational value of the school publication for the elementary school. Even if you have no publication in your school, will you please fill out those portions of the questionnaire which do not refer specifically to a local publication?

1. Should the elementary school have a school newspaper (publication) of its own?_________

2. Are elementary students old enough to gain value from reading a school publication?_________

3. Will elementary students learn desirable traits and skills through producing a publication?_________
   Please list some of the traits and skills a school publication should provide.________________________

4. Would you limit the workers to the upper grades?_______

5. Will the small children gain valuable experience in contributing to the school paper?_________

6. Will the students, rather than the teachers, have to do all the work?_________

7. Should creative expression be more important than dissemination of news?_________

8. Should the school paper be used to gain support for the principal's projects?_________

9. Should the principal refrain from censoring each issue of the paper?_________
10. Should a teacher be appointed adviser to the paper and given complete responsibility for the contents?_______

11. Should there be a faculty sponsor, rather than just a responsible student in charge as editor?_______

**Mechanical Aspects**

12. Is the cost of producing a school paper too little to interfere with a school's producing one?_______

13. Should the elementary school budget include provisions for producing a school paper as a definite and desirable medium of education?_______

14. Are the relatively cheap mimeographed papers of about equal value with a printed paper?_______

15. Would you rather have a neat mimeographed paper than none at all?_______

16. Should the paper be financed by advertising and/or sale of copies to the students?_______

**Contents**

17. Do you have a school publication in your elementary school?_______

18. What is its name, and how often is it published?_______

19. Is your paper produced as part of some regular class activity?_______

20. May all students contribute to the school paper?_______

21. Does the paper encourage and use creative writing?_______

22. Is the paper making worthwhile educational contributions to your students?_______

23. Should the elementary school paper serve as a "public relations" contact with the home?_______

24. Comments—please list any values of the elementary school publication which this questionnaire overlooked, or make any other comment you have on the subject._______

25. Please enclose a copy of your school paper.
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