JOURNALISM AND MASS MEDIA EDUCATION

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PREFACE

Journalism is a discipline of collecting, verifying, analysing and presenting information gathered regarding current events, including trends, issues and people. Those who practice journalism are known as journalists. News-oriented journalism often is described as the "first draft of history." Even though journalists often write news articles to a deadline, news media usually edit and proofread the results prior to publication.

Journalism has as its main activity the reporting of events - stating who, what, when, where, why and how, and explaining the significance and effect of events or trends. Journalism exists in a number of media: newspapers, television, radio, magazines and, since the end of 20th century, the Internet.

Generally, publishers and consumers of journalism draw a distinction between reporting - "just the facts" - and opinions (such as editorials, the official opinions of the paper, and op-ed columns, "opposite the editorial page" commentary). However, this distinction sometimes can break down. Journalists may unintentionally fall prey to propaganda or disinformation. Journalists may give a biased account of facts by reporting selectively, for instance, focusing on anecdote or giving a partial explanation of actions. Foreign reporting may become more susceptible to bias, because the writers or editors of a newspaper in a given geographical area may find it more difficult to check the facts in reports about distant places.

Newspapers and periodicals often contain features written by journalists, many of whom specialize in this form of "in-depth" journalism. Journalists' interaction with sources sometimes involves confidentiality. Many Western governments guarantee the freedom

of the press. By extension, these freedoms sometimes also add legal protection for journalists, allowing them to keep the identity of a source private even when demanded by police or prosecutors.

The 21st century approaches, mass media educators are in the midst of a decades-long debate over the nature and purpose of mass media education. Some of its most pressing challenges are related to changes in curriculum because of the evolution of the media industries and new technologies. But perhaps the most vexing questions are related to its structure. Media educators also must continue to respond to practitioners who ask whether mass media education is really necessary. How such issues are resolved will have a profound effect on media-related education in the new century as well as on the media industries they serve. Any discussion of mass media education necessitates the use of the term journalism in a variety of ways. Because journalism existed as a professional field before the beginning of academic training for journalists, the term journalism began to be used by educators to represent the new field of study. Journalism education developed in departments of English at liberal arts colleges at the same time that departments and professional schools of journalism were established at fledgling comprehensive universities. As coursework in other media-related fields was added to journalism programs, the term journalism continued to be used as an overarching term for the field. With the introduction of the term mass communication in the 1940s, that term also began to be used to refer to the entire field, as well as to professional training for media-related fields other than journalism and to a more-theoretical course of study, also called media studies or communication studies.

The purpose of this book is to give the reader not only media educators but also media practitioners and others interested in academic issues--some understanding of how media-related education has evolved as well as the nature of the debate that threatens to cause the disintegration of mass media education into separate academic fields.

Hari Chand Tiwari

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Journalism and Mass Media Education: Nature and Scope

Journalism Education

Based on research, criticism of Journalism education has been around a long time. Indeed, such criticism appeared when college administrators first thought about offering courses in the field. For example, Paul Dressel pointed out, "Though there was genera! agreement that the newspaperman should be well educated, the prevalent view rejected a formal curriculum in favor of learning by experience on one of the better papers of the day." Nonetheless, Journalism education developed. Unfortunately, between 1908 and 1925, journalism programs were mere trade schools. Vocational education was the norm, to say the least. Academic respectability came many years later. Perhaps Gardner Cowles, Jr., a managing editor, was the first professional to understand the dilemma that journalism education faced. In 1928, he "criticized journalism education as limiting the imagination by emphasis on practical instruction placing too much stress on routine work on the college daily. He called for greater emphasis on broad principles and problems of editing."

In 1930, Abraham Flexner said journalism education was "on a par with university faculties of cookery and clothing." In the same year, the American Society of Newspaper Editors recommended that

the journalism curriculum be almost entirely liberal education and that schools of journalism should become graduate schools comparable to those of law and medictne.

In 1938, Robert Maynard Hutchins "characterized schools of journalism as 'the shadiest education ventures under respectable auspices.' "

In 1947, the Commission on Freedom of the Press, which Hutchins chaired, reported:

> *Most [journalism schools] devote themselves to vocational training, and even here they are not so effective as they should be. The kind of training a journalist needs most today is not training in the tricks and machinery of the trade. If he is to be a competent judge of public affairs, he needs the broadest and most liberal education. The schools of journalism as a whole have not yet successfully worked out the method by which their students may acquire this education.*

As a result of such criticism, the liberal arts curriculum was (and is) emphasized by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). Indeed, today the ACEJMC recommends that a student majoring in journalism take no more than 25 percent of his academic course work in journalism. Seventy-five percent should be in other courses, such as English, economics, political science, history, sociology, science, and mathematics.

Fortunately, criticism of journalism education continued. Fortunately is used because journalism -- like any subject -- needs criticism, whether positive or negative, in order to change. Since education is an evolving process, change is necessary.

In 1963 and 1964, in two articles appropriately titled "What's Happening to Journalism Education?", John Tebbel caused practitioners to applaud and educators to squirm. Among Tebbel's criticisms were:

1. Certain professors have stopped reading newspapers.
2. Certain professors have forgotten their purpose: to train individuals to interpret thoughtfully today's complicated information and to communicate information effectively.
3. Research has replaced teaching in graduate programs in the largest schools.

4. Emphasis on research has caused a de-emphasis of the professional curriculum. Indeed, certain research faculty do not have any professional media experience.

It must be remembered that a university's prestige is measured in one sense by the number of faculty with Ph.D. degrees. Since a university's administration deems research as one of its missions, the quest for faculty with Ph.D.s will not cease. On the contrary, the quest will grow stronger. However, Tebbel 's point about faculty with little or no professional experience must be seriously considered by both administrators and journalism faculty. In 1965, David Boroff provided other criticisms. In his article, "What Ails the Journalism Schools", which was based on a study for the Ford Foundation, he pointed out,

1. Certain journalism faculty are failed reporters.
2. The Ph.D. "has the effect of freezing out some of the best journalist- teachers."
3. About 50 percent of the journalism programs do not support the university's newspaper.

Boroff believed that journalism programs need to hire journalists who can teach instead of those who have Ph.D.s. He also believed that a journalism program needs to have its students work for the university's newspaper, primarily because they could practice their skills and learn about freedom of the press and responsibility.

Regarding Boroffs first point, one has to speculate that what he claimed is true. His second point, on the other hand, is solidly based on fact. Some of the best teachers are perhaps kept out of journalism programs because they do not meet the requirements, specifically the Ph.D. or some other doctoral degree. Boroff 's third point, although possibly true at the time he wrote the article, is not true today. Most schools of journalism are involved directly or indirectly in student publications.

In 1971, M. L. Stein (then chairman of the department of journalism at New York University) pointed out similar arguments:

1. Should the curriculum focus on the practical courses in reporting or on the social effects of the mass media? Should reporters or the behavioral scientists manage journalism programs?
2. Hostility exists between older faculty with professional media experience and younger faculty with Ph.D.s who have little, if

any, professional media experience and who are indifferent to skills courses.

3. Research faculty influence and pNews: Definition and Meaning perhaps dominate the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.
4. The older faculty with professional media experience sneer at the research studies conducted by the younger faculty with Ph.D.s. The older faculty claim that the emphasis on research diverts journalism programs from their primary purpose: to educate people for the nation's print and broadcast media.
5. The older faculty with media experience believe that the younger faculty with Ph.D.s have an antimedia bias.

Stein's comments are relevant to today's situation. There seem to be two camps, as he mentioned. And the researchers do not like to teach the "trivial" courses that is, the skills courses: writing, editing, and such. As far as the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications is concerned, researchers do hold a considerable amount of power. However, one must remember that the profession itself has more power than in the past. If newspaper publishers and editors are not happy with the people they hire, they can either fire those individuals or not hire others who have graduated from certain universities. Or the publishers or editors can contact specific universities and comment on the quality of education. Most department heads or deans will listen. After all, if a specific program earns a poor reputation, students may be encouraged by others to go elsewhere.

Whether Stein's comment about faculty who have Ph.D.s bring with them an antimedia bias is true, it is hard to say. Nonetheless, such a statement should not be taken lightly. It may contain an ounce of truth.

In 1972, at a symposium on "Education for Newspaper Work" cosponsored by the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and the University of South Carolina, editors pointed out "that journalism schools frequently do not take advantage of available opportunities to have professionals visit, nor do they go to the newspapers to learn themselves what is happening there."

The editors and educators agreed that students who graduate from journalism programs have a weak command of the English language. These points must be considered. Apparently many

professionals believe the same, because several complaints keep appearing. Whether teachers of journalism can actually improve students' ability to write in one to three courses is debatable. After all, most students who attend college have had four years of high school English. If they have not learned how to write by the time they graduate from high school, how can publishers and editors expect a Journalism professor to teach students the fundamentals of writing in one to three classes? Perhaps their expectations are too high or their criticism misplaced. In 1973, at a conference sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, editors and educators pointed out the following criticism:

> *Too many non- Journalism introductory courses are geared to lead toward advanced, graduate work and not to provide the real, basic nuts-and-bolts needed by newsmen. If this problem cannot otherwise be solved, most administrators agreed that the Journalism school or department should offer its own program in the area.*

In 1974, at a symposium on "Education for Newspaper Careers . . . Satisfied?" sponsored by the Western Newspaper Foundation, all publishers present agreed that journalism schools were doing a poor job. The keynote speaker, Ronald H. Einstoss, pointed out,

1. Many applicants "lack a working knowledge of English."
2. Many applicants are being taught that a lead contains the five Ws and an H. They are not taught that a reader's degree of understanding drops significantly after twenty words.
3. Many applicants do not have a background in liberal arts and the sciences. "They know little of local government."

Certain criticisms that were mentioned before are mentioned above. Perhaps schools of journalism should tighten their entrance requirements. Instead of having an open-door policy, schools of journalism should require a certain score on an entrance examination. Students who do not do well should not be allowed to major in journalism. Of course, administrators may become concerned over enrollment figures.

In the November/December 1974 issue of the American Society of Newspaper Editors Bulletin, Ted Bush reported the following "basic gripes" that editors have toward journalism graduates and journalism programs:

1. They are weak in English grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
2. Faculties may not know what newsrooms are doing.
3. Faculty salaries need to be increased; such would appeal to outstanding professionals who may desire to teach and would eliminate "cheap labor" those who failed as reporters.
4. Faculties are loaded with Ph.D.s who are interested in research more than they are in teaching.
5. Faculties should not have to write for scholarly journals in order to be eligible for promotion.
6. Class size, particularly in writing courses, should be limited.

Although Bush's list of "basic gripes" includes most of the complaints already mentioned, several new ones appear. The suggestion for higher pay is an example. However, in order to raise salaries of most educators of journalism, every journalism school would have to receive additional funding. Where would the money come from? The public? Private corporations? The media? If funding came from the public, whether at the local, state, or national level, academia probably would be criticized by certain groups within the public sector. Higher education, after all, is not the nation's highest priority. This is unfortunate. Funding from private corporations, specifically corporations that own newspapers, radio and television stations, magazines, and other media, has appeared from time to time. Unfortunately, such funding, in most cases, has allowed a certain school of journalism to hire perhaps one or two distinguished professionals. This practice has at least two drawbacks: the professionals are usually hired for either one or two semesters, and only the elite state-supported or private schools of journalism receive any contributions of any consequence. The small state-supported and private schools seldom receive such gifts. In the Autumn-Winter 1975 issue of Nieman Reports, Ronald Farrar pointed out the following problems with journalism education:

1. Too many students; too few qualified faculty members.
2. Too many graduates; too few jobs.
3. Students lack motivation.
4. Technology is expensive for certain programs in journalism.
5. Quality of faculty is uneven.

"Ideally, the journalism professor should bring to his position several years of worthwhile experience as a working journalist as well as appropriate academic credentials."

Farrar's assertions must be considered. Indeed, there are too many students enrolled in journalism, too few qualified instructors to teach the required courses, too few instructors with sufficient experience, and not enough funds to pay for the costly but necessary equipment.

Ben Bagdikian, in his "Woodstein U" article, which was published in 1977 in the Atlantic, caused journalism educators to write to the magazine for several months. Apparently, some of what he said hit some nerves. For example, in discussing one of the largest journalism schools in the nation, the University of Texas, he pointed out,

> *The journalism faculty is heavily larded with University of Texas graduates and former reporters and editors for Texas papers. Forty percent of all new reporters for Texas papers come from the school. But the faculty is not distinctive in either the practice of journalism or journalistic research.*

Bagdikian also complained about the following:

> *From fairly rigorous and realistic training in the graduate schools and some of the better undergraduate departments, the level of training drops precipitously at the easy going colleges and at most junior colleges where stereotyped journalism is taught.*

Bagdikian claimed that those who hire students who majored in journalism "have mixed but largely negative attitudes toward the value of journalism education."

Bagdikian's complaints concerning the large journalism schools, particularly the University of Texas, have been remedied, for the most part, by discerning administrators. The problems confronting junior colleges, however, are another story. Faculty who have strong qualifications to teach journalism do not stay at junior or community colleges for long because most of these two-year institutions do not have the resources nor the proper equipment on which students can be trained. For example, few community colleges can afford to invest in computers and other hardware that are needed for laboratories. Yet, such is important today.

In 1977, Mal Deans reported "that about two-thirds of American schools and departments of journalism, of which there are about 250, now have some sort of electronic equipment."

He pointed out,

> *The electronic age, however, has created some problems for journalism teachers. Many educators, and editors as well, have expressed concern that fascination with the new technology may result in de-emphasis of the basics-teaching students how to report, write and edit properly.*

This assertion has been shown to be true. Indeed, students seem to be interested in learning how to operate a particular software program rather than learning certain principles or theoretical concepts.

Darrell Berkheimer, then news editor at the Provo Daily Herald, wrote in 1979 that "the university should be placing more emphasis on finding an instructor with a solid 15 to 30 years experience in business, and forget about the master's degree requirement."

He criticized journalism schools' instructors for presenting the "wrongful" emphasis on "investigative reporting":

> *Somehow, many beginning reporters are coming out of J-schools with super-liberal ideas and ambitions on how they will become "investigative" reporters and columnists. And they have the idea that the use of a byline allows them to "interpret" the news as they see fit, using the facts as they choose them.*

Berkheimer has a point. There was a time when a course in journalistic ethics was required of every student majoring in journalism. This is not true today -- at least, not in every journalism school.

Creed Black, then chairman and publisher of the Lexington, Kentucky Herald-Leader, in 1979 wrote that he read Journalism Quarterly (now Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly), hoping to find articles of value. However, because he found little he could understand or apply, he concluded that his reading time would be more productively spent on English-language publications."

Black admitted that there was a place for research in journalism schools. "But it should be directed to the problems that actually confront working journalists and should be reported in terms that a reasonably intelligent editor or publisher can understand."

Black and other publishers and editors like him must admit that some research is useful and simple to understand. For example, studies that seek to determine what may prejudice jurors or studies

that illustrate the deficiencies in coverage of the elderly or other groups have merit. Much research done for various press groups whether national, state, or local -- has merit. Indeed, such can contribute to media performance and, concurrently, dispel our erroneous beliefs and confirm our correct beliefs.

In his article, "What's Wrong with Journalism Education?", published in 1980, Warren Schwed, a former employee of UPI, McGrawHill, and Newsweek, pointed out,

> *It seems to me there are several things (which need changing, starting with the obvious -- the teachers.*

Many lack relevant professional experience for teaching skills courses like reporting, writing, [and] editing.

Schwed also mentioned that salaries were too low to attract people who have professional media experience. Regarding what should be taught, Schwed mentioned that people who have professional media experience stress skills courses -- that is, reporting, writing, editing, and law. Those who do not have professional media experience stress theory courses. Regarding journalism students, Schwed pointed out that the students cannot spell, punctuate, or write. In addition, they rarely read. Schwed mentioned that instructors could make it tough on students, but few do because of survival -- that is, they are evaluated by students and they like to be liked by students. Also, administrators prefer faculty to pass along weak and borderline students. Schwed mentioned several points that others have made. However, his last point must be considered. Usually, the practice of passing along weak students is for a simple reason: numbers affect budget appropriations. The more students an institution has, the more funding it will receive. This holds true for colleges and departments within the institution, too. Therefore, an institution or college or department within an institution cannot afford to fail too many students, some administrators rationalize. In the February 1981 issue of Presstime, Daniel E. Thornburgh, then chairman of the department of journalism at Eastern Illinois University, made the following assertions:

1. The jargon of communication theory and research affronts professional journalists.
2. Mass communication research has become too dominant in undergraduate journalism education.

3. With additional work in technical courses, in theory, and in mass communications research, academic work in the arts and sciences and in some skills courses has suffered.
4. Life is now so complex that the journalism graduate from a four-year program may survive at an entry-level job, but is not prepared for career advancement. A fifth year of study for a professional degree in journalism is a possible answer.
5. Something needs to be done; professional journalism organizations should take a definite and unified stand as to the type of journalism program that should be recognized for accreditation purposes.

Thornburgh 's first three assertions have been mentioned elsewhere and commented on, but the last two have not. Since our society is so complex, some schools of journalism begin at the fifth year. For example, Columbia University's professional program is actually a fifth-year program. The University of California at Berkeley has a similar program. Whether professional journalism. organizations could make a unified stand as to what type of journalism program should be offered is questionable, since there are so many journalism organizations and associations in existence.

In 1982, speaking at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, Howard Fibich, then news editor of the Milwaukee Journal, mentioned the following:

> *What newspapers need from journalism educators is not scholars versed in the mumbo-jumbo of research methodology. We need reporters and editors with solid liberal arts backgrounds who know how to interview, how to gather information from often reluctant sources, who can write intelligently and who can deal with the maze of statutes and decisions on libel, privacy, open records and open meetings.*

Fibich leaves little to be said. Hopefully, schools of journalism are striving for the above. They certainly have been criticized in the past.

In the November/December 1984 issue of the ASNE Bulletin, Rhea T. Eskew wrote,

> *what j-schools should do is get on the faculty someone who has done it, who loves it and who believes in it. Bewspaper work. Someone who knows that accuracy in reporting and writing is the linchpin to public acceptance of newspapers. Someone with enthusiasm, a sense of*