

JOURNALISM EDUCATION— A MATTER OF COEXISTENCE

by M. L. STEIN

According to various indicators, journalism education in the United States is in its Golden Age. Approximately 38,000 students are currently enrolled in journalism schools and departments, to say nothing of thousands with minors in the subject and those taking journalism courses at junior colleges and other institutions where journalism is not a major. The Newspaper Fund reported that journalism enrollments last year set a record for the tenth straight year, having increased more than 20 per cent since 1968 and having tripled since 1960. The number of junior and senior majors jumped 241 per cent in the ten-year span, and in 1970 there were 54.7 per cent more journalism degrees awarded than in 1968.

A total of 3,692 students were taking graduate journalism courses during the 1970-71 school year, a 13 per cent rise over the previous year.

There seems to be no slowing of the trend this fall. New journalism departments or offerings are popping up in schools across the nation, and a growing number of institutions are seeking accreditation by the American Council for Education in Journalism. The Council is so jammed with applications that some schools must wait as long as a year and a half for a visit by an accreditation team. At the same time, the council's requirements are getting tougher, with the clear intent of barring substandard or marginal programs. Currently, there are sixty-one schools accredited in one or more journalism sequences out of some 175 schools that have journalism and communications programs.

With this bonanza has come a marked improvement in the status of journalism education. University administrators, who once regarded the journalism department as a kind of embarrassing stepchild on campus, have taken a look at the registration figures and decided that journalism is a full member of the academic family after all. Scores of students are picking journalism as a "with-it" major, providing them with an opportunity for in-

volvement in political and social issues as well as giving them an outlet for creative expression. Others see communications education as a clear road to a job, although the past year has been a lean one in that respect.

Journalism has penetrated even the Ivy League. Cornell has more than 100 majors, Pennsylvania claims the Annenberg School of Communications, and Princeton offers media lectures by Irving Dilliard, erstwhile editorial-page chief of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Beneath the glowing statistics, however, lie serious problems. How they are resolved will determine the future course of journalism education and may affect the operation and content of the mass media as well. One of the major issues is the design of the curriculum. Should the emphasis be on the practical courses in reporting and editing or on the social impact of the mass media? Should schools and departments continue to assign the bulk of their resources to traditional undergraduate programs or to graduate work in mass communications research? In brief, who should run the journalism schools: the reporters or the behavioral scientists?

The so-called Chi Square vs. Green Eyeshade feud is more muted than it was five years ago, but it's still very much alive, with resentments running deep on both sides. At one end are the older faculty members with newspaper backgrounds and teaching predilections to match. At the other are a group of generally young, bright, and assertive Ph.D.s whose interests run to researching and teaching the processes and effects of mass communications. Most of them have had little or no media experience and are indifferent, if not hostile, toward undergraduate techniques courses. There is a middle ground in this picture that I'll get into later.

The researchers have piled up impressive victories in the relatively few years since they appeared on the scene. They are a powerful influence within the Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ); indeed, some observers feel that the researchers dominate the national teaching organization. Such big journalism schools as the Universities of Iowa, Texas, Colorado, Min-

nesota, and Washington are headed by men holding doctorates in mass communications research or another behavioral science. In addition, these schools and others have developed sizable graduate programs in mass media research that draw hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant money. Stanford's Institute of Communication Research, which supplies a number of Ph.D.s in this area, far outstrips in wealth and prestige the undergraduate journalism program.

The heightened status of the Chi Squares is reflected in other ways, too. *Journalism Quarterly*, the AEJ's professional publication, is replete with articles bearing such titles as "Information Flow, Influence Flow, and the Decision Making Process," "A Q Analysis of Values and Attitudes Toward Advertising," and "Mass Communication and Political Socialization." Its cover describes the magazine as being "Devoted to Research in Journalism and Mass Communication." The *Quarterly*, however, does contain historical pieces and articles that evaluate press performance in a straight, expository style. A recent one examined the reasons for the death of the Los Angeles *Daily News*.

Dr. Edwin Emery, the *Quarterly's* editor and a member of the University of Minnesota's journalism faculty, said that a research slant is not an automatic entree into the *Quarterly's* pages. "First," he explained, "the research must be original and the article must be readable." Emery added that the periodical is receptive to historical and media appraisal efforts if the same criteria are met. "We turn down anything that is too narrow in scope, such as an evaluation of the Baptist press from 1890 to 1900," he noted.

Journalism teachers in the Green Eyeshade camp sneer at the research reports; they consider the reports and their complex correlation tables as trivia piled on trivia. They argue that it diverts journalism schools from their true function of turning out competent newsmen and women for the nation's newspapers, magazines, and broadcast outlets. Television and radio news, along with advertising and public relations, play a large role in journalism education today. Some of the old newspaper types even resent the introduction of broadcast skills into the curriculum. Dr. Curtis D. MacDougall, of Northwestern, a bitter foe of research emphasis in "J" schools, thundered during the recent AEJ convention held at the University of South Carolina that "all journalism is reporting. There is a need for more and more effective reporting."

Professor William E. Porter, chairman of the department of journalism at the University of Michigan, declared

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at the convention that "we are the only people still teaching writing. The English department has given it up."

A number of old-line journalist-teachers also are convinced that most of the communication Ph.D.s bring with them an anti-media bias, especially toward newspapers. Recalling his job interview with a newly-minted research doctor, a department chairman said, with contempt, "I think he wanted to teach a course called 'Beat the Press.'"

Some of the papers presented by the AEJ's Theory and Methodology (T and M) Division at the South Carolina meeting confirmed the traditionalists' suspicion that communications research has strayed far from the concerns of professional journalism. The studies carried such titles as "Family Communication Environment and Citizenship Norm Acquisition," "Communication as Interaction: A Role Theory and Dissonance Analysis," and "Visual Literacy: Facets Toward an Understanding of the Visual and Symbolic Process."

The proliferation of such research prompted one AEJ wag to circulate to delegates a spoof abstract titled "Family and Peer Sociometric Dimensions of Valentine Interchange." "Using Guttman Scaling," the author wrote, "it was found that more cards were exchanged among buddies than blood enemies. This finding reinforces earlier suggestions that some people like some other people better than they do others."

Few of the methodologists were amused. They see their work as making an important contribution to knowledge and the first real attempt to discover the processes and effects of mass communications. They say they can advance the cause of professional journalism if only media managers and editors would listen to them. Further, the research professors believe that conven-

tional journalism courses in many schools are outmoded and are taught by newspapermen who haven't had a new idea since the 1940s, when they practiced their trade.

"Many newsmen come into journalism education and want to live on their past reputations," said Dr. William E. Ames, of the University of Washington, and a past AEJ president. "Their teaching methods are outdated and they don't want to change."

The T-and-M proponents reject the newsmen's criticism that they are unqualified for media research because they lack professional experience. "We don't have to have had newspaper training any more than a doctor has to have been a nurse or a child psychologist, a father," snapped Minnesota's Phillip J. Tichenor, a Stanford Ph.D. "We don't claim that we have all the answers, but journalism teaching must evolve. Mass communications research is a way of studying society. We are like any other discipline in that we are seeking new knowledge. Journalism schools could fail if they don't restructure themselves to adapt to new ideas and methods."

These assessments are given some credence by professionally-oriented faculty members, who concede that reporting education is ready for an overhauling in a number of journalism schools.

"If reporting is dying in 'J' schools, maybe it's our fault," said R. Neale Copple, director of the University of Nebraska's School of Journalism and a former reporter and city editor. "Maybe it deserves to die. If reporting is the base of our curriculum, we've got to improve it before the sharp kids and the real journalists find us out. Telling the students about the inverted pyramid style of writing and how to check a police blotter is not enough for today's journalism."

Professor Hillier Kriehbaum, of

New York University, the current AEJ president, declared: "With media, both print and broadcast, under probably the most vigorous attacks during a generation, journalism teachers should stand behind good performance and try to blunt those criticisms that are self-seeking and unrealistic. Teachers should get out of their ivory towers and help media do the best job possible rather than quibble over the relative merits of Chi Square versus Green Eyeshade. There is plenty of work to do in journalism education and to see that minority groups get a fair share of the jobs in journalism."

It is significant that Tom Wolfe, one of the high priests of the New Journalism, got a huge ovation after he outlined his approach to writing at the South Carolina assembly. "He represents what the students want in journalism," one dean said later.

Many news-leaning journalism instructors say they have no objection to research if its practitioners will stay at their end of the journalism building and not try to push out the professional courses. "I have nothing against research but . . ." was the response of several "J" school teachers when asked about the split in AEJ ranks. The "but" invariably indicated their dread about a T-and-M take-over, an eventuality that some researchers would not find inappropriate. The journalism professor, for years the odd man on campus, feels the Ph.D.s have gone far enough. He resents their new-found academic respectability, their easy camaraderie with other social scientists, and the generous supporting funds they draw in comparison to the relatively tiny amount of outside money available for basic journalism training. Another sore spot is the fact that the infusion of Ph.D.s into journalism schools has made it almost impossible for administrators to hire instructors without advanced degrees, no matter how capable they are. The degree factor also has affected promotions. Journalism teachers without doctorates must, like Avis, try harder if they want to move up.

"The Ph.D. is keeping a lot of good people out of journalism education," said Dr. Ray E. Hiebert, head of the University of Maryland's department of journalism and the former director of the Washington Journalism Center. "Not all newsmen make good teachers, but there are those without doctorates who can make a significant contribution to our programs." Dr. Hiebert asserted that Maryland is, foremost, a professional school but also has room for research.

Their fears notwithstanding, the reporting advocates have won their share of skirmishes. Neale Copple, a tried and true newsman, emerged as the



"Maybe it would help, dear, if you could just think of being stuck in a holding pattern as getting more flying for your money."

president-elect of AEJ at the South Carolina gathering. The University of Missouri's School of Journalism, one of the giants in the field, recently picked as its dean Roy M. Fisher, editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, who has only a bachelor's degree. Also, reporting and editing courses are a long way from extinction, as today's enrollments make quite clear.

The Chi Square-Green Eyeshade controversy sometimes obscures the fact that there is a middle ground between the adversaries. It's represented by a body of journalism instruction that involves the relationship of mass media to society and the effects of interaction among the media, government, and the courts. It includes such issues as free press versus fair trial, the right to know, the newsman's protection of his sources, and how our lives are made better or worse by mass communications. These are courses of interest not only to the future journalist but to anyone who will have contact with mass media. Hundreds of non-journalism majors are signing up for them. Among the leading exponents of this approach are Dr. William L. Rivers of Stanford, a one-time Washington correspondent, and Dr. J. E. Gerald of Minnesota. Said Dr. Rivers: "We are seeing a decisive change in journalism education. We can't continue to believe that all journalism majors are going to be reporters. Nor can we teach newspaper reporting as I was taught it."

The research-pragmatic teaching issue need not be irreconcilable. There is a need for competent research into the mass media, and journalism schools are the proper place for it. We know little about the effects of the mass media, a topic that might also benefit from such investigation. Newspaper editors who sought to divine reader preferences generally were unsuccessful. If the explorations reveal shortcomings in the media, that, too, is a legitimate function of journalism education. At the same time, journalism schools have a responsibility to graduate well-trained, liberally educated men and women to report on an increasingly complex society. Journalism instructors must also meet the challenge of students who don't want to be strait-jacketed in old writing forms. They can be taught basic and important principles of news gathering and writing, while being given the opportunity to do their own thing in going behind hard news for the story in depth and in true focus. This is as vital for broadcast journalism as it is for the print media. Any attempt to remove or weaken the core of professional courses from journalism schools would be a disservice to education and society as a whole.

Sportswriting

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who then gave the black power salute during the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" in Mexico City.

- The 1968 Kentucky Derby was plunged into a historic dispute, and long litigation, after illegal medication reportedly had been found in the winner, Dancer's Image.

- A power struggle was waged for control of amateur sports by the Amateur Athletic Union and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

- A boycott by horsemen closed down the Aqueduct racetrack in New York, and a boycott of several tracks was threatened by jockeys when exercise girls began to win their crusade to be licensed as regular riders.

- Baseball umpires won the right to unionize under the National Labor Relations Board and later went on strike during the 1970 playoffs.

- Joe Namath quit pro football during a battle with Commissioner Pete Rozelle over the quarterback's ownership of a Manhattan bar frequented by "undesirables," but then relented, sold the bar, and returned to the wars. But, at other times for other reasons, mostly economic, the sports ranks were "quit" by Fran Tarkenton, Maury Wills, Hawk Harrelson, Sam McDowell, Tony Conigliaro, George Sauer, Joe Kapp, and Rick

Barry. And "inside" books of protest came from the disenchanted pens of Jim Bouton, Dave Meggyesy, and Bernie Parrish.

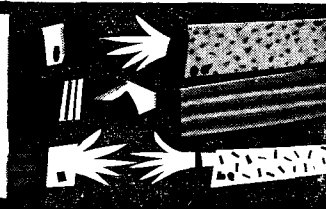
- The touring golf pros seceded from the PGA in a struggle over control of their \$7-million tour, then returned under their own commissioner, Joe Dey.

"Sport in America," reflected James Reston, "plays a part in our national life that is probably more important than even the social scientists believe. Sports are now more popular than politics in America, increasingly so since the spread of television. The great corporations are much more interested in paying millions for sports broadcasts than they are for all political events except for the nominations and inaugurations of Presidents, because the general public is watching and listening."

"I got paid \$2,100 a year when I joined the big league," recalled Casey Stengel, who made the old Brooklyn Dodgers half a century before Curt Flood sued baseball for his freedom from the reserve clause, "and they get more money now." They get more money, and more headaches for their money, and Casey Stengel gets more of both because he's a banker now. And for the sports writers, as with all people who report revolutions: more headaches, more challenges, more opportunities. Come back, Gene Fowler, and join the fun; all is forgiven.



Public Relations



The Making of a Profession?

Despite sharp, sometimes deserved, but often unfair attacks on the function and practice of public relations, the field has grown steadily. Regardless of the title by which the function is labeled, it is clear that public relations is more and more necessary in a time when so much that is basic in our society is being challenged.

Colleges, universities, corporations, churches, foundations, trade unions, and even governmental departments increasingly are finding that they cannot operate effectively without public approval. And this need calls for expert help in establishing policy and communication. It is no wonder then that the demand across the country for skilled practitioners has intensified in all sectors, private as well as public.

One sign of growth is reflected in the membership of the Public Relations Society of America, the only national organization in the general field of public relations. From fewer than 500 in its founding year, 1948, membership has multiplied to more than 6,500. This year the organization appointed its first full-time—and well-paid—president. Chapters of PRSA have proliferated: there are now seventy-two. In addition, forty-three student chapters have been formed in colleges where public relations is taught. However, PRSA membership is not the only indicator of growth, for there are far more men and women in practice than is shown by the society's membership.

Still, there is an uneasiness among many PRSA members, particularly those with long experience. It is evidenced by individuals who come from agencies as well as among those who work for corporations and non-profit groups. This dissatisfaction with PRSA is bound to be extensive, since the diversity of work experience and skills is so great within the membership that it is difficult for the society to serve every member effectively.

Wisely, PRSA officers are looking at the organization carefully. And while they do so, they might well consider the organization's attempts to make it appear as though public relations is a profession. It is not. A business, a trade, a craft, a skill, and often even an art, perhaps, but to presume it is a profession is to give it a posture that

adds nothing to the status of public relations; to do so could even be harmful.

As an example, the society's "professional standards for the practice of public relations," forbid members to solicit a client who already retains a public relations agency. In fact, most of the complaint cases acted on by the organization do not involve actions against the public but, rather, instances of what the society calls "member encroachment" or "account piracy." It is clear that a PRSA member is more prone to object if someone tries to solicit one of his accounts than he is if a fellow member acts against the public good.

What the pertinent section of the code does is give the society a Pecksniffian air, for the effect is to prevent competition between agencies—to drive business solicitation, via the indirect approach, into the country club. And it protects those who already have from those who would like to, even though the chance of a satisfied client's switching firms is certainly remote.

It is worth taking a look at other organizations whose members are also communicators. Advertising agencies are, in many ways, comparable to public relations firms, inasmuch as most of the latter are essentially communicators, with policy counseling an adjunct or not provided at all. The American Association of Advertising Agencies, founded in 1917, makes no bones about advertising's being a business. Advertising does not try to masquerade as a profession, and its practitioners are all agencies rather than individuals, as is the case within PRSA. AAAA's service standards—first adopted in 1920 and revised in 1962—are voluntary. These standards are intended, they note, "to serve as a guide to the kind of agency conduct which experience has shown to be wise, foresighted, and constructive." They also proclaim that "advertising is a business and as such must operate within the framework of competition" and that "keen and vigorous competition, honestly conducted, is necessary to the growth and health of American business generally, of which advertising is a part."

AAAA does not prevent or even oppose solicitation of clients. Its policy, under the section dealing with "unfair tactics," is that "the advertising agency

should compete on merit and not by deprecating a competitor or his work directly or inferentially . . . or by making unwarranted claims of scientific skill in judging or pre-judging advertising copy, or by seeking to obtain an account by hiring a key employee away from the agency in charge in violation of the agency's employment agreements."

The Institute of Canadian Advertising, which also accepts only corporate members, has no solicitation ban, nor does it seek one.

The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (the British counterpart of AAAA and the Canadian organization) has individual members as well as corporate membership. Its by-laws, revised in 1969, state simply that "members shall conduct themselves in their business at all times in a manner that will uphold the reputation and standing of the institute and its members" and that members "shall not discredit fellow members or their work." But there is no ban on account solicitation.

The Australian Association of Advertising Agencies, which has only corporate memberships and is akin to AAAA, does not oppose solicitation of accounts by members from each other. In this respect, it is on all fours with the American, Canadian, and British organizations.

By insisting that their calling is a profession, some members of PRSA compare themselves with the legal profession. Such a comparison is a childish status-seeking exercise. Before practicing law, lawyers must have not only certain educational standards before attending law school but must pass bar examinations after graduation. They are not permitted to solicit business in any way. But anyone who knows the legal profession knows that lawyers, by indirection, can and do make a potential client aware that they are available.

PRSA, of course, does not include all who work at public relations. Many first-rate practitioners are not members—not to avoid the code of the society, but because they prefer not to join. In addition, PRSA's code does not and cannot affect those who are not members of the society. So, as a result, it is an offense for a member of the society to try to get a fellow member's account away, but it is not an offense to pirate an account from a non-member. Obviously, if it is unprofessional to solicit an account from a society member, it ought to be unprofessional to solicit an outsider's account.

In the continuous search for improvement of PRSA, it would be helpful if the society's hierarchy took a hard look at the "member encroachment" section of its code of standards.

—L.L.L. GOLDEN.