To determine how high school journalism textbooks published from 1980 to 1985 deal with mass media and to what extent they deal with journalistic skills versus historical and theoretical content, a content analysis was made of nine comprehensive textbooks published during that period. Specific content areas that were analyzed in the historical and theoretical context were news understanding, the individual's use of the media, mass media in society, journalism history, press law, First Amendment freedom, functions of newspapers, responsibility, new technology, careers, and ethics. Among the journalistic skills analyzed were newsgathering, news reporting, proofreading, copyediting, production processes, and news writing. The analysis showed that current high school journalism textbooks tend to cover similar information for student development of skills. However, the analysis of the coverage of the historical and theoretical content showed a disparity among books. A content checklist for the books and a bibliography of texts reviewed are included. (HOD)
HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM TEXTBOOKS, 1980-1985:
AN OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

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Abstract

HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM TEXTBOOKS, 1980-1985: AN OVERVIEW

A review of high school journalism textbooks published from 1980-1985 shows that current high school journalism textbooks tend to cover similar information for skills development. However, an analysis of the coverage of the historical and theoretical content shows a disparity among books.

Specific content areas that were analyzed in the historical and theoretical context were news understanding, consumerism, mass media in society, journalism history, press law/First Amendment freedom, functions of newspapers, responsibility, new technology, careers and ethics.

Nine comprehensive textbooks published over a five-year period were examined. In addition to the books cited, there is a supplemental bibliography of helpful adviser-oriented publications.

A chart for quick referral allows the journalism teacher/publications adviser to see what topics are included in each text.
Textbooks. Are they more than a teacher's companion or guide? Do they in fact shape students' attitudes for life? Do they make students think? To what extent do high school journalism textbooks cover topics broadly grouped under historical and theoretical content? To what extent do they deal with journalistic skills?

These are questions that educators face when tackling the tough issue of textbook adoption. Textbooks were under fire long before the present clamor for better schools began (Hechinger, 1985). School boards agonize; teachers debate; parents protest.

High school publications antedate the teaching of journalism in the secondary school (Scott, 1960). In 1912, Cora Colbee, an English teacher in Salina, Kansas, began what has become known as the first high school journalism class and wrote about it in The English Journal (1913).

With the recent growth of a national interest in journalism and with the establishment of the department of Journalism at the University of Kansas, several Kansas high schools seem simultaneously to have founded courses in journalistic writing.

That same year, Charles Gleason and George Linn wrote a 40-page booklet entitled The School Paper, which was printed by Eaton and Company in San Jose, California. Three books quickly followed: Newspaper Editing in High School (1917) and Newspaper Writing in High School (1917) by Leon Flint and Journalism for High Schools (1918) by Charles Dillon.
Early textbooks focused on news writing, news gathering, the lead, types of news stories, editorials, features, makeup, headlines, copyreading, newspaper English, interviewing, advertising, newspaper terms, and human interest stories. Many dealt with such problems of student publications as staff organization, financial management, printing, engraving, and advertising either fully or superficially. Some of them discuss the writing of material intended to guide or entertain the readers, for example, columns, reviews, stories. Few, very few, discuss the history or social significance of communication media. The textbooks emphasize chiefly newswriting and learning the journalistic techniques necessary to produce student publications (Campbell, 1939).

From 1980-1985, there has been a flurry of new or revised textbooks available to the secondary journalism teacher. These texts have come a long way since the earlier books, but has the role of mass media in society become a primary concern to publishers and authors? If, indeed, textbooks are designed to help shape students' attitudes for life, are such issues as freedom and responsibility, consumerism, careers, and the role of technology thoroughly covered in those books?

The subject of freedom and responsibility should not be left solely in the purview of political science and history classrooms. Studies of secondary school American history textbooks show scanty coverage of the First Amendment, with
little discussion of landmark court decisions (Mehlinger, 1981). Leading government and history textbooks overlook chances to relate current issues and events to the Constitution (Mehlinger, p. 124). The journalism teacher/adviser can correct these deficiencies.

The importance of textbook selection has been emphasized in curriculum studies that show most teachers base their lessons almost entirely on the textbooks they are required to use. Teachers explain that they may not cover a given topic or use a particular approach unless it is in the chosen text (Hechinger, 1985).

Journalism teachers may have even greater need for textbook support than their colleagues require in more traditional fields. The 1974 Commission on Inquiry into High School Journalism (Kennedy Commission) found that fewer than half of the 363 teachers surveyed had had experience in journalism. Also, a minority had taken more than twelve hours of journalism courses in college. The commission believed that university-level emphasis on the training of professional journalists had contributed to a dearth of qualified high school teachers.

With a lack of teachers trained in journalism, the job of high school journalism teacher often goes to an English teacher or to anyone who is assigned to advise the student newspaper. Not surprisingly, the turnover of journalism teachers is as high as 60 percent annually in some states (Commission, 1974). The textbook then may become an
introduction to media theory and skills for both the student and the teacher.

Studies conducted in the 18 states which have statewide textbook adoption and in the 10 largest school districts in the United States reveal that four textbooks have been selected significantly more often than others. These are *Journalism in the Mass Media* by Norman Moyes and David White, *Press Time* by Julian Adams and Kenneth Stratton, *Journalism for Today* by Donald Ferguson and Jim Patten, and *The Mass Media and the School Newspaper* by DeWitt Reddick (Knott, 1984).

How do the textbooks published from 1980-1985 deal with mass media? To what extent do the textbooks deal with journalistic skills versus historical and theoretical content? In order to answer these questions this study evaluates nine comprehensive textbooks published over a five-year period.

The analysis is modeled after Christopher Sterling's overview of mass communication and society texts, which noted that "increases in the number of available books...forces a more focused and selective approach" (1978).

Such an analysis should be valuable to the high school teacher who needs to compare or contrast available journalism texts. Whether recommending a broad-based general text for school purchase, or selecting a supplement for personal reference, the teacher should be able to make a more informed choice. The analysis is followed by a
chart, which lists the specific content areas of each book in a format designed for easy review.

Specific content areas that were analyzed in the historical and theoretical context were news understanding, consumerism (or the individual's use of the media), mass media in society, journalism history, press law/First Amendment freedom, functions of newspapers, responsibility, new technology, careers and ethics.

Although the historical and theoretical content areas are interrelated, the need for consumer education has particular significance. In the recently published teacher's guide, The First Amendment: Free Speech and a Free Press, Thomas Eveslage points out that "many citizens today either take these freedoms for granted or don't know how free they really are. The U.S. Constitution and its Bill of Rights erode and lose value without proper care."

Eveslage's concern for educating the students, who will soon become decision-making citizens and leaders, stems in part from a Gallup Poll, conducted for release at the 1980 First Amendment Congress in Philadelphia. The poll found that three-quarters of the American people do not know what the First Amendment is. In addition, 37 percent of the American public thinks that the limits imposed on the press are not harsh enough. "The key finding," Gallup said, (FOI Report, 1980) "seems to be that the press in America is
operating in an environment of public opinion that is increasingly indifferent and, in some respects, hostile."

Ralph Otwell, as president of the Society of Professional Journalists, SDX, described (1974) the educational void that led to Gallup's results:

The problem is simply this: A great portion of the American public lacks any real understanding of the role of the press under our Constitution; they neither know nor appreciate the intent of the Founding Fathers, as expressed in the First Amendment; they lack a historical perspective on the role of the media, and most importantly, they do not see the crucial link between a free press and a free society.

Ideally, journalism education in high schools should be communication oriented, said the Kennedy Commission (1974), adding that its emphasis should be on First Amendment freedoms as well as ethics and responsibilities of the media. Instead, the Commission report suggested, its goals are too often submerged by the low status of journalism curriculum.


Now in its fourth editing, *Press Time* first reached high school classrooms in 1963. The text continues to offer variety in content and teaching aids. Its current edition covers mass media and career planning in two of its five well-designed units.

In each unit, chapters begin with a list of objectives to guide both teacher and student. Each chapter concludes with a checklist for students to measure their
understanding, a content summary, sets of review and discussion questions and a suggested project.

The book's introduction to mass media includes the process of transferring ideas from sender to receiver and of recognizing basic differences between interpersonal and mass communication. Students learn how commercial broadcast and print media handle news before examining the functions of school newspapers.

The text surveys the history of American newspapers before presenting the contemporary paper in terms of publication frequency, content and special audiences. A flow chart presents the steps of newspaper production.

A chapter on the power and responsibility of the press stresses the meaning of press freedom as well as the legal limitations, including libel, right of privacy, copyright, obscenity and incitements to violence. Students also are warned to distinguish between fact and opinion, to watch out for slanted news, and to recognize propaganda.

Student press rights are presented in the light of constitutional protection but are quickly qualified by the need for guidelines based on responsibility to school and community audiences.

In offering practical advice on choosing a career in journalism, the text includes profiles of working professionals in print, broadcast and photography positions. It encourages the student to seek practical writing experience as well as a
college education in order to prepare for a future in a highly competitive job market.

*Press Time* clearly emphasizes skills over history and theory, but it is a logically organized, readable and graphically pleasing text.

With the comprehensive text, Prentice-Hall offers a Teacher's Guide, which includes lesson plans for each of the book's chapters. The plans offer a general objective, list important terms for student understanding, and suggest teaching strategies. The new or overworked teacher will welcome the guide's answers to chapter review and discussion questions, while the experienced teacher can delve into an extensive bibliography or print and audio-visual resources. In short, the guide provides helpful tools for all teachers.

A *Press Time: Practice Book* adds another dimension to the text's usage. Two or more follow-up exercises are offered for each of the twenty chapters, ranging from writing leads to assembling composite news stories. Students can gain practice in improving style, writing headlines and preparing an ad layout.


The focus of this new text is clearly stated in its subtitle: "Producing a Student Newspaper." All but three of its seventeen chapters carry the beginning journalism student through the process of school paper production, starting with staff organization and copy flow and ending with distribution and promotion. But Bohle, a former
community college adviser, is careful to include a sampling of history and theory and to add a bibliography for further reading on each chapter topic.

Each chapter ends with a vocabulary list of new terms. A glossary at the end of the text includes all the vocabulary lists, plus new terms that the student may need to refer to. Chapters also list suggested projects and occasional exercises to reinforce skills or concepts.

The book's "introduction to newspapering" includes a brief history of the professional press, followed by a history of school newspapers. It then covers such news values as prominence, human interest, timeliness, proximity and conflict, using examples from the commercial and the college press. Newspaper language is introduced through a fictitious conversation between a reporter and editor:

Reporter: Hey chief...I've got a good angle for a page story with a sidebar.

Editor: Oh yeah? What's the slant? (p. 12)

The text's chapter on legal and ethical issues covers libel, privacy and obscenity; includes the Student Press Law Center's model guidelines; addresses the still ambiguous question of rights of the adviser; and annotates fourteen significant student press law cases, occurring between 1967 and 1975. The omission of more recent cases is the only flaw in its otherwise comprehensive coverage of legal issues.
From News to Newsprint is introduced as a text for high school and college journalism classes. Its thrust, however, is toward college level. But the experienced high school teacher, working with 11th and 12th grade students, could consider it as an alternate to Press Time. Both books are from Prentice-Hall.


The grandfather of high school texts in this study, first copyrighted in 1950, Scholastic Journalism now appears in its seventh edition. The tight, grey two-column format of the book's earliest editions has made room for more photographs and illustrations. And its content and activities have grown with the acceleration of communications knowledge over the years.

The last of the text's seven sections examines the mass media through chapter topics ranging from newspaper function, to magazines, to broadcasting and the space frontier. The oldest of texts in this analysis covers the newest developments of the communications revolution: satellites, cable television, pay television, cable programming and direct broadcast satellite transmission.

Scholastic's chapter on newspaper function discusses professional ethics as well as the newspaper's roles as commentator, entertainer, community crusader and advertiser. The function of representing special groups is emphasized in content on the ethnic, black and religious press.
Under "Canons of Journalism," the text offers the American Society of Newspaper Editors' 1923 Code of Ethics for comparison with the Associated Press Managing Editors' 1975 code. It includes a photograph of the Journalist's Creed, reproduced on a bronze plaque at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. A separate chapter on standards of good newspaper practice offers criteria to judge papers' policies and practices, including the use of propaganda devices.

The new technology and its effects are illustrated by graphics ranging from the UPI worldwide communications center to the step-by-step process of how a local story gets in the hometown newspaper.

The student's introduction to press law comes through the text's chapter on student press guidelines. It quotes the Tinker decision that neither "students nor teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate" (Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District, 393 U.S. 503, 1969) and points out that fear of school disruption is not a basis for prior restraint or censorship. Although the guidelines discuss libel, right of privacy and obscenity as areas leading to legal action, they do not cast a chilling effect on press freedom.

The text's familiar, straightforward approach in its outlined content is neither patronizing nor esoteric. It continues to offer both student and teacher a broad scope of unfiltered fact and theory, with a wide selection of
exercises concluding each chapter. Still a skills-oriented resource, its most obvious omissions are lack of specific content on newspaper history and career guidance.


Although *Journalism Today!* has a 1986 copyright, it was issued April 1, 1985 and falls within the five-year span for this paper.

Originally published in 1972 as *Journalism for Today: An Introduction for High School Students*, the updated *Journalism Today!* focuses on the many changes that have swept the mass media.

This text offers a thoughtful presentation on the responsibilities of the media, including a brief discussion of the Ariel Sharon libel suit against *Time* magazine (p. 26). It offers a performance checklist for the consumer of the mass media (p. 23) which allows for a healthy classroom discussion.

*Journalism Today!* includes career profiles that are handled much like the ones in *Press Time*. They are timely, readable and provide a realistic look at varied careers. They include the famous (Richard Clarkson—p. 235) and the not-so famous (Marcia Neville—p. 171).

In the discussion of news understanding, Ferguson and Patten have the benefit of their most recent publication date and take advantage of using Britain's Prince Charles
and Princess Diana and their two children, William and Henry, to make a point about prominence.

This textbook is heavy on laboratory exercises that appear at each chapter's conclusion. It is designed, as Ferguson and Patten write in their introduction, "to start students writing real stories about real people very quickly. We are short on formulas, long on pushing students to think and experiment."


Graphically, *Inside High School Journalism* is on the top of the list of these textbooks for its design and orderliness. Its colorful cover and use of red chapter headings and subheads makes this a book that's hard to put down.

Throughout the text are bits of journalistic trivia that are strategically placed and should appeal to the high school audience. For example, the following "extra" appeared in the chapter on "Writing Editorials" (pages 87-97).

*The California legislature, whose members felt they had been caricatured once too often, passed an anti-cartoon law in 1899; it was never enforced. (p. 93)*

*Inside High School Journalism* is concisely written; more so than any of the other books evaluated in this study. It reflects the author's background as a copy editor. That is further evidenced by the fact that the strongest chapters in the textbook are the ones on "Editing the News," "The Art
of Writing Headlines," and "Designing Newspapers and News Magazines."

The chapter divider pages feature excellent photographs that can be used for in-class discussion purposes and as good examples for student photographers.

This text seems to appeal to schools which may only offer a one-semester journalism course. It lacks depth in the history and theoretical content, and has some omissions in the skills content (depth reporting, surveys and consumer journalism and staff organization).

Many high school students today are concerned with job possibilities, and Gilmore's chapter on "Careers in Journalism" provides salary information, job descriptions and hints on how to prepare for a career in journalism.

The 30-page Teacher's Resource Book that accompanies Inside High School Journalism suggests activities that can be adapted to any journalism classroom. In addition to teaching suggestions, there are four supplemental editing exercises and a section of chapter review answers.


Writing and Editing School News is designed as a project text in basic newswriting and editing that allows instructors to devote full time to teaching.

This text is an excellent supplement to a high school journalism skills course -- but it is weak on the theoretical content. Although there are some brief appendices which deal with the history of American
journalism and school press organizations, there are no discussion assignments or activities covering First Amendment freedom, responsibility of the press, or press law.

The appendix on school press organizations discusses the National School Yearbook/Newspaper Association (p. 324), which has been out of business since 1979. Another appendix discusses the potential value of a broad-based journalism course that makes students aware of the social problems involved with the mass media and how to improve the mass media (p. 325).

An introductory chapter includes the American Society of Newspaper Editors Statement of Principles and the Associated Press Managing Editors Code of Ethics, which can be used to begin a discussion on freedom, responsibility, and ethics. However, the inexperienced teacher may feel ill-prepared to lead such a discussion if this is the only text available.

Harwood provides helpful bibliographies at the end of each chapter that can help a teacher become more confident about a particular topic.


This is a newer version of the text Journalism in the Mass Media, which Moyes first edited in 1970 with David Manning White. Journalism in the Mass Media, last published in 1979, is only available on contract to a limited number of school systems. Journalism is the text
that the publisher, Ginn and Company, is promoting as its scholastic journalism offering.

Let there be no mistake, however, this is a new text and title with an increased emphasis on giving a comprehensive picture of school media as well as the professional media. Its colorful cover and pleasing graphics make it appeal to students who have grown up during the video generation.

The text is divided into three parts: The Mass Media in a Democratic Society, The Role of the Journalist in a Democratic Society, and The High School Journalist and the School Media.

Part I skims over the development of mass communication/media. A first reading finds only one paragraph dealing with freedom of the press:

Journalism acquired status with the "freedom of the press" clause. Recognizing the need for an informed electorate the framers of the Bill of Rights designated that clause as the First Amendment of the Constitution. (p. 24)

It is followed by Article 1 of the Constitution.

The author redeems himself, however, when he carefully discusses "Preserving a Free and Responsible Press" later in the text, which traces four implications of the "free and responsible press": an impartial source of information, guardian of the public's interest, defender of freedom under law, and ally of the consumer (pp. 272-304). It seems appropriate that Moyes has placed this chapter in the section of the book that deals with the journalist's role in a democratic society. It emphasizes the students' dual
roles as preserver of a democratic society and responsible member of the community. His "ABCs of Credibility" are worth noting by all journalism teachers (pp. 276-277). The learning activities provided at the end of the chapter are timely: national security, antinuclear demonstrations, news leaks, credibility gap, and censorship (p. 304).

Moyes has done an excellent job analyzing careers and the impact new technology will have on people. The chapters that deal with magazines, the nonprint media, public relations and advertising, and technology are compact yet concise, with usually effective photos and charts to clarify understanding. By illustrating a query letter in the section on magazines, periodicals and books, the author encourages students to look outside the school community for publishing ventures - a necessity for preparing for the future (p. 63). The photo, however, depicting a student recording a swimming meet with a portapac camera and full-size television monitor at poolside, dates the chapter and should have been excluded (p. 128).

One of the most valuable and effective class assignments found in all of the textbooks is in Moyes' chapter on technology (p. 138). It requires the establishment of student teams to identify and visit community print/publishing shops, radio/television stations, and computer companies.

The 253-page Teacher's Resource Book is composed of three sections: strategy, laboratory and references.
The strategy section contains practical suggestions for presenting and teaching each chapter in the text. There are further activities and options related to the chapter, as well as a list of films, filmstrips or slides that have relevance to the subject matter.

The laboratory section provides the lab activity for the students and can be duplicated to provide sufficient copies for everyone in the class.

This resource book even adds an "end of course" test of 100 objective-type items that allow the teacher to assess the students' mastery of the concepts and skills presented in the text.


The editor states that advisers and student journalists have used Springboard to Journalism as a basic text in some situations, as a supplementary text in other situations, and as a classroom workbook in many situations. If, indeed, it is used as a textbook, then it lacks the depth that provides a broad-based perspective.

This book can be considered as a supplement to a journalism classroom. It is the fourth edition of a popular title and includes the work of many authors, many of them known for their expertise in advising student publications.

The value in this publication is in the activities provided for the teacher. The skills orientation is similar
to other texts, albeit an abbreviated, yet thorough, presentation.

"Legal Rights and the Responsibilities of Scholastic Publications" (chapter 11, pp. 60-68) provides a readable, comprehensive discussion of student press challenges that is not found in the broad-based textbooks. Responsibility is emphasized and there are examples of how to avoid problems. A chart of "Significant Cases Involving Students' Freedom of Expression" (pp. 67-68) is the most up-to-date in all of the texts analyzed.

The "Selected Journalism Bibliography" (pp. 69-70) includes readings on careers, ethics and law, history and mass communications.

Springboard to Journalism is 72 pages of helpful advice to a student publications adviser that would be strengthened with a stronger emphasis on historical and theoretical content.


This second edition of DeWitt Reddick's book only improves on the 1976 edition. Although the author died in 1980, he had completed the major revisions and his son and daughter, Bryan and Alicia, saw the book through to completion.

Reddick, who devoted more than 50 years of his life to scholastic journalism, quickly gives the reader some perspective about the mass media in a changing society. He
observes that it is necessary to understand the complex ways in which society and media interact and that there is still pioneering to be done in the field (pp. 5-7). It makes for a nice challenge to students. His perspective and respect for the field are clearly evident in his writing style.

The discussion of libel, invasion of privacy, government control and press freedom are brief. By not citing specific court cases other than the landmark 1969 Tinker v. Des Moines Community School District, he avoids the problem of contradictory school press law cases that seemed to garner attention in the late '70s and early '80s. His extensive bibliography provides a guide for teachers (pp. 429-434).

Reddick is one of the few authors who discusses how an individual can get the most use from the media (pp. 57-67). Consumerism is one area that seemed weak in all of the textbooks surveyed.

The emphasis in this textbook is clearly on the school newspaper and, as such, provides little on careers. How can students relate what they are doing in the classroom to a future vocation? A chart condenses what should have been a longer discussion into "The Expanding World of Communication" (p. 425). It is a good chart to duplicate to display in the journalism classroom.

Accompanying the textbook is Journalism Exercise and Resource Book: Aids for Teaching High School Journalism, a 257-page skills-oriented workbook. Of particular mention is the section designed to use with the chapter on freedom and
responsibility (pp. 197-198). Here the adviser has many activities to choose from that stretch the students' minds and create a healthy classroom discussion. A section devoted to consumerism encourages the teacher to make students "use" the media and to clarify their understanding of it.

Both books are graphically pleasing. Chapter divider pages have timely photographs, although some photos in the text seem outdated (i.e. the very young syndicated columnist Liz Smith interviewing an equally young Robert Redford) (p. 165).

Five supplementary books published from 1980-1985 are annotated in the bibliography. These books were included for their usefulness to journalism teachers and student publications advisers.

Conclusion

This analysis shows that current high school journalism textbooks tend to cover similar information for student development of skills. The need for basic skills in newspaper writing and production is hardly debatable. Each text helps the teacher organize and present introductory material for the newspaper staffer or potential college journalism major. Such background is essential.

The books vary in level of skills instruction. A contrast was presented in discussion of the two Prentice-Hall published texts, Press Time and From News to Newsprint. The selection of an appropriate text should
depend not only on the students' needs, but also on the high school teacher's background in journalism.

Clearly, the skills emphasis is more urgent than the introduction to historical or theoretical content. But teachers must be mindful of the need to prepare students for their roles as citizens and journalists in a democratic society. Although only a few of them will become journalism professionals, all should be able to leave the high school classroom as more knowledgeable consumers of mass media. Therefore, the theoretical content of high school texts should not be relegated to the end of the semester, or skimmed only as substance for an occasional quiz.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY


A 120-page book that examines the legal issues confronting America's student journalists, advisers and administrators on both the high school and college levels. Includes Model Guidelines for Student Publications and the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.


A study of how advisers are currently using computers in journalism classes and recommendations concerning computer equipment and software purchases. Includes activities to use on the computer.


For all advisers who need to know how to become managers. Provides some thoughtful discussions for classroom use.


From cover to cover, this truly is a survival kit for teachers.


A self-contained package easily adapted to any classroom text. Includes summaries of significant free speech cases and annotations of useful resources.
## History and Theoretical Content: An Overview

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+ = covered
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