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Uses and General Educational Benefits of a Student Newspaper in the Elementary School

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USES AND GENERAL EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS
OF A STUDENT NEWSPAPER IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

By
H. Roger Salisbury
August 1961

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It is with particular thanks that I acknowledge the valuable assistance of my Graduate Committee in assembling this paper. Especially, I would like to thank the Chairman of my Committee, Miss Bonnie Wiley, for her thoughtful guidance and persevering patience throughout this endeavor. She was a constant inspiration.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was (1) to determine the utilization, supplementation, and general educational benefits derived from the student published newspapers of a selected group of elementary schools in the state of Washington; (2) to examine the position that the student publication now holds in the elementary curriculum; and (3) to determine the number of those selected elementary schools that have had and/or now have a pupil published newspaper.

Importance of the Study

This study hoped to illuminate some untouched areas of the language arts program in the elementary school and to propose operative suggestions for the publishing of a newspaper by students in the elementary grades. The study was also intended as an evaluating device and practical guide for educators desiring to produce an elementary publication. Actual examples of student published newspapers are included.

In this period of concentrated specialization in the field of education, many teachers are trained to teach in a specific academic area. Therefore, when confronted with the many general academic areas of the elementary

school curriculum, some teachers often become frustrated. Without a planned, well-balanced educational program, the frustration and insecurity of a new teacher are often inevitable. Especially in the major area of language arts is there a substantial amount of insecurity and frustration on the part of the teacher who lacks a strong academic background in the English language. Such an atmosphere, whether hovering over the fledgling teacher or the veteran teacher, is not too conducive to successful teaching.

Many teachers have sought information about establishing and maintaining a student publication integrated with the language arts program. Not much material has been published on this subject. One of the purposes of this study, therefore, was to determine if the elementary newspaper could strengthen the language arts program. A secondary intent was to provide educators a detailed guide for the genesis and continuance of a newspaper.

Scope of the Study

Material for this study was secured by the use of questionnaires, from periodicals and textbooks, and through private interviews. Most of the information was obtained from a two-page questionnaire mailed to 250 selected elementary principals and teachers in Washington. Of the 250 questionnaires mailed, 71.2 per cent were returned. A

breakdown of these returns will be found on many of the succeeding pages of this study.

Besides the major questionnaire mailed to principals and teachers, a secondary questionnaire was distributed to 100 teachers during the 1960 summer session at Central Washington College of Education. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 25 per cent were returned with attached comments.

Data compiled by the use of the major questionnaire were gathered during the fall of 1959 and the winter of 1960. Data compiled by the use of the secondary questionnaire were gathered during the 1960 summer session at Central Washington College of Education. Since most of the material obtained from the questionnaires is contemporary and subsequently vital to this paper, a large part of it has been incorporated into this study.

A personal letter of inquiry regarding published material in this field was mailed to many of the major book companies in the United States. The purpose in sending such an inquiry was to gain a better insight of the national picture relative to the study. Of the 28 inquires mailed, 22 replies were received, constituting a return of 78.5 per cent.

Definition of Terms

Elementary school. This, a school for children of

elementary school age, normally requires six years to complete.

Academic learnings. This will refer to knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers, or by both.

Social learnings. These are the numerous adjustments to one's position in relation to society, environment, and associates.

Student newspaper. This will refer to a school paper written by elementary children and ordinarily mimeographed or hectographed.

The "school newspaper" is a term applied to a variety of publications. Some consist of a single sheet, and others are of magazine shape and size. 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 (21:368).

A major function and indeed the major purpose of a school newspaper is to provide natural, motivated writing and reading practice for all pupils in a school. When pupils write not just for one teacher but for possible publication and consumption by their fellow students, they are motivated to a high degree. . . . They are not writing to please an unpleasable teacher or to relate to classmates what they already know. And similarly the finished newspaper should be a valuable reading experience for all who can read it. The pupils are reading about friends and acquaintances, the topics are within their ken, and the difficulty level is generally appropriate to the reader. There is a sense of involvement in the subject matter that practically no other non-fiction reading can produce. Here then is the basic function of the school newspaper. . . to provide motivated writing and reading experiences for the pupils (29:177).

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter II will review the literature relating to the various uses of a student publication in the elementary schools. The literature contains a synthesis of the pupil newspaper during the past 30 years.

In Chapter III actual copies of student newspapers will be scrutinized for the application of language arts skills. The tabulated results from the questionnaires and pertinent comments of various educators will also be included in this chapter.

Chapter IV will present proposed criteria for student newspapers on the elementary level. The objectives, some desirable features, and the actual production of a pupil newspaper will be presented.

Chapter V will give a summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Little contemporary and pertinent literature was available. Few pertinent articles have been written during the past twenty to thirty years. Most literature examined was published ten to twenty years ago. As far as could be determined, the educational journals in Washington State have published very little material relating to this particular topic. This does not mean that educators in the elementary field have not been utilizing the newspaper project. Many elementary schools in this state have been publishing pupil newspapers for a number of years.

While there was apparently a minimal amount of published material on the subject, research for this paper indicated that educators do have a lively interest in the subject.

Feasibility of Newspaper

The feasibility of an elementary student newspaper is dictated by the present condition and educational climate of the local elementary school. No two schools are the same, just as no two pupils are the same. There may be similarities, but there are also extreme variances unique to a local situation.

Much of the literature reviewed for this study

indicated that many of those elementary schools which had published a pupil newspaper found the educational values derived seemed to merit continuation of the program. Reaping the benefits of such values depends upon the following principles: (1) the newspaper should be managed by the pupils themselves under the guidance of a teacher-advisor; (2) the paper should, as nearly as possible, be the students' work; (3) much of the material chosen could be selected anonymously by the class; (4) a good balance of creative work should be included in the paper; (5) if possible, the paper should be able to hold its own financially; and (6) after each issue the class and the advisor should evaluate objectively and constructively all aspects of the paper. Any new ideas or changes could be discussed at this time.

Because a school paper is based on the needs of a wide-awake community, because with the exception of better writing, it is the best motivation available for composition work, because such an enterprise helps to mold school and class spirit, and because it furnishes experience in the practice of business-like methods, it is highly desirable as an activity for children (33:34).

Function of Newspaper

Prior to starting any work on an elementary publication, the reasons for and functions of the newspaper should be determined. The valid functions of a newspaper must not be misinterpreted or misused. Although written in 1931, the succinct comments of Henry J. Otto still command respect:

Any activity which is to continue to have a place in the school life must justify itself by making definite contributions to aims and objectives which are worthy of achievement and which are in line with the purposes of education (25:102).

If the amount of work, determination, and time delegated to such an activity justify the final educational results, then a pupil publication need not be relegated to the improbable or the impossible.

The functions of an elementary student publication are of the utmost importance, for without purposive functions many activities which otherwise might have been beneficial to the total educational program are discarded. Valid functions are a necessity.

There exists today considerable confusion about the proper functions of elementary school newspapers. This is not strange: in many schools newspapers developed like Topsy; they just grew. Since today they have acquired permanent status and represent a "considerable financial outlay" it is important that we try to determine their proper functions (29:176).

Irwin J. Suloway, Director of Publications, Chicago Teachers College, proposed the following functions of an elementary school newspaper:

1. The school newspaper provides motivated writing and reading practice for the entire school.
2. Work on a school newspaper will improve the writing ability of staff members.
3. The school newspaper is a means of unifying the school.
4. The school newspaper serves to solidify desirable school-community relations.

5. The school newspaper is a means by which the administration can communicate with the pupils.
6. The school newspaper is "good publicity" for the school.
7. The school newspaper is a communication instrument for the parent-teacher association.
8. The school newspaper helps to produce tomorrow's journalists (29:176-7).

Also pertinent to the sound functions of an elementary publication are the following expressed aims:

1. The elementary school newspaper attempts to interpret the school to the community. Both through content definitely planned for public relations and through articles by children describing school activities of interest to themselves and their parents, the newspaper which is issued frequently and regularly helps to explain the school to the community.
2. The school newspaper helps to improve the English of children by furnishing motivation for compositions. Some children select the best compositions for publication in the newspaper. Topics for compositions are selected with a view toward supplying material for the newspapers that has real value and real interest. Higher degrees of excellence become the standards of acceptance. Improved vocabulary and better punctuation set goals for practical usage.
3. The school newspaper provides a stimulus and an outlet for creative expression. Those papers which are largely the product of children in the school contain original poems, stories, and drawings of unusual merit. While the competitive element should not be over-emphasized, it seems true that competition does serve as a stimulus to better effort.
4. The school newspaper serves to coordinate and to unify the activities of the school.
5. The school newspaper develops character through the experience 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 (25:103).

It should be clearly understood that the major function of the elementary newspaper is not to cause a great impression. The following statement presents the proper function:

Let us, when planning our school newspaper, forget that they might be used to make us look "good", to impress others, to train journalists, or to make money. Let us remember instead that the newspaper is perhaps the best single means we have of providing writing or reading experiences for our pupils and that it can create a sense of identification with the group which is the basis of good citizenship. Those are worthy educational aims (29:179).

Correlating the student newspaper with the language arts program adds to the ease and accuracy with which the regular staff members write the English language. Enthralled with the spirit of newspaper production when they are actually writing for the paper, there is a greater possibility the class will strive for clarity, coherence, and even correct comma usage as never before, and call it fun rather than work.

Most aims or functions of a pupil newspaper cannot be fully achieved unless the school administrator, the faculty, and the pupils join together in formulating and implementing a sound policy, a policy adopted to the needs

and interests of the children in a particular situation.

Before any work is initiated on the school newspaper, its functions should be clearly defined and understood by both the student staff and the advisor. Any misinterpretation or extreme deviation from specific educational functions could be embarrassing and detrimental to the total elementary program.

Much of the literature examined showed that basic to the entire value received from a pupil publication is the strengthening influence such has upon the language arts program, especially in the areas of written communication and grammatical structure.

It is sometimes a difficult task to motivate students in the language arts program. Language arts as studied in the elementary school have either a quickening or a deadening effect upon the pupil's future school work. It is important that all avenues of writing be explored. In this respect, the student newspaper could possibly be a challenging tool for children interested in a new approach to the language arts program.

Although the following comments about student newspaper work were written thirty years ago, they retain a contemporary pertinency:

It should stimulate purposeful writing of the sort that has been greatly neglected by English teachers of the culturist type. Such writing should be natural to the majority of students who have ideas to express and

the inclination and desire to communicate their ideas to others. Teachers who are willing to encourage writing of this kind will find the school paper a great incentive to production. It makes available for themes and paragraphs the whole range of interests and activities of school life. The knowledge that approving friends may see and read in print the results of one's efforts encourages greater care in writing and the selection of topics that are of current interest to the school. Class meetings with their appeal to particular groups, athletic or other interschool contests with their interest for all, incidents of the classroom, events of the school day, mass meetings or personal items may furnish material for narrative or descriptive writing. The editorial column provides a real incentive for writing of another type which may be just as natural and as purposeful as that required in news items and stories (30:192).

The literature stated that language arts is quite an encompassing field and that there is ample room for creativeness. Newspaper writing is also a creative activity:

The room newspaper may provide another means of creativity in the language arts. . . . When the paper was finished each child had contributed something. Here was a practical use for the grammar he had been studying (6:99).

Nina Hardy, an Oklahoma high school teacher, reinforces the preceding statement:

The first principle I have found that the school paper accents better than any number of red pencils is correct spelling. Words are just words to far too many students, and the new words are just a bother to most of them.

But when misspelled words appear in the paper, they are bold, glaring errors. Other students poke fun at the staff for misspelled words. . . even if they are typographical errors. Their taunts are so much worse than a silent red mark "sp" over a word in a theme that is destined for the trash can, anyway.

The journalistic activities are, in my opinion, more

lasting and impressive because they are so pointed and meaningful for the pupil (10:429-30).

If an academic activity is determined to be educationally sound through time and experience, it is usually allowed a position in the curriculum. In regard to this matter, Ralph B. Jones, Director of Curriculum Revision, Public Schools, Fort Smith, Arkansas, stated:

Curriculum revision in its broadest aspects is a continuous reorganization of the whole school program in terms of those experiences of childhood which come within the province of the school. It is a matter of improving every school factor involved in child development through a series of guided experiences. From this point of view there are no such activities as are commonly designated as "extracurricular" or "co-curricular." Any activity or material having a justifiable educative value becomes a definite element of pupil experience, and as such is a part of the school's curriculum. The only justifiable basis for any of the activities or materials which are included as a part of the developmental offering of the school is the needs of the child. These needs are conditioned by a great many factors in the past experience, present environment, and future plans of the child (21:251).

In conjunction with the aforementioned possibility of strengthening written composition through the use of the newspaper, a great deal of literature stressed the benefits accrued in the rudiments of English grammar. In almost every phase of news writing the student must apply those rules of grammatical structure he is learning. Perhaps the newspaper could be the "proving grounds" of the language arts program. In many cases, a child may readily visualize some of the "whys" and "wherefores" of the English language if he is allowed participation in writing activities.

Many of the following comments made by various educators stress the idea that experience should go hand in hand with the intangible teachings of English grammar:

Drill on parts of speech, phrases, clauses and objects was seen to be a means to an end. Facility in these usages was understood to be as necessary as the memorization of rules for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing in arithmetic. Each, in its field, is a requisite component of successful problem solving.

Quality and accuracy in all written work have improved tremendously on all levels of ability. In their biographical sketches, autobiographies, and essays, interest has been stimulated not only to have something interesting to say but to communicate it to others so that a reader will be interested. The children have found it natural to compose interesting introductory sentences, discuss one item at a time in connected paragraphs, and finish with a summarizing sentence (7:482).

Finally, the beneficial effect of the paper on the students was evidenced by the fact that the quality of their compositions was increased because they knew that the best compositions would be printed in the paper. Writing editorials, news, and articles helped to bring out the importance of expressing ideas clearly.--Many gained new self-confidence from having their work published and favorably commented upon (23:88).

The teachers agree that a newspaper furnishes motivation for the correct and effective use of English, builds up a wholesome attitude toward the school, and is a valuable means of carrying information to parents concerning the school activities (17:455).

Through this class newspaper our pupils have learned why it is desirable to enlarge one's vocabulary, improve one's command of English, and express one's ideas clearly and forcefully.

In developing the activity we correlated English, reading, and civics, studying how newspapers are printed and how the news is gathered and written, stressing the "five 'W's"--who, what, where, when, and why. A foundation for thoughtful reading was laid by placing emphasis in the value of a truthful conservative paper and diverting attention from cheap sensationalism (15:26).

All in all, the teacher who helps her class to produce a magazine will find out that the work motivates these pupils both in their creative activities and in their technical studies. Once aroused, interest in the project continues through to the final movement when the finished magazine is put together (24:67).

Much of the literature reviewed stressed the feasibility and the functions of the student publication. The various values received from such a project were also dealt with in some detail. Stressed was the combination of mental and manual learnings afforded if full responsibility for planning, organizing, and putting out the newspaper was the major responsibilities of the class. There would still be an advisor, but he must be one who offers advice. He must not assume the role of publisher. Allowing the child a greater voice in the newspaper production increases the possibility that he will work cooperatively in a social group. There is engendered a shared responsibility in the paper's success. The child is also offered the opportunity to spell, write, and draw for a purpose which is real to him. A type of clearinghouse for school activities and interests is also made available.

Functions and values are often similar in definition. Yet, functions are usually established before values can be ascertained. Throughout the reviewed material the values of a pupil newspaper were generously mentioned, as in this example:

Aside from the nebulous advantages in growth and knowledge to the individual worker on the elementary

school paper, there are definite concrete beneficial results which we can evaluate. The paper may be used either as a class clearinghouse or school clearinghouse medium and also as a message carrier as to future events, rules, plans, and the like. It is useful as a developer of talent and this is one of its greatest functions. It can improve relations between the public and the school (27:93).

The following comments seem to typify and identify more specifically some of the values received from the newspaper activity:

The publication of our paper is helping us to improve ourselves in many ways. We have shown growth in cooperative group planning, we have been made aware of the need of accuracy in the written word and we are developing the ability to convert conversation and observation onto the paper. Not an easy task! We have also seen the necessity for the improvement and development of manners and conversational rapport in unnatural situations (4:388).

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION OF DATA

A good newspaper is worth every effort required to get it out. The educational possibilities of such a venture are self-evident, as is the usefulness to the school. There's no denying that it is a lot of work for all concerned, but ask anyone who knows . . . either students or adviser. There's nothing quite like a touch of printer's ink in the blood (3:85).

Viewing the Elementary School Newspaper

Many elementary schools now publish student newspapers. What was once a pioneering activity in the classroom is becoming a common one. Because of this the form and content of the publication should be controlled and regularly re-evaluated. The form and content of any newspaper is dependent upon the paper's function, the interest, dependability, and the workmanship of the student staff, the leadership of the advisor, and the cooperation of all persons connected with the project. With such, those, a successful publication can be achieved.

The following pages of this study present actual samples of stories taken from elementary publications. To avoid unnecessary embarrassment, names have been altered. In no case has the original form and content been changed. In examining student published articles a primary purpose is to indicate the many types, forms, and calibre of pupil

inspired stories that are a part of the total make-up of an elementary newspaper.

A school newspaper should be based upon the needs of the children in the school. The type of content should vary between schools in different types of districts. The material included in the newspaper of a rural or small village school naturally should be much different from that in the newspaper of a large city school. The content of a paper in a city school that draws children from an old and well-established American community should be different from that of the newspaper produced in a community where most of the parents speak some foreign language (31:485).

News stories. A news story should contain the following points: (1) Who: main character or characters in an item; (2) What: the thing they did or what happened to them; (3) When: the day and date and sometimes the time of day; (4) Where: the place (in some instances this may be omitted when it is understood that it happened in the school); and (5) How and Why are often included in the story also.

News writing represents a specialized field. The task of the news writer is to sort the available facts about a particular item, arrange them in the order of importance, and write a readable story around them. The news writer must first see the picture clearly himself (13:216).

Some basic suggestions for the news writer might be: Use short paragraphs, normally from six to ten typed lines of the proper column width. Write each sentence so clearly that it does not have to be read more than once to be understood. Do not bring in any personal opinion (13:217).

The following lead paragraphs are examples of elementary student-written news stories, presented to indicate the form and calibre of the students' stories:

A large crowd of more than 200 attended the PTA "Back to School" night October 16, and visited in the classrooms of their children.

Each teacher explained to the parents in their room the program and materials for the grade.

Following three weeks of tryouts, Mrs. Brown chose 42 girls and 22 boys to sing in the chorus.

Girls' chorus practices Monday morning and the members are Joan White, Patricia Green, Mary Brown, etc.

Mrs. Joe C. Brown is substituting in the fourth grade, while Mrs. Jones is in the hospital.

Mrs. Jones left October 14 and will be gone approximately six weeks. She is at Community General Hospital.

Editorials. The editorial is the expression of an opinion, generally a comment on timely topics of interest to the entire school. Information usually not given in the straight news story is included in the editorial. An editorial should include something of interest contemporary to the pupils who read the paper. Advice from the advisor is necessary if the student editorial is to be an effective tool.

The following examples of student editorials are representative of many elementary newspapers:

Fire is our friend and foe. It keeps us warm. It cooks our food and gives us light. It also makes modern industry possible. Fire is also our foe. It destroys buildings and most of all, human lives. Here are some things to do if you ever run up against a fire. Dig or plow a trench so that field and forest fires cannot cross the bare earth. Keep a fire extinguisher handy for use on fires.

In old colonial days they didn't have a fire department, but they had a bucket brigade where everybody

pitched in and worked until the fire was out. A fire brigade is where people make two lines and they pass buckets to the well and back to the house.

Always remember the best way to fight fire is to prevent it. Accidents never happen, they are caused. In other words, there is no such thing as an accident.

Many editorials are written to expose a specific problem or situation that exists at a particular time. The following is an example:

Running through the halls and up and down stairs has been against school rules for a long time. Although we are often reminded by our teachers of our responsibility in carrying out this policy, some of us keep on breaking the rules.

Besides causing much noise and disturbing classes which are studying, running in the halls on waxed floors and up and down the stairs is dangerous business. You could fall and hurt yourselves badly.

Next time you get the urge to break the rule, remember this editorial. Maybe the cartoon above will help you remember.

Such a nebulous quality as sportsmanship is often used as a topic for pupil editorials:

What is good sportsmanship? It is being fair, honest, and being a good loser and a graceful winner in everything. Good sportsmanship is one of the first and most important lessons each of us has to learn. For some it is difficult and for some it is easy. We don't all react the same way. In the eyes of our friends we are well-liked if we are good sports. On the other hand a poor sport can quickly lose his popularity. Sometimes out on the playground you may see two teams playing a game and one team wins. The team that didn't win might make up an excuse because they didn't win. That is poor sportsmanship. So let's all try to be better sports. How about it?

Specially observed holidays such as Thanksgiving,

Christmas, Washington's birthday, and Valentine's Day offer additional possibilities for student editorials:

Why do we have Christmas? What would you do if there were no Christmas? Christmas has a lot of meanings. To most of you it means Santa Claus. But, you see, Christmas is a special day set aside as the birthday of Christ. All of you have birthdays. It's a day that you get gifts. When it is someone else's birthday you give them gifts. That is the way with Christmas. It is Christ's birthday. Everyone exchanges gifts and all are happy.

Thanksgiving, the word says a lot. You can feel the cold air. The bare trees loom against a dark sky. There are your relatives coming down the walk, cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents full of love and thanksgiving.

On the cold morning of Thanksgiving Day you go to church, thanking God for all the wonderful things you own.

After church comes dinner. The great turkey is set on the table along with the cranberry sauce and a great big pumpkin pie. Though you want to eat so badly, you stop a moment to give thanks for what is set before you.

Feature stories. A feature story or human interest story is not as inclusive as a straight news story. Pathos, humor, anger, or love is often aroused by reading a feature story. Opinion is included in the feature story. Interest is geared to a high pitch. A free style of writing may be found. In feature writing the student reporter has a greater opportunity to give full play to his emotions. The child may frequently "pull out all stops" to breathe joy or sadness into his written words:

For the first time in many years all the fifth and sixth grades are able to be "one big family" and be together in the newly remodeled high school, now called the Jones School.

The boys and girls in the nine fifth and sixth grades are having the fun of doing things together. We play on the playground and in the multi-purpose room together. Rooms get together to see movies. The fifth grades sing together. We liked getting together for our assembly of songs just before Christmas. On this day we really felt like the big family we are. We would like more assemblies like that one soon.

Our teachers are very friendly. They are helping us become better boys and girls and better citizens. Mr. Jones, our principal, is the "best friend a boy or girl ever had". Mrs. Green is our all-around helper, our friend and nurse too! The janitor, Joe Pratt, is friendly and keeps our school neat and clean. Our librarian, Mrs. Peters is as helpful a librarian as we could wish for. Our student teachers are our friends too. We want to help them become really good teachers.

We are glad to have the special room in "our family" too! We would like to be helpful to Miss Loder whenever we can.

Two other feature stories, also examples of students' work, are shown below:

Boys and girls and lots of toys is the formula for fun and frolic. The fourth graders brought their Christmas toys of all makes and sizes to school. Then they tramped down to gym A and led a wild riot, playing with a Yogi Bear doll, planes, and dolls of all sorts. I bet they could have played all day. But after the play they were normal fourth graders again.

Fifty-five years ago before your parents were born, the children from this district attended the Oliver School. It was a long distance to walk through the woods. The trail is now 33rd avenue. Parents felt uneasy as the children walked to the school so they asked the school board to build a school in the neighborhood. They named it Edward Brown School. That little school stood in the south-east corner of our school grounds. It is between 13th and 15th streets.

At that time there was a stream at the right side of our school. It was pretty deep so there was a bridge across it. During the recess the children played on the bridge.

Later the name of the school was changed to Worthington. If you want to know more about Worthington in its early days, the office has more information.

For most elementary pupils it is no easy task to write an inspiring feature story for the school newspaper. Such spontaneous inspiration is usually found only in adult newspaper work. Good feature writing is a challenging but not impossible task. Besides being able to express the human interest facets of school life, the student is applying his grammar skills.

Sports stories. Of special interest to many elementary pupils is the subject of sports. Most athletic activities arouse excited interest.

Sports writing can be an interesting and educational outlet for those pupils who indicate little or no interest in language arts. One author, writing for the Instructor magazine, was quoted as saying, "Boys who never felt a real need for correct written expression amazed themselves, and others, by doing creditable accounts of games played at recess, and of the interschool games" (15:26).

In the following sports story the student writer seemed to exert a special effort to work a number of names into the story:

Well, football season is here at Ogden School. The name of our team is Kwanis. The first game is Saturday, October 10, at Loop Field in Madrona at 10:00 A.M. The Kwanis and the Wolves will battle the game out. The Kwanis won the championship last year, and if we win

this year we get to keep the trophy. Don Helton, Darrel Brown, Leroy Jones, and Mike Smith are all battling for the backfield positions. Joe White, Bud Whitty, Olaf Inger, and Bob Strain are linemen who are doing very well.

Columns. Columns are another means of communication for the student. Columns may either present itemized activities of the school or include opinionated writings. The art of expression is still available.

Boy and Girl of the Month columns are popular with elementary children. There is often the chance that a student will see his own name in the column. Then, too, there is the incentive to become a leader so that one might be singled out for mention in the column.

The following two examples are rather representative of pupil columns:

We have chosen Linda Jones as our girl-of-the-month for February. Linda was born in Montana and is the baby in the family of seven children. Her birthday is June 24 and she is 12 years old. Her favorite colors are pink and blue, which go well with her pretty blue eyes and brown hair. Linda is a good citizen, always ready to help, and always getting her work done on time. Her hobbies are music and singing. She is in our school chorus and sings in the church choir. She was president of our sixth grade in October and November and right now is our class secretary.

The boy-of-the-month is Jack Brown. He is eleven years old and was born in Tacoma, Washington, on October 16, 1948. He has been a resident of Jonesville for the past six years. His hobby is cars. He loves to build plastic models and read hot rod magazines. He also likes to take things apart. He was chosen boy-of-the-month for outstanding improvement in his school work and citizenship.

Original stories and poems. Another phase of the elementary newspaper is the unlimited scope for creative writing. Especially during these early school years is there an uninhibited attitude on the part of the pupil to write creatively. Original stories may be classified as creative writing. The class newspaper can be an outlet for this type of writing, a place where the young author can have his material printed. The thrill of seeing his work in print may inspire him to do more and better work. Creative writing in the class newspaper should be encouraged and guided by the teacher.

Following are two examples of creative writing by elementary students:

It was Christmas Day in the Jones family, but it was a very gloomy one. Billy had to have a serious operation. The doctors wondered if she would live:

The Jones family was all huddled up out in the waiting room, hoping that Billy would live. It was about to become a very gloomy Christmas when the nurse stepped out. She said, "The operation is over. Billy is alright. She has a surprise for you". They heard a bark. There was Billy standing in the doorway. She ran around licking each person in turn. You see, Billy was a dog. The Jones family sighed a big sigh of relief. It was a merry Christmas after all.

Now for Billy's surprise. Out paraded four beautiful puppies.

Ever since the morning we got to camp, Cabin 23 had wanted to go on a hike. On the second day of camp we went on our hike at six o'clock in the morning. We started walking out of camp. Two boys in Cabin 76 were awakened by the tramp, tramp, tramp of our feet. Tom and Wayne got up and dressed to follow us. On our way

up we picked a bouquet of flowers for each of us. Patricia, Julie, and Melissa then started to hike again. Then, all of a sudden, Patricia and Melissa saw a big brown ball of fur. It was a bear. All of the flowers were thrown up into the air. All sorts of screams and yells were in the air. Wayne and Tom started walking faster and faster. They ran smack dab into Mr. Bear. All the girls had run away and could not be seen. Poor Wayne and Tom were adopted as bear cubs and never seen again. One hour later Cabin 23 came puffing into camp and told their story to the rest of the camp.

Creative writing for the newspaper is not limited to prose. There is also poetry. Although many children appear more secure in writing prose, there are those who are adept in poetry. If the writings appear in the newspaper, additional incentive is given the pupil. Examples of student poetry follow:

I have a dear old granny,
 And Granny's sweet as spice.
 I also have a mommy,
 And Mommy's also nice.
 'Ception when I throw my toys,
 And go playin in the dirt,
 Then Mommy, she gets mad at me,
 And spanks me where it hurts.
 But when I went to Granny's house,
 I had myself a ball.
 'Cause I had me a hideout,
 That she couldn't find at all.
 I threw apples at the big red bull,
 He came at me like a bus.
 Then Granny, she ran after me,
 And, boy, she made a fuss.
 Granny's got a kitty,
 He's my choo choo train.
 I pull his little tail,
 And he whistles loud and plain.
 But when Granny heard my whistle,
 And saw my choo choo train,
 She must have gotten mad at me,
 'Cause she sent me home by plane.

The leaves are turning red,
The leaves are turning brown,
The leaves are turning yellow,
And falling to the ground.
The wind will soon be blowing,
The leaves will fly high,
The children will be playing,
Under a blue and sunny sky.

Information stories. Interesting news need not be limited to the social happenings of a school. The subject matter of the classroom, if presented interestingly, may also be "big news" to the child. Some children have trouble grasping a certain academic skill. If this "difficult" material were written by a student in the newspaper, perhaps the chance of a child understanding it now would be increased.

The following articles are examples of pupil writings relating to subject material:

The sun has a family of nine planets. It may have even more than this but they may be so far away that no-one has seen them yet. The farthest planet we know about, Pluto, was discovered only about 25 years ago.

Every planet has its own path around the sun just as our own planet, the earth has. The paths of each planet are millions of miles from one another.

Some of the planets shine in the sky like bright stars. They shine because the sun is shining on them.

Two planets, Mercury and Venus, have paths closer to the sun than our path. The paths of other planets are all farther away.

Jupiter is the biggest planet and Saturn the next largest.

Venus is covered with thick clouds which cannot be

seen through. Mars has white caps at its poles. This may be frost. It is dull red with greenish streaks in it. It is possible that the streaks are plants and the red parts, desert.

We wonder whether people like us could live on other planets. The scientists think not. Most of the planets are either far, far too hot, or far too cold. Besides, as far as it is known, none of them have air like ours.

The riddles of the scientific world, planets, etc., will be discussed and maybe some solutions arrived at during a big project being planned by scientists to begin on July 1. This project has the big name of I.G.Y. It will last one and one-half years.

An exciting time is ahead for all of us interested in science.

A group of people in our room are making a conservation project. This project consists of four main parts which are put together on a large tray. Sand, sub-soil, sod and gravel are the four materials we are using. Sub-soil was put into the tray first. At the back of the tray the sub-soil was made two inches deep. It kept getting less deep as it got toward a little trench at the end of the tray. On top of the sub-soil, fine sand was put just so it covered the sub-soil. Along side of that, a piece of sod was fitted. On the sod, plant life is growing.

The purpose of this experiment is to see how the soil is carried away off bare soil and off soil with plant life. This experiment is also to see how much water is found to run off the bare soil and how much is found to run off soil with plant life on it.

Many different types of stories may be found in the student publication. Not only are the formats of a newspaper dissimilar but also the stories. Each newspaper should be adapted to the particular needs and interests of the student body.

Many times the student writer has a larger reading

audience than does the teacher, since the articles are written by the student's peers.

The students who write the news articles usually learn something about the topic upon which they are writing. Often, reference is made to the textbook, encyclopedia, or some type of information source.

The student writer must also employ his working knowledge of the English language. Practical experience is difficult to minimize.

It is no inconsequential theory that students, like their elders, enjoy seeing their own names in print. They also enjoy reading about their fellow pupils.

In the 35 student newspapers reviewed in this study, there was a minimal number of grammatical errors. Some of these errors were misspelled words, unquoted material, and typographical mistakes. There appeared to be no major grammatical errors. Words such as "quiet," "floats," and "hysterical," were misspelled. Errors, whether "major" or "minor," are not acceptable or condoned in any pupil publication. Every newspaper should be operated at its highest level of efficiency. Accuracy of grammatical structure and content is a necessity. The mere fact that a student's name appears printed above a story is often an incentive to eliminate many errors.

As previously indicated, one of the primary purposes of having a student newspaper in the elementary school

is to aid and supplement the already existing language arts program. The newspaper, however, is no panacea for any program. A student publication is merely another means of enhancing the comprehension of the English language and aiding the child in social growth.

Questionnaire Results.

A major portion of this study has been based upon the results of the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire, along with a number of graphs, are presented on the following pages.

One of the first questions related to why elementary schools that had once published a newspaper had discontinued the activity.

It was first noted that the advisor of the student publication should, if possible, possess some journalistic knowledge. He should have a definite interest in the activity. A student staff may be vitally interested, but if the teacher lacks zeal and creative drive, most work is to no avail.

Of the reasons some schools had discontinued publication, the departure of the teacher-advisor totaled 19.3 per cent. Another reason for newspaper discontinuance was the apparent lack of interested faculty members, which totaled 28.5 per cent. In some schools there was a disinterested student body. Schools that had discontinued

publication because of a lethargic or passive student body accounted for 7.6 per cent. The answer most often given for discontinuance of the newspaper was "other variable reasons." This term comprises a number of reasons, some of which are illness, inadequate working facilities, insufficient time, lack of materials, inexperience, and insufficient finances. "Other variable reasons" was 44.2 per cent of the total number of reasons given for the discontinuance of the activity. (Note Figure 1).

A major question related to the strategic point as to whether the newspaper was beneficial as a part of the language arts program. Of the 118 replies to this question, 66.1 per cent were affirmative. Seven and six tenths per cent of those answering felt the newspaper activity had a negligible influence upon the language arts program. There was also 21.1 per cent of "no comment." (Note Figure 2).

Another question related to who published the elementary newspaper. Of those responding, 79.1 per cent said that one classroom put out the paper. Although the news printed was representative of the whole school, one home-room produced the entire paper under the direction of a teacher-advisor. A number of classes or various grade levels (at designated periods) publishing the paper totaled 18 per cent of those responding. (Note Figure 3).

Just as in the teaching of the fundamental subjects in the elementary school, it is essential that the children who produce the newspaper have the guidance of a

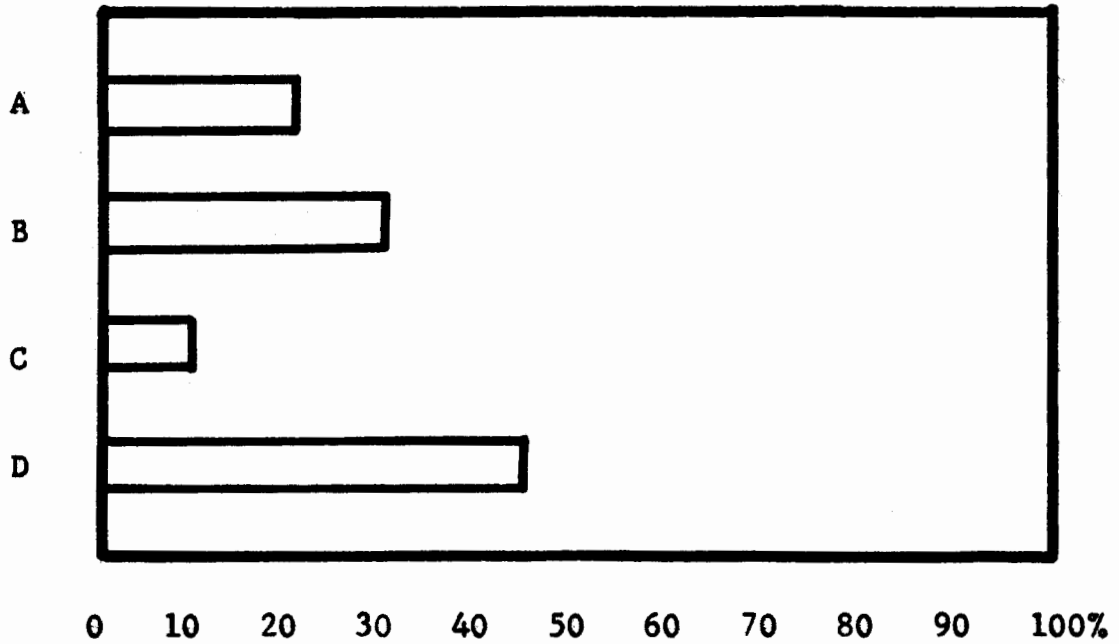


FIGURE 1

DISCONTINUANCE OF PUBLICATION

CODE:

A--Loss of Teacher-Advisor

B--Uninterested Faculty

C--Uninterested Pupils

D--Variable Reasons

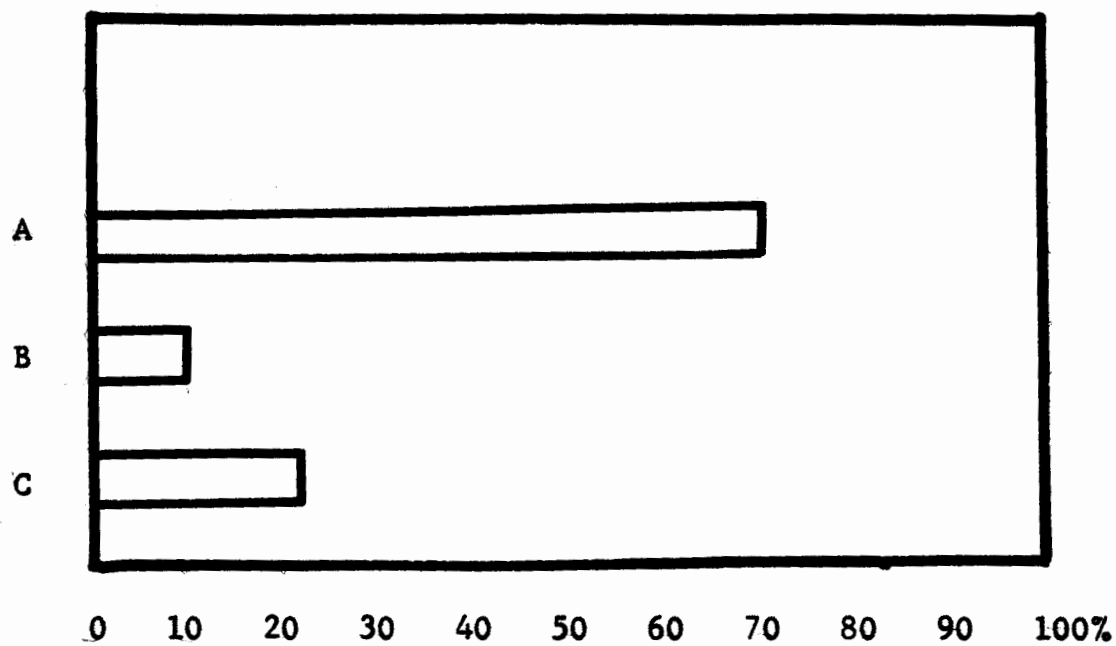


FIGURE 2

NEWSPAPER BENEFICIAL TO LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

CODE:

A--Affirmative

B--Negative

C--No Comment

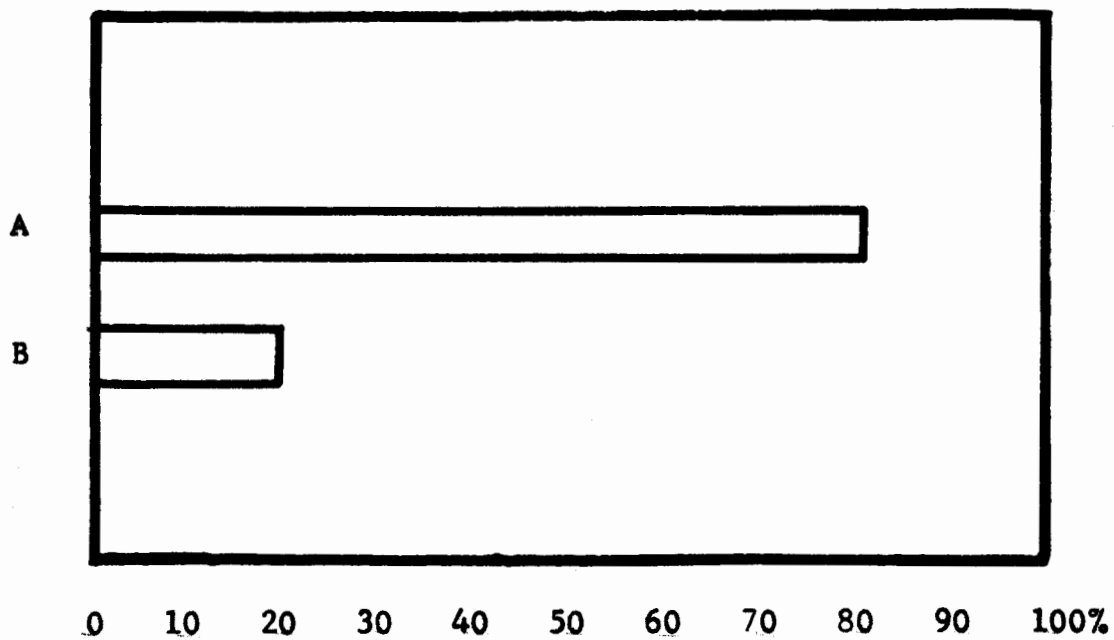


FIGURE 3

PUBLISHING OF NEWSPAPER

CODE:

A--Single Classroom

B--Various Classrooms and Grades

group of teachers (or one teacher). The production of paper is as much a learning situation for many children as any other activity in which they engage. The values that children receive from preparing the newspaper are determined largely by the guidance of the teachers who work with them.

The teachers' staff should be largely advisory in nature. Precautions must be taken to insure that a major portion of the work is done by the children. The primary function of the teachers' staff is that of planning the larger aspects of publication and then helping to plan the general organization and details of each issue with the children's staff (31:486-87).

It was established that the teacher-advisor to the newspaper was extremely important. Two methods of maintaining an advisor for the publication were found. Of those responding, 75.2 per cent had one teacher acting as advisor to the newspaper. The other method, supported by 24.7 per cent, was having various teachers, at specific intervals, assume responsibility as advisor. The one-teacher advisor system was most frequently used (Note Figure 4).

There must be an interested faculty member to guide the pupils in their work, regardless of which advisor system is chosen:

Most important among the qualifications of a good sponsor is willingness to work with the staff and a desire to help the pupils to learn. The motto of the advisor may well be "let the staff do it" while he guides and directs (25:115).

There are essentially four groups of elementary newspaper readers. They are the students, the school administrators and the faculty, the parents of the school children, and the community at large.

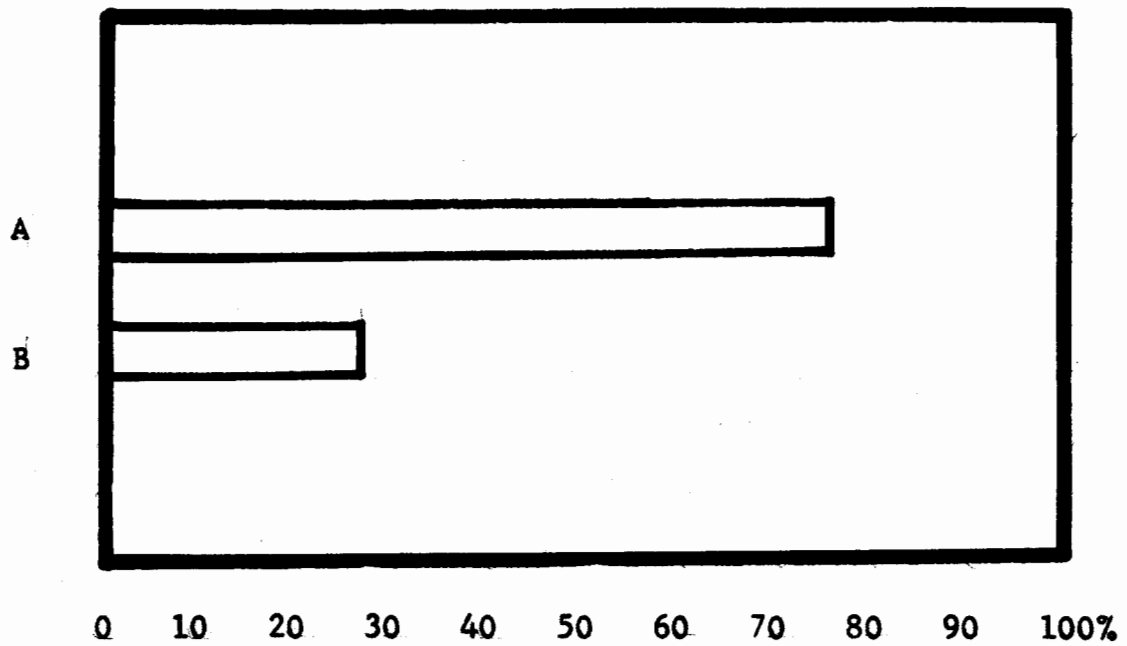


FIGURE 4

TEACHER-ADVISOR

CODE:

A--One Teacher as Advisor

B--Various Teachers as Advisors

A question often posed by educators is, "How well is the elementary school newspaper received?" Considering the previously mentioned groups as the reading public, a question was inserted regarding the response of these various reading groups to the publication. Each question and the respective group will be studied separately.

The first question pertained to the reception given the publication by the elementary pupils. Of the 74 educators who answered this question, all declared that the pupils unanimously liked the newspaper. (Note Figure 5).

Unless the publication is well-received by the pupils, the success of the activity is in jeopardy. The content, form, and the actual publication of the newspaper is supposedly geared to the student's interest. A rather substantial number of pupils apparently favored the student newspaper.

Also requisite to the general success of an elementary newspaper is the acceptance shown by the faculty. Although student interest may be quite intense, the faculty must also be "sold" on the project if general success is desired. Few student activities survive the year without the support of some faculty members.

Of the 74 responses to the question, "Is the paper well-received by the faculty?" 90.7 per cent were affirmative. Nine per cent of the respondees answered negatively.

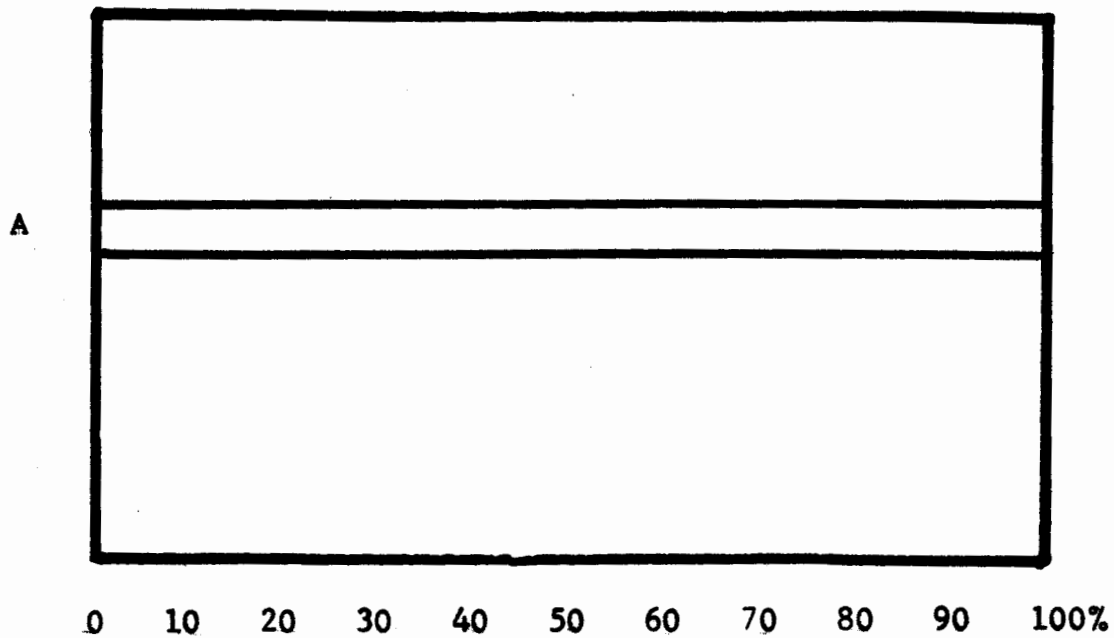


FIGURE 5
PUPIL ACCEPTANCE OF NEWSPAPER

CODE:

A--Affirmative

A trend of acceptance would appear to be evident. (Note Figure 6).

One writer described his student newspaper in relation to the faculty and administration in the following words:

Two rather distinct factors have stimulated the development of this endeavor. On the one hand some publications grew out of the interest of those in the classroom, pupils and teachers. Many of these papers began as classroom enterprises, later becoming all-school projects. On the other hand, a number of school publications have originated through the stimulation of the principal (25:101).

For each elementary child who reads the student newspaper there may be at home one parent or more who also peruses the paper. Most parents are cognizant of their children's activity at school. Parental support and interest in a school project aids immeasurably in setting the academic atmosphere for the pupil.

Many times a student's enthusiasm for a particular project arouses parental interest. The response and support of the parents in the newspaper activity cannot be minimized.

A principal described the importance of harmonious relations between parents and the school in the following manner:

That brings us to one of the greatest values that comes from our paper, the service it gives as a report to the parents. . . . The newspaper is fun. Fun, and much else. It is good citizenship, good English and art, good business training, and a good report to the patrons (26:33).

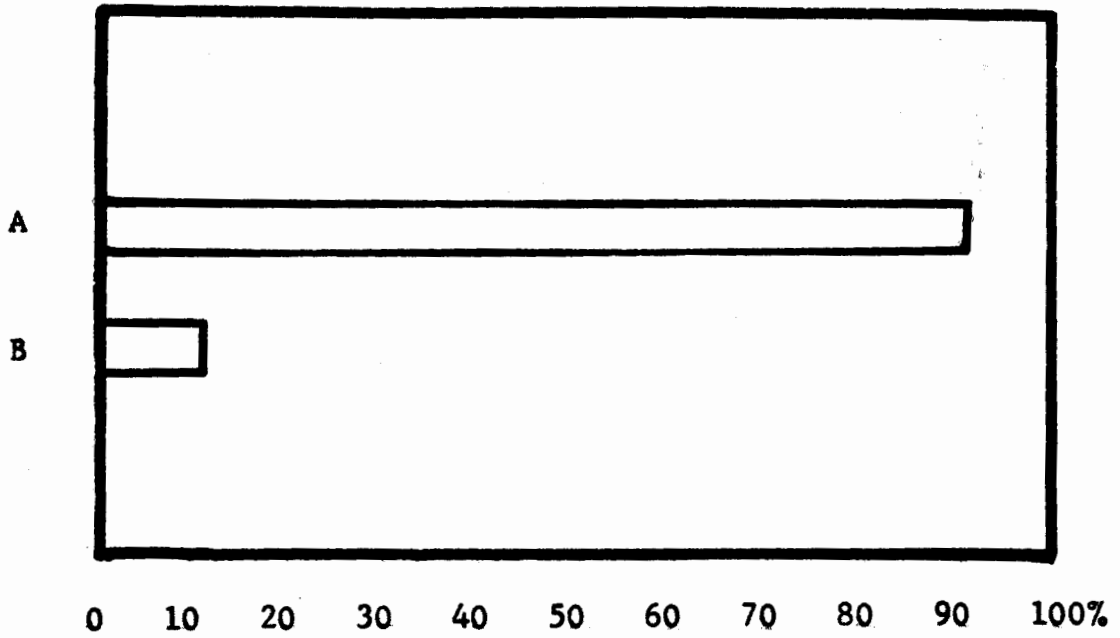


FIGURE 6
FACULTY ACCEPTANCE OF NEWSPAPER

CODE:

A--Affirmative

B--Negative

To the question of parental response to the newspaper 83.1 per cent of the 77 respondees indicated an affirmative response. The negative response registered 5.1 per cent of the total. There was 11.6 per cent of the responses with "no comment." (Note Figure 7).

In conjunction with the parental response to the newspaper, there was also considered the community response to the activity. Community response to many activities can often be evaluated.

Of the number of respondees answering this question, 58.7 per cent were in the affirmative column. There was 11.1 per cent of those answering who thought the newspaper was not too well received by the community. A relatively high percentage 30.3 registered "no comment." Such a percentage of "no comment" would seem to substantiate the idea that community reaction is often difficult to evaluate and interpret. (Note Figure 8).

When administered successfully, an elementary school publication is dependent for its success upon the cooperative effort of the entire school. It can affect possibly all members of the school community, those who aid in its preparation and the larger groups who share in this activity; through reading for information and enjoyment. It may set goals for pupil participation in all aspects of life of the school. Through arousing interest and enthusiasm it may provide a stimulus for worthwhile educational endeavors throughout school and community (25:99).

What types of stories are most often printed in an elementary publication? Is everything that transpires

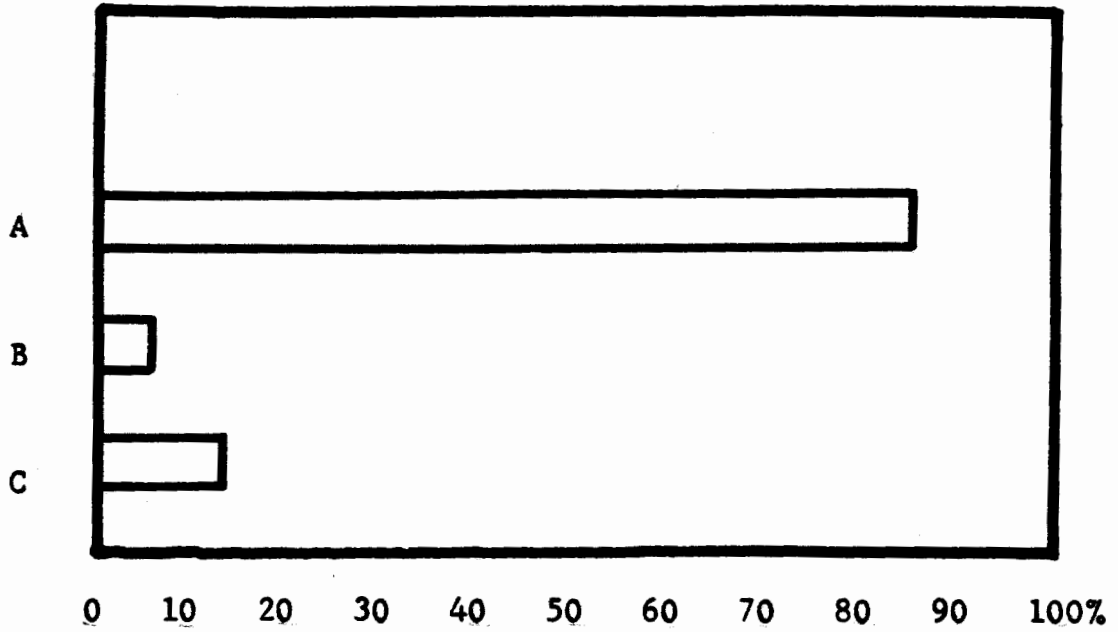


FIGURE 7

PARENTAL SUPPORT OF NEWSPAPER

CODE:

A--Affirmative

B--Negative

C--No Comment

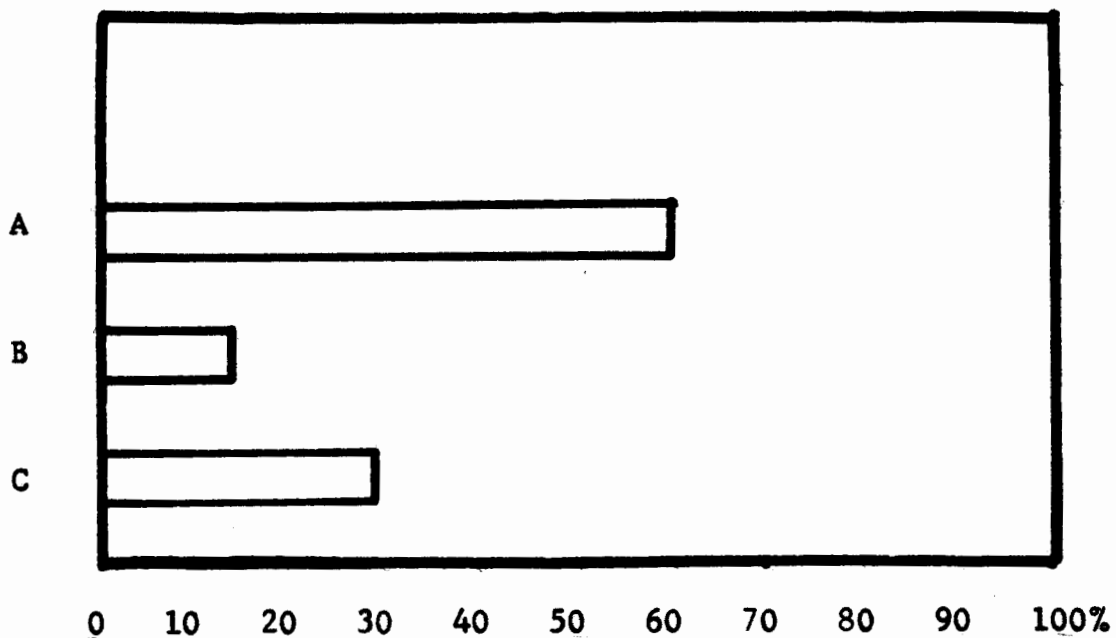


FIGURE 8

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO NEWSPAPER

CODE:

A--Affirmative

B--Negative

C--No Comment

within the boundaries of the school complex worthy of news coverage? Perhaps there should be a selecting process to determine the type and number of articles that will be printed. There now appears to be no dogmatic answer to these questions.

Some educators felt that all material presented by the pupils should be published. Other educators subscribed to the plan that offered strict regulation regarding content, form, and number of articles submitted. A compromise of the two plans was also suggested.

Two inter-relating cross-reference questions were placed in strategic parts of the questionnaire. Both questions were relevant to the same topic but were worded differently.

The first question was, "Does your student newspaper publish stories and sundry happenings of the classroom?" Stories and sundry happenings would include all news. Of the 91 responses to the question 43.9 per cent were affirmative. There was 36.1 per cent opposed to the publishing of all news. (Note Figure 9).

The cross-reference question was, "Do you feel that little stories, happenings, and essays are of newsworthy value?" There was a 65.9 per cent affirmative answer, while 15.9 per cent of the respondees were opposed to this type of program. (Note Figure 10).

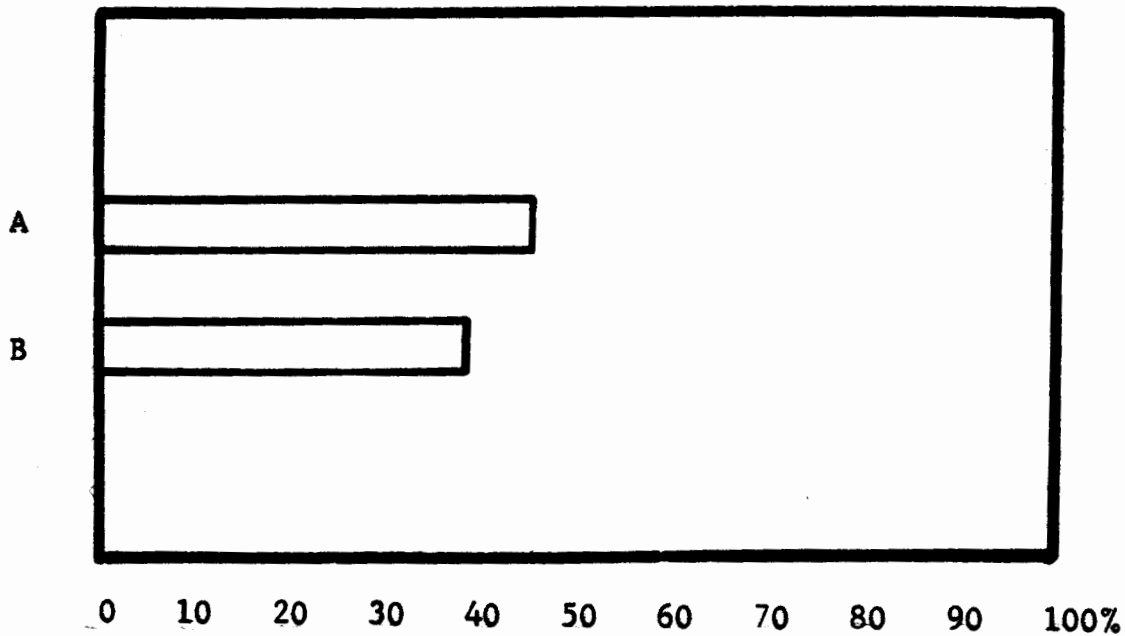


FIGURE 9

NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHING ALL TYPES OF STORIES

CODE:

A--Affirmative

B--Negative

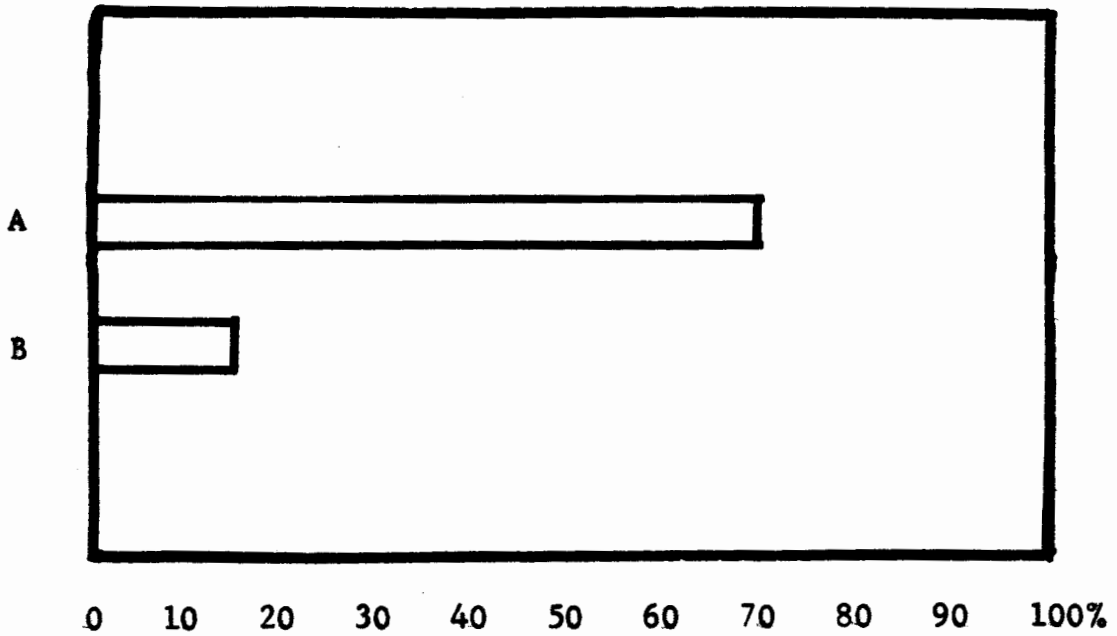


FIGURE 10

STORIES, HAPPENINGS, ESSAYS OF NEWSWORTHY VALUE

CODE:

A--Affirmative

B--Negative

Although 65.9 per cent favored publishing all stories and happenings of the school, only 43.9 per cent of the respondees indicated the inclusion of all stories in their newspaper. There appears to be some difference between the thought and the deed. The material that a staff accepts and publishes is usually dependent upon its own discretion.

Regarding frequency of publication, 62.5 per cent of the 80 respondees published their newspapers fewer than six times per year. A total of 37.5 per cent said they published their newspaper six or more times per year. Figure 11 illustrates these figures more fully.

The number of publications is determined by the size of the school, the size of the staff, the student interest, the time allotted, and the work that can be extracted from each staff member. Experience and interest may also influence the number of publications.

It is often the responsibility of the teacher-advisor or the office staff to type and mimeograph the newspaper after it has been "dummied in" by the student staff. Out of the 75 responses, 72 per cent indicated that the teacher-advisor or the office help mimeographed the paper. Twenty-eight per cent said that their newspaper was completely published by the student staff under the direction of the advisor. (Note Figure 12).

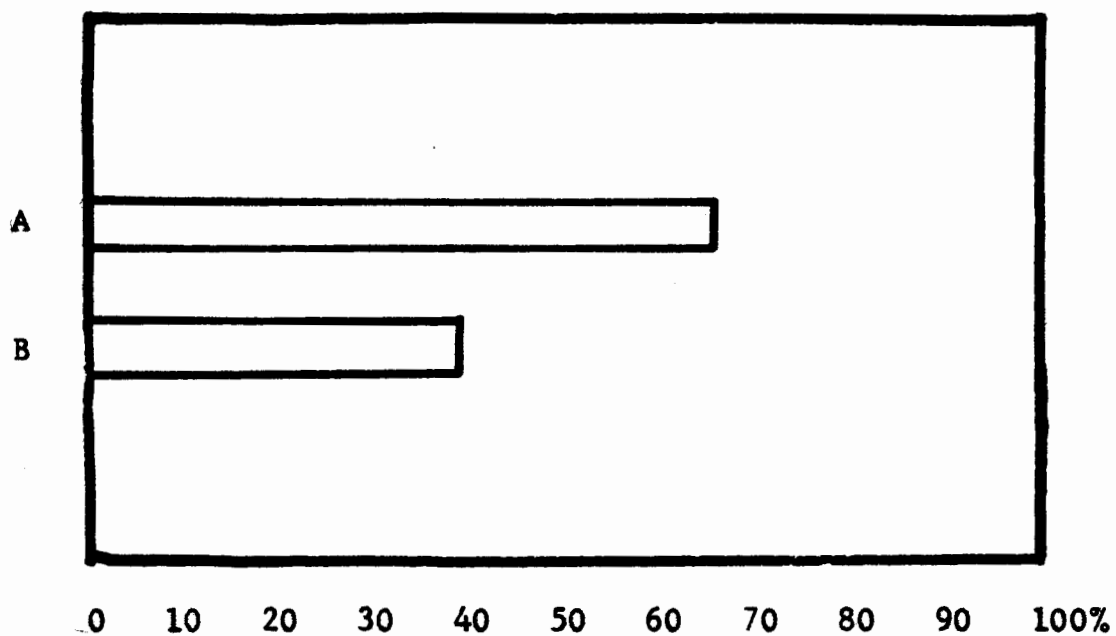


FIGURE 11

REGULARITY OF PUBLISHING PER YEAR

CODE:

A--Fewer than six times per year

B--More than six times per year

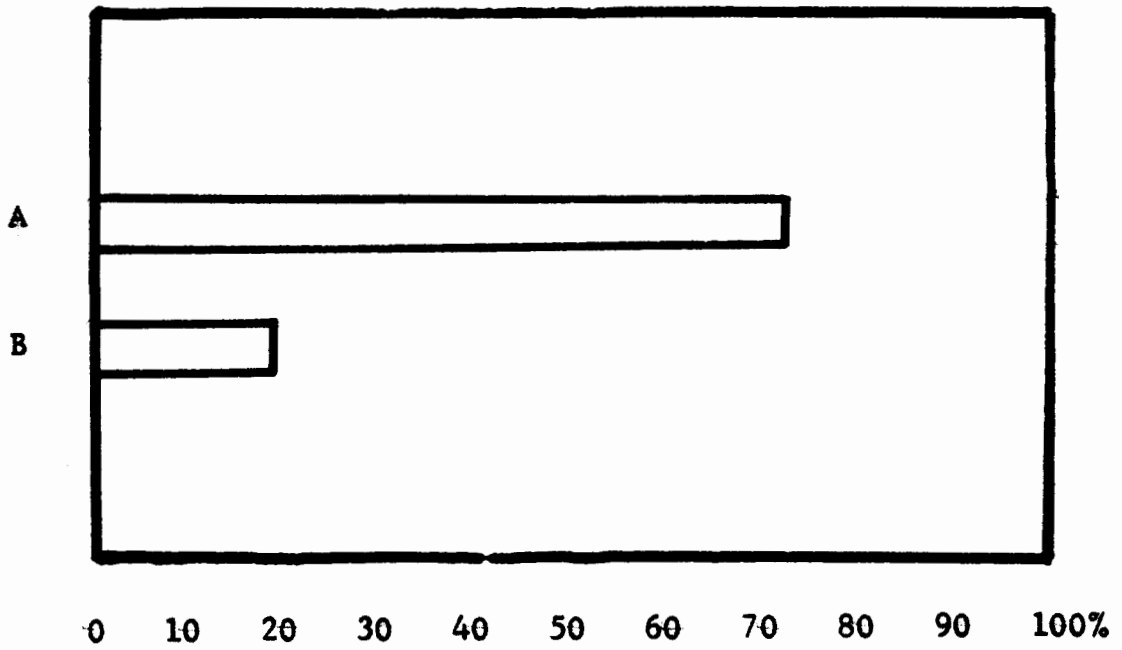


FIGURE 12

MIMEOGRAPHING THE NEWSPAPER

CODE:

A--Advisor And/Or Office Help

B--Student Staff

Should the elementary newspaper be sold to its readers? In the following statement one writer attempted to summarize this issue:

The cost of the paper to the children also may need to vary between schools. Five cents per copy is a moderate price for the children in some school districts. In other districts, where the economic status of the home is at the very bottom, even one cent per copy is difficult to pay. Probably the school newspaper in the smaller districts should be financed in some other way than by the sales of papers. In any event, it is necessary to adapt the size and type of the paper to the financial resources available (31:485).

The consensus of response to this particular question was that 76.9 per cent of the respondees did not sell their newspaper. The remaining 22.4 per cent did sell their newspapers. (Note Figure 13).

Selling the elementary newspaper continues to be a controversial point. Some educators claim that one should not get something for nothing. Others feel that the newspaper is relatively inexpensive and many pupils cannot afford the additional expense of a school newspaper. There are apparently valid arguments for both sides of the question.

One of the main purposes of the questionnaire was to survey the opinions of educators regarding actual learnings derived from participating in a school newspaper project. Two general classifications of learnings were used, Academic Learnings and Social Learnings. It is difficult to entirely

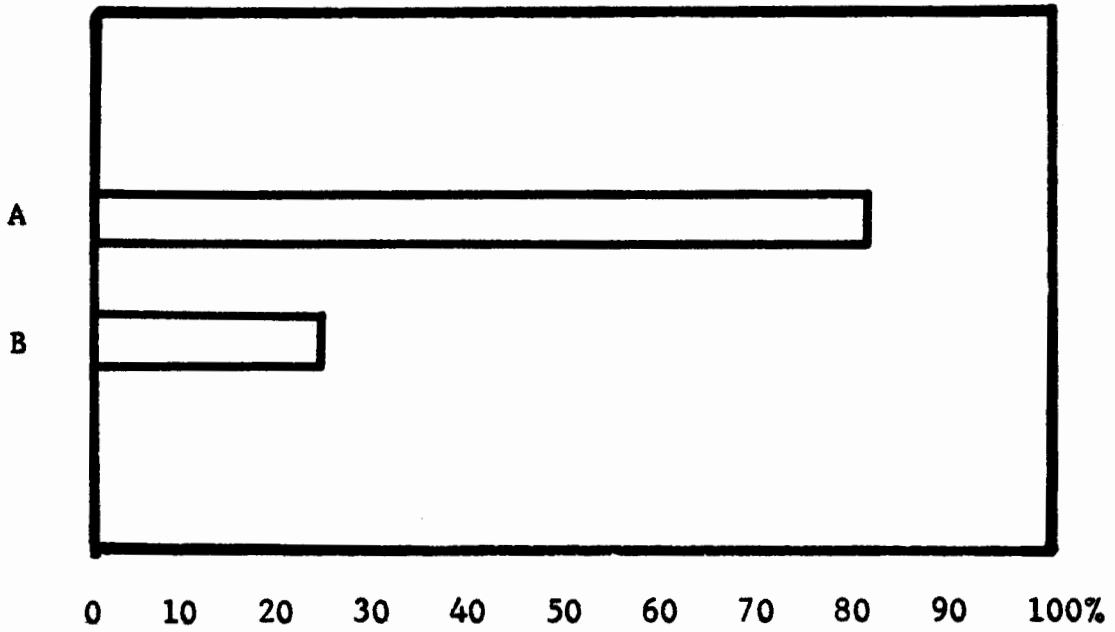


FIGURE 13

NEWSPAPER BEING SOLD

CODE:

A--Do Not Sell Newspaper

B--Do Sell Newspaper

separate the two types of learning. In order to expedite the presentation, though, those two headings were used.

Academic learnings. Subordinate to the major heading, Academic Learnings, were the sub-headings of (1) conversation and discussion in classwork, (2) building and/or maintaining a vocabulary, (3) reading skills, (4) grammar usage, (5) sentence structure, (6) spelling, (7) handwriting, and (8) punctuation.

The respondee was asked to determine how effective the student newspaper was in aiding the class in the preceding skills. The questions were rated according to the scale of 1. Ineffective, 2. Moderately Effective, 3. Very Effective. The number of responses often varied according to the individual questions.

There were 72 responses relating to the effectiveness of the newspaper in aiding conversation and class discussion. Of that number, 69.4 per cent said the newspaper was moderately effective in this area. A total of 15.2 per cent thought it was very effective. The remaining 8.3 per cent thought the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 14).

At the elementary level it is educationally desirable to allow the pupil ample time in which to strengthen his vocabulary. It is thought that the practical experience of working on a school newspaper could help the student utilize his vocabulary.

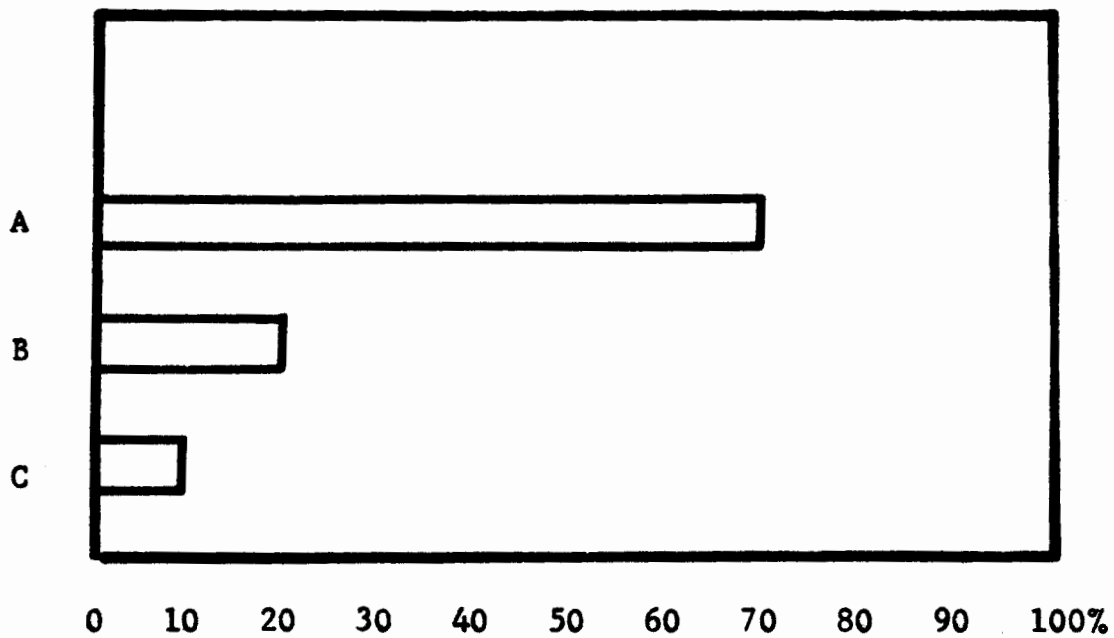


FIGURE 14

NEWSPAPER--AID IN CLASS DISCUSSION

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

How effective has the newspaper been in aiding the child with his vocabulary? Of the 78 responses to that question, 66.6 per cent said the newspaper was moderately effective. There was 8.9 per cent who thought it was very effective. Of the remaining number, 11.5 per cent said it was ineffective. (Note Figure 15).

Another question posed related to the effectiveness of the newspaper activity in aiding the reading program. Of those polled, 62.8 per cent thought that the newspaper was moderately effective. It was also noted that 12.8 per cent felt that the publication was very effective. Only 8.9 per cent felt that the newspaper had been ineffective in festering good reading skills. (Note Figure 16).

Acquiring the basic rudiments of reading is quite important to the elementary student. One method of improving a pupil's reading ability is to have him read material that interests him. The class newspaper may be particularly helpful in this area. Students usually enjoy reading about themselves or their classmates in a publication put out by their peers. There may be additional incentive to read an article if it is written in one's own language about people and activities with which you are acquainted.

Through the newspaper activity there is the opportunity for students to write sentences, paragraphs, and stories, actually putting into practice their grammar

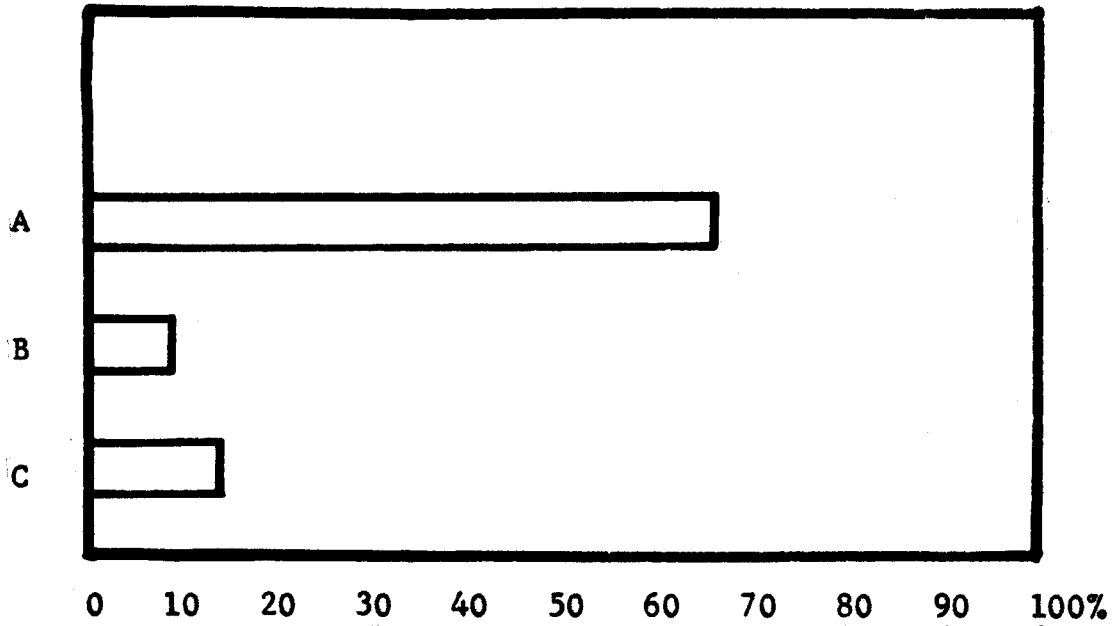


FIGURE 15

NEWSPAPER--AID IN BUILDING VOCABULARY

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective



FIGURE 16

NEWSPAPER--AID IN IMPROVING READING

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

skills. In this area the student publication may be another means of academic application. Few student writers care to have their peers notice grammatical errors in their news stories. Another educational incentive has been presented.

How effective has the publication been in aiding pupils in correct grammar usage. Forty-eight per cent indicated the program was moderately effective, while 36 per cent said the newspaper was very effective in this area. There was 12 per cent who thought the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 17).

At times educators may notice a gap between grammatical learnings and student application. Such an activity as the student newspaper may be one means of helping to close the gap.

The comprehension and use of good sentence structure is quite important to the student of English. Fifty per cent of the respondees indicated that the use of a newspaper was moderately effective in aiding the pupils in this area. A total of 40.2 per cent of the respondees said the activity was very effective. Of the remaining number, 9.7 per cent thought the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 18). The newspaper in the elementary school may be another effective tool in helping the pupils learn proper sentence structure.

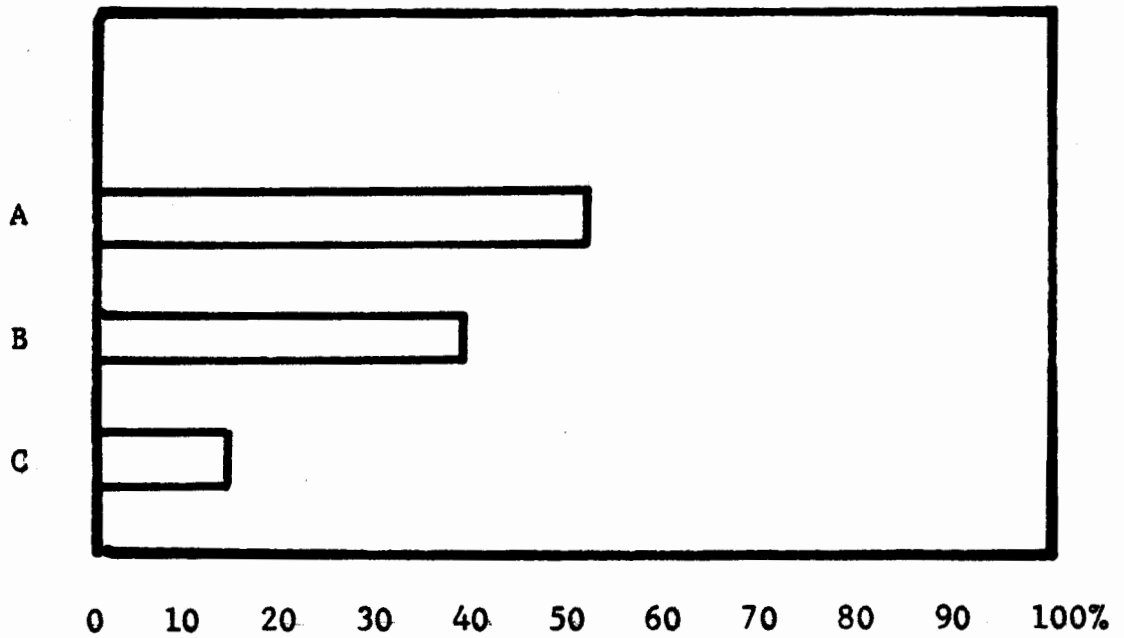


FIGURE 17

NEWSPAPER--AID IN CORRECT GRAMMAR USAGE

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

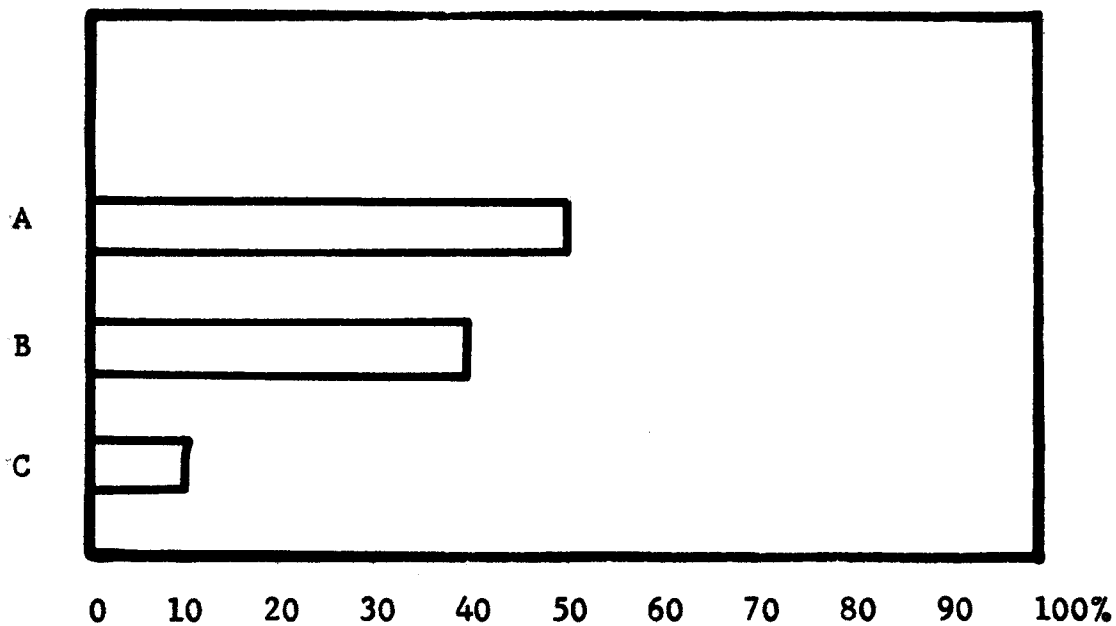


FIGURE 18

NEWSPAPER--AID IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

For some students, spelling may be exciting and interesting; for other, merely a task of rote learning; and for the remaining number, a distasteful job. There are many meaningful activities by which to enliven the spelling program.

How effective is the newspaper in aiding the students in their spelling program? Of the 68 respondees, 50 per cent said the newspaper activity was moderately effective. A total of 38.2 per cent said such an activity was very effective. Of the remaining number, 10.2 per cent thought the newspaper activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 19).

Another question related to the effectiveness of the newspaper as an aid to the pupils in correct handwriting. There were 78 responses to this question, and of that number, 60.2 per cent gave a rating of "moderately effective." Another 23 per cent felt that the activity was very effective in this area. Of the remaining responses, 16.6 per cent thought the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 20).

In the area of punctuation, there were 66 responses. Of that total, 69.6 per cent indicated that the newspaper was moderately effective in aiding the pupils in grasping English punctuation. Another 15.1 per cent of the respondees thought the activity was very effective. Also, 15.1 per cent felt the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 21).

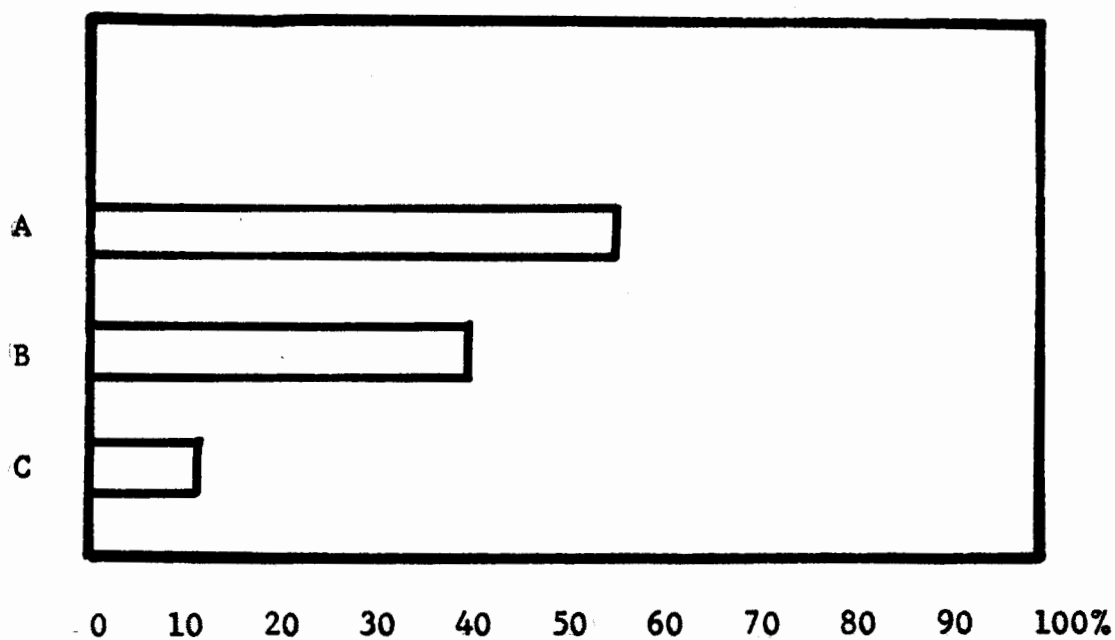


FIGURE 19

NEWSPAPER--AID IN IMPROVING SPELLING

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

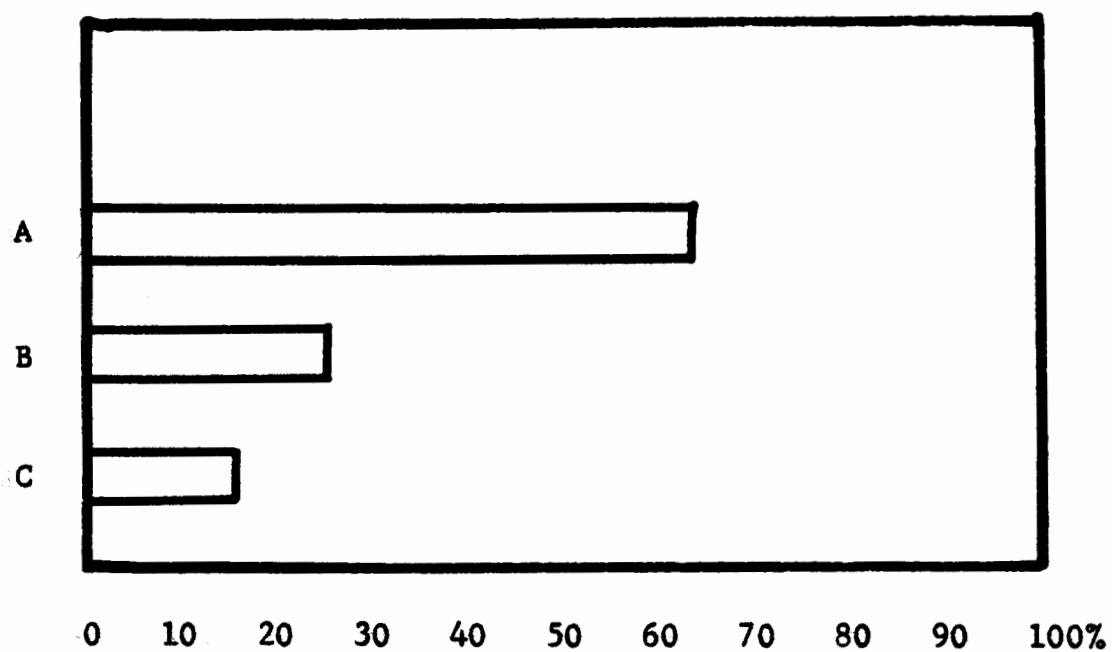


FIGURE 20

NEWSPAPER--AID IN HANDWRITING

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

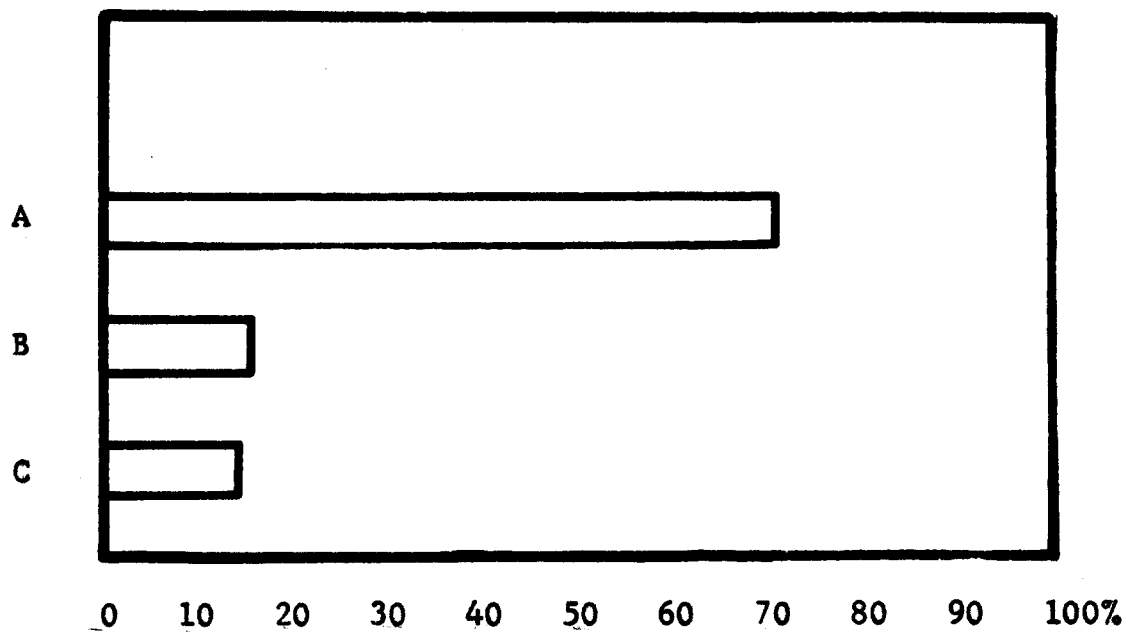


FIGURE 21

NEWSPAPER--AID IN PUNCTUATION

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

Through his effort on a class newspaper the student is given another opportunity to put into practical use those English grammar skills he has learned in the classroom. After having been taught a particular skill, perhaps the student could then "prove out" this learning through his writings for the class newspaper. When the student is aware that his particular article may appear in printed form, there is a possibility that the will to do "one's very best" will motivate his work.

Children as well as adults enjoy seeing their names in print. If they realize that many people are to see their work they put their best effort into the project (32:29).

The student newspaper is definitely another means of implementing and complementing the existing language arts program. If the newspaper activity is to be used in the language arts program, then the work and time involved must be justified by time allowed it in the classroom work.

One enthusiastic writer said, "As long as our investment yields such attractive dividends as those received to date, the newspaper will continue to be published" (15:26).

The attractive dividends referred to by the above writer may include not only academic learnings but also social learnings. It's a moot question as to where one learning concludes and the other begins. It would seem probable that both types of learning do occur often simultaneously.

Social learnings. Many activities in the elementary school provide the student with a practical use for his social learnings. Such social learnings are sometimes difficult to evaluate. One method of evaluating a child's social learnings is through daily observation by the teacher. As the advisor of a school newspaper the teacher has additional opportunity to evaluate and interpret a student's social behavior.

In determining how effective the use of a newspaper had been in aiding students in their understanding of social learnings, those polled were not as reluctant to answer as might be pre-supposed.

The ability to work satisfactorily with others is a desired trait, whether in the elementary student or the adult. Students are taught how to live and work well together. In the elementary school, children become well-acquainted with the idea of harmonious living.

How effective has working on the school newspaper been in aiding students to work together? Of the 67 responses to the question, 47.7 per cent said the activity was moderately effective. Another 35.8 per cent declared that the newspaper activity was very effective, and the remaining 17.9 per cent thought the activity was ineffective in this particular area. Altogether 83.5 per cent of the respondees declared in the affirmative. (Note Figure 22).

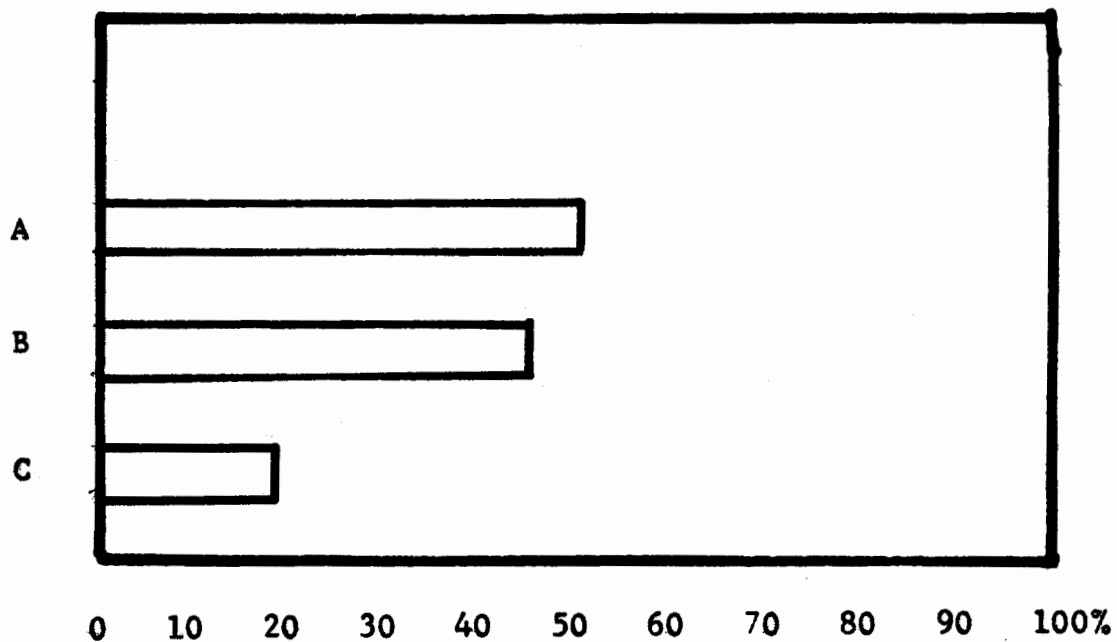


FIGURE 22

NEWSPAPER--AID IN WORKING WITH OTHERS

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

Staff members on the newspaper are afforded many opportunities to come in contact with others. Meeting new people can be a meaningful experience for children of this age, whether they are meeting fellow students or faculty members. Forty-five per cent of the respondees said that the newspaper activity was moderately effective, 39.4 per cent felt this activity was very effective, and the remaining 15.4 per cent felt the student newspaper was ineffective in this field. (Note Figure 23).

In the following statement a writer expresses his views on the value of the newspaper project:

Language took on a new meaning. There was good reason for learning how to use words and punctuation. Every child had a part in it. Assignments took them to other classes where they learned how to conduct interviews. Children in the other classes also had a thrill out of seeing their news items published. . . . They learned how to cooperate with each other in this larger undertaking. They had fun doing it too. They learned requirements must be met and "deadlines" meant promptness. Some found that they would be interested in newspaper work for a life-time job (12:290).

Teaching students the necessity of assuming responsibility is quite a task. Although the home is basically responsible for teaching this, the school also inherits some responsibility. The success of most student activities is dependent upon the responsibility of the participating students. It is assumed that participating in various activities will help build a responsible attitude in the child.

How effective has working on the school newspaper been in aiding students to assume responsibility? There

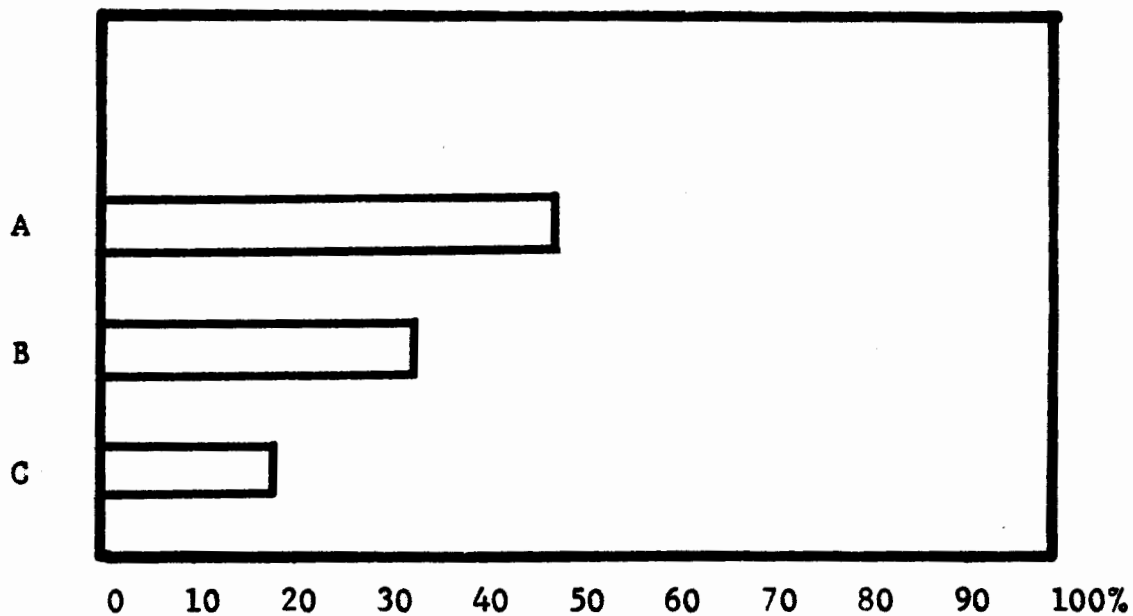


FIGURE 23

NEWSPAPER--AID IN MEETING OTHERS

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

were 67 responses to that question. Of this total, 49.2 per cent thought the newspaper activity was moderately effective. Another 34.3 per cent of the respondents felt the activity was very effective, and the remaining group of 17.9 per cent said the activity was ineffective in this area. (Note Figure 24).

In any type of newspaper work, whether on a large city newspaper, a high school publication, or an elementary newspaper, there are always certain "deadlines" to meet. Meeting these "deadlines" often goes hand in hand with the assumption of student responsibility.

Does working on a newspaper aid students in meeting their "deadlines"? Of the 63 responses to that question, 52.3 per cent claimed that the newspaper was moderately effective. Another 33.3 per cent thought the activity was very effective. Nineteen per cent of the respondents thought that such a project was ineffective in helping students meet "deadlines." (Note Figure 25).

Accepting constructive criticism at any grade level is desirable. Perhaps the newspaper could be another means whereby the students have additional opportunity to implement this social learning. A question was asked in regard to this. Of the 74 responses to this question, 62 per cent felt a student publication could be moderately effective in this area, 24.3 per cent who thought the activity was very

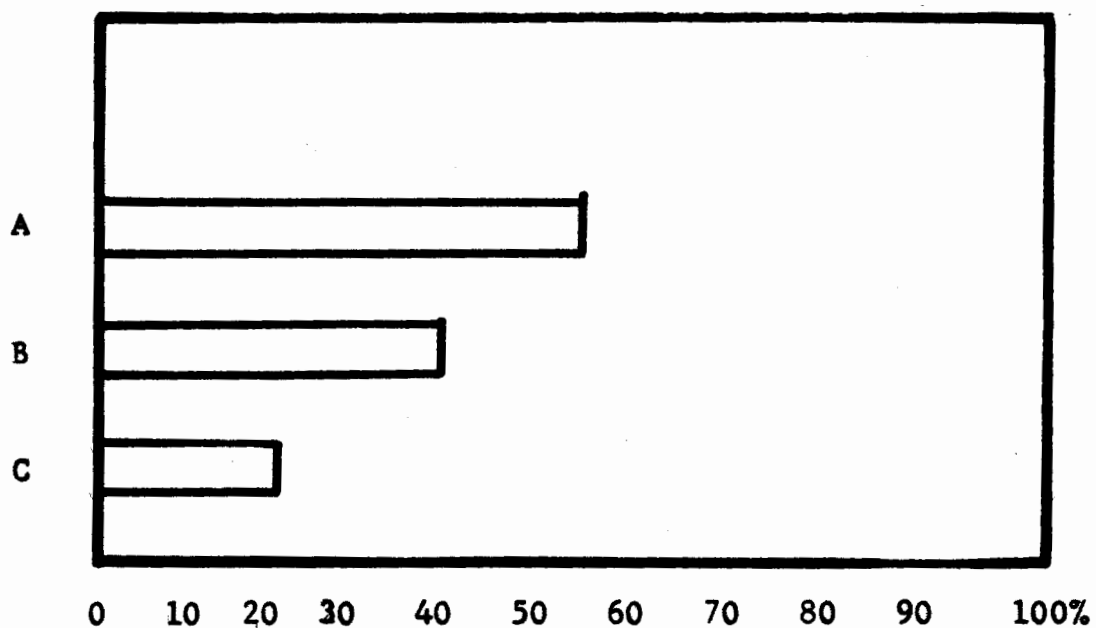


FIGURE 24

NEWSPAPER--AID IN ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

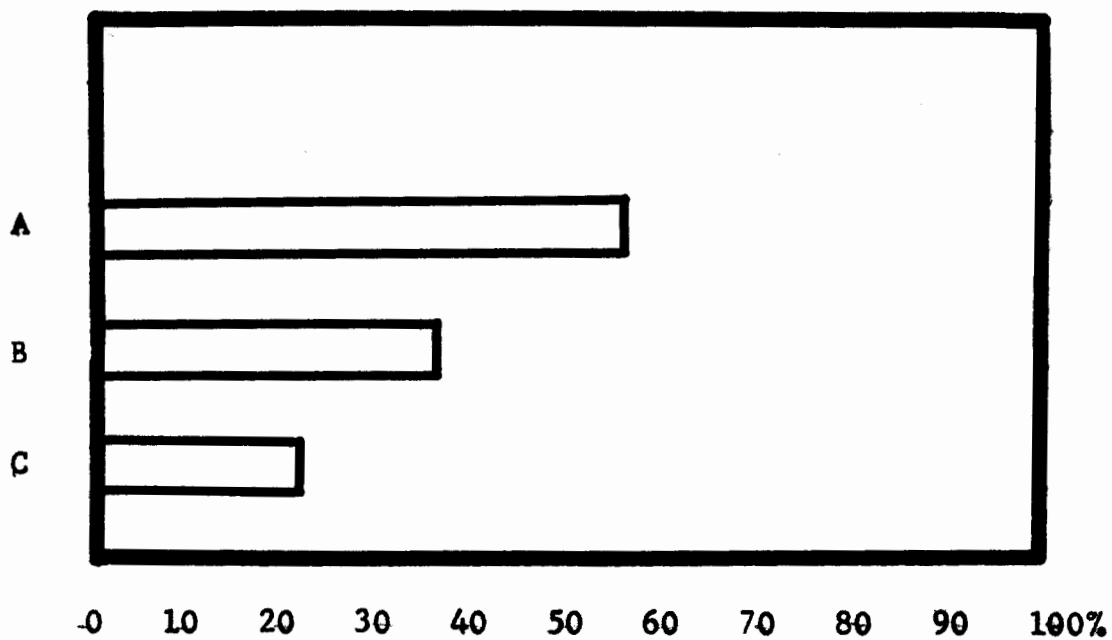


FIGURE 25

NEWSPAPER--AID IN MEETING DEADLINES

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

effective, and the remaining 13.5 per cent felt the newspaper activity was ineffective in this area. (Note Figure 26).

Tolerating or respecting the divergent views of others can sometimes be a problem. Respecting the views of other is one area of social learning that can be taught early in the elementary grades. It's understood that the toleration or respect of another's views does not mean that one agrees with such views.

How effective can the newspaper be in aiding students to respect divergent views? There were 65 responses to this question. Of that number, 78.4 per cent felt that the student publication was moderately effective. A total of 9.2 per cent thought the activity was very effective. Only 13.8 per cent felt the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 27)

During early childhood there is usually less prejudice and malice toward others than in the following years of adolescence and adulthood. Numerous activities in the elementary school directly or indirectly teach the student to think objectively.

Of the number of respondees who answered the question relating to the ability of an assignment to arouse a child to think objectively, 75 per cent felt that the newspaper activity was moderately effective, 15.2 per cent deemed

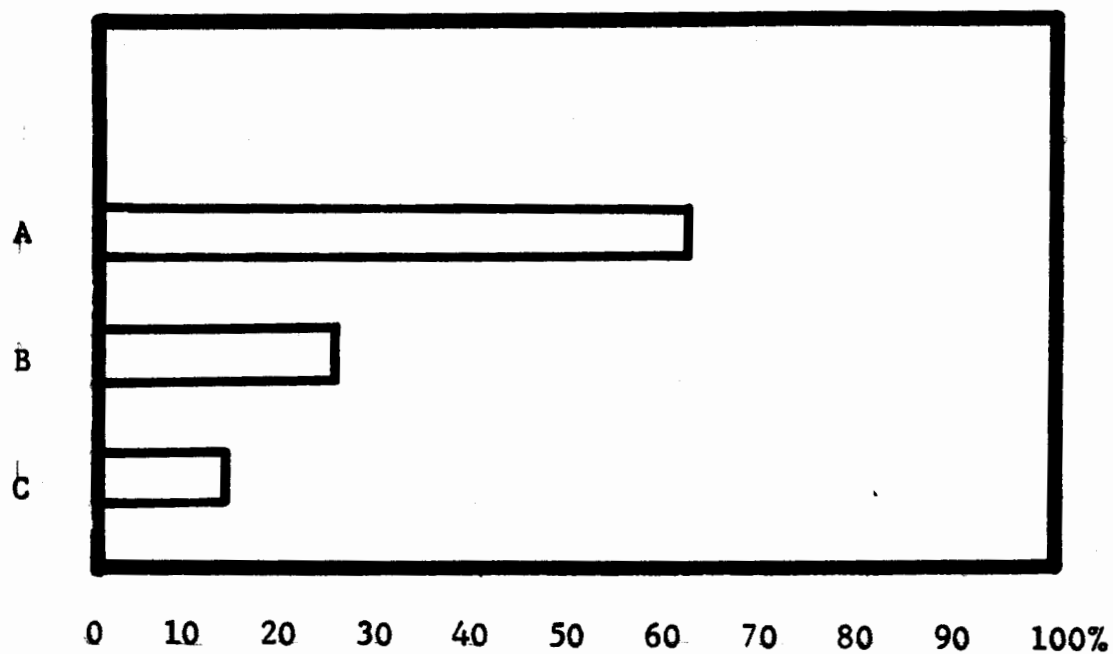


FIGURE 26

NEWSPAPER--AID IN ACCEPTING CRITICISM

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

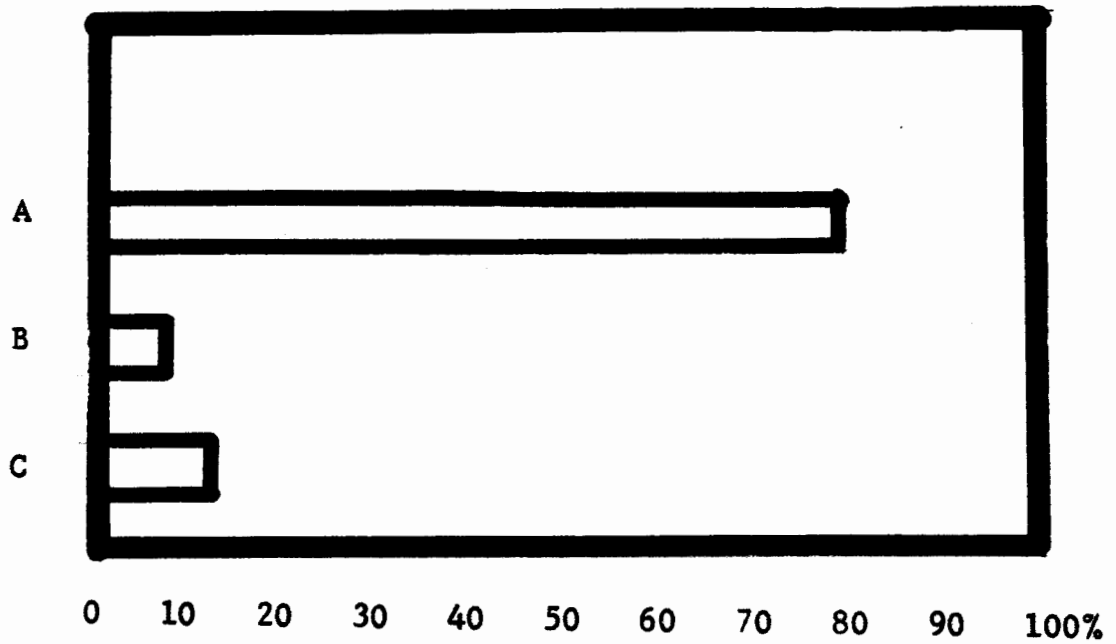


FIGURE 27
NEWSPAPER--AID IN RESPECTING DIVERGENT VIEWS

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

the activity very effective, and 11.4 per cent thought the activity was ineffective. (Note Figure 28).

Being able to think concisely and clearly are skills that should be taught each child. Through the accumulation of facts, quotations, and other material for a story there is some opportunity for the pupil to expose himself to thinking clearly and concisely. Fifty-nine per cent of the respondents felt that the newspaper project was moderately effective in the area of thinking concisely and clearly. Of the 66 responses to the question, 25.7 per cent said that a publication activity was very effective. (Note Figure 29).

Could the newspaper activity be an additional incentive for pupils to strive for creativity in writing? In answering that question 52.7 per cent of the total 74 responses felt that the newspaper activity was moderately effective, 33.7 per cent thought such an activity was very effective, and 13.5 thought the newspaper project was ineffective in that area. (Note Figure 30).

The pupil newspaper is not offered as a panacea to any particular ills in an academic program. Such an activity as the newspaper should be well-defined in its objectives, time-calculated for its value to the curriculum, and, if acceptable, judiciously guided by the classroom teacher.

Newspapers are becoming a tradition in an increasing number of elementary schools. Usually, one of the upper grades is given the responsibility for management of the paper, but all groups of children make contributions. This does not mean that the school newspaper should be a

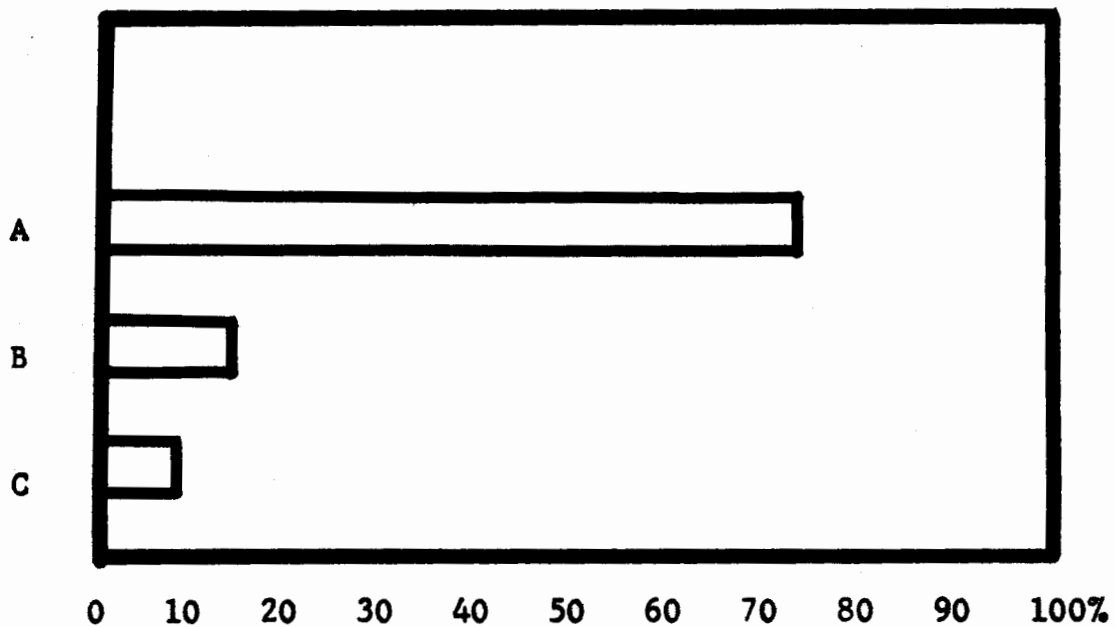


FIGURE 28

NEWSPAPER--AID IN THINKING OBJECTIVELY

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

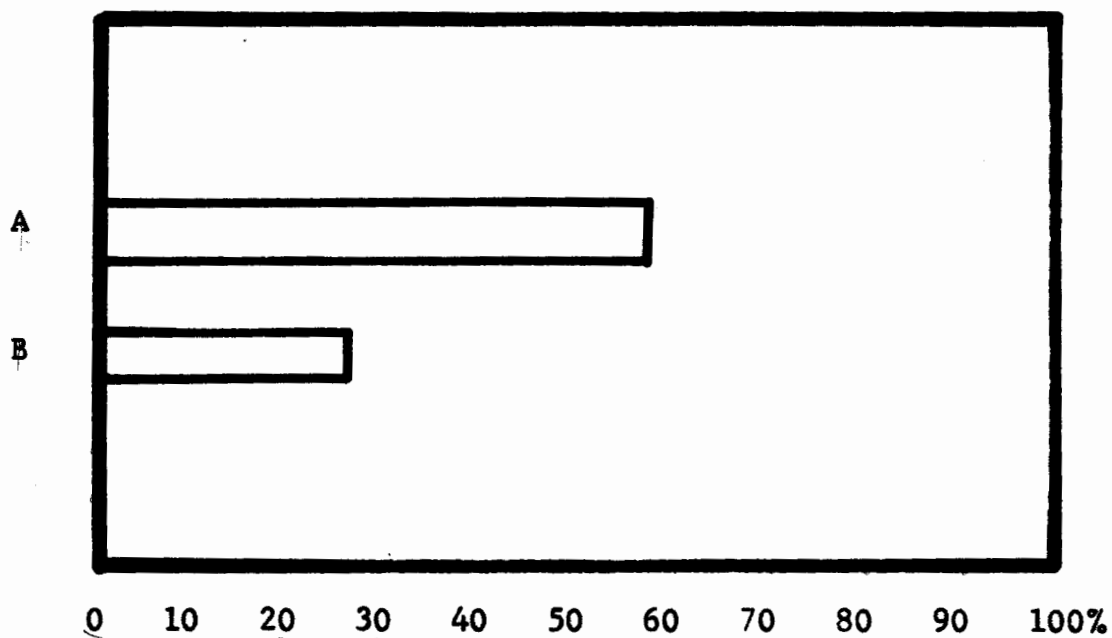


FIGURE 29

NEWSPAPER--AID IN THINKING CONCISELY AND CLEARLY

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

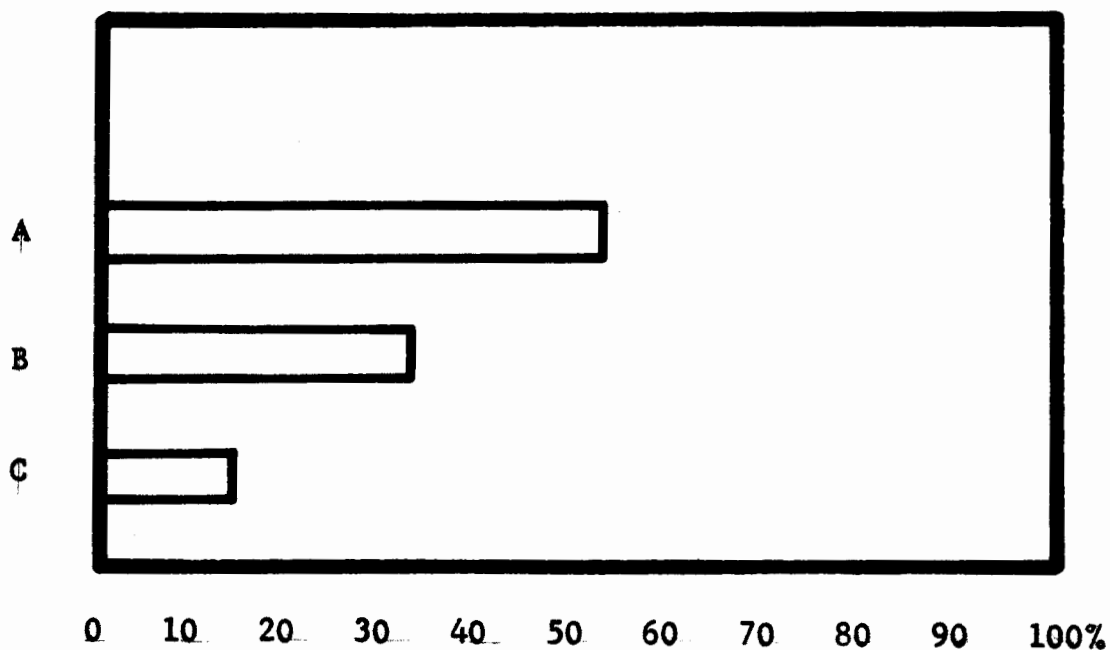


FIGURE 30

NEWSPAPER--AID IN PROMOTING CREATIVITY

CODE:

A--Moderately Effective

B--Very Effective

C--Ineffective

routine affair, approached merely as another task to be accomplished. If the teachers and the 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 (21:371-2).

There was additional space on the questionnaire for the respondee to appraise his own elementary publication. This was to allow those polled the opportunity to express supplemental comment without the restriction of specific questions. Pertinent comments made by administrators and teachers have been condensed, but the crux of the thoughts has not been altered. In presenting the substance of these comments, no conclusions are herein offered.

Many educators felt that the student newspaper offered a meaningful experience to children. In such an activity there could be fostered group planning, creative thinking, and additional impetus toward independent work. The newspaper was a great booster and morale builder.

Also enumerated many times was the importance of the publication being utilized as a functional media in language arts. The paper afforded students the chance to practice writing, spelling, punctuation. Long rambling sentences were often omitted and a more concise sentence put in its place. Wordiness was deleted. Participating students could objectively scrutinize their own writings.

A student newspaper may also help strengthen public relations between the school and the parents. One educator

said that their elementary publication was his school's best public relations instrument.

It was apparent that much of the success of the elementary school publication was directly dependent upon the supervision and guidance of the teacher-advisor. Enthusiasm and leadership were necessary requisites for a newspaper advisor. The interest of the advisor often determines the calibre of the publication.

There were also a number of criticisms of the elementary newspaper project. Foremost among the criticisms was the accusation that the newspaper was labored to the point of exhaustion in the classroom. The newspaper project became an all-engulfing activity, thereby excluding other educational activities just as meaningful.

Some felt that the activity was far too time-consuming in relation to the amount of learning experience achieved. It was also mentioned that the school day was entirely too brief to engage in a time-consuming program which would distract from the regularly scheduled curriculum. Perhaps the elementary school was attempting to do too many things.

The actual value received from the newspaper activity was questioned as compared to many other approaches a teacher might employ with the amount of time one would devote to the newspaper.

One educator thought that the publication was more of a "teacher-office help" project than a student project. Children tend to rely too heavily on the teacher. Few schools had sufficient help to do the required typing.

Another educator felt that the activity was useful to only a limited few. It was very effective for the top third of the class, moderately effective for the middle third, and only a fairly effective device for the slower children.

There was also the possibility that some teachers might sacrifice other valuable school work in order to have a good newspaper, or else sacrifice their own recreation and relaxation time. On the other hand, a poorly supervised newspaper could be much worse than none at all.

Time, values received, student interest, teacher interest and responsibility, functions, and the total objectives of the newspaper project must be adequately considered before any conclusive evaluation can be rendered.

CHAPTER IV

PROPOSED CRITERIA AND PRODUCTION OF NEWSPAPER

This chapter is divided into two portions, (1) criteria for an elementary publication and (2) actual production of an elementary publication. The material in this chapter was gathered from available literature, the questionnaire, actual copies of elementary newspapers, and interviews with educators.

Criteria

In order that the newspaper activity may best be utilized by the language arts program, criteria for the publication should be established. Although the criteria may vary from school to school, they should be centered about the most important element in the school, the student:

Make the newspaper a pupil enterprise. . . . Even at the beginning the newspaper should be largely the product of the children. It should not merely be a medium through 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 though they fall short of the standards which have been set (31:486).

The criteria for the grammatical structure of each news story might include the following: (1) legible handwriting, (2) clean copy, (3) pithy sentences, (4) well-phrased paragraphs, (5) correct punctuation and spelling, (6) correct sequential form, and (7) interestingly written.

The printed copy of the publication should be legible and void of ink stains. A consistent format should be maintained. Continuity of stories and particular news sections should also have consistency.

There is no place for mediocrity in the elementary newspaper. Each child should be encouraged to do his very best at all times. Only the best work of the student should be allowed a space in the newspaper. It should be considered a privilege to have one's work displayed in the publication.

Production

The following information is presented as a minimal guide to the publishing of an elementary student newspaper. In the final analysis each school will adopt a program that suits its local needs and basic functions.

"The idea is to begin small, and then let the endeavor grow and expand as the pupils learn" (25:118).

Faculty supervision. For the newspaper activity, faculty supervision is a necessity. The teacher-advisor should be cognizant of the possibilities and the impossibilities of this activity. The advisor should also be aware of the educational objectives of the project. One writer said in regard to sponsors:

Most important among the qualifications of a good sponsor is willingness to work with the staff and a desire to help pupils to learn. His motto should be "Let the staff do it" while he guides and directs.

Conferences in which problems can be discussed will direct the activities of the staff while allowing pupil initiative free play. The staff conferences should be conducted with the sponsor in the background as an advisor and final arbiter, not as a lecturer or dictator. In other words, the sponsor must be a good leader, with a spontaneous enthusiasm that will infect others with an eager willingness to do (25:115).

Motivating activities. Motivation is easy in the realm of newspaper work, especially in the elementary field. One of the better methods of motivating interest in the class publication is a field trip to the city newspaper plant. Prior to such a trip the class should have instruction regarding publishing activities. Elementary students are usually quite interested in visiting a "real" city newspaper. At the plant the pupils may be allowed to see the huge machines in operation, chat with the editor, and perhaps visit with the reporters.

Another motivating activity is to subscribe to several newspapers. Allow the students opportunity to peruse these papers. Under teacher supervision students may critically examine their newspapers. Questions may be asked: (1) What's on the front page? (2) How do news articles differ? (3) What do you notice about headlines? (4) Where's the editorial page and what is included on it? (5) Where are the sports articles? (6) What are special columns? (7) Why are there want ads and sales advertisements? (8) Who publishes the paper? (9) If you like the

newspaper, why? (10) Should there be funnies in every newspaper? and (11) Why must one pay for a newspaper?

The class may invite a newspaper editor or a reporter to their class for a briefing on the work of a newspaperman. Many children would enjoy seeing and talking to an "actual" newspaperman.

Class members could be requested to bring to class samples of city newspapers. Preparation and discussion may concern the following: (1) What is the name of the newspaper? (2) How often is the newspaper published? (3) Where is the date on the paper and what is its importance? (4) Is there a table of contents, and if so, why? and (5) How many sections are there to the newspaper?

The use of headlines should be examined by the class. The title of a news story is called a headline, and its purpose is to aid the reader in discovering that which is most important to him. Perhaps the class could write their own headlines.

Elementary publications from other towns and districts may be examined. From such an examination the class might begin formulating ideas of their own for a newspaper.

Securing a student staff. This is usually no great problem if it is a class newspaper. There are a number of feasible methods by which to select a staff. One writer offered the following method:

Pupil participation is the sine qua non of every successful school publication. Selection of a dependable staff, chosen for reliability and talent rather than talent alone, is a matter of prime importance since the success of the publication depends so largely on the calibre of the staff. Outstanding pupils in English are desirable but "live wire" workers add immeasurably to its efficiency. Students should be chosen whose scholarship will permit them to spend ample time on editorial duties.

Responsibility for final selection of the staff should be given to the teacher, but membership should be placed upon a highly competitive basis. Teachers may suggest the names of pupils high in standing in leadership qualities, but the candidates should be tried out with assignments and selected after they have proved their qualifications by actual work (25:113).

Another writer proposed the following somewhat simplified method of selecting the staff:

For the initial effort it is best to call for volunteers from the student body, in order to insure getting the publication past the early days when many problems have to be faced and all concerned have to stick to it.

When the time comes, at a later date, to gather the actual contents of the newspaper, there should be supplementary contributions from non-staff members. The primary grades should not be overlooked, as they often create stories and drawings which are quite worthy of publication.

A specific time should be set aside for weekly staff meetings. At the first meeting the most important order of business is to choose editors and assign the rest of the staff to their particular field of interest. Usually the best plan is to have a boy and girl working as co-editors. Good leaders are needed in this capacity. The staff divisions can be kept simple by assigning members as reporters, artists, proofreaders to check the finished stencil, printers to work the mimeo machine, staplers and distributors, with interchanging of jobs to assure smooth operations (3:66).

Whether the newspaper will be an all-school paper or merely a classroom activity will directly influence the

number of the staff. The objectives, news coverage, and the availability of qualified personnel will also have a direct bearing on the number of staff members. In order to enhance interest the newspaper should be a school project when feasible.

It was previously stated that the size and the functions of the publication would be determined by the local needs of each school. A suggested student staff and their respective responsibilities are included in this chapter for the consideration of those educators who might be planning an elementary newspaper.

The editor. He should be selected from the upper grades if it is an all-school publication. His duties are to lead the staff and work closely with the advisor. The editor would occasionally write editorials. He should maintain high scholarship. A certain degree of the success of the newspaper depends upon the calibre of the student editor.

The assistant editor. This person aids the editor in his responsibility and assumes the editorship when the editor is absent. The assistant editor could be in charge of page makeup and writing headlines. High scholastic average is also desirable.

The sports editor. This position needs a pupil

vitally interested in athletics. The ability to write accurately and interestingly should also be considered. The editor would cover the areas of intramural sports, physical education activities, and girls' sports.

The news editor. His responsibility is assigning news stories to the staff, collecting the completed stories, and working with the assistant editor on page make-up. The pupil selected for this position should have an aptitude for organizing straight news stories.

The feature editor. Since this position needs a student who possesses a definite flair in the writing of human interest stories of every-day school life, one with creative ability would be useful in this position. In some elementary publications the position of feature editor is omitted, the positions of news editor and feature editor being combined.

The art editor. He should be talented in the area of drawing. The art staff could draw the various cartoons for the paper as well as construct the masthead or logotype of the paper.

The business manager. His is a necessary position if the newspaper is to be sold. He would conduct the monetary transactions of the publication. A solid background in arithmetic is necessary.

The reporters. These are the nucleus and driving force of any newspaper. In some instances the entire class may be reporters. Without the best reporting there is no successful publication. All students should be encouraged to write for the school newspaper since one of the main purposes of combining the activity with the language arts program is to aid the student in his understanding of the English language.

Reporters must "seek out" their news stories. News may be gathered from assigned beats, assigned stories, and incidental happenings. Regular beats for the reporters might include the administrative office, faculty, assemblies, student officers, intramurals, and any other standing committees.

Reporters should be aware of the courtesy extended to interviewees. Appointments should be promptly kept.

A record of stories assigned to each reporter should be maintained by the advisor and the editor. The assigned date and the completion date should be recorded.

Story suggestions might include the following:

(1) guidance: care of books, attitudes, manners, (2) editorial ideas: fair play, book care, neatness, safety, (3) October: Columbus Day, Halloween, honor roll, (4) November: Thanksgiving, Veteran's Day, (5) December: Christmas program, the Christmas spirit, (6) January: winter birds seen,

weather observations, resolutions, (7) February: Lincoln-Washington programs, (8) March: Saint Patrick's Day, Spring arrives, and (9) April: Easter program, growth of spring flowers, right kind of April Fool's Day.

Copy readers. Copy readers are also quite important to the newspaper. The responsibility of the copy reader is to scrutinize all copy intended for publication. All grammatical and typographical errors should be corrected. After a news story has been read by one reader, the corrected copy should be relayed to another copy reader for the second scrutiny. This dual processing should minimize the number of errors. During the first few issues, the advisor should also check the articles.

The distributors. Distributors perform the culminating work on the newspaper. After the publication has been typed and mimeographed (or stenciled), the staff then staple the pages together. The newspapers are then distributed to the various classrooms.

Good form and format. Such are of great essence for any newspaper. Quality white paper should be used since it is more absorbent than regular bond paper. A successful newspaper is also judged by its attractiveness.

Many schools use the 8 ½" by 11" or the 8 ½" by 18" mimeograph paper. Some feel that the longer sized paper

makes a better page layout. There is apparently little cost differential.

Most elementary newspaper pages are divided into two or three columns. This allows for an appearance similar to that of an actual newspaper. For each additional column, more typing is required. In some instances columns, editorials, and special front page news stories are double-columned for increased reader emphasis. A variety of formats enhances the appearance of the paper.

On the front page of the newspaper the name of the publication, the volume, number, date, and the place of publication are always found.

Drawings and cartoons can be reproduced by using a stylus and mimeoscope. There should always be an educational purpose for each cartoon or drawing. The elementary publication is not a "funny paper."

Some newspapers are divided into particular news sections. That is, the editorials are located always in a specific area, the news stories in a particular section, and the sports section in one area.

Distribution. Distribution of the newspaper, the culminating activity of the project, is an important phase. Schools interviewed used many methods of distributing the paper. Staff members could distribute the paper each month, at the same time, to the homerooms. If that method

is too disrupting, a member from each homeroom could go to the news room and get the issues. The advisor could also place the newspapers for each respective room in the teacher's boxes.

Subscriptions. Getting subscriptions for the elementary newspaper is a much-discussed issue in many schools. Should a cost or charge be attached to the publication? It is a moot question. Some educators feel that if the paper is worthy of extended time and effort, then it should also be worth a cost to the reader. Some schools actually conduct subscription campaigns.

Other educators feel that the expense of publishing the newspaper is not prohibitive to the school and the educational values received from the project more than pay for it. There must also be considered the cost-value of the product.

Good business principles in the production of the school newspaper are vitally important. One writer stated:

The business aspects of the newspaper should be conducted in such a way as to insure supervised first-hand experiences to as many pupils as possible. The probabilities that the learning accompanying participation in these pupil activities is more effective than many other experiences which the school can supply. The school authorities should earnestly seek to extend the pupil's practical business training through varied pupil experiences in life-like situations (25:111).

Evaluation. An evaluation should be made of the

newspaper activity. Such interested groups as the student staff, the faculty, the administration, and the students should be allowed to participate in the evaluation.

An evaluation by the faculty and/or the advisor could possibly include the following points: (1) What was the number of articles submitted for publication? (2) Was there a fair distribution of articles by school grades? (3) Was there a real interest manifested by those students who managed the paper? (4) What was the attitude in general of the pupils and teachers toward the publication? (5) Was the newspaper filling its intended purpose as a supplemental and incentive device in the language arts curriculum? (6) Was the publication improving in each successive issue in content and form? and (7) Was the newspaper activity actually worth the time and effort expended on it?

A brief evaluation by the students might include the following points: (1) What did you feel were the results of having worked on the school paper? (2) Do you think other children in the same grade should have the same activity and experience? (3) What do you feel you learned doing this activity? (4) Do you have any concrete suggestions for improving this activity? and (5) What do you feel were some of the "draw-backs" of this activity?

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

A number of supplemental and challenging activities are now being integrated into the language arts programs of many elementary schools in the State of Washington. One of these activities is the student-published newspaper. A challenging project, it may present new vistas of understanding in the language arts program.

If such an activity is deemed feasible in the school, then objectives and functions must be formulated and periodically re-evaluated. Educational goals or objectives could include some of the following points: (1) a stimulus for written composition, including creative works, (2) an active endeavor to make composition more interesting and meaningful to the student, (3) a stimulus for an increased aptitude in sentence structure and spelling, (4) a correlation of other subjects in the program, (5) a concerted effort to build school spirit and student participation, (6) a plan of promoting the pupils' qualities of responsibility and leadership, (7) an idea in developing better rapport between school, home, and the community at large, (8) a program to allow the pupil a deserved opportunity to receive real life experiences and an expression of those feelings,

and (9) a program allowing many children their most challenging outlet of self-expression.

The advisor to the school newspaper should (if possible) have some journalistic "know-how" and be a teacher of the highest calibre.

An essential part of each school newspaper is an interested student staff. Many times the pupils must be motivated to participate. Some motivating activities are visiting a city newspaper plant, hearing a talk by a "real" newspaper reporter, and studying various city and school publications. If the student interest is to be sustained, then the elementary newspaper must remain a pupil newspaper, not a teacher's "sounding board."

An evaluation of the newspaper activity should be made regularly. Time, effort, and academic results should be considered in an objective critique by the student staff, the faculty, and the advisor. A designated criteria would aid in the evaluation.

Conclusions

There is no substitute nor panacea for a well-defined and rigorous language arts program. There are, however, opportunities for a number of meaningful activities to supplement the existing language arts program. As a supplemental and meaningful activity, the student newspaper can be an educationally sound project if correctly correlated with the language arts curriculum.

In the State of Washington there are now many elementary schools publishing student newspapers. The results of this study indicate that the efforts to sustain a successful publication in the school have been comparatively successful. Although the form, function, and objectives of this activity have varied in the various elementary schools, there is an apparent acceptance and high pedagogical regard for the newspaper.

The newspaper activity can be a supplemental aid to students in their understanding of the English language and its practical application.

The newspaper activity may also aid some students to a better grasp of their responsibility to others.

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APPENDIX A

321 5th Avenue
Apartment # 4
Kirkland, Washington
September 27, 1959

Dear Sir:

I am a graduate student now working towards the Master of Education Degree at Central Washington College of Education. The problem of my thesis is a study of the utilization and educational benefits derived from a student newspaper (as an enriched experience or supplement to the language arts program) in various elementary schools in the state of Washington.

It is my sincere hope that this study in some way may help in illuminating some of the good uses and/or misuses of a student newspaper on the elementary level.

I would greatly appreciate your help (or the help of your school paper advisor) in filling out the enclosed questionnaire. Please feel free to make any candid remarks concerning this project.

It would also be appreciated if you could send me a copy of your school publication.

Enclosed please find the questionnaire and one self-addressed envelope.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration and help.

Cordially yours,

H. Roger Salisbury

ENCLOSURES

APPENDIX B

ELEMENTARY NEWSPAPER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by underlining the answer YES or NO.

1. Is your elementary school now producing a student newspaper? Yes No
2. If your school paper previously produced a student newspaper, but discontinued the project, was it because of:
 - a. Departure of newspaper advisor? Yes No
 - b. Lack of interested faculty? Yes No
 - c. General lack of student interest? Yes No
 - d. Other variable reasons? Yes No
3. Do you think your student newspaper has proved beneficial to the students as a part of their language arts program? Yes No Comment if you please.
4. Do you think an interest by the students has, or is being established, in newspaper work as a profession?
Yes No
5. Is your paper published less than six (6) times per school year? Yes No
6. Is your paper published more than six (6) times per school year? Yes No
7. Do students from various grade levels put out the newspaper? Yes No
8. Do students of one particular grade level, but in various classes, put out the paper? Yes No
9. Do students in one particular classroom entirely put out the paper?
10. Is there one particular teacher used as advisor to the paper for the entire school year? Yes No
11. Do various teachers accept the responsibility of advising the paper during the year? Yes No
12. Does the advisor do the mimeographing or dittoing of the paper? Yes No

13. Do the students do the mimeographing or dittoing of the paper under the supervision of the advisor?
Yes No
14. Are the papers sold for money? Yes No
15. Does your paper publish only little stories, essays, and sundry happenings of each classroom?
Yes No
16. Is the paper well-received by the pupils of the school? Yes No
17. Is the paper well-received by the faculty and the administration of the school? Yes No
18. Is the paper well-received by the parents of the school children? Yes No
19. Is the paper well-received by the community at large? Yes No
20. Do you consider little stories, essays, and sundry happenings, written by the students to be of news-worthy value? Yes No

Please rate the following questions according to the scale:

1. INEFFECTIVE, 2. MODERATELY EFFECTIVE, 3. VERY EFFECTIVE. Place an X in the appropriate square.

21. How effective has working on the school newspaper been in aiding students in their grasping of the following academic learnings?

	1	2	3
a. conversation and discussion in classwork?			
b. building and/or maintaining a vocabulary?			
c. reading skills?			
d. grammar usage?			
e. sentence structure?			
f. spelling?			
g. handwriting?			
h. punctuation?			

22. How effective has working on the school newspaper been in aiding students in their grasping of the following social learnings?

- a. working with others?
- b. meeting people?
- c. assuming responsibility?
- d. meeting deadlines?
- e. accepting constructive criticism?
- f. respecting divergent views?
- g. practicing objective fairness?
- h. thinking concisely and clearly?
- i. seeking originality?
- j. striving for creativity?

1	2	3

23. Do you think the above academic and social learnings are more adequately attained by the students in the production of a school newspaper than by the use of any one other activity in the language arts program?
UNDERLINE YOUR CHOICE Yes No

24. Please state frankly your opinions and experience you may have had with elementary school newspapers.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER OPINION SURVEY

Dear Teacher:

Realizing that you are extremely busy during this hectic summer, I'll not take too much of your time.

I'm now working on my Master's Thesis which deals with the use of a student newspaper in the elementary schools. I've heard a number of pros and cons concerning this program. How do you feel about it? Whether you think it worthwhile or not, will you please state your reaction to an evaluation of such a program. Frankly, your opinions are an excellent evaluating device.

Please place your comments (on this paper if you wish) in Box 606, Campus P.O., or leave them at the Publications Office in the Music Building.

I would greatly appreciate your help in this study.
Thanks very much!

Cordially yours,

H. Roger Salisbury

COMMENTS: