

# The History of Newspapers in Education

Newspapers In Education is a concept dating back to June 8, 1795 when the Portland (Maine) Eastern Herald published the following editorial:

Much has been said and written on the utility of newspaper; but one principal advantage which might be derived from these publications has been neglected; we mean that of reading them in schools, and by the children in families. Try it for one session - Do you wish your child to improve reading solely, give him a newspaper - it furnishes a variety, some parts of which must infallibly touch his fancy. Do you wish to instruct him in geography, nothing will so indelibly fix the relative situation of different places, as the stories and events published in the papers. In time, do you wish to have him acquainted with the manners of country or city, the mode of doing business, public or private; or do you wish him to have a smattering of every kind of science useful and amusing, give him a newspaper - newspapers are plenty and cheap - the cheapest book that can be bought, and the more you buy the better for your children, because every part furnishes some new and valuable information!

## 1930s and 1940s

The New York Times and the Milwaukee Journal sponsor programs that are dedicated to providing newspapers and curriculum aides to the classroom teacher. While no official name was yet affixed to the programs, the "Living Textbook Program" was sometimes used to describe the newspapers fresh curriculum material available daily.

## 1950s

As educational trends switched from studying the past to studying the present, school use of newspapers becomes a nationally supported program. In 1954, C.K. Jefferson, a circulation executive at the Des Moines Register persuaded the school system to survey 5,500 secondary students about their leisure time. 30-40% spent no time reading outside the classroom those who did read spent only 1/3 of the time they spent watching TV. Concerned, Jefferson approached the National Council for the Social Studies, which had already published a pamphlet series on "How to Use the Daily Newspapers," and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Both organizations passed resolutions supporting research on the use of newspapers in schools. In 1956, representatives of 10 major professional organizations in education and the newspaper business met at the Drake Hotel in Chicago to plan the research. It was this research in 1957 that led to the establishment of a national "Newspaper in the Classroom" program, first sponsored by ICMA and later taken over by the American Newspaper Publishers Association, which became the Newspaper Association America in 1992.

The first manifestations of the national program was the development of three annual graduate credit summer workshops that trained up to 100 teachers each year in the classroom use of newspapers.

## 1960s

NIE programs passed the 100 mark. As of yet, little emphasis on the continuous use of newspapers as a supplementary text in various curricular areas. Local newspapers began to conduct their own workshops and graduate credit college workshops.

## 1970s

More than 350 papers sponsor local programs. The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association originated a new title for the program. Newspaper in Education, recognizing the expansion of the educational use of newspapers to institutions and organizations beyond the traditional classroom setting. Educators hired to promote and administer the programs.

## 1980s

This was the decade of increased development of partnerships with national education associations. The NAA Foundation and the International Reading Association joined to sponsor NIE Week each March. Newspapers were used in the classroom from kindergarten through college in almost all subjects. Newspapers could also be found outside the classroom for tutoring and adult education, and in prisons, mental institutions and nursing homes. By 1989, more than 700 NIE programs were in place nationwide.

## 1990s

As publishers and editors realize they need to invest in future readers, the NIE program becomes more vital to newspapers. Editorial content to reach young people is more popular and is often tied closely to a newspaper's use in schools.

More than 60 years of NIE experience has indicated there is no limit to a good newspaper's capacity to interest students in learning. The growth in numbers and creativity within the NIE community appears to guarantee this capacity will be fulfilled.

## How does NIE work?

About 700 newspaper companies provide newspapers to schools in their local areas. This means there are 700 different NIE programs, because there are at least as many ways for an NIE program to operate as there are combinations of newspapers and communities. In its most elemental form, an NIE program is one in which newspapers are distributed to schools or other institutions that conduct educational programs. At this basic level, an NIE program may involve nothing more than the weekday delivery of newspapers to a school. At the most active level, an NIE program engages several newspaper staff members; a well-defined package of products and services, including extensive teacher training; and activities all year long.

A well-developed program often includes literacy efforts and other programs that earn a reputation for the newspaper as an active and well-respected player in the community's educational program.

With the immediate gratification provided through today's media and entertainment industry, students and parents have lost the ability to utilize critical thinking, reading and communication skills. NIE is designed to make reading and newspapers a fun and profitable learning experience; the key being fun.

*Source: Andrea Farage, NIE Coordinator NAA and the Pensacola News Journal in Education, Pensacola, Fl.*