

Faculty Newspaper Survey

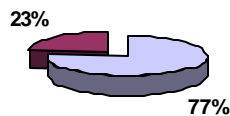
April 2002

Purpose

This survey asked faculty at University Park their opinions about the student Newspaper Readership Program and the learning outcomes they associate with this effort. They were also asked how often they currently obtain copies directly from the newspaper distribution units throughout campus and their interest in expanding the program to include faculty.

Participation Rate

E-mail notices were sent to 2038 faculty. Of these, 23% (n=471) agreed to take the online survey.



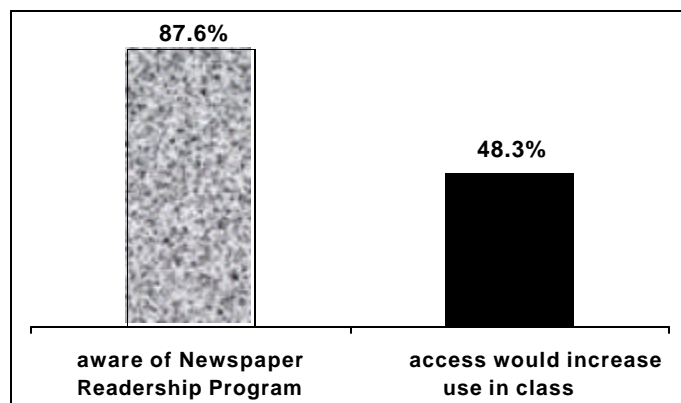
Findings

A majority of faculty either require newspaper readership or refer to newspaper articles in their classes.

- ▶ 15.2% currently require newspaper readership in their classes
- ▶ 68.4% of those who do not require newspaper readership report they refer to newspaper articles in their classes

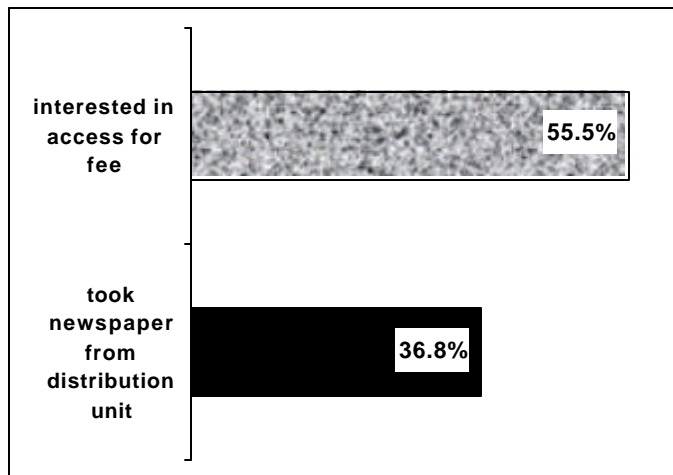
Almost all faculty reported they knew about the Newspaper Readership Program and that opening the Program to faculty would increase their use of newspapers in their classes.

- ▶ 87.6% are aware of the Newspaper Readership Program
- ▶ 48.3% said that opening up the program to faculty would increase their reference to newspaper articles in their classes



One-third (n= 149 36.8%) indicated that they had obtained newspapers from the student distribution units once or more in the last two weeks.

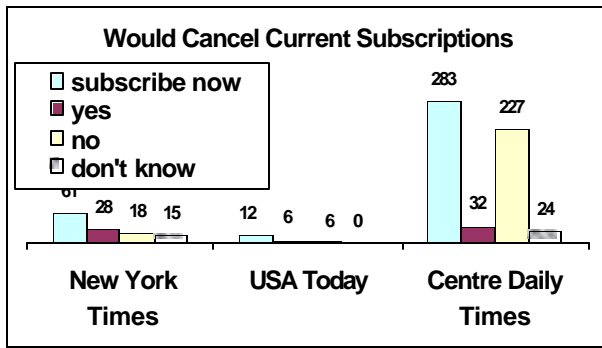
Over half (n= 246 55.5%) would be interested in having the Newspaper Readership Program be available to them at a charge of \$10-\$15 a semester.



Faculty were asked if they read specific newspapers, if they currently subscribed to those newspapers, and whether they would cancel those subscriptions if the Newspaper Readership Program were made available to them.

	Currently Read	Currently Subscribe	Current Subscribers Would Cancel if Program Open to Faculty
New York Times	n=294 (66.6%)	n= 61 (15.1%)	n= 28 (45.9%)
USA Today	n=155 (37.9%)	n= 12 (3.1%)	n= 6 (50.0%)
Centre Daily Times	n=389 (85.1%)	n=283 (65.2%)	n= 32 (11.3%)
Daily Collegian	n=349 (78.9%)	-	-

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Faculty were likely to report that regular newspaper readership facilitated learning outcomes associated with general education objectives.

Learning Outcomes Enhanced by Regular Newspaper Readership

Learning Outcomes	Faculty April 2002	Students February 2002 (Penn State Pulse)
having opinions about national/international concerns	85.7%	65%
feeling informed about University issues	52.3%	46%
feeling informed about local community issues	54.7%	47%
understanding public policy, law and political positions	56.4%	36%
ability to discuss important current events or issues	78.7%	70%
participating in class discussions	49.2%	32%
making connections between real life experiences and concepts presented in class	58.1%	30%
gaining insight into the historical context of current issues	44.3%	27%
developing strategies useful to pursuing career goals	29.2%	22%
evaluating use of language, statistics, arguments and visual illustrations	37.7%	27%
understanding ethical dilemmas related to contemporary issues	50.6%	36%

Individual Comments

Other Learning Objectives

- ♦ I think regular newspaper readership helps students see how ideas from research and scholarship are reflected in, and sometimes distorted by, the popular media that help to define how we see ourselves as human beings.
- ♦ It is a matter of general education that, in these days, is threatened through the amount of specialized education one has to take. To me, the newspaper program of the University belongs to the most valuable programs.
- ♦ I teach transportation, which is in the newspaper virtually every week. This practical context helps students to understand the pragmatic issues confronting transportation policy and implementation.
- ♦ The current events presented in the news provide a nice corrective to the more abstract generalizations about human and social behavior studied in class. But, to be a good reader of the news requires that one keep at it for awhile.
- ♦ counteracting the obsession with Internet as the source of everything
- ♦ upgrading the general cultural and intellectual level of the

Individual Comments

More Learning Objectives

- ♦ Students are required once a week in a “random mike” exercise where two or three students summarize a current article relevant to class subject, ethics and issues related to food, fiber and natural resources systems in the world. What a terrific resource to use newspapers for shedding insight into contemporary issues.
- ♦ Mostly a matter of being an educated public who can thus participate effectively in the political processes
- ♦ I encourage my students to be informed, well-educated citizens, in addition to being students. Initiating the habit of reading newspapers daily at the undergrad level is a habit that they will hopefully continue after graduation.
- ♦ Respect for diversity of opinions; broadening of awareness and interests outside area of study
 - ♦ I find that current events provide good opportunities to generate examples that can be discussed in class...possible for me, as the instructor, to use examples that all students would be familiar with regardless of cultural, ethnic, or other differences.
- ♦ In addition to class discussions, reading the news provides one with topics of conversation in different venues.

Suggestions for Increasing Awareness and Use of the Readership Program

- ♦ I currently pay for the New York Times in ...I would be more inclined to integrate the paper in my class if it was freely available to me on campus.
- ♦ Good program for students. I frequently get “passed along” copies from my students after they finish reading ...“Pass along” is less wasteful. You should encourage it.
- ♦ I support opening the program to faculty in the strongest possible terms. It would be a great benefit.
- ♦ program...has contributed significantly to the incredible mess in classrooms.
- ♦ Many students glance at these papers and leave them lying around the classrooms, and I pick them up, take a copy to the office and read them. I don't see why we cannot access them for free as well. I get the CDT at home, and would keep the subscription, but the marginal cost vs. great educational utility of being able to get the New York Times every day is considerable.
- ♦ Anything that encourages students to read is a good thing.
- ♦ This program is one of the most important academic services offered to our students. Almost daily it allows me to make connections between science, technology and society. It is the scope and quality of coverage in the New York Times which enables effective classroom use. Useful tidbits are also frequently available in USA Today.
- ♦ I believe I will use newspaper articles more if I can have access to the readership program. Right now I have been reading or rather scanning news online, which is ineffective and harmful to the eyes.
- ♦ Having the faculty “hooked” on any paper will increase circulation among the students.