

MEASURING UP!

The Scope, Quality and Focus of Newspaper In Education Programs in the United States





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*At what size
papers are they
mostly located?*

Measuring Up! is a product of the Newspaper
Association of America Foundation.

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*How many
NIE programs
are there?*

*What
percent of
newspaper circulation
does NIE represent?*

*How many
schools, teachers and
students are served?*



Introduction

In recent years, Newspaper In Education professionals have all shared a similar feeling: What we are doing is growing in importance, and the number of existing programs is multiplying. In various promotional pieces, you will see phrases such as “the growing numbers of NIE managers” or “the multitudes of NIE programs across the United States.”

The Newspaper Association of America Foundation, charged with actively supporting NIE programs throughout North America, found itself using the same phrases. Numbers show that more newspapers participate in NIE Week and utilize literacy tabloids, so efforts are paying off. But as for exact numbers, no one knew for sure.

Now we know.

In cooperation with the NAA Foundation, Dan Sullivan, of the University of Minnesota, led a survey team in search of answers to these questions. How many newspapers have NIE programs? Where are these programs and who do they serve? In what department is the NIE person most often placed?

Measuring Up! presents the results of this well-researched survey in easy-to-read charts and bulleted information. While these numbers are certain to fluctuate some each year, this “snapshot” displays solid industry gains and suggests steps for promoting growth. NIE has expanded incredibly over the last eight years. Now the numbers are here to prove it.

The feeling is a fact.





Purpose

- To report findings about the scope, quality and focus of NIE programs and changes since the last study conducted in 1992 (Survey of Newspaper In Education Programs and Literacy Programs).
- To frame a discussion about how to advance the mission of NIE. This study is intended to serve the NAA Foundation as it decides what steps it might take to further the overall mission of NIE. As such, the emphasis here is on identifying specific opportunities for the Foundation to pursue.

Overview

Research Context

- NAA Foundation defines NIE as “a cooperative effort between schools and newspapers to promote the use of newspapers as an education resource.”
- Research is intended to identify what the NAA Foundation can do to advance this objective.
- This is a three-part project:
 - Phase I: Profile of existing NIE programs
 - Phase II: Impact on student performance
 - Phase III: Relationship to future readership.

Purpose of Phase I

- Develop current profile of existing NIE programs and how they have changed since 1992.
- Provide a context and framework for Phase II.

Study Description

- Overall design built on 1992 study to allow meaningful comparisons.

This study presents a profile of NIE as it exists today and describes how it has changed since 1992. Through this comparative analysis, the study provides some indications about where NIE might be headed over the next several years.

- Data from multiple sources, including new mail and telephone surveys of NIE programs (50 percent response rate), ABC and SRDS data.

The framework for this study was limited to U.S. newspapers. The survey was done in two parts: Part I simply ascertained whether or not the newspaper had an NIE program (100 percent response to this part of the survey). In Phase II, newspapers that do have a program were asked if they would be willing to provide some information about it.

- Developed sophisticated statistical model to project sample data to all newspapers (both 1992 and 2000).

Analysis of the 1992 report determined that a major problem with its findings was that there was considerable response bias to the prior survey. Newspapers with NIE programs were far more likely to complete an NIE survey than those that did not. This bias resulted in a significant overestimate of the percent of newspapers with NIE programs. To control for this bias, respondents to the 2000 survey were grouped with a random sample of nonrespondents and the survey data together with ABC and SRDS data was used to develop a predictive model. That model was used to predict scope variables for nonrespondents and to adjust participation for 1992.

Key Findings—Highlights

- NIE has continued to grow in terms of share of newspapers with programs and numbers of schools, teachers and students being served. This research focuses on three aspects of NIE programs: scope, quality and focus, each of which is viewed as important to the overall mission of NIE.
- Some indicators of program quality have increased while others have not.
- The role of circulation departments and focus on circulation gains has increased.

It is unclear how this shift in the operation of NIE programs impacts the overall success of NIE. What does become clear is a need for the NAA Foundation to understand the relationship between short- and long-term objectives.

Scope

- More than 50 percent of all U.S. newspapers have a circulation of less than 15,000; Yet these newspapers account for only 10 percent of total newspaper circulation in the United States.
- The number of daily newspapers in the United States declined by more than 20 percent between 1992 and 2000.

☆ **Table 1**

NIE Programs at U.S. Daily Newspapers—2000

Circulation Size Category	Number of Newspapers*	Number with NIE	Percent of Category
Over 100,000	107	107	100%
50,000 – 100,000	118	116	98%
15,000 – 50,000	383	334	87%
Under 15,000	812	393	48%
TOTAL	1,420	950	67%

*Excludes USA Today and Wall Street Journal

☆ **Table 1a**

NIE Programs at U.S. Daily Newspapers—1992

Circulation Size Category	Number of Newspapers*	Number with NIE	Percent of Category
Over 100,000	141	135	96%
50,000 – 100,000	158	150	95%
15,000 – 50,000	510	394	78%
Under 15,000	995	456	46%
TOTAL	1,804	1,135	63%

*Excludes USA Today and Wall Street Journal

- The share of newspapers with NIE programs increased from 63 percent to 67 percent.
- The share for newspapers with NIE programs of more than 15,000 circulation increased from 84 percent to 92 percent.
- Thirty (30) percent of all current NIE programs did not exist in 1992 (even so, the total number of programs declined).

The share for newspapers with more than 15,000 circulation increased from 84 percent to 92 percent.



☆ Table 2

All U.S. Daily Newspapers—2000

Circulation Size Category	Number of Newspapers*	Percent of Total	Total Circulation (Millions)	Percent of Total
Over 100,000	107	7.5%	28.1	52.9%
50,000 – 100,000	118	8.3%	7.8	14.7%
15,000 – 50,000	383	27.0%	11.6	21.9%
Under 15,000	812	57.2%	5.6	10.5%
TOTAL	1,420	100.0%	53.1	100.0%

*Excludes USA Today and Wall Street Journal

- There is clearly a strong correlation between newspaper size and the existence of an NIE program. Virtually all large newspapers (more than 50,000 circulation) and most medium-sized newspapers (15,000–50,000 circulation) have NIE programs. The percentage of newspapers with NIE programs has actually increased, even though the total number of NIE programs declined. That is because of the large decline in the total number of daily newspapers in the U.S.
- The large number of newspapers that report having started their NIE programs within the past eight years, together with evidence from newspapers that don't currently have programs, suggests that many small and medium-sized newspapers will occasionally suspend their programs for one or more years for budgetary or staffing reasons.
- The number of students NIE serves grew from 10.8 million in 1992 to 14.4 million in 2000—a rise of 33 percent.
- The number of students enrolled grew by 12 percent from 1992 to 2000.
- The share of students served increased from less than 1 in 4 to nearly 1 in 3.
- Ninety-four (94) percent of all students now go to school in areas served by an NIE program.
- The share of all schools served by an NIE program is now more than 40 percent.
- The share of high schools served by NIE programs is only 15 percent.
- The U.S. Department of Education classifies all schools as either elementary (K–8) or secondary (9–12). Middle schools are lumped together with elementary schools; therefore, it is not possible to say with any precision how well NIE programs are reaching middle school students compared to students in grades K through 5 or 6. However, indirect evidence suggests that middle school students are being reached just about as well as the younger students, and that the real “gap” is limited to secondary students.
- School copies now account for about 2.4 percent of newspaper circulation.
- The primary mechanism for growing the size of NIE programs is an increase in the number of newspapers delivered to schools for free—this increased from 20 percent in 1992 to 42 percent in 2000.

The number of students NIE serves grew from 10.8 million in 1992 to 14.4 million students in 2000.



☆ Table 3

Reach of NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

NIE Reach	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Schools	84,877	105,855	7,518	19,096	25,510	53,731
Teachers	294,794	380,633	22,115	60,786	95,577	202,155
Students	10,822,100	14,383,471	745,233	1,921,110	3,695,913	8,021,215

☆ Table 4

Coverage of NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

NIE Program Coverage	TOTAL	
	1992	2000
Percent of Elementary and secondary students living in an area served by an NIE program	90%	94%
Percent of Elementary and secondary schools participating in an NIE program	31%	40%
Percent of Elementary and secondary teachers participating in an NIE program	26%	35%
Percent of Elementary and secondary students participating in an NIE program	24%	32%

- Most newspapers cite lack of budget or staff as reason for not having an NIE program.
- Almost 90 percent of newspapers without an NIE program have under 15,000 circulation. Most are evening newspapers and in large urban areas that are served by other newspapers. The newspapers outside metro areas without NIE programs are typically very small (under 10,000 circulation), and many serve communities where students are bused to schools located in another community.

☆ **School copies now account for about 2.4 percent of newspaper circulation.**



★ Table 5

Reasons for Not Having an NIE Program

Reasons	TOTAL	
	1992	2000
Lack of Budget	59%	54%
No Person Responsible*	39%	43%
Management Not Interested	5%	12%
Schools Not Interested	5%	4%

*Usually related to recent or pending ownership change

Points to Consider

- Expand existing programs versus start new programs.

An assumption here is that the ultimate goal is to increase the number of students served by NIE programs. Most of the evidence suggests that this can more easily be accomplished by expanding existing NIE programs. Existing programs have the potential to reach 94 percent of all students, but today reach only about one-third of those students.

- Develop high school programs as a growth opportunity.

While there would appear to be a significant opportunity to expand NIE at all grade levels, clearly the group being least served is secondary students. The NAA Foundation will explore strategies for significant expansion of services to this group. As more states require students to pass some type of standardized reading test as a prerequisite for graduating from high school, there may be an opportunity to develop programs targeted at these students.

- Understand possible trade-offs between quantity (scope) and quality (intensity).

The NAA Foundation must decide if it should encourage newspapers to focus on getting copies to more students or giving more copies to a given student (a decision that becomes increasingly important as more donated copies become available). The Foundation will be working on such issues as what constitutes a quality program.

Quality

- There are three dimensions to quality: intensity, services and resources.

Central to establishing priorities is having a clear sense of what constitutes a “good” or “high quality” NIE program. Here three important dimensions are measured. It should be noted that all of these dimensions relate to program “inputs” and not to the possible “impact” the program might be having on students.

- Program intensity is growing: Frequency of delivery, duration of delivery and copies per delivery all increased significantly.
- The bottom line—copies per student per year has nearly tripled.

The average student in an existing NIE program gets more access to a newspaper more times per week and more weeks per year than did the average student eight years ago. The combination of all three types of increase is that over the course of a school year, the average student in an NIE program has nearly three times the access to a newspaper as did the average student just eight years ago.

- Changes in the array of services provided is a mixed picture: The percent of newspapers offering certain services has increased while the percent offering others has decreased.
- The most significant decline is the percent of newspapers offering teacher training (this decline is across all sizes).
- Most significant increases are in materials provided to schools.
- The largest single change is the increased use of the Internet, from zero to 62 percent.

An important assumption underlying all of the quality discussion here is that more (of anything) is better.

- The services that declined are generally more labor-intensive and those that increased more nonlabor-intensive. This reflects the fact that newspapers have shifted labor resources to selling and servicing NIE accounts.
- Staff and nonlabor resources for NIE programs have increased substantially over the past eight years (even so, only large programs have full-time staff). However, this growth is less than the growth in the number of teachers and students served.
- Adjusted for inflation, expenditure per student has declined more than 20 percent.
- A key issue is whether the Internet can enable the more efficient use of labor resources and whether this should be driven by individual newspapers and/or supported by NAA.

☆ **Table 6**

Additional Services for NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

NIE Services	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Instruction Materials (e.g., Teacher’s Guides)	90%	94%	78%	93%	100%	100%
Special Topic Supplements	56%	70%	41%	61%	84%	89%
Training Workshops for Teachers	73%	65%	27%	61%	82%	92%
Guest Speaker to Schools (Not NIE Staff)	78%	61%	32%	59%	76%	74%
Lend Videos, Films, Books, etc.	28%	14%	14%	14%	18%	13%
Other* Support for Schools	22%	22%	16%	21%	22%	32%
Internet	0%	62%	38%	52%	76%	78%

*Includes promotional activities, recognition events and newsletters

Focus

- Circulation now plays a greater role in NIE programs. Nearly 70 percent of programs are now housed in circulation (versus 47 percent in 1992).
- Forty-four (44) percent say that immediate circulation gains are “extremely important” to their programs (versus 28 percent in 1992). This is most pronounced for the largest newspapers.
- Direct involvement of publishers or general managers in NIE programs has been significantly reduced.
- Most programs continue to place a high priority on future readers.
- Thirty-six (36) percent of NIE directors have pay incentives, almost all tied to circulation.
- Most large programs continue to make significant use of research.
- Such shifts prompt questions and needed dialogue about current and future priorities for sales efforts: Should NIE papers go to students where circulation is low, or to ones who will benefit most educationally or to ones most likely to become future subscribers?

- Using expanded NIE circulation to achieve the long-term goal also must recognize the impact of ABC rule changes.
- Achieving appropriate balance of long- and short-term goals and how to ensure congruence between the two will be an on-going challenge.

☆ **Table 7**

Resources Per Student Served—1992 and 2000

Resources	TOTAL	
	1992	2000
Staff per Student Served	.17	.14
Total Expenditures per Student Served		
Actual Dollars	\$4.31	\$4.17
1992 Constant Dollars	\$4.31	\$3.34

☆ **Table 8**

Organization of NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

Organizational Structure	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Department Responsible						
Circulation	47%	69%	83%	69%	60%	60%
Marketing	21%	15%	3%	14%	19%	18%
NIE	16%	10%	10%	9%	9%	16%
News	8%	2%	0%	1%	3%	3%
Comm. Relations	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%
Other	6%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
NIE Head Reports to						
Circ. Director	30%	59%	58%	64%	59%	51%
Mktg./Promo Dir.	12%	17%	2%	14%	25%	25%
Publisher/G.M.	24%	11%	40%	8%	2%	3%
Editor	8%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%
Comm. Relations	6%	2%	0%	1%	4%	2%
Other	20%	9%	0%	10%	9%	18%

☆ **Table 9**

Importance of Factors to NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

“Extremely Important” To NIE	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Immediate Circulation Gain	28%	44%	31%	36%	44%	62%
Future Newspaper Readers	82%	86%	81%	85%	88%	87%
Image Building/Comm. Service	n/a	44%	38%	46%	45%	48%
Awareness of Press Freedom	30%	25%	24%	28%	22%	25%
Sense of Citizen Responsibility	n/a	38%	29%	43%	41%	36%

Next Steps

- Phase II of research will use a variety of methods to study the impact of NIE programs on student performance.
- Combined with Phase I, we will give more attention to what constitutes a “good” NIE program.
- In addition, NAA Foundation will explore ways to take advantage of growth in schools’ use of the Internet.

Appendix

☆ Table 10

All U.S. Daily Newspapers—2000

Circulation Size Category	No. of Newspapers*	Percent of Total	Total Circulation (Millions)	Percent of Total
Over 100,000	107	7.5%	28.1	52.9%
50,000 – 100,000	118	8.3%	7.8	14.7%
15,000 – 50,000	383	27.0%	11.6	21.9%
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TOTAL	1,420	100.0%	53.1	100.0%

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☆ Table 10a

All U.S. Daily Newspapers—1992

Circulation Size Category	No. of Newspapers*	Percent of Total	Total Circulation (Millions)	Percent of Total
Over 100,000	141	7.5%	28.2	52.6%
50,000 – 100,000	158	7.8%	7.9	14.7%
15,000 – 50,000	510	29.3%	11.8	22.1%
Under 15,000	995	55.4%	5.7	10.6%
TOTAL	1,804	100.0%	53.6	100.0%

*Excludes USA Today and Wall Street Journal

To strengthen NIE, what more can the NAA Foundation do to take advantage of growth in schools' use of the Internet?

☆ Table 11

Comparison of NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

NIE Program Statistics	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Length						
< 3 Months	38%	13%	16%	7%	10%	15%
3–6 Months	15%	11%	5%	10%	10%	13%
6–9 Months	9%	13%	10%	14%	13%	15%
Full School Year	38%	63%	69%	69%	67%	57%
Frequency						
At Least Weekly	55%	57%	66%	56%	54%	55%
More Than 1/Wk	16%	22%	21%	21%	22%	24%
Full School Year	11%	15%	19%	13%	13%	16%
Newspapers						
Average Copies Per Delivery	23.3	44.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bottom Line						
Average No. of Copies Per Student Per Year	5.3	15.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

☆ Table 12

Resources for NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

NIE Staff at Paper	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Full-time						
None	53%	34%	78%	44%	10%	5%
1 Staffer	35%	42%	18%	51%	70%	20%
2 or More Staffers	12%	24%	4%	5%	20%	75%
Part-time						
None	19%	27%	17%	28%	33%	23%
1–2 Staffers	53%	54%	56%	44%	28%	23%
3 or More Staffers	28%	19%	27%	27%	39%	54%
Average Staff	1.6	2.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

☆ **Table 13**

Resources for NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

Budgets of NIE Programs	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Nonlabor						
Under \$10,000	68%	51%	93%	65%	36%	8%
\$10,000–\$25,000	16%	23%	7%	24%	34%	22%
\$25,000–\$50,000	8%	11%	0%	8%	18%	14%
More Than \$50,000	8%	15%	0%	3%	12%	56%
Labor						
None	35%	18%	41%	19%	2%	2%
Under \$30,000	38%	37%	50%	60%	24%	4%
\$30,000–\$50,000	11%	20%	5%	17%	49%	16%
\$50,000–\$100,000	11%	13%	4%	3%	17%	32%
More Than \$100,000	5%	12%	0%	1%	7%	46%

☆ **Table 13a**

Resources for NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

Available NIE Budget	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
None	47%	28%	57%	36%	9%	8%
Under \$30,000	38%	37%	43%	54%	32%	8%
\$30,000–\$50,000	13%	27%	0%	9%	56%	55%
More Than \$50,000	2%	8%	0%	1%	3%	29%

Existing programs have the potential to reach 94 percent of all students, but today reach only about one-third of those students.



☆ **Table 14**

Incentives for NIE Head—1992 and 2000

Incentives for NIE Head	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Use Pay Incentives						
Yes	n/a	36%	11%	28%	48%	58%
No	n/a	64%	89%	72%	52%	42%
Incentives Tied To:						
Circulation	n/a	70%	33%	60%	67%	80%
NIE Growth	n/a	60%	50%	62%	64%	55%
Student Performance	n/a	3%	0%	4%	5%	3%

☆ **Table 15**

Performance Measures of NIE Programs—1992 and 2000

NIE Performance Measures	TOTAL		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	< 15,000	15,000–50,000	50,000–100,000	100,000+
Use Measures to Evaluate						
Yes	68%	68%	52%	61%	80%	85%
No	32%	32%	48%	39%	20%	15%
Which Ones						
Circulation	33%	41%	14%	33%	62%	53%
NIE Growth	18%	24%	20%	24%	25%	32%
Teaching Satisfaction	64%	50%	72%	58%	44%	41%
Internal Performance	12%	10%	4%	10%	14%	18%
Do Research						
Yes	62%	67%	31%	35%	44%	80%
No	38%	33%	69%	65%	56%	20%
On What						
Progressive Growth	39%	42%	35%	38%	44%	51%
Progressive Educational Value	44%	37%	10%	35%	40%	41%
Student Performance	3%	4%	0%	1%	5%	5%
Grads Become Subscribers	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%

Forty-four percent say immediate circulation gains are “extremely important” to their programs—this is most pronounced for the largest newspapers.



**NIE has grown incredibly over the last eight years.
Now the numbers are here to prove it.**

How many NIE programs are there?

At what size papers are they mostly located?

Who does not have an NIE program?

In what department is the NIE person placed?



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