

Mandatory Testing and News in the Schools:
Implications for Civic Education

A Report from the Carnegie-Knight Task Force on the
Future of Journalism Education



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Carnegie-Knight Task Force on the Future of Journalism Education

Prepared by Thomas E. Patterson, Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press,
John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Task Force Members:

Geoffrey Cowan

Dean, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California

Alex S. Jones

Director, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard University

John Lavine

Dean, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University

Nicholas Lemann

Dean, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University

Orville Schell

Dean, Graduate School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley

The Carnegie-Knight Task Force is one element of the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education which was launched in 2005 and focuses on developing a vision of what journalism schools at major universities can be. The Carnegie-Knight Task Force aims to carry out research and create a platform for educators to speak on journalism policy and education issues. All of these efforts grew out of a partnership involving the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the deans of four of the nation's leading journalism schools—Orville Schell, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley; Nicholas Lemann, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University; John Lavine, Dean of the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University; Geoffrey Cowan, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California—and Alex S. Jones, Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

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Executive Summary

From America’s earliest days, its public schools have been charged with both educating students and making them into citizens. Some observers believe that civic education in the United States is being compromised by the push for mandatory testing, with its emphasis on language, math, and science skills. Based on a recent national survey of 1,262 social studies, civics, and government teachers, this report examines the effect of mandatory testing on the classroom use of current affairs news. The evidence shows that standardized tests do inhibit classroom use of news, including student discussion. The effect is particularly pronounced in schools with large numbers of lower-income and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students, who are precisely the students that would benefit most from a vigorous civic education. The report concludes with recommendations on how teachers, school administrators, and policymakers can mitigate the effects of mandatory testing on civic education in America.

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Mandatory Testing and News in the Schools: *Implications for Civic Education*

No democracy places a greater burden on its public schools than does the United States. From the earliest days, the nation's public schools have been charged with both educating students and making them into Americans. Leon Sampson, a nineteenth-century social reformer, noted the stark difference between the philosophy of public education in the United States and that in Europe. "The European ruling classes," he wrote, "were open in their contempt for the proletariat. But in the United States equality, and even classlessness, the creation of wealth for all and political liberty were extolled in the public schools."¹ In the absence of a binding ancestral heritage, America's children were schooled in their country's unifying values as well as in the three R's. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed: "It cannot be doubted that in the United States the instruction of the people powerfully contributes to the support of the democratic republic."²

America's public schools are still a place where the nation's values are transmitted. The Pledge of Allegiance that starts the school day is a practice that has no precise equivalent in other democracies. The flying of the flag on school grounds and the playing of the national anthem at school events, though not unique, are more prevalent in the United States than elsewhere.

Nevertheless, some observers believe that civic education in U.S. schools is being compromised by the push for mandatory standardized testing, with its emphasis on language, math, and science skills. A few decades ago, American schools commonly had three courses in civics, democracy, and government. Today, the norm is a single semester-long course in government.³ In a 2004 joint report, the American Youth Policy Forum and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development claimed that "the recent preoccupation of the nation with reshaping academics and raising academic performance has all but overpowered a task of equally vital importance—educating our young people to become engaged members of their community as citizens."⁴ According to a recent study, only a fourth of America's middle- and high-school students have a grade-appropriate understanding

of the U.S. political system.⁵

This report seeks to inform the debate on the status of civic education in an era of high-stakes testing. Based on a national survey of 1,262 civics, government, and social studies teachers in grades 5 through 12, the report examines the classroom use of daily news and how it has been affected by mandatory testing requirements.

News is a good barometer of testing effects because it is extra-curricular and yet is a conventional means of bringing public events into the classroom. Moreover, the news is a means by which teachers can encourage students to discuss important issues and events, which a 2003 CIRCLE/Carnegie Corporation report identified as one of the six "most promising approaches to civic education." According to the report: "When students have opportunities to discuss current issues in a classroom setting, they tend to have greater interest in politics, improved communication and critical thinking skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school."⁶ Of course, classroom exposure to news is not by itself an adequate civic education. Nevertheless, recent studies indicate that the use of news, when combined with classroom discussion, improves students' civic knowledge and skills.⁷

The teachers surveyed for this study were randomly sampled from Market Data Retrieval's list of more than 30,000 social studies, civics, and government teachers and were contacted through the Internet over a two-month period in the fall of 2006. Each respondent was contacted up to three times in an effort to obtain a high response rate. Among teachers who opened the e-mail request, a third responded, which is an unusually high response for an Internet-based survey. The sampling error for a survey of 1,262 respondents is approximately plus or minus 3 percent. (Additional information on the survey, including a copy of the questionnaire, is provided in the appendix.)

NEWS IN THE CLASSROOM

In the opinion of America's government, social studies, and civics teachers, news is an important component of civic education. Nine in ten

teachers in our national survey agreed with the statement: “News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for their role of citizens.”

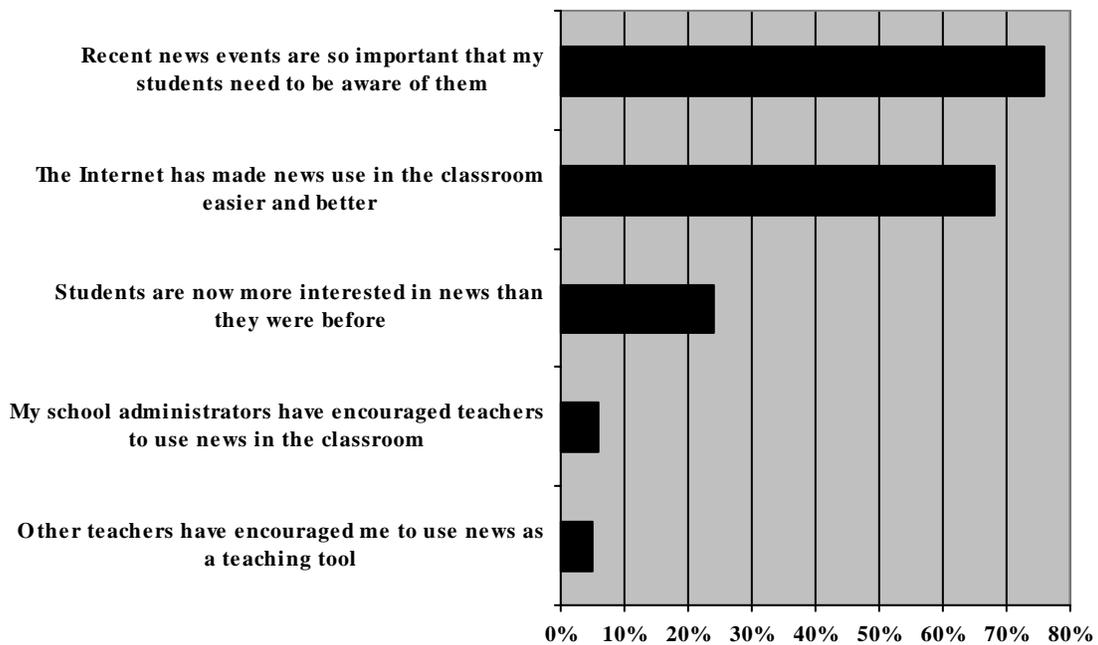
News has been gaining ground in America’s social studies, government, and civics classes. Half of the teachers in our survey indicated they are making greater use of news today than a few years ago. Only a sixth of the respondents said they were making less use of news while a third reported no change in their usage.

This increase, however, is unrelated to school policy (see Figure 1). The war on terrorism, the conflict in Iraq, and other issues have made the news a more compelling classroom subject than it was in the 1990s. Three-fourths of teachers now making greater use of news say they are doing so largely because “recent news events are so important that my students need to be aware of them.” Influences within the schools were only a tiny a factor in the increase. A mere 6 percent of teachers said, for example, that school administrators had encouraged them to make greater use of news in the classroom.

On the other hand, school policy ranked as the top reason why some teachers now make less use of the news in the classroom (see Figure 2). Three-fourths of these teachers said that “mandated standardized tests have made it harder for me to find the classroom time to make use of the news.” Mandatory testing also is prompting some teachers to plan a reduction in their use of news. Eighty percent of these instructors cited mandatory testing requirements as a primary reason they intend to make less use of news. As one of them said: “Teaching to the test is the rule here, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to [give time to] current events and the news.”

Teachers perceive a conflict between the use of news in the classroom and the demands of mandatory testing (see Table 1). Although teachers see the news as one of the best ways “to get students interested in a class and its subject” and “to prepare students for their role as citizens,” they do not see it as a good way to prepare students for standardized tests. Only 9 percent of the teachers agreed fully with the statement: “News in the classroom is one of the best ways to

Figure 1: Reasons Teachers Give for Increased Classroom Use of News



Note: Based on respondents who reported they have increased their classroom use of news. Figures total more than 100 percent in that respondents were allowed more than one response to the question of why they had increased their classroom use of news.

prepare students for mandated standardized tests.” As one teacher complained: “I cannot count the times I have shelved a topic, idea, project, or student inquiry because it does not align with the test.”

“TEACHING TO THE TEST” AND NEWS USE

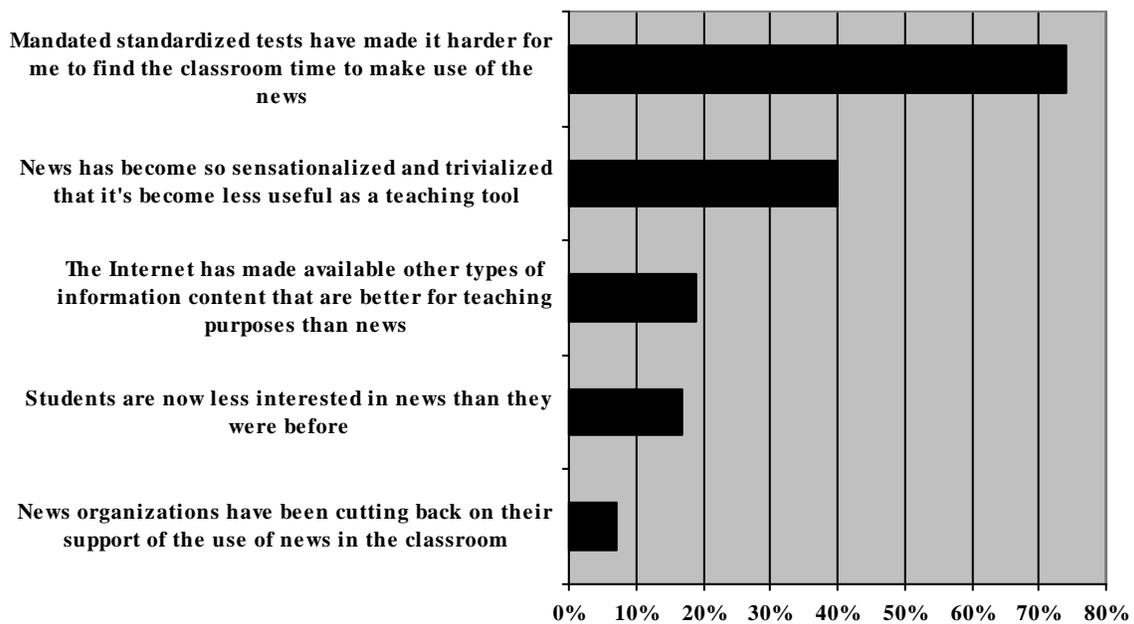
Although mandatory testing has less effect on social science, civics, and government teachers than it does on those in the language, math, and science fields, many of them are nonetheless required by law or school policy to “teach to the test.” When the teachers in our survey were asked whether “preparing students to pass mandated standardized tests” affects their teaching, 16 percent said it “dictates most of my teaching” and 44 percent said it “substantially affects my teaching.” Only 11 percent said it has “little or no impact on my teaching” while 29 percent claimed it “slightly affects” their classroom instruction.

Teachers who are required to “teach to the

test” make less use of news in the classroom. Compared with the least-constrained teachers, those who are most constrained by standardized tests are a fourth less likely to bring news into the classroom several times a week (Table 2), three times more likely to have cut back on classroom use of news (Table 3), and twice as likely to plan future reductions. As one of these teachers said: “Standardized testing is driving my curriculum to the point that I teach no content other than the standards that will be tested.”

The effect of standardized test requirements on news use is apparent even when statistical controls are applied. It is conceivable, for example, that the observed relationship between testing requirements and news use is a function of teachers’ seniority. If more experienced teachers have greater freedom in the classroom and are also more likely to employ news content, then the observed relationship between testing and news use is spurious—a consequence of seniority rather than standardized testing *per se*. However, the relationship between testing and news use holds

Figure 2: Reasons Teachers Give for Cutting Back on Classroom Use of News



Note: Based only on respondents who reported they have reduced their classroom use of news. Figures total more than 100 percent in that respondents were allowed more than one response to the question of why they had reduced their classroom use of news.

Table 1: Teachers' opinions on the classroom value of news

	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree
News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for their role as citizens	1%	3%	17%	72%
News in the classroom is one of the best ways to get students interested in a class and its subject	1%	5%	30%	59%
News in the classroom is one of the best ways to teach skills such as reading and writing	4%	11%	35%	47%
News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for mandated standardized tests	25%	29%	31%	9%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% because “not sure” responses are not included.

up when teaching experience is controlled statistically. Although teachers with 11 years or more of experience make greater use of news in the classroom than do less experienced teachers, those in each category that face the strictest test requirements are 15 percent less likely to use news in the classroom than those unencumbered by test requirements. As one senior teacher noted: “With state mandates, it is quite difficult to spend time with current events. I miss that aspect of teaching.”

Standardized testing does more than reduce the use of news in the classroom. It changes how teachers use the news. The National Council for the Social Studies concluded that the purpose of civic education is “to promote civic competence . . . [by helping] young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”⁸ In the classroom, this goal is met, not through rote learning, but through opportunities to discuss and evaluate issues and events.⁹ Standardized test requirements can work against such opportunities by shrinking the time available

for classroom discussion. Teachers who work under strict testing constraints are nearly as likely as the least restricted teachers to use the news as a basis for in-class quizzes, but they are 15 percent less likely to use it as a basis for class discussion. “I have so much core content to cover I [seldom] have the time to discuss the news,” said one teacher. “Government is not a tested area.”

THE DOUBLE BIND: BASIC SKILLS VS. CIVIC COMPETENCE

As public policy, mandatory testing is aimed primarily at improving underperforming schools, many of which are located in cities or rural areas. Few suburban schools are “failing” by the metric of standardized testing. Yet, if disadvantaged urban and rural students are the chief beneficiaries of test-driven instruction, they are also the students that would benefit most from a vigorous civic education. Most of their parents do not participate in public affairs, nor pay appreciable attention to the news. Their home life is typically a weak path to citizenship.

The tradeoff between standardized tests and civic education is evident in schools with large

Table 2: Relationship between “teaching to the test” and classroom use of news

Extent to which “preparing students to pass mandated standardized tests” affects a teacher’s instruction				
Frequency of news use	“Dictates”	“Substantially affects”	“Slightly affects”	“Little or no impact”
A few times weekly or more	61%	68%	67%	80%
Once a week or less	39	32	33	20
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3: Relationship between “teaching to the test” and trends in teachers’ use of news

Extent to which “preparing students to pass mandated standardized tests” affects a teacher’s instruction				
Trend in news use	“Dictates”	“Substantially affects”	“Slightly affects”	“Little or no impact”
Use it less	26%	16%	11%	8%
Use it more	45	50	54	50
No change	29	34	35	42
	100%	100%	100%	100%

numbers of lower-income students. Compared with teachers in schools populated mostly by higher-income students, teachers in the lower-income schools are roughly 15 percentage points less likely to use news in the classroom and also less likely to employ news when they work under the constraints of mandatory testing. In fact, teachers in schools populated mostly by higher-income students are largely unaffected by testing requirements, at least when it comes to the classroom use of news. In these schools, about 75 percent of the social studies, civics, and government instructors—those that teach under the constraints of standardized tests and those that don’t—bring news into the classrooms several times weekly. Apparently, standardized tests are not much of an obstacle to civic education in schools where most students pass the tests easily.

A similar pattern is found when schools are

ranked by the proportion of English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) students (see Table 4). In schools with few or no ESL students, news is a regular feature in 70 percent of social studies, civics, and government classes, and standardized-testing constraints have only a marginal relationship to teachers’ news use. As the proportion of ESL students increases, the use of news diminishes and testing strictures become important—that is to say, news is employed less often by instructors who teach under tight testing constraints.

These findings reveal the challenge facing America’s schools as they seek to raise academic standards while also training future citizens. A fifth of America’s public school students today are the children of immigrants—the highest number in the country’s history.¹⁰ It is difficult to argue with policies aimed at improving the basic

academic skills of these and other less advantaged students. Yet, the same policies that promote this goal diminish the prospect that such students will receive a satisfactory civics education.

MAKING NEWS A LARGER PART OF THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Although this study presents a discouraging picture of the effect of standardized testing on civic education in America’s classrooms, it offers lessons on how the effect can be mitigated.

A Lesson for Teachers: Mentor Junior Colleagues. Standardized testing is a confining reality in American schools, affecting not only what teachers do in the classroom but also what they believe they can do. Some teachers are psychologically handcuffed by mandatory tests. “I must teach only the essentials,” said one of the survey respondents. Yet there are teachers who operate under strict testing restraints that have found ways to bring news into the classroom at a level matching that of instructors who teach without these restraints. Said one such respondent: “It is important for us as teachers to get students to think for themselves.”

Research indicates that less experienced teachers are more likely to feel constrained by standardized testing and less likely to think they can deviate from its strictures. These teachers in particular would benefit from the guidance of experienced teachers who have discovered how to employ news in the classroom without compromising testing imperatives. Apparently, this type of mentoring is uncommon. Although 80 percent of the teachers in our survey—including

the less experienced ones—agreed that “news in the classroom is something that most teachers think is a good idea,” only 4 percent said other teachers have actively encouraged them to make greater use of news in the classroom.

A Lesson for School Administrators: Encourage the Use of News. Active encouragement from school administrators is also relatively uncommon. Although seven in ten teachers think that their local and district school administrators believe “news in the classroom is a good idea,” only one in twenty teachers claimed to have been strongly encouraged by school administrators to make greater use of news.

School administrators could highlight arguments made by the teachers themselves in making the case for increased use of news in the classroom. Nearly 90 percent of the teachers we surveyed agreed that “news in the classroom is one of the best ways to get students interested in a class and its subject.” Teachers also believe that news use contributes to the development of cognitive and language skills. More than 80 percent agreed that “news in the in the classroom is one of the best ways to teach skills such as reading and writing.”

In other words, the use of news could be encouraged in the context of skills relevant to standardized testing, as well as in the context of civic education. As one teacher noted: “I use current events to hone skill sets such as reading comprehension and expository writing, as preparation for the test.” Another teacher observed: “News is a great way to get students connected to the subject material and can be

Table 4: “Teaching to the test,” news, and English-language skills

Students’ back-grounds	Extent to which “preparing students to pass mandated standardized tests” affects a teacher’s instruction		
	“Dictates”	“Substantially affects”	“Slight or no effect”
More than 1/4 are ESL	57.8%	67.8%	68.8%
About 1/4 are ESL	62.5%	68.7%	69.2%
None to few are ESL	69.1%	69.5%	72.21%
Totals	100%	100%	100%

Note: Figures in table are the percentage of teachers in each category who use news in the classroom a few times a week or more.

useful in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. Also, the news helps with students' critical thinking skills."

A Lesson for Policymakers: Expand Civic Education. Most states require students to take a course that includes civics or government. Most states also have testing requirements in this area, although this testing is typically infrequent and without consequences for school funding.

This situation could change in the near future. Several state legislatures are considering laws that would expand civic education and create a high-stakes civics test similar to those for other subjects. The first of the changes—increasing the course requirement in civic education—is a sound idea. The second—imposing high-stakes testing on this area—is not. There is no evidence to support the notion that the skills of citizenship can be taught and tested in the same way as language, math, and science skills. To be sure, students should be informed about individual rights, the institutions of government, and the like. Nevertheless, sound citizenship is mostly a function of thoughtful observation and judgment. These traits can be nurtured through classroom discussion of the issues of the day and similar modes of instruction. If the purpose of civic education, as the National Council of Social Studies argues, is to enable “young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good,”¹¹ the goal is unlikely to be met by imposing a standardized civics test on teachers and their students. A more promising pedagogy for reinvigorating civic education in America's schools is one suggested by the 2003 CIRCLE/Carnegie Corporation report, “The Civic Mission of Schools:”

Competent and responsible citizens are informed and thoughtful. They have a grasp and appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; an ability to obtain information when needed; a capacity to think critically; and a willingness to enter into dialogue with others about different points of view and to understand diverse perspectives. They are tolerant of ambiguity and resist simplistic answers to complex questions.¹²

FINDING A PROPER BALANCE

The challenge for teachers, school administrators, and education policymakers is to find ways to promote civic education in an era of high-stakes testing. As this report has shown, there is no absolute incompatibility between such testing and an adequate civic education. But the two become incompatible when high-stakes testing becomes an end unto itself. As one teacher noted: “In my state, and especially in my district, testable core content is not the main thing. It is—to quote Vince Lombardi—the only thing. My principal has said plainly on many occasions that if it is not testable core content, it has no place in our school. That's just the way it is. It does not do much for making good informed citizens, but teachers with lower test scores are put on improvement plans and either forced out or fired.”

ENDNOTES

¹ Quoted in Michael Harrington, *Socialism* (New York: Bantam, 1973), p. 142.

² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Part B.

³ Carnegie Corporation of New York and Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), “The Civic Mission of Schools,” New York, 2003, p. 14.

⁴ Bruce O. Boston, “Restoring the Balance between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools,” report of the American Youth Policy Forum and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, D.C., 2005, p. 3.

⁵ National Center for Education Statistics, “NAEP 1998 Civics Report Card Highlights,” U.S. Department of Education, November, 1999. See also, Judith Torney-Purta, Rainer Lehmann, Hans Oswald, and Wolfram Schulz, *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries* (Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2001), pp. 62-63.

⁶ “The Civic Mission of Schools,” p. 6.

⁷ See, for example, Richard G. Niemi and Jane Junn, *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁸ National Council for the Social Studies, “Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for the Social Sciences,” Washington, D.C., 1994, p. vii.

⁹ See, Gonden Cawelti and James P. Shaver, *Improving Student Achievement in Social Studies* (Arlington, Virginia: Educational Research Service, 1999).

¹⁰ “The Civic Mission of Schools,” p. 16.

¹¹ “Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for the Social Sciences,” p. vii.

¹² “The Civic Mission of Schools,” p. 10.

Appendix

The teachers surveyed for this study were randomly sampled from Market Data Retrieval's list of more than 30,000 social studies, civics, and government teachers and were contacted through the Internet between late August and early November 2006. Each respondent was contacted up to three times in an effort to obtain a high response rate. Among teachers who opened the e-mail request, roughly a third responded.

Nearly 100 of the respondents were teachers that do not teach or no longer teach a social studies, civics, or government course. These respondents were eliminated from the analysis, leaving a total of 1,262 respondents. The sampling error for a random sample of this size is plus or minus 2.7 percent.

The sample included teachers in grades 5 through 12, reflecting a research decision to limit the study to middle school, junior high, and high school teachers. The sample was weighted toward the higher grades, such that two-thirds of the respondents teach grades 9 through 12.

The questions asked in the survey are as follows:

1. Do you teach full-time?
 - No
 - Yes, although I also have some administrative duties
 - Yes
2. How long have you taught?
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - More than 20 years
3. Which subject do you teach the most? (You may check two or more if your teaching time is evenly divided.)
 - Social studies
 - Civics/Government
 - Math
 - Science
 - Physical education/health
 - Foreign language
 - English
 - Music
 - Journalism
 - Art
 - Business
 - Vocational
 - Other
4. What grade level are most of the students that you teach?
 - 12
 - 11
 - 10
 - 9
 - 8
 - 7
 - 6
 - 5
 - Less than 5
5. Do you teach any advanced placement courses?
 - Yes
 - No
6. What state is your school located in?
7. At what type of school do you teach?
 - Public
 - Private
 - Parochial
8. What type of community is your school located in?
 - City
 - Suburb (or other community near a city)
 - Town (away from a city and population larger than 10,000)
 - Rural area or isolated town of less than 10,000 people
9. What is the family income of most of the students at your school?
 - Most are from higher-income families
 - Most are from families with average incomes
 - Most are from lower-income families
 - Not sure
10. Roughly how many students attend your school? (This question refers only to your immediate school rather than the entire school district.)
 - Less than 100
 - 100 to 299

- 300 to 499
 - 500 to 999
 - 1000 or more
11. About how many of your students speak English as a second language?
- Most
 - About half
 - About a fourth
 - Less than a fourth but more than a few
 - None or very few
12. To what extent does preparing students to pass mandated standardized tests (“teaching to the test”) affect your teaching?
- It dictates most of my teaching
 - It substantially affects my teaching
 - It slightly affects my teaching
 - It has little or no impact on my teaching
13. How often do you make use of the news as a teaching tool?
- Nearly every day
 - A few times a week
 - About once a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - Less than once a month or not at all
14. How do you typically make use of news in your teaching?
- I mostly integrate news into my curriculum
 - I mostly set class time aside to discuss news
 - I use both of these approaches about equally
15. Which type of news content do you use most often in the classroom?
- Government and public affairs news
 - Science-related news
 - Health-related news
 - Sports-related news
 - Business-related news (such as the stock market)
 - Other
16. Please indicate how frequently you make use of the news for the following purposes:
- a) As a basis for class discussion
 - b) As a basis for homework assignments
 - c) As a basis for student folders, scrapbooks, journals, etc.
 - d) As a basis for your lesson plans
 - e) As a basis for tests or quizzes
17. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
- a) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to teach skills such as reading and writing
 - b) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for mandated standardized tests
 - c) News in the classroom is something that most teachers think is a good idea
 - d) News in the classroom is something that my district school administrators think is a good idea
 - e) News in the classroom is something that my local school administrators think is a good idea
 - f) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to prepare students for their role as citizens
 - g) News in the classroom is one of the best ways to get students interested in a class and its subject
18. Has your use of news as a teaching tool changed over time?
- Use it more
 - Use it less
 - No change
19. What is the main reason or reasons you're now making more use of the news in the classroom? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I'd been planning to do and I finally did it
 - The Internet has made news use in the classroom easier and better
 - Students are now more interested in news than they were before
 - News organizations through their services have made it easier for teachers to use news in the classroom
 - My school administrators have encouraged teachers to use news in the classroom
 - Exposure to news helps students to do better on mandated standardized tests
 - Other teachers have encouraged me to use news as a teaching tool
 - Recent news events are so important that my students need to be aware of them
 - Other

20. What is the main reason or reasons you're now making less use of the news in the classroom? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I have been planning to do and I finally did it
 - The Internet has made available other types of information content that are better for teaching purposes than news
 - Students are now less interested in news than they were before
 - News organizations have been cutting back on their support of the use of news in the classroom
 - My school administrators have suggested cutting back on the use of news and similar content in the classroom
 - Mandated standardized tests have made it harder for me to find the classroom time to make use of the news
 - Other teachers have discouraged use of the news as a teaching tool
 - News has become so sensationalized and trivialized that it's become less useful as a teaching tool
 - Other
21. What's your best estimate about your future use of news as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
 - Likely to use it less
 - No change anticipated
22. What is the main reason or reasons you expect to make more use of the news in the classroom in the future? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I have been planning to do and I am finally going to do it
 - The Internet is making news use in the classroom easier and better
 - Students are now more interested in the news than they were before
 - News organizations through their services are making it easier for teachers to use news in the classroom
 - My school administrators have encouraged teachers to use news in the classroom
 - Exposure to news helps students to do better on mandated standardized tests
 - Other teachers have encouraged me to use news as a teaching tool
- Recent news events are so important that my students need to be aware of them
 - Other
23. What is the main reason or reasons you plan to make less use of the news in the classroom in the future? (Please check as many main reasons as apply in your case. Please do not check marginal reasons.)
- It's something I've been planning to do and I am finally going to do it
 - The Internet has made available other types of information content that are better for teaching purposes than news
 - Students are now less interested in news than they were before
 - News organizations have been cutting back on their support of the use of news in the classroom
 - My school administrators have suggested cutting back on use of news and similar content in the classroom
 - Mandated standardized tests have made it harder for me to find the classroom time to make use of the news
 - Other teachers have discouraged use of the news as a teaching tool
 - News has become so sensationalized and trivialized that it's become less useful as a teaching tool
 - Other
24. What's your best estimate about future use of the news as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
 - Likely to use it less
 - No change anticipated
25. How about Internet-based news particularly? What's your best estimate about your future use of Internet-based news as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
 - Likely to use it less
 - No change anticipated
26. Now the newspaper particularly. What's your best estimate about your future use of the newspaper as a teaching tool?
- Likely to use it more
 - Likely to use it less
 - No change anticipated
27. Now television news particularly. What's your best estimate about your future use of television news as a teaching tool?

- Likely to use it more
 - Likely to use it less
 - No change anticipated
28. Now a few questions on particular news media
- a) Which medium do you like best as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
 - b) Which medium do your students like best as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
 - c) Which medium do you like least as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
 - d) Which medium do your students like least as a way of bringing news into the classroom?
29. Does your school have Channel One? (Channel One is a daily 10-minute television newscast with 2 minutes of commercials designed specifically for use in schools. Schools that have Channel One are provided television monitors and other equipment for agreeing to show Channel One news programs to their students regularly.)
- Yes
 - No, although the school had it at one time
 - No
 - Not sure
30. Does one or more of the classrooms in which you teach have a TV set so that you could show your students television news if you wanted to?
- No
 - Yes, but I rarely or never use television news as a teaching tool
 - Yes
31. Do you make use in your classroom of national television news (such as news produced by CNN, Fox, MSNBC, Channel One, PBS, or the ABC, CBS, and NBC networks)?
- No or rarely
 - No, but I used to do it
 - Yes
32. Which national television news outlet do you use most frequently in your classroom?
- Channel One
 - CNN
 - Fox
 - MSNBC
- PBS
 - One of the commercial broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, or NBC)
 - Other
33. Do you make use of local television news content during class?
- No or rarely
 - No, but I used to do it
 - Yes
34. Does the local daily newspaper make copies of its paper available either free or at a charge for use by students in the classroom?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
35. What's the newspaper's pricing policy on copies used in the classroom?
- Copies are free or nearly free
 - A limited number of copies are free or nearly free but additional copies require a payment
 - Copies are available for the most part only by paying for them
 - Not sure
36. What's the name of the daily newspaper that's available for classroom use by students? (Please provide city and banner name—for example, the *Chicago Tribune* as opposed to just "Chicago" or just "the *Tribune*.")
37. Do you get copies of the local paper for each student to use in class?
- No or rarely
 - No, but I used to do it
 - Yes
38. Can you access the Internet in one or more of the classrooms in which you teach?
- Yes
 - No
39. Do you use Internet news in your classroom?
- No or rarely
 - No, but I used to do it
 - Yes
40. When accessing the news through the Internet for class use, how often do you use the following types of websites?
- a) Local newspaper's website
 - b) Local television station's website

- c) A blogger's website
d) National news organization's website (such as CNN.com or MSNBC.com or NewYorkTimes.com)
e) Website of an organization that is not a news organization but includes news on its site (such as NEA, AFT, MoveOn, or Christian Coalition)
f) Non-US news organization website (such as the BBC)
41. Does one or more of the classrooms in which you regularly teach have a projector that allows you to show Internet content to your students?
- No
 - No, but students have computer access at their desks
 - Yes
42. Some news organizations (for example New York Times, Channel One, CNN, and some local newspapers) have a special section on their website that provides teachers with instructional materials, such as lesson plans, quizzes, student handouts and simulations. How often, if at all, do you use these supplemental instructional materials?
- Nearly every day
 - A few times a week
 - About once a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - Less than once a month
 - Not at all
43. At which website do you usually obtain these supplemental instructional materials?
- Your local newspaper's website
 - New York Times's website
 - Another newspaper's website
 - PBS's website
 - Local television station's website
 - Channel One's website
 - CNN's website
 - Other cable news network's website
 - AFT, NEA, or other teacher organization's website
 - Other
44. Does your school have a student newspaper?
- Yes
 - Yes, and I have been an advisor for the paper
 - No
 - Not sure
45. Finally, we'd like to ask just a few personal questions. What is your gender?
- Female
 - Male
46. What is your general level of interest in politics and public affairs?
- High
 - Moderately high
 - About average
 - Moderately low
 - Low
47. How many days in an average week do you spend at least 15 minutes of the day:
- a) Watching local news on television?
b) Watching national news on television?
c) Reading the news section of a newspaper?
d) Listening to the news on radio (such as on NPR or an all-news station)?
e) Getting news through the Internet? (Please think only of news content and not other Internet-based content.)

The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy



John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
79 John F. Kennedy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138



Phone: 617-495-8269
Fax: 617-495-8696
www.shorensteincenter.org

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