DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

By

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DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS

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PREFACE

This study was conducted to examine and update information regarding the structure of the research methods course offered at American universities that provide a graduate program in journalism and mass communication. Specific objectives of this research were to determine (1) the prerequisites for taking the course; (2) the content of the course; (3) the general requirements for completing the course; (4) the most frequently used textbook; (5) the qualifications of the people teaching the course; (6) differences between small and large graduate programs; and (7) differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs. To answer these questions, mail questionnaires were sent to graduate coordinators at 121 universities that offered a graduate program in journalism/mass communication.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

Graduate education in journalism serves two groups--those who want to work in higher education either as teachers or administrators and those who want to improve their journalistic skills.[1] For those who choose higher education, research productivity plays an important part. While a college teacher may be judged by success in the classroom, the decision of promotion and tenure is highly dependent on success in doing research.[2]

Professional journalists find that knowledge of research techniques helps to improve the editorial product. Reporters, public relations practitioners and advertisers benefit from the ability to evaluate surveys and polls presented by others who conduct research and seek to present it to the public through the mass media. Journalists need to know enough about survey techniques and interpretation not to be fooled by poor or inaccurate data. Journalists can also use research to evaluate their audiences to ensure that the public's needs are being served.[3]

While the importance of developing good research skills has been established, little research has been done regarding the structure of the research methods course which focuses on methods and techniques taught generally as a core course for the graduate program in journalism. A 1983 study by Fowler[4] examined the structure of the research methods course at 97 institutions offering the master's degree in journalism; however, no research in this area has been completed since 1983.

Background

According to Fowler[5], the research methods course is the foundation of the master's program. Students pursuing a graduate degree in journalism need this instruction in order to complete the degree requirement of conducting a research project to write a thesis or gather background data to complete a professional project. Knowledge of research methods is also beneficial for those who go to graduate school to pursue careers in academia and for those who go into private industry.

Those people who choose a profession in higher education find that the way to promotion and tenure is through publication in refereed journals. However, in order to write journal articles, faculty members must first be able to conduct a well thought out, properly executed research project. In order to achieve this goal, faculty members need to have a sound background in research development and statistical analysis.

Schweitzer[6] stated that practical research can also bring respect to journalism schools. According to Schweitzer, journalism schools are not respected because they are rarely on the "cutting edge" of the problems and issues facing their professional constituents. He said journalism schools follow the industry rather than lead it unlike other schools such as business where professors are some of the most widely respected and quoted experts.

Many professionals in the mass media industry also find obtaining a higher degree beneficial. A study by Johnstone[7] showed that in 1976 more than 35 percent of the news people surveyed pursued formal educational training after employment. Although undergraduate journalism students receive a broadly-based liberal arts background in

school, they are not usually well-trained or well-versed in social science research methods or statistical analysis.[8] When they enter the professional world, they find that they are not totally prepared to do their jobs well. As a result, many return to school to improve their skills.

Statement of Problem

Little research has been conducted to examine the research methods course which has been found to be most prevalent in master's programs in journalism and the course that provides a foundation for future research efforts.[9] In order to determine what is being taught and by whom, the study conducted for this thesis examined the content of the research methods course offered at American universities that provide a graduate program in journalism/mass communication.

Purpose of the Study

In 1983, Fowler[10] examined and surveyed graduate programs in American universities offering a master's level research methods course in order to determine how this course was structured. The present study is an effort to update Fowler's data by examining the structure of the research methods course. A comparison of the data collected in 1983 with the current study was made to determine if any changes had occurred.

Objectives

For this study, answers to the following seven basic questions were sought.

1. What are the prerequisites for taking a course in research methods?
2. What is the content of research methods courses?
3. What are the general requirements for completing a research methods course?
4. What are the textbooks used most frequently in research methods courses?
5. What are the qualifications of the people teaching research methods courses?
6. Are there differences between large and small graduate programs?
7. Are there differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs?

Methodology

For this study, mail questionnaires were sent to 121 American universities which offer a graduate program in journalism/mass communication. The mailing list was obtained from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 1992 annual directory. The questionnaires were addressed to program directors who were asked to forward the questionnaire on to the individual or individuals who were most frequently in charge of the graduate research portion of the graduate program at the master's level. The mail survey was sent March 8, 1993, with a follow-up mailing April 21, 1993.

Significance of the Study

The research methods course is a very valuable part of any graduate program. Not only do students learn how to conduct research and analyze the results so they can complete the thesis or professional project requirement, but for those planning to become teachers, the need to know how to conduct research properly can mean the difference between being employed or unemployed. It also has been determined that knowledge of research methods for those journalists employed in the private sector is becoming a valuable commodity.

The findings of this research project will assist faculty members who teach this type of course by showing them where programs across the nation are similar and different. Perhaps through this investigation, faculty members who teach this course can determine if they are meeting the needs of their students or if changes need to be made in their programs.

Outline of Remainder of Study

The remainder of this thesis is organized in the following manner: Chapter II reviews the development of journalism education, graduate education and journalism graduate education in the United States as well as the role of research in graduate education and previous research on the research methods course. Chapter III explains the methodology used to obtain answers to the research questions and describes the questions chosen for the survey. The responses to the survey are presented in Chapter IV with analysis and interpretation. Finally, a summary of the study and its findings, a comparison

of these findings with previous findings, conclusions and suggestions for further research are found in Chapter V.

NOTES

[1]Gilbert L. Fowler, Jr., "Content and Teacher Characteristics for Master's Level Research Course," *Journalism Quarterly* 63.3 (1986): 594-599.

[2]Gerald Stone and Will Norton, Jr., "How Administrators Define the Term 'Faculty Research,'" *Journalism Educator* 35.2 (1980): 40-42.

[3]Jerry R. Lynn and Kelly Leiter, "Both Benefit When Research Writing Classes Coordinate," *Journalism Educator* 36.1 (1981): 21-23.

[4]Gilbert L. Fowler, Jr., "Content and Teacher Characteristics for Master's Level Research Course," *Journalism Quarterly* 63.3 (1986): 594-599.

[5]Ibid.

[6]John C. Schweitzer, "Practical Research Can Bring Respect to J-Schools," *Journalism Educator* 40.2 (1985): 38-41.

[7]John W.C. Johnstone, *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976): 138.

[8]Jerry R. Lynn and Kelly Leiter, "Both Benefit When Research Writing Classes Coordinate," *Journalism Educator* 36.1 (1981): 21-23.

[9]Gilbert L. Fowler, Jr., "Content and Teacher Characteristics for Master's Level Research Course," *Journalism Quarterly* 63.3 (1986): 594-599.

[10]Ibid.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature of graduate education in journalism and mass communication. It includes a brief history of journalism education, graduate education and graduate education in journalism and mass communication in the United States. This chapter also reviews what has been published regarding the importance of research in the field of journalism and mass communication and the role of journalism research in academe.

History

The origins of American graduate education in journalism and mass communication can be found in both the history of journalism education in the United States as well as in the history of graduate education in the United States. The following historical review is comprised of three parts: the history of journalism education, the history of graduate education and the history of graduate education in journalism and mass communication.

History of Journalism Education in the United States

The idea of journalism education came about after the Civil War. But the argument over whether journalism was a trade or a profession and whether journalists

were born or made contributed to the slow development of journalism programs within the United States.

DeForest O'Dell's[1] account of the development of journalism education in the United States stated that General Robert E. Lee, president of Washington College (later Washington and Lee University), established a program in printing in 1869 in response to an ongoing conflict between the American social order and the Penny Press which was described as the "most base, false, servile and venal publication that ever polluted society." General Lee believed that journalism education could be used as a rehabilitating force in the South and requested that 50 scholarships be made available to young men proposing to make printing or journalism their profession. The proposed scholarships were never used and the journalism program was abandoned in 1878. Although General Lee's dream of a journalism program never actually materialized, he did lay the foundation for future journalism programs.

Following in the foot steps of General Robert E. Lee, Andrew Dickson White, first president of Cornell University, sought to develop a journalism program at his university. Announcement of the university's interest in journalism education and plans to offer a certificate in journalism were published in the annual catalogues of 1875, 1876 and 1877; however, the program was never developed. It is not known just why President White abandoned his program for journalism education, but many educators and journalists took note of his efforts.[2]

In a review dedicated to following the 75-year development of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Peterson[3] stated that

Kansas State College and the University of Missouri offered courses in journalism beginning in 1873 and 1878, respectively, and the movement began to spread through the Middle West. The first organized curriculum in journalism was offered at the University of Pennsylvania from 1893 to 1901 by Joseph French Johnson, a former financial editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. Other universities offering courses in journalism prior to 1900 included Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska and Ohio State.

Emery and McKerns'[4] tribute to Willard G. Bleyer, the founding father of AEJMC, credited Bleyer with incorporating a liberal arts curriculum into journalism education and identifying journalism education with teaching, research and service. Bleyer, who came from a family of Milwaukee newspapermen, began teaching journalism courses at the University of Wisconsin in 1904.

The country's first separate School of Journalism was founded in 1908 at the University of Missouri. Walter Williams, first dean of the first U.S. school of journalism, has been credited with producing 5,000 or more professional journalists at Missouri who staffed newspapers in the United States and the worldwide press associations.

O'Dell[5] stated that interest in journalism education was enhanced in 1903 when Joseph Pulitzer, owner of *The New York World*, endowed a school of journalism at Columbia University with the sum of $2 million. Pulitzer believed that journalism was a profession for which one should be educated. In response to criticism about the proposed school, Pulitzer said, "In no profession is the art of writing more important than in journalism." The cornerstone of the building erected at Columbia University to house the

Pulitzer School of Journalism was laid July 2, 1912. The school opened that fall, but did not occupy its own quarters until the next year.

Peterson[6] found that 31 colleges and universities offering courses in journalism were identified by 1912. Of the 31 colleges and universities, there were three professional schools identified: Columbia, Marquette and Missouri. Seven others had departmental status: Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Notre Dame, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

In the late 1930s, enrollment in journalism programs began to increase significantly. In a survey conducted by Douglass Miller, professor of journalism at Syracuse University, 19 of 22 schools belonging to the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism indicated enrollment increases in the 25-40 percent range.[7]

Enrollment reached a post-World War II high in 1948 with some 73 schools reporting 14,567 students; however, post-veteran years then brought almost staggering annual enrollment declines. The downward slide turned around by 1964, and again journalism enrollment was on the rise. In the early 1970s, journalism enrollments began to "skyrocket." In the autumn of 1986 more than 86,000 students were reported by some 180 schools as majors in journalism and mass communication.[8]

History of Graduate Education

In Walters'[9] account of the development of graduate education in the United States, he reported that the concept of graduate education began to evolve in the early 19th century when many young American men were traveling abroad to study in Germany.

The rural society and few cities contributed to the migration. At that time, colleges were founded on the English pattern that was devised to give cultural education to relatively few young men. The rigid curriculum was based on instruction in the classics and offered little or nothing of other subjects. Colleges basically prepared young men for either the ministry or school teaching.

After the founding of the United States, several leaders such as Benjamin Rush and George Washington called for a national university with implications for graduate and professional education. Thomas Jefferson wrote extensively about educational systems including professional and graduate schools. His original plan called for the University of Virginia to be a graduate institution. Scholars such as George Ticknor, Edward Everett, George Bancroft and Joseph Green Cogswell, all who had studied at the University of Gottingen, Germany, attempted in the 1820s to bring about educational reforms at Harvard, but without success. By 1850, almost 200 American students had registered at German universities, all to return to America "imbued with the German spirit of freedom of thought, scholarly thoroughness and hard work."[10]

From 1820 to 1850, European educated men such as Theodore D. Woolsey, president of Yale from 1846-71, Francis Wayland, president of Brown University from 1827-55, and Henry P. Tappan, president of the University of Michigan from 1852-63, contributed to the ideas for expansion of existing institutions into universities similar to the traditional European universities or for the founding of new universities. All of these men supported reforms in higher education, especially in liberalizing the classics-based curriculum and institution graduate work. Tappan, who sought to "Prussianize" the entire

educational system in the state of Michigan, carried through his part of the general plan and in 1858 Michigan offered graduate courses leading to master's degrees.[11]

The evolution of graduate education was a slow process. Many institutions struggled to establish formal graduate work but without success. Edward Everett, president of Harvard from 1846-49, was unable to institute graduate programs at his college. Plans for graduate education in New York at New York University at Columbia, at Union, and at Albany failed. Tappan's plan for Michigan in the late 1850s did attract a few graduate and special students for several years, but soon collapsed when Tappan was forced to leave Ann Arbor.[12]

Griggs, [13] another researcher of the historical development of graduate education, found that American universities added a research program of public service initiated from outside the university system to the German concept of graduate education, which emphasized original research initiated from within the university. This combination of research and public service received support from outside the universities under the Morrill Act of 1862 which established the land-grant colleges. This act reflected the common concern of American society in terms of scientific agriculture and free public education. Both the land-grant college movement and graduate education began about the same time, with the two programs existing side by side within many universities. Cornell University was, at the beginning, a combination of a land-grant college, a Germanized graduate school, a private university and a liberal arts college.

Carmichael,[14] along with many scholars, labeled Johns Hopkins (founded in 1827) as the first American university to adopt the German idea of research and add it to the

college, which was derived from the British. From its very beginning, Johns Hopkins was the leader in American graduate education. This practice spread slowly. With the exception of a few of the best endowed and most advanced universities, graduate and research programs were limited.

According to Walters,[15] Daniel Coit Gilman, the president of Johns Hopkins, declared graduate and advanced education as its most important mission. Within a few years Johns Hopkins had come to set the standards for graduate education. The level of scholarship and of research, the emphasis on freedom of teaching and research and the excellence of the doctoral programs were soon copied at other universities, both those which had been long established and those which were just emerging.[16]

In the post-Civil War years, graduate education began to develop rapidly. The two earlier forces--the migration of American students to German universities and the demand for graduate work--grew dramatically. By the end of the century graduate education had become an established part of higher education. Despite four years of Civil War and the disturbed years that followed, during the 1860s more than 1,000 American students matriculated at the German universities. In the 1880s, the number rose to a peak of 2,000, then declined during the 1890s and the years before World War I. It has been estimated that about 10,000 Americans made academic pilgrimages during the 19th century and that more than half of them studied in the departments of philosophy at German universities, which included those subjects not pertaining to theology, law or medicine. Thus approximately 5,000 Americans matriculated in what may be called "graduate work."[17]

From 1900 to 1940 graduate education, like higher education in general, grew in phenomenal proportions. The growth rate in higher education from 1900 to 1920 outdistanced the growth in the total population; from 1920 to 1940 the rise was even more pronounced. Graduate student enrollments soared, as did the numbers of master's and doctorate degrees conferred.[18]

By the turn of the century, the development of American-style graduate study contributed two important new dimensions to higher education. College teaching became recognized as a career for which one specifically prepared and the college curriculum became more sharply divided into disciplines, or subjects, similar to those in which the teachers had done their graduate work. Thus, college faculty members came from graduate schools rather than from the ministry or public service. The idea of specialization began to develop and with it began the controversy over teaching and research.[19]

The belief that college teachers should have advanced degrees, preferably the doctorate, contributed to the growth of graduate education. Fewer and fewer institutions were willing to accept teachers holding only bachelor's degrees and former ministers with or without a degree. Increasingly, regional educational associations and national education groups as well as the public at large, came to use the number of doctors on faculty rosters as an important measure of collegiate standards. Similarly, schoolteachers and administrators began to recognize the importance of graduate education, primarily that leading to the master's degree. In many school systems the possession of this degree meant an automatic, although not necessarily substantial, salary increase.[20]

World War II brought significant changes to higher education, as it did to almost every other facet of American life. Perhaps the most important changes were the role of research, especially in the sciences and the effects of a soaring growth of population. During the war, research in every field of science (and in some social sciences) developed phenomenally. Universities carried on much of this research, particularly in atomic energy, communications, control systems and propulsion.[21]

Walters[22] stated that the research-oriented universities continued to obtain Federal funds for research after World War II. Universities had become intimately bound up in the country's realization that "science was a major national resource" and that "research was a vital element in national security." However, Carmichael[23] reported that the appearance of Sputnik in 1957 resulted in the United States facing criticisms about the ineffectiveness of its scientific and technological education. It had been assumed that the United States and Britain were number one as far as scientific and technological development until the Russian exhibit made it clear to the world that at least in one area Russia had achieved superiority.

The criticism of American education since that time was widespread and bitter. New emphasis upon science and technology, a new concern for quality and excellence, larger sums for finding talent and seeing that it was developed and greater public awareness of the fundamental importance of scientific progress were the outcome.[24]

In his research, Trivett[25] found that enrollment in graduate programs grew at record rates during the 1950s and 1960s. Enrollment growth was accompanied by improvement in faculty salaries, research facilities and assistance for faculty. Financial aid

for students was plentiful. From a societal standpoint, graduate education was regarded as a golden resource and became a major industry. The two most important supporting elements were the growth of undergraduate enrollment and growth of research support. A rise in salaries for the graduate-educated spurred greater demand for graduate education. The use of graduate students as instructors not only provided support for them, but subsidized undergraduate instruction. At the same time, the demand for research grew and the share of research money earned by the universities increased, helping to keep the cost of graduate education down.

Hartnett and Katz[26] stated that the expansion of graduate education began to slow down in the late 1970s and continues today because of a declining birth rate and a shaky national economy. Students with doctorates, who were in such demand in the mid-1960s, now find that there is an excess of Ph.D.s and that jobs are extremely scarce. The researchers stated that a recent report issued by the National Board on Graduate Education, showed that these developments are having their most pronounced impact on the smaller, less prestigious departments, usually located in poorly financed private universities and in the lesser known public institutions.

History of Graduate Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

As journalism education began to take form, a debate over whether graduate education in journalism and mass communication should be pure academic learning or professional training began to take place.

In Jandoli's[27] historical account of journalism graduate education, he stated that Columbia University in 1935 instituted the first exclusively graduate school of journalism despite Joseph Pulitzer's objection to delaying journalism education until the completion of the B.A. degree. In 1927, the University of Wisconsin started a five-year plan and Northwestern followed suit in 1938; however, until recent years the Columbia example of "exclusiveness" remained an "altogether unique venture." Now, only two other schools have followed Columbia's lead in establishing strictly graduate professional schools of journalism: Northwestern and The University of California at Berkeley.

Donald Ross'[28] historical account of Willard G. Bleyer and journalism education, stated that other programs were offering graduate studies in journalism as well as undergraduate studies. In 1909, the University of Wisconsin awarded its first graduate fellowship in journalism to Louis P. Lochner, who later was to win a Pulitzer prize. By 1913 graduate work was firmly established, and in 1916 two students received their master's degree in journalism from Wisconsin.

Today, most schools offer both undergraduate programs and professional and/or theoretically oriented master's degrees, according to the Project on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education.[29] Becker's[30] research showed that of the 404 schools with journalism and mass communication programs in 1990, 401 offered a bachelor's degree program, 161 a master's degree program and 31 a doctoral program.

Research and Graduate Education

American higher education, undergraduate and graduate, was developed based on two educational models--the English college and the German university, respectively, according to Trivett. [31] Undergraduate education developed parallel to the founding of the United States; however, graduate education is only a little more than 100 years old. The basic educational philosophy and teaching approaches of undergraduate and graduate education differed greatly. The purpose of undergraduate education was to convey knowledge, and the purpose of graduate study was to "develop mature scholars and professional men and to provide a workshop for theoretical scientific research."

Research is one major characteristic that has made graduate education distinctive from undergraduate education.[32] Although American graduate work merged the German university tradition of scholarship, research and specialization with the English college model of undergraduate education, research has always been at the core of graduate education in the United States, often in the face of charges that teaching was being neglected. Journalism education has not been the exception.[33]

According to Ross, [34] pioneers in journalism education such as Willard Bleyer saw a need for research in his field, but found opposition to his ideas. Bleyer identified journalism education from the beginning with teaching, research and service. As early as 1916 Bleyer was urging more research at the graduate level for the improvement of journalism:

> One of the first requirements for further development of journalism as a subject of university instruction seems to be the systematic investigation of all the various problems connected with the influence of the newspaper as a factor in the social and political life of this country.

Emery,[35] in his recounting of the development of AEJMC, stated that Bleyer "hammered" his colleagues about the need for research at the 1921 meetings of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism in Madison, Wisconsin. The 1923 AATJ minutes reported:

> Professor Bleyer recommended, after presenting his paper on "The Place of Research in the School and Department of Journalism," that a large part of the programs of conventions hereafter be devoted to the presentation of the results of research by members of the association, and recommended also that the following resolution be passed: "That we believe that research is more vital for the continued success of teaching of journalism than it is in other subjects in which research has been carried on for longer periods."

Today, research is an essential part of journalism and mass communication graduate study. While many programs have opted to offer students a choice between completing a thesis or a professional project (61 percent in 1991 according to Briggs[36]), 61 percent of programs surveyed in 1980 by Ryan[37] required a research methods course of all students. Briggs'[38] 1991 study showed that 80 percent of programs surveyed required a research methods course of all students.

According to Stein,[39] for graduate students who choose the professional track or those who choose college teaching, a sound knowledge of research techniques and theories is beneficial. There has been a real need for journalism research in the industry; however, in the past, journalism schools have been the followers rather than the leaders. Speakers at the Newspaper Research Council conference at Santa Barbara, California, stressed that research is a key to survival in today's rapidly changing marketplace. The use of quantitative research to boost newspaper circulation and advertising has been growing in acceptance among top managers. Stein[40] reported that a 1991 survey conducted by

Steve Kircher, research manager for the *St. Petersburg Times*, found that 43 percent of the 103 respondents said they were "keeping on top of a heavy demand" for research at their newspapers and 31 percent expected the demand to grow as newspapers deal with problems of dwindling readership and advertising revenue.

For graduate students who choose a career in college teaching, research and publication can mean the difference between being employed or unemployed. However, good research can enhance a person's teaching abilities. According to Maxwell McCombs,[41] teaching and research are natural complements.

> This preparation for research insures a disciplined approach to the subject matter. Haphazard rambling makes for both poor scholarship and poor teaching. The research process imposes a sharp focus on the information collected. This is the missing ingredient in much classroom teaching. A systematic grasp of the topic, a coherent overview, is necessary both for effective research and for effective teaching. The teacher-scholar typically brings an enthusiasm to the classroom that is immediately apparent to the students.

Research Methods Course

While the importance of developing good research skills has been established, little research has been done regarding the structure of the research methods course which focuses on methods and techniques taught generally as a core course for the graduate program in journalism. A 1983 study by Fowler[42] examined the structure of the research methods course at 97 institutions offering the master's degree in journalism; however, no additional research projects have been completed in this area since that time.

According to Fowler,[43] the research methods course is the foundation of the master's program. A 1991 study conducted by Jean Briggs found that 80 percent of the

102 programs surveyed required a research methods course.[44] Students pursuing a graduate degree in journalism need this instruction in order to complete the degree requirement of conducting a research project to write a thesis or gather background data to complete a professional project. Knowledge of research methods is also beneficial for those who go to graduate school to pursue careers in academia and for those who go into private industry.

Fowler's[45] study sought answers to six research questions:

1. What are the prerequisites for taking a course in research methods?
2. What is the content of research methods courses?
3. What are the general requirements for completing a research methods course?
4. Are there differences between large and small institutions?
5. What are the textbooks used most frequently in research methods courses?
6. What are the characteristics of individuals teaching a research methods course?

Fowler[46] surveyed 97 institutions that indicated they had awarded graduate degrees in the winter 1982 or winter 1983 edition of *Journalism Educator*. Sixty-nine questionnaires were used to calculate the data.

Fowler[47] found that the research methods course was typically a part of all M.A., M.S. or M.C. programs. Most of the programs did not require any prerequisites for the research methods course and few differences were found between large and small graduate programs. The course dealt most often with the tools necessary for completing a thesis or applied research techniques. Content analysis was the most often mentioned technique

and computer analysis was stressed in a majority of the programs. The most frequently adopted text was Stempel & Westley's *Research Methods in Mass Communication*.

Fowler[48] found that those teaching research methods had obtained the terminal degree in the early 1970s and had been teaching the methods course for seven years. Nearly 90 percent said they had published articles in scholarly journals.

Summary

From this broad review of the literature of graduate education in journalism and mass communication, we find that knowledge of research methods and theory has become an intricate part of journalism education. Not only is this knowledge important to those who wish a career in academia, but increasingly research is becoming a necessity in the journalism profession as well.

Fowler's[49] 1983 survey of 97 graduate programs is the only known comprehensive study examining the requirements and content of the research methods course in journalism and mass communication. The present study is an effort to update Fowler's data by examining the structure of the research methods course of 121 American universities which offer a graduate program in journalism and mass communication.

NOTES

[1]DeForest O'Dell, *The History of Journalism Education in the United States* (New York, NY: Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1935): 1-17.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Paul V. Peterson, introduction to "AEJMC: 75 Years in the Making," by Edwin Emery and Joseph P. McKerns, *Journalism Monographs* 104 (1987): 1-4.

[4]Edwin Emery and Joseph P. McKerns, "AEJMC: 75 Years in the Making," *Journalism Monographs* 104 (1987): 5-8.

[5]DeForest O'Dell, *The History of Journalism Education in the United States* (New York, NY: Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1935): 55-67.

[6]Paul V. Peterson, introduction to "AEJMC: 75 Years in the Making," by Edwin Emery and Joseph P. McKerns, *Journalism Monographs* 104 (1987): 1-4.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Everett Walters, "The Rise of Graduate Education," in *Graduate Education Today*, ed. Everett Walters (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1967): 1-29.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Charles M. Grigg, *Graduate Education* (New York, NY: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1965): 3.

[14]Oliver C. Carmichael, *Graduate Education: A Critique and a Program* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1961): 12-27.

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

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[21]Ibid.

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[23]Oliver C. Carmichael, *Graduate Education: A Critique and a Program* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1961): 28-44.

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[32]Ibid.

[33]David A. Trivett, *Graduate Education in the 1970s* (Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education, 1977): 4-10.

[34]Donald K. Ross, "Willard G. Bleyer and Journalism Education," *Journalism Quarterly* 24 (1957): 466-474.

[35]Edwin Emery and Joseph P. McKerns, "AEJMC: 75 Years in the Making," *Journalism Monographs* 104 (1987): 5-8.

[36]Jean Briggs, "A Survey of 102 Master's Programs in Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications: Admission and Graduation Requirements and Program Structure and Content," (M.S. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1992): 81.

[37]Michael Ryan, "Journalism Education at the Master's Level," *Journalism Monographs* 66 (1980): 1-36.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

This chapter describes in detail the procedures used in conducting this study. It includes an explanation of the research approach and the research instrument, as well as a description of the plan for collecting, recording and analyzing the data. Methodological assumptions and limitations of the study are also discussed.

Research Methodology

This project was completed in order to update information regarding the structure of the research methods course taught at the master's level in schools of journalism and mass communication. For this study, answers to the following seven basic questions were sought.

1. What are the prerequisites for taking a course in research methods?
2. What is the content of research methods courses?
3. What are the general requirements for completing a research methods course?
4. What are the textbooks used most frequently in research methods courses?
5. What are the qualifications of the people teaching research methods courses?
6. Are there differences between large and small graduate programs?
7. Are there differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs?

The research instrument selected for this study was a mail questionnaire. This was considered to be the most efficient and cost-effective method to acquire the information needed to answer the research questions.

The population consisted of 121 graduate schools of mass communication in the United States, as listed in the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) 1992 annual directory. A questionnaire (Appendix A) with a cover letter (Appendix B) and a stamped, addressed return envelope were sent to the master's program coordinator in the journalism/mass communication department of each school. The questionnaire consisted of four sections with a total of 26 questions regarding the structure of the research methods course and the qualifications of the people who teach the course.

Selection of Subjects

Mail questionnaires were sent to 121 graduate schools of journalism and mass communication in the United States. (A list of the schools included in this study is in Appendix C.)

Names and addresses of schools were obtained from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) 1992 annual directory. The AEJMC directory is updated yearly and is considered to have the most complete list of graduate programs in journalism and mass communication.

Research Instrument

A five-page questionnaire was used to gather the required information. The questionnaire included instructions, return address, telephone number and 26 questions, with space available for additional comments at the end. (A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A.)

Enclosed with each questionnaire was a cover letter and a stamped, addressed return envelope. The cover letter (Appendix B) described the subject of the survey, the lack of current information regarding this subject, educators' need for this information, the necessity for a response from each school surveyed, where to return the questionnaire and the deadline for response.

Survey questions were separated into four sections: general, course structure for courses that were one semester/quarter in duration, course structure for courses that were longer than one semester/quarter in duration and teacher characteristics.

General questions included whether or not the research methods course was required, what type of project(s) were required to graduate from the program, whether or not the program was accredited, what courses were prerequisite to the research methods course, what projects/activities were required in the course and how many graduate students were currently enrolled in the program.

Questions regarding the structure of the research methods course offered for one semester/quarter in duration included the name of the course, the number of hours earned for successful completion of the course, how often the course was offered, the percentage of time devoted to theory, methodology and statistics, and the required textbooks.

The questions regarding the structure of the research methods course offered for more than one semester/quarter in duration were the same as those in the previous section with the addition of one question regarding the number of semesters/quarters needed to complete the research methods course.

Questions in the last section requested information regarding the content areas taught in the research methods course as well as information about the number of individuals who taught the research course, what degrees these people held, the number of research projects these people had been involved in within the past five years and the number of scholarly articles each person had published within the past five years.

Initial and Follow-up Mailings

Cover letters, questionnaires and stamped, addressed return envelopes were mailed to the graduate program coordinators on March 8, 1993. Follow-up questionnaires, cover letters and postage-paid, addressed envelopes were sent on April 21, 1993, to those who did not respond. The second mailing was identical to the first except for minor changes in the cover letter to the effect that a response had not been received and that a response from each graduate school coordinator was essential for completeness of the study. (Both cover letters are in Appendix B.)

Data Collection and Recording

Return of questionnaires was facilitated by the inclusion of a stamped, addressed envelope with each mailing. Questionnaires were numbered before mailing to identify the

respondent. Questionnaire answers were numerically coded and entered into SYSTAT (The System for Statistics).

Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the information in the responses to the questionnaire. Percentages (i.e., What percent of schools are accredited?), averages (i.e., What is the average number of programs that require a thesis?), and comparisons (i.e., How does the percentage of professors from large graduate programs compare with the percentage of professors from small graduate programs in reference to media experience?) were variously used.

Responses to the open-ended questions were categorized and percentages calculated for the number of responses in each category. Comparisons were then made between the different categories.

Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that the questionnaires would reach the appropriate people. It was also assumed that instructions were clear, questions were understandable and the answers would be honest.

Academic programs are constantly changing and this can be considered a limitation to this study in the long run. What is accurate today may not remain so for long. However, it is valid for a certain point in time and creates a basis for comparison with the past and with the future.

Summary

A 26-question survey was mailed to 121 schools of mass communication to obtain information about their research methods course. Responses were coded and descriptive statistics were used to make comparisons between them. Results of this study are valid only for the time-frame in which it was conducted. They are also valid as a comparison with both past and future studies.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This study surveyed graduate schools of journalism and mass communication in the United States in an effort to update data regarding the structure of the master's level research methods course.

Survey Return Results

In March 1993, questionnaires were sent to each American university (121) that offered a graduate program in journalism/mass communication. The mailing list was obtained from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 1992 annual directory. The initial mailing resulted in the return of 59 questionnaires (48 percent). A second mailing to those people who had not responded resulted in the return of an additional 27 questionnaires, for a total response rate of 71 percent after the second mailing.

Eight of the 86 surveys were excluded from the study for various reasons: six schools did not offer a research methods course as part of their graduate curriculum and two schools had discontinued their graduate programs. This left 78 usable questionnaires out of the 86 returned.

Organization of Questionnaire

Data was collected from the questionnaires to answer the following seven basic questions.

1. What are the prerequisites for taking a course in research methods?
2. What is the content of research methods courses?
3. What are the general requirements for completing a research methods course?
4. What are the textbooks used most frequently in research methods courses?
5. What are the qualifications of the people teaching research methods courses?
6. Are there differences between large and small graduate programs?
7. Are there differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs?

Prerequisites

Table I shows the responses to the question regarding prerequisites for the research methods course.

TABLE I

PREREQUISITES FOR TAKING RESEARCH METHODS COURSE

N=78

Prerequisite	Percentage
No prerequisites	65.38%
Undergraduate statistics	16.67
Undergraduate theory & research	6.41
Introduction to communication research	5.13
Mass communication theory	3.85
Undergraduate research	1.28
No response	1.28
TOTAL	100.00%

While the majority of the graduate programs required no prerequisites to the research methods course (65.38%), undergraduate statistics was required in 16.67 percent of the programs. Only 5.13 percent of the programs required an introductory graduate course.

Course Content

Table II shows the responses to the question of what is taught in the research methods course. Content was divided into two areas: Theory/Methodology and Statistics.

TABLE II

CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE

N=78

Theory/Methodology	Percentage
Survey research	97.44%
Content analysis	91.03
Lab experiments	80.77
Field experiments	79.49
Historical research	67.95
Polling	60.26
Case studies	55.13
Group methods	39.74
Q-methodology	26.92

Statistics	Percentage
Sampling	85.90%
Hypothesis testing	82.05
Chi-square tests	80.77
T-tests	79.49
Probability	78.21
Correlation analysis	73.08
Analysis of variance	67.95
Single/simple regression	44.87
Multivariate analyses	42.31
Multiple regression	34.62
Factor/cluster analyses	30.77

Survey research (97.44%), content analysis (91.03 %), lab experiments (80.77%), and field experiments (79.49%) were included most often in the content of the research methods course. Theories/methodologies listed under "other" included rhetorical/critical analyses (5.13%); observation (5.13%); focus groups (3.85%); interviewing (2.56%); and multivariate statistical techniques (1.28%).

Questionnaire responses showed that sampling (85.90%), hypothesis testing (82.05%), and chi-square tests (80.77%) were the statistical tests included most often in the content of the research methods course. Statistical tests listed under "other" included discriminant analysis (3.85%); cojoint analyses (2.56%); and nonparametrics (2.56%).

General Requirements

Table III shows the responses to research question 3--What are the general requirements for completing a research methods course?

TABLE III

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETING A RESEARCH METHODS COURSE

N=78

Requirements	Percentage
Research proposal	76.92%
Final exam	74.36
Mid-term exam	71.79
Survey of literature	66.67
Computer use for statistics assignments	56.41
Individual research project	42.31
Sample questionnaire	39.74
Abstracts of readings	35.90
Statistics projects	34.62
Group research project	26.92

The majority of the research methods courses required a mid-term exam, final exam, research proposal, survey of literature and computer use for statistics assignments. In addition to the requirements listed on the questionnaire, one program required a survey

project, one required publication analysis, two required experimental design and two required critical studies.

Textbooks

In the 78 programs surveyed, the textbook used most frequently in the research methods course was Wimmer & Dominick's *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (30.77%). *Practice of Social Research* by Babbie was used by 17.94 percent of the programs surveyed. Other textbooks used included *Contemporary Communication Research Methods* by Smith (3.85%); *Foundations of Behavioral Research* by Kerlinger (3.85%); and *Research Methods in Mass Communication* by Stempel & Westley (3.85%).

Instructor Qualifications

In the 78 schools that responded to the questionnaire, 162 people were listed as teachers of the research methods course. Of these 162 people, 157 had Ph.D.s and one had completed all the work for a doctorate degree except for the dissertation. Two people had Ed.D.s and one held a Master of Arts.

Of the 162 people who taught the research methods course, 125 (77.16%) responded that they had media experience, 23 (14.19%) reported no media experience, and 14 (8.64%) did not respond to the question. Table IV presents the various types of media experience reported by the respondents.

TABLE IV

TYPES OF MEDIA EXPERIENCE FOR INSTRUCTORS OF RESEARCH METHODS COURSES

N=125

Experience	Percentage
Print journalism (newspaper)	40.0%
Broadcasting	20.0
Public relations	14.4
Advertising	10.4
Research consulting	5.6
Production	3.2
Magazines	.8
Media economics	.8
No response	4.8

Fifty of the 125 people who taught the research methods course had experience in the newspaper industry, while 25 had experience in broadcasting , 18 had experience in public relations and 13 had experience in advertising.

Of the 162 people who taught the research methods course, 154 (95.06%) participated in research projects. Two people had no research experience and six did not respond. Table V shows the percentage of those people who reported participation in research projects grouped by the number of projects.

TABLE V

PARTICIPATION BY INSTRUCTORS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

N=154

Number of Projects	Percentage
1-5	18.18%
6-10	5.19
11-15	8.44
16-20	3.24
21-25	2.59
26-30	0
31-35	.64
36-over	2.59
No Response	59.09

While 95.06 percent of the instructors who taught the research methods course were reported to have participated in research projects, only 40.91 percent reported how many projects they had participated in with 59.09 percent having no response to the question. The majority of those responding to the number of projects participated in were in the one to five project range.

One hundred forty-six of the 162 who taught the research methods course were reported to have published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years. Ten were reported to not have any publications and six had no response. Table VI shows the percentage of those publishing articles within the past five years.

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF INSTRUCTORS WHO HAVE PUBLISHED ARTICLES WITHIN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

N=146

Number of Articles Published	Percentage
1-5	41.09%
6-10	8.90
11-15	6.16
16-20	.68
21-25	1.36
26-30	0
31-35	0
36-over	0
No response	41.78
TOTAL	100.00%

Of those responding to the number of articles published in scholarly journals, the majority (41.09%) published from one to five articles. Of the 90.12 percent responding that they had published articles, 41.78 percent had no response regarding the number of articles published.

Table VII shows the areas of research that those teaching the research methods course stated to be their specialties.

TABLE VII

AREAS OF RESEARCH SPECIALTY FOR INSTRUCTORS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS

N=154

Areas of Research	Percentage
Survey research	50.64%
Content analysis	33.76
Lab experiments	24.00
Field experiments	15.58
Historical research	13.63
Case studies	6.49
Group methods	6.49
Legal	4.54
Rhetorical/critical	3.89
Mixed quantitative	2.59
Q-methodology	1.94
Qualitative	1.94
Cross-cultural	1.29
Textual	1.29
International	.64
Statistics	.64
Organizational	.64

Survey research (50.64%) and content analysis (33.76%) were the most popular specialties.

Small vs. Large Graduate Programs

Research question 6 asked if there were differences between small and large graduate programs. Small graduate programs were defined as those having 1-50 graduate students and large graduate programs were defined as those having more than 50 graduate students. Of the 78 respondents, 39 were classified as small programs and 37 were classified as large programs. Two respondents did not indicate the number of graduate students enrolled in their programs.

Table VIII shows the differences between small and large graduate programs in regard to accreditation.

TABLE VIII

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SMALL AND LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS REGARDING ACCREDITATION

N=78

Accreditation Status	Small Programs	Large Programs
Accredited	48.72%	70.27%
Not accredited	48.72	27.03
No response	2.56	2.70
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

A greater percentage of the large graduate programs were accredited (70.27%) compared with the small programs (48.72%). A greater percentage of the small graduate programs were not accredited (48.72%) compared with the large programs (27.03%).

Table IX presents the differences in prerequisite requirements between small and largegraduate programs.

TABLE IX

PREREQUISITE REQUIREMENTS --
SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Prerequisites	Small Programs	Large Programs
No prerequisites	64.10%	67.57%
Undergraduate statistics	15.38	16.22
Undergraduate theory & research	10.26	2.70
Introduction to communication research	5.13	5.41
Undergraduate statistics & research	2.56	--
Mass communication theory	2.56	5 41
No response	--	2.70
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

There was little difference between the small and large graduate programs regarding prerequisites for the research methods course. A greater percentage of both the small and large graduate programs did not require prerequisites for the research methods course.

Table X shows the differences in course content between small and large graduate programs.

TABLE X

COURSE CONTENT --
SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Theory/ Methodology	Small Programs	Large Programs
Survey research	100.00%	94.59%
Content analysis	87.18	94.59
Field experiments	82.05	78.38
Lab experiments	79.49	81.08
Historical research	64.10	75.68
Polling	56.41	64.86
Case studies	53.85	56.76
Group methods	33.33	48.65
Q-methodology	25.64	29.73

Statistics	Small Programs	Large Programs
Sampling	87.18	83.78
Hypothesis testing	82.05	81.08
Chi-square tests	82.05	78.38
Probability	79.49	75.68
T-tests	79.49	78.38
Correlation analysis	74.36	62.16
Multivariate analyses	43.59	40.54
Single/simple regression	43.59	45.95
Multivariate regression	30.77	37.84
Factor/cluster analyses	28.21	32.43

There were no major differences between small and large graduate programs regarding the content of the research methods course. Under theory/methodology, both survey research and content analysis had the greatest percentages in both the small and large graduate programs. Sampling, hypothesis testing, chi-square tests, probability and t-tests had the greatest percentages under statistics.

Table XI shows the differences between small and large graduate programs regarding general requirements for completing the research methods course.

TABLE XI

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS --
SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Requirements	Small Programs	Large Programs
Research Proposal	87.18%	67.57%
Mid-term exam	74.36	67.57
Survey of literature	74.36	59.46
Final exam	71.79	75.68
Computer use for statistics assignments	58.97	54.05
Individual research project	46.15	37.84
Sample questionnaire	41.03	37.84
Abstracts of readings	35.90	35.14
Statistics assignments	30.77	40.54
Group research project	23.08	29.73

There were little differences between the requirements for the research methods course in regard to small and large graduate programs. However, the large graduate programs did list more requirements including experimental design (5.41%), critical studies (5.41%), a survey project (2.70%), and publication analyses (2.70%). The small graduate programs did not list any of these other requirements.

The percentage of individuals who regularly teach the research methods course divided between small and large graduate programs is presented in Table XII.

TABLE XII

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO REGULARLY TEACH RESEARCH METHODS -- SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Small Programs	Large Programs
1	53.83%	21.62%
2	30.77	27.03
3	15.38	29.73
4	--	2.70
5	--	2.70
6	--	10.81
No response	--	5.41
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

There was a greater percentage of people who regularly taught the research methods course in small graduate programs where one or two people were responsible for the course (53.83% and 30.77%, respectively). However, there was a greater percentage of people who regularly taught the research methods course in large graduate programs where three, four, five, and six people were responsible for teaching the course (29.73%, 2.70%, 2.70%, and 10.81%, respectively).

Table XIII shows the percentage of individuals with media experience in small and large graduate programs who regularly teach the research methods course.

TABLE XIII

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS WITH MEDIA EXPERIENCE -- SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Small Programs	Large Programs
1	51.28%	29.73%
2	28.21	29.73
3	5.13	16.22
4	--	2.70
5	--	--
6	--	8.11
No response	15.38	13.51
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

In small graduate programs where only one person was responsible for teaching research methods, there was a greater percentage of people who had media experience (51.28%) compared with large programs where only one person taught research methods (29.73%). In large graduate programs where two, three, four, and six people taught research methods, there was a greater percentage of people with media experience (29.73%, 16.22%, 2.70%, and 8.11%, respectively) compared with small programs (28.21%, 5.13%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

Table XIV shows the percentage of individuals in small and large graduate programs who have participated in research projects and who regularly teach research methods.

TABLE XIV

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN RESEARCH PROJECTS -- SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Small Programs	Large Programs
1	53.85%	21.62%
2	28.21	27.03
3	15.38	29.73
4	--	2.70
5	--	2.70
6	--	8.11
No response	2.56	8.11
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

In small graduate programs where one and two people regularly taught research methods, a greater percentage of those people had participated in research projects (53.85% and 28.21%, respectively) than those in large programs (21.62% and 27.03%, respectively). In large graduate programs where three, four, five, and six people were responsible for teaching research methods on a regular basis, there was a greater percentage of people who had participated in research projects (29.73%, 2.70%, 2.70%,

and 8.11%, respectively) compared with those in small programs (15.38%, 0%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

Table XV shows the percentage of individuals in small and large graduate programs who have published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years.

TABLE XV

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS WHO HAVE PUBLISHED SCHOLARLY ARTICLES WITHIN THE PAST FIVE YEARS -- SMALL VS. LARGE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Small Programs	Large Programs
1	35.90%	21.62%
2	28.21	29.73
3	15.38	27.03
4	--	2.70
5	--	2.70
6	--	8.11
No response	20.51	8.11
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

A greater percentage of small graduate programs that had only one person teaching research methods had published articles within the past five years (35.90%) compared with large programs (21.62%). Large graduate programs with two, three, four, five, and six people teaching research methods had a greater percentage of programs that

had scholarly articles published within the past five years (29.73%, 27.03%, 2.70%, 2.70%, and 8.11%, respectively) compared with small programs (28.21%, 15.38%, 0%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

Accredited vs. Non-accredited Graduate Programs

Research question 7 asks if there are differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs. Of the 78 programs surveyed, 47 were accredited, 29 were not accredited and two programs did not respond to the question. The 47 programs were accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education for Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC).

Table XVI shows the differences in prerequisite requirements for the research methods courses in regard to whether the graduate program is accredited or not accredited.

TABLE XVI

PREREQUISITES FOR RESEARCH METHODS COURSES -- ACCREDITED VS. NON-ACCREDITED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Prerequisites	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
No prerequisites	63.83%	68.97%
Undergraduate statistics	19.15	13.79
Undergraduate theory & research	4.26	10.34
Introduction to communication research	6.38	3.45
Undergraduate statistics & research	--	--
Mass communication theory	4.26	3.45
No response	2.30	--
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

More non-accredited graduate programs required an undergraduate theory and research course (10.34%) than the accredited programs (4.26%) while more accredited graduate programs required an introduction to communication theory course (6.38%) than the non-accredited programs (3.45%). The majority of the programs (both accredited and non-accredited) did not require any prerequisites (63.83% and 68.97%, respectively). Undergraduate statistics was the prerequisite required most often for both accredited and non-accredited programs (19.15% and 13.79%, respectively).

Content of the research methods courses in accredited and non-accredited graduate programs is depicted in Table XVII.

TABLE XVII

CONTENT OF RESEARCH METHODS COURSE--
ACCREDITED VS. NON-ACCREDITED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Theory/Methodology	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
Survey research	95.74%	100.00%
Content analysis	93.62	89.66
Field experiments	78.72	82.76
Lab experiments	78.72	82.76
Historical research	65.96	72.41
Polling	61.70	58.62
Case studies	53.19	58.62
Group methods	36.17	48.28
Q-methodology	23.40	31.03

Statistics	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
Sampling	82.98	89.66
Hypothesis testing	78.72	86.21
Chi-square tests	76.60	86.21
Probability	74.47	86.21
T-tests	76.60	82.76
Correlation analysis	72.34	72.41
Analysis of variance	59.57	79.31
Multivariate analyses	34.04	51.72
Single/simple regression	36.17	55.17
Multiple regression	27.66	41.38
Factor/cluster analyses	25.53	34.48

There was little difference between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs in the theory/methodology content of the research methods course. Content analysis, survey research, field experiments and lab experiments were taught in a greater percentage of programs in both accredited and non-accredited graduate programs.

Multivariate analyses, single/simple regression, multiple regression and factor/cluster analyses were offered in a greater percentage of the non-accredited graduate programs compared with the accredited programs. However, there was little difference between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs regarding sampling, hypothesis testing, chi-square tests, probability, t-tests and correlation analysis.

Table XVIII shows the general course requirements for the research methods courses in accredited and non-accredited graduate programs.

TABLE XVIII

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH METHODS -- ACCREDITED VS. NON-ACCREDITED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Requirements	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
Research proposal	78.72%	75.86%
Mid-term exam	65.96	79.31
Final exam	65.96	89.66
Survey of literature	63.83	72.41
Computer use for statistics assignments	55.32	55.17
Individual research project	40.43	44.83
Sample questionnaire	38.30	37.93
Abstracts of readings	36.17	37.93
Statistics assignments	29.79	37.93
Group research project	29.79	20.69

There were few differences regarding general course requirements for accredited and non-accredited graduate programs. A greater percentage of the programs required a mid-term exam, final exam, research proposal, survey of literature and computer use for statistics assignments.

Table XIX shows the percentage of individuals with media experience in accredited and non-accredited graduate programs who teach the research methods course.

TABLE XIX

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS WHO HAVE MEDIA EXPERIENCE-- ACCREDITED VS. NON-ACCREDITED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
1	31.91%	51.72%
2	38.30	20.69
3	8.51	10.34
4	2.13	--
5	--	--
6	6.38	--
No response	12.77	17.24
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

In programs that had one and three people teaching the research methods course, a greater percentage of those from non-accredited graduate programs had media experience (51.72% and 10.34%, respectively) compared with those from accredited programs (31.91% and 8.51%, respectively). In programs that had two, four, and six people teaching the research methods course, a greater percentage of those from accredited

graduate programs had media experience (38.30%, 2.13%, and 6.38%, respectively) compared with those from non-accredited programs (20.69%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

The percentage of individuals in accredited and non-accredited graduate programs who have taught the research methods course and have participated in research projects is shown in Table XX.

TABLE XX

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN RESEARCH PROJECTS-- ACCREDITED VS. NON-ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
1	36.17%	37.93%
2	29.79	27.59
3	19.15	27.59
4	2.13	--
5	--	3.45
6	6.38	--
No response	6.38	3.44
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

In accredited and non-accredited graduate programs where one and two people were responsible for teaching the research methods course, there was little difference in the percentages regarding participation in research programs. However, the percentage of

individuals participating in research projects was greater in accredited graduate programs where four and six people were responsible for teaching research methods (2.13% and 6.38%, respectively) compared with non-accredited graduate programs (0% and 0%, respectively). The percentage of individuals participating in research projects in non-accredited graduate programs was greater in programs where three and five people were responsible for teaching research methods (27.59% and 3.45%, respectively) compared with accredited graduate programs (19.15% and 0%, respectively).

Table XXI shows the percentage of individuals in accredited and non-accredited graduate programs who teach the research methods course and have published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years.

TABLE XXI

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS WHO HAVE PUBLISHED SCHOLARLY ARTICLES WITHIN THE PAST FIVE YEARS -- ACCREDITED VS. NON-ACCREDITED GRADUATE PROGRAMS

N=78

Number of People	Accredited Programs	Non-accredited Programs
1	27.66%	27.59%
2	31.91	27.59
3	17.02	27.59
4	2.13	--
5	--	3.45
6	6.38	--
No response	14.89	13.79
TOTAL	100.00%	100.00%

In accredited graduate programs where two, four, and six people were responsible for teaching research methods, there was a greater percentage of programs where the individuals had published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years (31.91%, 2.13%, and 6.38%, respectively). In non-accredited graduate programs where three and five people taught research methods, there was a greater percentage of programs where individuals had published articles within the past five years (27.59% and 3.45%, respectively). There was little difference in the percentage of accredited and non-

accredited graduate programs where only one person was responsible for teaching research methods regarding publication of articles (27.66% and 27.59%, respectively).

Summary

This study showed that there is consistency in the structure of the master's level research methods course nationwide. Courses were similar in prerequisite requirements, content, general requirements and instructor qualifications.

While the small graduate programs were divided equally between accredited and non-accredited, the majority of the large programs were accredited. However, when comparing small graduate programs with large, there were few differences regarding prerequisites, content and general requirements.

In small graduate programs where only one person was responsible for teaching research methods, there was a greater percentage of people who had media experience compared with large programs where only one person taught research methods. However, in large graduate programs where two to six people taught research methods, there was a greater percentage of people with media experience. Similar data was reflected when small graduate programs were compared with large regarding instructors who had participated in research projects and published articles in scholarly journals.

There were few differences in prerequisites, content and general requirements when accredited graduate programs were compared with non-accredited graduate programs. But, in programs that had one or three people teaching the research methods

course, a greater percentage of those from non-accredited graduate programs had media experience compared with those from accredited programs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Research

This study was designed to update information regarding the structure of the research methods course taught at the master's level in schools of journalism and mass communication in the United States.

Graduate coordinators of 121 master's programs were surveyed by mail in March/April 1993. Seventy-one percent of these responded. (Eight of the 86 surveys returned were excluded from the study for various reasons: six schools did not offer a research methods course as part of their graduate curriculum and two schools had discontinued their graduate programs.)

Prerequisites

Research question 1 addressed the prerequisites required for the research methods course. This study found that the majority of graduate programs surveyed required no prerequisites to the research methods course (65.38%). Undergraduate statistics was required for 16.67 percent of the programs surveyed. Other prerequisites included: undergraduate theory and research (6.41%), introduction to communication research (5.13%), and mass communication theory (3.85%).

Course Content

Research question 2 addressed the content of the research methods course. Instruction on survey research (97.44%), content analysis (91.03%), lab experiments (80.77%), field experiments (79.49%), historical research (67.95%), polling (60.26%), and case studies (55.13%) was included most often in the content of the research methods course. Theories/methodologies listed under "other" included rhetorical/critical analyses (5.13%), observation (5.13%), focus groups (3.85%), and interviewing (2.56%). Eighty-six percent of the programs included instruction on sampling, 82.05 percent taught hypothesis testing, and 80.77 percent taught chi-square tests. Other statistical tests included most often in the content of the research methods course were t-tests (79.49%), probability (78.21%), correlation analysis (73.08%), and analysis of variance (67.95%). Statistical tests listed under "other" included discriminant analysis (3.85%), cojoint analyses (2.56%), and nonparametrics (2.56%).

General Requirements

General requirements for the research methods course were addressed in research question 3. The top five general requirements listed for the research methods course were a research proposal (76.92%), final exam (74.36%), mid-term exam (71.79%), survey of literature (66.67%), and computer use for statistics assignments (56.41%). Only 26.92 percent of the programs required a group research project as part of the general requirements.

Textbooks

Research question 4 asked which textbooks were used most often in the research methods course. Wimmer & Dominick's *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* was used by 30.77 percent of the programs surveyed. Eighteen percent of the programs used *Practice of Social Research* by Babbie. Other textbooks used included *Contemporary Communications Research Methods* by Smith (3.85%), *Foundations of Behavioral Research* by Kerlinger (3.85%), and *Research Methods in Mass Communication* by Stempel & Westley (3.85%).

Instructor Qualifications

Instructor qualifications were addressed in research question 5. In the 78 schools that responded to the questionnaire, 162 people were listed as teachers of the research methods course. Of these 162 people, 157 had Ph.D.s and one had completed all the work for a doctorate degree except for the dissertation. Two people had Ed.D.s and one held a Master of Arts.

Of the 162 people who taught the research course, 77.16 percent (125) responded that they had media experience, 14.19 percent (23) reported no media experience, and 8.64 percent (14) did not respond to the question. Fifty of the 125 people who taught the research methods course had experience in the newspaper industry, while 25 had experience in broadcasting, 18 had experience in public relations, and 13 had experience in advertising.

Of the 162 people who taught the research methods course, 154 (95.06 %) participated in research projects. Two people had no research experience and six did not respond. While 95.06 percent of the instructors who taught the research methods course were reported to have participated in research projects, only 40.91 percent reported how many projects they had participated in with 59.09 percent having no response to the question. The majority of those responding to the number of projects participated in were in the one to five project range.

One hundred forty-six of the 162 individuals who taught the research methods course were reported to have published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years. Ten were reported to not have any publications and six had no response. Of those responding to the number of articles published in scholarly journals, the majority (41.09%) published from one to five articles. Of the 90.12 percent responding that they had published articles, 41.78 percent had no response regarding the number of articles published.

Fifty-one percent of those individuals who reported that they regularly taught the research methods course listed survey research as their area of specialty. Other areas listed as specialties included content analysis (33.76%), lab experiments (24%), field experiments (15.58%), and historical research (13.63%).

Small vs. Large Graduate Programs

Research question 6 asked if there were differences between small and large graduate programs. For this study, small graduate programs were defined as those having

1-50 graduate students and large graduate programs were defined as those having more than 50 graduate students. Of the 78 respondents, 39 were classified as small programs and 37 were classified as large graduate programs. Two respondents did not indicate the number of graduate students enrolled their programs. Seventy percent of the large graduate programs were accredited compared with only 49 percent of the small programs. A greater percentage of the small graduate programs were not accredited (48.72%) compared with the large programs (27.03%).

There was little difference between the small and large graduate programs regarding prerequisites for the research methods course. A greater percentage of both the small (64.10%) and large (67.57%) graduate programs did not require prerequisites for the research methods course. Of the large graduate programs, 16.22 percent required undergraduate statistics as a prerequisite and 15.38 percent of the small programs required undergraduate statistics. Of the small graduate programs, 10.26 percent required undergraduate theory and research as a prerequisite, while only 2.70 percent of the large programs required this course.

There were no major differences between small and large graduate programs regarding the content of the research methods course. Under theory/methodology, both survey research and content analysis had the greatest percentages in the small and large graduate programs (100% and 87.18%; 94.59% and 94.59%, respectively). Sixty-four percent of the small graduate programs included instruction on historical research compared with 75.68 percent of the large programs. Eighty-two percent of the small graduate programs taught about field experiments, while 78.38 percent of the large

programs included field experiments as part of the course content. Instruction on lab experiments was provided in 79.49 percent of the small graduate programs and 81.08 percent of the large programs.

Sampling (87.18%--small; 83.78%--large); hypothesis testing (82.05%--small; 81.08%--large); chi-square tests (82.05%--small; 78.38%--large); probability (79.49%--small; 75.68%--large); t-tests (79.49%--small; 78.38%--large); and correlation analysis (74.36%--small; 62.16%--large) had the greatest percentages under statistics.

There were few differences between small and large graduate programs regarding requirements for the research methods course. However, the large graduate programs did list more requirements including experimental design (5.41%), critical studies (5.41%), survey projects (2.70%), and publication analyses (2.70%). The small graduate programs did not list any of these other requirements.

There was a greater percentage of people who regularly taught the research methods course in small programs where one or two people were responsible for the course (53.83% and 30.77%, respectively). However, there was a greater percentage of people who regularly taught the research methods course in large programs where three, four, five, and six people were responsible for teaching the course (29.73%, 2.70%, 2.70%, and 10.81%, respectively).

In small graduate programs where only one person was responsible for teaching research methods, 51.28 percent of the people had media experience compared with 29.73 percent in the large programs. In large graduate programs where two, three, four, and six people taught research methods, there was a greater percentage of people with media

experience (29.73%, 16.22%, 2.70%, and 8.11%, respectively) compared with small programs (28.21%, 5.13%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

In small graduate programs where one and two people regularly taught research methods, 53.85 percent and 28.21 percent, respectively, of those people had participated in research projects compared with 21.62 percent and 27.03 percent, respectively, in large programs. In large graduate programs where three, four, five, and six people were responsible for teaching research methods on a regular basis, there was a greater percentage of people who had participated in research projects (29.73%, 2.70%, 2.70%, and 8.11%, respectively) compared with those in small programs (15.38%, 0%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

Thirty-six percent of the small graduate programs that had only one person teaching research methods reported that instructors had published articles within the past five years compared with 21.62 percent in large programs. Large graduate programs with two, three, four, five, and six people teaching research methods had a greater percentage of programs that had instructors publishing scholarly articles within the past five years (29.73%, 27.03%, 2.70%, 2.70%, and 8.11%, respectively) compared with small programs (28.21%, 15.38%, 0%, 0%, and 0%, respectively).

Accredited vs. Non-accredited Graduate Programs

Research question 7 asks if there were differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs. Of the 78 programs surveyed, 47 were accredited, 29 were not accredited and two programs did not respond to the questions. The 47 programs were

accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education for Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC).

The majority of the programs (both accredited and non-accredited) did not require any prerequisites (63.83% and 68.97%, respectively). Undergraduate statistics was the prerequisite required most often by both accredited and non-accredited graduate programs (19.15% and 13.79%, respectively). More non-accredited graduate programs required an undergraduate theory and research course (10.34%) than the accredited programs (4.26%) while more accredited programs required an introduction to communication theory course (6.38%) than the non-accredited graduate programs (3.45%).

There was also not much difference between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs in the theory/methodology content of the research methods course. Content analysis, survey research, field experiments and lab experiments were taught in a greater percentage of programs in both accredited and non-accredited graduate programs. Multivariate analyses, single/simple regression, multiple regression and factor/cluster analyses were taught in a greater percentage of the non-accredited graduate programs than the accredited programs. However, there was a difference between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs for sampling, hypothesis testing, chi-square tests, probability, t-tests and correlation analysis.

There were few differences regarding general course requirements for accredited and non-accredited programs. A greater percentage of both the accredited and non-accredited graduate programs required a mid-term exam, final exam, research proposal, survey of literature and computer use for statistics assignments

In programs that had one and three people teaching the research methods course, 51.72 percent and 10.34 percent, respectively, of those from non-accredited graduate programs had media experience compared with 31.91 percent and 8.51 percent, respectively, of those from accredited programs. In programs that had two, four and six people teaching the research methods course, 38.30 percent, 2.13 percent, and 6.38 percent, respectively, of those from accredited graduate programs had media experience compared with 20.69 percent, 0 percent, and 0 percent, respectively, of those from non-accredited programs.

In accredited and non-accredited graduate programs where one and two people were responsible for teaching the research methods course there were few differences in the percentages regarding participation in research programs. However, the percentage of individuals participating in research projects was greater in accredited graduate programs where four and six people were responsible for teaching research methods compared with non-accredited graduate programs. The percentage of individuals participating in research projects in non-accredited graduate programs was greater in programs where three and five people were responsible for teaching research methods compared with accredited programs.

In accredited graduate programs where two, four, and six people were responsible for teaching research methods, there was a greater percentage of programs where the individuals had published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years. In non-accredited graduate programs where three and five people taught research methods, there was a greater percentage of programs where individuals had published articles within the

past five years. There were few differences in the percentage of accredited and non-accredited graduate programs where only one person was responsible for teaching research methods regarding publication of articles.

Conclusions

In order to determine changes in the structure of the research methods course during the 10-year span that was examined, it is necessary to compare the findings of this study with that of Fowler's[1] 1983 survey of 97 graduate programs. Fowler sought to answer six of the seven questions addressed in this study. In his study, Fowler did not look for differences between accredited and non-accredited graduate programs.

Prerequisites

In 1983, seven (10.1%) of the 69 programs surveyed required a statistics course and two (2.9%) required an undergraduate statistics course. In the present study, 13 (16.67%) of the 78 programs surveyed required an undergraduate statistics course. The present study shows that in 1993 a greater percentage of journalism/mass communication graduate programs required an undergraduate statistics course compared with the percentage required in 1983; however, 16.67 percent is still not much. For a course that focuses on teaching research skills, it seems that a background in statistics would be helpful if not essential to students. Fowler found that three (4.3%) programs required a theory course and two (2.9%) an introduction to graduate research study course. In the 1993 study, five (6.41%) programs required an undergraduate theory and research course, while four (5.13%) required an introduction to communication research. When comparing the 1983 study with the 1993 study, there is not much difference between the percentage of programs not requiring any prerequisites (62.31% and 65.38%, respectively).

Basically, there have been few changes in prerequisite requirements during the 10-year span.

Course Content

Data comparing the two studies with regard to course content is in Table XXII and Table XXIII.

TABLE XXII

A COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE FROM STUDIES MADE IN 1983 AND 1993-- THEORY/METHODOLOGY

Theory/Methodology	% in 1983 N=69	% in 1993 N=78
Historical research	60.9%	67.95%
Case studies	--	55.13
Group methods	--	39.74
Content analysis	84.1	91.03
Survey research	--	97.44
Field experiments	78.3	79.49
Lab experiments	78.3	80.77
Polling	72.5	60.26
Q-methodology	34.8	26.92
Interviewing	80.0	2.56

TABLE XXIII

A COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE FROM STUDIES MADE IN 1983 AND 1993--STATISTICS

Statistics	% in 1983 N=69	% in 1993 N=78
Sampling	94.2%	85.90%
Hypothesis testing	89.9	82.05
Chi-square tests	78.3	80.77
Probability	75.4	78.21
T-tests	73.9	79.49
Correlation analysis	72.4	73.08
Analysis of variance	62.3	67.95
Multivariate analyses	33.3	34.62
Single/simple regression	--	44.87
Multiple regression	27.5	34.62
Factor/cluster analyses	31.9	30.77

In the 1983 study, Fowler found that under the heading of theory/methodology content analysis (84.1%), interviewing (80%), field experiments (78.3%), lab experiments (78.3%), and polling (72.5%) were the areas mentioned most often. In the present study, survey research (97.44%), content analysis (91.03%), lab experiments (80.77%), historical research (67.95%), and polling (60.26%) were the areas mentioned most often.

The 1993 study showed that a greater percentage of the programs provided instruction in the areas of historical research, content analysis, field experiments and lab

experiments. In the 1983 study, the areas of polling, Q-methodology and interviewing were taught at a greater percentage of the schools. When comparing the two studies, it is also apparent that much of what was taught in 1983 such as semantic differential, listenership/viewership, readability and news diffusion is no longer addressed in most programs, while areas such as case studies, group methods and survey research are now taught at the majority of schools. Survey research, the area mentioned most often in the 1993 study at 97.44 percent, was not mentioned in the 1983 study. It is probable that the content of the course has been changed to include emphasis on survey research, content analysis, case studies and group methods because these methods of research are more cost effective than conducting lab experiments, field experiments, or interviews. With shrinking budgets at universities and colleges, faculty members have had to make adjustments to the way they collect data. Also, larger samples can be obtained using such methods as survey research and content analysis compared with methods such as lab or field experiments. It appears that the content of the research methods course has been changed to reflect these changes.

When comparing the percentages of statistical tests taught in schools of journalism and mass communication, it was found that they have remained fairly close during the 10-year span. However, 44.87 percent of the programs surveyed in 1993 reported that single/simple regression was a part of the content, while no programs surveyed in 1983 mentioned it. There have been very few changes made in the content of research methods courses regarding statistics during the 10-year span.

General Requirements

Table XXIV shows a comparison of general requirements for the research methods course from the 1983 and 1993 studies.

TABLE XXIV

A COMPARISON OF GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE FROM STUDIES MADE IN 1983 AND 1993

Requirements	% in 1983 N=69	% in 1993 N=78
Mid-term exam	60.9%	71.79%
Final exam	72.5	71.79
Research proposal	71.0	76.92
Survey of literature	66.7	66.67
Abstracts of readings	58.0	35.90
Individual research project	53.6	42.31
Sample questionnaire	97.1	39.74
Group research project	44.9	26.92
Computer use for statistics assignments	53.6	56.41
Statistics projects	44.9	34.62

For the most part, the general requirements for the research methods course have remained the same for the 10-year span. However, abstracts of readings (58.0%), sample questionnaires (97.1%), and group research projects (44.9%) were included in the general requirements in 1983 considerably more often than in 1993 (35.9%, 39.74%, and 26.92%, respectively). It is interesting that 97.44 percent of the programs surveyed in 1993

included survey research as part of their course content, but only 39.74 percent of the programs included preparing a sample questionnaire as part of the general requirements. So in other words, the majority of programs were teaching the theory, but not putting the theory to practice.

The comparison of studies showed that there was not much change in the number of programs that required computer use for statistics assignments (53.6%--1983; 56.41%--1993). Again, with the rapid changes taking place in computer technology, it would seem essential that students receive hands-on experience with the use of computers to calculate data.

Textbooks

Fowler found that the textbook used most often in 1983 was Stempel & Westley's *Research Methods in Mass Communication* (33.3%) followed by Babbie's *Practice of Social Research* (17.3%), Wimmer & Dominick's *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (8.7%), and Kerlinger's *Foundations of Behavioral Research* (4.3%). He noted at the time that Wimmer & Dominick's *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* "showed promise."

In the 78 programs surveyed in 1993, the textbook used most frequently in the research methods course was Wimmer & Dominick's *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (30.77%). *Practice of Social Research* by Babbie was still used by 17.94 percent of the programs surveyed. Other textbooks used included *Contemporary Communication Research Methods* by Smith (3.85%); *Foundations of Behavioral*

Research by Kerlinger (3.85%); and *Research Methods in Mass Communication* by Stempel & Westley (3.85%).

It appears that Fowler's prediction was correct, the popularity of Wimmer & Dominick's book did grow. Books by Babbie, Kerlinger and Stempel & Westley were still being used in 1993, but not nearly as much as in 1983.

Instructor Qualifications

In the 1983 study, the schools responding to the survey indicated that 142 people regularly taught the research methods course. Sixty-eight of the programs surveyed (98.6%) responded that the people teaching research methods in their schools had obtained the Ph.D. degree. Of the 69 programs, 89.8 percent indicated that faculty members responsible for the research methods course had published articles in scholarly journals.

In the 1993 study, it was found that 162 people taught the research methods course. Of these 162 people, 98.14 percent had obtained a doctorate degree (157 Ph.D.s and two Ed.D.s). One person had completed all the work for a doctorate degree except for the dissertation.

The more recent study showed that 146 (90.12%) of the 162 individuals who taught the research methods course were reported to have published articles in scholarly journals within the past five years. When comparing instructor qualifications in 1983 and 1993, no major differences were found. Fowler did collect different data regarding instructors than the investigator of the 1993 study. Fowler focused more on personal

characteristics such as age and where each person received his/her degree, while the investigator of this study focused on faculty members' media experience and research experience.

Small vs. Large Graduate Programs

Fowler defined large graduate programs as those having 50 or more graduate students resulting in groupings of 38 large programs and 31 small programs. For the present study, large graduate programs were defined as having more than 50 graduate students resulting in groupings of 37 large programs and 39 small programs.

In his study, Fowler only looked at differences in course content between small and large graduate programs. He found that a greater percentage of large programs covered interviewing techniques (97% to 80%) and computer analysis (87% to 74%) while a greater percentage of small programs included legal research (51% to 29%) and news diffusion (39% to 26%) as part of the methods course.

The present study showed that there were no major differences between small and large graduate programs regarding the content of the research methods course. Under theory/methodology, both survey research and content analysis had the greatest percentages in small and large graduate programs. Sampling, hypothesis testing, chi-square tests, probability and t-tests had the greatest percentages under statistics

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study are valid for the time period (1993) of the study. A similar study at a future date would provide a third point of comparison with Fowler's 1983 study and this one. Similar studies during a period of time are valuable for showing changes and trends in this area of education.

Research has been a part of journalism graduate education since the 1920's when Willard Bleyer saw a need for it in his field stating that "research is more vital for the continued success of teaching of journalism."[2] This study has shown that both those who choose a career in college teaching and those who choose a career in the profession need a sound knowledge of research techniques and theories. While many programs have opted to offer students a choice between completing a thesis or a professional project, 80 percent of the programs surveyed in 1991 required a research methods course of all students.[3]

Although undergraduate journalism education has been the subject of more frequent research, there are many areas of graduate education that need investigating. Previous studies need to be updated to determine the direction of journalism and mass communication education and research on new issues facing journalism graduate education need to be addressed.

A comparison of the 1983 and 1993 studies on the structure of the research methods course showed that there have been few changes in prerequisites, content and requirements during the 10-year span. Since few changes have been made, professionals and college teachers who have taken a research methods course could be surveyed to

determine if the research methods course met their needs as students and prepared them for their present careers.

While 95.09 percent of the instructors who taught the research methods course were reported to have participated in research projects, only 40.91 percent reported how many projects they had participated in and 58.19 percent reported that they had published articles in scholarly journals. Fedler and Smith[4] stated that a recent study found that 22 percent of the field's teachers had not published a single article during the last five years, and 54 percent had not published a single article in a national refereed publication such as *Journalism Quarterly*. Studies examining the research productivity of college teachers would help clarify if these people actually do research, but don't publish the results, or if they are not completing the research they begin. Researchers could survey faculty members or they could look at scholarly journals such as *JournalismQuarterly* and determine who is publishing and how much.

Schweitzer[5] stated that journalism schools do not get respect because they are rarely on the cutting edge of the problems and issues facing their professional constituents. He said journalism schools often follow the industry rather than lead it. In order for journalism schools to change this perception, they need to conduct research that provides relevant data for the professional sector. Studies investigating what the professional sector would like to see in terms of research could help guide faculty members in their quest for research ideas.

It has also been stated by Schweitzer[6] and McCombs[7] that research enriches one's teaching. Faculty members who are active in research, by being involved in current issues and problems of business and are informed about new technologies, enrich classroom

instruction by presenting realistic examples. More emphasis needs to be placed on researching ways to use new technologies to increase excellence in reporting, editing, advertising, broadcast journalism, public relations and all parts of mass communication. This kind of information will be essential for journalism students preparing to enter today's workforce.

NOTES

[1]Gilbert L. Fowler, Jr., "Content and Teacher Characteristics for Master's Level Research Course," *Journalism Quarterly* 63.3 (1986): 594-599.

[2]Edwin Emery and Joseph P. McKerns, "AEJMC: 75 Years in the Making," *Journalism Monographs* 104 (1987): 5-8.

[3]Jean Briggs, "A Survey of 102 Master's Programs in Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications: Admission and Graduation Requirements and Program Structure and Content," (M.S. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1992): 81.

[4]Fred Fedler and Ron F. Smith, "Administrators Feel Traditional Research has Highest Value," *Journalism Educator* 40.3 (1985): 51-53.

[5]John C. Schweitzer, "Practical Research Can Bring Respect to J-Schools," *Journalism Educator* 40.2 (1985): 38-41.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Maxwell McCombs, "J-Researchers Appraised," *Journalism Educator* 29.1 (1974): 3-5, 44.

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APPENDIX A--QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY
DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE
TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

This is a survey of the content and structure of the research methods course(s) required for most students pursuing a graduate degree in mass communications. Please complete the questionnaire by March 18, 1993, and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions, please contact me at:

Susan Geisert
206 Paul Miller Building
School of Journalism and Broadcasting
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078-0195
405-744-6354

***

1. What kind of term system is your university on?
   ____Semester
   ____Quarter
   ____Other (please identify)_____

2. The research methods course(s) is:
   ____Required
   ____Elective
   ____Required for some options/sequences

   If the research methods course(s) is required for some options/sequences, please identify the options/sequences.

3. Check the type of project(s) required to graduate from your program and indicate the option/sequence for which the project is required.
   ____A thesis_____
   ____A research report (non-thesis)_____
   ____A report_____
   ____A professional project_____
   ____All of the above_____
   ____None of the above_____
   ____Other (please identify)_____

4. Is your program accredited?
   ____Yes ____No

   If yes, please indicate by which organization(s).

5. What is the primary emphasis(es) of your graduate program? Check all that apply.
   ____Radio/television
   ____Advertising
   ____News/editorial
   ____Public relations
   ____Telecommunications
   ____Research
   ____Mass communication (generic)
   ____Other (please identify)_____

6. What courses are prerequisites to the research methods course(s) at your institution?

7. Check which particular projects/activities are required in the course(s). Check all that apply.
   ____Requires mid-term exam
   ____Requires final exam
   ____Requires research proposal
   ____Requires survey of literature
   ____Requires abstracts of readings
   ____Requires individual research project
   ____Requires sample questionnaire
   ____Requires group research project
   ____Requires computer use on statistics assignments
   ____Requires statistics projects
   ____Other (please list)_____
   _____
   _____

8. How many graduate students are currently enrolled in your program?

If the research methods course offered at your institution is one semester/quarter in duration, answer the following questions. If it is more than one, please skip to the next section.

1. What is the official title of your research methods course?

2. The number of hours credit given for successful completion of the research methods course is:
   ____3 ____4 ____5 ____Other (please identify)_____

3. How often is the course offered?
   ____Once a semester
   ____Once a quarter
   ____Once a year
   ____Other (please identify)_____

4. Indicate the approximate percentage of the course devoted to theory, the approximate percentage of the course devoted to methodology, and the approximate percentage of the course devoted to statistics.
   ____Theory
   ____Methodology
   ____Statistics
   ____Other (please identify)_____

5. List required textbook(s).

If the research methods course offered at your institution is more than one semester/quarter in duration, answer the following questions.

1. What is the official title(s) of your research methods course(s)?

2. How many semesters/quarters are needed to complete the research methods course(s)?
   ____1 ____2 ____3 ____4 ____Other (please identify)_____

3. The number of hours credit given per semester/quarter for successful completion of the research methods course(s) is:
   ____3 ____4 ____5 ____6 ____Other (please identify)_____

4. How often is each course(s) offered?
   ____Once a semester
   ____Once a quarter
   ____Once a year
   ____Other (please identify)_____

5. Indicate the approximate percentage of the total course devoted to theory, the approximate percentage of the total course devoted to methodology, and the approximate percentage of the total course devoted to statistics.
   ____Theory
   ____Methodology
   ____Statistics
   ____Other (please identify)_____

6. List required textbook(s).

All respondents answer the following questions.

1. Check the content areas taught in the research methods course(s) at your institution.

   Theory/Methodology:
   ____Historical research
   ____Case studies
   ____Group methods
   ____Content analysis
   ____Survey research
   ____Field experiments
   ____Lab experiments
   ____Polling
   ____Q methodology
   ____Other (please identify)_____
   _____
   _____

Statistics:
____Sampling
____Hypothesis testing
____Chi-square tests
____Probability
____T-tests
____Correlational analysis
____Analysis of variance
____Multivariate analyses
____Single/simple regression
____Multiple regression
____Factor/cluster analyses
____Other (please identify)_____
_____
_____

2. How many individuals regularly teach the research methods course(s)?
____1 ____2 ____3 ____Other (please identify)_____

3. What is the highest degree held by each individual who teaches the course(s)? Indicate the number of individuals for each response.
____Master of Science
____Master of Art
____Doctor of Education
____Doctor of Philosophy
____Other (please identify)_____

4. Does the individual(s) teaching the research methods course(s) have any media experience? Indicate the number of individuals for each response.
____Yes ____No

If yes, please identify what kind of media experience.

5. Has the individual(s) teaching the research methods course(s) participated in any research projects within the past five years? Indicate the number of individuals for each response.
____Yes ____No

If yes, please indicate the number of projects and identify what kind of research projects.

6. Has the individual(s) teaching the research methods course(s) published any articles in scholarly journals within the past five years? Indicate the number of individuals for each response.
____Yes ____No

If yes, please indicate the number of articles for each individual.

7. What does the individual(s) teaching the research methods course(s) consider to be his/her specialty in the field of mass communication research? Indicate the number of individuals for each response.

____Historical research
____Case studies
____Group methods
____Content analysis
____Survey research
____Field experiments
____Lab experiments
____Other (please identify)_____

This completes the questionnaire. Thank you for your time. The space below is for any additional comments you might like to make.

APPENDIX B--COVER LETTERS

March 8, 1993

Dear Graduate Program Coordinator:

I am a graduate student in the School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Oklahoma State University and Charles Fleming, Ed.D., Assistant Director for Graduate Studies, is my adviser. The research for my thesis focuses on the content and structure of the graduate research methods course in the schools of mass communication throughout the United States.

The research methods course required for most graduate degrees in mass communication provides the foundation for future research efforts, yet little research has examined the structure of the research methods course. I am working on a research project which will update the data already obtained in this area.

A similar study has been conducted, but that was nearly 10 years ago. The knowledge acquired from the current study will be of value to educators such as yourself who are concerned with graduate education as well as journalists in the private sector. It is our goal to submit the results for publication to a national journal.

The completeness of the research depends on the information you can provide. I would appreciate it, therefore, if you would take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire or pass the questionnaire along to the individual or individuals who are most frequently in charge of the graduate research portion of your program at the master's level. A stamped, addressed envelope has been enclosed for your convenience. Please return it by March 18, 1993.

The number on the questionnaire is for keeping track of respondents and will be removed upon receipt. Individual responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions, please call or write me at the address below. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Susan Geisert
Graduate Student in Mass Communications

206 Paul Miller Building
School of Journalism and Broadcasting
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078-0195
405-744-6354

April 21, 1993

Dear Graduate Program Coordinator:

A few weeks ago I mailed you a letter and questionnaire concerning the graduate research methods course taught in schools of mass communication.

As I have not received a completed questionnaire from you, I am concerned that perhaps my first packet did not reach you. I am therefore enclosing another questionnaire and return envelope.

I realize how busy you must be. I hope you will take just a few moments to complete and return this survey. The accuracy and completeness of my study depend on you.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Susan Geisert
Graduate Student, Oklahoma State University

P.S. If you have already returned the questionnaire, I would like to thank you again for your time.

APPENDIX C--LIST OF UNIVERSITIES SURVEYED

UNIVERSITIES SURVEYED FOR STUDY

University of Alabama
Tuscaloosa, AL

University of South Alabama
Mobile, AL

University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ

University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR

University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Little Rock, AR

Arkansas State University
State University, AR

University of California at Berkeley
Berkeley, CA

California State University, Chico
Chico, CA

California State University, Dominguez Hills
Carson, CA

California State University, Fullerton
Fullerton, CA

California State University, Northridge
Northridge, CA

University of the Pacific
Stockton, CA

Pepperdine University
Malibu, CA

San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

San Francisco State University
San Francisco, CA

San Jose State University
San Jose, CA

University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA

Stanford University
Stanford, CA

University of Colorado
Boulder, CO

Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO

University of Denver
Denver, CO

University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, CO

University of Hartford
Hartford, CT

The American University
Washington, DC

University of Florida
Gainesville, FL

Florida International University
North Miami, FL

University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL

University of South Florida
Tampa, FL

University of West Florida
Pensacola, FL

University of Georgia
Athens, GA

Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA

Columbia College
Chicago, IL

University of Illinois
Urbana, IL

Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL

Northwestrn University
Evanston, IL

Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL

Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville, IL

Ball State University
Muncie, IN

Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN

Drake University
Des Moines, IA

University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA

Iowa State University
Ames, IA

University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS

Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS

Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, KS

Wichita State University
Wichita, KS

Morehead State University
Morehead, KY

Murray State University
Murray, KY

Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA

Loyola University
New Orleans, LA

Northeast Louisiana University
Monroe, LA

University of Southwestern Louisiana
Lafayette, LA

University of Maryland
College Park, MD

Towson State University
Towson, MD

Boston University
Boston, MA

Emerson College
Boston, MA

Northeastern University
Boston, MA

Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN

St. Cloud State University
St. Cloud, MN

Jackson State University
Jackson, MS

University of Mississippi
University, MS

University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS

Central Missouri State University
Warrensburg, MO

University of Missouri
Columbia, MO

University of Montana
Missoula, MT

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Lincoln, NE

University of Nebraska - Omaha
Omaha, NE

University of Nevada - Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

University of Nevada - Reno
Reno, NV

Fairleigh Dickinson University
Teaneck, NJ

Columbia University
New York, NY

Empire State College of SUNY
Rochester, NY

Iona College
New Rochelle, NY

New York University
New York, NY

Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY

University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC

University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND

Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH

Kent State University
Kent, OH

Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

Ohio University
Athens, OH

University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK

Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK

University of Oregon
Eugene, OR

University of Portland
Portland, OR

Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA

The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA

Shippensburg University
Shippensburg, PA

Temple University
Philadelphia, PA

University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC

University of South Dakota
Vermillion, SD

South Dakota State University
Brookings, SD

Memphis State University
Memphis, TN

Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN

University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN

Abilene Christian University
Abilene, TX

Baylor University
Waco, TX

East Texas State University
Commerce, TX

University of Houston
Houston, TX

University of North Texas
Denton, TX

University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, TX

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, TX

Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX

Brigham Young University
Provo, UT

University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT

Norfolk State University
Norfolk, VA

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA

University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Washington State University
Pullman, WA

Marshall University
Huntington, WV

West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV

Marquette University
Milwaukee, WI

University of Wisconsin - Madison
Madison, WI

University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY

APPENDIX D--OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Proposal Title: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Principal Investigator: CHARLES FLEMMING/ SUSAN GEISERT

Date: 10-27-92 IRB # AS-93-018

This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as: Exempt [XX] Expedite [ ] Full Board Review [ ]

Renewal or Continuation [ ]

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):

Approved [XX] Deferred for Revision [ ]

Approved with Provision [ ] Disapproved [ ]

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or Disapproval:

Signature: Marcia K. Tilley Date: 10-28-92

Chair of Institutional Review Board

VITA

Susan Kay Geisert

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS COURSE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Major Field: Mass Communication

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Kearney, Nebraska, on February 25, 1956.

Education: Graduated from Kearney High School, Kearney, Nebraska, in May 1974; received Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism and Broadcasting --News Editorial from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in May 1987. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Mass Communication at Oklahoma State University in May 1996.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University, College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology as a proposal development editor, 1987-1990; employed by Oklahoma State University, School of Journalism and Broadcasting as a graduate teaching assistant, 1991-1993; employed by Oklahoma State University, School of Journalism and Broadcasting as an undergraduate academic counselor and instructor, 1993 to present.

Professional Memberships: OCADA.