

The New York Times

Readership Program Report

University of North Florida

December 2008

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History of New York Times at UNF

The primary goals of the American Democracy Project are raising student awareness about public and international affairs, promoting and facilitating student political participation, and encouraging civic engagement. The New York Times Readership Program is an important part of the American Democracy Project initiative at UNF because it addresses the first goal by providing media resources that will heighten student awareness of the issues of the day. This readership program is a part of a larger campus-wide readership program, which provides students access to several other media sources including The Florida Times Union, The Wall Street Journal, and USA Today.

In the 2005-2006 academic year, the New York Times was first offered as a free resource to students. The Office of Academic Affairs sponsored the readership program. At that time, 300 papers were delivered on campus each day. In February 2006, the New York Times sponsored a presentation at UNF given by Ethan Bronner titled "War and Terror: How the New York Times Covers Today's Global Conflicts."

In the 2006-2007 academic year, the New York Times was jointly sponsored by Academic Affairs and Student Government (SG). In that year a representative from the New York Times came to campus and held a faculty workshop on incorporating the New York Times into the classroom. The audio version of this workshop was subsequently made available on the ADP website.

In the 2007-2008 academic year, the New York Times was again jointly sponsored by Academic Affairs and Student Government. During this year, the New York Times paid for signage that was added to the New York Times distribution stands. This increased the visibility of the New York Times on campus. During the latter part of the Spring 2008 semester the number of papers delivered on campus per day was decreased to 250 due to budget constraints.

During the Fall 2008 semester, there were 250 papers distributed each day to 7 campus locations. Academic Affairs and Student Government continued its support of the program through a collaborative effort. In order to assess the effectiveness of the New York Times Readership Program at UNF, the Provost requested that a survey of the program be conducted during the Fall 2008 semester. This survey was conducted in 2 formats: face-to-face and online. The results of this survey are included in this report.

Paper Returns Rate

Each week the student newspaper distributor submits a Returns and Shortages Affidavit, which details the number of papers that were remaining from the previous day at each distribution location. According to the affidavits from the 2007-2008 academic year, there were an average of 74 papers remaining each week. This average dropped to 8 papers remaining each week during the Fall 2008 semester. This decrease can be largely attributed to the fact that in Fall 2008 there were 250 papers distributed each day, rather than 300 per day as was in 2007-2008.

New York Times Survey

Method

There were two methods of administration used for this survey. The first was face-to-face, in which the student workers in Academic Affairs and the newspaper student distributor were stationed at various distribution locations around campus at varied times of the day in order to administer the survey to individuals as they took a newspaper. This method was used for 2 weeks and yielded 45 responses. The second method used was an online survey. This survey was sent out to all-faculty and was posted on Student Update. The online versions of the survey were modified to ask only the question that pertained to the target audience. Respondents were instructed not to submit an online survey if they had already participated in the face-to-face survey. This method yielded 69 responses.

The questions that were asked on the survey were designed to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the program. Through this survey we wanted to find the extent to which the readership program facilitates the objectives of the ADP. Specifically, we wanted to know if the New York Times had positively changed a student's ability to discuss current events, their understanding of national/ international concerns, their participation in classroom discussions, and their writing assignments. Below is a list of the questions that were included on the survey:

1. How often do you pick up the New York Times? a) 1-2 times a week b) 3 or more times a week
2. Are you: a) Staff b) Student c) Faculty
 - i. **IF staff:** continue to question 3
 - ii. **IF faculty:** Do you incorporate the NYT in your classroom instruction? YES NO
 - iii. **IF student:** Do you believe the NYT has positively changed:

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Your ability to discuss current events | YES | NO |
| 2. Your understanding of national/international concerns | YES | NO |
| 3. Your participation in classroom discussions | YES | NO |
| 4. Your writing assignments | YES | NO |
 - ii. **IF student:** Is the NYT being used in one or more of your classes? YES NO
 - iii. **IF student:** Has an instructor encouraged you to read the NYT? YES NO
2. If the NYT funding were to be eliminated, would you consider purchasing the paper at 35c/copy?
 - a) YES
 - b) NO
 - c) UNSURE
3. If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued, how would you replace this source for your news?
 - a. TV
 - b. Other newspapers
 - c. Internet
 - d. NYT online
 - e. Other
4. Do you read any other newspapers in addition to the NYT?
 - a. YES _____ (identify one)
 - b. NO

Results

There were 114 respondents to the survey. This is a combination of the results from the face-to-face survey and the online survey. See appendix A for frequency distributions of all survey items.

- Overall, respondents were more likely to pick up the New York Times 1-2 times a week (63% v. 39%) than pick it up 3 or more times a week.
- The highest percentage of respondents was students (57%), then faculty (45%), and the lowest staff (2.6%)
- Of the faculty who responded, 50% said that they incorporate the New York Times in their class instruction while 50% said that they do not.
- A significant majority of students (89.2%) believe that the NYT has positively changed their ability to discuss current events.
- A significant majority of students (89.4%) believe that the NYT has positively changed their understanding of national/ international concerns.
- A majority of students (56.1%) believe that the NYT has positively changed their participation in classroom discussions
- A majority of students (61.5%) believe that the NYT has positively changed their writing assignments.
- Only 23.4% of students reported that the NYT is being used in 1 or more of their classes.
- A majority of students (57.4%) of students reported that their instructor encouraged them to read the NYT.
- Only 19.3% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in purchasing the paper at \$0.35 if NYT funding were eliminated.
- If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued 56.1% would replace it with the internet, 30.7% would replace it with the NYT online, 26.3% would replace it with other newspapers, 17.5% of respondents would replace this new source with TV, 16.7% would replace it with another source not previously mentioned.
- The majority of respondents (65.8%) indicated that they read other newspapers in addition to NYT.

Analysis

- In examining whether readership of other newspapers impacted New York Times readership we found that those who do not read other newspapers were more likely (42%) than those who do (36%) to pick up the NYT 3 or more times per week.
- On the other hand, students who read other newspapers were more likely (64.1%) than those who do not read other newspapers (57.9%) to pick up the NYT 1-2 times per week.
- Students were slightly more likely (93.3% v. 87.2%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their ability to discuss current events if the New York Times had been used in 1 or more classes.
- Students were slightly more likely (94.3% v. 87.5%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their ability to discuss current events if their instructor had encouraged them to read the NYT.
- Students were slightly more likely (93.3% v. 87.2%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their understanding of national/international concerns if the New York Times had been used in 1 or more classes.
- There was no significant difference (88.6% v. 87.5%) between student responses concerning whether or not the NYT has positively changed their ability to discuss current events if their instructor had or had not encouraged them to read the NYT.
- Students were slightly more likely (66.7% v. 53.2%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their participation in classroom discussions if the New York Times had been used in 1 or more classes.
- Students were more likely (68.6% v. 37.5%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their participation in classroom discussions if their instructor had encouraged them to read the NYT.
- Students were more likely (80% v. 53.2%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their writing assignments if the New York Times had been used in 1 or more classes.
- Students were more likely (68.6% v. 50%) to believe that the NYT has positively changed their writing assignments if their instructor had encouraged them to read the NYT.

Conclusion

This survey demonstrates that there are a significantly high percentage of students who believe that the NYT has aided in reaching the ADP goal of raising student awareness about public and international affairs. This is strong evidence that the program is meeting its goal. However, these results also indicate that more needs to be done to encourage faculty to incorporate the NYT into their course curriculum. For example, the cross tabulation analysis suggests that if the NYT is used in class instruction, then student participation in classroom discussion and writing assignments are positively changed. In terms of actually getting the papers into the hands of students and faculty, the pick-up rate indicates that we have a good balance in the number of papers that are going out to the various campus locations, because there are not very many returns each week. Therefore, the current number of papers per day (250) should be maintained.

Appendix A

Frequency Data

| | Number | % Value |
|--|--------|---------|
| How often do you pick up the New York Times? | | |
| 1-2 times a week | 63 | 61.8 |
| 3 or more times a week | 39 | 38.2 |
| Total | 102 | 100.0 |
| Are you a staff member, faculty member, or student? | | |
| Staff | 3 | 2.6 |
| Student | 66 | 57.9 |
| Faculty | 45 | 39.5 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| If you are a faculty member, do you incorporate the New York Times into class instruction? | | |
| Yes | 22 | 50.0 |
| No | 22 | 50.0 |
| Total | 44 | 100.0 |
| If you are a student, do you believe the New York Times has positively changed your ability to discuss current events? | | |
| Yes | 58 | 89.2 |
| No | 7 | 10.8 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |
| If you are a student, do you believe the New York Times has positively changed your understanding of national/international concerns? | | |
| Yes | 59 | 89.4 |
| No | 7 | 10.6 |
| Total | 66 | 100.0 |
| If you are a student, do you believe the New York Times has positively changed your participation in classroom discussions? | | |
| Yes | 37 | 56.1 |
| No | 29 | 43.9 |
| Total | 66 | 100.0 |
| If you are a student, do you believe the New York Times has positively changed your writing assignments? | | |
| Yes | 40 | 61.5 |
| No | 25 | 38.5 |
| Total | 65 | 100.0 |
| If you are a student, is the New York Times being used in one or more of your classes? | | |
| Yes | 15 | 23.4 |
| No | 49 | 76.6 |
| Total | 64 | 100.0 |
| If you are a student, has an instructor encouraged you to read the New York Times? | | |
| Yes | 35 | 57.4 |
| No | 26 | 42.6 |
| Total | 61 | 100.0 |
| If the NYT funding were to be eliminated, would you consider purchasing the paper at 35¢ a copy? | | |
| Yes | 22 | 19.3 |
| No | 53 | 46.5 |

| | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| Unsure | 39 | 34.2 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued, would you replace this source for your news with TV? | | |
| Yes | 20 | 17.5 |
| No | 94 | 82.5 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued, would you replace this source for your news with other newspapers? | | |
| Yes | 30 | 26.3 |
| No | 84 | 73.7 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued, would you replace this source for your news with the internet? | | |
| Yes | 64 | 56.1 |
| No | 50 | 43.9 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued, would you replace this source for your news with NYT online? | | |
| Yes | 35 | 30.7 |
| No | 79 | 69.3 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| If the NYT on-campus papers were to be discontinued, would you replace this source for your news with some other source not mentioned above? | | |
| Yes | 19 | 16.7 |
| No | 95 | 83.3 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |
| Do you read any other newspapers in addition to the New York Times? | | |
| Yes | 75 | 65.8 |
| No | 39 | 34.2 |
| Total | 114 | 100.0 |

Below is a list of the papers that were listed in response to the question “Do you read other newspapers in addition to NYT?”

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Florida Times Union—27 | Le Monde |
| USA Today—9 | The Independent, |
| Wall Street Journal—9 | New York Post |
| Atlanta Journal Constitution-online | News Journal |
| CNN.com | El Mercurio |
| Chicago Tribune | Orlando Sentinel, |
| Sun Sentinel | Savannah Morning News |
| Many other national news sources via the internet and UNF's database collections. | Spinnaker--2 |
| Miami Herald | Chicago Tribune |
| Washington Post--6 | St. Augustine Record --2 |
| Financial Times | Tampa Tribune--2 |
| Folio Weekly--2 | The Guardian |
| St. Petersburg Times--3 | La Tercera |
| Tallahassee Democrat | The Nation , La Nacion (C.R.) |
| Slate.com | Mother Jones |
| Gainesville Sun | El Siglo |
| NY Daily News | Punto Final |
| The Economist--2 | NACLA |
| The New Yorker | NY Times (Online) |
| Harpers | |

Appendix B

Cross-tabulations

| | | Student: NYT being used in 1 or more classes? | |
|--|-----|--|--------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed ability to discuss current events? | Yes | 14 93.3% | 41 87.2% |
| | No | 1 6.7% | 6 12.8% |
| Total | | 15 100.0% | 47 100.0% |

| | | Student: Instructor encouraged you to read NYT? | |
|--|-----|--|--------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed ability to discuss current events? | Yes | 33 94.3% | 21 87.5% |
| | No | 2 5.7% | 3 12.5% |
| Total | | 35 100.0% | 24 100.0% |

| | | Student: NYT being used in 1 or more classes? | |
|---|-----|--|--------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed understanding of national/international concerns? | Yes | 14 93.3% | 41 87.2% |
| | No | 1 6.7% | 6 12.8% |
| Total | | 15 100.0% | 47 100.0% |

| | | Student: Instructor encouraged you to read NYT? | |
|---|-----|--|--------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed understanding of national/international concerns? | Yes | 31 88.6% | 21 87.5% |
| | No | 4 11.4% | 3 12.5% |
| Total | | 35 100.0% | 24 100.0% |

| | | Student: NYT being used in 1 or more classes? | |
|--|-----|--|--------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed your participation in classroom discussions? | Yes | 10 66.7% | 25 53.2% |
| | No | 5 33.3% | 22 46.8% |
| Total | | 15 100.0% | 47 100.0% |
| Student: Instructor encouraged you to read NYT? | | | |
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed your participation in classroom discussions? | Yes | 24 68.6% | 9 37.5% |
| | No | 11 31.4% | 15 62.5% |
| Total | | 35 100.0% | 24 100.0% |
| Student: NYT being used in 1 or more classes? | | | |
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed your writing assignments? | Yes | 12 80.0% | 25 53.2% |
| | No | 3 20.0% | 22 46.8% |
| Total | | 15 100.0% | 47 100.0% |
| Student: Instructor encouraged you to read NYT? | | | |
| | | Yes | No |
| Student: Believe NYT has changed your writing assignments? | Yes | 24 68.6% | 12 50.0% |
| | No | 11 31.4% | 12 50.0% |
| Total | | 35 100.0% | 24 100.0% |