

The Library Media Center of Today

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THE certification pattern for librarianship for many years was as rigid as it was rugged. The person who went through that program worked hard and came out solidly based in the fundamentals of librarianship; but those fundamentals dealt with print materials only. World War II brought forth an array of interesting and in some instances unheard of resources; and problems arose immediately after the war in regard to the handling of all these new types of materials. The librarian, with proper certification for this involved pattern, would have some things added to the program.

Expanding Vistas

Libraries were enjoying somewhat phenomenal growth prior to World War II. Microfilm was coming into prominence because of its facility for storing much in little space (newspapers, for example) and equally because of its facility in transporting even rare materials that could not be sent out like regular books. The writer himself microfilmed hundreds of pages of antebellum materials such as academy catalogs, minutes of boards of trustees, minutes of faculties, etc., in the late thirties.

Union catalogs came into some prominence in those years; and these were very useful wherever they were built. Interlibrary loans grew more popular; processing procedures were streamlined; and thought was

given to the ever-present problem of retrieval. Following the war hundreds of teachers going out of service and back into teaching began to ask for the things that had been available for use in the military: films, tapes, discs, overhead projection, 2 × 2 slides, and all the equipment involved.

Library reaction at first, frankly, was that of interested observer in a neutral corner. It took a while for that position to change to one of glowing reception. That should not be too amazing. There had not been a demand like this before from the patrons. When public school principals and faculties began to ask repeatedly for such items, as part of the library's holdings, arrangements were initiated to add such items to the library.

Two studies financed with funds from the Knapp Foundation were initiated, the first one in the early sixties. The second one, a five-year study, is still in progress, now at the end of the second year.

Standards

The current study, the American Library Association Manpower Project, which is under the direction of Robert Case, concerned itself with task analysis for the first two years, a good solid look at the library of today, what

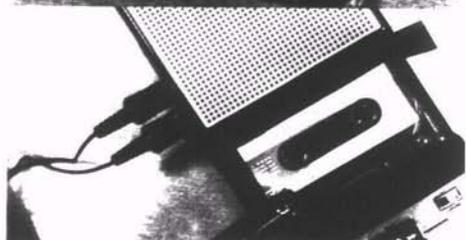
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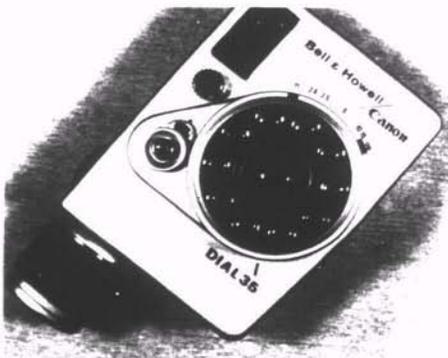
A



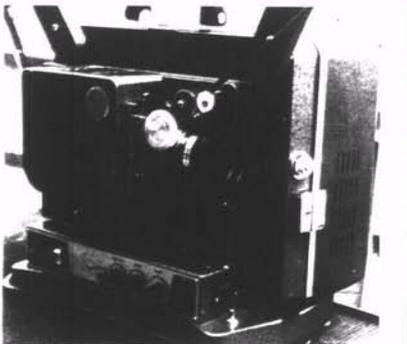
B



C



D



E



F

A—A cassette tape recorder gives flexibility in the use of sound. **B**—Slides and filmstrips can be locally produced and circulated. **C**—The 35mm camera can produce slides and filmstrips. **D**—A 35mm "single frame" camera can give up to 72 slides on a single roll. **E**—A Japanese 16mm sound automatic-thread projector adapts well to student use. **F**—Music, voice, sound may be used by teacher or student, at school or at home.

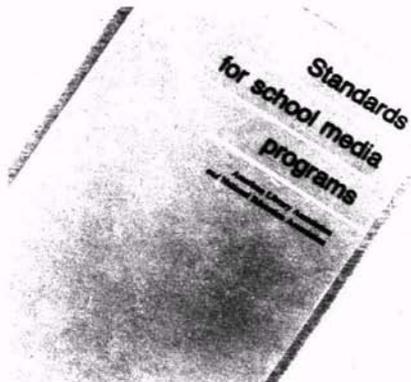
it is doing, and who is carrying on the work.

The two years ended with three big regional meetings at San Francisco, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans. I attended the one in San Francisco and was highly pleased with the way things went. First we took a quick backward look at the survey and the status of developments; and then we turned our attention to the organization and planning for the next three years of the study—looking forward with the library.

The little book, *Standards for School Media Programs*, report of a joint study, appeared about a year ago. This is an excellent study; the best thing about it is that it was done by a large committee made up equally of representatives from the Department of Audiovisual Instruction of the NEA (now the Association for Educational Communications and Technology) and the American Association of School Librarians of the American Library Association. Its focus is upon all materials that might be of help in the library for the student or the faculty member.

What has come to be the most startling announcement in the little book, frequently referred to as the *Guidelines*, is that there should be one fully certified library media specialist for every 250 students. This brought forth something of a shock wave; but today's dream is tomorrow's reality. The library's function is appreciated more than ever before. The library media specialist is at the center of things. His acceptance of this greatly expanded role would really determine whether the figure is realistic or not. The library media center has become physically the center of the school. Its helpfulness extends out in all directions. Even more professional help will be needed in proportion to school population as greater response is given to the needs of faculty and students alike in the school situation.

The little book is a set of guidelines, a collection of helpful and logical suggestions. Their recommendations are given for numbers of books, magazines, filmstrips, films, tapes, discs, etc., according to the population of the school. Equipment needs are spelled out specifically. One whole section offers guidance as to floor space, arrangement,



Photos courtesy of the author

This book treats the selection, financing, and distribution of equipment and materials.

basic needs in the structure of the library media center.

The *Standards* represents a monumental piece of work accomplished through cooperative effort of two large professional organizations. Plans call for revision of the *Standards* every five years. I venture to say that by 1974 most of the current recommendations will have been met and we shall be looking forward to additional recommendations for our expanding school set-up.

Centers Today

The school libraries are flexible. Librarians are becoming well trained in book and nonbook materials. They are not *afraid* of machinery. The certified professional has an interesting staff, made up of professionals, paraprofessionals, clerks, graphic artists, technicians, aides. And—they keep things cleaned up. I detest trying to teach a class while standing knee-deep in extension cords!

Students come one by one, or two by two (more romantic) in small groups or large. They may be accompanied by the instructor—but more likely will be on their own.

A somewhat new development is the satellite center, the sub-library center. This is a small version of the large library, preferably very close to the main library, which will contain the most frequently used items for a particular subject area. Though there



The library media center at Fairview High School, Boulder, Colorado, was planned first; then the rest of the building was added.

are arguments for and against, this seems to have merit if it can be set up skillfully and supervised adequately, without involving too much duplication of materials.

Programmed learning usually includes the following:

- Skinner, the linear approach, constructed response

- Crowder, intrinsic programming, branching technique

- Postlethwait and the audio-tutorial approach.

A dozen years ago these were words to conjure with. Before World War II and for a few years after, the terminology would have been meaningless. Now they represent practices that have become almost commonplace.

Today's library is a busy place, where ideas are being born, accepted, and developed, and where children are learning. The carrel is an old term, dating back several centuries. The "wet carrel" is something else. It

is a dry carrel that has been "wired for sound." It may have dial access, filmstrip viewer, record player, small super 8 projector, a television receiver, etc. Those wet carrels, with all their sophistication, are turning up in the middle of the public school library—where they are wonderfully helpful for individualized instruction, nondirected study, and similar programs.

At the moment we have a plethora of names. We hear librarian, instructional media director, library media director, library media specialist, educational media specialist; library media center, instructional materials center, learning resources center, teaching resources center, and other combinations.

At any rate, this big room with things in it seems to be doing such an important job that it has become the focus of the school to the point that it is planned first and the new school built around it. Let us strain our energy to use it to the best advantage for the children who are in it to learn. □

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