

## The School Library Becomes a Materials Center: Stages of Development

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At this Institute we have been concerned with examining research and practical experience that support the concept of a school library materials center; we have learned of new resources for the school library materials center, and of patterns for organizing and processing these resources. We have spent some time discussing the planning of facilities to house the school library materials center. We have also had presented to us exciting descriptions of school library materials programs that exemplify desirable use of the school library materials center by both teachers and students.

The topic for consideration in this paper, "The School Library Becomes a Materials Center: Stages of Development," is not an easy one to tackle for it is at this point that we are charged with the task of attempting to answer the question, "How does the school library become a materials center?"—or another way of phrasing the topic is, "We are ready and willing, how do we begin?"

I have approached this assignment wondering what could be said that has not already been covered. But, I am happy to have this opportunity to share with you a few elementary beliefs, activities, and programs that may reinforce what you are already doing, or may give you, who are school librarians, the courage to implement plans for the further development of your school library materials center.

In attempting to answer the question ("How do we begin?"), it is essential for the individual school librarian, or the library supervisor, to know what his own philosophy is and what his own point of view is concerning the school library materials services. This has been brought out by other speakers who have mentioned this directly or by inference. Since this is fundamental, I shall assume for a few minutes the role of the individual school librarian, and at the same time I hope I represent all school librarians, when I state my own philosophy which is as follows:

The school library—like the school of which it is a part—exists for one basic purpose: the education of children and youth. This central purpose remains constant and has been so since the first school library was ever established.

The school librarian is a participating member of the school faculty that makes up the team that is charged with providing the best possible education for children and youth in a particular school. This is basic!

The school library materials center concept is an approach to the implementation of the basic purpose of the school—the education of children and youth.

I do not have to substantiate this philosophy for you probably would not be attending this Institute if you were not already sympathetic toward the school library materials center concept as a new approach in making available, within a school, many media of instruction. However, I do often have occasion to interpret this concept to school librarians, administrators, classroom teachers, boards of education, and other governing bodies. In doing this I have found the use of transparencies and slides to be effective in reinforcing my points. For example, one transparency on "What's New?", with three overlays, is very effective. The first overlay lists some new trends in instruction: TEAM TEACHING, LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION, INDEPENDENT STUDY, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION, and OFF CAMPUS LEARNING. The other two overlays are made up of a hodge-podge of words depicting services, materials, organization, and facilities needed to support the new trends in instruction. The words appear on the overlays as rays leading to the central theme, "What's New?" These words are: many locations, extended hours, microforms, multi-media, research, study carrels, flexible schedule, faculty space, movable stacks, more materials, A-V coordinator, and continuing education.

As a part of my philosophy I know—accept—and promote these Key Ideas:

The Instructional Materials Concept is here to stay! The old question, "Should we handle audiovisual materials?" has changed to, "How should we handle them?"

Many forces promote the IMC. These forces include changes in curriculum content and teaching methods, and the needs of teachers for assistance in selecting, locating, obtaining, and using varied instructional media.

Each media has special values, and some limitations. Handling all types of instructional materials through one agency—the school library—promotes balance.

Methods must fit purposes. Whatever plan is used in handling instructional media, service is the thing that counts. Whatever is done about selecting, housing, arranging, organizing, processing, and circulating audiovisual materials and equipment must be decided in terms of the needs of the individual school.

Problems must be faced and overcome. The problems arise from inadequacies in budget, staff, facilities, and selection aids.

We know more than we think we do. Basic principles for the selection, organization, and use of library materials apply to audiovisual as well as to printed materials. Machines are getting simpler all the time! They neither bite nor talk back.

We must begin where we are. We have to begin where we are now and work gradually to improve.

We must think big! The opinions and expectations of students, teachers, and administrators concerning the school library depend upon the vision we have of our work.

As I establish within my own mind key ideas relating to the school library materials services, I must necessarily define and delineate these services. This has already been done in many ways at this Institute; however, I invite you to follow my thinking as I define them. I think of the areas of service as circles that intertwine, separate, overlap, contract, and expand according to size of school and available space for facilities. At no time, however, do I envision any one of the services being eliminated. In the one-room library in a very small school many of the circles would overlap for the same space area could be effectively utilized for more than one activity. In the school with a large enrollment the circles would expand and multiply to meet the needs of the large student body and diversified curriculum. The sketch on the following page illustrates this. Many of the circles located in the School Library Materials Center overlap into the classroom for facilities for listening, viewing, and reading and are essential to teaching and learning in the classroom.

The areas of service are translated on an architect's drawing as building plans; however, the arrangement of the space areas must be designed by the architect to meet the needs of the individual school. The school library supervisor and the school librarian's task is to identify areas of service and to interpret to the architect relationship of the various services. Design of facilities is the task of the school architect.

After an identification has been made of the areas of service, the school library materials center has to contribute in promoting the single purpose of the school—namely the education of children and youth, it is then necessary to work together as a part of the faculty team. This might be to:

Study and interpret the need to centralize materials.

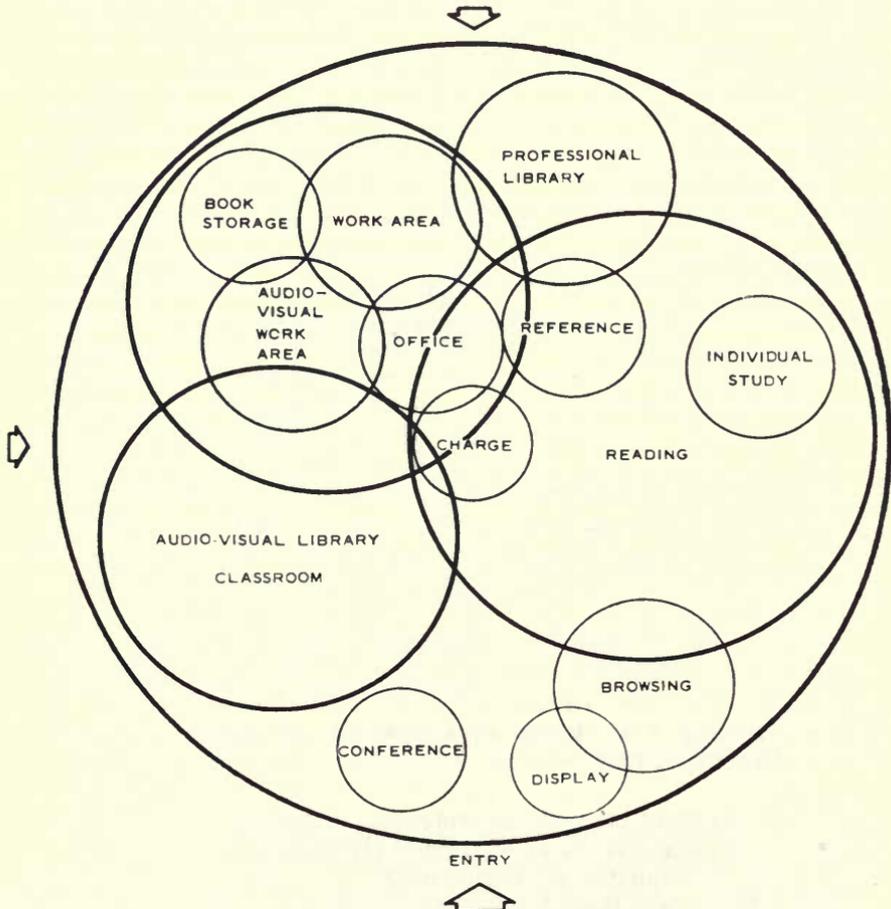
Where are materials now located in the school?

How are these materials organized?

Who administers them?

A first step might be the simple one of taking an inventory. Can you imagine a business, with a similar investment as that found in most schools, not maintaining an inventory? I do not recommend that a school librarian do this on his own; this is a team activity.

After the school knows what it has, it is ready to start bringing the instructional materials together to be organized, indexed, or cataloged. Filmstrips are excellent audio-visual media to begin with for filmstrips require very little housing space and can be cataloged as books are, or can be indexed in a less detailed manner. It may be that most equipment and some instructional materials should never be housed in the center itself, but all instructional materials and equipment should be organized and administered by the center. Usually equipment is located where it is most often used except for "spares" and types used sporadically by several teachers or groups.



The School Library Materials Center

Set up simple and sound distribution or circulation patterns for materials and equipment.

Set up a budget, based on research and statistical data, for centralizing purchases of all materials and equipment.

Assume the role of a specialist in the selection of the various media. This carries with it the responsibility to know selection sources and to have competencies essential to the evaluation of materials.

Begin with what the present library can manage, and the rest will follow.

Point out the values of school library materials services whenever and wherever possible. One excellent method is by providing the level of services that will set a good example.

Remember to use audio-visual materials and equipment as an integral part of the services to students and teachers, within the confines of the library.

This is a big order if the individual school librarian thinks he must do it all alone. The library supervisor has a responsibility to assist whether he be a state, county, or city school library supervisor. Working as a member of the administrative staff he:

1. Interprets functions: to the library and education profession; to governing bodies, including boards of education and legislative groups; to PTA's, Citizens for Better Schools, and other school related groups; to lay groups. The use of visuals and statistical data are two effective techniques to explain.
2. Promotes multi-media concept by including all types of media in subject bibliographies and by incorporating multi-media services in state standards.
3. Develops and implements standards as a part of the team. The supervisor participates in the evaluation of services as related to standards.
4. Publishes, produces, and distributes aids such as bibliographies; guidelines for evaluation, selection, acquisition, organization, and utilization of various media; transparencies, films, filmstrips, and recordings as well as guidelines for servicing equipment. This is opportunity unlimited!
5. Directs in-service programs on school library materials services by such activities as direct instruction, group projects, demonstrations of newer media, credit, and non-credit courses. The library supervisor also serves as a resource specialist to other in-service programs in the state or in the school system. This is opportunity unlimited!

6. Directs and participates in conferences on a multitude of topics directly and indirectly related to the school library materials center concept.
7. Serves as resource specialist to curriculum committees, publication committees, workshops, and conferences.
8. Encourages librarian and other faculty members to visit and observe in action good school library materials center such as the Knapp School Libraries.
9. Assists in the preparation of realistic budget requests to finance school library materials centers.
10. Encourages the establishment of demonstration libraries that administer a full program of materials services. Seeks foundation or other type grant support.
11. Encourages teacher and library education institutions to incorporate the school library materials center concept in their training programs.
12. Encourages schools with quality school library materials centers to participate in teacher and library internship or practice work programs.
13. Recruits qualified staff.

Many of these activities of the library supervisor can be just as easily assumed by the librarian in the individual school.

The school library supervisor does not work alone. He finds ways to work with and to solicit help from other staff members, professional organizations, and governmental agencies with responsibilities for interpreting and promoting the school library materials center concept. Some of these groups have already been identified by other speakers at this Institute. There are, however, three documents that I wish to call to your attention as having had great influences, in my own state, on the development of libraries that are striving to become materials centers. One is Standards for School Library Programs,<sup>1</sup> and the other is the policy statement of the Chief State School Officers, in the Responsibilities of State Departments for School Library Programs.<sup>2</sup> These two documents were developed by the two groups that have determined to a great extent school library development in the United States. We find The Evaluative Criteria: 1960 Edition,<sup>3</sup> and especially its "F Section: Instructional Materials Services—Library and Audio-Visual," another instrument in influencing secondary and junior high school library development.

Experimental programs and special projects are also utilized to accelerate the development of instructional materials services. You are familiar with many such projects and programs. I cite one exciting project—The Shaker Heights, Ohio F.A.E. Project which was

initiated last year. This three-year project, financed by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, involves two elementary schools and has as its main objective the helping of pupils in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades to become independent users of instructional materials by mastering library and study skills. The libraries in the two schools are Learning Centers with superior book collections, ample collections of filmstrips, teaching tapes, flat pictures, overhead transparencies, facilities for independent study using multi-media, and the creation of semi-separate areas within the room to facilitate carrying on several different activities simultaneously. Another feature of the F.A.E. Project is the availability of a technician who produces transparencies for the overhead projector for both pupils and staff members. Traditional scheduling of library periods has been eliminated; instead, staff members permit and urge children to take advantage of the resources of the Learning Center as the need arises, thus shifting the emphasis from the teaching process to the learning process. It is predicted that results from the Shaker Heights F.A.E. Project will make a significant contribution to the independent use of multi-media by the student within the elementary school library.

In summary, one could state that it is our job to develop libraries that are materials centers and learning resource centers. This rate of development is affected by the following points:

A. Staff time. Sufficient personnel and effective utilization of staff are essential. When the school library materials center moves from a one-man operation to a staff operation, careful consideration should be given to effective staffing patterns that include job classifications which will provide the varied competencies needed to give the desired services. It is in this area that sound recommendations should evolve from the profession.

B. Staff preparation. School librarians need competency in printed materials, audio-visual materials, and instructional methods. Developing such competency calls for broader pre-service preparation and more and better in-service training. In addition, the technician, the subprofessionals and the library clerk need special competencies and training.

C. Technical processes. The individual school library materials center should be free of technical processes to the extent that it is feasible and possible. System-wide and even multi-system processing centers should be encouraged.

D. Selection aids. Evaluative sources to help locate and select audio-visual materials are woefully inadequate; however, the situation will be improved with the publication of the Educational Media Index in 1964.

E. Budget. Granted that present sources are inadequate, the school library should acquire at least a minimum collection in each media and add materials in areas of greatest need and demand.

The profession has the opportunity to exert its energies to the important task of affecting effective ways of making all learning media available to the student at the right time, in the right form, and at the right place. And, as Oliver Wendell Holmes so ably put it, "I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in which direction we are moving."

#### REFERENCES

1. American Association of School Librarians, School Library Standards Committee. Standards for School Library Programs. Chicago, American Library Association, 1960.

2. Council of Chief State School Officers. Responsibilities of State Departments of Education for School Library Services. Washington, D. C., Council of Chief State School Officers, 1961.

3. Evaluative Criteria: 1960 Edition. Washington, National Study of Secondary School Evaluation, 1960.