



# The Shaker Heights, Ohio, Program

MILDRED L. KROHN

LIBRARIES HAVE BEEN A PART OF THE Shaker Heights school system almost from its inception (with one school) more than fifty years ago. In the first ten years of its existence the pattern of a library in each school was established.

The total library program is guided by the school library philosophy and objectives written by the school librarians in 1966-67\* and based on the educational philosophy of the Shaker Heights Board of Education. The text is as follows:

Since the emphasis in education today is on learning rather than teaching, the role of the school library is of prime importance, a changing and growing one. Both the knowledge explosion and the many technological developments in education create new responsibilities for helping the school system adapt to the great changes in today's world. Now the library is geared for total education for all students. Its aim is to develop in each student a conviction that continuous learning is an essential characteristic of every responsible citizen in a world of accelerating change. Its goal is to reach each student and help him attain his fullest potential.

The library is central to the purpose of the school, not simply a repository for books, but a multi-media materials center and a source of inspiration and information which aids students and all members of the professional staff. It is the storehouse of all recorded knowledge, since the individual needs to have access to all information regardless of the medium through which it is presented. It is a place where a pupil may explore any subject or pursue any path of learning in which his interest has been aroused, either by the curriculum or by his own personal experience. The school library supplies the tools and the background of information which will enable pupils to explore, to dig deeper, and to discover

---

Mildred L. Krohn is Coordinator of Libraries, Shaker Heights City School District, Ohio.

\* The statement is circulated in mimeographed form only.

### *The Shaker Heights, Ohio, Program*

that there are no limits to learning. It acts at all times as a coordinating and integrating instructional agency within the school, serving all subject areas and all methods of teaching.

An effective school library program is instrumental in helping to fulfill the educational objectives of the district in the following ways:

By working in cooperation with teachers and administrators to acquire and organize a wide variety of materials to support and enrich the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served.

By creating an atmosphere favorable to the growth of factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards, making each pupil aware of the importance of the great library heritage and the power of books in his everyday living.

By teaching the necessary library skills to enable both teachers and pupils to make effective use of books and libraries in the interest of research and self-education. To this end the librarian will cooperate with the teacher in planning not only a logical, sequential arrangement of learning experiences from kindergarten through high school, but also by integrating library skills with the classroom curriculum.

By providing teachers with materials, suggestions, and assistance in the use of the many types of instructional materials and displays available in the library, for it is through the cooperation of the librarian and teacher that each pupil is served most effectively.

By providing information on all sides of controversial issues, so that staff and students may make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.

By guiding and assisting pupils in their choice of reading materials so as to foster a love of reading, a critical judgment of books, and a genuine appreciation of fine literature.

By providing materials representative of the many religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

The library program begins at the elementary level with weekly scheduled classes of from twenty minutes for kindergarten to one hour for sixth grades. It has been and continues to be the practice to expose students to regular library visits, with their teacher in attendance, for lessons in library skills, for sharing of reading experiences, for panel discussions, for story telling, and for introduc-

tion to books of all kinds—new ones, classics, fairy tales, reference books, *Readers' Guide*, Newbery-Caldecott winners, and so on. Students thus acquire the library habit.

However, a small revolution began in 1962, when the Ford Foundation gave a three-year grant to two elementary schools to experiment in a project emphasizing the teaching of work-study skills to prepare students for independent study. Non-scheduled classes in grades four through six were planned to encourage students to come to the library when they had the need. Multi-media materials were added; large group instruction, by grade level and with the help of the overhead projector, was inaugurated; and increased staff was employed to meet American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards. During the first year librarians taught all the scheduled large group lessons, but as the project progressed teachers and specialists taught some of the lessons that were more appropriately within their training and experience, such as those relating to maps and globes, outlining, charts and graphs, and so on. The actual program has been described in several publications so it will not be repeated here. (See "General References" below.)

However, the project had impact on all nine elementary schools in relation to program, physical facilities, and room arrangement. Only one has not increased floor space during the last four years. A trend developed by which the original library moved from a space the size of a regular classroom to either the kindergarten room or the auditorium, or else a wall to an adjoining classroom was removed to give additional space needed for increased enrollment and the inclusion of multi-media materials.

Large group instruction and the use of the overhead projector are now found in all schools. Transparencies are available; film strips and projectors are available for home use as well as in the library. Scheduled classes continue in seven of the nine schools, but free research periods are available when teachers can bring classes or send individuals or groups for special research or additional class projects. This is no problem in the smaller schools, but the largest school (740 enrollment) could only make free research periods possible by reducing time of scheduled classes on an otherwise completely scheduled day.

Where unscheduled classes were in effect, a considerable drop in circulation was noted in the project schools—especially during the first, and to a lesser degree during the second, year. Classroom teach-

### *The Shaker Heights, Ohio, Program*

ers felt the need for encouraging reading experiences to supplement the research and independent study in which facts were needed and materials were used, but in which books were not necessarily circulated or borrowed. Consequently, scheduling by appointment was encouraged.

The Ford Foundation grant ended in 1965. However, Project Discovery began in 1964 at our largest elementary school when Britannica Films made available a thousand film strips and five hundred 16 mm. films in one school. Bell and Howell put a self-threading film strip and a film projector with a cart in each classroom where a 70-inch projector screen was also installed. The materials have increased to seventeen hundred film strips and seven hundred films since 1964. The materials are housed in a former storage room adjoining the library; a door was cut through one wall so that it became a part of the library. The purpose of the project is to see what happens to learning and the curriculum in one school when an abundance of materials in addition to books is available. A progression has been noted in the use of materials from looking at complete films and film strips at the novelty stage to more discriminatory use of a few frames of a film strip and parts of a film as they relate to a lesson. These materials are also available for home use by students and faculty.

The elementary school program has forced the secondary schools to change their facilities and to include multi-media. One junior high has removed a wall to make possible a listening area, which was all that space limitations would allow. The other junior high has converted the two conference rooms to listening and viewing areas. The high school has doubled its floor space, added conference rooms, a workroom, some records and film strips, and a tape deck, and some of the study carrels have been wired for sound.

The program in the secondary schools is quite different from that in the elementary schools. The junior high has orientation classes for new students, gives book talks at teachers' requests, teaches library skills according to need, and introduces reference and special materials when class assignments make this meaningful. Subject and special bibliographies are made on request and as needed.

The high school library provides seating for a hundred and fifty, which includes twenty-nine carrels for individual study. There are also two seminar rooms which may be used for individual study, library instruction, college conferences, or by teachers wishing to bring classes for library materials or a television program, or to listen to

tapes. A special collection contains eight hundred college catalogs, directories, guides, scholarship information, and college profiles. Several newspapers and a hundred and thirty-five magazines are received regularly, and a five-year file is kept for reference. The vertical file consists of forty-eight drawers containing clippings, pamphlets, pictures, and transparencies. Filmstrips and records are available for information about some fifty colleges.

Materials, equipment, and services are provided by the Instructional Materials Center in a room adjoining the library, extending the scope of service which the library can provide to the professional staff and student body. The primary function of this Center is to provide films, magnetic tapes, transparencies, records, filmstrips, flat pictures, slides, and copies of materials, together with the equipment necessary to utilize them; it also schedules and orders films, tapes and filmstrips for staff use.

A listening center for tapes and discs and two foreign language stations are available for individual student use. There are one disc and four tape players which feed into twelve listening carrels located in the library. A student uses earphones to listen to tapes or discs on file in the library; tapes are made from lectures given by teachers in certain classes, and tapes and discs from outside sources are also available.

Most of the libraries at all levels are basically multi-media equipped, but there is also a district teaching media center, which is a separate department and not part of the Library Services Department. It houses films, tapes, transparencies and educational kits. Supplementary materials are available from this center as needed. The center assists in pre-viewing, selecting and evaluating audio-visual materials; classifies and catalogs them; provides for booking, scheduling and distributing of materials and equipment; takes care of repairs; produces transparencies, tapes, and slides; dry mounts and laminates flat pictures; and conducts workshops and in-service programs in the use of materials and equipment; production of materials and operation of equipment.

One of the librarians' most important functions is the selection of materials. Ten regular monthly book meetings are held each year and are invaluable in helping to select books according to curriculum needs of the school system. The coordinator each month sends at least fifteen books to each elementary librarian, twenty-five to the junior high and often more than eighty to the senior high librarian. Li-

### *The Shaker Heights, Ohio, Program*

brarians seek the help of teachers, curriculum specialists and students to evaluate at all levels. At the high school the librarian sends curriculum materials to department chairmen who distribute titles within the department for evaluation. Something is said about every title on the monthly mimeographed book review list, which also becomes the order list for each library. Board members, administrators, principals, library school students and guests from other school systems have attended and find these meetings most practical, helpful and enlightening.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the Shaker Heights program is that the secondary schools do not have the variety or quantity of audio-visual materials in their libraries which are available at the elementary level. A start has been made, but space limitations in these larger schools have made progress slower than anticipated.

The improvement of the total library program during the past five years has been accelerated by participation in special projects which gave outside financial aid to three elementary schools. As they developed and improved program, staff and physical facilities, the other schools were not satisfied with their existing standards. Librarians, principals, parents and students wanted the richer, more varied type of program developed in the project schools, and their voices were heard.

All the schools required physical change and renovation to make room for the audio-visual materials formerly housed elsewhere in their buildings. All schools but one have increased their floor space for listening and viewing areas, research and study areas, and teaching areas for library instruction. Emphasis on independent study has caused the card catalog to be used more than ever before; consequently, many existing catalogs were rearranged with the drawers spread out horizontally instead of stacked in the usual vertical arrangement.

All these developments have been helped by a sympathetic and cooperative board of education and administration, which have provided for growth and expansion more speedily than could have been predicted. Future goals include additional staff, both professional and clerical, and more budget and more space in some schools. The attainment of ALA-recommended quantitative standards is most desirable but a larger concern is an exemplary qualitative program. The Shaker Heights school district is making sincere efforts in that direction.

MILDRED L. KROHN

*General References*

- “. . . and this is Lomond School,” *The Instructor*, 74:47-49+, June 1965.
- Krohn, Mildred L. “Learning and the Learning Center,” *Educational Leadership*, 21:217-222, Jan. 1964.
- Krohn, Mildred L. “The Lomond Learning Center,” *School Library Journal*, 12: 25-26, Dec. 1965.
- Krohn, Mildred L. “Study in Self Reliance,” *Library Journal*, 90:4520-4522, Oct. 15, 1965.
- “Two Elementary Schools in Shaker Heights, Ohio,” *ALA Bulletin*, 58:118-119, Feb. 1964.