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The School Media Program:

Emerging Multi-Media Services

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AN ORGANIZED PROGRAM of school media services
exists to serve the students, the teachers, and the educational goals of
the school. Any description of emerging multi-media services and
their evolutionary development is directly related to the trends and
problems of education in general. These media services have evolved
over a period of many years beginning with the development of schools
and learning materials in the thirteen original states. Many agencies,
including schools, libraries, boards of education, state departments of
education, the professional associations (the American Library Associa-
tion and the National Education Association and its constituent depart-
ments), as well as private foundations and interested citizens have
been involved in the development of these services.

Historically the first public support for learning resources was given
for public school libraries by New York and Massachusetts and dated
in the early 1800s. These school district libraries were little used; their
meager collections were more suitable for adults than school students,
and staff and funds were small or nonexistent. For the most part early
school libraries were closely associated with public library service to
schools as well as with the development of a literature separate from
that of textbooks.

The first comprehensive study of library service in the United States
deplored the fact that young people below the age of fourteen were
not served.[1] In the years that followed public libraries developed
children's rooms and services.[2] In reports of the early history of the
American Library Association and the National Education Association
many studies were made of cooperation for library services to youth,
although resources for teaching and learning planned especially for

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students were scarce. Recommended lists of books, the debate over classroom collections versus central collections, and traveling collections from public or county libraries were the major efforts of the late 1800s.[3]

About 4,000 secondary school libraries were established by the turn of the century. The Certain reports, as well as the publications of the Secondary and Elementary School Principals, were important beginnings of standards for accreditation of schools in the early 1900s. These reports gave a rationale for teacher-librarians and materials for school libraries and were the forerunners of standards developed by the five regional school-accrediting associations. Typical of these concerns was the 1915 publication issued jointly by the National Education Association Committee on Library Organization and Equipment and the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which detailed the services and equipment which should be available in junior and senior high schools.

The American Council on Education has also been influential in the development of standards. Its division, the National Study of Secondary School Evaluation, an organization in which all five regional accrediting associations are represented, has issued an *Evaluative Criteria* every ten years since 1940. Instruments for qualitative evaluation of the instructional program including media services are provided in definitive schedules of criteria. Originally the services were separated—one for library and one for audiovisual. However, the 1960 edition, section F, was "Instructional Materials Services—Library and Audio-Visual," and the 1969 edition, section 6, was "Educational Media Services—Library and Audio-Visual." [4]

Several private educational foundations, including the Carnegie Corporation, the General Education Board, the Rosenwald Fund and the Rockefeller Fund contributed to school library development and media services in the 1920s and 1930s. By 1927 forty-five of the forty-eight states had laws governing the establishment of school libraries.

In 1945 the American Library Association issued its first national standards for school libraries—*School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow*.[5] This landmark served as a guide for objectives and as a program for the next fifteen years. Early in the 1950s, library and audiovisual specialists began to develop and establish a "unity of materials" philosophy and often this service came from the instructional materials center. New standards were issued again in 1960 by the American Library Association through its newly established divi-

sion, the American Association of School Librarians. This publication—
Standards for School Library Programs—provided goals for staff,
users, materials, budget, facilities, and equipment.[6]

Early audiovisual units in schools began with museum services.
Noteworthy were the school services from Philadelphia, St. Louis,
and Cleveland museums. Large cities were also the leaders in estab-
lishing and organizing audiovisual education—St. Louis, Chicago,
Newark, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Philadel-
phia. The successful uses of training aids by the armed services in
World Wars I and II gave added impetus to the movement. Audio-
visual instruction in the 1950s and early 1960s was organized around
16 mm. films, filmstrips, tapes and recordings. The newer media for
individualization of instruction—programmed materials, dial access,
8 mm. and super 8 mm., instructional television as well as miniaturiza-
tion of equipment have been recent additions.

The professional association, Department of Audiovisual Instruc-
tion (DAVI) of the National Education Association (now the Associ-
ation for Educational Communications and Technology), for the past
fifty years has carried the leadership role in the continued growth and
utilization of audiovisual communications.

A benchmark study—the National Education Association's Tech-
nological Development Project directed by James Finn—was unique
in its thoughtful assessment of growth in audiovisual education since
1930.[7] The yearly surveys by Thomas Hope for the Society of Motion
Picture and Television Engineers report production and sales of
16 mm. projectors and non-theatrical films in the *Journal* of the society.
Eleanor Godfrey in her study, *The State of Audiovisual Technology:
1961-1966,* found that the teacher was the key to selection and utiliza-
tion of audiovisual media.[8] Sherman and Faris [9] developed guidelines
for a basic school program—personnel, materials, and equipment—
which became the accepted *Standards* adopted by DAVI and the As-
sociation of Chief State School Audiovisual Officers in 1965.

Demonstration projects have been very successful in improving
media services as well as serving as models for other schools. One of
the most successful national demonstration projects in media utiliza-
tion was the Knapp School Libraries Project funded by the Knapp
Foundation and directed by the American Association of School Li-
brarians.[10] The purpose of the project was to bring the library program
in the eight project schools up to the 1960 *Standards* in services, staff
utilization, resources, and facilities. A unique part of the project was

the visitation program which allowed teams of leaders from school communities to observe the exemplary programs and return to improve their own media services.

A second promising new venture funded by the Knapp Foundation is the School Library Manpower Project. The first phase completed a task analysis of the jobs performed in media centers.[11] The second phase is the identification of competencies for the professionals who serve in school media centers and the restructuring of professional media education for these professional tasks. In addition to library science and audiovisual communications, the new discipline—media sciences—will draw on psychology, sociology, administration, curriculum, business management, communications theory, computer science, educational research, and other fields.

Federal legislation has had a significant impact upon evolving media services. The units of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 made provision for strengthening instruction including much audiovisual equipment in "critical" subjects such as science and mathematics. Eventually it was enlarged to cover most areas of the curriculum. Under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, staff and remodeling of facilities have improved services to educationally deprived children. Title II of the ESEA has certainly improved the quality and quantity of media collections.[12] Many states established elementary school library media programs. Title III made grants for supplementary centers and services and many projects had strong media components.

School libraries and audiovisual departments in schools greatly increased after World War II, although more than one-half of the elementary schools were without centralized services in the early 1960s.[13]

Until the twentieth century the body of information and literature available was small, and the quality of resources for teaching and learning was poor. Research and scientific endeavors began to play a central role in improving the learning resources available to schools. Changes in instruction and the importance of the development of "library and audiovisual materials," rather than only text materials, were transitional stages in developing multi-media services. Many professional journals and books on curriculum change reflect the dawning of the "child centered" school with the development of each individual as a whole human being striving to become all that he can become.[14]

Many new curriculum studies planned by leaders in the academic disciplines emphasize the growing importance of independent study and the individualization of instruction.[15] Some of the more visionary curriculum leaders have urged team teaching,[16] the nongraded school,[17] the middle school,[18] and flexible scheduling [19] as new ways of organizing the school day.

Any history of the emerging school media program in the United States will identify the decade of the 1970s as a time of action. It is no longer a matter of conjecture that most quality schools have learning centers of all media for the instructional, inspirational and intellectual pursuits of students and teachers in today's modern educational program. One of the most significant developments in education at the turn of the decade was the preparation and issuance of new national standards for media resources, *Standards for School Media Programs*,[20] by the two professional associations directly associated with media— the American Association of School Librarians and the then Department of Audiovisual Instruction—in cooperation with an advisory board consisting of representatives from twenty-eight professional and civic associations.

This program of action has mean the adoption of new terminology and revised patterns of service that illustrate the vital, enthusiastic quality program required in teaching and learning for today's students and teachers. Since media and media programs exist to serve the constituents and goals of the school, terminology and patterns of administration may differ among schools. There are school libraries, instructional materials centers, learning resources centers, instructional media centers, library media centers, and audiovisual centers. Again the terms as defined in the *Standards* are cited for clarity:

Media—Printed and audiovisual forms of communication and their accompanying technology.

Media program—All the instructional and other services furnished to students and teachers by a media center and its staff.

Media center—A learning center in a school where a full range of print and audiovisual media, necessary equipment, and services from media specialists are accessible to students and teachers.

Media staff—The personnel who carry on the activities of a media center and its program.

Media specialist—An individual who has broad professional preparation in educational media. If he is responsible for instruc-

tional decisions, he meets requirements for teaching. Within this field there may be several types of specialization, such as (a) level of instruction, (b) areas of curriculum, (c) type media, and (d) type of service. In addition, other media specialists, who are not responsible for instructional decisions, are members of the professional media staff and need not have teacher certification, e.g., certain types of personnel in television and other media preparation areas.

Media technician—A media staff member who has training below the media specialist level, but who has special competencies in one or more of the following fields: graphics production and display, information and materials processing, photographic production, and equipment operation and simple maintenance.

Media aide—A media staff member with clerical or secretarial competencies.

System media center—A center at the school system level to provide supporting and supplemented services to school media centers in individual schools of the system.

Unified media program—A program in which instructional and other services related to both print and audiovisual media are administered in a single unified program under one director.

Teaching station—Any part of the school (usually but not always a classroom) where formal instruction takes place. Media centers are not included within this definition, although it is recognized that instruction is part of the media program.[21]

The school media program is a program of services throughout the school to students and teachers from a specialized staff when and wherever the need for learning resources occurs. These services emanate in a center and range from assistance in independent study to serving as a member of team teaching; from direct teaching for a group of students in a subject discipline to dial access and computer-assisted instruction in very sophisticated learning areas such as in Oak Park-River Forest [22] or Nova High School.

The key to such a program is adequate professional media staff (some generalists and some specialists) with support from technicians, aides and clerks. Personnel specialization should include reference, research, subject disciplines, and guidance in utilization, graphics preparation, message design or instructional technology, television, audiovisual communications, as well as learning theory and management.

Therefore, a good media service program serves the objectives of the total educational program of the school by:

1. Providing media professionals with sufficient supportive staff to consult, organize, and manage media resources, services, and facilities in media centers, in subcenters, in classrooms or wherever learning takes place.

2. Locating, gathering, organizing, coordinating, promoting, and distributing a rich variety of quality learning resources for use by teachers and students as individuals and in groups to improve learning, and by including involvement of teachers and students in the selection process.

3. Making available facilities, services, and equipment necessary for the selection, organization, management, and use of printed and audiovisual resources, including availability at all hours of the school day, before and after school, and extended hours.

4. Offering leadership and by counseling and guiding teachers and students in motivation, utilization, and experimentation in terms of the best media or combination of media for the particular learning situation.

5. Supplying a quality media environment with efficient work spaces for students, faculty, and media staff for reading, listening, and viewing activities.

6. Providing reference resources and specialized reference staff in reference areas to meet the informational needs of the faculty and staff.

7. Furnishing facilities for and assistance in the production of self-created instructional materials, displays, and demonstrations to meet the special needs of students and teachers.

8. Exploring the uses of modern technology, including exploratory use of computers, in attacking the control and synthesis of knowledge to encourage more learning in less time.

9. Encouraging supervisory and other supplemental services from districts or larger units, including investigating the desirability and cost of central services required in processing the varied learning media for all the schools of a cooperating area.

10. Offering information on new educational and curricular developments and participating in networks of knowledge for the benefit of students and teachers.

Such a program must have staff; collections of materials, equipment,

and devices; facilities and funds. Each part is dependent upon the other. Basic to the program is the support of school board members, school administrators, curriculum specialists, classroom teachers, and community leaders. The concern for quality education must be shared by all citizens.[23]

The course of the school media program from a few books which a teacher owned to the computer-based multi-staffed, multi-media center represents the efforts of many dedicated professionals. That this goal will be accomplished remains with school administrators who have vision; dedicated library, audiovisual and media specialists; creative teachers and active learners supported by boards of education and community, state and national leaders.

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