The Curriculum Consultant Role of the School Library Media Specialist

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SCHOOL LIBRARIANSHIP HAS DESCRIBED a role for the librarian in curriculum in its literature for almost half a century. The national standards of the profession reflect the evolution of that role. Theoreticians within and outside the profession offer conflicting notions about desirable directions for that role in curriculum development. Research literature, although thin, relates librarians' involvement in curriculum to their qualifications and to the perceptions of administrators and teachers about their role.

EARLY VIEWPOINTS IN TEXTS AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

The texts of the American Library Association (ALA) in the 1930s and 1940s stressed that school librarians work with teachers and students in selecting and using all types of materials which would contribute to the instructional program.[1] Its "Experimenting Together" series, with volumes on the librarian and teachers of English, science, music and home economics, emphasized such concerns.[2] Cooperation between teacher and librarian in planning and using the learning resources of library and community was the message. The authors of one work reached out to suggest that the librarian might do missionary work among teachers by demonstrating in small ways how their instruction could be made more fruitful.[3]

ALA standards for school libraries specified more clearly the role of the librarian as curriculum consultant. In the 30-year period 1945-75, four such statements appeared. The standards of 1945 and 1960[4] cited

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two major purposes of the school library: (1) to cooperate with teachers in selecting and using library materials which would contribute to the teaching program, and (2) to participate with teachers and administrators in programs for continuing professional and cultural growth of the school staff. The 1960 standards expanded the responsibility of the school library to include films, recordings and new media. The librarian may have full or partial responsibility for the audiovisual program, which might include producing instructional materials as well as planning the use of radio and television. The 1960 document elaborated the activities in which the librarian participates — with students, teachers and administrators — as part of the instructional program of the school. The unifying element in all the activities was their connection with media — finding them, using them, making them. To carry out these services, the library staff member should serve on all school committees for curriculum development, text-book selection and policy-making.

The 1969 standards, prepared jointly by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Department of Audiovisual Instruction (DAVI) of the National Education Association (since 1970 known as the Association for Educational Communications and Technology or AECT), were noteworthy not only as a cooperative venture but also for their urging of a unified library/audiovisual effort, newly labeled "the media program."[5] The librarian and audiovisual specialist became media specialists. Specific responsibilities of the media specialist working with teachers matched those of the 1960 standards, with the addition of designing learning activities and instructional materials. These charges reflected DAVI's growing concern with instructional development, which was noted in the introduction to a position paper prepared for its board of directors in 1967: "The role of the media professional in education is changing from that of a keeper and dispenser of teaching aids to that of an analyst and designer of instructional systems who must be centrally involved in the planning of learning environments, and in providing for related support functions and evaluative procedures."[6] The 1969 standards recognized new emphases on individualization, inquiry and independent learning, and described the media center and its staff as supporting, complementing and expanding the work of the classroom.

The title of the 1975 revision of the 1969 standards, *Media Programs: District and School,* indicated their expanded scope.[7] They differed from preceding standards most markedly, however, in the function claimed for the media program. The term *service* and the concept of a

media program as supplementary and supportive were eliminated. Instead, a program was described in which "curriculum design and media utilization are inextricably interwoven."[8] The activities of the media program were grouped into four categories — design, consultation, information and administration — and included in each were some operations which could be labeled "curriculum consultation." These activities appeared in no special order and repeated many listed in the 1960 and 1969 standards, but added was the responsibility of the media specialist to initiate instructional design and development. Although the 1975 guidelines used the concepts of the technologist — design, system, process, product, interface — and frequently reiterated the need to apply instructional technology to the curriculum, they could be used to support other curriculum orientations.

Thus, in thirty years the profession had enlarged the responsibilities of school librarians from those of service personnel supporting the work of teachers to those of curriculum developers. It is noteworthy that the major role changes came from the jointly prepared standards and parallel the shift of the profession of educational technology from a narrow concept of audiovisual instruction to a broad framework with subprofessions of instructional program development, media product design and media management.[9]

CONCEPTS OF CURRICULUM THEORY

The educational technologists are not the only professionals concerned with curriculum. A brief overview of major concepts of curriculum theory can provide insight into the concerns of some media specialists from a library science orientation about the limitations of the educational technologists' view.

Eisner and Vallance studied contemporary writings about curriculum and classified them into five concepts which they believed exemplified major orientations.[10] The first of these, *curriculum as the development of cognitive processes,* emphasizes the "how" rather than the "what" of education. Learning how to learn is viewed as the central problem of curriculum. This process-oriented approach focuses on the student, aiming to help him develop cognitive skills which presumably will apply to a variety of situations outside of school. They suggest that this concept has been greatly elaborated in recent years in the developmental psychology of Jerome Bruner and Robert Gagné.

Curriculum as technology identifies a concept which, like cognitive processes, centers on the "how" of education. This concept states that the

function of curriculum is finding efficient means to predefined ends. It deals with the technology by which knowledge is communicated and with packaging material efficiently for students' learning. The curriculum-as-technology approach uses the vocabulary of production — input, output, entry behavior, stimulus, and systems to "produce" learning. The learner is neither a problem nor a dynamic element in the system; the key job of the curriculum developer is organizing the instructional package.

The *self-actualization concept* is child-centered and focuses on content. Education liberates and integrates. It enriches the child's present life and offers the tools for self-discovery. Proponents of this doctrine, such as Abraham Maslow, Philip Phenix and Maxine Greene, believe strongly in the potential value of education for growth and personal integrity.

The *social reconstruction-relevance orientation,* as its label implies, emphasizes the role of curriculum and education in reforming society and responding to its future needs. It advocates that schools bridge the gap between what is and what might be. One approach holds that curriculum should provide the tools for individual survival in an unstable world. A second, reformist approach advocates that education intervene to bring about change.

Most traditional of the five concepts is *academic rationalism,* which holds that the primary concern of education is to transmit culture. According to this theory, the curriculum should stress the classic disciplines so that students will be able to understand the writing and thinking of Western culture. This concept has changed in recent years to emphasize the structure of knowledge, or more precisely, the structure of a discipline, its basic concepts and methods of inquiry.

Some school library media specialists fret about being locked into a single approach to curriculum development. They reject labeling the library media program "instructional technology." Symptomatic of their unrest was the AASL board of directors' decision in February 1977 to restore the term *library* to all references to the school's media center and professional staff.[11] Approved terminology became *library* media specialist, *library* media center, and *library* media program. Although AECT leaders decried this decision as a backward step,[12] many AASL members welcomed it as a more accurate designation of major components in the unified media program.[13] Shapiro, under the rubric "Overkill in Instructional Technology," argued for a more humane use of media in the schools and, by implication, a flexible management of them in the school library.[14] Hug, a member of the AASL/AECT Joint Committee on Standards Revision,

believes the 1975 guidelines are sufficiently flexible to support a humanistic curriculum as well as an instructional technological approach.[15] He warns, moreover, against inexperienced personnel attempting a systems approach to curriculum development, believing they may discredit a process which is useful only in competent hands.[16]

Some educational leaders from outside the media field suggest the 1975 guidelines overestimate the knowledge of the media specialist. For example, at a national conference of media directors Brickell commented: "Without exactly saying it the '74 [1975] Guidelines come close to suggesting that you know more about learning than [the faculty] do, and you know how to put together that combination of methods and materials and time, in a sequence to match a kid to learn a thing that he doesn't know. . . . Do you have the superknowledge about instruction so that you could listen to the various proposals and dejudicate among them?"[17]

To what extent library media specialists fulfill their role as outlined in the national guidelines is a key question. Theoreticians from AASL and AECT may advocate for them more power and more resources; yet school personnel outside the media field may be skeptical about their qualifications for curriculum development. The potential impact of media programs upon curriculum, and hence upon students' learning, will not be tested until practicing library media specialists are involved in curriculum work. Researchers have, over a period of time, examined the library media specialists' involvement in curriculum and the factors related to it.

RESEARCH STUDIES

A convenient model for analyzing the role of the library media specialist in curriculum, proposed by this author in an earlier paper, consists of three parts: competencies the media specialist brings to the task; perception of the role of the media specialist by the teacher, the administrator and the media specialist; and the points of entry and exit of the media specialist in the curriculum process.[18]

Competencies of the Library Media Specialist

Four studies in the past decade have attempted to clarify and categorize the varied responsibilities of the library media specialist. In each, task analysis — albeit only one element of a complex audit — aids in identifying the work of the librarian in curriculum development.

The *School Library Personnel Task Analysis Survey* (1969) was part of the initial data collection for the School Library Manpower Project con-

ducted by AASL from 1969 to 1975.[19] The study identified superior school library media centers in each of the 50 states and surveyed them using a checklist of 300 task statements to learn the types of duties carried by staff members. From this work came the 1971 publication of occupational definitions for school library media personnel and a list of seven areas of competency outlined in behavioral statements for the professional education of media personnel.[20] These competency statements served as guidelines for the curricula of six experimental media education programs, and as the basis for the 1973 publication, *Behavioral Requirements Analysis Checklist*.[21] This checklist is composed of about 700 tasks grouped into 7 categories: human behavior, learning and learning environment, planning and evaluation, media, management, research, and professionalism. Each category is broken down into job functions and task descriptions in behavioral terms. The learning and learning environment category lists six functions and forty-three tasks pertaining to curriculum and learning.

The Jobs in Instructional Media Study (JIMS) sponsored by AECT in 1970[22] examined the tasks of audiovisual personnel using a functional job analysis technique and a model, the Domain of Instructional Technology. Tasks were analyzed from two perspectives — what gets done and what people do to get things done — and then classified as data, people or things. Further analysis sorted tasks by degree of complexity and educational level required to complete them. JIMS offered researchers a large group of tasks which could be reclustered into a variety of job descriptions either by function or by difficulty of tasks or skills required.

In 1969 Gaver attempted to identify the variety of services which media staffs in high schools offer their patrons by a survey using a checklist of approximately 280 items.[23] The list is useful for its comprehensiveness, although Gaver warned that it measures only the media specialists' perceptions of service rendered and not the opinions of faculty or students.

Liesener (1976) formulated a systematic planning process for school media programs.[24] Included are detailed inventories and forms used in early stages of the process to determine the priorities faculty and students attach to media services. Services are classified in five areas: access to materials, equipment and space; reference; production; instruction; and consultation. The inventories are written from the users' viewpoint and permit them to choose the amount of service desired on a continuum ranging from "self-service" to "full service."

The 1969 standards, specifying broad professional preparation in media and education, motivated a number of studies directed at determining how prepared library media staff in the field believed they were

to handle the new tasks suggested for them. Respondents frequently cited their need for more preparation in instructional design and development, and in the handling and utilization of nonprint materials (e.g., Crowe in Pennsylvania, 1973; Van Dreser in Nebraska, 1971; Ball in the southeast, 1975; Marshall in South Carolina, 1972; Rosinger in Ohio, 1968; and Ayers in southern Appalachia, 1972).[25]

Universities educating media personnel have assessed practitioners' needs in order to plan for continuing education. For example, in 1975 Wayne State University polled media staff in Wayne County, Michigan, to find out their interest in topics such as administration and management, equipment, materials, curriculum and instruction, and inservice training.[26] Three of the four highest-ranked topics, selected by more than half of the 182 respondents, dealt with curriculum: helping teachers plan and develop multimedia units, applying library/media to new curriculum developments, and participating in cooperative curriculum development.

Hoban (1973) studied the professional and personal profiles of members of the Division of Instructional Development of AECT.[27] Only a minority (37 percent) of the respondents worked at the elementary and secondary school levels. A major focus of his study was to determine the range of learning theories and instructional guides used by developers in their work. He found them limited to a very small range of theories (Skinner was predominant) and to the instructional guides essentially of Gagné, Bloom and Mager.

These reports suggest that many practitioners believe they are ill-equipped to bear the responsibilities of newer media and curriculum development. However, polls of graduates of the six experimental library media programs in the AASL School Library Manpower Project indicating high participation in learning activities counter such professional gloom.[28] (More detailed analyses of needs and of preparation to handle them are available in the voluminous literature dealing with the professional education of the library media specialist, and are omitted here.)

Perception of Role

Researchers have asked principals, teachers and media professionals about the appropriate responsibilities of the media staff. Lacock (1971) queried representatives of each group from the fifty states about what jobs the media specialist should undertake and what abilities the media specialist should possess in production, consultation and utilization, and instructional design and development.[29] Media administrators (principals as well as media directors were included here) and teachers disagreed on

whether media specialists should operate equipment or make learning materials. In an emergency, teachers expected the media specialist to tape the interview, develop the negative, and repair the equipment, while media administrators only expected the media specialist to bring in the technician to do the work. Teachers and administrators agreed on the specialists' role in instructional design, development and consultation, and teachers were willing to accept their advice and assistance on such problems.

Pearson (1974) asked media center directors in elementary schools whether or not their media centers had participated in thirteen curriculum development tasks.[30] His inquiry assumed that curricular innovation encourages instructional development. The survey supported his hypothesis.

Leeper (1975) compared Colorado elementary school library media centers in open-space schools with those in closed-space schools (i.e., self-contained classrooms and media centers).[31] Teachers, principals and media personnel opted for the media services of the open-space schools. He also found that attitudes of these three groups varied more among individual schools than among types or sizes of schools. He believed this finding implies that individuals, particularly the principal and media specialist, determine the quality of elementary school media programs.

Johnson (1977) found that library media specialists, teachers and principals in the elementary schools of Atlanta, Georgia, generally agreed about the work of the media specialist.[32] Her checklist grouped fifty-two tasks into seven categories. Voted as most important for the media specialist were selection and utilization of media; and as least important, media production, research and evaluation. Qualifications of the media specialist, such as experience, media course preparation, degrees and participation in curriculum development, were unreliable indicators of the tasks assigned to them.

Hellene's 1973 study focused on the relationship between strong media programs and the school principal's behavior.[33] She questioned three groups — teachers, principals and library media specialists — in elementary, junior and senior high schools in Washington State. The respondents appraised those principals in schools with well-developed media programs as stronger in their support of the program than were their counterparts in schools with ill-developed programs. Poorly trained or poorly motivated librarians in weak libraries appeared to inhibit program development.

In a study of Utah secondary school media professionals, Larsen (1971) concluded that the principal and media specialist often disagree on the appropriate role for the media specialist.[34] He suggested that the difference may be caused by the principal's ignorance of the potential of the media program.

Loertscher (1972-73) compared the opinions of teachers in Indiana high schools on the media services received with the opinions of the librarians on the services offered.[35] He investigated the importance and frequency of service in eight programs, including instructional design, utilization and evaluation. He found that the media staff preferred and implemented the traditional services of acquisition, accessibility, awareness and distribution, as opposed to the newer services of instructional development, evaluation and utilization.

Hiland (1973) quizzed thirty-five high school social studies teachers to learn the substance and sources of their information needs.[36] She also tested the relationship between teachers' use of information sources and three media center variables: number of services for teachers, proximity to social studies classrooms, and number of adult staff. None of the selected variables related significantly to teachers' use of information systems or the media centers.

Senior high schools of Westchester County, New York, were the site of Cantor's 1975 study of role expectations for library media services held by school administrators, teachers and media staff.[37] She found that media specialists expected more from the media program than did the other respondents. Teachers and administrators did not perceive media specialists as participating in curriculum development and revision, working on curriculum committees on resource units and guides, cooperating in instruction design, or conducting workshops for teachers.

Bucher's 1976 survey examined the role of secondary school library media specialists in Alabama as perceived by superintendents, principals, teachers and media specialists.[38] Her questionnaire was a list of fifty role statements arranged under seven role segments: administrator, teacher, materials specialist, instructional designer, library media professional, technical processor, and clerk. Respondents indicated on a 5-point scale whether they would or would not expect the media specialist to perform the stated function. Each of the four groups of respondents agreed among themselves about the role segments, except for that of clerk; there were significant differences, however, between role expectations held by teachers and by library media specialists, and between those held by superintendents and by teachers.

Pfister and Alexander (1976) attempted to determine the discrepancies between the actual and ideal roles and functions of Texas elementary and secondary school librarians as perceived by school superintendents, principals and librarians.[39] The survey questionnaire consisted of fifty-seven statements about possible tasks for the librarian; respondents noted whether their librarians were engaged or should be engaged in the activity. All three groups perceived the librarian as working on the fringes of curriculum and instruction now and in the future.

Jetter (1972) conducted a Delphi study to determine the consensus among experts in the allied fields of library media service, media education, curriculum and instruction, and educational research about the future role for the school library media specialist.[40] The major role that emerged was that of an instructional development specialist.

That the school media program continues to be frequently overlooked in texts and journals addressed to teachers and administrators was the major finding of Saddler (1970) and Holzberlein (1971).[41] Saddler analyzed textbooks used in introductory education courses in teacher training schools in Kentucky; Holzberlein studied professional journals published during 1960-69 available to administrators. What descriptions there were pictured only traditional reading and reference functions of the school library.

Findings in Shoemaker's recent survey (1978) of journal articles of 1970-78 about the media program and curriculum offer additional evidence of the insularity of the school media field in education literature.[42] Of the ninety-three pertinent articles published during this period, *Library Literature* indexed eighty-three, and *Education Index* sixteen.

The single generalization that may be drawn from these role perception studies is that school faculty, administrators and media staff disagree on the work media specialists now do and might do in the future. Some respondents would restrict the media specialist to the production workroom or the reference and circulation desk; other would assign to him or her a broad range of duties, from advising on materials to leading staff in planning, developing and evaluating instructional systems. None of the researchers whose role studies are included here tried to find out why respondents, including library media specialists, held the opinions they expressed, although both direct and indirect evidence was offered about the importance of the principal and media specialist in building effective media programs. Studies discussed in the following section will fill this gap.

The Curriculum Consultant Role

Entry and Exit Points in Curriculum Development

If one conceives of the curriculum development process as consisting of three major stages — planning, implementation and evaluation — the stage at which the media specialists enter will obviously affect the character of their contribution. The research noted here attempts to describe the extent of involvement of media specialists in curriculum development and factors related to it.

Schulzetenberge's 1969-70 study of Minnesota high school libraries concentrated on ascertaining the relationship between the extent of head librarians' work with teachers in curriculum and instruction, and personal and educational background variables.[43] He found that the best predictors for success in curriculum development activities with teachers were the type of materials program, and the librarian's undergraduate major and working preference. Librarians identified as extroverted with diversified interests were more involved in curriculum work with teachers.

Adams (1973) studied the relationship between the personality of secondary school librarians and the amount of time allotted to various library services.[44] Of a sample of twenty-four librarians from southern California, she found that those with lower self-images spent more time on clerical tasks and less on reader services.

Daniel (1974) hypothesized that library media specialists in schools where the library is highly integrated will exhibit significantly different communication patterns and personality characteristics than will their counterparts in schools where the library is isolated from the central functioning of the school.[45] Her population was 138 Maryland public schools. She found that high integration scores correlated significantly with humility, accommodation, submission, conscientiousness, responsibility and perseverence. Librarians in these schools were also significantly more conservative and tolerant of traditional difficulties, while their counterparts were more independent, radical and projected. Librarians in schools with low integration scores were less likely to initiate contact with teachers; the contact was less frequent, and was seen as less important. Daniel concluded that the roles of the library and the librarian were marginal in the schools studied and that the potential of both was undeveloped.

Madaus (1974) investigated a number of factors conceivably related to a successful library media program in Texas high schools.[46] Among the variables were the extent of the librarian's curriculum involvement, librarian personality factors, and teaching structures available (e.g., language labs, teaching machines, team-teaching, flexible scheduling). Madaus defined a successful program by the amount of

material circulated. The best predictors of high material circulation were a high extroversion score on the personality inventory and a high degree of involvement in curriculum on the part of the librarian. School librarians differed significantly as a group from librarians measured in Douglass's (1957) landmark study, which recorded many negative characteristics. School librarians surveyed by Madaus were more extroverted, more sociable and demonstrated fewer neurotic tendencies.

Turner and Martin (1978) studied the relationship between personal and environmental characteristics of media specialists and the extent of their involvement in instructional development activities.[47] The subjects were forty-three graduates of the library service graduate program at the University of Alabama. Investigators found that those respondents who read more journals, had more production equipment and had completed more research and courses in psychology contributed somewhat more to instructional development.

Kerr conducted two studies on the work of the "new" media specialist.[48] (In the 1975 study, the media professional is a learning resource specialist, or LRS; in the 1978 study, an educational communications consultant.) In the former study, he queried administrators, teachers and LRSs in the state of Washington about the recommended expansion of the media specialist's role. Respondents voted on the appropriateness of LRS participation in technical, informational and instructional development tasks. Kerr theorized that teachers would resist sharing with LRSs their authority in those aspects of curriculum development in which they consider themselves autonomous and omnicompetent (e.g., designing units and selecting instructional strategies and materials). Adapting Blau's theory of social exchange, he reasoned that teachers might find sharing less threatening if the LRS had valued resources to share. To test this theory, Kerr added a final section to his survey with questions about resources which might have social exchange value — career mobility, professionalism, cosmopolitanism and role-taking ability (i.e., ability to "step into another person's shoes"). He found that administrators, teachers and LRSs agreed that information services were the most essential part of the LRS's role and technical services (e.g., setting up equipment and producing materials) the least important. Teachers and administrators at the elementary level, and administrators at the high school level, were more interested in having the LRS engage in instructional development than were LRSs themselves. Of the social exchange variables, role-taking ability was correlated positively with teachers' acceptance of the expanded role of the LRS.

In his second study, Kerr offered a persuasive review of the litera-
ture to support his thesis that two current trends in education offer the
educational communications consultant the opportunity to assume a more
effective role in promoting change, provided there is an increased aware-
ness of the social interactions inherent in that role. The trends cited were
"ecological" research and development, which recognizes the need to
study school programs in their social setting, and the growth of specializa-
tion in education. Kerr argues that if ecological research is to function,
new leadership is mandated. If teachers become increasingly specialized,
someone will need to link them for essential communication. Kerr cited
research reports of team-teaching studies to buttress his contention that
team-teaching offers an ideal opportunity to link teachers in a productive
unit, as well as a logical base for the educational communications con-
sultant to utilize capabilities in instructional development. Kerr's work
crosses disciplines and offers a rich resource to theoreticians in the li-
brary/media field.

Aaron (1973) developed and tested a model which assigned the
library media specialist an active instructional development role on the
school's teaching team.[49] She reported on the responsibilities of the media
specialist on the teaching team, the environmental factors which affect
teaming (e.g., size of professional and supportive staff, attitudes of ad-
ministrators and teachers toward media staff participation, and amount
of lead time for planning instructional units), and the media staff's per-
ception of their responsibilities in instructional development. Her warning
that media specialists must accept their enlarged role or lose it to others
less qualified echoes the viewpoint of many other researchers cited in
this paper.

The carving out of a niche for the school librarian in curriculum
has been going on for many years. Standards have both extended and
systematized the role. Research offers conflicting evidence about what
changes, if any, have occurred. The pessimist could conclude that the
prescriptions and new vocabulary of the standards have not succeeded
in accrediting the library media specialist to participate in curriculum
development. The classroom remains the province of the teacher and is
not to be intruded upon by the media specialist. The proper place for
the library media specialist is the media center. The pessimist might also
argue that the attempts to unify media program and staff have created
antagonism, confusion and an impossible set of labels for the professional
in the field.

The optimist, on the other hand, could claim that research revealed that some school staffs believe in an active role in curriculum for the library media specialist, and that some library media specialists meet these expectations. The national standards evolved from the experience and judgment of leaders in library science and educational technology familiar with exemplary programs in the field. Optimists would argue that creative library media specialists mesh programs with instruction, and that the extended yet flexible role within the school now encourages the talented and discourages the meek.

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