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TODAY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY

by

Sharon Gail Floyd

Special Studies

January 2, 1967

TODAY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY

"A library is a library... A library is a place for books. And Books need people to enjoy them, children to pore over them, to wander through them and wonder, to leaf over them and laugh over them and love them. Teachers need to know them to delight in them, and to want to share them. Librarians who are not merely the keepers but the ambassadors of books, their representatives, their introducers, their friends and advocates."¹

The above statement is one which this paper will attempt to prove is very ~~much~~ correct. One of the most stimulating and interesting developments in the elementary schools of today is the new relationship between curriculum planning and instructional material. The result is a learning center called a centralized library where children may use and explore all types of printed and nonsense material. This helps to satisfy their intellectual curiosity as well as fulfill the more specific demands made in the classroom.

The elementary school library, audio-visual expert and curriculum specialist are forming a working trio to continually explore new ways of co-ordinating their services and wares. They know they must share their knowledge and skills. Together they must pool the vast resources into

a centralized department.²

Development of the Elementary Library

The high school library came as a tradition and has developed and grown with the secondary school systems, but the elementary library had to prove itself before it could grow. In previous years, the elementary grades have been considered as a place where fundamental skills must be taught--"fundamental subjects." These came from centering everything around the textbook. Methodology was centered around assigning lessons and hearing recitations. Occasionally a school would have a "library" consisting of a nondescript collection of books--unorganized, uncataloged, and unselected. The only function it served was for the children to take home a book every now and then.³

Only in 1816 were childrens' needs felt. As late as 1893 children under ten were denied full rights. By 1910, work had been done, needs had been met, and the development period was over. The promise of library work with children was fully perceived, and an all-inclusive program was launched.

People had finally realized how much of the reading in the United States was done by young people. Children under 15 account for one-third of public library registration. From 1952-1959, one-half of all books were in the juvenile category.

The libraries in larger cities and urban areas were the first ones to begin development. Library experts believe that the contribution made by the children's library

in large urban centers will be repeated in rural and suburban areas only when library units are organized in a manner which will permit better utilization of specialized knowledge and training. But until these suburban areas are better able to equip and pay their librarians, the qualified people will look for places of more suitable easier employment.⁴

A basic need in studying any educational provision is to learn its status. Most recent statistics by USOE include data for provision of elementary school libraries.

65.9% of elementary schools in 1958-1959 lacked centralized libraries and 51.0% of all children in the United States attended these schools. The average number of volumes in the elementary library was 4.6 per student compared with 6 in the secondary schools. The average expenditure per pupil equaled \$1.43 compared with \$1.85 in the secondary schools. 25.8% of elementary schools was served by school library whereas the secondary schools had 91.5%.

But along with these discouraging statistics come a few encouraging data:

Out of 810 districts state that 11.1% districts report full provision are expanding services; 32.9% of those reporting limiting provisions are expanding, and 0.9% of those with no provision are adding services.⁵

Down through the years the people in positions of responsibility have realized that the school library cannot afford to work alone. Co-operative action must be developed. Too many advantages in joint action can come to be this way if tried. All persons concerned with providing quality education have a stake: administrators,

teachers, school board members, parents, as well as the public. The following are some examples of this cooperative action: (1) In Groton, Conn. Mrs. Betty East, chairman of the Elementary P.T.A. which had set up a central elementary library (two of eleven) became convinced that system-wide action was needed. She asked her superintendent to appoint an advisory committee. The committee surveyed the existing services and developed a long-range plan for providing more and got to work. Within one year they had hired two Junior high school librarians, clerical assistants for the high school librarian, and an elementary school librarian's consultant. (2) In our own state, elementary school principals attended a state wide meeting and sponsored workshops for elementary school libraries. (3) South Carolina issued new state standards which boosted the requirements for elementary school libraries. (4) In the tri-state area of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, school library leaders met with school superintendents to explore possibilities for organizing multi-district school library centers.⁶

Much work has been done since 1816, and much has yet to be done.

Today's Library--the Centralized One

The notion that the centralized library is needed only in the secondary system has gone with the hornbook. A statement in the Standards for School Library Programs issued by the ALA shows the standard: "For the individual

student, the library program offers valuable experiences and instruction that start with kindergarten and expanding in breadth and depth, continue through secondary schools."⁷ This takes it for granted that library services at all levels are centralized, therefore calling for a change in most elementary schools.

Justification for the above statement can be met by:

(1) The growing emphasis on quality education demands a rich store of constantly changing materials. Classroom collections are usually limited to books, and they no longer represent the repository of all learning. It would also be foolish to try and let each room have ample materials. But books should not be done away with in the classroom. Ideally, teachers use the central library to keep the classroom collection flexible. (2) Children should learn to base their judgements on evidence collected from many varied sources. They can learn to build research habits in elementary schools if the material is available to them. Using the card catalog to locate information about igloos will grow to abilities enabling a young man to do a thesis on isotopes. (3) The varied materials in the central library can spark the interest of the phlegmatic child and challenge the gifted. The gifted child can explore and maybe set a spark of interest in the slower learner.

There is nothing requiring that these standards be met, but the mere fact that the standard is there may help

people to stretch and reach them. There is significant evidence that the pace which modern education demands can be maintained only if school library programs advance at the same time.⁸

Even though all these justifications can be given, people still come back with the question: "Why have an elementary library when the children are unable to really appreciate it?" These people need to be updated on the methods of teaching. As the learning process changes, the study-recitation type of procedure has given way to an active integrated curriculum. Many courses advocate "units of work" or "areas of learning" in which old subject lines fade away. Finding this material to enrich this type program requires--textbooks, library books, magazines, pamphlets, maps, charts, pictures and visual aid materials. They need a vast supply of material to open their eyes. They need to become familiar with sources and how they can locate the material. They need lots of books--fiction as well as non-fiction. For these reasons the elementary library had to develop just as the high school and college libraries. Of course, it did so on a much smaller and simpler scale. As the children progress they become capable of using more extensive material. They can carry on research in ever widening fields of intellectual interests.⁹

Although many children lack readiness to learn, others are hurting because they have acquired this readiness

and then have no other place to expand. In primary schools where there are no central libraries, the children may usually only borrow one book a week, or are not allowed to check books out themselves. These schools fail to capitalize on the young child's eagerness to read. One of the unfortunate results of these procedures is that some school boards are still having blueprints approved for building elementary schools without central libraries.¹⁰

Schools that fail to capitalize on this readiness have been blind to the fact that goals of reading have impeded and come to mean that children must have skills needed to handle content material, including location of information, critical evaluation and interpretation of what is read. Transfer of this knowledge to a well-developed report is the final step. At the present time these skills are usually deferred to the secondary level. If a child is to reach his potential, he must have access to different materials and instruction accumulated from previous experiences in the library. The multi-level approach must be followed.

A recent project entitled the Knapp Project Library has set a goal of seeing that every library has the financial support for equipment, housing, services and dedicated personnel to man the library. In their experimenting they met problems such as these: (1) Problem of a study place. Their model library divides itself into one-half for the primary grades and one-half for the intermediate

grades. Two classes, one at each level, meet each morning. The afternoon periods are left open for study groups and other uses. (2) The problem of how to start instruction in library skills was met by letting kindergarten children visit and become acquainted. As they enter the first grade they become Red-banded Readers and get to go to the library by themselves for one-half hour a week. (3) Finally, the child needs to learn skills by applying them. The Knapp system makes it possible for them to come to the library and work on reports, using the information center, library helpers, and reference books.¹¹

Purpose and Goals of a Central Library

Pooling of sources means a constant flow of materials from classroom to classroom, greatly enriching the curriculum. More economical means would be possible for less duplication of materials if the materials are pooled. More variety is also possible. Students learn better how to study, discover for themselves, acquire greater familiarity with the contents of a book.

These advantages are not found in a classroom library. They are primarily keyed to the interests of the individual teacher. They are usually not effectively organized, indexed or administrated and are not complete. They are neither economical nor do they adequately cater to the wide variety of reading levels. The central library can eliminate all this.

Its goals are:

(1) To reach and serve every child in school; average, gifted, slow, shy and problem children all. (2) Provide material of all types and on all subjects at various levels of pupil maturity represented in the school, and covering the wide range of demands of the modern curriculum. (3) Provide ample collection of material to satisfy the independent reading interests of each child and to encourage him to broaden his interests. (4) Furnish reading guidance as an effective means of developing in each child as an awareness of the rich fare found in books. (5) Serve as one important facet in over-all guidance programmer. (6) Teach each student the necessary skills in the use of books and library so that he will be able to use reference and research materials. (7) Develop personal attributes of responsibility through the sharing of public property, recognition of rights of others, and the observance of democratic principles. (8) Supply teachers with materials needed in the instructional program and for our own professional growth. (9) Serve as a stepping stone to the use of all community library resources. ¹²

The central library serves school as the public library serves the community. Its service are not limited to four walls. Every child feels the planned library program. The basic purpose of the elementary library is identical with those of other higher educational libraries. But it uniquely is to provide the materials needed for elementary school education. Services include:

(1) Adequate and well-selected collection of books for recreation and free reading. (2) Suitable collection of reference books and materials. (3) Reference and supplementary materials for classroom use. (4) Suitable collection of audio-visual materials. (5) Instruction on their individual levels. (6) Guidance in reading and development of good habits. (7) Opportunity to discuss books and share in reading experiences. ¹³

Much has been written on the need for elementary school libraries and with a little enthusiasm and planning on the part of local school personnel, school board members, and parents one can be started. Values can't be stated; they will mount up. It's very important to have a well-trained librarian and a few organized books rather than a lot of unorganized materials.

Getting started is the biggest obstacle facing a school. The need must be recognized and two or three people form a library committee, then call on the school board for financial aid. From there they may get a promise. Go back to the PTA or city committee and put the problem squarely before them. Tell them this is for their children. Get the PTA to appoint a committee to work with other fund-raising committees. Once you have weathered the storm of beginning, don't back out.

Find a room and furniture (even from the storeroom perhaps). Spend \$300 as follows: one set of reference books--\$120, non-fiction books--\$65, fiction and easy books-

\$100, supplies-\$15. As you order, make out order sheets, put classification numbers on the copy you keep.

When the materials come in, a system of organization has to be planned. On the elementary level, they should be simple: do not carry the numbers beyond 3 decimal places (Ancient history 930 and U.S. history 973 are complete enough). Supplies needed are circulation cards, card file, book pockets, date-due slips, punched catalog cards and glue. As the library grows, add more card files, a rubber stamp, dater and mending tape. 14

Reasons given for not organizing an elementary library are often flimsy and unsensible such as the following:

(1) "They lose books."--Yes, but so do adults; Librarians and teachers have to keep check on the overdues. (2) "They tear books."--They are less likely to do this than one thinks. A talk tells them how to avoid baby brothers, dogs, etc. (3) "They get books dirty"--Yes, but many are washable, and books are expected to get dirty. Cleanliness drives kids away. (4) "They make noise in the library."--You need to teach consideration. A librarian who gives praise for compliance builds this. (5) "They can't read."--The library gives them the motivation with pre-primers, primers, easy-to-read books and beginner books. (6) "They have books in the classroom. --They don't have to borrow books."--But for wide reacting they need a large selection, and wide selections are possible for less money if the library is centralized. Books are meant to be read, and children

normally begin school with a desire to learn.. The school must not deny the full opportunity for the primary children. 15

Elementary Library as an Instructional Center

First of all, just what is an instructional center? With the fall of the one-textbook, teaching the school has become an exciting, challenging experience. Keeping materials centers up-to-date with the changing curriculum is also challenging. In the instructional center are kept the books, periodicals, pamphlets, atlases, reference books, science equipment, film strips, radios, T.V., maps, models, charts, graphs, and pictures all at easily disposable range and ready to be used. 16 Modern society now places emphasis on "seeing and experiencing" in the learning process. Therefore, this necessitates the extension of the elementary school library service to include this. The library is the one agency in school to handle effective materials to be circulated throughout the school--so it becomes the "materials center", "resource center" or "instructional aids center."

The principal has to see that the librarian is qualified to take care of these duties. She will need to be familiar with types of materials so she can help teachers to use them. A new type of training for her is needed. A new type of physical planning for the library is needed. Special shelving, spacing of non-printed materials, and noise-free preview or listening rooms are essential. The

library may serve as a clearing house when agencies outside the school handle the audio-visual materials. The various audio-visual education departments notify the teachers of the materials, and the teachers request it through the library. 17

Two trends in education are having an effect on the school library: (1) the flood of non-book "teaching aids." and (2) the demand of school boards for extensive and continuing training of the faculties. Since most schools have no audio-visual centers, the library is the logical place to turn to for help.

The centralized library handles the issuing of film and filmstrips. Library of Congress cards are available for most audio-visual materials. There is one set of cards per school for each film. Filmstrips have Library of Congress cards, too, but they treat each strip separately. Most often school, such as Central District #1, Lake Mohegan, N.Y., have their strips in subject and not by title--so they make their own cards as such:

Catalog No.	name	Editor
	FS 347	
	Learning About Science No. 2 M ^{rs} Shaw Hill	
	A. How Zavis far?	
	B. Forces called gravity	
	C. Everything changes	
	D. How rivers are formed	
	E. Measuring time	
	1. Measurements 2. Gravitation	
	3. Time 4. Rivers	Subject

They assign the accession number to each filmstrip, FS going before the number. They write the call number on the label of the film, also on the container. Then they prepare the catalog cards. They make lists of films "on order" by company and jobber.¹⁸ The library needs some filmstrips, but the most important thing is for them to know where to get the strips. The librarian should know the purpose of the film and how they are presented. Subject matter should be authentic and unbiased, up-to-date, problems genuine, situations normal and natural, content should appeal to students. Films should be well-organized in presentation of material. The librarian should know the over-all value and general effectiveness of the filmstrip.¹⁹

Many libraries include a radio in their materials center. Librarians need to be alert to the ways it can be used. Good story-telling programs, book-reviews, book quiz programs, author interviews and dramatization of children's books are available over many radio stations. Some department tape programs can be used. Radio programs can form the basis for stimulating discussions of books and stimulate reading. Some librarians have set up "Radio Corners". -- They set up a bulletin board and put programs of interest and suggest books for reading in connection with this.

In the past 20 years, television has become more popular than the radio. Many librarians say it has widened

interests and affected their book selection. Puppet shows make books on puppets and how to handle them really circulate. Science shows caused a request for many authentic science books. On station KING-Seattle, Washington, there is a program "Telaventure Tales", which is a 30-minute program. They have proved that mass communication media can be constructively used without loss of interest in reading.

Librarians can capitalize on this interest by: (1) setting up displays to supplement the information the children see on television. (2) If there is a story hour, the librarian can provide additional books and information about the author. (3) Use sports programs for display and bulletin board ideas. (4) Prepare a T.V. Corner to adjoin the Radio Corner. 20

Recordings are easy to select if the help of the music teacher is requested. The general quality must be interesting and hold the child's attention. The subject must be in the child's range. Librarians should always choose a good quality record. When getting these ready for circulation an accession number should be assigned to each record, the record marked and a shelf-list card prepared. The recordings should be cataloged under composer, form, instrument and artist.²¹

The demand generated by courses taken by the teachers or by specific problems existing in school demand answers. Material to use in finding solutions is expensive; therefore,

this professional material should be kept in the centralized library for everyone to use. Catalog cards are stamped "Professional Library" above the classification number locating the book. There should be different colored cards denoting this type of book. An extra catalog card is made for all professional books--it is the master file to be found in the library office.²²

Clippings from newspapers are helpful to have in a vertical file as a part of ^{the} materials center. Magazines, although few in number, are needed to aid the children and to develop good habits. These titles should be evaluated every year. Pamphlets are useful because they provide the latest most up-to-date information available before it is put into book form. A large picture collection, pasted on heavy paper, should include animals, insects, flowers, portraits, seasons, holidays, places and events.²³

Most schools agree that the library should be the materials center. One school in Kalamazoon, Michigan, serves as an example of how a library can become the best type center. By 1963-64, the need for pooling resources was seen. Each classroom had access to all the materials scattered through out the particular building and had their own collection of books. Teachers shared their books and non-book materials but without a master list of all materials owned, many were not aware of what was available. They decided to seek a solution.

They already had a big collection of books so they called in 40-50 titles every 5 weeks (trying not to get the particular ones that a class was using) and cataloged and classified them at a central spot, then returned them to the library area in that building. The books were out of use no more than 5 weeks. It only took them until the Christmas holidays to really get a good start on the project.²⁴

Personnel Needed in the Centralized Library

A library supervisor is very badly needed. His duties are concerned with keeping up with new trends, informing the staff, planning long-range and short-range programs, evaluating, providing professional guidance to the staff, co-operating, and suggesting procedures to be adopted in all schools of the area.

In the library his duties are receiving, approving, and preparing purchase orders; placing orders for books, magazines, newspapers, binding, library supplies and other materials; distributing supplies to schools; balancing the budget.

As co-ordinator of the program he is responsible for seeing that all teachers understand and that the schools provide the basic program. He must also carry out a continuous evaluation of the book collections and materials and their use by teachers and pupils, programme of instruction, the library quarters and equipment and services of personelle.²⁵

A competent, effective librarian is the key to the whole program. He must have a wide variety of interest, knowledge

and love of books, energy, love and understanding of children. He must carry out technical organization of the library. The requirements for becoming a librarian are professional education courses for teacher certification and basic library training. Many schools just beginning their programs cannot afford to hire someone who is completely trained, and they usually call on a teachers who are skilled and may have had some library hours.

Some areas compromise even further and have overcome their problem. They hire one trained person who has helpers and works with several schools. The librarian designates certain teachers in each school to be "teacher-librarians". The librarian usually works one day a week in each school.

Large libraries have to provide more people other than those highly trained to do typing, pasting, filing, and assembling of materials. Therefore, the need for librarian assistants arises. Many times parents volunteer to work at this for a certain number of hours each week. They can do many jobs, such as: (1) Processing books: unpacking, invoicing, opening, alphabetizing, pasting, marking. (2) Work with card catalogue and shelf list: typing, sorting, alphabetizing, filing cards. (3) Work with information file: clip, paste, mark new materials. (4) Miscellaneous jobs: typing book cards, mending, filing, cutting stencils, and making displays.

The program can be effective only if teachers enter into it. Children will follow the leadership of the teacher.

Teachers should borrow many books for thier rooms, hoping to set an example (also to supplemant their teaching). Teachers should provided observed, regular library hours and periods with hours arranged so that pupils have the opportunity to use the wealth of material, and also share the responsibility of teaching instruction in use of the library. ²⁶

All these people work together for one main purpose-- to select the right book for the right child at the right time. There are some key questions to ask concerning the book wanted: (1) Concerning subject matter--is it interesting, true to life, does it interpret the past accurately, does it contribute to child's understanding of self, is it up to date, has it bias or prejudice? (2) Literary qualities: is it readable, style appropriate for the subject matter, suitable for the group intended? (3) Format : what about size, binding, attractiveness, durableness, color and finish, illustrations? (4) Author: what other books have they written, are they suitable, what are his special qualifications? (5) Publisher: who and what reputation, what other useful books published for the school library.²⁷

Processes for getting a book ready to read

Selection of materials and building of collections are among the most important tasks executed in the school library. The first step is the selection of good titles. May Hill Arbuthnot sums up the essential qualities as a "strong theme,... lively plot,...memorable characters and distinctive style." One source which should become the Bible of inexperienced

librarians is The Unreluctant Years (ALA 1953), which has criteria for selecting books from fairy tales to encyclopedias. The selector must have high standards. Basic Book Collection and Children's Catalog should be used to start and build collections.

Things to remember in building a collection are:

- (a) The provision of financial aid is the responsibility of the school authorities.
- (b) Teachers and students should help by recommending titles for purchase, becoming final only after the librarian has seen them.
- (c) Special factors of nature of the community areas of curriculum study and character of the student body would be considered in building the collection
- (d) Collection would be developed on a consistent basis of support and represent a balance of subjects, types, materials, and content and reading levels.
- (e) Collection read minimum quantitative levels as rapidly as possible.
- (f) Collection should be manned yearly with regular allotment for books and additional allotment for magazines, encyclopedias, rebinding, and other things.

Some areas in the library have been neglected in the past. Two such areas are periodicals and reference books. The Standard Catalog recommends 25 titles for K-6 and 50 titles for K-8. Doblers International List of Periodicals for Boys and Girls and the Subject Index to Children's Magazine suggest titles also. In 1959-60, 150 schools were polled and only nine had 2/3 of the 57 reference books and no dictionary included in the recommended list. Only

two libraries reported having either the Abridged Reader's Guide or the Subject Index to Children's Magazines. Two new areas that the library is tackling are science and foreign languages. Deason's The Science Book List for Children (AAAS, 1960) is the most complete aid in this field. 28

Consideration must be given to the wide variety of materials needed to fit the needs of the 6 grades. Books must include a range of content, different levels of reading difficulty, style and type, books for slow and fast readers, also for the gifted and the retarded.

It is impossible to set a fixed number that the library will need. It is good to say that 2,500 titles are required for the 6 primary grades that have an enrollment of 250 students. Those schools with higher enrollments need 10 books or more per child and maximum of 4 copies for one title. For a beginning period this is a high standard, but the library can build to reach it. Percentages should run:

000-999 General	2 percent
100-199 Philosophy	$\frac{1}{2}$
200-299 Religion and myth	1
300-399 Social science	3
400-499 Languages	$\frac{1}{2}$
500-599 Science	12
600-699 Useful arts	8
700-799 Fine arts	3
800-899 Literature	5
900-999 History, travel and biog.	20
F, 398 Fiction and Fairy tales	20
	25

It's hard work involved in getting things where you need them. The steps are procuring, processing, classifying, and cataloguing material.

Procuring: Order cards are the first step. They should be made on 3 x 5 cards and contain the following information: author's name as used on the catalog card, title of the book, special information, place, date and name of publisher, price, indicate if printed cards are to be ordered. In the upper left hand corner the classification number is placed. In the centralized library, books will probably have been brought in from all classes. The librarian should carefully examine these and keep only those suitable for the age group to be served. Books in poor physical condition are laid aside, also those too difficult for kids to use, those whose contents are out of date, poorly printed, unattractive, inaccurate, or mediocre. 29

Processing material: when a large number of books are to be done, it is good to form an assembly line. The librarian needs to post directions at each post so that all workers will know what they are doing.

Station I: Opening the book, examining, removing the book jacket and writing classification number on the front flap.

Station II: Stamping the book

Station III: Accessioning book

Station IV: Labeling book card and pocket

Station V: Pasting in pocket and date due slip

Station VI: Writing information in the inside margin

Station VII: Lettering book spine

Station VIII: Spraying book spine and cover if necessary

Station IX: Checking the processed book, done by the librarian. 30

Classifying books: Many systems have been tried. The system used needs to be simple for the librarian and for the user to apply, provide for expansion and conform to other

systems used in other libraries. The Dewey Decimal system seems to fit all these qualifications. Every subject has a number, and the number always stands for the same subject. Trained libraries use the latest edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index to determine the proper classification of each book.

Cataloguing Books: This is the process of making an index to the contents of the library. A primary library catalog may be a form of catalog for the more mature reader. Each book requires shelf-list, author, subject, and cross-reference cards. All cards are filed alphabetically as in the dictionary.

This paper has been a small attempt to explain the different processes used in a centralized library and to try to explain why they are so very important. The centralized library is new, and the public is going to have to learn to accept it, also the teachers, and pupils.

FOOTNOTES

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⁷Bowden and McGuire, March, 55.

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