

NON-BOOK MATERIALS, LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

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The Nature of Non-Book Materials

Writing of one kind or another has been with us about 7,000 to 10,000 years; pictures, cave paintings, etc., as much as 50,000 years. It has been only 35 years since educational motion pictures became a physical reality in the classroom; we have had cheap film, slides, etc., only for the past 20 years. We have been using print in one or another form for only 500 years, and it too is now appearing in vastly changed and machinery-dependent forms. We are talking here about non-book materials: visual aids and aural aids, and the combination aural/visual such as motion pictures and television. A sine qua non of this definition, but not always so stated, is that all types of materials are necessary to us in our libraries as aids and supplements to the experiences stirred up and made alive by book materials. Therefore, in talking about non-book materials in libraries, I shall treat them as if they were as common to us as books, since I see no reason for their inclusion as part of our working tools if they are not considered as basic and vital for their particular purposes as are books for the things books can do.

Let me pretend that for the next three or so paragraphs I am talking to an audio/visual class, and that I am presenting to them a part of the story as to why it is important to consider audio/visual materials in the learning process. I shall refer to Edgar Dale's Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching, revised edition,¹ for the meat of this small digression. Mr. Dale tries, in an early chapter in his book, to impress on the reader that all learning must be hinged on concrete experiences if it is to be permanent or solid. He then proceeds to outline, on what he calls the "cone of experience," relative positions of different learning experiences with respect to their concreteness in the learner's mind. At the bottom of

this cone is the direct, purposeful experience--the thing "you can get your hands on or sink your teeth into"; thus, situations in which you participate with some responsibility for the outcome are such direct experiences. Less concrete are contrived experiences, dramatized situations, field trips, exhibits, in the order stated. Toward the top of the cone we come to those areas where we shall be primarily concerned--motion pictures, recordings/radio, still pictures, visual symbols (charts, graphs, maps), and at the very pinnacle of the cone we find verbal symbols. However, verbal symbols--words spoken or written--are the first symbolic experiences with which we become familiar as children. A fairly average vocabulary for first graders contains about 3,000 words; when a student finishes school at age 17 or so, he probably has looked at ten times that number (different ones, of course). So verbal symbols--the most abstract--are necessary parts of all of the other more concrete experiences; in fact, some of the other levels of concreteness are not possible to achieve without improved use of common abstractions, such as words in our vocabulary. The main purposes of the use of aural/visual aids are to help provide a two-way escalator for bringing more concrete understanding in all types of learning experiences, to pave the way for the learner to retain more of what is taught, and to facilitate self-help in all his future learning experiences.

Now we usually deal with the fait accompli insofar as our learners are concerned--that is, we are dealing with adults who have gone through the controlled learning situations and so are on their own. But all too many of them are still unable to handle abstract symbols in meaningful ways; too many of them think that only books have most of the answers to their informational, and other, problems. When they come to us for books, and we in our most concrete professional manner help them to obtain the most abstract learning tools, we run into troubles which have been already cited in library literature to the tune of hundreds of examples. Somewhere on this merry-go-round ride something has to give, and it usually is the patron; he politely thanks the librarian and takes the book, goes, and many times sends it back the next day with his child. Result: one successful "contact" and one vaguely disturbed unsatisfied patron; unsatisfied not because of our inadequacies or fumbblings but because when the book is found that has the stuff, the patron cannot handle the ab-

stract symbols in the proper way for his learning needs. With this philosophy in mind, then, we have a clearcut reason for trying to tie together the patron's ability and the library's resources, assuming that audio/visual materials can be utilized to help bridge the gap.

The thought that books are hard objects, solid things, makes it seem to many librarians that the newer materials are flimsier, less permanent, and therefore less requiring of attention in their handling, organization, etc. This thought, coupled with the traditional unease that we are supposed to possess when it comes to handling equipment and machinery, may account for some of the slowness and uncertainty with which we have approached the whole field of non-book materials. After all, we have been brought up with books--reading--the slow absorption of printed materials; now we find that we must quickly change our accommodation-of-information patterns to account for moving images, sights, and sounds, and we must quickly acquire a relatively high degree of mechanical proficiency so as to use these new things. So the idea of dealing with the new impedimenta is possibly more of a block than the actuality of handling them.

Aside from the stereograph and the personal individual slide viewer (such as comes with sets of slides like the Disney African Lion), in order to use audio/visual materials you must handle the equipment which makes their use possible. This equipment ranges in complexity from the simple slide projector, which many of you have used and even own for showing 35mm. color slides, to the highly complex and easily misused professional tape recorders. The amount of information about equipment we as librarians need in order to pull off a program or set up services involving these materials is substantial, if you compare it to what we have to know about equipment in dealing with books. But remember that all audio/visual equipment has on/off switches, and in the moments of the most terrifying voids when nothing happens, a switch may be a librarian's best friend. Let us consider in some detail the equipment-material ties which are necessary in order to use the various groups of non-book materials.

For all photographed visual materials some projector is needed. Even a TV set is a projector of sorts, the electrons themselves acting as pinpoints of light which bounce off the fluorescent material of the picture tube and so activate a picture pattern. Light plus a motor plus a sound system

properly synchronized are the basic ingredients of a film projector; light plus lenses are required for other than motion pictures. For audio materials, a sound system and some means of transforming mechanical energy to electrical energy are necessary: records require phonographs to do this, tape recordings need tape mechanisms. The most wonderful thing about all of this equipment is that, once you get it set up and started off correctly, you only have to stand by and watch it run itself. There is no need to worry about how it works, only if it works. A minimum of technical know-how is necessary to put into use the material available to us, but the absolute maximum of knowing what to do with these things also becomes a necessity.

The various chemical and natural elements used in producing audio/visual materials differ in their combination so that the final product is a different physical thing which requires a bit more care and somewhat different handling. Books will not burn easily, in spite of Storm Center; 16mm. safety film must, by law, be non-explosive--however, it will scorch and disintegrate under heat. Books do tear easily if you've a mind to do so; film will break easily if incorrectly threaded but it is pretty hard to tear otherwise. You can patch a book page, but you have to splice film and tape; you can't do anything about a 35mm. filmstrip if you break it. Slides, glass mounted, can be fixed if the glass breaks; slides unmounted can only be thrown away if the slide itself gets badly scratched or torn. LP records can be ruined by a fingernail, manicured or not; dropping, however, may not do much. What I'm pointing out is that ordinary precautions in handling these materials will be necessary to prolong their usefulness and make them easier to use. We do not have to take a course in special techniques on this subject because, while film may remind you of a snake if it unwinds through error from its reel, it cannot bite the hand which feeds it through a projector.

Most pieces of equipment have operating instructions furnished with each machine, and usually there is little we can do if the equipment does not function as the manufacturer tells us it should. There is normal maintenance, of course, but many times even this is disregarded in spite of its simplicity. Beyond this, all other repairs must and should be done by competent service men. A word on service: sometimes it pays to select your items of equipment on the basis of local

service facilities, granted, of course, the range of selection is between items of equal value. It is pretty tough to have to pack an item and send it several hundred miles for service when another equally reliable make can be serviced in your home city.

I have taken the liberty of being so flatfootedly elemental about these points because we are talking about hundreds of dollars worth of items instead of a few dollars for each piece of equipment. If a book needs binding, or must be discarded, we think little of it; if a projector is damaged beyond repair, we think several times about its loss from the inventory. The materials themselves are not particularly expensive on an item basis, except for films, but in this field materials are useless without corresponding equipment.

Like their printed counterparts, audio/visual materials have prices, lengths of useful service, and they must be replaced. Unlike their counterparts, there are different bases of reasoning for each consideration. The library is uniquely the community's book center; the library's audio/visual collection may not--and probably should not--be the only source of such resources. Many libraries have gotten their start in this field through cooperative actions for audio/visual supplies where they could not or would not do so for printed materials. Therefore discarding - replacement - additions of audio/visual items bring in slightly different factors than those considered for books.

In presenting the case for audio/visual materials for the smaller libraries, one pictures the common question many boards will ask: how much for how much? There is much less resistance to buying a set of volumes for \$50.00 than to buying a film for the same amount, whatever the reasons expressed as to how you get your money's worth. We have less of a problem in presenting a book list which may total far more than an audio/visual list, even though the cost per circulation for non-book things may be only a fraction of that for printed materials. For example, if a film costs \$125.00 and is seen during its useful life by 2,000 viewers, the cost per capita use is about 6 1/4 cents; if a book costs with discount \$3.65 and is circulated 30 times during its useful life, the cost per capita use is twice that of the film. I cannot equate cost absolutely (and it is not very much to the point to try) since there are too many other factors involved, such as films not being individual media as are books, etc.; yet if

you must argue costs, you have the basic point that initial expenditure is high and use cost is low for almost any audio/visual material. By the same token, you cannot expect librarians to start worrying only about cost, since then one might say that any reference tool over \$25.00 which has limited use is a waste. I don't think we use Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers 25 times a year, but when we want it "there ain't nothing else." When we want to see, through the medium of the film, a far distant landscape, there is just nothing else so good for the purpose. Therefore, let us not compare costs too carefully since results are what count.

With relation to discarding, physical condition is a prime factor with audio/visual materials as it may not be with books. A phonograph record with chopped-up grooves is no good, nor is a badly scratched film; but a book with broken spine and torn end-sheets can be rebound if the material in it so justifies. Many libraries have become museum-minded because they can't bear to part with old treasures; not many audio-visual collections are old enough yet to worry about this point. There is nothing so horrible as a film which cannot be seen or heard or a record which is unintelligible. It is obviously impossible to compare items in the audio/visual collection for subject strength the way we do our book stock, since most of us haven't enough to start with, anyway. However, it is desirable to think in terms of coordinated subject presentations: don't discard all your books on Cuba before 1910 and then hold on to a historical film depicting the buccaneers of early 1800 and expect to really tie together the materials in your library. On the other hand, don't feel that because a film has been popular in the past year that your patrons are going to carry on a desire to keep reading about the subject of the film for quite a while to come. What I'm trying to stir up here is a feeling for two things: if you're audio/visual minded, think of discarding in terms of your own total (i. e., book and non-book) resources and then think of audio/visual materials in terms of availability from other sources.

There are perennial favorites among books none of us could live without; the only perennial among films so far is Mickey Mouse. Far be it from me to tell you why this is so, but I hope no one runs out and leases all the Disney films because I said this. There are some almost-perennials--The

River, Men of Aran, Louisiana Story, etc. --but they are not everywhere "musts" for replacements. We have been at this too short a time and are faced with too much new material to be able to say with certainty what is the minimum replacement list for films, records, etc. LP's will drive you nuts there are over 20 recordings by different artists of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, Violin Concerto and Third Symphony, and each has its adherents as to best performance; if you discard one of these you probably will have to replace it. On the other hand, there are basic lists of "first choices" for all films and records and filmstrips; these could serve as guides for both discards and acquisitions. Audio/visual librarians should not feel the need for being over-cautious here anymore than anyone else would in the balancing of special collections.

Perhaps a word should be said here about upkeep of collections. How much does it take to keep films, records, and the like, up-to-date? There is no set answer, of course, nor can an empirical formula for proportionate expenditures be laid down as gospel. In a survey which I conducted a couple of years ago, audio/visual expenditures ranged from pennies to many thousands; and there are very few standards to state unequivocally that there is a definite amount to be spent for each kind of aid. Worse, none of the guides available for audio/visual materials show any connection (in organized fashion) between books and non-books, so that the librarian has no way of telling what it will cost to add or subtract items in relation to books. Further, taking a figure like 10 or 20 or 30 per cent of the funds for materials is not always useful: if you start with a small collection you must spend a greater percentage in the beginning than in the end as you approach your own satisfactory operating level. Would it not be more logical to think in terms of proportionate expenditures--that is, always being prepared to add audio/visual items as the need arises, but with reference to what is now on hand and what is available? If enough libraries were to purchase audio/visual materials on this basis and keep a set of figures, we might begin to set up norms for buying which could be useful; but only when libraries report audio/visual purchasing with consideration for and respect to their book services will these figures be meaningful.

Library Considerations

Up to now I have tried to throw in a number of practical considerations from the viewpoint of the specialist with reference to the audio/visual area itself. Now let us pay some attention to the total institution of which audio/visual is only a part. At this point, too, I want to remark about our competence as professionals and therefore teachers in contrast to our patrons as learners. I think there is room for honest appraisal as to whether we as the professionals are as familiar with, interested in, and competent to handle all the vast range of materials we are more and more being subjected to. I question whether very many librarians attempt to focus their professional time on improving their own reading, hearing, seeing abilities--whether they consciously and constantly try to extend the range of their own interests and knowledges. If it is important to widen the range of materials available for our patrons, it is equally important that the dispenser of materials know what it is all about. It is only partly funny when a staff member stops in the middle of a reference search to tell a patron that a machine is as new to the staff member as to the patron; it is not even partly funny when a staff person has to have explained to her (or him) that a universal drive has nothing to do with church activity but is instead a part of an auto. For obvious reasons I won't go on--there'd soon be a sentence necessary about my inadequacies and misunderstandings. Now the inadequacies probably are necessary and inevitable; but interest in making up this lag in knowledge is not so common or easily found. There is just too much to become familiar with and too little time in which to do it; while we cannot go back to school at the onset of every new development or enlargement of a field of learning, we still cannot too many times put up with our own lacks without doing something about it. Here is where these extensions of learning come to our aid as well as our public's help: often a film, for example, can give us a badly-needed lift over the hump of new-information complexities which otherwise might be difficult to handle. Planned series of associations with audio/visual materials, organized around fields of knowledge which are not so easily explained by books or other printed forms, may be a wonderful way to coordinate staff training as well as provide the needed information. I don't know that this has been done on any kind of

"course" basis by librarians; if not, why not?

This brings us to the problem of knowing the subject matter and the range of current supplies of audio/visual goods. Fortunately there are tools to help us with the larger items: Educational Film Guide, Filmstrip Guide, various record catalogs, special lists of the more restricted items such as maps, charts, etc. These lists, especially the first two, are comprehensive and evaluative, thereby saving all of us much trouble and at the same time building our backgrounds. The problem of knowing the material is only partly solved by knowing about the guides and tools to the materials, however; it is fair to say that no one knows as much as he could about the audio/visual materials currently available because no one has seen or heard enough to have the commensurate experience with them that he has with books. Therefore, my thinking is that we should strive to be only small generalists and large specialists: the key to successful collections and service lies in the first-hand knowledge of specific materials for the most part and after that how to get at the more general items. This means that the literature specialist knows as much as is possible to garner about non-musical recordings, diagrammatic slides and filmstrips, biographical films, etc.; the technical specialist knows about films, filmstrips, graphic aids (in that order, probably); the fine arts specialist knows filmstrips, slides, models and exhibits, films, flat pictures (and records if music is included). The poor general staff, Young People's, Children's, Extension and Catalog Departments will just have to take the guides home nights and memorize all 45,000 entries!

For the smaller library with none of the subject breakdown found in the large institution, the staff probably will have to conspire with the public to get needed materials ordered, rented, or otherwise procured. There is a tendency in these places for so-and-so to "do films," so-and-so to "do records," and so on. What happens when the person isn't around to "do"? Moreover, the patron's needs can't wait, even if his request cannot be fulfilled by your library. One answer lies in cooperative actions, among which are film circuits, record pools, picture collection projects, etc. Only in this way will the main purpose of supplementing other aids and expanding subject matter found in books be accomplished for most of our small libraries.

A few words about available materials for the larger subject divisions: films cover the general knowledge of mankind, and do pretty well with thousands of specific subjects. By and large most 16mm. educational films fall into categories which best suit their use as classroom films. Many specialized films are so much so that their showing to general audiences is entirely useless; many general films are exactly that, and can satisfy no special individual interest. For example, how many libraries own a film which tells about the public library? Or, indeed, where is the film which tells, in general interest terms, about the public library? We have library films--made by librarians for librarians--but where is the good general film of popular appeal? Remember, however, that film making is only fun when it is profitable, and if libraries want more films which correspond more closely to the typical library operation, we shall all have to buy more of them; or else be content with what we have.

I do not want to be particularly critical about our film fare. From the size of library-sponsored film program audiences, it is obvious that we hit the mark pretty well most of the time with what we can get our hands on; therefore, don't be misled into thinking that one has to put up with a lot of misplaced materials which really don't belong in our hands.

Phonograph records are the most completely cataloged and arranged items in the whole audio/visual field. Partly this is because more specialists are in on the whole record business and partly it is because record listening, as far as most library services are concerned, is a personal thing rather than a group experience. It is relatively impossible to go wrong with record collections beyond the fact that you may buy too much or too little of one thing. The whole field of music recordings is practically unlimited in terms of sources from which you can select and buy.

We could spend a good deal of time talking about evaluation of the materials in various categories, but if you allow my premise that very few of us are expert selectors in these things, you will have to agree that we should seek guidance from established and well-known sources. These are relatively inexpensive, efficient, and absolutely necessary if you plan to furnish any information to the public and your co-workers. I have mentioned a few in passing: Educational Film Guide, Filmstrip Guide, etc. You may say that you

don't have enough films to make the purchase of these guides worthwhile; but do you take all of the periodicals in the various guides you have? What a guide is useful for mostly is that it shows the range of material available, and it gives the user some idea of the most likely sources. Some evaluative information is also given and, while this information is general, it is better than nothing and serves as a starting point for further probing or instant elimination.

Evaluation should be approached from several points of view: effectiveness of the material for providing the needed information; the physical value of the material in providing an informational experience; the capabilities of the group using the material (staff and public); the entire program set-up which brought the group's thinking to this particular piece of material; and the consideration of how much librarians know about and do with audio/visual items. This is not the time to go into all of these factors (and there are probably more) except that one good starting point for talking to the mirror on the wall is the last item, since there would be no use of audio/visual aids if we had not already started to question ourselves somewhat as to where we stand in picking them up and getting them out. It is here that we actually sell audio/visual to ourselves, our boards and our staff, who in turn sell them to the public. It is here also where we must honestly appraise our own willingness to take on the new, spend more time than at first seems sensible in building our backgrounds, and experiment with our reactions and our ideas in turning the use of these materials to library advantage. They are new, they are demanding, they are rewarding--if we measure up to the total involvement required.

Here also, in promoting the use of these materials, comes a golden opportunity for building a public relations structure for present and future. You may be able to best serve your own purposes of integrating the library and its community by embarking on a cooperative evaluation scheme utilizing the specialized resources of experts around town; you could honestly proclaim to those invited that they have been asked because you didn't know the answer and you didn't want to go after secondhand information. Evaluative ideas built around the local need are all too few in our educational ventures, and until lately probably a totally unexplored area as far as libraries are concerned. Out of such sessions a real collection and service program would be set up which would have started

with a well-fertilized ground for the grass roots we hear so much about.

The whole question of how libraries use persons and materials is in itself the story of the development of the peculiarly American institution known as the public library. And there are as many types, kinds and depths of audio/visual experiences provided or arranged by these libraries as there are libraries themselves. Rather than catalog these now, let me instead point out where we still have whole careers ahead of us in terms of use and programs. For a time it was conceived that successful library participation in audio/visual areas consisted mainly of spending as much money as possible on procurement, then circulation. After the flush of overexertion had been somewhat dissipated on this front, we went wholehog for evaluation sessions in which we sat down and counted our experiences like sheep--but unlike sheep they didn't stay in the corral--and from this tried to determine where we had been and where we are now. Well, where are we? Are we yet at the point where we don't have to think twice about purchases, programs and results? Are we yet at the place where new staff members from library schools are conscious of an integrated library viewpoint regarding all materials used and the oneness of services offered?

Pretending that we are not quite at this spot, let me enumerate a minimum number of thoughts. I want to plead for the community information center concept as the final costume (1950-2050, at least) for our Carnegie coliseums, and as part of this concept I want to plead further for us librarians as directors of such centers. Specifically, we directors must serve as coordinators of the purchasing-using devices and by the act of coordination entitle ourselves to hang such a shingle on our doors, and we must also follow through on how our materials wind up. We must think in terms of extra-territorial conquests as well as in terms of internal orderliness and approach. We must be prepared either to conquer the opposition or to join it--and the opposition exists inside as well as outside. We must then make sure that the customers like it--at first it was sugar coated and easily digested, while now it is plastic coated and like an overcooked waffle--and even after they do, keep feeding them. All this generalia has to do with one important thrust at you fellow professionals: information itself is increasing in geometric ratios to our ability to absorb it, and recorded sources

of information are appearing in geometric ratios to our ability to procure and use them. This being so, no one of us can any longer hold off from becoming overwhelmed with the deluge of things in print and non-print which it is our duty and business to know and use. It is significant that the U.S. Government has had need in recent months for conferences relating to the flow of documents--not what's in them, mind you, but how to get them in and out--because the greatest impediment to intelligent agency functioning is the very volume of materials to be absorbed and used. Well, what about us? With 12,000-odd titles appearing in print each year, even if we could afford them, could we absorb them in the 8,760 hours of each year? Could we see the several thousand new films which are available during the year--or could we hear the thousands of hours of music recorded and radio/tv programs broadcast? Yet clamming up like the "see-hear-speak no evil" monkeys is not the answer; in fact, a better one is "we can't afford them" since that implies the positive idea of being interested but not yet possessive. How do we get out of this mess? Only, I think, by integrating all the library's services so that there is no duplication of routine or activity; and in the case of audio/visual materials, complete handling on the same plane as printed materials.

It would have to go something like this, in our community information center: the director sees a master acquisitions table which shows the steady flow of all materials on any and all subjects; he coordinates the handling of these materials by calling in subject specialists who are responsible for channeling the right groupings of integrated packages to the field workers in various community activity levels--branches, bookmobiles, plus school groups, home study groups, adult centers, etc. In turn, these field workers contact resource people, program leaders, activity chairmen for conferences about how these packages of integrated materials will be used. Reports go back through channels indicating the success or failure--with stress on the failure--of the packages to do the jobs they were created for, and with indication of the degree of relation with community people. The flow chart would show, instead of individual circulation of 100's, 500's, fiction, films, records, etc., the number of packages by subject area; by putting together the totals over periods we come up with a picture of how well the community information center is getting at the needs of the community.

Now this does not rule out individual use of the library at all-- it rather increases the chance of individual success with a given subject since the reader will have more than one type of material at his fingertips and, depending on his own abilities, should be better able to find something that is useful. The Detroit reader-interest idea is a step in this direction for book organization, but materials are flowing too fast and too steadily for us to divert the river with a single dam. Incidentally, by so using staff as to bring out their best personal qualifications and interests, we can also help overcome other staff problems such as shortage of persons on any single activity, if the idea is handled correctly.

Now before anyone starts taking my gear box apart to see if it is oiled, let me hasten to add that I am not thinking only of the large libraries which seem obviously more able to do such things. I am in a medium-sized library and I feel that we could well afford to try out a simplified basis of this coordinated scheme in the limited way in which we would necessarily have to work. If it did nothing else for us, it would remind us that we do not stand alone in the community, or in our area.

From the lofty plane of theory let me fling us down to the well-worn dirt tracks of more normal operations. If it be true that there is money to be spent on audio/visual we might consider if two purses are not better than one; and if this is so, we might be able to arrange a little cooperation among our neighboring libraries which would expedite the collecting, distributing and using of these materials. Film circuits--on smaller or larger units of service bases--have proved a good way out of the dilemma of funds; they have not, however, contributed much toward the organization of complete services of which audio/visual is only a part. Other types of circuits--cooperative actions, that is--are either not well-known or maybe just not well-thought-of. The answer to this demand for banding together is not yet in sight, since we have really only just begun to act on larger than local frontiers. Here is where specialists in audio/visual use may be used to the greatest 40-hour week advantage: send them around in circuits (which might after all turn out to be only bigger circles) to take charge of the films, etc., which are already traveling. If we can fund away our boundaries, why can't we people them away, too? It was not so long ago when the pin-peddler performed yeoman duty in handling information as well as stock;

in like manner the traveling specialist can help overcome the difficulties of staff shortages and knowledges.

Finally, I should like to throw out at you--with every hope that you will throw them right back--a few thoughts about services in this field. We know how to count, to store, to arrange, to check up on things--but we don't know very much about the whys of successful programs. Many of them seem to happen, as it were, because we hit upon the selection of the right materials; others fall flat because we are not prepared to go beyond the known into the unknown field of program-service analysis. Typical library operations in audio visual cover the clock at the main building and at branches, with circulating equipment in some instances which goes right along with the materials; other institutions insist that programs take place in their buildings under the supervision of proper staff persons if library materials are used; still others offer only advice about how to get the materials but do not offer to lend or procure. Whatever the pattern in the community, it is not complete for all or lacking for one. Yet there seems to be no great experimentation in more general ways rather than in more specific approaches. For instance, we need far more consideration of the ways in which the news-recreation-information function performed by our local newspapers can be tied to library functions; mainly we need this because we need the customers worse than the newspapers do. What can/should the library do to add to its services those functions which hit at the common and oft-repeated items found in any city daily (excluding the comics since ours are available only in fancy collections), such as better maps to explain world news, exhibits which show state actions, TV shows which tie the library with the local scene, etc. Maybe it seems to some of you that there isn't too much reason for trying so hard, since it does cost money to do battle with a large organization like the papers; also, how much of a permanent dent can you make in the consciousness of ephemera users, many of whom are actually unable to handle the longer versions of printed informational supplies? Well, for them, the audio/visual aids could be a boon if they get the right ones organized into more than one experience and session; for special groups, such as golden agers, YP's, the organized grouping of audio/visual materials might be handled on a self-selective program basis, with the program committee chosen by the group and working with the staff. Other community

agencies might well be brought into a planning activity for their own specialized groups; but for general public strata, such as newspaper readers, the library should first exhaust its own staff and then go out to garner others (even the editor might be a good one to pull in--maybe he doesn't understand either why his paper is a success). Any time a large issue comes into focus in the community, the library ought to be pitching its informational tent and standing guard over the public's apathy about it; I feel shamefaced about even saying this since we got holy heck not so long ago from one women's organization for not having an exhibit ready in time for Marigold Month. But you know what I mean, I think; not one of us has exhausted or totally explored the avenues of contact with our public individually or collectively; the bromide of audio/visual has been in some instances that we have tranquilized our fears about lack of numbers by inserting lack of ideas. This leaves us many horsepower weaker, dollars poorer, but experience wiser.

If you agree that audio/visual materials are important in helping libraries to better reach adults whose reading ability is limited and often behind their other capacities, then you must further agree that there is no one place to "best" use these resources. Rather, as you think of your total operations, try to see your library as a more useful, potent agency whose purposes will be better realized because their impact will be more sure, satisfying and widespread. The impact resulting from the coordination of materials and their use may well be the greatest contribution we can make to meet public information needs.

References

1. Edgar Dale, Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching (Rev. ed.; New York: Dryden Press, 1954), p. 534.