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THE LIBRARY AND ITS RELATION TO THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL CURRICULUM

by

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degree of Master of Education, in the Graduate School
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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN RELATION TO ITS
LIBRARY SERVICE

The survey of literature used in the graduate courses in education and librarianship has provided the background for this paper. The goals, aims, and trends in the modern elementary curriculum have invariably depended upon the use and understanding of instructional material for their administration. Since the limitation of classroom activities to textbook assignments is no longer an acceptable method of teaching in the modern school, teachers must turn to all resource materials available. The degree to which it is available and usable determines, largely, the success of the program. Efficiency based in terms of evaluation of the work accomplished in relation to the time and money expended, can be maintained at its highest level by a centralized and competent administration of the materials. Duplication of time and effort are minimized. This necessitates certain physical requirements and trained personnel. The purpose of the central library is to provide these as an integral part of the school program.

Research has offered the conclusion that the better the teaching methods, the wider the spread becomes in the individual development within the group. This indicates a need for materials suited to many levels of ability. To supply each classroom with the desired materials would

mean a great deal of duplication and expense. The central library provides an efficient method by which one source of materials can supply the whole school.

The classroom teacher does not generally have the time or the training to collect and organize materials which she would find invaluable aids if they were at her disposal.

Modern trends in education indicate that we are endeavoring to prepare the child for life in a changing world. Therefore, he must have the opportunity to satisfy a wide range of interests and to become acquainted with the cultures of the rest of humanity. In order to adjust himself to his rightful place as a citizen in a democracy, he must have a certain economic efficiency and an opportunity for self-realization. His hobbies give him release and an emotional security just as his vocational training helps him to attain economic security.

To communicate with our fellow men today we must be literate. Channels of communication are necessary to world concepts and understandings.

These demands upon our modern educational system must be met as efficiently and completely as possible if we are to insure the perpetuation of a democratic way of life. As educators, we are a kind of craftsmen and we cannot do our best work without the best tools. In our field the tools are instructional materials. We must insist as ardently for the provision of such tools as we insist upon the standards of our design for education.

We can do this by concerted and intelligent effort through our professional organizations and well-planned public relations programs. Our institutions of teacher training provide us with modern methods and techniques. It remains our responsibility to carry them into productive action.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to explain the place of the centralized elementary school library in relation to present day standards of the elementary curriculum, as presented by contemporary authorities on curriculum and library service. The discussion will be presented under the following general divisions:

I. The aims and trends of the elementary curriculum and their logical relation to library service based on research of contemporary literature used in the elementary education and library courses at the Central Washington College of Education and the University of Washington. This will make up the main body of the paper.

II. The facilities and services offered by a modern centralized library.

III. The lag which exists in the state between the teacher and librarian training and the existing facilities.

IV. Some suggestions which might be of value in extending and improving library service in the elementary schools of the state.

The Progressive Elementary Curriculum

There seems to be a pretty general agreement among educators that we have certain premises acceptable as bases for curriculum improvement and development. In fact, our aims are much more consistent than our methods.

The most specific and inclusive list I have found, I believe, is that of Wesley.¹ He lists twenty-five aims based on prevailing national objectives arrived at by discussion, action, appropriation, and donation. I think it is important to note that the first four and several later ones are based on a world outlook. For example, the second is "to uphold the United Nations", the third is "to control the atom bomb", and the tenth is "to extend international trade". These are for the elementary school. This means building a type of concept much earlier than we had thought possible in the past. It also involves a different kind and method of teaching. It will include the use of current events. It will necessitate the use of a great many materials.

Preston² puts his aims as follows:

The primary objective of modern social studies teaching is to help boys and girls to meet, understand, and solve some of today's problems of living. Successful living is the most desirable outcome of social studies teaching. Helping a child to think critically, to respect the achievements of all people, to work cooperatively, to use the tools of learning effectively, to understand his community, and to become aware of his privileges and responsibilities as a citizen are some of the ways by which this goal may be achieved. The school is one of the agencies which must provide these opportunities.

Since the building of concepts in home, community, national, and international life is the specific problem of our social studies teachers

¹Edgar Bruce Wesley, Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School (New York: D.C. Heath, 1946), pp. 148-9.

²Ralph Preston, Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 26.

it becomes an important factor in curriculum planning. Much research has been done in this field in the last few years by people primarily interested in the elementary curriculum.

Michaelis³ points out the trend in social studies when he says that our subject matter fields are largely viewed as resources to draw upon to solve our problems. He includes many specific ideas in his outline, such as critical thinking and the development of problem-solving techniques. Again, we note, this takes us away from the formal and traditional method of presenting history and geography.

It would be impossible to make an outline or a course of study to fit each individual in the classroom unit, but by research, or the consumption of research available, we can draw general conclusions concerning the mental, physical, emotional and social maturity needs of certain age groups in a general way and let this serve as a guide for setting up a program for the individual needs within the group.

Materials are a prime factor in carrying out the activity programs and the unit courses used in the suggested methods. Inadequate school facilities and personnel add to the burden of teachers who are expected to carry on this type of activity. Children are expected to have, or to build vicariously, through school situations, the necessary background for understandings and concepts. This pressure is reduced to anxiety and tension when the proper facilities are not provided in the way of

³John U. Michaelis, Social Studies for Children in a Democracy (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), pp. 290-322.

materials and equipment. The materials should not only be provided, but provision for their efficient use should be insured by the administration. Teachers need to be aware of the availability of materials and familiar with their use.

The ability to read critically and intelligently is a dynamic process which should continue to grow as the child progresses through school and on into adult life. Pupils need guidance to react critically, to clarify their thinking, to reach valid conclusions, and to select appropriate materials.

Methods and aims may change with progress or the changing needs of society, but there must always be certain constant values in a stable and orderly progression of civilization. In education the ability to read at some level has remained a constant need in our public schools. Reading is the basic tool in the English and social studies program.

Draper⁴ quotes from a study prepared as early as 1931, in Detroit, Michigan, the following statement:

There are two phases to the teaching of reading which must be noted, the teaching of reading as a science, and the teaching of reading as an art. One implies efficiency and skill; the other the appreciation of literature. The former phase is emphasized in the reading period in the home room; the latter in the literature room.

In discussing the developmental growth of children we must be alert to each stage of emotional maturity or readiness. We must be

⁴Edgar Marion Draper, Principles and Techniques of Curriculum Making (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1938), p. 296.

ready with the materials when the interest level is high. Reading interests are often higher than the child's ability level. It is most important to have a wide choice of materials at this stage which answer both problems. The special teacher, as well as the classroom teacher, finds more and more demand for this type of material in almost every field of interest. The librarian, whose training includes that of the classroom teacher in addition to specialized training, can function in the solving of this problem in a way which is of immeasurable value to the educational program.

Michaelis says, "Children must be ready for the use of selected instructional materials if maximum learning is to be achieved."⁵

Jersild⁶ discusses the importance of the child's interest in relation to our methods of training and the opportunities offered by the school. He believes the child who lives in an environment which provides an opportunity for the learning of many and varied interests will probably be better situated than a youngster in an environment with only a limited range. The idea of making the school an environment for stimulating and satisfying a large range of interests has given education a new meaning.

⁵Michaelis, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

⁶Arthur T. Jersild and Ruth J. Tasch, "Children's Interests and What They Suggest For Education (New York: Bureau of Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949), Chapt. VII.

He gives us a brief summary of his philosophy in the following statement:

Conceived in these terms, the supplying of as many means as possible through which children may discover and realize their potential interests is not a luxury, and it certainly is not a way of diluting or sugar-coating education. When we take education literally and seek to educe, to draw forth in the most constructive manner, the resources with which children are by nature endowed, we are not simply helping them to have a good time. We are making a fundamental investment in human welfare.⁷

The report of the Educational Policies Commission⁸ gives us a summary of the educational aims, which seems to express the generally accepted bases for the curriculum planning under four brief headings as follows:

- I. Self-realization
- II. Human relationships
- III. Economic efficiency
- IV. Civic responsibility

Any program, therefore, must be measured to some large extent in terms of accomplishment in these areas. Tools are not an end. John Dewey made that clear to us. Few educators would disagree. Without tools the craftsman cannot build. Without the tools of the language arts our pupils cannot reach the goals we have set for them, the goals of an

⁷Ibid., p. 227.

⁸The Educational Policies Commission, "The Purposes of Education in American Democracy," National Education Association of the United States, an American Association of School Administrators (1201 Sixteenth St., Northwest, Washington, D. C., 1938), p. 47.

education to participate in a democracy. The mastery of reading skills has no inherent value except as it achieves some larger objective set by the individual or his group.

Curriculum authorities refer to the library as the center around which worthwhile teaching is done. Where the trend is toward broader areas of learning in the program, where classes are combined to make the curriculum more satisfactory, the diversified assignment is necessary. This means that the teacher must know the use and the contents of the library. It means not only improved methods of teaching, but improved teachers.

Wilson says, "The fundamental purpose of the library in education is to help attain the objectives of the educational program. The library is an integral part of the program; it cannot be set aside as a supplement of other educational functions and activities."⁹

An elementary school library is not one of the "frills" of education. It requires the services and cooperation of the entire school personnel. The librarian needs to be a person with definite qualifications and training. Her job is to integrate the principles and aims of the administration and the classroom procedures. She must understand the needs and methods of the classroom teacher. Ability to handle children is essential.

⁹Louis K. Wilson, "Purposes and Scope of the Yearbook," Forty-second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago, 1943), p. 11.

She must not only have a broad knowledge of the books and materials, but an understanding of children. Since her job is one of public relations, she must know how to get along with people. Her enthusiasm must be sincere and genuine. She will gain little respect and interest from children or adults if her own interests are not broad and rich.

Current literature by library authorities bears out the contention that librarians must be cognizant of the increasing changes in the school curriculum and ready to offer the services demanded. Fargo states:

When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of intelligent self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious. In line with the above principles, it is pointed out that the curriculum has undergone marked modification, new subject matter and activities have been introduced in order to bring the school into closer relation with social processes and the needs of the learner.¹⁰

There has been an emancipation from text book slavery. Child activity is the keynote of the elementary curriculum. We seek to stimulate his interests, broaden his horizons, and to satisfy his curiosity.

The purpose of the school is not limited to stimulating interest in academic fields alone. To live a rich and satisfying life, most individuals need hobbies, and leisure time interests. We live within a world concept today and we cannot share in the lives of our neighbors unless we have some appreciation of their cultures. The more intelligent

¹⁰Lucille F. Fargo, The Program for Elementary School Library Service (Chicago: American Library Association, 1930), pp. 30-31.

the individual, the greater his curiosity and the greater his need for resource material which will satisfy him. These, then are the major problems of our elementary school and to carry out any program which fulfills these needs we must have certain facilities available to us.

During the throes of the birth of progressive education we wandered, sometimes deliriously, advising and experimenting with some pretty aimless activity programs. Our aims as stated were to provide opportunity, guidance, and success. Too often the activity program provided opportunity for educationally useless activity and experience. Educational experiences imply learning experiences in a positive sense. There can be activity and experience which provoke bad habits and undesirable learnings. Therefore, we cannot separate the activity from the guidance. If the pupil cannot evaluate and interpret his experiences to some degree of success in achieving the goals which we have set for education, the experience does not belong in the curriculum. Spears¹¹ has given us a list of four cautions in evaluation of our activity program as follows:

- I. All experience is not educative.
- II. If activities of children are to pay educational dividends, they must be properly selected and directed toward worthy goals.
- III. For children to be active merely for activity's sake is educationally unsound.
- IV. Too much activity is over stimulating, as are too many diverse activities. "Too much" and "too many" may likewise be fatiguing or down right boring.

¹¹Harold Spears, The Teacher and Curriculum Planning (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951), p. 20.

Except in the primary department, the ability to evaluate and interpret must come through the pupils' background of experiences, real or vicarious. He needs to find a link between them and the world in which he lives. This involves knowledge of the past and present gained through the subject matter of his general education courses. From the intermediate grades on up, it will mean history, geography, science, mathematics, literature, the arts, and industrial and vocational courses. There is no means to acquire any satisfactory degree of these needs except by the use of the language arts and there is no source which can provide this in measure comparable to the school library. Gray¹² discusses the increasing demands for wider information and for the wide use of various agencies of communication. We must maintain an informed citizenry, he believes, and goes on to add that a surprisingly large proportion of our adult population is not prepared to use to advantage the various sources of information that are now available. He states, "They...justify the conclusion that boys and girls of this generation should acquire far broader interests and much greater efficiency in the use of the library and other sources of information than has been generally true in the past."¹³

¹²William S. Gray, "Social and Educational Changes Affecting the Library," Forty-second Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago, 1943), p. 17.

¹³Loc. cit.

When the school is organized and planned with broad goals in which every member of the faculty has had a part, the school librarian has the opportunity to play an important role. With the objectivity possible by an overall view of the whole system, which the librarian should have, she is able to see the problems as common to the whole system and suggest a common solution.

Just as the library must change to fit the needs of the school, so the librarian is in a position to aid and stimulate change in the school. First of all, the librarian must acquaint the teachers with the facilities and services of the library, make these desirable and easy to use, and point out the advantages of teaching by methods which will demand them.

The next important step is to bring to the pupil the knowledge of its use, the pleasures and enrichment to be derived from it and the satisfactions of working out their assignments with a variety of interesting materials. When teachers and pupils demand library facilities, it will be hard for the most conservative administrator to insist that they are luxuries and not basic educational needs.

Gray says, "Never before in the history of education has the library held such a vital and prominent place in school activities as it does today. Never before has it cooperated in as many types of school activities as it does today."¹⁴

¹⁴Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

It now becomes our problem to determine, in a specific manner, how the library meets these accepted premises of educational goals and why it must be incorporated into the total school program as a tool for administering the curriculum.

With that in mind we might review our statement of values, beginning with self-realization and economic efficiency.

The industrial arts program, and later, the vocational training program, might be good examples of developing individual efficiency. We know that these courses provide for attitudes, appreciations, and new ideas which bring personal satisfactions. Language arts, again, are basic to the success of these programs. Vocational instructors have begun to accept the fact of individual differences and find group instruction will not suffice. By use of the printed materials, they are able to reach individual problems. A modern vocational course includes text books, reference books, related subject books and much other instructional material. The larger technical schools have central reading rooms where books on fiction, travel, biography, art, and music are conspicuous, as well as shelves of technical books and magazines.

Modern educators realize that the whole personality of the pupil must be developed, not only to fit him into his particular job, but into the home life, the community life, and of the larger life of his country. Modern industrial changes have created more leisure time for millions of workers. Thousands of children have leisure today, who a generation or more ago would have been employed in the sweat shops or at least in some

gainful occupation. These children and adults need and desire more than a "3-R" type of education and experience. Leisure time activities may be of great personal and social value. Most homes cannot provide the facilities to answer the needs for books, magazines and other materials, nor are they equipped to provide the physical conditions for their use.

When Mayor of New York City, La Guardia realized the importance of the proper reading. He appointed a committee of court personnel, librarians and teachers to make a reading list which he published under the title of "An Invitation to Read". The list was made with a definite purpose, and it was made available to the under-privileged boys and girls who made their way into the juvenile courts. The committee felt that through reading interests and materials of the kind they selected, desirable social habits and attitudes could be developed. This list has now been accepted as a valuable reading list by the school librarians.

Self-realization is achieved by broad cultural experiences. An index of cultural development is determined by the decrease in illiteracy of the people. Scientific investigation has shown us that there is a high degree of correlation between the intelligence quotient and the ability to read. We, as educators, know that language is an essential part of all individual development. By the same token, we could justly call it the "vehicle of culture".

We must never minimize the need for rich and meaningful experiences in order to learn to read with comprehension and appreciation, but on the other hand, we must provide the child with experience into a world of

things, facts, and ideas which his physical limitations cannot provide. He has a right to be on speaking terms with the great minds in the fields of literature, art, and philosophy, as well as to be familiar with the practices and ideas of his own immediate world.

As stated before, the home and the classroom are both unable to meet this need to the fullest extent. The need for satisfying human relationships cannot be solved from reading books, but the right book can give release and satisfaction in many ways. The library is able to extend and enrich the opportunities. There is a measure of security to be found in the facile use of informational material. To know where we can turn for reliable answers to our problems gives us a certain confidence in our work and social life. The girl who knows the use of *Daily Post* won't worry so much over small social amenities. The boy who knows where to look for the answer to his "hot-rod" problem will not feel so frustrated. The handicapped child, who can project himself into the hero of his favorite sport will find release. These examples might be multiplied many times in the school life of one pupil and the satisfactions he will have gained through his school library will be likely to carry over into adult life.

Civic responsibility is really an extension of our first human relationships. As stated above, the child first understands his relationship in the home and then his community, until, at last, he can recognize the whole world. A democracy depends upon an informed citizenry being able to think critically. Critical thinking is what makes education

functional. It is the transfer of learning to procedure. It makes it possible to apply prior knowledge to the solving of the problems at hand.

The ability, or rather the degree of ability, which the individual possesses to think critically determines his educational level in the actual sense, and usually his degree of ability to think critically determines his degree of success and adjustment in his society.

We might say that a child begins this process with his first formal educational experiences. The degree and the speed with which it is developed depends, in a large part, in the school. Thinking is clarified by terminology. It must also have factual background. It is experience and observation interpreted. The curriculum must provide the child with the tools to accomplish these processes.

The first business then, of the curriculum, is to teach the child to read and to communicate with his companions. There is no substitute for this process in progressive education. The term "progressive" as used, means in the continuing sense. That this learning process is best promoted by an activity program has been accepted. The activities and experiences must be carefully planned and guided to insure learning of the most desirable kind. Competent utilization of the reading skills to achieve our broader goals is too often taken for granted. We find out, too late many times, that pupils are frustrated because we have allowed them to reach the upper grades without being able to read on their ability level. It is difficult to take them back to the proper starting point because their interest levels have gone so far beyond.

An illiterate person cannot be a full citizen, in the best sense. He is limited in his constitutional right of equality by reason of his illiteracy. We expect the rank and file of adults today to use their right of franchise and to take an active part in their trade organizations. Rural areas are no longer "backwoods", but participate in such worthy organizations as the grange, co-operatives, 4-H, and other similar organizations. The need for men and women today to take an active part in community affairs is more urgent and more necessary than ever. Schools and teachers recognize these needs and are trying desperately to keep up with them.

A good library can be an atmosphere in which the spark of intellectual interest may be kindled. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity, but it remains the responsibility of the total school program to take advantage of it. The librarian will be able to find reading materials with low vocabularies and high interest levels to meet the needs of individual problems. Often the librarian has a much better opportunity to find the interests and to detect the problems than the teacher. Some of the more progressive schools are doing much of the remedial work in the intermediate and upper grades in this way. Worthwhile and interesting activities are carried on in the stimulating atmosphere of the library. No stigma of "remedial" is attached and the interest and the enthusiasm which can be supplied in this way goes much farther in attaining the goal than mere drill routines.

The much-neglected superior child also gets a break in the same

way. In our present day over-crowded classrooms the average teacher finds it difficult to plan or carry out an enriched program. By use of the library, these youngsters may carry on extra units of work, follow through on hobbies and special interests, and find in the wealth of reading material the answer to many other needs.

Regular library classes teach the evaluation of material. Here the pupil comes into contact with many ideas, with many minds and with many kinds of materials. He learns to pick and choose his books. He decides which reference materials serve him best and which authors tell the best stories. He finds that history books do not always agree. He gives the librarian her chance for motivation and guidance.

It seems evident from the opinions of curriculum experts and from general observations that the elementary school library must eventually be the core around which we build the program of the classroom. It functions as a two-way process; reaching out to recognize the needs and drawing in to solve the problems.

Facilities of the Modern School Library

Since the ideal arrangement of library service is realized through the central library, our discussion will refer to that type of service. By the use of a central library most of the benefits of the other methods are secured and in addition many more and valuable ones may be included.

The success of the library program depends primarily upon three factors, the physical set-up, the personnel and the administration.

All three are essential and interdependent.

The first often depends upon the financial circumstances of the district. It would be impossible to have the necessary housing, equipment, and materials if no money was available. On the other hand, it can be a circumstance in which other school facilities are considered more important. It is not unusual to find schools which have built up one program at the expense or complete sacrifice of another. It is hoped that the first part of this discussion has impressed the importance of the library as a core of the curriculum.

Gardiner and Baisden¹ have given an excellent and complete discussion of the physical properties for the centralized library. One of the first considerations should be the location of the library. It should be easily accessible for classroom use. The size will be determined by the enrollment and the future anticipation of needs and materials. The librarian should be consulted by the administration and the architects during the planning stages if possible. In addition to the reading room, a workroom is necessary. This room needs storage space, work tables, and a sink. Some modern libraries are equipped with museums and lavatories. Provision should be made for bulletin boards, magazine racks, and a circulation desk. Lighting of the reading room should meet with standard requirements.

¹Jewel Gardiner and Leo B. Baisden, Administering Library Service in the Elementary School (Chicago: American Library Association, 1941), Chap. V.

The decoration and arrangement of furniture make up the atmosphere of the library. Attractive reading corners, interesting displays, well-arranged shelves, a few good pictures and well-cared-for plants do much to make the room a popular place, not only for reading and study, but for relaxation and harmony.

The librarian and her assistants compose the personnel of the library. Gardiner and Baisden have stated, "No matter how ample or attractive the library room or how adequate the book collection, a library is only as effective as the personnel in charge."² This puts a great deal of responsibility and importance on the choice of the librarian.

Ideally, the librarian should be a person, not only trained in the field of librarianship, but a person of many other desirable qualifications. It is her duty to see that the library constantly functions as an integral part of the school and not as a separate unit. She should know the curriculum problems, the philosophy of the school, and the changes which are constantly being made in materials and methods. The friendly and stimulating atmosphere of the library can bring to the teacher the encouragement and interest which will increase her effectiveness in the classroom.

The librarian with a broad background of children's books and supplementary classroom material may create, within the school, a needed change in the methods of teaching and in turn make not only the classroom teacher, but the administration cognizant of the importance of the library

²Ibid., p. 28.

service. When the librarian works with the teacher in harmony and both realize the impossibility of carrying out a modern and satisfactory program without the library's service, the security and improvement of the elementary library will be insured.

The librarian should like and understand children. She should be able to interest and challenge them. Her training should include storytelling, as well as the clerical knowledge necessary for the classification and cataloging of the materials. In addition to her required background as classroom teacher, she needs training in child psychology, so that she may be able to deal with each child as an individual personality.

Since she is a kind of coordinator of the whole school, personal attractiveness and tact are important to her success. The effectiveness of her program depends upon her relationships with teachers, children, and administrators.

The policies of the school system lie within the province of the school administrators and the final answers of its problems must be determined by them. Lack of harmony between principals, supervisors, and other members of the administrative personnel will slow down progress and efficiency in all departments. It seems most important, then, that the entire personnel of the school be brought together in a democratic form for the planning and understanding of a balanced and educationally efficient system. When this is done the service of the well-planned library cannot be overestimated.

The goal of the library program is to have a complete library service. This means that the library can and should stimulate intelligent

research, satisfy leisure reading needs, provide materials for various levels of ability, coordinate curriculum needs with suitable materials, offer activities which develop democratic methods, and integrate the program of child development in all its facets with the general school program.

The Lag Between Needs and Services

Teachers trained in our Washington colleges of education are well aware of the trends away from the old text book assignment, of the classrooms where pupils have no activity units, and any methods of learning which are not related to or preceded by, interest and experience. Yet these teachers often go out into the field and find situations where there is little provision or equipment for any other kind of teaching. There are comparatively few centralized libraries in our state and those are mainly in the larger cities.

The Washington State School Library Association recently compiled the results of questionnaires sent to the three hundred librarians of the state. Only forty-one of the one hundred, thirty who replied were found to be professionally trained. Seventeen admitted less than ten hours of library training. In comparison to this we might note that the state of Tennessee has five hundred full-time librarians, seventy-five percent of whom hold library degrees. In Washington, less than ten percent hold the same type of training.

Thirty-two of the libraries, out of the one hundred thirty who

responded, were being used as study halls; ten others for various things from a piano classroom to a teacher's lunchroom. These statistics include the secondary school libraries which make up the majority of centralized libraries in the state.

The 1953 report of the Professional Training Committee of the Washington State School Library Association states that the majority of schools in the state do not have libraries. This does not necessarily refer to centralized libraries but may include any set-up which gives some type of library service. Since Washington has long held an enviable place in the nation for her progressive educational system and her training schools this lag or range between the goals we have set up and the action we have taken to attain them is not only regrettable but educationally alarming.

Suggestion for Improving Library Service

There is something in the old adage about "the wheel that squeaks getting the grease." If the Washington-trained teachers demand the facilities to do the kind of teaching they have been trained to do, they will eventually be given some consideration. This must be done in carefully thought out ways, using a well-planned public relations program. Teachers must know their fields, have a sincere philosophy of education, and present their case intelligently.

The librarian and the teacher-librarian have an important responsibility toward their state and regional association. Upon them rests

the responsibility of selling their program to the school and the community. The progressive administrator is becoming more concerned with a balanced program and often welcomes the help and suggestions from those who have recent training in curriculum planning.

Statistics are convincing and when the taxpayers realize that money spent wisely for centralized instructional materials brings more returns per dollar than many other and more popular school expenditures they will have a different attitude toward programs which they had thought to be "frills" and "luxuries".

This past year was the first year that the Washington State School Library Association had an Elementary School Library Committee. It was created to emphasize the value and growing need of libraries in elementary schools. This group is working to increase the professional training of elementary librarians and the standards of the elementary school libraries. The association is growing and each year records a substantial increase in interest and membership. Working in close relation with the State Department of Education, the group feels it is making headway in gradual changes toward the place of the library in the school.

The teachers colleges and universities in the state are adding courses in librarianship to their summer courses. In addition, workshops have been held which have brought teachers and librarians from all over the state. Such groups serve to accelerate the interest and catch the notice of other departments on the campus.

The P. T. A. provides a good medium for library publicity. The school librarian will usually be welcomed on the program, especially if she can demonstrate some phase of her work, such as story-telling, book displays, or the work of some group which has been done in the library. Outside speakers or members of the in-service personnel may be scheduled for similar uses for community gatherings as well as for school staff meetings.

Education is a slow process, but its history is the history of a democracy. The foundations of our present way of life were built slowly, but surely by the untiring efforts of a people who were determined that their children should be literate and have the full rights of citizenship. It is well to glance back occasionally at the gradual, but constant, improvements in the last two centuries. If we are inclined to feel that the pace is too slow, the realization of how far we have come should prove an inspiration to those who have chosen the field of education.

Since librarians are specialists in broad fields of thought and activity, since by their training they have a more objective viewpoint, we may hope to find in them an added and enduring force for continuous progress.

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