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Organizing a Community Resource File for the IMC

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ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY RESOURCE FILE FOR THE IMC

A Research Paper
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts

University of Northern Iowa
Department of Library Science

by
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Today's education is not limited to the structure of only what is in the textbook. Teachers use many forms of instruction and media to enhance the classroom learning situation. Students, especially at the high school level, are studying some subjects for which textbooks have not been written yet. They are doing in depth studies on subjects of their own choosing. Education is being made more meaningful to the student's everyday life.

In many schools a number of years ago, the library if there was one, was simply a place that housed the school's collection of books. In some instances it was also the study hall. Today the centralized school library is playing an important role in the changing education pattern. Today's library is much more than an organized collection of books. The materials in the library collection are closely related to the curriculum of the school, be it an elementary or secondary school building. It contains many types of materials, ranging from art prints to filmstrips to sculptures, besides the traditional collection of books and periodicals. Because of the variety of media present, the library is generally no longer called the library, but

an Instructional Media Center or an Instructional Materials Center (IMC).

Teachers look for ways to enrich their courses of study. There are times, when with all the forms of materials available from the IMC, that the material still does not meet the needs of the teacher. Where do the librarian and teacher go to find the resources needed to fit a particular unit of study?

Instructional materials do not have to be limited to what is located within the physical boundaries of the school buildings of a system. "Every community has people of talent, people with unusual hobbies, people with special professional knowledge."¹ These people can add much to the educational process. Because of their interest, they can bring alive many things, things that the students would otherwise just read about. No teacher, no matter how good a teacher, can be an expert in every aspect of his teaching field. The outside person can relate personal experiences, show items, pictures, etc., that relate to the subject area.

Who, but a person who has spent a length of time in another country or is from another country, can tell

¹Julie Carlson, "If You're On Your Own... Where to Find Resource People----And How to Use Them," Grade Teacher, 85:92, September, 1967.

the students what that country is like? Who, but a person who has done what the student is studying, can tell about it with enthusiasm that the student will catch? Where, but at a factory, can students see how products they use every day are made?

Who are these people in the community, just what can they provide in enrichment, and how can a teacher get in touch with them when their knowledge would fit into the curriculum. "Resource people are a reliable source of information on current and local practice, methods and techniques. They bring to the classroom realistic experiences, and up-to-date information."²

The IMC should have a file of the resources in the community, and perhaps the surrounding area of outside persons and materials, that can be used in connection with a classroom program. Such a file located in the IMC would be accessible to all the professional staff in the building and be valuable to a newcomer on the staff.

A file as a guide to community resources that can be used as instructional materials should be located with the rest of the instructional materials in the IMC.

This paper presents some suggestions as how to find the community resources and how to organize a file of such

²L. C. Schank, "Use Resource People to Enrich Your Voc. Ag. Program," Agricultural Education Magazine, 35:173, February, 1963.

in the IMC.

Chapter 2

TYPES OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There are three major types of community resources that can be used in the school situation. They are speakers, field trips and displays.

SPEAKERS

Speakers are persons who come to the school to talk to the students on a special subject. If the subject is of general interest, he may speak to a large number of the students in an assembly program. If the subject is of a narrower interest, he may speak informally in a classroom to one or two classes.

The speaker may talk about a trip to a special place he has visited, a special hobby he has or maybe his occupation. Generally the subject of the talk will relate to the curriculum.

Many times a speaker will make use of visual aids in giving his speech, the most common being slides or movies and/or objects that are examples of what he is speaking about.

In the small group arrangement the speaker almost always allows time for students to ask questions of him. This allows the student to clear up any points left unclear

by the speaker or ask the speaker to expand on points of the talk.

FIELD TRIPS

The field trip is a community resource that most students have experienced. It is the one most elementary school teachers plan. Community helpers, such as the policemen, the firemen, the postmaster, etc., are often visited early in the child's school life. In some upper elementary grades, the students have a day when the whole day is spent on a field trip, visiting more than one place. These places may fit into their studies, but maybe not at the time of the trip.

A field trip, other times, is thought of in the terms of trips to collect samples for a biology or similar class. Field trips can also be to local industry to find out what is manufactured in the community, to see and hear local artists explain their work in their studios, to hear musicians in rehearsal and/or in concert and to local galleries or museums to learn about the community's past.

DISPLAYS

Displays are collections of articles having something in common. They may be different specimens of the same item, such as a stamp or coin collection, items related by a common theme, such as items coming from the

same country or period of time, or items of art, such as a collection of prints or sculptures.

Displays bring to life things that the students have had to visualize. They help to form correct impressions of things discussed in class.

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

Students sometimes form their own resources. They do this by participating in activities such as mock political conventions and mock United Nations sessions. Generally these are held at colleges, with high school students and college students from a number of schools taking part. If not all the students are able to participate, those taking part should report back to the rest.

Some civic organizations and business groups sponsor special events, in which a small number of students from one school joins with students from other school to take part in such things as becoming a member of a mock state and taking part in the government activities of the mock state or trips to see groups as the United States Congress or the United Nations in action. Here again these students can report back to those classes studying these subjects. Some of these civic organizations or business groups choose for their participants those who, after taking part in their activities, will return to

school to report to their classmates of the experience.

Another type of resource that might be generated by both adults and students is when students are allowed to take over certain city and/or county government positions for a day.

Chapter 3

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

How does a librarian go about gathering the needed information to form a community resource file for the IMC?

Information for the file can be gathered from a number of sources such as: teachers, parents, and the community at large. What information can be gathered and how can it be gathered from these sources?

TEACHERS

When the decision is made to set up a file, the whole professional staff should know about the file and have discussed it as the first step. It should be a whole school project.

Materials for the foundation of a resource file might already be found in the school in various areas in an unorganized manner. Teachers who have been in the system for a period of time will probably have a list of persons, who in the past, they have called upon to give talks, loan items for displays, or places where they have taken their students on field trips.

The major way to get the needed information is to devise an information form that the teacher can fill out and return, with the information the librarian wants.

Some teachers may not want to give up the information the librarian wants, that they have gathered. They may feel that this is private information and do not want to share it with everyone. In these cases pressure should not be put on these people. Hopefully after the file is set up and working they will make use of it in an area they do not have sources of their own. Because of the wide variety of material on different subjects they can add their file, without fear someone will over use the items.

A memo and information form to the teachers within a system might appear some what like the following:

INTRASCHOOL MEMO

TO: All Teachers

DATE: June 10, 1972

FROM: The IMC

SUBJECT: Beginning a centralized community resource file in the IMC.

As has been discussed in various meetings, the IMC is going to set up a centralized file of community resources for the use of the faculty.

One source of information is what you as teachers have used in the past for speakers, displays and/or field trips.

Enclosed are some forms for recording the needed information. Please fill out one for each item and return to the IMC. If you need more forms they are available

from the IMC.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE FILE

Teacher _____

Subject: _____

Grade level: _____

Type of Resource: _____

Person to Contact: _____

Address: _____

circle one
home/business

Phone: _____

home/business

Occupation: _____

Notice Time Needed: _____

Materials used: _____

Equipment Needed: _____

Size of Group: _____

Last time used: _____

Evaulation and/or other comments:

A second item from the teachers might be a request for "...what resources they would find valuable in their

teaching..."³

PARENTS

Probably the largest source of community resources are the parents of the students. These people make up a large share of the population of the community. These are the people doing the things a teacher wants the students to experience.

A questionnaire sent to the home of the students is the best way to get the information. There are a number of ways to get the information. There are also a number of ways to handle the sending of the questionnaire. Some of which have been used by both public and parochial schools. For example in one school, the kindergarten teacher sends home a questionnaire to the parents of her students at the beginning of the year for use with her students.⁴ In Minneapolis a "...questionnaire was sent home with every child in the school district..."⁵ A third public school starting a community resource file sent home two

³Betty Jane Reed, "Thank You for Coming: Minneapolis Schools Welcome Volunteers in Their Community Resource Program, The Instructor, 77:77, October, 1967.

⁴Marjorie L. Roth, "Resource File," The Instructor, 78:41, August/September, 1968.

⁵Reed, loc. cit.

questionnaires (one for each parent) and a letter explaining its program as a child enrolled in kindergarten.⁶

One parochial school distributed to parishioners at a mass early in the the school year the following questionnaire, which is a good basic and typical questionnaire:

"What Can You Do to Make the
St. Mary's School Program a Richer One?"

Name..... Occupation.....
Address..... Special Field.....
Telephone..... Call: A.M. .. P.M. ..

I. Travel:

A. Have you traveled in the United States and/or other countries?

1. 2. 3. 4.

B. Would you share these experiences with the school in any of the following ways? (Please check)

Talk () Articles of Interest ()

Movies () Slides ()

Please give details.

II. Talk:

A. Could you make an informal talk to classroom groups on any subject? (For example, occupation, special field, or spare time activities.)

If you are unable to speak, would you make information and materials available to a teacher?

B. Could you demonstrate some special skill, art, craft, or hobby to a classroom group?

How much notice would you require?
Age level?

C. Would you speak on a special subject at Assembly Programs? Please give details, including what if any illustrative materials you have.

⁶ Anonymous, "How to Tap Your Community Resources," School Management, 7:50, February, 1963.

III. Visitors:

Could you arrange for people of interest to come to the school (without charge), such as musicians, journalist, public figures, etc?

Please list possibilities:

How much notice would be required.

IV. Collections, Films, Etc.:

Would you show or lend collections, films, slides and/or other visual aids? Such as: (Please underline.)

(1) Weaving, pottery, woodwork, craft; (2) Americana; (3) Books or pictures; (4) musical instruments or recordings; (5) scientific equipment, material, information; (6) agricultural or botanical exhibits, geological specimens; (7) historical data or papers; (8) movies or slides; and/or other (Please give detail.)

"Would you talk about the materials?

Age Level?

V. Trips:

Could you arrange a special trip to a factory, farm, school, court, etc.?

Where Best Time

Cost Age level

Size of Group

VI. Time and Equipment:

Could you donate any time and/or equipment to our school? (Please give details.)

VII. Special Courses:

Have you had any special courses in Theology, Liturgy, or Catechetics that you could share with the children."

For a public school the last question might be eliminated or different subjects used.

With the form used, should go a letter explaining the program, how the information will be used, also asking

⁷Anonymous, "Utilize Parish Talents in Your School Program," Catholic School Journal, 67:94, September, 1967.

if anyone the parents know might have a resource that could be useful to the school. The letter should thank the parents in advance for any information they might be able to provide.

THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

There are a number of ways to locate the people outside of the parents who might contribute to the school program.

One way is to read the local newspaper. People who have something of interest, have been somewhere unusual, or have done something of interest are often written up in the local newspaper.

Service and social organizations in the community often have special programs they sponsor, that could be used at the school level. They often have a list of speakers that may be of value to the classroom teacher.

Colleges and universities in an area often have professors and other staff members who are willing to present programs at schools. They may speak in their field of training, some unusual teaching locations or their hobbies. These lists can be obtained usually by writing the public relations department of the school.

Sometimes professional organizations on a state level have specialized films and/or speakers available to the schools. Contact with these groups is with a local *person*

who is a member of the organization. Two examples of this are: the Pharmaceutical Association has films on drugs that can be booked at no cost through a local pharmacist and the Iowa Academy of Science has a program of visiting scientists who will speak to high schools. Some science teachers are members of this organization and would know the details of the program.

One teacher, when looking for a specific resource, asked the local public librarian, who was able to give an answer on the spot. This same teacher says that she finds people in her every day, i.e. people she meets socially and in activities connected with her work.⁸

For field trips one school finds them thus: "To identify and locate suitable trips, the classified section of the telephone book and the local trade and professional directory were checked."⁹

One high school made use of former students who were in college. The school planned a college and career day just before Christmas, when many of the college students were home. They spoke and answered questions from the high school students about their colleges and the

⁸Carlson, loc. cit.

⁹David D. Pasco, "Teachers Unlimited! Utilizing Community Resources," *The Instructor*, 67:83, June, 1958.

careers they were preparing for.¹⁰

Many times people are willing to give time and service to a school, but they don't simply because they have never been asked. People are often flattered when they are asked. Thus a librarian and/or teacher should not be afraid to ask. A person cannot say yes or even no unless he has been asked.

¹⁰Plainfield Community High School, Plainfield, Iowa. Personal knowledge of the event.

Chapter 4

ORGANIZATION OF THE FILE

Hopefully the response from the teachers' form and the parents' questionnaire has been successful. The librarian now has sheet after sheet of information. How much of it will be of value to the classroom teacher? How many people listed things that do not fit into the curriculum?

If the response has been large now is the time to call in some help. There are groups connected with the school like the PTA and other groups outside the school that have an interest in education, which can help here. They can follow up on the material from the questionnaires. They can interview and screen candidates and double check the material that is on the questionnaires. (Some joker might return his questionnaire with all the material on it fictional.)

The material with help has now been checked for authenticity. What must the librarian do to make the material so that it is available to the classroom teacher. It has to be organized into some logical arrangement accessible to all. This type of file almost has to be organized by subject. Subject matter is what teachers will be looking for when they use the file. A subject

classification that is familiar to the teachers should be used.

A form to enter the information on is needed. This form will need to have all the information the teacher needs to bring the resource into the classroom. The size of the form may range in size from 4" by 6" to 5" by 7" to 8½" by 11".

Following is a sample of the arrangement of information on a card; both front and the back of the card would be used:

Subject _____	Type of Resource _____
Grade Level _____	Length of Presentation _____
Person to Contact _____	Notice Time Needed _____
Address _____	Equipment Needed _____
_____	Materials Used _____
Phone _____	Dates Used _____
Occupation _____	_____

Other Notes:

On the reverse side of the card would be space for evaluation comments by the teachers who have used the resource.

The groups who helped with the screening of the original material may be used again to help transfer the information from the teachers' forms and the parents' questionnaires to the file cards. These people should

work in two groups, one group transferring the information and the other group to verify that the information has been transferred correctly.

The librarian should be the one to assign the final subject headings, thus making sure that the subject headings follow the same method used in the other areas of the IMC. The librarian should also set up see and see also cards like those in the card catalog. The librarian should also make sure that these cross references are not blind cross references.

The file should be located so that all the teachers have easy access to it. Students should have no need for using the file. If students for some unusual reason want information from this file, they should have the teacher get the information they need.

Chapter 5

EVALUATION OF THE RESOURCES

Even though the resources were screened when gathered, they should be evaluated in the school situation. When a person was screened he may have presented an outline of his material to an adult on an one to one basis. When the same person comes before a group of students his presentation may not be as good.

The resource file should have two sections. One section would be the active file and the other the inactive. The active section would have two parts. The first part is a temporary or holding file. In the holding file go the resources which have not been used in the classroom and thus there is no teacher evaluation of the resource.

After the resource has been used in the classroom, the teacher should fill out an evaluation form and send it to the library. A sample form might look like the following:

RESOURCE EVALUATION

Date _____ Resource Person _____

Type of Presentation _____

Group Given to _____

Circle the number that is your evaluation of the above resource, Number one being excellent, three being

average, and five being poor, with two and four being between the others. This evaluation will be helpful to other teachers wishing to use the same resource.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| A. Delivery 1 2 3 4 5 | D. Suitable for group given to 1 2 3 4 5 |
| B. Knowledge of subject 1 2 3 4 5 | E. Recommend use again for this group 1 2 3 4 5 |
| C. Material used 1 2 3 4 5 | F. Recommend use for different group/also |
-

Other comments:

If parts of this presentation were poor, can the school help improve the presentation, such as better use of A-V Materials?

The other part of the active section would be the permanent file with teachers' comments summarized on the back of the card. Each evaluation should contain the name of the teacher making the evaluation.

Each presentation should be evaluated. Each time a presentation is given it changes some what. If the presentation is grade leveled, the level of the presentation may have changed or perhaps the curriculum has changed the level at which the subject is taught.

In the second section of the file would be the inactive file. Those that performed poorly should be

placed here. Other teachers hear who has given programs and on what. They may seek out a certain person and not finding him in either part of the active section, will want to know why he isn't in the active section. Finding the resource in the inactive section with a poor evaluation will answer some of their questions.

Chapter 6

KEEPING UP TO DATE

A resource file loses some of its value if it is not kept up to date.

The community from which the resource people are taken is always changing. People in business and industry are coming and going at all times during the year.

It would be frustrating for a teacher to find just the right resource for the unit of study, then for some reason be unable to obtain that person. This could happen if the community resource file is not kept current.

Reading the local newspaper can help the librarian keep the file up to date. In the business section may be news of someone moving from the community for business reasons. Also the obituary section can inform the librarian of deaths of people who are in the file.

By word of mouth news of people leaving town and dying comes to the librarian. When he hears of this he should discreetly double check the information for accuracy. When the information is correct the cards should be removed with the reason of the withdrawal and placed in the inactive file.

A complete weeding of the file should be done once a year. Just before or at the beginning of the school year

is a good time for a complete weeding. When the weeding is done at this time it is fairly accurate for teachers when they are planing for the coming year. Many changes could take place in the three months time the school was closed for the simmer.

One way to keep the file current is to check names, telephone numbers and addresses in the file against the local telephone directory when a new one is issued. If the name, telephone number and address are the same, fine. There may have been a move with a new address and telephone number. It should be changed on the card in the file. If a name is no longer in the telephone directory, it should be double checked, to see if the person is still in the area. Moving or death may have caused the lack of a listing. If the person is no longer in the area, this should be noted on the card and the card placed in the inactive file.

Mentioned earlier were speakers from colleges and universities, and civic groups and programs from civic groups. Just before school starts these groups should be contacted to get their current information. They also change staff and programs. Maybe a person from one of these has been used year after year, but now he has retired and moved from the area, the teacher needs to know this before making plans.

A resource may still be in the area, but unable to

give time. A short letter once a year just before the start of school, thanking them for their past use and asking them if they will be available for the coming year, should be sent to all in the resource file. A post card for reply should be enclosed. A person may only temporarily be unable to give his resource. This should be noted on the card. When he is again available, the card can be returned to the active file.

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