

The Standards Revisited

by Fred Branscombe

There is no bond of union so strong as the bond created by common dangers shared in common.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier

We, whose primary professional concern is the provision and utilization of learning materials, are known by dozens of apparently conflicting titles and job descriptions. For the most part, they are variants of one or other of two basic terms: librarian and audio-visual (or media) specialist. We are usually found polarized in our attitudes toward technology. At one extreme, some eagerly embrace every technological innovation. Others, at the opposite extreme, are openly hostile to every medium except the printed word, which because of its age is deemed to have shed the stigma which it once had as an unwelcome new technology.

These differences among us are understandable. We are the heirs of two separate traditions. The corporate voices for those two traditions are the Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada (formerly the Canadian Audio-Visual Association and later the Educational Media Association of Canada) and the Canadian School Library Association (a division of the Canadian Library Association).

The first criteria used in Canadian schools regarding the provision of learning materials were imported, typically, from the United States. This was the 1945 publication *School Libraries for Today*

Dr. Fred Branscombe is coordinator emeritus of educational media services with the Board of Education for the City of North York. Throughout a long and distinguished career he was a pioneer in the development of AMTEC and its precursors, CAVA and EMAC, and was active in AECT and its precursor DAVI in the United States. Fred is well known as the co-author, with Harry Newsom, of *Resource Services for Canadian Schools*. Now officially retired, Dr. Branscombe continues to maintain an active interest in AMTEC while pursuing his writing interests.

and *Tomorrow*, produced by the American Library Association. Importation from the United States was still the practice in 1960 with the use of *Standards for School Library Programs* (prepared by the American Association of School Librarians) and again in 1966 with *Quantitative Standards for Audiovisual Personnel, Equipment and Materials* (by the Department of Audiovisual Instruction of the National Educational Association). Not only for reasons of national pride but also because of significant differences between educational goals and practices in Canada and the United States, there was a need for distinctively Canadian standards.

That need was recognized by the newly formed Canadian School Library Association at its first annual meeting, held in Ottawa in 1962. A standards committee was appointed at that time under the chairmanship of Mrs. Helen Donaldson, of the Metropolitan Toronto Borough of East York. It produced in 1965 the *Preliminary Standards for School Libraries*. That document was revised by a second standards committee, with Harry Newsom of Winnipeg as chairman, which arranged for the publication by the Ryerson Press in 1967 of the *Standards of Library Service for Canadian Schools*.

The publication of the C.S.L.A. *Standards* was a notable achievement. It was the first Canadian standards for the provision of learning materials in schools. It was a pioneer, too, in recognizing that books were not the only materials that should be available to teachers and learners. In a bold statement that may seem trite in 1985 but was (in 1967) a vision of the future, Harry Newsom and his collaborators wrote, "The library collection consists of books, disc records, tapes, pictures, pamphlets, periodicals, film strips, film slides, microfilm, charts and museum objects — all materials which might be used to instruct, inspire as well as encourage and facilitate the learning programme. The librarian, as an instructional materials resource person, works with students, instructional staff, administration, parents and community

agencies to produce a library programme." True, many of the non-book items in that list were old-timers, even in traditional libraries. Several had attained respectability under the rubric, *Vertical File*. It was an age, however, when myopia and tunnel-vision were often in evidence in administrative decisions relative to non-print library materials in schools. I know of a large urban secondary school where, about the time of the publication of the C.S.L.A. *Standards*, filmstrips were kept (along with cash and the school records) in a walk-in vault in the main office and were lent from there by a secretary one at a time as needed, which (not surprisingly) was infrequently.

The members of the Canadian Audio-Visual Association welcomed the appearance of a Canadian volume of standards for learning materials. They applauded the recognition of the universality of needed materials, without distinction as to format or medium. They were disappointed, however, with what they considered to be the inadequate recognition of the need for local production of non-print materials. This was particularly true in the case of production by students where the learning value was in the process, not in the product. It was feared that this shortcoming might cause serious harm, were it come to be accepted that the responsibilities of the "instructional materials resource person" went no farther than "to acquire books and materials" and "to organize these materials for effective use."

C.A.V.A. decided that there was an urgent need for a comprehensive presentation of the needs for and the difficulties in, a fully developed program for the production and distribution of non-print materials. By the time that a book was produced to meet this need, the organization had changed its name to the Educational Media Association of Canada. In partnership with E.M.A.C., which produced the manuscript, Pergamon of Canada Ltd. published in 1969 *Media Canada: Guide Lines for Educators*. The book, which was edited by James Miller of the Borough of York in Metropolitan Toronto, was well received and enjoyed a second printing in 1970.

Together, the C.S.L.A. *Standards* and E.M.C.A.'s *Media Canada* provided much more reliable guidance than either volume did on its own. Both books had areas of outstanding value, resulting from the particular professional competencies of those who produced them. Unfor-

tunately, each book had blind spots reflecting the specific training, experience and interests of its authors.

The C.S.L.A. *Standards* was progressive in its advocacy of the unification of print and non-print collections and programs, whereas *Media Canada* appeared to champion the already outmoded concept of complete separation. Where the *Standards* gave little or no leadership relative to materials production, *Media Canada* provided recommendations covering every conceivable eventuality. Conversely, *Media Canada* was mute concerning how to classify, catalogue and arrange non-print materials so as to facilitate their effective use, whereas these were areas of particular strength in the C.S.L.A. *Standards*.

At its 1971 Annual Meeting C.S.L.A. decided that the time had come to have a revised edition of its 1967 *Standards*. To improve its credibility in advocating the unification of print and non-print collections and services, it included in a newly appointed standards committee four members who had outstanding credentials as audio-visual specialists. The chairman was Harry Newsom, of the School of Library Science, University of Alberta, Edmonton. This was a well balanced committee. Except for one problem, it could have produced a set of standards for instructional materials, equally usable relative to learning materials is all media.

The problem was that, regardless of the book's merits, it would not have been acceptable to all to whom it would have been addressed. No matter whether it had been published under the auspices of C.S.L.A. or E.M.A.C., the members of the other association would surely have seen it as a subversive plot to seize, or to keep, hegemony (depending on how things were organized locally) in the learning materials program in the local school system. If C.S.L.A. had published its own revised edition, E.M.A.C. undoubtedly would have had one too, complete with chapters in the areas where it had been weak previously.

It was obvious that the need was not for separate second editions of the two books of standards, each competing with and undermining the other. The time was opportune for C.S.L.A. and E.M.A.C. to follow the example in the United States of the Department of Audiovisual Instruction and the American Association of School Librarians when they jointly published the *Standards for School Media Programs* (1969).

By a happy coincidence I had an oppor-

tunity in 1971 to say in print what many members of both E.M.A.C. and C.S.L.A. were saying privately. I had been asked by *School Progress* to write an article on the interface of librarians and audio-visual personnel in Canadian education. I took advantage of the opportunity to say of the two Canadian books of standards, "There is an urgent need for the different, though complementary, competencies of all the contributors to both books to be concentrated on the production of a new set of media standards for Canadian schools, having the best elements of both existing publications. This is no idle dream. It can be done cooperatively by the Canadian School Library Association and the Educational Media Association of Canada."

During the autumn of 1971 the executives of E.M.A.C. and C.S.L.A. explored the possibility of both organizations laying aside their plans to publish revised editions of their respective books of standards, in favor of an entirely new book to be published jointly by the two associations. These preliminary conversations led to a formal agreement by C.S.L.A. and E.M.A.C. to sponsor jointly the writing and publishing of a comprehensive book of standards for resource services in Canadian schools. To this end it was agreed that the committee that was to implement the decision, as well as its sub-committees, would have two co-chairmen, one from each of the sponsoring associations. Gordon Jarrell, president of the Educational Media Association of Canada, invited me in January, 1972, to be the national co-chairman, who was to represent E.M.A.C. Harry Newsom, the chairman of the existing C.S.L.A. standards committee became the other co-chairman.

Having witnessed some of the mighty rows over petty disputes between media people and librarians at local and state levels in the United States, I found the first meeting of the Joint National Standards Committee in Winnipeg early in 1972 to be truly memorable. With four representatives from E.M.A.C. facing over a dozen C.S.L.A. members, I concluded that we were not about to win anything that the other side of the table was unwilling to hand over. Then a remarkable thing happened that set the tone for that meeting and all the rest that followed until the publication of the book in 1977. Harry Newsom proposed that questions be settled by consensus, rather than by voting. Furthermore, with the approval of his C.S.L.A. colleagues, he an-

nounced that where it was impossible to avoid a formal vote, only as many C.S.L.A. members would vote as there were E.M.A.C. members voting. That established a solid trust and mutual respect which soon obliterated all distinctions based on association loyalties. In the few votes that the national committee had in five years, the division was never along organizational lines.

Contributors of ideas and authors of the text of *Resource Services for Canadian Schools* were organized on a two tier basis. Content committees were established according to what would become chapters of the book. Two co-chairmen (one from each sponsoring association) and the remaining members of each of these sub-committees were chosen on the basis of (1) maintenance of a balance between E.M.A.C. and C.S.L.A. members and (2) residence within a reasonable distance of each other so that the work could be done without undue inconvenience or cost. These content groups generated ideas and expressed them in position papers which formed the basis of the text which was eventually developed.

The co-chairmen of the sub-committees on content were: Richard Bell (Calgary), Malcolm Binks (St. Catharines), Gerald Brown (Winnipeg), Louise Burgess (Toronto), John Church (Vancouver), Anne Davidson (Regina), Heather-Belle Dowling (Edmonton), Doris Fennell (Toronto), Harry Greaves (Toronto), Norman Guilbert (Winnipeg), Kenneth Haycock (Guelph), Ian Hose (Toronto), David Jenkinson (Winnipeg), Neil Nelson (Toronto), Gwendoline North (Calgary), Ray Rycroft (London), Barbara Smith (Mississauga), John Stoeber (Calgary), Marjorie Szollosy (Toronto), and John Wright (Edmonton).

In addition to the general supervision of the project, the national standards committee had the responsibility of determining the basic philosophy of the book. This involved reconciling minor differences in the recommendations of the sub-committees so as to produce a unified text. The members of the national committee were: Kenneth Bowers (Edmonton), Fred Branscombe, co-editor (Toronto), Agnes Florence (Winnipeg), Gordon Jarrell (Toronto), Gordon McLean (Fredericton), Lawrence Moore (Kingston), Harry Newsom, co-editor (Edmonton), Margaret Scott (Toronto), Florence Willson (Prince George) and Robert Wylie (Belleville).

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CURRICULUM RESOURCES

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debate the issue of school libraries and educational media, such a discussion trivializes the major issues. While we bemoan the lack of integration of different types of learning resources, particularly into effective programs, we focus too on the media and their collection and organization. In an information society more time and energy has to be devoted to national debate on using the resources we have available to us in effective instructional programs to teach youngsters how to process and use information.

To do that, we go right back to the promise of **Resource Services for Canadian Schools**. We need a clear aim for the program, a role for professional personnel which is clarified and focused, good programs to prepare this staff, a district approach to coordination of resource centres and their development in a unified system, staff development programs which focus on program development and enhancement, and a commitment to well-designed, well-integrated resource based learning programs for young people. This is really the least we can do with any degree of professional competence and respect.

MISSION POSSIBLE

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The standards contain both quantitative and qualitative statements, and "represent a compromise between 'what should be' as expressed in the literature and 'what is realistically attainable' in the present economic climate." It is intended that they be interpreted as minimum rather than desirable expectations.

The inclusion of quantitative standards for school library collections, staffing and facilities is always controversial. At once they are seen by schools exceeding them as too low, and by those at the other end of the spectrum as impossible to attain. According to responses to the questionnaire, about 36 percent of the school jurisdictions would have some difficulty phasing in the standards over a 3-5 year period.

Following are the standards for library staff and the school library collection.

Library Staff

- Professional direction is critical to the development and implementation of an effective program. Professional direction may be provided through a variety of alternatives:
 - By a full-time teacher-librarian on the school staff.
 - By a teacher-librarian with a part-time library and part-time teaching assignment.

- By a teacher-librarian serving more than one school in the district.
- By supervision by a school district (central office) teacher-librarian.
- By cooperative agreement with a regional library system.
- Where no teacher-librarian is available, by the principal and teaching staff of the school.

Note: i) The minimum qualifications of a teacher-librarian should include teacher certification and successful teaching experience along with university credits in at least eight half courses in librarianship and instructional technology.

- Active participation on the part of the principal and teachers in the implementation of the library program must increase as teacher-librarian time is decreased.

- Qualified technical/clerical support should also be provided.
- Professional and technical/clerical support should meet or exceed the following standards:

School Size	Teacher-Librarian	Technical/Clerical Support
150 Students	-	½ - 1
300 Students	½	½ - 1
500 Students	1	1
750 Students	1	1½ - 2
1000 Students over	1	2
1000 Students	1½ - 2	2½ - 3

The School Library Collection

- The basic collection should support the major content areas of the instructional program and represent a balanced range of student interests and needs, including the appreciation of literature.
- The size of the basic collection should be dependent upon the total student enrollment served, the number of grades taught in the school, the number and types of instructional programs, and accessibility of relevant materials through regional cooperation, networking and interlibrary loan arrangements.
- The basic library collection for a school of 250 students should include:

print and nonprint materials . . .	4,000 titles
magazines . . .	20
newspapers . . .	2
pamphlets, pictures . . .	to meet program needs
film/video, etc. . .	from Regional Film Centre, District IMC, ACCESS (Alberta Educational Communications Corporations) etc.

Note: 1. The above represents an

average basic collection for 250 students regardless of the type of school (elementary, junior or senior high). The number of course offerings in junior and senior high is offset by more grade levels served in elementary school and the need for more books at the primary school level.

- For schools with larger enrollments, the collection should be increased to meet the needs of the students and the instructional program.
- The ratio of fiction to nonfiction and reference should range from 15% - 30% fiction and 70% - 85% nonfiction and reference depending upon accessibility and the nature of interlibrary loans available from other school, regional, public, college and university libraries.
- The reference collection should include at least one current general encyclopedia.
- Schools offering programs in both English and languages other than English, should increase the basic collection to include a comparable standard of materials (print and nonprint) to support instruction in the language(s) offered.
- Selection criteria for the library collection should be consistent with:
 - Guidelines for tolerance and understanding.
 - Controversial issues policy statement.
 - Canadian content priorities.
 - Identified library program goals and objectives.
 - Needs identified by students and teachers.
 - Information from recognized selection tools.
- An annual school library budget should be allocated for the purchase of new materials, supplies and equipment (if equipment is not provided for in the capital budget or some other budget category). The budget should be determined on the basis of the funds required to realize library program goals and objectives. It should be recognized that smaller schools and schools offering programs in English as well as languages other than English will require a higher than average allocation.

Scene V

The Department has several activities completed or underway to provide the

means for accomplishing its responsibilities.

- A description of over 30 schools throughout the province illustrating effective library program development and implementation, **Alberta School Libraries in Action** (Alberta Education, 1984), has been distributed to all superintendents. School addresses and phone numbers are provided so that advance arrangements can be made for on-site visits.
- A model for an integrated school library program has been developed. A description of this model will be made available to all Alberta schools, spring 1985, in the form of a monograph.
- Throughout discussions related to the new policy, continual reference was made to the need for inservice educational programmes for teacher-librarians, teachers and administrators. In 1984, Alberta Education established a new fund for teacher inservice education in the suggested priority areas of computer literacy, gifted and talented students, and

STANDARDS REVISITED

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Harry Newsom (from his base in Edmonton and later in Kamloops) worked with the sub-committees which were situated in Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Since I was located in Toronto, I related with the groups in St. Catharines, Toronto, Guelph and London. Meetings of the national committee were held in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto. These had to be kept to a minimum because of the costs involved. The principal coordination of the work of the various groups in western and central Canada was achieved by frequent meetings between Harry Newsom and me. Most of these work sessions were held in Winnipeg, although some were in Toronto and Kamloops.

Neither the Canadian School Library Association nor the Educational Media Association of Canada (or its successor, the Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada) had the financial resources to support activities on such a large scale. The preparation of the manuscript might well have been impossible had it not been for the generous grant of \$12,000.00 by the World Book Encyclopedia of Chicago and Toronto. With that assistance it was possible to pay for the postage, telephone

evaluations. Added to these priorities for 1985/86 is school libraries. The grants provide for \$9.00 per pupil in grades one through twelve, and \$5.40 per early childhood services student. The guidelines for this funding focus on activities which will result in improved classroom instruction.

- Since 1984, a number of special needs areas have been identified by Alberta Education for additional funding. These may vary from year to year. For 1985/86, additional support will be given for the enhancement of school library learning resource collections. These funds will be allocated to school boards on the basis of \$10.00 per student or \$1000.00 per school which ever is greater. The funds are to be applied in addition to, not as a substitution for, the funds normally allocated for the development of library collections. In June 1986, boards will be expected to make an interim report of the utilization and impact of this funding, with a final report in June, 1987. School boards will be required to have

documents on file that are consistent with the new library policy; a plan for priority needs for collection development; and an evaluation and selection policy approved by the school board. The 4500 responses to the questionnaire are a testimony to the commitment of Albertans to improve school library services — from the leading man, David King, Minister of Education, to the 'cast of thousands' starring the L.R.C. and provincial library association, strongly supported by parents.

Educators have given a standing ovation to the initiatives taken by Alberta Education. Curtain calls are inevitable.

REFERENCES

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charges and travelling expenses that were necessary.

We have now come full cycle in 1985 and it is again time to consider revision of the recommendations of **Resource Services for Canadian Schools**. We have today the same two options which we had in 1971: two separate books (one each published by C.S.L.A. and A.M.T.E.C.) or a single set of standards published by the two associations jointly.

The convenience is tempting for each organization to produce a unilateral statement of the true faith from its point of view, without the bother of developing a consensus with others in the field. It would be the easier way to go and more conducive to ego trips, both corporate and personal. It would, however, be a dereliction of duty.

The dangers which we face as librarians and media specialists, we face in common. When reduced funding undermines the provision of learning materials, all are affected. The negativism of the "back to basics" revisionists makes no distinction between us. Neither books nor films are safe from witch hunts. We are attacked in common and we must defend ourselves together. Any revision or the replacement of the present standards must be a joint A.M.T.E.C. - C.S.L.A. project.

The central issue is whether we want to recommend unified standards or to

retrogress to separate sets of recommendations. It is **not** whether it should be a single larger book or a series of smaller ones dealing with various particularities of recommendations. That dichotomy is a red herring. Either comprehensive or modular publications can be produced cooperatively or separately. One of our options is to publish two separate books (or, if we go the modular route, ten or twelve booklets in pairs), competing with each other for sales, subtly contradicting and lessening one another's credibility. Our other option is to develop a consensus and to speak with united conviction and doubled authority to those who need to be convinced of the importance of learning materials in all media and to be shown how to use them effectively.

The members of the Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada and of the Canadian School Library Association have an obligation to present the case for the acquisition, production and utilization of learning materials in every medium, not competitively so as to advance the fortunes of one association at the expense of the other, but cooperatively in a bond of union, that will be, for media specialists and librarians alike, the means of obtaining better protection against common dangers and of achieving greater success in common endeavors.