

## Standards: Aiming Towards Tomorrow

by Lorne MacRae

There is a need to consider the publication of revised, enlarged and futuristic standards to guide the development of school media programs in Canada. Such consideration is essential and long overdue. A developing foundation of credible research, rapid technological change, the altering expectations of students, teachers and the public — all indicate that every consideration should be given to the development of useful and visionary standards. Such standards would outline achievable goals and suggest realistic practical strategies to achieve those goals. There must be statements of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and relationships — for teacher-librarians, library technicians, library clerks, central support systems, provincial departments of education, university faculties and for newly defined fiduciary obligations of federal departments and agencies.

"Although some people dismiss the concept of standards of excellence as unrealistic in the actual world, there is a need for a vision of the educational program as it should be, even though its achievement may seem impossible. . . . We need standards to help us determine if our present course is a wise one; program goals provide a sense of direction even though we may be able to move only a short distance." (Elizabeth Fast; *School Media Quarterly*, Winter, 1976.)

In an editorial entitled "Take Another Look" (*Canadian Library Journal*, April 1983, p. 59), Art Forgay placed a call for the development of new standards squarely before the membership of the Canadian Library Association. Forgay points out perceived ongoing concerns about the lack of quantitative statements

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in the 1977 document jointly produced by CSLA and AMTEC — *Resource Services for Canadian Schools* (Edited by Frederic R. Branscombe and Harry E. Newsom, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1977). Although Forgay salutes the development of *Resource Services for Canadian Schools*, he says that, "as with any such document, questions were raised during and after its publication regarding the methods used and the degree to which it had achieved its mandate", (*Canadian Library Journal*, April 1983, p. 59). Unfortunately, these questions and some considerable difficulty in interpreting the document for useful local development gave it a much shorter lifespan than the scope the document deserved.

Jane Anne Hannigan in "School Media Standards" (*Library Trends*, Summer, 1982) points out concerns similar to those raised by Forgay, but in reference to *Media Programs: District and School* (American Library Association/Association for Educational Communications & Technology, 1975). In addition, she deftly highlights a major concern, one that both documents failed to address thoroughly or reasonably, and one that must be addressed in any new document: "the standards have for years skirted the issue of teaching . . . nowhere has the profession determined the scope and sequence of our responsibilities to students and to the schooling process. We have continued to suggest that learning the location and use of simple materials or library skills is our goal, forgetting that finding or obtaining access to information is only a relatively small and, to some extent, an insignificant part of the need of an individual learner confronted with information." (Jane Anne Hannigan, "School Media Standards", *Library Trends*, Summer 1982, p. 53-54).

Both Forgay and Hannigan suggest that new standards must of necessity look at the technological changes impacting upon schools and must consider the impact that technology promises — good and bad — upon societal concerns such as that represented in our dichotomous need for access to information and our need for privacy. Previous standards have tended

to be glib about or to ignore the potential negative impact that improved models and strategies of telecommunication promise with ease and can now deliver with rapidity. Easy and relatively inexpensive access to databases necessitates an examination and evaluation of both appropriate and reasonable access. "The school media specialist will (also) have to face an increase in electronic publishing and determine how the user of informational and imaginative content will cope. We have developed some interesting approaches to criticism of literature and film, but we have not begun to determine the criticism necessary for assessing the computer software that is now published and which will undoubtedly escalate. The new standards will have to deal with this question in a more realistic fashion than have our earlier attempts to cope with technology, as witnessed by the failure to deal effectively with film." (Jane Anne Hannigan, "School Media Standards", *Library Trends*, Summer 1982, p. 55).

As Hannigan states, previous documents have overlooked offering articulate statements about the integral relationship of the school library to learning, teaching, effective education, life-long learning, student attitude, and student achievement. Nor have previous documents clearly delineated useful models that outline the benefits to be gained by employing strategies that address learning styles, models of teaching, flexible scheduling, resource sharing/networking and cooperative program planning.

If the present economic climate has had any positive impact, then perhaps it is the fact that it has required teacher-librarians and school administrators to reassess and redetermine the foundation upon which a good modern school library program must exist. The conditions of the present carry with them a strong call to identify the fundamental services of a good school library program and then to define what that program requires as it moves into a future that quickly becomes tainted with obsolescence!

New standards must examine the role of all school library personnel and their interrelationship. The teaching component of the role of the teacher-librarian must be carefully outlined and appropriate certification models suggested. Teacher-librarians are **not** public librarians and the educational requirements of both are different. Although there may be some overlap in the specific course requirements to be a

librarian, it is **not** the overlap, but the substantive difference that requires attention. D. Philip Baker addresses this concern in *The Library Media Program and the School* (Libraries Unlimited, Inc. 1984). He discusses the competencies of a library media specialist as outlined in *Media Programs: District and School* and states . . . "to prepare a capable professional in each of . . . fourteen strategic areas during a one — (or even two) year preparation program is about as easy as teaching elephants to fly. In reviewing these competencies, which national professional associations maintain that a professional must possess, one is struck especially by two matters. The first is that, after all the rhetoric is discarded, these are activities that the library media specialist does daily. The second is that if a year of formal academic training to prepare a professional is not enough, then ten years is not enough either." (D. Philip Baker, *The Library Media Program and the School* Libraries Unlimited, Inc. 1984, p. 27-28). Any new standards must assist to identify the areas where competencies are essential and patterns of certification where such competencies can be achieved.

Any new standards must not only address the desired role of the teacher-librarian (and the relationship of that role to the school program as more typically and traditionally defined), but also must emphasize the need for staff development — of the teacher-librarian, of the teachers, of the principal, of the Superintendent! Such staff development must be broad in its concept, but definite in its statement of need for ongoing commitment. It must permit for the opportunity to learn about the "new basics" that technological innovation requires and for the inclusion of the opportunity to become specialized in those areas that newer strategies of teaching and newer theories of learning require. Such standards must also promote and incorporate a full understanding of the role of the principal as an effective agent of change and the relationship of the teacher-librarian as an equitable partner in the staff development initiatives that accompany such change.

Without clearly defined statements that specify the integrated role and relationship of the teacher-librarian to teaching and learning, it is quite possible that the promised technological release from burdensome administrative detail will be significantly diminished as the requirements for new schemes of organiza-

tion and the possibilities offered by automated advantages once again occupy the major time commitments of school library staffs. Central service assistance can ensure support for a diminished school-based technocratic organizational role, while at the same time permitting school-based staffs the enhanced, enlarged and essential opportunity of working appropriately with students and teachers.

The promise of the next twenty years requires new considerations to be raised in relationship to the acquisition of collections that will serve students and teachers. The application of selection criteria to the acquisition of all resources will occur within the process of collection development policies, procedures and implementation plans at both the school and district level. These collection development plans must necessarily address the need to provide resources that meet the traditional expectations attached to reading, viewing, listening, speaking and writing and that prudently address the growing and necessary utilization of newer modes of information delivery and information processing.

There is a need to carefully examine the access to information via data bases that students and teachers must have. School-based needs for data access will be complicated by the growing home access to information delivery systems. Many schools will house student populations who will be individually information-rich. Other schools will cope with students noted for their limited personal access to information sources. The continuing trend of school decentralization exacerbates the possibility of information poverty. School boards, provincial and federal governments must ensure information equity.

Information equity must be addressed within the broadest context of the resource collection. The entire scope of the school library collection including online access must be developed as part of a collection development plan. The days of rapid and frenetic provisioning should be replaced with thoughtful program-based collection development plans that address the needs of the learner and support the curriculum in a long-term fashion. Jacqueline C. Mancall and Christopher C. Swisher suggest that "one of the clearest ways to visualize collection development is to look at it as a process." (*Developing Collections for the Eighties and Beyond*. *School Library Media Annual: 1983*, Vol. 1; edited by Shirley

Aaron and Pat R. Scales). One model they cite, (Edward G. Evans, *Developing Library Collections*, Libraries Unlimited, 1979, Littleton, Colorado), for examining this process suggests that there are six universal elements that must be considered: 1) analysis of the library's patron community; 2) preparation of a collection development policy based on the findings of the community analysis; 3) selection or identification of materials to be acquired; 4) the actual acquiring or acquisition steps; 5) weeding, or the removal of items no longer useful; and 6) evaluation or assessment of the value of the collection to its users.

The concepts and principles outlined and supported by Mancall and Swisher are the substantive stepping stones providing for a collection that will adequately and generously provide for students and their teachers. These principles must be reflected in any new standards and they must become accountable expectations at both the school and district level. The application of these sound management principles ensures collections that are both relevant and useful.

Standards are often used to evaluate collections. This appears to be based on the belief that "more is better" and that quantity is a predictor of quality. . . . The problem with this type of reasoning is, of course, that size alone is certainly no indicator of the collections' ability to respond to demand. A large collection of obsolete, little used items is worth less than a very small, highly used collection." (Jacqueline C. Mancall and Christopher C. Swisher, "Developing Collections for the Eighties and Beyond," *School Library Media Annual — 1983*: Vol. 1, Editors: Shirley Aaron and Pat R. Scales, p. 261). There can be no argument that collection relevance is of greater importance than collection size. However, when the principles espoused by Mancall and Swisher are applied with the techniques of a program-based budgeting model, then collections of the future will be collections of considerable impact.

Quantitative assessments can be helpful, but usefulness will be determined by using strategies that address the future. The Calgary Board of Education, Media Services Group has assisted schools with such a program-based budgetary approach to collection development and resource acquisition for two years. In those schools where the strategy has been conscientiously employed,

Continued on page 15.

the use of NIT in education, the answers took two general forms. The U.K. and South Australia both emphasized the importance of students learning to use computer-based information sources. The other countries responding were not as specific and listed as most important the provision of information and/or "resources" to schools.

From the results of the survey the developing nature of the use of the NIT is obvious as are the different approaches to school library resource centres. In those countries without a tradition of local school libraries the impact of the new technology is felt mainly in the classroom. It also follows that the NIT are likely to be incorporated in regional AV centres in much the same way that film and other resources have been. The developments in these countries do not seem as relevant to the Canadian situation where library resource centres commonly play a more central role in the school.

In countries where the school library resource centre is common, more questions are raised about the specific role the NIT should play. Most interesting is work going on in this area in the U.K. and, to some extent, France. What is emerging in both of these countries is a new category of teacher, one who is the coordinator for the application of the NIT in a school (Gwyn, 1984). In France this is the result of a teacher training policy which provides an extensive year-long program for select groups of teachers who will then have the responsibility for training other teachers. In the U.K. it is a condition of provision of hardware. Although not specifically aimed at SLRC personnel in either country, it would seem a natural extension of the work of those personnel. As outlined in the CERI (Gwyn, 1984) paper on **New Teaching Functions and Implications for New Training Programmes** these "NIT Coordinators" would:

- Be identified as resource persons, knowledgeable about the NIT, to whom their colleagues can turn for informal advice;
- Take a lead, more formally, in school-based in-service training;
- Be responsible for the management of NIT hardware and software resources and of technical support staff;
- Contribute to software design and development;
- Advise headteachers and school managements on acquisitions policy as well as on longer-term education development. (p.6)

In Canadian terms, this would certainly seem an approach that conforms with our concept of the services that should be provided through the SLRC.

The approach in the U.K. adds one

other essential element which also concerns the SLRC. Although the U.K. government's Microelectronics Education Programme primarily focuses on developing "a steady stream of new employees ready and able to work with information technology as it is found in the real world" (MEP, 1983), the program includes as one of its topics the instruction of students in the use of the computer as a means of information retrieval from databases. Certainly SLRC personnel are the logical people to carry out this instructional task.

Perhaps most interesting of all is an approach for the U.K. suggested by Gilman (1982) in a paper prepared for the Council for Educational Technology titled **Information Technology and the School Library Resource Centre**. The approach is two-fold and well summarized in the following quote:

The computer is a school-wide resource rather than the preserve of any one particular subject area. As such, its use needs to be organized and managed on a school-wide basis, and its software integrated with the school's total collection of book and audio-visual resources. The department within the school most suited to such a role is, I suggest, the school library resource centre, on the basis of its existing involvement with the servicing of the requirements of the school's overall curriculum . . . Additionally, the school library resource centre's normal responsibility for the in-service training of staff in the use of audio-visual equipment, together with the instruction of pupils in the use of the library's bibliographical tools (catalogues, indexes, bibliographies, and the like), makes it the obvious department to be made similarly responsible for the provision of instruction and practice in information retrieval skills and techniques to both pupils and their teachers. (p.73)

Accomplishing these tasks within the SLRC will not be easy. For instance, as suggested by Gilman, one of the first difficult tasks is acquiring a computer for the SLRC. Yet this is essential if the centre is to achieve centralized control of the administration of the school's micro-resources. The second problem, although perhaps easier to overcome, is the decision to include a component on instruction uses of databases in the curriculum and a recognition of the appropriateness of the SLRC as a logical location to carry out the instruction.

Perhaps one final comment is necessary. The reader will note in this review an absence of emphasis on any suggestion of a radical change in the fundamental nature of the library. This is not for lack of writing on this subject. For instance, Lichman (1982) suggests:

Much of what we normally call the

library's holdings will constitute the computing center's holdings . . . or a network to which we belong . . . What has passed for librarianship, and for acquisition, cataloguing and circulation of books surely will be substantially different in the future. (p. 9)

While current in some circles, particularly universities, this view is not reflected in what is actually happening in school library resource centres. This, in large measure, arises from the teaching role school libraries play as opposed to the research role university libraries play. However, I would also hope it reflects the sentiments so well expressed by Kanes (1982), "Libraries have been able to provide spaces where thinking is optimized" (p. 32). As he points out, the library is a place for wrestling with ideas and meaning and important **tangible** sources of history, science, dreams, etc. Libraries allow browsing in a fashion not possible with a database. Nothing compares to eyeing a book, picking it up and immersing oneself in other worlds, in the mysteries of science, the delight of history and myriad other subjects. It is not just the ideas, words and pictures but the physical surroundings, even the silence, which are conducive to thought, imagination and wonder.

The new information technologies are having and will continue to have an impact on school library resource centres. The approach suggested by Gilman for the U.K. and the results of the survey done suggest two fundamental roles for the SLRC in dealing with the NIT. One is the management of all educational resources, including those associated with the NIT; the other is the instruction of students in the use of those resources and others new to the school, such as on-line databases. Both arise out of the traditional role of the library resource centre and thus represent an evolution in its development rather than a radical change. Let us hope that this is an accurate assessment and that, while taking on new functions, the library does not lose its essential function as a place for thinking and imagining.

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#### STANDARDS

Continued from page 11.

teacher-librarians and principals report satisfaction. This approach is now documented in a publication entitled "Collection Development in School Libraries" (Educational Media Team/Media Services Group; Calgary Board of Education, 1984).

There is little good rendered when the school library and its staff spend the major portion of their time dedicated to inform acquisition. It is of little comfort to select the most apparently useful book, periodical, photograph, or videodisc if the students are unable to apply independent critical judgement to their use of the resource and determine its application to their study or their life. There is every need in the development of new standards to rethink and re-present the concept of scope and sequence. This concept must be one that sheds the information locational approaches taken within traditional library skills programs. It must rather integrate the broadest information

needs of students with the total curriculum and program expectations of the school. Far too many teachers and teacher-librarians have neglected scope and sequence and its relationships to the resource oriented program when good teaching is dependent upon it!

There is definitely a need for new standards — standards that will outline the developmental steps needed to ensure the provision of appropriate facilities — facilities that provide access to systems of resource networks, quickly providing information about the latest news developments and that blend the best elements of computer technology with other modes of image and voice delivery.

But the development of new standards will be of little meaning unless placed in a societal context. Jane Anne Hannigan expresses these concerns well when she talks of overriding principles that must accompany any revisions. She calls for an understanding of personal freedom and its concomitant requirement for a commitment to the respect of privacy. She calls for a sensitivity to guard against in-

formation overload and to know that "human beings must still be recognized and respected as the orchestrators and controllers of that information" (Jane Anne Hannigan, "School Media Standards", *Library Trends*, Summer 1982, p. 53).

The development of new standards offers a new opportunity to examine the essential role that the school library — and its human and material resources — occupies in the educational environment. Standards that concentrate too much upon the nature of the facility, the size of the collection, or the faster delivery of information will do a disservice to students. The essence of the school library lies in its integral relationship to the school program and in the integral relationship of the teacher-librarian to teaching and learning. It is time to stop saying that the school library "supplements" and "complements" the school program. The school library is not the tablecloth on a well-graced table. It is the basic food offered for the educational sustenance of all students.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

It was with a good deal of concern that I read Marvin Duncan's "Preparing Personnel for School Media and Library Service Positions: Some Observations" in the March, 1985 issue of the **Canadian Journal of Educational Communication**. Not only was Duncan's analysis of the American situation superficial but it was just that: an analysis of the American situation without any indication in the article or by the editor that the role competencies and terminology in Canada are quite different. Readers unfamiliar with the current direction and thrust of teacher-librarianship in Canada, consistent with **Resource Services for Canadian Schools**, would draw the conclusion that Duncan describes the Canadian situation rather than the American one. Without knowledge of the Canadian con-

text it would be difficult for a reader to recognize the inherent differences from the situation described by Duncan.

We certainly have our own set of problems in providing effective resource services at the school and district levels in this country but they are **not** the same problems as necessarily exist in school districts south of the border. We are inundated by the American professional literature; surely our own professional literature can address our own issues and help debate their resolution.

Yours truly,  
Ken Haycock

Editor's note: In retrospect, a preliminary statement identifying the author's viewpoint as American might

have been useful. It was simply an editorial decision that the paper stood alone without such identification. Certainly any confusion which may have arisen among readers thinking that Mr. Duncan was referring to or extrapolating to the Canadian scene is to be regretted.

On the second point, Mr. Haycock suggests that perhaps CJEC should restrict itself to Canadian issues and topics. Again, the policy of this editor is to accept submissions from any source, within the domain of educational technology.

Finally, Mr. Haycock should be more pleased with this issue of CJEC which does precisely what he has suggested, in providing a forum for a Canadian viewpoint on issues which jointly confront the media and library professions, including Mr. Haycock's own useful analysis.

D. Hlynka