

Media Managers

Al LeBlanc, Editor

Resource Review Project

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The Grey County Board of Education Media Services was established in the late 1960s. The film library in use today essentially was developed between 1968 and 1972 with the help of Ministry of Education incentive. To be eligible for these, at least 50% of the titles had to be selected from the Ministry of Education Catalogue (1970). Though some prints were purchased, many actually came from the Ministry's film library as part of it being phased out; many of these showed signs of wear on arrival.

Like many film library managers, I sensed that the quality of the library was deteriorating. Mattison (1978), in his article "Maintaining the Centralized Film Library" argues that there is a relationship between reviewing/culling and budget; he suggests the lifespan of a title should be less than ten years. Budget restraint prevented any positive hope of addressing the problem. Feedback from teachers reinforced the feeling that much of the material was growing too old to be useful.

I used the comment of a teacher, "This old turkey should be put out of its misery," as the basis for a proposed review project. Funds covered stipends for two teachers and I to work four weeks in July. Terms of reference included reviewing Primary/Junior level films five years old or older. The first task was to establish evaluative criteria: (a) validity or accuracy of content, (b) communicativeness (i.e., would today's pupils relate to its approach?), and (c) relevancy to courses presently in place. Other considerations included: (a) physical condition, (b) frequency of use, and (c) availability of other resources (i.e., content/audience).

The magnitude of the task in the time frame available meant the approach had to be relatively clear-cut. The dated titles and statistics were made available by the staff. An unsophisticated system was established where material would be reviewed and rated on a three-level scale based upon the following criteria:

- (a) reject, because of failing to meet any one of the first four criteria above in spite of frequency of use,
- (b) hold in the library because of relevancy to courses, but phase out and/or replace in the near future, or

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(c) accept and leave in the library until some future review.

In total 861 titles reviewed; 245 of these were withdrawn from the collection, 60 will be replaced at the first opportunity, and 556 remain in circulation. Figure 1 shows how few recent productions are in the film library (i.e., there are only 34 titles at the Primary/Junior level produced from 1981 to 1985). The committee took time to exchange ideas about the place of film and other resources in Grey County classrooms. They drafted a short summary report for each Primary/Junior teacher and provided a comprehensive project report and two sample utilization models for school reference.

It is being recommended that the Media Center 1986 budget include funds to carry out the second phase of the library review; looking at older material of the Intermediate/Senior Divisions as well as adding film and/or videotape titles to both replace the outdated materials withdrawn and continue the development of the centralized resource collections.

If any *CJEC* reader would like a copy of the summary report, contact the author: c/o Media Centre, Box 100, Markdale, Ontario NOC 1H0.

FIGURE 1.
Number of Films by Impression Date.

