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Communication and cooperation between the classroom and the library

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Abstract

Library literature points out the importance of communication between the classroom teacher and the librarian in specific fields of the curriculum and contains general suggestions for its improvement. ''' A search of current literature provides the basis for this paper. The purpose of the paper is to examine the importance of communication between the classroom and the school library and the effect this communication can have on the school program in general and the use of the library in particular.

COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND THE LIBRARY

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Paul W. Essig
June 20, 1973

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

"Communication is not a gimmick, but a tool for efficiency."¹ However, there is often a frightening lack of understanding between the classroom teacher and the librarian. Development of open lines of communication between these two areas could result in greater educational benefits to students.² As Bernard Franckowiak states, "The key to effectiveness of the library program is communication between the librarian and the teachers and an awareness of each other's goals and needs."³

Library literature points out the importance of communication between the classroom teacher and the librarian in specific fields of the curriculum and contains general

¹Sister Patricia Marie Walsh, "Communication: Tool for Efficiency," Catholic Library World, 39:421, February, 1968.

²Robin Bateman, "Allied Forces," Times Educational Supplement, 2777:267, August 9, 1968.

³Bernard Franckowiak, "Teachers Are Not Expendable: Librarian-Teacher Planning Must Be Done," Wisconsin Library Bulletin, 64:247, July, 1968.

suggestions for its improvement.^{4,5,6,7} A search of current literature provides the basis for this paper. The purpose of the paper is to examine the importance of communication between the classroom and the school library and the effect this communication can have on the school program in general and the use of the library in particular.

⁴Ronald D. Blazek, "Influence of the Teacher on Pupil Use of Nonrequired Library Materials in Math; an Experimental Study," Illinois Libraries, 53:528-544, September, 1971.

⁵Groomer B. Davis, "Partners for Progress: Social Studies and the School Library," Wisconsin Library Bulletin, 66:333-334, September, 1970.

⁶Joan Paulson, "English Teachers and the Librarian," Wisconsin Library Bulletin, 64:98-99.

⁷Lorraine Sullivan, "Media Center in Today's Curriculum," Catholic Library World, 44:24-27, July, 1972.

SECTION 2

TEACHER ORIENTATION

For many years the work of the school librarian was thought to consist simply of selecting materials and organizing them into some classification to help the user. The population growth and tremendous increase of print and non-print material have placed responsibilities upon the school librarian which were never dreamed of a few years ago.⁸ Today the library (or its successor, the IMC) has developed a new importance to everyone in the school and its media and services affect all teaching and learning processes.⁹

Student Teacher Training

Due to the far reaching influence of the library on today's educational process "teachers will need more information about the school library and there will need to be

⁸Garvin Johnston, "School Library Must Be Directly Involved in Teaching-Learning Process," Excerps from a speech before school librarians section, MEA Convention, 1970. Mississippi Library News, 34:99, July, 1970.

⁹Kenneth I. Taylor, "Librarians, Audiovisual Consultants, and Instructional Planning," Illinois Libraries, 53: 176, March, 1971.

increased cooperation between teachers and librarians."¹⁰

Educators today see the necessity for this understanding of the library to begin with student teachers before they actually begin their teaching careers.

Modern teaching methods and today's extensive curricular developments demand the use of a wide variety of materials to meet the needed learning experiences of individual students. The availability of large volumes of these materials makes it important for the teacher to possess skills for selection and evaluation. Research shows that "student teachers have, at best, very limited knowledge of the library resources available to them and that much of the information they think they have is incorrect."¹¹ Special courses in the use of library resources and instructional materials are being offered in many colleges and universities.¹² However, Dr. W. C. Meierhenry points out in "Media Centers Present New Challenges to Teacher Education" that the best way for

¹⁰C. J. Champlin, "Use of the Elementary School Library by Classroom Teachers," Thesis (Ed.S.) George Peabody College for Teachers, 1969, p. 31.

¹¹Evelyn J. Swenson, "Library Science Training and Teacher Education," Journal of Education for Librarianship, 8:149, Winter, 1968.

¹²Ibid., p. 161.

student teachers to become acquainted with the use of the media center is for them to be exposed to it throughout their own educational process.¹³

Training of Practicing Teachers

Adequate library training for student teachers is not, however, the only area of teacher training in need of attention. Librarians generally agree that many teachers currently employed in elementary and secondary schools have inadequate knowledge of the library and its use and some librarians consider this lack of knowledge the main problem in school library work today. Moreover, the teachers themselves express a desire for background and instruction in using the library. The need for teachers to have pre-service and in-service programs in the use of the school library has been well established.¹⁴ The librarian can aid individual teachers by taking new teachers to the library for an introduction to the program and presenting new services and other developments to returning teachers.¹⁵

¹³W. C. Meierhenry, "Media Centers Present New Challenges to Teacher Education," Illinois Libraries, 52: 728-730, September, 1970

¹⁴Champlin, op. cit., pp. 4-5, 30-31.

¹⁵Franckowiak, op. cit., p. 247.

Adequate training of student teachers and providing information to current classroom teachers can be the first step in open lines of communication between the library and the classroom and will lead to productive involvement of teachers in making meaningful library programs.

SECTION 3

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

Once teachers have been introduced to the library and its services and have been made aware of their importance, a background will be established to produce cooperative efforts between the librarian and the classroom teacher. Planning must be aimed at maximum utilization of the school library, breaking down of the barriers that separate library and classroom, and discovery of the unity that can support the learning process.¹⁶

The first step in cooperative planning is to find common goals, ideals, and interests. Good programs depend on agreement on what is to be accomplished by teachers and librarians separately and collectively.¹⁷ Teachers tend to state their plans in terms of the learner and his activities. In view of this, librarians must begin to think of the library as an agency to help young people rather than as a place to house media.

¹⁶Don W. James, "Teacher and the Library," Education, 86:546-547, May, 1966.

¹⁷Jerry L. Walker, "Changing Attitudes Toward the Library and the Librarian," American Library Association Bulletin, 61:981, September, 1967.

One proposed set of guidelines for this type of planning includes the use of the following questions:

1. What should students be learning?
2. How should they be learning?
3. How can we provide increasingly better opportunities to assure more effective learnings?¹⁸

This student centered type of planning will call for deemphasizing, but not ignoring, card catalogs, classification, charging routines, operation of equipment, and quantitative standards.¹⁹ For the librarian to contribute effectively to planning and become a genuine partner in the learning process it is important for him to understand the curriculum and to be aware of how each teacher teaches.^{20,21}

This expanded role of being actively involved in the teaching process will demand much of the librarian's time which was formerly spent in clerical and routine tasks. The school system should be called upon for additional personnel and central processing of library materials to provide more planning time.²² Both the teacher and the librarian need to

¹⁸Taylor, op. cit., p. 177.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Franckowiak, op. cit., p. 247.

²¹Florence Keneman and Mary Ann Wickwire, "Programming for Educational Initiative," School Librarian, 21:18, Spring, 1972.

²²Davis, op. cit., p. 334.

become more familiar with the role of the other and mutual orientation must be continuous.²³ The working relationship between the teacher and the librarian should be close enough so that there is free discussion of the objectives each has in mind for the students.²⁴

With the learner as the center of the total planning process the librarian and the teacher must share responsibility for designing and implementing programs to achieve educational objectives.²⁵ The librarian must plan cooperatively with fellow teachers and work directly with the students involved. As the teacher, the librarian, and the student work together the common goal of instructional excellence will be reached.²⁶

²³Champlin, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁴Davis, op. cit., p. 333.

²⁵Dorothy Bixler, "Planning with Teachers," Illinois Libraries, 53:179, March, 1971.

²⁶Johnston, op. cit., p. 99.

SECTION 4

TEAM TEACHING

The librarian who has been an important part of the planning for learning activities will be capable of participating in those activities. In today's expanded role of the librarian there is general agreement with the librarian-as-active-teacher concept. Librarians see the change in their role as addition of duties rather than change in duties since they continue to provide traditional services while taking a more active part in teaching.²⁷ In addition to teaching, the school librarian will also be a media specialist who has knowledge and information of types, kinds, and content of educational media and how to match media to teaching goals.

Librarian's Participation

The greater activity in actual teaching requires that the librarian have an "understanding of how learning takes place, a knowledge of teaching techniques, methods, procedures and devices. He must also have some knowledge of curriculum design and how it is supposed to operate."²⁸

²⁷Walker, op. cit., p. 81.

²⁸Johnston, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

Librarians in the new role find themselves on numerous teaching teams and not always in the library. Their activities place them in a variety of situations throughout the school. One library staff has taken the attitude of considering themselves right along with the library materials "to be checked out by the teachers whenever they can make a special contribution to the unit being studied."²⁹

Changing Role of the Library

Free movement between the classroom and the library must be established for the librarian, the teacher, the student, and all media.

To do its job the library and the librarian must move outside the four walls and function in the classrooms. Materials of all kinds must flow freely between the library and the classrooms. Students, individually and in small and large groups must be encouraged to do the same. The librarian must get into the classroom to see what is being done, to teach, to help to stimulate, encourage, support and complement the efforts of the classroom teachers.

As the librarian works actively with teachers the library will become an integral part of the teaching-learning process, essential to a quality educational program.³⁰

²⁹M. A. Ganzel, "Librarians Make the Team," Virginia Librarian, 17:9, Fall, 1970.

³⁰Franckowiak, op. cit., p. 248.

Just as cooperative teaching will require the librarian to move out of the library, it must be emphasized that there will be greater traffic into the library. No longer may the library be a place of silence, but a center which is open for free flow of students as individuals or as classes.³¹ The classroom teacher should be welcome to the library and should accompany his class when they are given class periods for library use. This enables the librarian and the teacher to work as a team in assisting the children and will give real meaning to the teacher's role as he participates actively in the library program. The teacher and the librarian become allies in the education of children--the teacher through close daily contact and acquaintance with his students and the librarian through working with the child in a less structured environment as he moves through the grades of elementary or secondary school.³²

³¹Sullivan, op. cit., p. 27

³²Betty Fast, "Teachers and Librarians: Stage Managers for the Learning Program," Childhood Education, 43:74, October, 1966.

SECTION 5

INFLUENCING LIBRARY USAGE

The willingness of the student to make use of the library facilities on a regular basis is heavily influenced by both the librarian and the classroom teachers with whom he comes in contact. Library usage by teachers, on the other hand, is frequently influenced by the librarian.

A highly significant factor in enthusiasm for use of the library by teachers and students is the personality and helpfulness of the librarian. The affect of these factors can be either negative or positive. One study showed that teachers who thought their librarian to be friendly, cooperative, and in possession of a positive attitude made better use of the school library. Those teachers who felt that the librarian was uncooperative used the library to a limited degree and independently of the librarian.³³

"Enthusiasm is the secret of success" is a saying which can be applied to everything from selling shoes to selling reading. Teachers and librarians with enthusiasm can build a climate that is conducive to reading. A teacher or a

³³Champlin, op. cit., p. 30.

librarian who has a consuming enthusiasm for reading will find some way to share this love with other people.³⁴ Bulletin boards, electronic devices, and written words can do much to portray the enthusiasm the librarian or the teacher feels for reading, but personal contact will bring better results in the long run.³⁵

Those who have the responsibility of guiding youth must be committed to the necessity of reading and must do so constantly. The pleasure of reading is bound to rub off on children. Without this influence reading is drudgery for the child. "It follows as surely as the night the day that if faculty members are reading so are their students."³⁶

The extensive influence of the classroom teacher on library usage should be emphasized. In a study by Ronald D. Blazek the data supported the hypothesis that the greater the teacher utilization of the library resources in his teaching, the greater the use of the library by his pupils. It also indicated that the teacher's personal characteristics are an

³⁴Hazel Kirbie Saunderman, "Accept the Negative, Accentuate the Positive," Reading Teacher, 24:251,255, December, 1970.

³⁵Walsh, op. cit., p. 421.

³⁶Carlyne McCallister, "Teacher Contacts with the Library Are Important," Education, 86:409, March, 1966.

important factor since it is obvious that not all teachers possess the same capacity to stimulate pupil activity.³⁷

Good library habits begin in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher who appreciates the importance of books and who cares about the intelligent use of them. These habits are then developed and encouraged by librarians.³⁸ Thus the teamwork of the teacher and the librarian continues in fostering independent inquiry by learners and developing the use of materials through library skills.³⁹

³⁷Blazek, op. cit., pp. 528-529

³⁸John Sherman, "Children and Their Libraries," Improving College and University Teaching, 17:55, Winter, 1969.

³⁹Harold H. Punke and Clyde H. Cantrell, "Libraries and Education," Education Digest, 36:10, December, 1970.

SECTION 6

COOPERATIVE SELECTION

Since teaching activities and library usage promotion have become cooperative efforts for teachers and librarians, it follows that the selection of library materials for use in these activities should also be cooperative. The librarian can ask for teacher's suggestions by calling to their attention current reviews and standard selection tools for materials in their area and receiving recommendations for purchases.⁴⁰ Teachers and librarians can share the responsibility of evaluating new materials and of the necessary weeding of the old.⁴¹

The librarian can be of great service as a media specialist who can help the teacher in selecting materials appropriate to his objectives and the teacher, on the other hand, because of his specialized knowledge, can help the librarian evaluate materials in his field and aid in seeing that all aspects of his field are adequately covered by the library collection.⁴² When specific units of study are in

⁴⁰Franckowiak, op. cit., p. 248.

⁴¹James, op. cit., pp. 547, 548.

⁴²Davis, op. cit., p. 333.

question the books and materials needed are best selected by the teacher who will be setting up the work.⁴³ The teacher needs to notify the librarian well in advance as to what is desired so that the librarian can borrow or buy accordingly. This kind of cooperation will be successful only if there is advance planning which allows the librarian ample time to obtain the needed materials.⁴⁴ The librarian's professional knowledge of where to obtain the materials along with the teacher's knowledge of the students and their abilities creates a selection team with excellent potential.

This cooperative selection should be devoted, in part, to obtaining professional materials for use by the teachers. The librarian should not limit his concern to the materials for students only. He must be aware of the adult literature in all fields of curriculum, and know the teacher's interests, strengths, and weaknesses.⁴⁵ The library plays an important role in providing materials for professional growth and use of these materials can be quite extensive.⁴⁶ Suggestions concerning professional materials should be welcomed by both

⁴³Bateman, op. cit., p. 267.

⁴⁴Robin Bateman, "Libraries and Schools," Library Association Record, 69:118, April, 1967.

⁴⁵McCallister, op. cit., p. 409.

⁴⁶Champlin, op. cit., p. 29.

the librarian and the teacher, giving both a greater opportunity to know what is worthwhile.

The suggestions offered by the teachers should be of such quality that the librarian will know that they are based on sound knowledge and professional judgment. The teacher should, however, expect to be turned down on some occasions when the librarian feels that his suggestion is not the best for the overall school needs. In this way, mutual respect for professional opinion will be shown by both the teacher and the librarian.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Paulson, op. cit., p. 99.

SECTION 7

INDEPENDENT STUDY

The open lines of communication and the increased cooperation between the library and the classroom should finally produce young people who are capable of directing their own study--a skill which will be of utmost value in furthering their education and in their adult lives. The goal of the teacher and the librarian is to become dispensible to the learner as quickly as possible. The independent study phase should be the heart of the learning program. In this phase the student must assume responsibility for his own learning. "R for responsibility is the fourth R to be added to our traditional 3 R's."⁴⁸

Independent study is one innovation which the classroom teacher and the librarian can influence to a great extent. Here the student pursues some private and unique plan, possibly something not currently being offered.⁴⁹

⁴⁸"New Programs in Library Service," South Dakota Library Bulletin, 53:8, January, 1967.

⁴⁹Pauline Paulin, "Using a Multi-Media Library," California School Libraries, 43:14, Fall, 1970.

Often it may be up to a single librarian or teacher to instigate such changes as are necessary to begin programs of independent study. This may be done by introducing each other to new ideas and new materials. The librarian and the teacher can be friendly prods to each other to keep up with current trends.⁵⁰ Success is apt to depend on the quality of leadership provided by librarians. It may be up to them to be the leaders since they are the ones who will be experiencing change in their role as librarians.⁵¹

The librarian who views his role as an innovator to introduce teachers and students to new materials, a consultant to help . . . teachers select resources which are available, an expediter to help students and teachers find materials quickly, and a fellow-teacher who is concerned with how and what students learn will be of great benefit.⁵²

The traditional librarian's role, which is usually thought of as being a passive one of providing the material and then removing oneself from the scene, changes to the active role of helping students learn to learn by themselves.⁵³

⁵⁰Davis, op. cit., p. 334.

⁵¹Walker, op. cit., p. 81.

⁵²Davis, op. cit., p. 334.

⁵³Keneman and Wickwire, op. cit., p. 18.

Advantages of Independent Study

Independent study programs result in many advantages. Some of these as reported by Florence Keneman and Mary Ann Wickwire in "Programming for Educational Initiative" are as follows:

The flexibility of the classroom is increased. The classroom teacher can add to his techniques of group work, team teaching, and other learning activities that of individual study. This tool will present a different type of challenge to the student and bring him into contact with the library and the librarian to a much greater degree.

The personal dignity of the student is enhanced. Some students work better in situations where they do not need to feel inferior to their peers or to the teacher and will gain from the one-to-one relationship with the librarian and the teacher. An increased feeling of personal dignity will result and the student's interest in the learning process will be enhanced.

A more realistic experience is provided. In the individual study situation the student is allowed to choose his own problem area (perhaps within broad guidelines) and so is made to feel that every effort has been made to accommodate his interest. The student gains satisfaction from working in an area which is relevant and realistic to him

and is therefore motivated to do "his own thing" in a capable fashion. Throughout his study he will receive constant encouragement and guidance from both his teacher and the librarian.

Opportunity for rewarding the poor as well as the well-motivated student is provided. In the independent study situation the student is not judged in relation to his peers and the classroom "norm" and so he can be praised and encouraged without restraint. This praise and encouragement, by both the teacher and the librarian, can be offered to poor as well as good students and each will respond with an attempt to produce the type of behavior which brought on the praise.

Effective and critical thinking is encouraged. Independent study affords the student with an ideal opportunity to develop problem-solving skills intensively. The teacher and the librarian guide him in his development according to his ability, interest and maturity.

Even though it is possible for a student to fail at individual study, it has the possibility of offering a change-of-pace assignment which has benefits to the teacher, the student, and the librarian and allows the learner to explore his ability to "go-it-alone". The end result will be increased self-learning.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Keneman and Wickwire, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

SECTION 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From the readings done as a background for this study some general conclusions may be drawn concerning the importance of communication and cooperation between the classroom teacher and the librarian.

The basic introduction of student teachers and current classroom teachers to the services of the library through special college classes, overall college programs, pre-service and in-service training, and through the personal contact of the librarian will result in a sound background for a cooperative working situation.

After the establishment of a sound understanding by teachers of the library and its services, it is possible for the classroom teacher and the librarian to work hand-in-hand on planning student centered activities which will cross over traditional barriers between the library and the classroom and will attain the goal of instructional excellence.

Working in such a close relationship with the classroom teacher creates for the librarian a new role as an active teacher. In this role he provides the traditional services as he always has, but adds to his responsibilities the active

teaching of students. The role of the library itself is also changed as a free flow of materials, students, teachers, and the librarian is established.

As students are caught up in the new idea of the relationship between the library and the classroom they are highly influenced by both the librarian and the teacher as to the importance and pleasure of reading and making use of the available library resources. The enthusiasm for learning through reading shown by the adults who are their daily contacts reaches them to a greater or lesser degree depending on the personality and sincerity of those adults.

Selecting, as well as using, the material in the library collection becomes a cooperative effort for teachers and librarians. Selection is based on sound professional judgment and knowledge as the freedom of expression of truly honest opinion is established. The librarian's professional know-how and the teacher's special acquaintance with his students are obvious assets to good selection.

The ultimate goal of helping students learn to direct their own study should be kept in mind throughout all phases of cooperation between the classroom and the library. Independent study with decreasing amounts of direction and assistance by the librarian and the teacher has many advantages involving the classroom, personal dignity, realistic experiences, various

student abilities, and development of thinking patterns. It also produces changes in the role of the librarian and the teacher as they work in a one-to-one relationship with the individual student.

Throughout the entire development of open communication and cooperation between the classroom and the library runs the underlying current of the teacher and the librarian working together to promote learning. Together they determine the materials and methods to be used to attain desired educational goals, and working toward these goals makes today's school scene a successful prologue to a lifetime of learning.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Fast, op. cit., pp. 73-75.

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