



Can Instructional Technology Survive the Joint Media Standards?

DAVID ALAN GILMAN *

THE recent publication, *Standards for School Media Programs*,¹ prescribes a long-awaited, often contemplated, forced marriage between the school library and the school audio-visual center. Implementation of the *Standards* begins when the traditional library and audio-visual departments are combined into a single instructional materials center presided over by a generalist knowledgeable in both print and audio-visual media.

A plethora of publications heralding the forced joint programs has followed issuance of the *Standards*. The joint audio-visual—library philosophy is almost universal in current library literature. The *Standards* have the support of the Department of Audio-visual Instruction (DAVI) (now the Association for Educational Communications and Technology) and the American Library Association (ALA).

Many schools have established audio-visual centers and other schools have been planning instructional technology programs. These schools now have to decide whether they wish to adhere to the *Standards* and abandon the instructional programs they perceive as best for their particular needs, or whether they are going to continue to operate instructional technology units apart from the school library knowing that such a program is, according to the *Standards*, substandard.

Veteran school administrators have pre-

viously experienced some well-meaning, although ill-advised, attempts by professional organizations to change the operation of their schools. For example, several science teaching organizations promoted PSSC physics as a solution to the decreased enrollments in high school physics classes. As a result, many schools abandoned successful traditional physics programs to implement PSSC. They have since found further decreases in their physics enrollments and have discovered that PSSC has not been a howling success.

Similar developments have occurred in other areas of school operations, so school leaders should be aware of some of the problems that can result from the forced library-AV marriage that the respective AV and library professional organizations have sanctioned. These problems raise doubt as to whether instructional technology can prosper, or even survive, if all school instructional technology programs are forced to be merged with school libraries.

Successful Programs

Throughout the history of audio-visual programs, there have been at least four types of organizational structures that have served schools well in philosophy and organization. These structures are the following:

1. *Cooperative media programs.* The AV specialist in a cooperative program is primarily concerned with classroom presenta-

¹ American Library Association and the National Education Association. *Standards for School Media Programs*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1969.

* David Alan Gilman, Associate Professor of Education, Indiana State University, Terre Haute

tions. His role is more than that of a keeper and dispenser of teaching aids. He is an analyst and a designer of instructional systems and is actively involved in the planning of learning environments, providing support functions and evaluative procedures. Cooperative AV programs are primarily concerned with presentation design and techniques and with providing instructional systems to the classroom.

2. *Separate media programs.* In many schools, well-developed AV programs have as their primary purpose providing technical services, such as production and reproduction of learning materials and the distribution of hardware. Here, the AV program provides a different type of service than that given by the library, and thus it can operate effectively in a separate center.

3. *AV-TV programs.* In some large schools and school systems, transmission of instruction is facilitated through the AV-TV combination, enabling teachers to combine the technologies of audio-visual services and television in the classroom.

4. *Joint media programs.* In those programs in which the focus is the distribution of media to students, the apothecary approach of an instructional materials center makes sense. These programs emphasize storage and retrieval, and cataloging, and provide the primary service of distributing materials through a media supermarket.

Many excellent programs that are certainly in no way substandard, reflecting each philosophy, dot the educational landscape throughout the United States. It is interesting to note that none of the four philosophies prohibits filmstrips and nonprint media from being stored, cataloged, or available in the school library.

An Incredible Situation

However, an AASL/DAVI Standards Committee of 24 members brought about an incredible situation. Since the committee was to be a joint library-AV committee, most of the members were naturally congenial to the joint program. Those of the joint program

philosophy got together and by an 8-4 AV vote and a 12-0 library vote did the other philosophies in. This is a move as old as politics itself. Those of one philosophy get together and vote the others out of existence.

The Instructional Materials Center of the joint program has been the official line of ALA publications for 33 years. There have been IMC's since 1925. Raymond Wyman concluded in his 1967 article in *Audiovisual Instruction* that although we had been talking about the utopia of an IMC presided over by a general media person for years, there were very few operating examples to point to.² In 1968, the late James Finn declared that the IMC, as proposed by the joint *Standards*, was 15 years behind the times.

Regardless of what the *Standards* intended to say about cooperative and specialized programs, what is actually said is communicated with remarkable clarity:

The *Standards* would have all new schools begin with a joint program.³

All existing specialized and cooperative programs are to be phased out and replaced by joint media centers.⁴

The *Standards* were supposed to apply to school buildings with more than 250 students. However, the *Standards* committee widened its sights considerably. School system programs are to become joint library-AV programs.⁵

The *Standards* would have states change certification patterns to promote joint programs,⁶ set the pattern for State Departments of Instruction,⁷ and even set the patterns for the curricula of colleges and universities.⁸

The meaning of what the *Standards* actually say is abundantly clear to librarians, to AV specialists, and even to laymen. Regardless of the effectiveness of existing or proposed cooperative or specialized programs

² Raymond Wyman. "The Instructional Materials Center: Whose Empire?" *Audiovisual Instruction* 12 (2): 114-16; February 1967.

³ *Standards for School Media Programs*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

at any level, they are to be phased out and replaced by joint programs, which are supposed somehow always to be better.

Like the sheep in *Animal Farm*, educators are being conditioned to say "Joint programs are good, others are bad."

Our major concern, of course, is not for the program, but for the students. For several reasons, joint programs may be less effective for many schools and consequently less beneficial for students.

First, many competent librarians have neither the interest, training, skill, personality, nor desire to operate programs of instructional innovation. The same, in reverse, is true for AV people operating libraries.

Second, in many cases, the demands of the library program can create an ineffective AV program. There is too much to be done, too much to be learned, too many to be served, for one person to be a competent librarian and AV resource person.

Third, facilities may be so extensive or so cramped that a cooperative or separate arrangement can be much more effective. As more extensive physical plants are built, as educational systems become more complex, the task becomes insurmountable for a single unit.

In summary, because of reasons of facilities, personnel, program objectives, and personalities, it is often possible to have better selection, better preparation, and more participation through a cooperative or specialized media center.

A study by Robert Milkman found that AV specialists are usually male and most librarians are female.⁹ In citing studies which show that most librarians (87 percent) are women and most AV professionals (86 percent) are men, Twyford concludes that apparently there is a selection factor at work.¹⁰

Implementation of the *Standards* was studied at the 1970 Northeast Regional Con-

⁹Robert Milkman, "Professional Education and Subsequent Employment." A paper presented at the national meeting of the Department of Audio-visual Instruction, Portland, Oregon, May 1, 1969.

¹⁰Loran C. Twyford, "Reply on Behalf of Cooperative Media Programs." A paper presented at the national meeting of the Department of Audio-visual Instruction, Detroit, Michigan, April 29, 1970.

ference of DAVI. The conclusions were that it would take at least 50 years to implement the joint *Standards*, if, in fact, they ever could be implemented. The conference concluded that programs should continue to operate in the schools in the way that is most effective and teachers will continue to turn to the person who understands technology best for help, regardless of what the *Standards* recommend.

If there is going to be effective educational innovation, everyone must be encouraged to develop his technology programs in a way that is most effective for him. We should not be trying to exclude anyone. There are emerging developments for improved instruction through technology that have nothing whatsoever to do with library science.

There have been several interesting reactions to the *Standards*. The states of Wisconsin and New York have passed standards for non-library AV programs. In Indiana two AV training institutions have changed the name and the emphasis of their training programs from "media" to "Instructional Systems Technology." The new concept is, in part, a reaction to the *Standards*, and expresses a desire to include all media programs.

The school library is primarily concerned with providing individual learners with materials for self-instruction. This accounts for only a small part of the total instructional program of the school. The library is book-oriented, although it provides the learner with a variety of materials.

The instructional technology program is concerned with providing instruction through presentations to classes of students. The technology program is concerned with development, design, and analysis of instructional systems and with providing learning environments and related support functions and evaluative procedures.

These differences clearly necessitate that, in most cases, the role of the instructional technologist be different from that of the school librarian. It is this difference which must characterize the future school media and technology program and will characterize the future developments of instructional technology. □

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