DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 344 EA 010 531

AUTHOR	Woodbury, Marda
TITLE	Selecting Instructional Materials. Fastback 110.
INSTITUTION	Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, Ind.
PUB DATE	78
NOTE	48p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Phi Delta Kappa, Eighth and Union, Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 ($0.75; $0.60 to members; quantity discounts; payment must accompany all orders for less than $5 or $1 will be charged for handling)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. EC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Early Childhood Education; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; Guidelines; *Instructional Materials; *Media Selection; *Resource Guides; Special Education; Textbook Evaluation

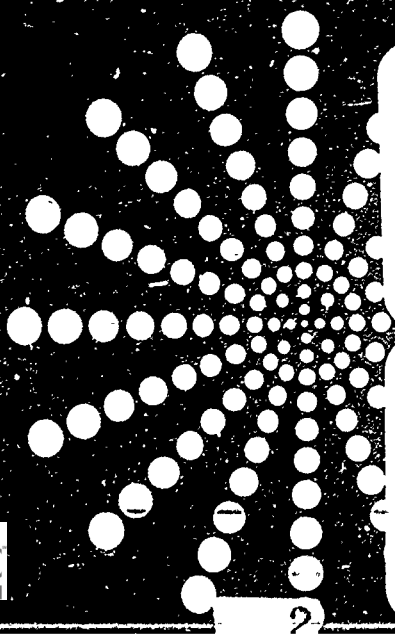
ABSTRACT

This fastback deals with the problems and issues involved in selecting instructional materials and provides some principles and resource aids to help with the selection process. The recommended resource aids concentrate on elementary, secondary, early childhood, and special education teaching materials. Major emphasis is on textbooks, library books, and educational media--three forms of instructional materials that are interrelated in educational applications, although they are often selected in different ways. Also dealt with briefly are the use of such budget extenders as museum holdings, recyclables, and free materials. (Author/EIF)

Selecting Instructional Materials

Marda Woodbury

FASTBACK 110



MARDA WOODBURY

Marda Woodbury grew up in Minnesota and New York, studied chemistry and political science at Bard College, and received her library degree from Columbia University. Following graduation, she moved to California where she combined raising three children with a variety of library positions. When her oldest boy was young, she took a year off to study journalism at the University of California-Berkeley. When her second son was young, she took time off to study education. Since then, she's tried to combine librarianship with education and writing.

As an education librarian Woodbury has worked in both elementary and high schools. She developed a unique reference collection for the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. At the Title III Gifted Resource Center of Northern California, she designed an original selection center for educators of the gifted that includes suggested criteria, evaluation forms, recommended selection tools, and an annotated card file.

Her publications include *A Guide to Sources of Educational Information*, published in 1976 by Information Resources Press and *Curriculum Catalysts*, a resource series on multifaceted topics for teachers of grades 4-8, with exercises and suggested materials.

Selecting Instructional Materials

By Marda Woodbury

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number. 78-50389
ISBN 0-87367-110-4

Bloomington, Indiana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment

I owe a debt to many friends, colleagues, and organization officials who graciously shared their expertise and often obtained needed documents on short notice for the preparation of this fastback. Special thanks are due to Roy Barron of the Santa Barbara Unified School District for prompt replies to my queries, to Dave Elliott and Ken Baranski of the Educational Products Information Exchange Institute (EPIE) for their time and trouble, to Bob Muller of the Bay Area Media Evaluation Guild (BAMEG) for sharing his vast knowledge of media and to Jean Sanders, director of research for Merrimack Education Center. Thanks, also, to Priscilla Watson, science education librarian, Lawrence Hall of Science, and to Barbara Nozik, San Francisco State University, for reading and commenting on my manuscript in its early phases.

Instructional Materials in the Schools

In this fastback I will deal with the problems and issues involved in selecting instructional materials and will try to provide some principles and resource aids to help with the selection process. The recommended resource aids will concentrate on elementary, secondary, early childhood, and special education teaching materials. Major emphasis will be on textbooks, library books, and educational media—three forms of instructional materials that are interrelated in educational applications, although they are often selected in different ways. I will also deal briefly with the use of such budget extenders as museum holdings, recyclables, and free materials.

Although instructional materials undoubtedly play a central role in education, there is surprisingly little usable research on their actual use, nor is there much helpful theory on the process of selection. Surveys and studies show that teachers and students in some way structure between 80 and 95% of their classroom time around instructional materials, yet we don't really know to what extent these materials determine the course of instruction or to what extent teachers use, adapt, or fill in time with whatever is at hand. Obviously the quality of instruction is affected by the quality of instructional materials. But we have no accurate measure of the extent to which they affect learning, since we rarely consider their role independent of teaching strategies, student behavior, and total classroom environment. One informed estimate, by Roy Barron of the Santa Barbara Unified School District, is that, overall, teacher skills and instructional materials are probably

equally responsible for learning—a proportion that is not reflected in any educational budget.

Selecting instructional materials is a process involving a complex weighing of many factors. Selection is a decision-making process requiring a critical mind, a wide acquaintance with existing materials, an awareness of trends in subject matter fields and teaching methods, and an intimate knowledge of one's school population (both students and teachers). Also entering into the decision-making process are the specific resources presently available and the budget allotment for new instructional materials.

Many external factors influence instructional materials selection. Legislators pass laws mandating particular content or statewide selection procedures. School administrators usually work out procedural steps for evaluating and purchasing instructional materials. Experts in evaluation design, like the Far West Laboratory and Educational Products Information Exchange (EPIE), develop complex analyses formats to evaluate materials. Reviewers use their own personal criteria in appraising quality in a growing number of review journals. Librarians and media people set ideal standards for quality and quantity for book and media selection. Commercial publishers design learning systems to match their instructional materials to learner objectives and behaviors. Teacher-centers develop their own materials. School resource people distribute mimeographed lists of their own favorite resources.

In recent years minority groups have produced a multitude of content analysis checklists for instructional materials designed to assure fair treatment for women, ethnic minorities, labor, the aged, single parents, inner-city dwellers, and followers of alternate life-styles. Even consumer advocates and nutrition activists now appraise social studies, science, and mathematics materials in terms of their interests.

Commercial producers and educational publishers, meanwhile, sharpen their market research efforts to provide educators with what they say they want. Many large educational publishers now have full-time editors judging materials for compliance with state codes and other assorted criteria. In addition, sales and promotion personnel who submit materials for state adoption have to meet the distribution

and deadline requirements of about 22 states (in California this requires meeting about six deadlines and submitting more than 80 copies of each book or program under consideration). Overall this tends to remove small or innovative publishers from many important markets, though it produces texts that the publisher can claim reflect the expressed needs of educators.

Ironically, while materials are increasing in sophistication, diversity, and actual numbers—about half a million items—our outlays for instructional materials have dwindled to the point where they are only about 1% of our educational budgets, a remarkably low percentage. With costs of paper and film rising rapidly, instructional materials budgets buy less and less each year.

The realization that our materials budgets will have to be stretched further and further makes the process of materials selection a complex undertaking. In the next chapter we shall look in greater detail at the factors involved in decisions about instructional materials and suggest guidelines that will help to make those decisions wise ones.

Factors in Selection: Qualifications of Selectors

According to the Educational Products Information Exchange Institute's (EPIE) National Survey, just about everyone is involved somewhere, somehow in the process of materials selection (although teachers and principals seem to differ in their perceptions of who does what). According to principals, print materials are selected by teachers, district-level and building level committees, department chairpersons, and state-level committees—in that order. Nonprint materials are selected by classroom teachers, librarians and media specialists, department chairpersons, district-level committees, and state level committees, again, in that order. Seventy-six percent of all principals say that teachers select "all or many" materials, 5% say that teachers select none, 67% say that school staff committees and districtwide committees select many or some. Yet, 15% of responding teachers say they have no role in selecting materials, 30% spend less than one hour, and 25% spend an average of 10 hours. The majority of these have no training for what is supposed to be a complex process.

My personal opinion is that each of these staff members has something to contribute and should be involved somewhere, sometime, at some level in the selection process. For the moment, I'd like to ignore the fact that individuals on a school staff vary widely in knowledge and abilities, and focus on the skills and assets that each can contribute to selection, and where he or she can best be used. The following generalizations are based on 10 years experience interacting with educators and instructional materials in three school districts.

Administrators. District administrators have a good knowledge of people and politics within their own communities. They know, or can find out, the values, costs, and availability of curriculum materials that have been produced in the local counties, districts, and states, which may be more appropriate for teaching purposes than purchased materials. They also know about in-house printing and media production which might be used to prepare curriculum materials. They are trained in decision making and experienced in coordinating information and using it to reach decisions. However, they are, in most cases, removed from classroom experience and have little knowledge of materials. Their most logical roles are to set up selection procedures, to determine budget figures by coordinating information from building staffs, and to see that adequate staff is available to process purchase orders and process materials after they arrive. If selection committees exist, administrators appoint some members (others might be elected), provide the committees specific goals and workable deadlines, and serve as facilitators as the committee proceeds with its work.

Media administrators. At district levels the individual responsible for media administration should organize, maintain, and keep current examination collections of materials. Such collections should be readily accessible to staff throughout the district. This person needs to provide selectors with a convenient meeting place and an extensive collection of review journals and evaluation tools to facilitate the reviewing process. Such administrative tasks as arranging for released time, convenient scheduling of preview and review sessions, distributing reviews and evaluations, and supervising selection procedures would also fall within the media administrator's jurisdiction.

Purchasing agents. As a group, purchasing agents are even more removed from instruction and use of materials than are administrators. However, they have a good knowledge of purchasing procedures and district policies and can be invaluable by designing purchasing procedures to facilitate rapid acquisition of needed materials. If computer time is available, they may be able to work with media people and selection committees to prepare order checklists and purchase order forms for standard items via computer. They can inform selectors of

deadlines that must be observed in processing orders If a district has a policy that requires all orders to be placed at one time or has other serious constraints, purchasing agents can help selectors to accommodate to such policies, or even be instrumental in revising them

Curriculum experts. They are well informed about their own field and its resources and materials, especially textbooks. They tend to be less knowledgeable about media and trade books. They are sometimes removed from the classroom experience, although they have good contacts with classroom teachers. Along with classroom teachers, curriculum experts are best at assessing the quality and relevance of texts and other media in their own subject fields. They can be helpful in familiarizing teachers with new text series, and in seeing that purchased curriculum materials are used. Also they can be particularly valuable in long-range assessments of needs.

Educational researchers and evaluators. Their training in analysis and evaluation can provide a systematic approach to the selection process. While they are not apt to be experts on instructional materials, they can help design instruments to assess the school, the community, and the program. They can help in designating evaluation instruments appropriate for particular schools or districts They can assist in pilot testing new materials. Ideally evaluators should work with librarians, teachers, and curriculum experts to research the total role of instructional materials. Evaluators from groups like EPIE are well trained in evaluating materials and can help provide inservice education for selection committees or the teaching staff as a whole

Parents. They represent their communities and can provide insights into community attitudes and concerns that are different from those of professional educators. They have an intimate knowledge of their own children and tend to see them as whole persons with a whole range of concerns. As a group, though, parents are not apt to be knowledgeable about the teaching process or the range of instructional materials However, highly motivated parents [illegible] as parents of gifted or handicapped children or some minority [illegible] parents, often have a great [illegible] of expertise and can be helpful [illegible] oughout the selection process

Parents may have more contacts with community institutions than do many educators. Their most useful roles usually are to help in assessing their community and the student body and in establishing learning priorities. (They know what they want their children to learn.) If they speak or read other languages or are members of minority groups parents can assist in selecting and evaluating particular titles or in establishing standards or budgets for these areas. In turn, given enough information, they can interpret educational concerns and policies to their communities, and thus generate support for materials. Parents are often the most active proponents of adequate budgets for instructional materials. And, particularly in rural districts, they may be active donors, above and beyond their customary school taxes. Other parents (or groups which include parents) have been equally active in opposing specific materials for use in the schools—most often library books, sometimes textbooks, dictionaries, or even spelling lists. Too often, because schools lack definite policies for dealing with censorship, these items, whatever their educational worth, are removed.

Parents do have a role in providing guidance to their own children, and, in certain circumstances, may legitimately request that their own children not use certain materials. Parents should *not* have the power to censor or limit the instructional materials available to other children. If they try, the American Library Association's Committee on Intellectual Freedom and the American Association of School Librarians' *Policies and Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials* (see Bibliography) can provide assistance. The NEA has long had policy statements on censorship of school materials, as has the American Civil Liberties Union. EPIE has recently been involved in this area also.

Citizen groups. Some groups, like the League of Women Voters, are expert in surveying community resources. It is advisable to enlist their expertise in school and community assessments. If individuals or community groups are to be included on selection committees, try to choose representatives from such groups as public libraries or museums, who often select and prepare materials that might be correlated with the curriculum. Also, community experts can be invited when considering particular programs and materials, for example, en-

ployment service people for career education, park rangers or environmental activists for environmental education, or speakers of foreign languages for bilingual programs. These experts can recommend materials that reflect community concerns, help establish program budgets, and serve as school-community liaisons.

Librarians and media professionals. These individuals are familiar with a wide range of materials, their review sources, their relative costs, and how and where to obtain them. They have, as well, a broad overview of curriculum, although they may not be subject matter experts. Librarians and media people who deal directly with students have a first-hand knowledge of students' outside classroom interests and activities that should be incorporated into materials selection. Librarians have more practice and probably more training in selecting materials than any other individuals in the schools. Since they tend to select materials on the basis of quality, aesthetics, interest, and appeal, their selection skills balance out those of teachers and curriculum experts who are more concerned about educational applicability. Librarians are probably more useful in reviewing texts for such attributes as quality, accuracy, presence of sexism, and indexing than for teaching purposes. Because of their knowledge of sources, they are the best persons to locate supplementary materials. They should, in coordination with teachers and curriculum experts, select most library and media materials for their own schools. They should be given time to review films and other media, as well as time to meet with other school and public librarians to coordinate their selections with those of other libraries. At least one or two librarians and media people should be on any district-level selection committee. In individual schools, they need to be involved in curriculum planning so that their collections will be finely honed to staff needs.

Although librarians and media people have traditionally selected materials based almost solely on their own judgments (according to established criteria and reviews and other assessments of client needs), in school situations they are probably wise to share this task by consulting with and informing others about what they intend to purchase. This approach will involve more people in the selection process, en-

courage suggestions, maintain contacts and rapport, and increase the likelihood that particular items will be used.

Since librarians and media people place orders directly, they can serve as liaisons between teachers or principals and the purchasing agent, and can help locate appropriate materials and prepare purchase orders for school staff. Libraries are logical places for housing display collections or for holding staff meetings on materials selection.

Teachers. Elementary school teachers are well aware of the teaching learning process, are informed about curriculum, and have a first hand knowledge of actual student skills at particular grade levels. They are adept at seeing the assets and drawbacks of particular text books if they are given time to examine them. They are less likely to see how materials can be adapted for different purposes. They assess reading levels somewhat differently than librarians, who often see children reading relatively difficult material because they are interested in its content. Both groups can learn from each other.

Teachers are excellent at matching materials to individuals, especially if they are helped to become aware of the range of materials available. They are better at picking materials for individual children, for their own classroom, for their own style of teaching, or for particular programs they believe in, than for unknown groups of children or for other teachers. This makes sense, since an excellent teaching tool in one teacher-student situation may be relatively ineffective in other teaching situations.

Teachers need a role in determining some of their own materials. (Studies such as the latest *California School Effectiveness Study* and the recent *Michigan Cost Effectiveness Study* show that students learn to read better when teachers choose more of the materials used in their own classrooms.) Ideally, they should have some discretionary funds to be spent throughout the school year as needed or have access to a well stocked library. They can benefit from exposure to the range of materials available, and need time to incorporate new materials into their instructional patterns. Teachers often could use training in use of materials by curriculum specialists (for textbooks and subject matter materials) and librarians (on the range of possibilities in trade books and media). This is particularly important for teachers in early childhood

education, special education, open education, and individualized education.

High school teachers, especially English teachers, are more apt to be subject matter experts, and combine a knowledge of what works in their classrooms with a rather extensive knowledge of basic materials in their fields, although some do not keep up with new materials.

All teachers, of course, have outside interests and expertise—art, music, traveling, gardening—and can be helpful in reviewing, recommending, and selecting materials in areas that interest them.

The best role for most teachers is choosing materials for their own classrooms, with help and consultation from librarians, media professionals, and curriculum specialists. Teachers should *not* be drafted for textbook selection committees, many excellent teachers are not good at choosing materials for other teachers. Only teachers who volunteer or who are interested in new materials should be asked to serve. Teachers need released time for such duties. They should be allowed to develop their own evaluation criteria and employ their own strengths in selection.

Experienced substitute teachers are a potential talent pool that should be considered in appointing selection committees. Generally, they have wider experience with students and curriculum materials than teachers who are locked into one classroom in one school. Moreover, their schedules tend to be flexible and they have time to serve, especially if they are hired for the task. Resource teachers, early retirement teachers, and recently retired teachers are also worth considering for selection committees. Resource teachers tend to be more oriented toward supplementary materials than many teachers and have good judgment on what will work.

Although teacher center staffs tend to be too overworked to take on added responsibilities, they are invaluable as a source of information on the felt needs of teachers. They are set up for inservice training and have often developed their own curriculum for local needs. They often are experts on making inexpensive equipment and using recyclables. Any teacher center would be a logical place to hold a "creative-use-of materials" inservice series that includes recyclables and materials selection.

Students. Although students are often treated as the passive recipients of education, they are, of course, experts on their own interests and concerns and as such should have a role in selecting materials. Students do have some choice in selecting from pre-selected materials—in learning centers, contract education, independent study, and in school and public libraries. They should be encouraged to provide input on subjects, authors, titles, and types of materials. In practice, school libraries, depending on budgets, usually select some materials based on the expressed interests of students, as do teachers who are allowed to choose their own materials.

At the minimum, students need to know that there is a selection policy; that textbooks, library books, and films do not appear magically, but are selected by specific individuals, ostensibly to meet student needs. It seems fair that students, for justifiable reasons, should have some veto power over their own use of specific materials—"I don't want to see that film again,"—as long as alternative materials are available. While students' comments on texts are frequently unsophisticated—"It's boring." "It's too complicated."—they are often correct, and should be considered during the selection process. The *School Media Quarterly* has printed many articles suggesting ways to use student input in selecting instructional materials.

Role of the Selection Committee

A selection committee's primary goal is to select materials to meet district needs. Its appraisal should be based on a thorough assessment of what is available in the district, an evaluation of how district selections have worked out in the past, an assessment of student needs and teaching styles, and a knowledge of ongoing programs and long range goals of the curriculum.

In 1963 a Joint Committee of the National Education Association and the American Textbook Publishers Institute published *Guidelines for Textbook Selection*, a useful document for any selection committee to study. In the *Guidelines* the following recommendations were made for textbook selection committees:

1. Should include classroom teachers, administrative personnel, curriculum specialists, and school librarians;
2. Should usually be around seven to 11 people, depending upon what is being evaluated (series, text, single grade);
3. Should include teachers from affected grades, as well as from grade above and grade below;
4. Should work during school hours;
5. Should have secretarial help as needed;
6. Should have regularly scheduled, well-spaced meetings at consistent times.

The *Guidelines* suggest the following work flow of selection committees:

1. Decide on goals;
2. Formulate temporary criteria (that can be revised),
3. Get evaluations by users;
4. Sort out books to be considered;
5. List them, make lists available, ask for comments,
6. Send criteria to publishers;
7. Consider comments;
8. Rate and rank books.

While these common sense guidelines are helpful, they fail to come to grips with many major problem areas in adoption and selection.

One such area is the delay inherent in state adoptions and lengthy reviews. In the 22 states that have state adoption regulations, mandated review procedures hold up the acquisition of textbooks from one to three years, and occasionally even longer. This limits the market to those large publishers who can afford these long lead times, and the large promotion and development expenses. The *Guidelines* make no attempt to widen the selection process to facilitate contact with small publishers who often produce the most innovative and interesting materials. As a consequence, materials selected are not necessarily the best or the most appropriate of those available.

These *Guidelines*, by their nature, are limited to textbooks, although such other materials as library books, many kinds of media, and laboratory apparatus may be more valuable teaching tools in many circumstances. The *Guidelines* also fail to come to grips with the appalling duplication of effort that occurs as hundreds or thousands of individuals across counties, states, or the nation all review and assess the same items. For the selectors, at least, it is highly desirable to pool the appraisals of instructional materials. Fortunately there are now tools which contain some of this information.

Selection committees should locate and take advantage of such evaluation guides as *EPIE Reports*, ERIC Clearinghouse publications, and trade book and media reviews for the curriculum areas they

are considering. They should also take advantage of the individual strengths and expertise of committee members and local staff. For example, a librarian might work up a list with costs of desirable supplementary materials for each text considered, teachers might assess the teaching guides that accompany text series as to their appropriateness for local conditions, a media expert might look for supporting media, curriculum consultants might appraise the long term value of a text and determine how long it would be useful, students could comment on interest, relevance, and difficulties. There should also be some means of exchanging information with state level selectors and other district committees looking at similar materials.

The questions below are typical of those which should be considered by a selection committee:

Are there students who are not being served by present instructional materials?

Are there curricular goals which are not being met by existing materials for the student body as a whole or for special groups of students?

Should successful materials currently in use be supplemented or replaced?

Are there new materials well suited to meet particular curricular goals?

Would new or different instructional materials facilitate certain learning styles or teaching strategies?

To what extent do these proposed new instructional materials utilize, build on, or negate existing resources and teaching approaches?

Do we have appropriate materials for new programs? What is an adequate budget?

Do new materials impose any limitations upon the school's organization and programs?

Can these materials offer enough flexibility to be adapted to individualized instruction, independent study, large group presentation, laboratory experiences, or small groups?

Can these materials be used in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches?

If these materials meet immediate needs, are they consistent with long-range goals?

How often might it be necessary to replace consumable parts of the materials and what would be the cost?

To answer the above questions a selection committee should devise a common materials analysis format through which publishers can provide information to educators in a consistent and useful way. Such a format could simplify evaluation and facilitate the flow of information across school levels.

I have developed a sample format (see page 21) based on my background as a school librarian and after a close examination of formats designed by educational evaluators. Other formats worth considering are those used by the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103, (see its *Writer's Manual: Alert Information System*) and the analysis form *CARTEL: Annotations and Analysis of Bilingual Multicultural Materials*, published by the Dissemination and Assessment Center for Bilingual Assessment, 7703 North Lamar Blvd., Austin, TX 78752. EPIE's *EPIEform A* is continuously revised and always a good source of ideas for analysis of instructional materials.

When a materials analysis form has been adopted it should accompany texts and multimedia packages through the selection and adoption procedures. Most publishers provide most of the needed information, in some form or other, to potential buyers. However, it is easier for selectors to work with this complicated data when it is arranged in consistent categories on an analysis form.

Some categories on an analysis form, such as linguistic components, call for specific information from publishers, who should be the authoritative source. I suspect that most publishers and producers would rather have their own staff writers prepare clear and accurate format descriptions of their own materials than leave the task to educational evaluators. In any case, it would be easier for the selection committee to verify and rewrite such descriptions than to start from scratch. If a publisher consistently provided inaccurate descriptions, it would soon destroy its own credibility and reputation.

In the sample analysis form below, I've included space for reviewers' and evaluators' comments to accompany the standard items to be considered for selection. These comments could be duplicated and forwarded to other selection committees. These evaluative comments, when combined with the descriptive analysis, add up to a selection instrument that is relatively easy to prepare and probably as useful as more extensive evaluations.

Materials Analysis Form

I. Publisher's information

Author:

Title:

Date:

Producer (include address):

Source (with address, if other than producer's):

Physical description (with costs):

Subject area(s):

Curriculum role:

Grade levels: Language levels:

Other characteristics of target audience:

Suggested ranges for number of instructional hours and or time periods

Research and development evidence:

How has producer involved children and teachers in the development of this product?

How does producer intend to involve students and teachers in revising and updating this product?

Linguistic content:

Rationale:

Scope:

Sequence:

Methodology:

How have materials been checked for fairness and balance in their treatment of women and minorities?

Supplementary information:

Sources of background information (other descriptive materials and/or persons):

Implementation requirements:

Physical facilities and equipment:

Staff training requirements (costs and time):

Consultation available? Costs?

Teacher's guides:

II. Comments by reviewers and selectors:

Outstanding features (include any major defects and virtues)

Possible uses:

Overall rating:

Recommended for purchase?

For whom? In what circumstances? How many?

If purchased, suggested follow-through:

Factors in Selecting Different Types of Materials

Each form of instructional material has its unique qualities that make it more appropriate for some teaching-learning situations and less appropriate for others. In this brief discussion, I will summarize qualities, evaluation criteria, and possible learning applications for the major forms of instructional materials.

Selection Criteria

Authenticity
- Accuracy
- Impartiality
- Currency
- Relevance

Appropriateness
- Vocabulary
- Concepts
- Subject correlation
- Curriculum correlation
- Individual/group use
- Suitability to medium
- Appeal to students

Organization
- Development
- Scope

Depth
Sequence
Pace
Balance
Narration
Captions

Technical Overview
Literary-quality
Visual quality
Composition

Special Features
Cost
Packaging
Teaching Guide
Comparability with similar materials

Print Materials

Since the invention of the printing press, printed matter has been the major method for storing and transmitting information. It is still our major conveyor of information, and, in school situations, the study of printed materials occupies about 62.5% of classroom time. Printed materials are portable, convenient, and relatively inexpensive. They are dependent largely on one sense of sight and require at least some ability to read. School learning is largely print learning or word learning.

Traditional criteria for assessing print materials include accuracy, currency, literary quality, content organization, age level appropriateness, curriculum correlation, typographical format, and sometimes aesthetic appeal. These are appropriate criteria for all media. In school situations, more emphasis has been placed on matching levels of printed material (vocabulary, type size, etc.) with reading and developmental levels for particular grades, and with their relationship to the curriculum than on aesthetic quality and student interests. The selection criteria list above covers most of the areas to consider in evaluating printed materials.

Textbooks

Textbooks are our major means of conveying curriculum content. They are also influential in standardizing the curriculum by grade level. Series of texts are developed sequentially to provide for orderly growth. They influence the teaching approach, and usually provide many suggestions and other kinds of assistance for teachers. Often they are validated by field tests in schools prior to publication. Since standardized achievement tests tend to be based on textbook content, scores on achievement tests are correlated with mastery of texts. Textbooks have a unifying role in our large pluralistic nation (though probably less than television). As accessible items, they can be inspected by parents and even by children during the selection process. Despite their major role, we currently spend only .7% of our educational budget on them, a decline from 1.6% in 1965.

Texts are written for groups or classes of students, not individual students (some are addressed to particular groups, such as inner city children). To be comprehensible (and sold) to a large group, many, not all, tend to be geared to a lowest common denominator. Many college texts, for example, now appear to be written at the tenth grade level, which may mean an increase in clarity but a decrease in depth and meaning. Since textbooks are designed at great pains not to offend anyone, they may lack depth, insight, or literary quality and fail to deal adequately with controversy.

Textbooks are addressed to mass audiences, and publishers invest much money, time, and effort in their development. Because of the time invested in their production and selection, texts are often out-of-date by the time they are available in classrooms.

El-Hi Textbooks in Print (New York, Bowker, revised annually each spring) is a useful tool for finding prices and other purchasing information for about 20,000 elementary, junior high, and high school textbooks and supplementary readers. It is arranged by major curriculum areas, includes information on grade levels and related teaching materials, and has indexes to authors, titles, and textbook series.

One study of textbooks, summarized in Donald Barron's "Review of Selected Research in School Librarianship," (*School Media Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 1, Summer 1977, pp. 271-88), states that textbooks were

ranked the "least desirable" media by teachers, but were used the most. Whether popular or not, they are almost indispensible for the basic curriculum.

Trade Books

Trade books cover the whole range of human knowledge. New books are published as that knowledge changes. They are long enough to cover subjects in depth and in an organized fashion. They are often indexed and can be reread and consulted as needed.

Trade books are underutilized in education, especially at the elementary school level. They can extend the curriculum and make it interesting for students. Trade books are useful in almost any new program, student project, or minicourse. As they are basically written by authors for readers who share the same interests, they are particularly well suited to individualized instruction, independent study, contract learning, learning centers, innovative curriculum, and supplementary reading. Since they are intended for individual use, they generally do not require lesson plans to be effective, although creative teachers have often developed lessons around a single trade book or multiple books with a common theme.

The sheer variety of trade books is one of their greatest assets. Text books are not equally suited to all learners. Often trade books can present relevant and appealing materials at all levels of difficulty and for all age ranges.

Book selection mechanisms. Because there are so many sources of reviews, it is far easier to evaluate and select trade books than any other medium. Generally, books are selected on the basis of favorable reviews, personal recommendations, or personal examinations. *Learning Magazine*, *School Media Quarterly*, *Science and Children*, and *Social Education* are educational journals that carry book reviews I find particularly worth reading. *Appraisal*, *Booklist*, and *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, are intended for children's librarians, but can be used equally well by teachers.

Three resources can provide help in the selection process. *Issues in Book Selection* (New York: Bowker, 1973) is a collection of essays for

teachers and librarians that deals with such difficult selection issues as sexuality, sex role stereotypes, and books on the occult. Margery Fisher's *Matter of Fact* (New York. Crowell, 1972) discusses appropriate criteria for selecting factual books. My *Guide to Sources of Educational Information* (Washington, D.C.. Information Resources Press. 1976) provides an overview and perspective on 29 selection sources particularly appropriate for teachers.

There are some well-indexed, annotated catalogues of selected titles appropriate for particular school groups or ages that include ordering information and explicit criteria. The most comprehensive are *Children's Catalog*, (Newark, N.J.. Bro-Dart), *Elementary School Library Collection*, *Junior High Library Catalog*, and *Senior High Library Catalog* (New York: H. W. Wilson).

Children's Books in Print, *Books in Print*, and *Subject Guide to Books in Print* (New York. Bowker) provide access by subject, author, and title to almost every book in print and include cost and ordering information.

All of these tools are frequently updated. All can be used for selecting books for purchase, or for selecting books for use (from libraries or other collections).

To be useful, these tools need to be purchased and consulted by teachers, librarians, curriculum specialists, and students on an annual basis.

Pamphlets and Leaflets

Typically, these kinds of materials deal with single topics, usually of current interest. They are often free or low cost. Because they are not easy to file, they can get lost and thrown away. Generally, they are not intended for in-depth presentations.

Selection mechanisms. Pamphlets are not usually reviewed, though they are sometimes annotated in periodicals. They are listed by subject in *Vertical File Index* (New York. H. W. Wilson). They are selected mainly on the basis of price, subject relevancy, and authority of issuing agency. They are invaluable for current topics that require brief discus-

sion, such as career education and health education. A good review of their selection, organization, and acquisition is included in *The Vertical File and Its Satellites* by Shirley Miller (Littleton, Colo. Libraries Unlimited, 1971).

Since school purchase orders are so expensive to process, it seems ridiculous to write purchase orders for pamphlets costing 35¢ or $1. They need to be purchased on a continuing basis with petty cash funds rather than checks. Government pamphlets can be purchased with coupons ordered from the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C.

Magazines

Periodicals are excellent materials for providing current information covering different points of view. They also provide intellectual and aesthetic stimulation. They are easier to file, although more expensive than pamphlets. They are valuable for research and reference, especially if indexed in one of the periodical indexes.

Selection mechanisms. *Media Programs* recommends a range of from 50 to 175 titles for a school of 500 students. Ideally, periodicals should be selected jointly by principals, teachers, and librarians. The librarian can expedite the selection process by routing a list of periodicals, acquiring sample issues, and asking for suggestions. Factors to consider are quality, student appeal, relevance to curriculum, and indexing. Bill Katz' *Magazines for Libraries* (New York, Bowker) is updated every two years and is a great tool for schools. Its chapter called "Free Magazines" has some unexpected treasures.

Locally Produced Materials

Some locally produced materials are perfectly adapted for local needs, others are a conspicuous waste of time and money. The suggestions below come from my experiences producing materials at the county and state levels.

The first questions to ask are: Is there a real need for new materials? What comparable items may be available? Other local agencies, such as newspapers, libraries, museums, cultural groups, and environmen

tal agencies may have materials schools can use or adapt. A trade book publisher may just have published an ethnic cookbook. A scouting organization may have the perfect collection of map activities. Check the resources of nearby school districts, your state education agency, other local and state agencies, or any organization that might have developed educational materials for the same reasons that you wish to develop them. Even if their products are not satisfactory for your purposes, you can benefit from their thinking and expertise.

If you decide to produce materials, proceed with a target audience in mind. Decide on a medium that is appropriate for your target, within your budget, and feasible for your local talents. Review the product thoroughly with many people for accuracy and quality. If you're in a school district, you probably can try out parts of the project. Ask for comments and adapt. A low-cost, tailor made product can be highly valuable, a slap-dash, inaccurate product cannot.

Prepare an accurate, dated title page, label, or frame, giving due credit. See that your product is distributed and publicized to its intended audience. Make enough copies! If it's good, people will want it. Try to arrange some mechanism for distributing your materials to individuals in other systems. If you can't make an arrangement to sell copies at cost, allow others to copy if credit is given. Or go to a commercial producer if it is what everyone is waiting for. Remember that other educators are always looking for good instructional materials.

Free Materials

These materials are easy on your budget, though they can be expensive in the time it takes to order and process them. They are good for enriching the curriculum and presenting different points of view. It's wise to examine these for objectivity and accuracy, if they are produced by business or advocacy groups. While they rarely contain actual inaccuracies, they rarely tell the whole truth, particularly when dealing with controversial issues. They are issued by a producer to promote a point of view, their educational intent is usually a secondary consideration. If they are selected from a variety of sources, they will represent a range of viewpoints.

I select these kinds of materials for their interest value and their cor

relation with the curriculum, and before I order them I ask, "What is the intent of the producer?" In some cases I don't place an order if I think materials are apt to be too misleading. In other cases, materials are useful to help children sharpen their critical thinking skills. Those materials could be labeled "FREE ITEM—Watch out for propaganda."

There are several standard lists of free material sources traditionally used by teachers. Educators Progress Service (Randolph, Wisconsin) offers annually annotated listings of free materials arranged by title under subject headings. Separate volumes provide sources of free films, filmstrips, guidance materials, science materials, and social science materials. George Peabody College for Teachers (Nashville, Tennessee) publishes a biennial listing of *Free and Inexpensive Learning Materials*. The NEA journal, *Today's Education*, includes lists of free and inexpensive materials. Other educational and library journals also list relevant materials.

Gift Materials

Gift materials, welcome as they are, should meet the same criteria as purchased materials. As with free materials, it's wise to assess the reasons for the donation before agreeing to accept it.

Portfolios

These inexpensive sets of facsimiles of documents were first developed for schools in Great Britain. Called *Jackdaws*, they are now available in the U.S. from Grossman Publishers (625 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022). Generally, these include facsimiles of about 10 primary documents with an overview, reading lists, and lesson plans. These are easy to store and integrate into the curriculum in mini courses, learning centers, and individual projects.

Games and Simulations

These provide students with involvement in situations paralleling real decision making. Their effectiveness depends upon students perceiving them as reality. They can provide a refreshing break in routine and are popular with students. They should be related to curriculum

and allow opportunities for decision making and problem solving Ideally, they should be easy to handle and store, and there should be some means for replacing or duplicating lost parts or pieces Users may have to reinforce packages to make them more durable There are quite a few good compilations of reviews, including *Contemporary Games* Vol. I, by Jean Belch (Detroit, Mich., Gale Research, 1973), which is well arranged by subject, and *Learning with Games*, by Cheryl Charles and Ronald Stadsklev (Boulder, Colo. Social Science Education Consortium, 1973). The latter includes selection and design criteria *Simulation Games* includes current reviews and articles. *Booklist* also reviews outstanding games. Also see Phi Delta Kappa's fastback 54, *Simulation Games for the Classroom*, by Mark Heyman

Activities Books

Since these types of materials are usually written by classroom teachers, they are validated by at least one teacher's classroom experiences. If they are republished by educational publishers, they are apt to gain in polish and lose in freshness. These worthwhile items are hard to locate because they are not usually included in *Books in Print* or in such systems as ERIC. Since they are relatively inexpensive and often set up as teachers' idea books, activities books should be reviewed by teachers for applicability to your school situation, using a simple assessment form. Some of these are listed in catalogues of the Center for Open Learning and Teaching (P.O. Box 9434, Berkeley, CA 94709) Others are reviewed in *Teacher's Choice* (1976), edited by Peter Dublin (Curriculum Center, Institute of Open Education, 15 Mifflin Place, Cambridge, MA 02138).

Art Materials

Media Programs recommends 800 to 1,200 art items for a school population of 500. They can be used for art, social studies, and other areas in the school curriculum. Many public libraries have extensive picture files dealing with local history.

Learning from Pictures, by Catherine Williams (Washington, D. C.: AECT, 1968) is still the basic authority on picture utilization Williams's criteria include. clarity, sharp focus, composition, authen-

ticity, suitable captions, ease of interpretation, indication of scale, and appropriate match to student abilities. Many of her sources are still current. My section "Picture Sources" in *Social Studies on a Shoe String* (Buffalo, N.Y.. D.O.K. Publications, 1977) provides an annotated guide to recent sources.

Posters

These attention grabbers are highly effective for establishing an atmosphere in a classroom or library, motivating learning or reading, and conveying values. Some even manage to pack in a lot of information. They are relatively inexpensive considering their value and appeal. *Learning Magazine Starting Points*, the *Instructor* centerfolds, *Scholastic* magazine supplements, and removable maps in the *National Geographic* often include teaching ideas and bibliographic backup. Other posters are useful in learning centers and on bulletin boards. Dale E. Shaffer's *Free Posters, Charts and Maps* (137 Jennings Ave., Salem, OH 11160) is a good starting point for school districts with limited funds. Posters are also widely available in poster and gift shops. Three companies that distribute a wide range of inexpensive posters ($1 to $1.50) are: Synergisms (601 Minnesota St., San Francisco, CA 94107), Celestial Arts Poster Sales (231 Adrian Rd., Millbrae, CA 94030), and Argus Communications (7110 Natchez, Niles, IL 60648). Also, the American Library Association issues a yearly recommended source list for posters.

Posters should be selected for visual appeal, accuracy, durability (they can be laminated), and correlation with curriculum. If small orders are placed, these should be handled like pamphlet orders.

Art Prints and Slides

Museums are good sources for both art slides and prints. *The Slide Buyers Guide*, by Nancy DeLaurier, is an excellent source of information on art slides (College Art Association of America, 16 E. 52nd St., New York, NY 10022). UNESCO publications, distributed through Unipub (P.O. Box 133, New York, NY 10016) is a good source of information on both art prints and art slides. Its *Catalogue of Reproduc*

tions of Paintings, 1960 to 1973 (Paris. UNESCO, 1974) is a helpful guide to high quality reproductions selected by art experts. Art prints are hard to store, and may need to be mounted, framed, or laminated.

Maps and Globes

These are often printed and distributed by government agencies as well as by commercial publishers. Government sources may be free or inexpensive. Maps in such magazines as the *National Geographic* are indexed in the *Readers' Guide. A Handy Key to Your National Geographics*, frequently revised by Charles Underhill (East Aurora, NY 14052; $3.50) is another inexpensive guide. Criteria to consider are currency, scale, quality of drafting, design, typeface, and clarity. Frequently used maps may need to be laminated or reinforced. Globes are selected using the same criteria.

Audiovisual Materials

For most students audiovisual materials seem immediate, authentic, and involving. For certain types of learners—language-handicapped, ear-oriented, visual-oriented, deaf or nonreaders—audiovisual materials can convey information far more effectively than print materials. For the general run of students, these materials may be most valuable for affective education. Combined with discussion, they can be powerful tools for values education. They can be highly motivating for almost any topic.

Audiovisual materials require less effort from students who can watch or listen passively. But they require more preparation and follow-up by teachers and should be supplemented with other media to be effective. They also require equipment that needs to be maintained and replaced.

They are difficult to browse and cannot be reviewed quickly. Generally, they are intended for groups, rather than individual use. Although there are about 300,000 media items appropriate in some way for the preschool through twelfth grade curriculum, there is less bibliographic access to them than there is for books. It is difficult to locate select appropriate items.

Selection criteria. There are many criteria for selecting audiovisual materials worked out by media professionals. The following criteria were designed as guidelines for *The Booklist* audiovisual consultant-reviewers. Obviously, all criteria are not relevant for every item

Authenticity

Is it authentic, accurate, and up-to-date?

Is it free from bias, prejudice, or misleading emphasis?

Is the author or producer well qualified?

Are translations and retellings faithful to the original?

Utilization

Will it stimulate and maintain the user's interest?

Will the user be stimulated to further study or discussion?

Is it useful with individuals as well as groups?

Are the format, vocabulary, concepts, and rate and methods of development appropriate for the intended audience?

Will it develop concepts that are difficult to get across in other ways?

Will it affect attitudes, build appreciations, develop critical thinking, or entertain?

Does it achieve its stated purpose?

Content

Is it well organized and well balanced?

Is the script well written and imaginative?

Is it timely or pertinent to library, community, or curriculum needs and problems?

Is the treatment, e.g., animation, dramatization, illustrated lecture, factual analysis, etc., appropriate for the subject?

Does it present information in ways that other materials do not?

Does it complement printed or other audiovisual materials in the same subject areas?

Could the subject be treated better by other media?

Technical Qualities

Is the photography, e.g., choice and handling of visuals, composition, color, focus, exposure, special effects, etc., satisfactory and effective?

Are the visuals other than photographs, e.g., paintings, illustrations, maps, charts, etc., well reproduced and effectively used?

Are the principles of artistic balance and design observed?

Are titles, captions, and explanations readable and of suitable length and in proper positions?

Is the sound acceptable, e.g., good fidelity, realistic sound effects, synchronization, and absence of conflicts between the background music or sound effects and the narration or dialogue?

Is the editing, e.g., continuity, matching, rhythm, pacing, etc., satisfactory?

Do the actors have good voice quality, diction, and timing?

Is the acting believable and convincing?

Does the narrator have good voice quality, diction, and timing?

Is the narrator condescending in mannerisms and style?

Overall Rating

(In addition to the above criteria the following general criteria should be considered when giving the item an overall rating.)

Is the production imaginative and creative?

Is it of significant educational, social, or artistic value?

Is it worth the purchase price?

Are accompanying guides or notes well written and helpful?

Is the packaging easily manipulated and durable?

Three other well-thought-out criteria lists can be found in *Developing Multi-Media Libraries*, by Warren Hicks and Alma Tillin (New York, Bowker, 1970), "Evaluative Criteria of Non-Print Materials, A Compromise," by Edward R. Lasher, in *Audiovisual Instruction*

(April 1975); and "Criteria for the Selection of Records, Filmstrips and Films for Young Children," by Nancy L. Quisenberry and others, in *Audiovisual Instruction* (April 1973).

Schools generally do not have as systematic procedures for examining, previewing, or selecting audiovisual materials as they do for print materials. These procedures are important for nonprint materials since the bibliographic and reviewing tools are less extensive than for print materials. Audiovisual reviews handle content well enough, but they are not as good for technical subtleties, which can be important. Except in music reviews, there is little comparative reviewing and almost no comparison across media. Too often the selector is left with word-of-mouth recommendations, producers' catalogues, or a variety of lists that cover one media or one subject. Mary Sive's *Educator's Guide to Media Lists* (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1975) does a good job of making sense of 270 such lists and is worth consulting for anyone who wants a source of information on media dealing with a variety of curriculum areas. "Guides to Nonprint Instructional Materials" in my *Guide to Sources of Educational Information* is a similar compilation which provides detailed information on the scope and educational uses of 59 guides to audiovisual materials.

Two helpful approaches to media evaluation, one local and one national, are those of EPIE and Bay Area Media Evaluation Guild (BAMEG). BAMEG, a multicounty cooperative evaluation project, combines personal reviewing with printed evaluations geared to the needs of educators. It was founded in 1968 by Robert Muller, media reviewer for *The Elementary School Library Collection*. It is open to any teacher, librarian, or media specialist willing to attend its monthly review sessions and review on a regular basis. These reviews are typed out, printed, and mailed to participating members each month. They include bibliographic data, content description, and a comprehensive evaluation by experienced librarians and media specialists.

Recently, these printed reviews have been made available to nonparticipants, $15 for an annual volume, $20 for a monthly mailing of 10 issues. Order these reviews from the Bay Area Media Evaluation Guild, 101 Lincoln Avenue, Daly City, CA 94015. Annual volumes also may be obtained in microfiche from Educational Resources Cen-

ter, San Mateo County Schools, 333 Main Street, Redwood City, CA 94063.

EPIE Nonprint Instructional Materials Projects, still in the developmental state, is a national cooperative network and computer index to media materials. This project will start with about 25,000 of the most-used items, initially in the fields of reading and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, and will later expand to include materials in career, environmental, consumer, and bilingual education. The new reviewing service for educators will be retrievable in microfiche, hard copy, or computer tape formats.

The description of each item will include standard bibliographic data, subject areas, major topic, grade range, topics covered, learning emphasis, vehicles for presentation, other instructional design provisions, technical information, analysts' critiques, and user feedback.

This project, being launched during the 1977-78 school year, is being carefully tailored to meet the needs of educators and should provide a data base that can be used in local catalogues and in many other ways. Contact persons are. David L. Elliott, West Coast EPIE, 1018 Keith Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708, and James R. George III, EPIE NSAIM Network, Box 620, Stony Brook, NY 11790.

Films

Educational films are intended for large audiences, therefore they need to be broad in appeal. They are relatively expensive and, in some instances, become dated rather quickly. *Media Programs* recommends access to 3,000 titles for a student body of 500. Ideally, these should be distributed from a central depository that has enough films (including duplicates) to meet 90% of user requests. Films are far too expensive for most individual schools to have their own prints.

Some good reviewing sources are Educational Film Library Association (43 W. 61st St., New York, NY 10023). It publishes monthly sets of *EFLA Evaluations*, based on reviews by independent reviewing committees that include film synopses and useful bibliographic information. It has also published *A Manual on Film Evaluation* (1971, nonmembers $5, members $4) and other helpful guides. *Leaders Films Reviews* (P.O. Box 69760, Los Angeles, CA 90069) reviews about 900

films a year in nine issues, and also provides a research service for locating hard-to-find films and distributors. R. R. Bowker (1180 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036), a library publisher, has issued several rather comprehensive indexes to films by type and grade level. Other sources can be found in my *Guide to Sources of Educational Information* and Mary Sive's *Educators' Guide to Media Lists* (both cited earlier).

Sound Filmstrips and Slides

Media Programs recommends one to four per student. These moderately priced media materials are increasingly popular in education. They are versatile items, which can be easily updated, modified for audiences, and used for both individuals and groups. They tie in nicely with other resources, and often have good accompanying guides. They require less technical skills to make than films, and can be produced by teachers, media people, even upper-grade elementary school children. They are easy to distribute and store. The *Elementary School Library Collection* includes good annotations of almost 1,000 filmstrips for grades K-6. *BAMEG Reviews* has excellent evaluative reviews of K-12 materials (see p. 37). *Booklist* also reviews recommended items.

Audio Materials

These ear-oriented materials are best used where sound is important: language instruction, verbal drill, music, plays, and poetry. For some students, they are good accompaniment to printed materials. Use such criteria as pleasing voices, clear articulation, and lack of distortion when making selections. Other technical qualities to consider are conformity with your equipment, ease of use, ease of maintenance, and durability.

The *Schwann Music Catalogs* found in record and music stores are the most comprehensive source for information on records. The New York Library Association (62 E. 42nd St., Suite 1212, New York, NY 10017) has put out some good brief listings for children's records and cassettes. Check *Educators' Guide to Media Lists* (cited above) for other sources.

Multimedia Kits

These kits, which are gaining popularity in education, need to be evaluated on criteria that consider the entire package. Selectors need to ask whether all items are equally valuable or if some might better be purchased separately. They should be packaged durably, and provide some easy means of replacing damaged or missing parts. They do require more inventory control than other media since parts are apt to get lost, broken, or misplaced.

EPIE Report 42 includes rather extensive criteria for multimedia kits in its *Guidelines for Analyzing Kits and Sets of Early Learning Materials.*

Recyclable and Do-It-Yourself Materials

Educational use of recyclables has been increasing rapidly in the last several years, in part as a response to constricted budgets but more importantly as a philosophical conviction that educators might well make some positive uses of the by-products from our throw-away economics system. Recyclables can be particularly worthwhile in involving children in their own education—both in collecting scrap materials and devising uses for them.

Teacher centers, museums, art councils, environmentalists, and craftspersons in this country all have valuable suggestions for using scrap creatively across all curriculum areas. UNESCO, which has been active in promoting education in poor and developing countries, also is a source of good ideas. Its revised science resource guide, *New UNESCO Source Book for Science Teaching* (Paris, 1973), is available from Unipub (P.O. Box 433, New York, NY 10016).

A few helpful titles and sources are listed below. Many others are incorporated in the end bibliography of *Teachers' Centers Exchange Directory* by Jeanne Lance and Ruth Kreitzman (San Francisco, Far West Laboratory, 1977), and in my *Beginner's Guides to Spaceship Earth* (Buffalo, NY: D O.K. Publishers, 1978). Any library or art store will have several books on the use of scrap materials, especially for art.

How To Make Your Own Educational Materials by Cynthia Brown and Ray Nitta. $1. Center for Open Learning and Teaching, P.O. Box 9434, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Recyclopedia by Robin Simons $3.95 Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976. (Based upon Boston Children's Museum activities.)

Science Equipment in the Elementary School by R. W. Colton $3 Mountain View Center for Environmental Education, 1511 University Avenue, Boulder, CO 80309

Teaching Science with Garbage and *Teaching Science with Soil* by Albert Schultz $4.95 and $6.95 respectively. Rodale Press, Emmaus, PA 18049

Summing Up

Evaluating and selecting instructional materials is an ongoing professional responsibility of all educators from the classroom teacher to the superintendent of schools. While librarians and media specialists have special training in assessing instruction materials, they cannot be the sole decision makers in selecting materials. Teachers, principals, supervisors, students, and parents all have valuable input that can be channeled into the decision-making process if appropriate procedures are set up.

We are blessed with a wealth of instructional materials for all levels and all curriculum areas. The dilemma we face is how to select those materials to meet our needs with the limited funds available. Budgets for instructional materials have never been commensurate with the central role they play in the teaching learning process. With school budgets facing serious restrictions in these inflationary times, funds for instructional materials are proportionately less than they were 10 years ago. For the long range we must lobby forcefully to secure adequate funds for instructional materials. For now we must be highly selective in the choices we make about instructional materials.

Hopefully the guidelines and resources presented in this fastback will assist in bringing the highest quality materials to all the children and youth we serve in our schools. They deserve nothing less.

An Acronymal Guide to Major Information Sources on Instructional Materials

These are the sources that deal broadly with the process of selection. Other agencies discussed in this fastback deal with single subjects, target populations or single types of media.

AASL American Association of School Librarians
50 East Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611

This association, founded in 1951 as an affiliate of the American Library Association, is concerned with evaluating, selecting, interpreting, and using media in schools, K-12. It has many inexpensive publications on selecting and using media materials, including *Policies and Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials* (1976, $.50), which has especially good guidelines for handling controversial materials. Its journal, *School Media Quarterly* ($15 for nonmembers) is an ongoing source of reviews of all media except textbooks, and includes research reviews and frequent articles on selection issues.

AECT Association for Educational Communications and Technology
1201 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

This association has long been active in developing effective guidelines and quality standards for media. *Media Programs. District and School* (1975, $3), produced jointly with the AASL, provides qualitative and quantitative recommendations for resources as well as programs. *Audiovisual Instruction*, its official journal, provides reviews and practical help.

ALA American Library Association
50 East Huron St.
Chicago, IL 60611

This organization has many publications and services to assist in selecting instructional materials. *Booklist* ($21 a year), is probably the best single review source for evaluative reviews of recommended materials in all media. Its Library Technology Program sponsors and executes comprehensive user oriented tests on media equipment and materials. Its Children's Services Division cooperates with other child advocacy groups and establishes evaluation standards for all types of media. It prepares annual annotated lists of outstanding materials for ...ent media.

EPIE Educational Products Information Exchange Institute
475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10027

Established in 1967 as a sort of consumers' union for educational products, it prepares independent, objective evaluations of equipment, systems, and materials, based on thorough product review and user feedback. It is a membership organization which issues, as part of its membership, eight *EPIE Reports* ($10, or $20 if purchased separately), half about equipment and half about materials. Its newsletter, *EPIEgram*, devotes 18 issues to materials, 18 to equipment. Membership at $100 includes the total package. Since 1974, it has trained teachers in a systematic method of analyzing instructional materials. Since 1977, it has been offering three-day training sessions in selecting instructional materials.

Joint Committee

A Joint Committee of the National Education Association and the American Textbook Publishers Institute was founded in 1960 to deal with issues relating to printed materials (especially textbooks), such as censorship, selection, distribution, quality, and uses. It has produced several basic guidelines for the selection process, including *Guidelines for Textbook Selection* (1963 and 1968) and *Guidelines for an Adequate Investment in Instructional Materials* (1967). The Joint Committee no longer exists as an operating unit but publishers and educators are still working together through the NEA and the School Division of the Association of American Publishers (AAP). Their most recent cooperative effort is *Instructional Materials. Selection and Purchase* (Washington, D.C.: NEA, 1976 [Revised edition], $3).

NEA National Education Association
1201 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

This association has cooperated with many groups in collecting information and devising standards for assessing educational materials. The Effective Teacher Education Program of the NEA is now disseminating information on about 500 instructional materials for inservice teacher education. Some helpful items are *Biased Textbooks* (1971), *Sex Role Stereotyping Fact Sheets* (1971) [duplicating masters], and *A Child's Right to Equal Reading* (1973)

NSAIM National Survey and Assessment of Instructional Materials

This two-year survey of instructional materials was funded by the Lilly Endowment in 1974, and was executed by EPIE. It is currently the major data source on use and selection of instructional materials. The full report was published in *EPIE Report 76* (1977. $20).

Fastback Titles

(Continued from back cover)

85. Getting It All Together: Confluent Education
86. Silent Language in the Classroom
87. Multiethnic Education: Practices and Promises
88. How a School Board Operates
89. What Can We Learn from the Schools of China?
90. Education in South Africa
91. What I've Learned About Values Education
92. The Abuses of Standardized Testing
93. The Uses of Standardized Testing
94. What the People Think About Their Schools: Gallup's Findings
95. Defining the Basics of American Education
96. Some Practical Laws of Learning
97. Reading 1967-1977: A Decade of Change and Promise
98. The Future of Teacher Power in America
99. Collective Bargaining in the Public Schools
100. How To Individualize Learning
101. Winchester: A Community School for the Urbanvantaged
102. Affective Education in Philadelphia
103. Teaching with Film
104. Career Education: An Open Door Policy
105. The Good Mind
106. Law in the Curriculum
107. Fostering a Pluralistic Society Through Multi Ethnic Education
108. Education and the Brain
109. Bonding: The First Basic in Education
110. Selecting Instructional Materials
111. Teacher Improvement Through Clinical Supervision
112. Places and Spaces: Environmental Psychology in Education

This fastback and others in the series are made available at low cost through the contributions of the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, established in 1966 with a bequest by George H. Reavis. The foundation exists to promote a better understanding of the nature of the educative process and the relation of education to human welfare. It operates by subsidizing authors to write fastbacks and monographs in nontechnical language so that beginning teachers and the general public may gain a better understanding of educational problems. Contributions to the endowment should be addressed to the Educational Foundation, Phi Delta Kappa, Eighth and Union, Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

All 112 fastbacks (not including 84S) can be purchased for $40 ($34 to Phi Delta Kappa members).

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Payment must accompany all orders for less than $5. If it does not, $1 will be charged ndling. Indiana residents add 4% sales tax.

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38. The Humane Leader
39. Parliamentary Procedure: Tool of Leadership
40. Aphorisms on Education
41. Metrication, American Style
42. Optional Alternative Public Schools
43. Motivation and Learning in School
44. Informal Learning
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