
Frances Henne and the Development of School Library Standards

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ABSTRACT

Frances Henne (1906–85) was the leader in the development of school library standards during her career as a teacher, librarian, and library educator. She was the driving force behind the publication of the 1945, 1960, and 1969 national standards for school libraries. Her imprint is evident in the research and philosophical foundations for the 1975, 1988, and 1998 national standards.

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION IN LIBRARIANSHIP

Born in Springfield, Illinois, on October 11, 1906, Henne received her bachelor of arts degree and master of arts degree in English at the University of Illinois in 1929 and 1934 respectively. After completing her undergraduate degree and while she was working on her master's degree, she worked as a library assistant in circulation and reference at the Lincoln Public Library in her hometown of Springfield from 1930 to 1940.

In 1935 Henne went to New York City to pursue a bachelor's degree in librarianship at Columbia University. While engaged in her studies, Henne also briefly worked as a circulation assistant at the New York Public Library in 1935 and then as a reference and circulation assistant at the New York State Teachers College at Albany from 1935 to 1938. She served as an instructor in school librarianship at Albany from 1937 to 1939, when Louis Round Wilson, dean of the Graduate Library School (GLS) at the University of Chicago, invited her to serve as an instructor there and to be responsible

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LIBRARY TRENDS, Vol. 52, No. 4, Spring 2004, pp. 952–962

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for the library in the University High School, a laboratory school for the University of Chicago.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Beginning her career as the first woman faculty member at University of Chicago's GLS in 1939, she also began her doctoral studies that same year. She served as librarian from 1939 to 1942. She participated in, and contributed to the proceedings of, the 1940 Conference on Reading, one of several annual conferences sponsored by and held at the University of Chicago throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Her paper, "Function and Activities of Libraries in Promoting Growth in and through Reading" (1940) was the first of approximately thirty articles, essays, chapters, and monographs written throughout her career on reading, school libraries, school library research, school library standards, and print and nonprint media for children and young adults (Henne, 1942, 1943, 1950, 1950/1970; Henne & Lowell, 1942). She was assistant professor at the GLS from 1946 to 1949, served as associate dean and dean of students from 1947 to 1950, and acting dean from 1951 to 1952.

In 1949, while serving as associate dean and dean of students, Henne received her doctorate degree in library science at the University of Chicago. Her dissertation, "Preconditional Factors Affecting the Reading of Young People" (1949a) recommended that high school libraries should reappraise their programs to stress appropriate selection and accessibility of materials and participate in the developmental reading programs and systematic reading guidance programs (Cole, 1955; Sullivan, 1990; Hannigan, 1993).

During her teaching career at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School, which lasted from 1939 to 1954, Henne allied herself with other school library practitioners and state supervisors of school libraries, notably Mary Peacock Douglas of North Carolina, Ruth Ersted of Minnesota, and Margaret Walraven of Texas. Henne established the Center for Children's Books and its *Bulletin*, a reviewing medium that related books to curriculum and analyzed critically children's and young adults' materials for libraries and schools (Cole, 1955; Sullivan, 1990; Hannigan, 1993; Schlachter and Thomison, 1974, p. 43).

At this time she was a member of an American Association of School Librarians (AASL) committee, chaired by Mary Peacock Douglas, which was hard at work producing standards for school libraries. Leaders like Douglas and Henne recognized that national guidelines were needed to establish best practice through demonstration programs and to encourage nationwide measures of effort and achievement. Since school libraries were part of the evaluation process of regional accrediting associations, it was especially important to have guidelines and standards and to get them adopted by the accrediting agencies (Henne, 1943; Sullivan, 1990). As of 1943, there

were two sets of national standards for school libraries, including the first standards for school libraries written by the National Education Association (NEA) Committee on Library Organization and Equipment for senior and junior high schools in 1920, and the 1925 Elementary School Library Standards, published as a joint collaboration of the NEA and the American Library Association (ALA) (Certain, 1920, 1925). In her 1943 article on "The Evaluation of School Libraries," Henne called for new standards for both elementary schools and high schools.

1945 SCHOOL LIBRARY STANDARDS

In 1945 the AASL school library standards committee published the first set of national K–12 school library standards, *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow* (Douglas 1945). The 1945 standards established the precedent for modern school library media programs by differentiating between the duties of the school librarian and those of the public librarian as well as defining the scope of the different services that the school library and the public library provided to schools (Douglas, 1945). Henne advocated collaborating with classroom teachers to include library skills education in the context of subject-based learning. An example of how this collaboration worked was *The Librarian and the Teacher of Home Economics*, published in 1945 by the ALA. This presented the results of Henne's collaboration with a home economics teacher, Margaret Pritchard, to provide activities and examples to show how planning with teachers could make the library experience more meaningful in the classroom situation (Henne & Pritchard, 1945).

In August 1947 Henne directed the GLS conference, "Youth, Communication, and Libraries," the papers for which were published by the ALA under the same title. *Youth, Communication, and Libraries* includes Henne's essay, "The Frontiers of Library Service for Youth," which addressed the issue of where best to locate library services to children and young adults (Henne, 1949b). Henne championed the idea that school libraries, not public libraries, should be the primary source for library service to elementary school children. She urged school librarians, teacher educators, and library educators to continue to evaluate programs in the schools and in the universities and to plan locally, regionally, and nationally to attain the best possible library media programs in schools (Henne, 1949b; Sullivan, 1990; Hannigan, 1993; *Frontiers of library service*, 1979).

Peggy Sullivan, in her biographical sketch of Henne, speculates that Henne overstated her position in this essay on the centrality of the elementary school library in the provision of library service to children. Sullivan points out that in her zeal to improve school libraries Henne angered public librarians who had their own traditions of providing children's services (Sullivan, 1990). It was indeed evident that Henne was ready for any turf

battles for library services to youth that lay ahead when she asserted that "We must provide . . . the ideals, the force, the zeal, the spirit, the hard work, and, yes, the toughness, that form the dynamics which turn visions and plans into workable realities" (Henne, 1949b, p. 209; Hannigan, 1993, p. 347).

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS (AASL)

The period of the late 1940s and early 1950s was a difficult time organizationally for the American Library Association and the AASL's relationship with it. Henne was an AASL board member from 1945 to 1947 and, in what was a critical period organizationally, vice-chair from 1947 to 1948 and chair from 1948 to 1949. In the early 1940s the AASL was part of the ALA's Division of Libraries for Children and Young People. Henne was a strong proponent of the idea that AASL should have autonomous divisional status within ALA with its own executive secretary (Sullivan, 1990; Hannigan, 1993). Since the 1920s a number of committees had been appointed to determine what the best structure would be for the association. The Fourth Activities Committee was set up in 1945, and among the recommendations of its 1948 report was to keep the Division of Libraries for Children and Young People but to separate the AASL from it as its own separate division. Henne was very active politically in these developments and was a member of the ALA Council when the report of this committee was considered. The long process of review and debate about all of this ended in 1951 when AASL became a separate division of ALA (Woolls, 2003; Lowrie, 1986, p. 734).

In order to help school libraries implement the 1945 school library standards, Henne, along with Ruth Ersted, who was then state supervisor of school libraries in Minnesota, and Alice Lohrer, assistant professor at the Library School of the University of Illinois, wrote *A Planning Guide for the High School Library Program*. Published by ALA in 1951, this was the first evaluative guide for school library programs (Henne, Ersted, and Lohrer, 1951). The Planning Guide provided a pattern for developing school library evaluation materials, including those used for self-studies for regional accreditation of schools, that continued to be influential in the future. The authors recommended that planning should be an integral part of the school library evaluation process and that school librarians should identify services for students as well as services for teachers that the school library should provide. They emphasized the need for extensive collection analysis, even though it must be done manually, and the need for statistics, facts, and charts to justify budget requests. They asserted that budget rationales were essential if school libraries were to get their share of building-level budgets, not to mention state and local education funding (Henne, Ersted, & Lohrer, 1951; Henne, 1953a, 1953b, 1953c; ; Sullivan, 1990).

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

In 1954 Henne left her position at the University of Chicago for a position as visiting associate professor at the School of Library Service at Columbia University. She became a permanent faculty member in 1955. It was here that she published a reflective article in 1956 that emphasized the need of school librarians to know the characteristics of the elementary school child. She also recommended that the school librarian should hold two certifications, as teacher and as librarian (Henne, 1955, 1956; Sullivan, 1990; Hannigan, 1993).

1960 SCHOOL LIBRARY STANDARDS

In the late 1950s Henne was the logical choice to chair an AASL committee to revise the 1945 school library standards. Composed of eleven librarians representing the AASL, as well as twenty-eight representatives of organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English, the American Association of School Administrators, and the NEA's Department of Audio-Visual Instruction (DAVI), the AASL committee members provided information and comments based on their expertise and interests. Henne, for example, advocated the inclusion of courses relating to school libraries in the professional education not only of school librarians but also of teachers and administrators. She suggested the need for demonstration libraries with good programs to serve as models. The resulting publication, *Standards for School Library Programs*, written by Henne, was published by the ALA in 1960 (AASL, 1960).

The 1960 standards emphasized that school library media programs should be student centered, focusing on enriching the development of individual students. The school librarian's role should include that of teacher, being jointly responsible with the classroom teacher for teaching library skills as an integral part of classroom instruction. The scope of the school library program was expanded to include audiovisual materials. Librarians were urged to collaborate with teachers in the selection and use of all types of media (AASL and AECT, 1998).

The same year that the standards were published, Henne and her colleague Ruth Ersted wrote an article on how to use the standards to fulfill the objectives of school instructional programs related to adequate staffing and centralization of technical processing of school library media (Henne & Ersted, 1960; Sullivan, 1990). In another 1960 essay, "Toward Excellence in School-Library Programs," Henne observed that adults, as a result of depending primarily on the mass media for communication of ideas, information, and entertainment, usually made little or no effort to support school media programs. She lamented the fact that principals and other school administrators lacked knowledge of what constituted successful school library programs and pointed out that many teachers had never experienced

the services of a good school library program in their own education or in their preparation as teachers (Henne, 1960; Frances Henne, 1960).

In addition to her writing about the standards, Henne was involved in planning and implementing a national project to demonstrate to educators what could be achieved by school libraries that measured up to the standards. This was the Knapp School Library Development Project, and she served as a member of its Advisory Board from 1960 through 1962 (ALA Honors, 1968; Henne & Ersted, 1960; Hannigan, 1993). In 1962, reflecting on her experience during the Knapp project, Henne identified what she considered to be three major factors holding back the development of effective school media programs: (1) the lack of communication and planning between the faculties concerned with teacher education and those concerned with library education; (2) the absence of information about materials for school children in the programs of professional education for school administrators; and (3) the failure to integrate the use of audiovisual materials into teacher and library education programs (Henne, 1962; Sullivan, 1990).

In 1963 Henne received the Joseph W. Lippincott Award given by the ALA for her role in the publication of the 1960 standards (Henne, 1963; Hannigan, 1993) and her work as an advocate for school libraries. Based on her surveys of libraries in schools and school systems in Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota and her survey of library work with children and young adults in Los Angeles, Henne recommended two general principles of library education for school librarianship: (1) the development of professional education guided by the experiences and philosophies of the past as well as by prognostications and demands for the future; and (2) research and experimentation to provide evidence to guide the evolution of the professional curriculum (Henne, 1966b; Sullivan, 1990; Cole, 1955).

In 1965, with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), school libraries were targeted for significant federal support for the first time. With the 1960 standards on hand, school libraries were in a position to take advantage of the newly available funds. In May 1966 Henne reported in *School Libraries* on the design, content, and evaluation of the first summer institutes funded by the ESEA for the continuing education of school librarians (Henne, 1966b; Sullivan, 1990).

1969 SCHOOL LIBRARY STANDARDS

The cycle of standards making began again in the late 1960s, when Henne was asked to coordinate the activities of a group to draft revised standards to replace the 1960 standards. During initial discussions on the revision of the standards, Henne urged that the new standards be developed cooperatively by the AASL and NEA's Department of Audio-Visual Instruction. This professional collaboration ensured that the importance

of both print and nonprint services in school libraries was fully reflected in the new standards (Henne, 1966a).

Henne began to prepare educators for the changes in standards in a series of articles from 1966 to 1968. She explained the importance of incorporating study and research skills into school instruction programs and the need for library education programs to emphasize the need for research on school libraries. Henne now recognized a role for public libraries, not just school libraries, in providing young people with access to materials. (Henne, 1966b, 1967, 1968a). She also considered the problems of extremely small school districts and called for feasibility studies on forming cooperative educational service centers for two or more districts to provide a location for reviewing materials and centralizing the technical processing of new materials. This concept had already been adopted by several states (Henne, 1968b; AASL and AECT, 1998; Reed, 1968).

As progress was made on the new standards, Carolyn Whitenack, AASL president in 1967–68, emphasized that the new standards were designed to correct serious deficiencies that existed in many schools across the nation (Whitenack, 1968; Henne, 1968b; Henne, 1969; AASL and AECT, 1998).

Standards for School Media Programs, a joint publication of AASL and DAVI, was published in 1969. The name of these standards and their joint authorship emphasized the changing role of the school library program. All media, print and nonprint, were recognized as equally important. New terms such as media, media specialist, media center, and media program were used to show the broad focus and scope of the unified school library program. Staffing standards for school libraries focused on the desirability of distinguishing professional and paraprofessional positions. The standards reinforced the broad scope needed for successful media programs by emphasizing the need for unified certification requirements for both the school library and audiovisual areas (AASL and DAVI, 1969; Woolls, 2003).

The 1969 *Standards* emphasized that school media specialists were expected to work with classroom teachers in the analysis of instructional needs, in the design of learning activities using existing and new technologies, and in the production of materials needed to support the classroom curriculum. The standards stressed the role of the media specialist in helping students develop competence in listening, viewing, and reading skills (Henne, 1969).

From 1969 and into the 1970s, Henne's thinking turned to more general issues related to school–public library relations. Recognizing that, despite the existence of the evolving standards process in which she had played so central a role, the availability of federal funding, and the completion of demonstration projects such as the Knapp project, most schools continued to have substandard media programs, Henne advocated cooperation with

the state library agencies to supplement school libraries. She promoted the concept of library networks involving two or more types of libraries or media centers and advocated district media centers to serve several schools districts (Henne, 1969; Henne, 1972; Sullivan, 1990; AASL and AECT, 1998). As she prepared for retirement, she reflected in a series of articles on many of the issues to which she had been dedicated professionally in the course of her career: the need for the continual improvement of school libraries and the integration of school libraries into school instructional programs, the use of media, the need for research in the actual and potential use of nonprint materials in school libraries, and the need of research libraries to acquire the resources needed for research in children's literature (Henne, 1975a, 1975b, 1976).

HENNE'S LEGACY TO SCHOOL LIBRARIANSHIP

Frances Henne, much honored by her profession, died on December 21, 1985, in a nursing home in Greenfield, Massachusetts, as a result of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) (Currents, 1986; Frances E. Henne—Standard bearer, 1986). Although her physical voice was stilled, her influence on and contribution to the development of school library standards is indisputable as the process of standards development, to some extent shaped by all that she was writing during this period, continued from 1945 to 1960 to 1969 and beyond. In 1975, the year of her retirement, the AASL and the newly organized Association of Educational Communications and Technology (AECT), formerly the NEA's DAVI, again collaborated on the next set of standards for school libraries, *Media Programs: District and School*, which recognized the changing and expanding role of the school library media specialist. Henne's influence can still be seen in the national guidelines, *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*, published in 1988, three years after her death, and ten years later, in 1998 in *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*.

The fact that both sets of national guidelines were written jointly by the AASL and the AECT reflects the power of Henne's vision of the integration of print and nonprint materials into school library media programs. The primary focus of both sets of guidelines was the building-level library media specialist, who was responsible for the design and delivery of effective library media programs and for initiating the planning process. Both sets of guidelines emphasized the need for collaboration in the design and implementation of the school library media program that best matched the instructional needs of the school. Henne would be pleased to know that both sets of guidelines demonstrated that the role of the library media specialist and the services of the library media center program were to be viewed as dynamic, "changing and evolving in response to the societal, economic, and technological demands on education" (AASL & AECT, 1988, p. x).

APPENDIX: MILESTONES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARY STANDARDS*

- 1920 National Education Association (NEA)'s Committee on Library Organization and Equipment publishes standards for senior and junior high schools
- 1925 *Elementary School Library Standards*, joint publication of the NEA and the American Library Association (ALA)
- 1945 *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow**
- 1960 *Standards for School Library Programs**
- 1969 *Standards for School Media Programs*,* prepared by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Department of Audiovisual Instruction (DAVI) of the NEA
- 1975 *Media Programs: District and School*, published as a collaborative effort of AASL and the Association of Educational and Communication Technology (AECT) (formerly DAVI)
- 1988 *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*, joint publication of AASL and AECT
- 1998 *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*, joint publication of AASL and AECT

* Publications involving Frances Henne

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