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## Use, training, and duties of student assistants in Iowa public school library media centers

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## Use, training, and duties of student assistants in Iowa public school library media centers

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### Abstract

Practical experience has shown this writer that without good student assistants, a school library media center may not function properly. While in charge of a media center in which there were no other professionals, the author learned first hand that one person cannot do everything. The only labor force available was student assistants. At times, little would have been accomplished had they not been available.

USE, TRAINING, AND DUTIES OF STUDENT  
ASSISTANTS IN IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL  
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS

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

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

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November 22, 1985

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## CHAPTER ONE

### The Problem

#### Introduction

Practical experience has shown this writer that without good student assistants, a school library media center may not function properly. While in charge of a media center in which there were no other professionals, the author learned first hand that one person cannot do everything. The only labor force available was student assistants. At times, little would have been accomplished had they not been available.

Indeed, Sister M. A. Hoagland states: "Do not sell student help short. Students trained to help in the library are future users and also the best public relations people among their peers. Future librarians will often be recruited from student library aides."<sup>1</sup>

Although the author agrees with the Prostanos that "volunteers and student assistants should in no way be construed as legitimate substitutes for employees,"<sup>2</sup> statistics may indicate that over a recently concluded six year period, someone is substituting for employees, or their work is no longer being done.<sup>3</sup>

In a survey of the 1973-74 and 1978-79 school years, non-certified

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<sup>1</sup>Sister M. A. Hoagland, "School Library Volunteers," Catholic Library World, 48 (November, 1976), pp. 185-6.

<sup>2</sup>Elmer and Joy S. Prostano, The School Library Media Center, 2nd ed. (Littleton, Co: Libraries Unlimited, 1979), p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Vance Grant and Leo Eiden, Digest of Education Statistics, U.S., Department of Education (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 1981), p. 214.

staff (employed full and part-time) in public school library media centers in the United States decreased dramatically between the first and the last academic year surveyed. The total number of non-certified staff (including clerical, secretarial, and technical aides) declined from 38,807 in 1973-74 to 3,944 in 1978-79. Jobs for elementary school aides declined from 21,482 to 2,891 within the same time periods, and secondary school aide positions from 17,325 to 1,053.<sup>4</sup>

A reasonable assumption might be made that some of the work formerly done by aides has been transferred in recent years to student assistants. Since the above are national figures, they may or may not be indicative of changes in Iowa. Current economic conditions, however, would tend to indicate the former.

A possibility, then, is that student assistants may become even more important to the smooth functioning of school library media programs in the future than they have been in the past. The author felt a worthwhile project, therefore, was to replicate, through 1982-83, major portions of a study done for the University of Northern Iowa Department of Library Science in 1976 by Jacquelyn Medin. That study surveyed training programs for secondary school student assistants in Iowa schools.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the present study includes elementary school student assistants.

### Problem

A purpose of the current study was to determine if the use or the training of student assistants in Iowa secondary school library media

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Jacquely Kay Medin, "A Survey of Student Assistant Training Programs in Iowa High School Media Centers, "Research Paper University of Northern Iowa, 1976, p. 1.

centers had changed since 1976. A secondary purpose was to determine the current use of and extent of training of elementary student assistants in Iowa school library media centers.

Specific research questions were:

1. What changes have occurred from 1975-76 to 1982-83 in the number of secondary schools that use student assistants in school library media centers, in the duties performed by student assistants, and in the methods of training student assistants?

2. What differences are there in the number and percentage of use of student assistants between elementary and secondary schools, what duties do these student assistants perform, and by which methods are they trained?

### Hypotheses

H1-From 1975-76 to 1982-83 there would be no significant difference in the number of Iowa secondary schools in each organizational category that use student assistants in the library media center.

H2-From 1975-76 to 1982-83 there would be no significant difference in the categories of tasks performed by student assistants in Iowa secondary school library media centers.

H3-From 1975-76 to 1982-83 there would be no significant difference in the methods used to train student assistants to work in Iowa secondary school media centers.

H4-There would be no significant difference in the number of elementary schools and the number of secondary schools in 1982-83 that use student assistants in the library media center.

H5-There would be no significant difference in the categories of tasks performed by elementary school student assistants and by secondary school student assistants in the library media centers in 1982-83.

H6-There would be no significant difference in training methods for elementary school student assistants and secondary school student assistants in library media centers in 1982-83.

### Importance of the Study

The author wished to update the Medin study data because seven years had elapsed. Because student assistants may be becoming ever more important to the functioning of Iowa school media centers with the passage of time, the importance of this study is to determine the changes, if any, during the passage of time upon the use and training of secondary school student assistants, given current economic conditions in schools. Additionally, the author hopes this study can produce some baseline information about elementary school student assistants.

Another point of interest is that much of the literature published on this subject since 1976 does not consist of research studies, but simply reports about what has been or is being done concerning student assistants or volunteers in local areas or in the nation.

### Assumptions

The assumptions of the study are: (1) all the schools contacted had media programs, (2) students were continuing to be used as library assistants, (3) students provide valuable service in this capacity, (4) media specialists train student assistants in some way, (5) these media specialists could remember how they trained their student assistants, and (6) the Medin study provides valid data through 1976 which can be used for comparison purposes.

### Limitations

The study was limited to K-12 public schools in Iowa and to schools

with library media centers as defined in the following section. The study covered one school year, 1982-83, and gathered data about the training, use, and duties of student assistants. The study was limited in that tasks listed in the questionnaire may not have included all work performed by student assistants, and by all general limitations of the survey questionnaire method of gathering data.

#### Definition of Terms

Elementary/Middle/Junior High School --a public school that includes any or all of grades K-8.

Secondary School --a public school that includes any or all of grades nine through twelve.

Library Media Center --an area or system of areas in the school where a full range of information services, associated equipment, and services from media staff are accessible to students, school personnel, and the school community.<sup>6</sup>

Media Specialist --a person with appropriate certification and broad professional preparation, both in education and media, with competencies to carry out a media program. The media specialist is the basic media professional in the school program.<sup>7</sup>

Student Assistant --a currently enrolled high school or elementary school student who volunteers services and time at some regular intervals to the media center program.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>American Association of School Librarians. Media Program: District and School (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975), p. 111.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>8</sup>Medin, op. cit., p. 6.

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Related Literature

The author expected a search to reveal how little material has been written since 1976 on concepts basic to the study. This expectation was largely substantiated. Some new information was located in regard to use and training of student assistants, however. Related literature about adult volunteers in libraries in general, as well as literature covering student assistants serving elsewhere in schools, was found. In addition, some related literature on student assistants themselves is included. These areas will be discussed here in the following order: (1) literature relating to student library assistants, (2) literature about student assistants serving in other capacities in schools, and (3) literature about adult volunteers.

Little new material was found about use of student assistants in school libraries, but one book did mention specific duties student assistants are to perform.<sup>9</sup> Listed among the duties of student assistants were shelving and checking out of media and books, helping the students to locate materials, keeping circulation files in order, handling housekeeping duties, assisting with bulletin boards, delivering materials, and assisting with overdue.

The Medin study<sup>10</sup> questionnaire asked, "Does the media center . . .

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<sup>9</sup>Helen Saunders, The New School Library, 2nd ed. (Metchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup>Medin, op. cit., p. 32.

utilize student assistants?" Forty-two of sixty-three returned questionnaires<sup>11</sup> were from schools using student assistants. Medin stated at the conclusion of her study that there had been an "apparent decrease" in the use of student assistants since 1949. Data in one table are presented by type of school organization, such as K-12; fifteen media centers, or thirty-five percent, in the grades 7-12 category used student assistants. This was the highest number of schools using student assistants in any organization category. Forty-one of forty-two schools reported use of student assistants for circulation tasks. Of the respondents using student assistants, 75 percent trained student assistants through individualized instruction.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps this apparent non-use of student assistants would change if parents were brought into their recruitment, as they were in a project for a Chicago school by Anita Richter.<sup>13</sup> Students with good scholastic records who were just entering the school (a three year high school) were put on a list to be student assistants. Parents of these students were then sent a letter saying their child had been selected. These students decided whether or not to become assistants after an organizational meeting at which tasks were explained, but the letter served as a powerful incentive for new students to consider being student assistants. Before using the letter Richter had virtually no help in her library. After using it, she had adequate help. Richter stated recruitment was difficult because of many students having jobs or not wanting to give up study time.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>13</sup>Anita R. Richter, "Student Assistants in the Library," Catholic Library World, 49 (April 1978), p. 392.

Some unique new training programs for student assistants were discovered in the literature. Bezzi and Sivak proposed a comprehensive program built around regular high school business and library courses which could lead to a person becoming a library technical assistant with an associate of arts degree later. The program consists of general education, library and business courses in high school. Field work assignments consist of everything from maintenance of visual equipment to ordering catalog cards. Students with special interests could aid teachers or media specialists by preparing such things as displays or resource files. This would seem an excellent program for student assistants to participate in.<sup>14</sup> Another report described a study in which new college library student assistants learned tasks by computer. The idea would seem adaptable, however, to high school students in a school owning a computer with similar capabilities. The program is designed to save staff time in training assistants by using the computer to test students on such things as how to charge and discharge library items and which patrons are eligible to check out materials.

A controlled experiment was done using the online training for an experimental group and more traditional group lectures and question and answer training for a control group. The computer instruction involved looking at 305 frames of information on the terminal, then typing an answer. Specific questions were not stated, but involved such procedures as how to take messages and handle elementary reference questions. For this preliminary effort, the results were significant at the .025 level

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<sup>14</sup>D. R. Bezzi and Marie R. Sivak, "Suggested Programs for Library and Media Technical Assistants," Clearing House, 49 (February 1976), pp. 277-78.

on a post-test in favor of the computer instructed group. The author had hoped an experiment with larger numbers could be done later.<sup>15</sup>

One study indicated that even elementary school student assistants should be able to learn the tasks which media specialists attempt to teach them. The study showed that fourth to sixth grade learning disabled students can be trained to perform library skills with a significant increase over previous ability, then tutor younger, non-learning disabled second grade students in those skills. Examples of tasks taught included looking up cards in the card catalog and proper loading of film projectors. Pre-, mid-, and post-administrations of a 10 point skills performance test involving such items as those mentioned above were given to the fourth through sixth grade students.<sup>16</sup>

The Medin study itself, with regard to training methods, found that in the thirteen service areas previously mentioned, individualized instruction<sup>17</sup> was overwhelmingly the choice of media specialist. Seventy-six percent taught circulation procedures by this method, and that was the lowest percentage for any task using individualized instruction. By contrast, only twenty percent of the media specialists used handbooks to teach circulation procedures. The formal class procedure was used by seven percent of the media specialists to teach the skills areas of shelving, vertical file work, and reference. These results confirmed Medin's hypothesis

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<sup>15</sup>Susan M. Rawlins, "Technology and the Personal Touch: Computer Assisted Instruction for Library Student Workers," Journal of Academic Librarianship, 8 (March 1982), pp. 26-29.

<sup>16</sup>Henry C. Dequin, and Jane Smith, "Learning Disabilities Students Can Be Tutors in Library Skills," Top of the News, 36 (Summer 1980), pp. 353-54.

<sup>17</sup>Medin, op. cit., p. 32.

that individualized instruction would be the most popular method of training.

Meyer<sup>18</sup> received some help from teachers in training her student assistants who experienced formal training despite the lack of a set class period designated for the library training. All students in Meyer's school received library instruction through English classes. Students came to the library media center for lessons, then teachers followed up later with assignments. Later, those desiring to become student assistants received a procedure handbook and were required to work in the library one period a day and to complete a formal training course with the media specialist. The course covered the Dewey Decimal System, card catalog, parts of a book, periodicals, and basic reference books. Students received academic credit for their course and library work.

Miller<sup>19</sup> tells of a twelve week formal course which may be taught by "an upperclassman with adequate knowledge" because the media specialist has a full schedule. Topics included such things as learning the Dewey Decimal system, proper shelving and shelf-reading techniques, how to type catalog cards, and learning the filing system for the vertical file.

Ziskind<sup>20</sup> taught a formal course with a heavy reading emphasis. Credit was given, but there was no regular class period. Assignments resulted in informal "talks" about a book with the media specialist. Some

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<sup>18</sup>B. N. Meyer, "Our Assistants Get Credit," Library Journal, 80 (January 15, 1955), p. 169.

<sup>19</sup>Matt Miller, "Training Student Assistants," Catholic Library World, 35 (April 1964), p. 491.

<sup>20</sup>Sylvia Ziskind, "Library Science in the High School," Library Journal 87 (February 15, 1962), p. 814.

examples of assignments were reading one 20th century American novel, or one or two books of folklore. Other assignments involved writing, speaking and research. No examples were given of speaking assignments. "Research" might mean answering elementary reference questions from the Reader's Guide or other sources; "writing" might mean preparing an annotated bibliography on a term paper subject.

Blanchard's<sup>21</sup> 1949 work is an actual research study, relatively uncommon in literature concerning K-12 student assistants. Questionnaires were returned to her from 265 media specialists in twenty-four states, including Iowa. They reported assigning ninety duties to student assistants in areas such as cataloging, circulation, and reference. Instruction of student assistants presented a problem for these media specialists. Some media specialists instructed through meetings, some totally through individualized instruction, and some with manuals. Other media specialists received help from experienced students with the training of new assistants.

Two articles discussed student assistants in the classroom. One article was about the use of student assistants in vocational agriculture and one concerned their work in an English classroom. In the case of the vocational agriculture classroom, students were selected after exhibiting positive character traits, such as reliability and the ability to get along with others, to be either clerical or class assistants. Clerical assistants performed typing and filing duties. Class assistants performed such tasks as taking attendance.<sup>22</sup> An English teacher reported on a peer teaching

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<sup>21</sup>Catherine S. Blanchard, "Student Assistants in High School Libraries," Library Journal, 74 (April 15, 1949), p. 639.

<sup>22</sup>Larry Garten, and Richard Welton, "Utilizing Student Assistants in Teaching Vocational Agriculture," Agricultural Education, 54 (July 1981), p. 24.

situation in his own classes. Students were placed in small groups where written assignments, such as themes prepared for class, were read aloud and critiqued by members of the groups.<sup>23</sup> Both reports gave positive evaluations. The vocational agriculture students participated by doing jobs which freed the instructor for more professional duties. In the English class, both readers and writers benefited, the writers from hearing what others thought of their work, the readers by learning to constructively criticize that work.

In the study conducted in elementary science using sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds as learning assistants, students on a post-test were found to have developed more positive feelings toward teachers, other students and school in general.<sup>24</sup>

Adult volunteers have been and are an important part of libraries. Sister M. A. Hoagland<sup>25</sup> reported that 1,100 volunteer adult library aides virtually run Philadelphia's extensive Catholic school library program. The precise skills of these volunteers are not detailed, but she makes it clear they are teaching children.

In 1981, four public libraries in suburban Chicago counted on over 1,000 volunteer hours of service per month from 30,000 volunteers. In 1978 the libraries used only 7,487 volunteers.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>David R. James, "Peer Teaching in the Writing Classroom," English Journal, 70 (November 1981), p. 49.

<sup>24</sup>Albert Thompson, and Daniel VanGorp, "Kids Are Teachers Too," Science and Children, 13 (September 1975), p. 16.

<sup>25</sup>Sister M. A. Hoagland, "Library Skills Caught or Taught?" Catholic Library World, 53 (November 1981), p. 173.

<sup>26</sup>"Volunteers in Libraries: Reports From All Over," Library Journal, 107 (January 1982), p. 30.

Not all media specialists like to use adult volunteers, however. A 1977 survey of thirty-three high school libraries in the San Francisco Bay area of California revealed that twenty of the thirty-three media specialists surveyed responded negatively to a questionnaire asking if they used parent volunteers. The twenty said they felt the volunteers were not dependable in terms of reporting for work.<sup>27</sup>

### Summary

This review considered literature which was concerned with several aspects of the work of student assistants, including more prominently the use and training of these assistants. Related literature about student assistants in schools and in non-school libraries was included.

Very few research studies were found in the literature. Rather, information was discovered about what media specialist or other educators have done concerning student assistants in their own individual situations. Some information was found indicating that individualized instruction is still widely used, and that circulation tasks, such as checking books in or out, were the ones most often taught to student assistants.

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<sup>27</sup>Allan Ochs, "Parent Volunteers in the High School Library? A Survey of Some Bay Area Libraries," California Media and Library Educators Association Journal, 1 (Fall 1977), p. 30.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

A survey questionnaire was sent to a stratified random sample of Iowa media specialists. The information gathered provided the sources of data for this study.

A proportional stratified random sample of 150 media specialists were selected from the Basic Educational Data (B.E.D.) list of school librarians<sup>28</sup> for Iowa, which includes both elementary and secondary media specialists. The sample was stratified and selected as follows:

1. The 1982-83 B.E.D. list of media specialists in Iowa public schools was used as the basic list of those schools with library media specialists.
2. The B.E.D. list was used to divide the population into an elementary list, a secondary list, and a K-12 list of media specialists.<sup>29</sup>
3. From each of the three lists, a random sample was selected. The number of media specialists selected by random from each list was determined by the total number of media specialists on each of the three lists.

The questionnaire asked what grades are served by the library media center, size of student enrollment, and whether student assistants are used in the center.<sup>30</sup> A survey questionnaire with accompanying cover letter (see

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<sup>28</sup>State of Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, Basic Educational Data Survey: Librarians, (1982).

<sup>29</sup>State of Iowa, Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, Iowa Educational Directory, 1982-83, (1982).

<sup>30</sup>Medin, op, cit., p. 32.

Appendix A) was mailed to the selected media specialists. Requested return time for the questionnaire was three weeks.

The questionnaire also asked whether the media specialist used the formal class, the handbook (procedure manual) or individualized instruction in teaching student assistants to perform tasks. Categories of tasks and specific tasks were the same as those used by Medin in her study.<sup>31</sup>

Respondents were asked to write a "1" (for primary method) or "2" (for secondary method) to indicate the actual methods of instruction for a variety of specific tasks in the task categories of shelving, circulation, housekeeping, reserve materials, processing, periodicals, vertical file, audiovisual, publicity, reference, repair, cataloging, and clerical.<sup>32</sup>

Three operational definitions were included in the questionnaire:<sup>33</sup>

- (1) Formal Class--students meet on a regular basis for prepared lessons,
- (2) Procedure Handbook--students refer to a handbook, manual or other written guide for how-to-do information,
- (3) Individualized Instruction--students are instructed on-the-job as the need arises.

The cover letter indicated that the survey questionnaire was being used to aid in preparation of a research paper the author is writing for partial completion of a Master of the Arts Degree at the University of

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 33-36.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

Northern Iowa.

An eighty-six percent return rate was achieved on this survey. Of one hundred fifty surveys mailed, one hundred twenty-nine were returned and one hundred twenty-seven were found usable. Two were improperly marked.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Data Analysis

Eighty-five (sixty-seven percent) of the one hundred twenty-seven respondents replied yes, they did use student assistants, fifty-eight at the secondary level and twenty-seven at the elementary level. Sixteen media specialists at the secondary level and twenty-six at the elementary level said they did not use student assistants in their libraries, a total of forty-two no responses.

The first three hypotheses were tested with data from the Medin study conducted during the 1975-76 school year and data collected for this study in 1982-83. The last three were tested by comparing 1982-83 elementary data with secondary data from the same year. Tables were developed to analyze data, and Chi square was used to determine whether significant differences exist between 1975-76 and 1982-83 data.

Six tables were developed, each relating to the hypothesis of the same number.

Hypothesis one states that "From 1975-76 to 1982-83 there would be no significant difference in the number of Iowa High Schools in each organizational category which use student assistants in the library media center." This hypothesis was accepted. However, Table 1 shows increased use of assistants on a percentage basis for media specialists in K-12 schools; and a marked percentage decrease for those in 7-12 positions.

Table 1

Number and Percent of Secondary Library Media Centers  
with Student Assistants, 1975-76 and 1982-83

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Grade Level	1975-76		1982-83	
	No.	%	No.	%
K-12	4	.10	12	.21
6-12	1	.02	2	.03
7-12	15	.37	15	.26
9-12	14	.34	20	.34
10-12	7	.17	9	.16
Total	41	1.00	58	1.00

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$\chi^2 = 2.81$ , 4 degrees of freedom. Table value = 9.49, .05

Hypothesis two states that "From 1975-76 to 1982-83 there would be no significant difference in the categories of tasks performed by student assistants in Iowa secondary school media centers." Again, the hypothesis was accepted. Table 2 shows the frequency with which media specialists assigned tasks in thirteen categories in 1975-76 and 1982-83. Particularly interesting data from Table 2 includes the percentage difference in audiovisual. Fifty-seven percent use student assistants in this category in 1982-83, up from only twenty-nine percent in 1975-76. This may well reflect an increased use of audiovisual material and equipment in general during the years between the studies. Two other task categories, periodicals and publicity, have major percentage changes between the two time periods.

Table 2

Number and Percent of Tasks Performed by Student  
 Assistants, 1975-76 and 1982-83

Tasks	1975-76		1982-83	
	No.	%	No.	%
Circulation	41	1.00	58	1.00
Shelving	41	1.00	56	.97
Periodicals	39	.95	45	.76
Housekeeping	38	.93	55	.95
Processing	34	.83	44	.76
Clerical	32	.78	33	.57
Repair	29	.71	36	.62
Cataloging	29	.71	39	.67
Reserve	27	.66	33	.57
Vertical File	25	.61	42	.72
Reference	25	.61	39	.67
Publicity	22	.54	42	.72
Audiovisual	12	.29	33	.57

$\chi^2 = 9.28$ , 12 degrees of freedom. Table value = 21.03, .05

Hypothesis three stated that "From 1975-76 to 1982-83 there would be no significant difference in the methods used to train student assistants to work in Iowa secondary school library media centers." Data from Table 3 supported this hypothesis with respect to individualized instruction. Insufficient data for the procedure handbook and formal class methods of training made analysis by Chi-square impossible.

Percentage difference in the thirteen categories of Table 3 varied from seventeen to thirty-seven. The largest difference, thirty-seven, was again in the audiovisual area. However, this time the lower percentage was for 1982-83. Perhaps this reflects an increased knowledge of audiovisual equipment and materials among students and thus a decreased need for instruction by the library media specialist.

Table 3

Number and Percent of Tasks for Which Individualized Instruction was Used as a Training Method, 1975-76 and 1982-83

Tasks	1975-76		1982-83	
	No.	%	No.	%
Circulation	41	.76	57	.98
Shelving	41	.76	55	.95
Periodicals	39	.89	44	.76
Housekeeping	38	.84	54	.93
Processing	34	.92	43	.74
Clerical	32	.86	32	.55
Repair	29	.91	35	.60
Cataloging	29	.91	38	.66
Reserve	27	.84	32	.55
Vertical File	28	.86	41	.71
Reference	25	.83	38	.66
Publicity	22	.96	41	.71
Audiovisual	12	.92	32	.55

$\chi^2 = 9.0202$ , 12 degrees of freedom. Table value = 21.03, .05

The comparison of 1975-76 with 1982-83 data, then, showed no significant differences in the use of student assistants in Iowa secondary media centers in the tasks these assistants performed, or in the most popular method of training them.

Hypothesis four states that "There would be no significant difference in the number of elementary schools and the number of secondary schools in 1982-83 that use student assistants in the library media center."

Table 4 compares the number of total respondents in elementary and secondary categories to those schools in each general category where media specialists used student assistants. A significant difference was found; therefore, hypothesis four is rejected.

Table 4

Number and Percent of Elementary and Secondary Schools  
Using Student Assistants, 1982-83

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School Level	No. of Respondents	Schools-Student Assistants	Percent
Secondary	74	58	.78
Elementary	53	27	.51

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$\chi^2 = 10.50$ , 1 degree of freedom. Significant at .001

Hypothesis five states "There would be no significant difference in the categories of tasks performed by elementary school student assistants and by secondary school student assistants in the library media centers in 1982-83." This hypothesis was accepted.

Table 5 compares the numbers and percent of tasks performed by elementary and secondary students in 1982-83. The difference in the number columns was due to the greater number of respondents to the 1982-83 survey at the secondary level. However, a much higher percentage of student assistants was used to perform processing, clerical, repair, cataloging, reserve, vertical file, reference, publicity and audiovisual tasks, probably due to older students' ability to perform these tasks.

Table 5

Number and Percent of Tasks Performed by Elementary  
and Secondary Student Assistants, 1982-83

Task Categories	Elementary		Secondary	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Circulation	26	.97	58	1.00
Shelving	27	1.00	56	.97
Periodicals	19	.70	45	.78
Housekeeping	27	1.00	55	.95
Processing	17	.63	44	.76
Clerical	10	.37	33	.57
Repair	10	.37	36	.63
Cataloging	7	.26	39	.67
Reserve	8	.30	33	.57
Vertical file	6	.22	42	.72
Reference	11	.41	39	.67
Publicity	16	.59	42	.72
Audiovisual	8	.30	33	.57

$\chi^2 = 16.1304$ , 12 degrees of freedom. Table value = 21.03, .05

Hypothesis six stated "There would be no significant difference in training methods for elementary school student assistants and secondary school student assistants in the library media center in 1982-83." This hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6

Number and Percent of Tasks for Which Individualized Instruction was Used as a Training Method in Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1982-83

Task Categories	Elementary		Secondary	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Circulation	25	.93	57	1.00
Shelving	27	1.00	55	.96
Periodicals	19	.70	44	.77
Housekeeping	27	1.00	54	.95
Processing	17	.63	43	.75
Clerical	10	.37	32	.56
Repair	10	.37	35	.61
Cataloging	7	.26	38	.66
Reserve	8	.30	32	.56
Vertical file	6	.22	41	.72
Reference	11	.41	38	.66
Publicity	16	.59	41	.72
Audiovisual	8	.30	32	.56

$\chi^2 = 16.1073$ , 12 degrees of freedom. Table value 21.03, .05

Table 6 compares use of individualized instruction in 1982-83 elementary and secondary schools. The data follows much the same pattern as for Table 5, although the percentage differences are not generally as great. The biggest percentage difference are in the cataloging and vertical file areas, in which elementary students would find it much more difficult to perform. There were insufficient data to compare the methods of training by formal class and procedure handbook.

In summary, then, hypothesis four was the only hypothesis rejected. Hypotheses five and six, as with the three earlier hypotheses, were accepted.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations

#### Summary

A purpose of this paper was to determine what, if any, changes had occurred in the use, training, and duties of student assistants in Iowa public secondary school media centers between 1975-76 and 1982-83. Another purpose was to obtain baseline information, through a questionnaire about elementary school student assistants and compare that information with 1982-83 secondary school data.

The questionnaire was sent to one hundred fifty media specialists selected from the Basic Education Data list. One hundred twenty-seven media specialists returned usable surveys.

All three hypotheses involving comparisons of 1975-76 to 1982-83 data were accepted. No significant differences were found in use of student assistants, categories of tasks, and methods used to train student assistants.

Comparison of 1982-83 elementary and secondary data lead to the acceptance of two hypotheses and the rejection of one. Hypothesis four was rejected, since a significant statistical difference was found between the number of 1982-83 elementary schools and 1982-83 secondary schools using student assistants. Twenty-seven elementary school media specialists used student assistants compared to fifty-eight using them at the secondary level.

Hypotheses five and six were accepted. No significant difference was

found in the frequency of task categories assigned or in training methods used between the elementary and secondary levels. It should be noted again that in computing data relating to hypothesis three and hypothesis six only individualized instructions as a training method could be used.

### Conclusion

The author feels that the purposes of the study, to learn more about whether student assistants are widely used and in what ways, were sound ones and were accomplished.

Valuable information was gained about student assistants. For example, preferences for teaching student assistants shelving and circulation tasks were found, and individualized instruction was overwhelmingly preferred as a training method. Predictably, high school media specialists used student assistants more than those serving elementary schools. Perhaps this is because older students are capable of doing more than younger ones.

The preference for individualized instruction may reflect the wish of media specialists to closely control the training of their student assistants.

### Recommendations

A recommendation would be that anyone seeking to replicate the study use exactly the same methodology and analysis to see if student assistants may become even more important to the smooth functioning of school library media programs than in the past in lieu of the decline of paid aides in school libraries. The author believes it might be helpful to replicate this study in about five years, primarily to see if more student assistants are being used, and if there is more of a variation in training methods.

Modifications could be achieved by comparing only elementary schools or only secondary schools; by comparing only the training methods, e.g., focusing on individualized instruction in either elementary or secondary schools; or by taking one or two task categories and breaking down survey results to see which specifics of a task are taught most often. A weakness of the present study was that its scope was so large that it did not allow for analysis of individual tasks within a category.

The current study could be applied as a springboard for further study. For example, an interview study could be conducted with randomly selected media specialists. They could be questioned as to why they preferred certain methods or tasks above others for their student assistants.

In addition, a media specialist could discover that other schools' student assistants perform specific tasks, or in which task areas his/her own assistants do not perform, and choose to add them to his/her program.

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## TASKS AND TRAINING METHODS

Instructions: The items in the first column below have been compiled to represent a partial listing of tasks that student assistants might perform in the school library media center. Please indicate for those tasks actually performed by your student assistants how they were trained for each task by placing a number in the appropriate column using the following key: 1 - primary method, 2 - secondary method. If only one method was used check one column only.

## Definitions:

Formal Class - students meet on a regular basis for prepared lessons.

Procedure Handbook - students refer to a handbook, manual, or other written guides for how-to-do information.

Individualized Instruction - students are instructed on-the-job as the need arises.

<u>TASKS</u>	<u>METHODS OF TRAINING</u>		
	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
CIRCULATION SERVICES			
1. Charging books			
2. Discharging and slipping books			
3. Handling overdues and fines			
4. Compiling and recording circulation statistics			
5. Filing daily-circulation cards			
6. Setting the date on charging machines or daters.			
7. Charging magazines			
8. Charging audiovisual materials			
9. Charging vertical file materials			
10. Copying book cards			
11. Other - please specify			
SHELVING SERVICES			
12. Arranging returned books in proper order for shelving			

SHELVING SERVICES con't	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
13. Shelving returned books			
14. Shelf reading			
15. Assisting with inventory			
16. Keeping shelves neat			
17. Adjusting shelf labels as needed			
18. Shelving audiovisual materials			
19. Replacing vertical file materials			
20. Other - please specify			
HOUSEKEEPING SERVICES			
21. Straightening shelves			
22. Assisting with displays			
23. Keeping periodicals in order			
24. Keeping the room neat and tidy			
25. Keeping the desk equipment in order			
26. Caring for plants and arranging flowers			
27. Checking attendance and permits			
28. Other - please specify			
RESERVE MATERIALS SERVICES			
29. Assembling reserve materials for teachers			
30. Charging and discharging loans of reserved materials			
31. Preparing a file or list of reserve materials for a class or teacher			
32. Accepting pupil requests for reserves			
33. Keeping reserve materials in order			
34. Making reserve book cards			
35. Clearing materials from reserve shelves when no longer needed			
36. Other - please specify			

PROCESSING SERVICES	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
37. Assisting in checking invoices			
38. Opening and collating new books			
39. Stamping ownership			
40. Pasting in pockets and date-due slips			
41. Accessioning			
42. Writing classification numbers, price in book			
43. Marking call numbers on books			
44. Lacquering spine or cover			
45. Other - please specify			
PERIODICAL SERVICES			
46. Preparing and checking periodicals on record cards			
47. Stamping ownership			
48. Reinforcing magazines			
49. Inserting current issues in covers			
50. Shelving current issues			
51. Filing back issues			
52. Clipping newspapers and magazines			
53. Locating back issues for reference			
54. Refiling back issues			
55. Keeping filed periodicals in order			
56. Other - please specify			
VERTICAL FILE SERVICES			
57. Pulling request vertical file material			
58. Replacing borrowed materials			
59. Mounting pictures and maps			
60. Clipping designated items			
61. Preparing clippings for file			
62. Filing material after subjects are added			
63. Making new folders for new subjects			

VERTICAL FILE SERVICES con't	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
64. Reinforcing pamphlets			
65. Processing pamphlet materials			
66. Filing pamphlets			
67. Other - please specify			
AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES			
68. Preparing records for use			
69. Preparing filmstrips for use			
70. Preparing films for use			
71. Preparing other audio-visual equipment			
72. Operating audiovisual equipment			
73. Receiving and locating requested materials			
74. Checking and repairing returned materials			
75. Booking requests for materials and equipment			
76. Keeping records of use of materials			
77. Other - please specify			
PUBLICITY SERVICES			
78. Planning and arranging bulletin boards			
79. Planning and arranging exhibiting and displays			
80. Making posters			
81. Preparing news items for school paper			
82. Writing book reviews			
83. Helping plan and present assembly programs			
84. Helping with library social functions			
85. Visiting other libraries			
86. Selecting materials for browsing area			
87. Acting as liaison between library media center and classroom			
88. Acting as classroom librarian			
89. Other - please specify			

REFERENCE SERVICES	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
90. Preparing simple bibliographies			
91. Checking teacher request lists with the card catalog			
92. Assembling materials for classroom loan			
93. Helping other students locate needed information and materials			
94. Helping other students learn how to use common reference tools			
95. Other - please specify			
REPAIR SERVICES			
96. Removing from shelves materials in need of repair or remarking			
97. Remarking materials			
98. Strengthening books with liquid plastic			
99. Mending torn pages			
100. Tipping in loose pages			
101. Applying cloth strips to book spines			
102. Recasing books			
103. Cleaning materials			
104. Setting aside books needing binding			
105. Reinforcing pamphlets and periodicals			
106. Other - please specify			
CATALOGING SERVICES			
107. Preparing order slips for indicated titles from various sources			
108. Verifying items on order requests			
109. Typing book orders from order cards			
110. Preparing orders for printed catalog cards			
111. Typing designated headings on cards			
112. Duplicating unit catalog cards			
113. Arranging shelf-list cards			

CATALOGING SERVICES con't	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
114. Filing shelf-list cards above the rod			
115. Alphabetizing catalog cards			
116. Filing catalog cards above the rod			
117. Other - please specify			
CLERICAL SERVICES			
118. Typing book cards			
119. Typing correspondence			
120. Writing overdue and fine notices			
121. Order free materials			
122. Tabulating statistical data			
123. Typing book orders and totaling the cost			
124. Sorting mail			
125. Taking letters from dictation			
126. Typing book lists and bibliographies from cards or copy			
127. Cutting stencils			
128. Other - please specify			

Thank you again for your assistance in this survey. Please return the entire survey to me in the envelope provided by May 5.

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