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A Survey of Student Assistant Training Programs in Iowa High School Media Centers

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A Survey of Student Assistant Training Programs in Iowa High School Media Centers

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine how Iowa public high school media centers trained student assistants, to what tasks they were assigned, and in what manner their work was officially recognized or awarded. A questionnaire was sent to 111 schools asking which training method—formal course, handbook, or individual instruction—was used to teach specific tasks. The media specialists were also asked to identify the tasks assigned to student assistants and what type of award was given to the students for their work. Sixty-three schools (56.76 percent) replied. Forty-three schools (68.25 percent) used student assistants and 78 percent or more used individualized instruction to train the students. The duties most assigned (80 percent or more) were circulation, shelving, housekeeping, processing, and periodical services. The award presented to students most was some form of service award (53 percent); other recognition that was given included academic credit (12 percent), money (12 percent), and gifts (18 percent).

A SURVEY OF STUDENT ASSISTANT TRAINING
PROGRAMS IN IOWA HIGH SCHOOL
MEDIA CENTERS

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

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

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine how Iowa public high school media centers trained student assistants, to what tasks they were assigned, and in what manner their work was officially recognized or awarded. A questionnaire was sent to 111 schools asking which training method--formal course, handbook, or individual instruction--was used to teach specific tasks. The media specialists were also asked to identify the tasks assigned to student assistants and what type of award was given to the students for their work. Sixty-three schools (56.76 percent) replied. Forty-three schools (68.25 percent) used student assistants and 75 percent or more used individualized instruction to train the students. The duties most assigned (80 percent or more) were circulation, shelving, housekeeping, processing, and periodical services. The award presented to students most was some form of service award (53 percent); other recognition that was given included academic credit (12 percent), money (12 percent), and gifts (18 percent).

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The utilization of student volunteers or assistants in a media center program is based on a long tradition of student service. Even a brief survey of professional library journals reveals that high school students have been giving of their time for over sixty years. In 1924 a high school librarian wrote the following about her experience with student volunteers:

One of the most interesting projects for high school libraries is that of having high school students as assistants. Having worked with such assistants for over ten years and still finding them a source of joy, I may be allowed to be enthusiastic over the plan.¹

When Blanchard reported the findings of her 1949 research study, she noted that the most frequent reason given for using student assistants was "relief to librarian from routine duties."² She further reported that one librarian said, "'I have to have student help, for being three

¹Edith A. King, "Student Assistants in a High School Library," Library Journal, 49:371, April 15, 1924.

²Catherine S. Blanchard, "Student Assistants in High School Libraries," Library Journal, 74:638, April 15, 1949.

persons in one is too much for me.'"³ Such an attitude is not a justifiable single objective for a student assistant program. Perhaps a more defensible position is that stated by a library assistant in a North Carolina high school:

I like to think that I am making a definite contribution to the operation of our school because I know that good schools require good libraries, and our library needs my help. My acquaintance with teachers, students, and books is being broadened. . . .

At the same time as a library assistant, I am receiving the benefits of a work experience. I am knowing the joy of work and of a job well done. I am learning the importance of attention to small details and of following instructions and prescribed methods in certain procedures. Much of my job is routine, and doing the small small [sic] tasks each day may become monotonous if I do not see them as a part of an important operation. And I am beginning to recognize the fact that perhaps a large part of all jobs are [sic] made up of the routine and it is only in being faithful over the little things that we may enjoy a sense of accomplishment.⁴

The reasons for using student assistants vary, as do the methods of selecting and training students, and the ways in which recognition is given to them. But the popularity of using student volunteers is attested to by their presence in a large majority of high schools.⁵ Whether the high school has a traditional, book-oriented library, a fully integrated media center⁶ or some combination of the two, volunteers are

³Blanchard, p. 638.

⁴Robin Roberson, "What Does It Mean to Be a Library Assistant," School Libraries, 5:20, May, 1956.

⁵Blanchard, p. 640.

⁶The term media center will be used hereafter to denote a collection of materials, whether only print or a mixture of print and nonprint.

there assisting the program. Librarians and media specialists⁷ should be planning meaningful experiences for these volunteers.

Problem Statement

Inherent in a media center program which uses student assistants is the necessity to train those volunteers. The threefold purpose of this study was to determine how student assistants in Iowa public high schools are trained, what duties or tasks are assigned to the students, and in what manner their work is officially recognized, that is, what type of award they receive. To study these factors three research questions were posed: In training student assistants in Iowa public high school media centers, what method was used most frequently? What duties were most frequently assigned to student assistants in Iowa public high school media centers? What type of official recognition was awarded to student assistants most frequently in Iowa public high school media centers?

The percentages expressed in the following hypotheses are based upon the experience of the author, upon the views expressed in ^{the literature} ~~Chapter 2~~, and upon informal communication with practicing media specialists in Iowa. Individualized

⁷The term media specialist will be used hereafter to denote a professional who directs the media center, whether that person deals only with print materials or a mixture of print and nonprint materials.

instruction is used by 75 percent or more of Iowa public high school media specialists to train student assistants. Circulation services, shelving services, housekeeping services, processing services, and periodical services⁸ account for 80 percent or more of the tasks assigned to student assistants in Iowa public high school media centers. Official recognition given to student assistants in Iowa public high schools is 10 percent academic credit,⁹ 80 percent service awards, 5 percent money, and 5 percent gifts.¹⁰

Importance of the Study

When planning the media center program, time and personnel to train student assistants must be provided. The factors to be considered in allocating these valuable, limited resources are the number of students to be trained, the extent of their training, and the method of training. Haddad¹¹ voices a common concern when asking what patterns of organization and type of activities for student assistants will best serve the student and the media center.

⁸See Appendix A for specific examples of tasks that are included in these service categories.

⁹The term academic credit will be used hereafter to denote any quantitative expression of completed schoolwork used to meet graduation requirements.

¹⁰See Appendix A for examples of these award categories.

¹¹Lillian Haddad, "Student Library Assistants," Illinois Libraries, 42:142, February, 1960.

"Workshops? Clubs? Individual instruction? Classes? Handbooks? What is the best method to use in training student library assistants?"¹²

Assumptions

Certain assumptions were made in conducting this study. The author assumed that all media centers using student assistants train the volunteers in some way. A second assumption was that the respondents to the survey questionnaire could recall how they trained students for specific tasks. Finally the assumption was made that some local training of student volunteers at each media center is necessary despite any prior training or experience.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study is that the author surveyed only Iowa public high school media centers. Another limitation exists in that the list of duties performed by student assistants that was selected by the author may not^h included all duties performed by students in a specific media center. A provision was made on the survey questionnaire for additional answers not actually listed. Also, all limitations of the questionnaire survey method apply here.

¹²Vernella Crawford, "Handbooks--A Tool for Training Student Assistants," School Libraries, 8:14, May, 1959.

Definition of Terms

The author recognized that the terms defined below are more narrowly defined by most educators and the 1975 standards for media programs, Media Programs: District and School.¹³ For the purposes of this study, however, the following definitions were used:

High School - a school that includes any or all of grades ten through twelve.

Media Center - an area providing accessibility to a collection of instructional materials, whether print only or a mixture of print and nonprint.

Media Specialist - a materials professional who directs the media center program, whether that person deals with only print materials or a mixture of print and nonprint materials.

Student Assistant - a currently enrolled high school student who volunteers services and time at some regular intervals to the media center program.

¹³American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Media Programs: District and School (Chicago: American Library Association, and Washington, D.C.: Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1975), pp. 109-111.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The student assistant in the media center continues to be a subject with which many professional journal articles deal. Media specialists recognize the worth of these volunteers to the media center program and the specialists' responsibility to make the experience meaningful for the students.

Four areas of concern expressed by the authors, who are practicing media professionals in most cases, are as follows: selection of students to be assistants, training the students, duties which can be assigned to the students, and what type of credit or recognition should be given to the students. The latter three topics as discussed in the literature were the concerns of this study.

One approach to training student assistants is through formal, structured courses. Sylvia Ziskind¹⁴ taught such a course. The course objectives emphasized student growth as well as service. Although the course had structured, set assignments, no class time was provided. Indivi-

¹⁴Sylvia Ziskind, "Library Science in the High School," Library Journal, 87:814-16, February 15, 1962.

dual students completed the assignments in their own time. "While on duty in the library the student learns library skills, procedures and techniques. . . ." ¹⁵

Another formal course, this one a twelve-week program taught by upperclassman student assistants, trained students to work with reference materials, the vertical file, the Dewey Decimal system, call numbers, magazine arrangement, cataloging, processing, keeping records, and shelving and shelf-reading. Oral quizzes, written tests, and practice under supervision were used to evaluate the students. Those who satisfactorily completed the course were accepted into the library club. ¹⁶

Sister Consolata Maria trained her assistants as part of a Library Science Class. In addition to the above-mentioned skills, bibliographic form and history of books were taught. ¹⁷

The amount of academic credit given for such formal instruction varied from one half unit per year with a maximum of two units, ¹⁸ to "full academic credit" ¹⁹ for three

¹⁵Ziskind, p. 814.

¹⁶Matt Miller, "Training Student Assistants," Catholic Library World, 35:491-92, April, 1964.

¹⁷Sister Consolata Maria, "Student Library Assistants," Catholic Library World, 36:235-37, December, 1974.

¹⁸Dot Kitchens, "A Student Library Assistant Speaks for Academic Credit," Wilson Library Bulletin, 30:174, October, 1955.

¹⁹Roger G. Sumpter, "Give Them More Responsibility," Wilson Library Bulletin, 29:244, November, 1954.

years. Unfortunately the author did not define full academic credit.

A procedure manual or handbook is a second method of training student assistants. Meyer²⁰ utilized a locally prepared library procedures and rules handbook to acquaint student volunteers with the Dewey Decimal system, card catalog, parts of books, periodicals, Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, and reference books. Tests were administered to individual students as they proceeded through the manual. The Ohio State Department of Education granted permission for the school to give academic credit. One credit could be earned toward graduation.

Crawford²¹ recommended the handbook as a teaching tool and the basis of training, regardless of the structure of the training. In training library pages, the public library equivalent to the schools' student assistants, Wright²² based the complete training on the procedure manual and on-the-job application of its routines.

A third training method discussed in the professional literature might be termed individualized instruction. The

²⁰Beatrice Nicholson Meyer, "Our Assistants Get Credit," Library Journal, 80:169-70, January 15, 1955.

²¹Crawford, p. 14.

²²Alice E. Wright, "Pages and Student Assistants: Their Training and Care," Wilson Library Bulletin, 36:739-48, May, 1962.

students who are trained by this method may have a manual to consult but the primary emphasis is on the learning-by-doing technique. Sumpter²³ divided the library work into primary and secondary operations. Students performed these tasks and learned them on the job, consulting the manual when necessary. His student assistants were assigned to departments after initial training. Those departments were circulation, cataloging, ordering, and audiovisual. As noted above, full academic credit was given; in addition, other rewards defined by Sumpter are pins, prestige, skills, social functions, and special privileges. The last includes "first chance at new books, no time limit (within reason) on charge outs, and freedom to move about the school on library business."²⁴

Librarians who trained their student assistants by the on-the-job method did not endorse the academic credit idea to the extent that librarians did who trained by the first two methods. Duffy says, "I believe the spirit of civic responsibility that is developed is a far better value than the credit earned."²⁵ A service award of an engraved leather-bound book was given by Wilkes.²⁶

²³Sumpter, pp. 244-46. ²⁴Sumpter, p. 246.

²⁵Ruby Duffy, "How to Make Effective Use of Student Helpers," Illinois Libraries, 32:77, January, 1950.

²⁶Rachel Wilkes, "Tricks for Training Student Assistants at Centralia," Illinois Libraries, 33:57, January, 1951.

Though not tied to a specific training method, the conclusion of a panel discussion reported by Sister M. Lillian was "most library aides stated that the work is a reward in itself."²⁷ She further reported that the following list represents a survey of the Washington, D. C., area schools reporting some type of award: honor certificate-21, pin-15, letter award-9, academic credit-7, money-5.²⁸

A survey of student assistants in the southeast was made in 1952. Cundiff summarized the findings succinctly but the survey is not of a random sample and the results do not represent the southeast so much as they represent Virginia and North Carolina. This author noted that 970 questionnaires were returned. The number sent is not reported. Items of relevance to this study were rewards given and duties assigned.

Rewards were varied, 190 had social rewards; 160 academic credit; 132 extra curricular points; 86 pins; 76 letters; 33 certificates; 32 pay; 22 gifts and 1 lunch. Some felt that academic credit was important since they could require more work for academic credit. . . . There was some question about certificates but it seemed²⁹ reasonable that a certificate might mean a great deal.

Students performed the following tasks in more than

²⁷Sister M. Lillian, "Should a Library Aide Be Rewarded?" Catholic Library World, 34:400, April, 1963.

²⁸M. Lillian, p. 401.

²⁹Ruby Ethel Cundiff, "Southeast Survey of Student Assistants," Library Journal, 77:2121, December 15, 1952.

half of the schools responding to the questionnaire:

880 indicated that students charge books; 855 keep the library in order; 840 discharge books; 776 read shelves; 775 check overdues; 749 file book cards; 731 check in magazines; 693 paste pockets; 653 arrange displays; 576 mend; 537 do preliminary filing in the card catalog; 462 type book cards; 453 do general typing. . . .³⁰

The above summarized articles represent the available relevant materials in the areas of training, utilizing, and rewarding student assistants as reported by practicing professionals. Two observations are needed to put these articles in their proper perspective. First, few of the articles are recent enough to expect that the situations described are still the status quo. In fact, with the exception of Sister Consolata Maria's article, all of the materials and therefore their authors' observations are between twelve and twenty-six years old.

A second criticism of the reports of available work is that each article merely summarizes one specific situation for the most part. While the original studies may have been more inclusive, no reports were found of comparative studies, no hypotheses were discussed, nor were any conclusions formed. This statement is not meant to fault the authors who clearly had no such goals in mind. However, reliable conclusions about the subject of student assistants need more studies of this kind, *more comparative studies, own study?*

The one research study reported in the literature and

³⁰Cundiff, p. 2120.

available at this time is Blanchard.³¹ This 1948 study of student assistants is of interest as the sole research study and as a survey of an area including this author's surveyed geographical area--Iowa. Three hundred twenty-six high school libraries in twenty-four states received questionnaires. The 265 responses indicated that 5,413 student assistants were performing more than ninety different tasks. The number of assistants varied from one to 120. Duties performed were similar to ones reported above, but also included "grooming" and beautifying the library, mechanical preparation, and publicity.

[Training reported did not differ from the three methods already discussed. Blanchard's report did not include any statistics about the methods of training with which conclusions about preferred methods might have been made.]

Credit or awards were varied, but the two most often reported were academic credit (100) and honor awards (199). Thirty-three paid the students.

[The date of this research study and the other articles discussed above when viewed with the absence of other real research on the topic of student assistants suggests that this is an area in need of investigation.] The literature indicates that methods of training and the type of credit given are widely varied. A survey could establish

³¹Blanchard, pp. 637-41.

if any training method is regarded more favorably than others. The third area discussed in this review is the duties performed by student assistants. Here more agreement was found and the differences are probably confined to degree or emphasis on the service performed. Finally, this author believes that the dearth of information about "media center" student assistants as opposed to "library" student assistants should be remedied by a survey or research study of today's student assistant in today's media center.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

A survey questionnaire³² was mailed to a systematic sample of Iowa public high school media specialists. The sample was drawn from the Iowa Educational Directory, 1975-1976 on the following basis. The given population of school districts in Iowa is 450 and a sample of one hundred or more was desired. By dividing one hundred into 450, four was obtained as the interval and three was selected at random for the beginning point. Therefore a questionnaire was mailed to the third school district on the list and to every fourth district thereafter. When a district had more than a single public high school, the first high school listed was selected to receive the questionnaire. One hundred eleven questionnaires were sent, and each included a postage-paid return envelope.

The survey instrument asked the media specialists to check the method of training they used with student assistants for tasks in thirteen activity categories. Training methods that could be indicated were a handbook (procedure and rules manual), individualized instruction, and formal classes. If a combination of these were used, the media

³²See Appendix A. Cover Letter and Questionnaire.

specialist was asked to mark the principal training method used in each case with a 1, the secondary method with a 2.

The thirteen categories of activities or duties appeared as follows: circulation services, shelving services, housekeeping services, reserve materials services, processing services, periodical services, vertical file services, audio-visual services, publicity services, reference services, repair services, cataloging services, and clerical services. Each category was divided into specific examples of these tasks. The list of duties was compiled by graduate students investigating duties of student librarians for a class at the University of Northern Iowa Library Science Department.³³ The list was primarily based on a listing made by Douglas,³⁴ but it is more concise.

In addition to training methods, the questionnaire asked for ~~this~~ ^{the following} information about the media center programs, grades served by the media center, student enrollment, the type of center (print, nonprint, or a combination), and the kind of award or official recognition given to the student assistants.

The person most directly responsible for training the

³³The list was developed in the graduate course Administration of the Instructional Materials Center (35:225) taught by Dr. Leah Hiland, Summer 1975.

³⁴Mary Peacock Douglas, The Pupil Assistant in the School Library (Chicago: American Library Association, 1957), pp. 3-10.

student assistants was asked to complete the survey when the media center had more than one professional.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The cover letter³⁵ accompanying the survey instrument asked for the replies to be returned within twelve days. The time allotted should have been sufficient to complete and return the questionnaire. However, the mailing date was late in the school year and may have meant that media specialists were involved in end-of-the-year activities which prevented their cooperation. In any case, sixty-three of the one hundred eleven questionnaires sent out were returned. This represents a return rate of 56.76 percent.

Of these sixty-three responses, forty-three of the responding media specialists used student assistants in their media center programs. All of the following data is based upon forty-two responses, however, as one reply did not have a completed form since their student assistant program had just been begun.

Individualized instruction is used by 75 percent or more of Iowa public high school media specialists to train student assistants. This hypothesis is accepted. A frequency distribution chart shows the duties to which students

³⁵See Appendix A, page 31.

are assigned in relation to the method or methods used to train them. Table 1 shows that the method most used to train student assistants for all areas of service is individualized instruction. The training method used by media specialists in over 75 percent of the cases was this method. The percentages ranged from 76 percent for circulation and shelving services to 96 percent for publicity services.

Table 1
Number and Percentage of Training Methods
Used by Service Categories

Services	Training Method ^a					
	Formal course		Handbook		Individualized instruction	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Circulation	2	.04	11	.20	41	.76
Shelving	4	.07	9	.17	41	.76
Periodicals	2	.05	3	.07	39	.89
Housekeeping	2	.04	5	.11	38	.84
Processing	2	.05	1	.03	34	.92
Clerical	2	.06	3	.08	31	.86
Repair	1	.03	2	.06	29	.91
Cataloging	2	.06	1	.03	29	.91
Reserve	1	.03	4	.13	27	.84
Vertical file	2	.07	2	.07	25	.86
Reference	2	.07	3	.10	24	.83
Publicity	1	.04	0	--	22	.96
Audiovisual	0	--	1	.08	12	.92

^aMore than one training method could be marked per service by each school.

{ Circulation services, shelving services, housekeeping services, processing services, and periodical services account for 80 percent or more of the tasks assigned to student assistants in Iowa public high school media centers. } This hypothesis is also accepted. The services performed by students in 80 percent or more of the media centers were circulation, shelving, housekeeping, processing, and periodical services. Table 2 shows the number and percentage of schools in which media specialists assigned each service category to student assistants.

Table 2
Number and Percentage of Services Assigned

Service	Schools	
	Number	Percent ^a
Circulation	41	.98
Shelving	41	.98
Periodicals	39	.93
Housekeeping	38	.90
Processing	34	.81
Clerical	32	.76
Repair	29	.69
Cataloging	29	.69
Reserve	27	.64
Vertical file	25	.60
Reference	25	.60
Publicity	22	.52
Audiovisual	12	.29

^aThis column shows the percentage of forty-two schools which use student assistants for each service.

Some media specialists indicated that more than one form of official recognition was given to student assistants. Seventeen schools gave two awards, two schools gave three awards, and two schools gave four awards. Seven of the media specialists mentioned that the gifts presented to the students were from the media specialist personally as an extra "thank you." Three schools gave no official recognition, but one of the specialists in that group said that she gave students a smile and a "big thank you." While ten schools gave academic credit, only eight are presented in Table 3 because credit was given for a class (secretarial course) in one case and for an organization (Future Teachers of America) in the other.

The third hypothesis was stated as follows: official recognition given to student assistants in Iowa public high schools is 10 percent academic credit, 80 percent service awards, 5 percent money, and 5 percent gifts. This hypothesis is rejected. Table 3 shows the frequency distribution for awards presented in official recognition to student assistants. Service awards have a long tradition in schools and were shown to be the most frequently presented award. Fifty-three percent of the total awards were some form of service award. Pins and certificates were given most often. Eighteen schools awarded pins and fourteen schools awarded certificates; sometimes both were given by a single school. The second most frequent form of award was the gift. These varied from books, to mugs, to trips and parties. Two schools gave one-fourth unit of academic credit per year, four gave one-half unit per year, one

gave one unit per year, and one gave two units per year. Money was given in the form of a gift by four schools. Three media centers paid the student assistants. The students in one of these received fifty-five cents per fifty-minute period worked.

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Schools Giving Awards
in Official Recognition to Student Assistants

Award	Number ^a	Percent
Academic credit	8	.12
Service award	35	.53
Money	8	.12
Gift	12	.18

^aThe total number of schools is greater than the survey sample (42) because some schools gave more than one award.

In addition to the data gathered which related to the three stated hypotheses, other interesting results were reported by the media specialists. Although the information was not anticipated nor originally part of the research problem, it gives a more complete picture of the responding schools. A discussion of this information is presented below.

Media specialists from forty-three schools indicated that their centers did have student assistants. Since this represents only 68.25 percent, the number of schools using student assistants seemed low. To determine how those forty-three schools using student assistants compared with the

twenty schools not using student assistants, the replies to the first page of the questionnaire³⁶ were charted. Table 4 shows the compilation of which grades the media centers serve. The schools with student assistants are within four percentage points of the respondent population in all cases and in five of the organizations (K-12, 6-12, 8-12, 9-12, 10-12) are within two percentage points. [No pattern developed to suggest that the organization of the school related to the use or non-use of student assistants. All organization patterns had student assistants in more than 60 percent of the cases.]

Table 4

A Comparison of the Organization of Schools Using Student Assistants to the Respondent Population

School organization	Schools using assistants	Percent	Respondent population ^a	Percent
K - 12	4	.09	5	.08
6 - 12	1	.02	1	.02
7 - 12	15	.35	24	.39
8 - 12	2	.05	2	.03
9 - 12	14	.33	20	.33
10 - 12	7	.16	9	.15

^aTwo schools did not respond to this question.

Table 5 compares the enrollment figures of the schools using student assistants with the respondent population. Again schools in both groups are within four percent-

³⁶See Appendix A, page 32.

age points. Schools with enrollment over 250 students utilize student assistants in more than 65 percent of the cases. Not only would the media specialists have more need of help in such centers but would also have access to a greater source of assistants.

Table 5

A Comparison of Enrollment for Schools Using Student Assistants to the Respondent Population

School enrollment	Schools using assistants	Percent	Respondent population ^a	Percent
Less than 100	1	.02	2	.03
100 - 250	11	.26	18	.30
250 - 500	16	.37	24	.39
500 - 1000	13	.30	15	.25
More than 1000	2	.05	2	.03

^aTwo schools did not respond to this question.

A final comparison of the media centers can be made from the data. This deals with the administrative organization of the centers. The respondents were asked to identify the type of center the school had, whether audiovisual (non-print), library (print), or media center (nonprint and print). Table 6 illustrates the response. There is less comparability in this table between respondent population and the schools using student assistants. However, this may present the best answer to the use or non-use of student assistants. The table shows that 60 percent of the schools using student assistants considered themselves to be libraries while only

40 percent of those identified as media centers used student assistants. Print-oriented centers appear to use student assistants to a greater extent than do media-oriented centers. Yet, since the questionnaire was directed to librarians rather than audiovisual directors when two or more professional were located in one school, the results may reflect this bias.

Table 6

A Comparison of the Types of Centers Using Student Assistants to the Respondent Population

Type of organization	Schools using assistants	Percent	Respondent population ^a	Percent
Audiovisual	0	--	0	--
Library	26	.60	34	.55
Media Center	17	.40	28	.45

^aOne school did not respond to this question.

{ The twenty centers not using student assistants was 31.75 percent of the respondent population. Because this percentage seems high, a closer look may be warranted. } While this paper did not propose to study this question, it does relate to the topic. Table 6 may provide a clue. Fifty-eight percent of the schools not using student assistants identify themselves as media centers. As more schools adopt some form of this newer image, perhaps the traditional "student librarian" does not fit into the scene. Further clues lie with the media specialists who returned these statements. One specialist said that students in their school were too busy. Two others replied that they had paid adult aides to do that work.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine how Iowa public high school media centers trained student assistants, to what tasks they were assigned, and in what manner their work was officially recognized or awarded. A questionnaire was sent to a systematic sample of one hundred eleven Iowa public high schools asking which of three training methods were used to train student assistants, what duties in a list of thirteen categories were assigned, and what type of award was given. The methods of training were a formal class, a handbook, and individualized instruction. The thirteen categories of services were circulation, shelving, house-keeping, reserve materials, processing, periodicals, vertical file, audiovisual, publicity, reference, repair, cataloging, and clerical. The award choices were academic credit, service awards, money, and gifts. Space for additional duties and awards was provided on the questionnaire.

Much of the literature pertaining to the above topics was dated and with three exceptions were situations unique to one school. None of the three training methods as discussed in the literature emerged as a clear favorite of ~~librarians~~ ~~or~~ media specialists. However, most of the articles seemed to include some mention of individual instruction as the

method endorsed or used in conjunction with another method, and it must be regarded as a dominant method of training student assistants. The articles which discussed duties were not always specific but when they were so seemed to indicate that student assistants performed the same type of tasks as is found in the list in the questionnaire. The type of award given to assistants most frequently seemed to be some type of service award, although all the others mentioned in the questionnaire were also used. Several authors felt that the work done by the student assistants was enough reward in itself.

Sixty-three schools replied to the questionnaire. Forty-three (68.25 percent) indicated that student assistants were used in the media centers. The grades served by a media center and the size of the school's enrollment did not appear to relate to the utilization of student assistants. The organization of the center did appear to be a factor. Print-oriented centers used student assistants in 60 percent of the cases while 40 percent of the centers with combined media used student assistants.

The hypothesis that 75 percent or more of the media specialists used individualized instruction as the training method was accepted. The hypothesis that 80 percent or more of the services assigned to student assistants were circulation, shelving, housekeeping, processing, and periodicals was also accepted. The third hypothesis was rejected. That hypothesis said that awards given to student assistants would be

10 percent academic credit, 80 percent service awards, 5 percent money, and 5 percent gifts. Service awards were found to make up 53 percent of the awards, gifts 18 percent, and money and academic credit each 12 percent.

The author concludes that student assistants do provide important help to their media centers. Media specialists employ students in a variety of tasks and seem willing to train the students individually to perform those tasks. A subject that might be investigated in the future concerns the apparent decrease in the use of student assistants since the days of Blanchard's study. Is the decrease due to other demands on students' time, the increasing number of paid and volunteer adult aides, or a general disaffection with "volunteerism?" This might be studied by conducting a survey of a larger population than that represented in this study.

Another area of potential study is how to select students to serve. Should everyone who volunteers be accepted? What talents are being sought? Evaluation is also an area of concern. Are student assistants being evaluated? If so, in what manner? A final area needing exploration was raised by one of the respondents to this study's questionnaire. The respondent said they did not have student assistants because they could not attract volunteers. The question is how to interest students in serving the media center. Perhaps new challenges are needed in today's media center to interest the students in service and provide meaningful help to the media center program.

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APPENDIX A. Cover Letter and Questionnaire

Northeast Hamilton Community School
Blairsburg, Iowa 50034

May 19, 1976

Dear Librarian/Media Specialist,

I would like to ask you to take a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. I realize that this is a very busy time for you since I too am involved in the closing weeks of school. If possible, please return the survey to me by June 1.

The purpose of this survey is to determine how student assistants are trained for work in a secondary school library or media center. The information, which will remain confidential, will be used for a research paper I am writing in partial completion of a M.A. degree at the University of Northern Iowa.

Should you have several librarians or media specialists in your school, please ask the person most directly involved in training the student assistants to answer the questionnaire. In the case of an audiovisual director and a librarian, please have the latter complete it as the tasks are more directly concerned with materials than with equipment.

I should like to thank you in advance for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Medin
IMC Director

Enclosure

Duties, Tasks, and Training
of Student Librarians

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructions: Please respond to each of these statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

1. The grades served by the library/media center are:

9 - 12 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 - 12 <input type="checkbox"/>
10 - 12 <input type="checkbox"/>	other <input type="checkbox"/> please specify _____

2. The student enrollment in the above indicated grades as of January 1, 1976, is

less than 100 <input type="checkbox"/>	500 - 1000 <input type="checkbox"/>
100 - 250 <input type="checkbox"/>	1000 or more <input type="checkbox"/>
250 - 500 <input type="checkbox"/>	

3. The structure of the center in which the librarian/media specialist works is best described as:

an audiovisual center (nonprint oriented)

a library (print oriented)

an instructional media center (combined print & nonprint)

other please specify _____

4. Does the center described in statement 3 utilize student assistants?

Yes

No

If your answer to statement 4 is No, you have completed the questionnaire. Please return the entire package to me in the envelope provided.

If your answer to statement 4 is Yes, please respond to the checklist on the following pages.

TASKS AND TRAINING METHODS

Instructions: The items in the first column below have been compiled to represent a partial listing of duties 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 in that task by placing a number in the appropriate column using the following key: 1 - primary method; 2 - secondary method.

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

Tasks	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			
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			

Task	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
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			
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 covers			
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 requested 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			
64. Reinforcing pamphlets			
65. Processing pamphlet materials			
66. Filing pamphlets			
67. Other - please specify			

Task	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES			
68. Preparing records for use			
69. Preparing filmstrips for use			
70. Preparing films for use			
71. Preparing other audiovisual 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 & arranging bulletin boards			
79. Planning & arranging exhibits & displays			
80. Making posters			
81. Preparing news items for school paper			
82. Writing book reviews			
83. Helping plan & 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 & classroom			
88. Acting as classroom librarian			
89. Other - please specify			
REFERENCE SERVICES			
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 rebinding			
105. Reinforcing pamphlets and periodicals			
106. Other - please specify			

Task	Formal Class	Procedure Handbook	Individualized Instruction
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			
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			

STUDENT RECOGNITION FOR SERVICE

Instructions: Please indicate by a check which type(s) of official recognition is(are) given to your student assistants.

1. Academic Credit:

1/4 unit 1/2 unit 1 unit other please specify _____

2. Service Award:

pin letter certificate other please specify _____

3. Money:

salary

gift

4. Gift please specify _____

Thank you again for your assistance in this survey. Please return the entire package to me in the envelope provided by June 1.

Jacquelyn Medin
706 Fair Meadow Drive
Webster City, Iowa 50595