

1983

The Utilization of Adult Volunteers in Elementary School Library Media Centers

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The Utilization of Adult Volunteers in Elementary School Library Media Centers

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the extent to which Iowa school systems, employing media specialists, were utilizing adult volunteers in elementary media centers and to determine the tasks the adult volunteers were being assigned. A survey instrument, consisting of equal parts of both professional and nonprofessional tasks randomly selected from the Task Analysis Survey Instrument, was sent to one hundred twenty-one Iowa elementary school media centers. These elementary school media centers indicated the presence of a media specialist on the Basic Education Data Survey 1982-1983. One hundred and eight survey instruments were returned, and this represented a return rate of 89.25 percent.

Two hypotheses were tested. First, fifty percent of Iowa's elementary schools responding would utilize adult volunteers in school media centers. Fifty or 46.29 percent of the responding elementary media specialists stated the use of adult volunteers; therefore, this hypothesis was rejected. However, the second was accepted. The hypothesis stated that at least 75 percent of the tasks performed by a majority of the adult volunteers were nonprofessional tasks. Thirty-three or sixty-six percent of the fifty respondents assigned at least 75 percent nonprofessional tasks to their adult volunteers. Fourteen or forty-two percent stated they had adult volunteers perform one hundred percent nonprofessional tasks.

In addition gathered data indicated the nonprofessional tasks most frequently performed by volunteers, the nonprofessional tasks not assigned to adult volunteers, and professional tasks most frequently performed by volunteers. Also the responding media specialists had a tendency to assign a nonprofessional task with greater frequency than did their part-time counterpart.

THE UTILIZATION OF ADULT VOLUNTEERS IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS

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

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts

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In addition gathered data indicated the nonprofessional tasks most frequently performed by volunteers, the nonprofessional tasks not assigned to adult volunteers, and professional tasks most frequently performed by volunteers. Also the responding media specialists had a tendency to assign a nonprofessional task with greater frequency than did their part-time counterpart.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Voluntarism is not a new resource to the American scene. The traditional utilization of volunteers by public services emphasizes the important tie between the community and its institutions.¹ In 1966 Stebbins referred not only to the traditional role of the volunteer but included the benefit of the volunteer's service in libraries:

Hospitals and school libraries have traditionally employed volunteers to help maintain their programs.... In general, they have been effective helpers in many libraries when they work with experienced librarians.²

The American Library Association reinforced the traditional role of the volunteer in 1971 establishing guidelines for the utilization of volunteers. The Library Administration Division of ALA stated the following:

The use of volunteers in public services is traditional. Social services, health, and welfare activities are well known for³ their extensive utilization of voluntary manpower.

As volunteer programs have been an integral part of many social institutions, the prevalence of the volunteer in

¹"Guidelines for Using Volunteers in Libraries," American Libraries, 2:407, April, 1971.

²Kathleen B. Stebbins, Personnel Administration in Libraries (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1966) p. 157.

³"Guidelines for," p. 407.

school systems throughout the country is evident through the current literature. Dade County Public School Systems, Florida; John Carroll High School, Birmingham, Alabama; Greenwich Public Schools, Connecticut; Murray School, St. Paul, Minnesota; Spring Branch Independent School District, Houston, Texas; Acolances High School, Lafayette, California; and Eureka City Schools, Eureka, Oregon, all have one factor in common--an active volunteer program. Tightening budgets and restricted allowable growth have forced school systems to seek methods for preserving existing services and programs and for expanding to meet future needs. The use of local volunteers has become an option seriously considered.

Georgia Slack, Public Information Specialist in the Dade County Public School System, summarized the dilemma this way:

Confronted with emptying pocketbooks, parental demands to shape up their teaching of the basics, and the realization that they no longer can survive without community support, school systems all over the nation are turning to a still largely untapped resource--the school volunteer.⁴

Iowa, not unlike the other states, has school systems fighting for financial survival. In early 1981 the Iowa Legislature announced that state school funding for the 1981-1982 school year would be reduced by \$40 million from the figure first proposed and that for the 1982-1983 school year more reductions might be required. This position set

⁴Georgia Slack, "Volunteering Is In," American Education, 14:6, April, 1978.

into motion hundreds of meetings across Iowa to see what adjustments could be made to local budgets to salvage existing staff, programs, services, and administrations in school districts. If this trend of reduced finances continues, Iowans also will be searching for means of maintaining programs and services offered to current and future students of the state. Iowa schools may also follow the example of various school districts in such states as Florida, Alabama, Texas, and Oregon. The expansion of the existing volunteer program or the development of a volunteer program may already be a "real" alternative to discontinuing educational services to Iowa students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stretching shrinking funding to meet budgetary demands is a reality faced by school administrators at all levels. Volunteer programs in local school districts across the nation have been credited with easing this burden.

This study was conducted to determine the extent to which Iowa school systems, employing media specialists, were utilizing adult volunteers in elementary media centers and to determine the tasks the adult volunteers were being assigned.

HYPOTHESES

In this study, two hypotheses were tested. First, 50 percent of Iowa's elementary schools responding would utilize adult volunteers in school media centers. Secondly, at least 75 percent of the tasks performed by a majority of

the adult volunteers would be nonprofessional tasks.

LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to Iowa schools, which had been identified as elementary by the individual, local school districts, listed in Iowa's 1982-1983 Department of Public Instruction printout entitled, Basic Education Data Survey (hereafter referred to as BEDS). BEDS, listing professional staff, school name, and school address, was the most complete list of Iowa schools available, but this author did realize that this list might contain errors. If it was impossible to determine a school's grade level, the Iowa Education Directory, which lists grade spans, was used as a reference. This author realized that the grade levels contained in the individual elementary schools on the BEDS list would vary greatly; therefore, schools selected for the study sample had at least half of their grades in the kindergarten to sixth grade range but did exclude schools which were identified as kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The tasks listed on the survey instrument were those selected by this author and did not reflect all the tasks performed by adult volunteers in Iowa's elementary school media centers. The survey instrument had half of its items as professional tasks, and half, nonprofessional. All limitations of the survey method did apply to this study.

DEFINITIONS

Throughout this study the following definitions did apply.

Elementary school - a school which contains at least half of its grades from kindergarten to sixth grade but excludes schools containing kindergarten through twelfth grade

Adult volunteer - unpaid person who assists in the operation of the media center⁵

Nonprofessional tasks - tasks which are clerical, technical, and/or secretarial in nature

Media specialist - A person with appropriate certification and broad professional preparation, both in education and media, with competencies to carry out a media program.⁶

School media center - An area or system of areas in the school where a full range of information sources, associated equipment, and services from media staff are accessible to students, school personnel, and the school community.

⁵American Association of School Librarians and Research Division of the National Education Association, Task Analysis Survey Instrument (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969) unp.

⁶American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Media Programs: District and School. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975) p. 111.

⁷Ibid.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The search of related literature on the subject of volunteers in the University of Northern Iowa Library produced limited resources. The examination of professional library journals revealed that much controversy exists as to the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining volunteer programs in libraries, both public and school.

Not all welcome volunteers with open arms. At a time when professionalism is finding a foothold in the library science field, many feel that the term voluntarism makes people in the field anxious. Warner states that the "fear of Lady Bountiful," a concern over job replacement, and the injection of emotionally loaded terms such as professionalism, protection, status, and standards heighten the emotions, creating insecure positions on the subject of voluntarism.⁸

To complicate matters, the literature which has appeared often levels sharp criticism on those who use

⁸Alice Sizer Warner, "Voluntarism and Librarianship," Library Journal, 97:1241, April 1, 1972.

volunteers. Jenkins addressed himself to this and stated:

It is implied but seldom said that it is not really good form nor is it proper professional behavior for librarians to use volunteers. Those few brave souls who have written articles supporting the use of volunteers have been just that--brave souls.⁹

Recently criticism concerning the utilization of volunteers in the library setting has risen from both the labor unions and the feminists. Alan Viani of District Council 37 AFSCME states, "From a labor union's point of view, we generally look upon the use of volunteers with a great deal of suspicion...."¹⁰ The present state of the economy is reflected through the declining budgets of many libraries, and unions see management "taking the easy way out."¹¹ The National Organization for Women (NOW) has strongly opposed volunteers in libraries on the basis that this is just another form of the exploitation of women. NOW contends:

Change-directed volunteer activities (like those by NOW members) are valid,..., but socially-oriented activities (which would include library work) merely reinforce the economic dependence of women by preventing them from earning money of their own. If these services are needed and valued, asserts NOW, the volunteers should be paid.¹²

⁹Harold Jenkins, "Volunteers in Libraries," American Libraries, 3:1400, April, 1972.

¹⁰Leslie Trainer, "METRO Workshop on Volunteers in Libraries Sparks Controversy, Offers Practical Advice," American Libraries, 7:666, December, 1976.

¹¹Noel Savage, "Volunteers in Libraries," Library Journal, 101:2431, December 1, 1976.

¹²"Volunteers in Libraries: New and Ongoing Programs," Library Journal, 99:1752, July, 1974.

Brooklyn College librarian Joan Marshall's opposition to the use of volunteers stems from a concern for time utilization of professional librarians. She feels that allotted time for selecting, training, and scheduling volunteers is not worth the possible benefits. She states "expenditures in staff time lost in training volunteers often nullify any forthcoming benefits....The work of professional librarians is denigrated by volunteers. It all boils down to a question of priorities, whether you are interested in quality or just in keeping the doors open."¹³

Current opinion is not all negative. Winifred Brown of the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center (New York City's first centralized volunteer agency) declares that trying to get volunteers to replace paid workers would be the "stupidest approach" possible.¹⁴ A staff of volunteers is not likely to come with professional training, but they do offer a variety of benefits many libraries should not pass up.

In a report to the Library Administration Division of the American Library Association, community support and public relations were cited as two benefits directly related to volunteer programs. It was stated that both were greatly enhanced when citizens become directly and personally involved

¹³Savage, p. 2431.

¹⁴Savage, p. 2432.

with libraries. Charlotte Devers, Director of North Castle Public Library, Armonk, New York, states, "Volunteers are invaluable because they often know the community better than you do and bring in feedback from the constantly changing public."¹⁵

Volunteers are advantageous as lobbyists for the library. Being directly involved, volunteers become aware of the services presently available but, more important, begin to recognize the services that could be offered. They very often have more clout than the librarian and, therefore, can initiate change. Brown supports this by saying:

You need people as advocates, as workers, as helpers. The city is afraid to eliminate fire, police, and sanitation departments. You must get them scared to death to kill services that make the city worth living in--libraries and museums.¹⁶

Volunteers are just the force to put this message across according to Brown.

Whether one advocates the utilization of volunteers or not, an examination of tasks being performed by all school library personnel is a necessity. Today's school libraries have expanded from the traditional print collection and have encompassed nonprint materials in a variety of formats and the equipment for its use. Coupled with financial restraints, the changing school library collections have

¹⁵Trainer, p. 666.

¹⁶Savage, p. 2432.

increased the services that school librarians must provide to meet the needs of instructors and students.

In 1968 the American Association of School Librarians recognized the critical need for school librarians to broaden their education and prepare for varied types of communication media of the future. The Association initiated a five-year program entitled School Library Manpower Project. Funded by the Knapp Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., this program was designed to treat three aspects of the problem of developing and utilizing school library manpower.

The first phase, Task and Job Analysis, focused on identifying the tasks performed by school library personnel at all levels. Using a purposive sample of outstanding school libraries with unified print and nonprint collections and the equipment and service necessary for their use, the data collected served as a basis for the development of new job descriptions for a variety of personnel serving school libraries. With the new job descriptions, Phase II of the School Library Manpower Project began to define and develop guidelines for new library curriculum for the education of future librarians.

No study to evaluate the types of tasks assigned to adult volunteers working in libraries has been done. Volunteers have been an essential part of the library team, helping out in routine duties as well as providing vital but extra services in outreach programs. Despite the reasons for using volunteers, librarians must take the initiative. Volunteer programs must be well defined and administered if such a resource is to be fully tapped.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

To determine the extent to which Iowa school systems employing media specialists, were utilizing adult volunteers in elementary media centers and to determine the tasks the adult volunteers were being assigned, a survey instrument was mailed to a randomly selected group of Iowa elementary school media specialists in both public and private Iowa school systems. The sample was drawn from the Department of Public Instruction's list entitled, Basic Education Data Survey 1982-1983, with some listings needing to be checked with the Iowa Education Directory for verification of grade level.

The procedure was the following. This author selected from the BEDS list those media specialists who were identified by the local districts as serving an elementary school and recorded the name of the school, the name of the media specialist, and the current school address on a numbered index card. If some of the elementary school media specialists listed on the BEDS served multiple buildings or if some elementary school media specialists were listed more than once in the exact same manner, only the first listing was utilized in determining the random sample. When the assignment of a media specialist as identified on the BEDS list did not clearly indicate grade level spans, the grade levels

were cross-checked in the Iowa Education Directory to determine the locally assigned grade levels. If the school met the definition of elementary level as defined earlier by this author, the name of the school, the name of the media specialist, and the current address of the school were recorded on a numbered index card.

Upon completion of this work, the numbered index cards were arranged in numerical order, and a table of random numbers was used to select 50 percent of the numbered index cards for use in the survey.

The survey instrument, mailed with a cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped envelope, began by asking the grade levels served by the library/media center and the amount of time the media specialist was in the school building addressed. Following this, the survey instrument asked if the elementary media center was served by adult volunteers. If the response was negative, the person filling out the survey instrument was asked to return the survey instrument using the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. If the response was positive, the person filling out the survey was asked to check the tasks assigned to adult volunteers in that particular elementary media center. After completion, the person filling out the survey instrument was asked to return the survey instrument using the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The survey instrument did consist of equal parts of

both professional and nonprofessional tasks, which were intermingled at random. A total of 100 tasks on the survey instrument was randomly selected by this author from the Task Analysis Survey Instrument developed for the School Library Manpower Project by the Research Division of the National Education Association. Each task was listed on a numbered index card, and a "P" was recorded before the card number if the task was a professional one; a "N" was recorded if the task was a nonprofessional one. Following the recording of all tasks on the Task Analysis Survey Instrument, the numbered index cards were separated into two groups, professional and nonprofessional. Using a list of random numbers, 50 tasks were selected from each group. All 100 numbered index cards were then shuffled four times, and the resulting order of numbered index cards was the order the tasks, professional and nonprofessional, were listed on the survey instrument.

To pretest the survey instrument, a random selection of eight media specialists served by Arrowhead Area Education Agency was made. A current list of media specialists, the elementary schools they served, and the addresses were obtained from Jack Adams, Director of Media Service, Arrowhead Area Education Agency, Fort Dodge, Iowa. Each media specialist's name, school, and address was recorded on a numbered index card and placed in a box. Eight index cards were drawn, and those media specialists did receive sample survey

instruments for evaluation. Responses from the pretest of the survey instrument were evaluated by this author, and no revisions of the survey instrument were necessary. The eight media specialists receiving the pretest were not included in the random sample.

Each survey instrument mailed had recorded on it the same number listed on the numbered index card, which was part of the randomly selected group of Iowa elementary school media specialists. Following the due date, the returned survey instruments were checked against the numbered index cards of the randomly selected group of Iowa elementary media specialists. Those not returning the survey instrument were sent a reminder letter.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The cover letter¹⁷ which accompanied the survey instrument asked for replies to be returned within nineteen days. In addition, a follow-up letter was sent, and the time period was extended seven days. The time allotted should have been sufficient to complete and return the survey instrument.

One hundred and eight of the one hundred twenty-one survey instruments sent out were returned. This represented a return rate of 89.25 percent. All of the following data were based upon the fifty returned survey instruments which indicated the utilization of adult volunteers.

Of the one hundred and eight returned survey instruments, fifty responding elementary media specialists stated that adult volunteers were utilized. This study hypothesized that fifty percent of the elementary schools would use adult volunteers. Those fifty responding were only 46.29 percent; therefore, this hypothesis was rejected.

A second hypothesis was that at least seventy-five percent of the tasks performed by a majority of the adult

¹⁷See Appendix C, p. 34.

volunteers were nonprofessional in nature. This hypothesis was accepted. Table 1 shows the number and percent of professional and nonprofessional tasks performed by adult volunteers in each of the elementary media centers that indicated the utilization of adult volunteers. Thirty-three of the fifty respondents or sixty-six percent of the elementary media centers listed assigned at least seventy-five percent nonprofessional tasks to adult volunteers.

Table 1 also indicates that of the thirty-three media centers that assigned at least seventy-five percent nonprofessional tasks to adult volunteers, fourteen or forty-two percent of the media centers listed had adult volunteers perform one hundred percent nonprofessional tasks.

From the fifty responding media centers listed in Table 1, one elementary school (Number 23) marked the use of adult volunteers in its elementary media center, but none of the one hundred tasks listed on the survey instrument were checked as being assigned to adult volunteers. Although the list of tasks on the survey instrument was randomly selected from the Task Analysis Survey Instrument which contains three hundred tasks, a question might arise as to what tasks were being assigned to adult volunteers in this elementary media center.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Professional and Nonprofessional Tasks Assigned by Responding Elementary Media Centers

| Elementary Media Centers | Tasks Assigned to Adult Volunteers | | | | Meets or Exceeds 75% of Tasks |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|---|
| | Professional | | Nonprofessional | | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | |
| 1 | 1 | 33.33 | 3 | 66.66 | |
| 2 | 3 | 20.00 | 12 | 80.00 | * |
| 3 | 1 | 33.33 | 2 | 66.66 | |
| 4 | 4 | 26.66 | 11 | 73.33 | |
| 5 | 1 | 16.66 | 5 | 83.33 | * |
| 6 | 0 | 00.00 | 4 | 100.00 | * |
| 7 | 2 | 66.66 | 1 | 33.33 | |
| 8 | 0 | 00.00 | 8 | 100.00 | * |
| 9 | 0 | 00.00 | 3 | 100.00 | * |
| 10 | 3 | 60.00 | 2 | 40.00 | |
| 11 | 1 | 16.66 | 5 | 83.33 | * |
| 12 | 1 | 25.00 | 3 | 75.00 | * |
| 13 | 1 | 09.09 | 10 | 90.90 | * |
| 14 | 1 | 06.66 | 14 | 93.33 | * |
| 15 | 3 | 42.85 | 4 | 57.14 | |
| 16 | 1 | 10.00 | 9 | 90.00 | * |
| 17 | 6 | 42.85 | 8 | 57.14 | |
| 18 | 1 | 07.14 | 13 | 92.85 | * |
| 19 | 0 | 00.00 | 8 | 100.00 | * |
| 20 | 1 | 20.00 | 4 | 80.00 | * |
| 21 | 1 | 50.00 | 1 | 50.00 | |
| 22 | 12 | 40.00 | 18 | 60.00 | |
| 23 | 0 | 00.00 | 0 | 00.00 | |
| 24 | 2 | 20.00 | 8 | 80.00 | * |
| 25 | 0 | 00.00 | 2 | 100.00 | * |
| 26 | 2 | 40.00 | 3 | 60.00 | |
| 27 | 0 | 00.00 | 1 | 100.00 | * |
| 28 | 1 | 11.11 | 8 | 88.88 | * |
| 29 | 1 | 14.28 | 6 | 85.71 | * |
| 30 | 4 | 26.66 | 11 | 73.33 | |
| 31 | 4 | 33.33 | 8 | 66.66 | |
| 32 | 2 | 33.33 | 4 | 66.66 | |
| 33 | 0 | 00.00 | 7 | 100.00 | * |
| 34 | 0 | 00.00 | 3 | 100.00 | * |
| 35 | 0 | 00.00 | 3 | 100.00 | * |
| 36 | 1 | 25.00 | 3 | 75.00 | * |

Table 1 (continued)

| Elementary Media Centers | Tasks Assigned to Adult Volunteers | | | | Meets or Exceeds 75% of Tasks |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|---|
| | Professional | | Nonprofessional | | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | |
| 37 | 2 | 22.22 | 7 | 77.77 | * |
| 38 | 1 | 16.66 | 5 | 83.33 | * |
| 39 | 1 | 25.00 | 3 | 75.00 | * |
| 40 | 2 | 28.57 | 5 | 71.42 | |
| 41 | 0 | 00.00 | 1 | 100.00 | * |
| 42 | 0 | 00.00 | 2 | 100.00 | * |
| 43 | 3 | 15.78 | 16 | 84.21 | * |
| 44 | 1 | 10.00 | 9 | 90.00 | * |
| 45 | 4 | 22.22 | 14 | 77.77 | * |
| 46 | 0 | 00.00 | 2 | 100.00 | * |
| 47 | 0 | 00.00 | 1 | 100.00 | * |
| 48 | 3 | 33.33 | 6 | 66.66 | |
| 49 | 7 | 41.17 | 10 | 58.82 | |
| 50 | 0 | 00.00 | 10 | 100.00 | * |

In addition to the data gathered which related to the two stated hypotheses, other conclusions may be drawn from Table 1. This information, although not a part of the original research problem, provides a more complete picture of responding elementary media centers.

According to Appendix E, pp. 41-43, from which Table 1 was derived, responding full-time media specialists indicated a tendency to assign a nonprofessional task with greater frequency than the responding part-time media specialists. Thirty-two of the nonprofessional tasks were assigned more frequently by full-time media specialists than by their part-time counterparts.

Table 2 shows the rank order of nonprofessional tasks most frequently performed by adult volunteers. The alphabetizing of catalog cards for filing, Task 66, was the nonprofessional task most frequently assigned. Twenty-six or fifty-two percent of the responding media specialists marked this nonprofessional task. Eighteen or sixty-nine percent of those respondents were full-time people.

In four instances, the frequency reported of a task on Table 2 matched another on the list. An example was Task 51 which matched Task 55. Each nonprofessional task was reported by twenty media specialists or forty percent of those responding. Similar instances related to Tasks 86 and 87 where sixteen or thirty-two percent responded; Tasks 29 and 35 where fifteen or thirty percent responded; Tasks 26 and 83 where eleven or twenty-two percent responded. Eight of the tasks were assigned in at least fifteen or more than thirty percent of the centers.

Media tasks are frequently categorized into larger service categories such as circulation, technical processing, reference, etc. Not one of the service categories predominates. Processing services are represented by three nonprofessional tasks: stamps ownership mark on all materials, places call numbers, classification numbers, copy numbers, etc. in/on books and other materials, and covers books with plastic jackets. Cataloging services and clerical services are represented by two tasks each, while shelving and circula-

tion services have one task each on the list.

Table 2

Nonprofessional Tasks Most Frequently
Performed by Volunteers

| Frequency Reported | Task Number | Task |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| 26 | 66 | Alphabetizes catalog cards for filing |
| 22 | 86 | Participates in book fair activities |
| 20 | 51 | Shifts materials and adjusts location labels as required |
| 20 | 55 | Stamps ownership mark on all materials |
| 16 | 80 | Places call numbers, classification numbers, copy numbers, etc. in/on books and other materials |
| 16 | 87 | Handles clerical and secretarial aspects of correspondence (i.e., sorting, filing, typing, mailing, etc.) |
| 15 | 29 | Covers books with plastic jackets |
| 15 | 35 | Charges, discharges, and renews materials and equipment |
| 11 | 26 | Checks card catalog and shelf list for ordering and duplication of materials |
| 11 | 83 | Types notices, requisitions, bulletins, bibliographies, letters, stencils, orders, etc. |

Ten nonprofessional tasks on the survey instrument were not assigned to adult volunteers by responding media specialists. Five or fifty percent of the unassigned nonprofessional tasks listed in Table 3 are clerical in nature. Examples of these tasks are maintaining schedules of class activities in the library, maintaining bindery records, taking attendance, and maintaining publicity records.

Audiovisual services are represented by two non-

professional tasks in Table 3. The recording of meetings, speeches, programs, and performances and the processing and printing of photographs are tasks that demand not only technical skills to accomplish, but they require a greater amount of time to complete than many of the tasks on the survey instrument. Perhaps media specialists do not have adult volunteers with the necessary skills, or perhaps more important, adult volunteers have not been willing to commit the time necessary to complete such tasks if they are trained. Should student aides, paid aides, or audiovisual clubs be available to the media specialist, tasks of this nature might be assigned to these people especially if the demand for the tasks is high.

Table 3
Nonprofessional Tasks Not Assigned
to Adult Volunteers

| Task Number | Task |
|----------------|---|
| 6 | Sprays maps and pictures with plastic fixative for preservation |
| 8 | Maintains schedules of class activities in library |
| 12 | Maintains bindery records |
| 25 | Takes attendance in library |
| 50 | Records meetings, speeches, programs, and performances |
| 54 | Processes and prints photographs |
| 70 | Maintains publicity records |
| 71 | Prepares and assembles bibliographic data for ordering |
| 73 | Issues student library cards |
| 79 | Supervises noon leisure-time activities |

Table 4 shows the rank order of professional tasks most frequently performed by adult volunteers. Planning, preparing, and arranging bulletin boards, displays, and exhibits, Task 27, was the professional task most frequently assigned. Thirteen or twenty-six percent of the responding media specialists checked this task.

Table 4

Professional Tasks Most Frequently
Performed by Volunteers

| Frequency Reported | Task Number | Task |
|--------------------|-------------|---|
| 13 | 27 | Plans, prepares, and arranges bulletin boards, displays, and exhibits |
| 12 | 41 | Assists with assignments done in the library |
| 8 | 89 | Labels library materials such as pamphlets, pictures, and clippings |
| 7 | 90 | Sets up and organizes circulation desk daily |
| 5 | 44 | Answers ready-reference questions |
| 5 | 84 | Plans, organizes, and supervises book fairs |
| 4 | 3 | Assists in production of TV programs |
| 4 | 14 | Disciplines students in library |
| 4 | 22 | Reviews library rules and procedures |
| 4 | 72 | Maintains accession and inventory records of materials |

In two instances, the reported frequency of a professional task in Table 4 matched at least one other in the list. An example would be Task 3, Task 14, Task 22, and Task 72. Each task was reported by four media specialists or less than one percent of the respondents.

Again no one of the media service categories predominates. Reference services are represented by three tasks: assists with assignments done in the library, answers ready-reference questions, and reviews library rules and procedures. Publicity services have two tasks on the list, while processing, circulation, audiovisual, and clerical services have one each.

Fourteen of the responding media specialists listed additional tasks assigned to adult volunteers on the survey instrument.¹⁸ These additional tasks might have appeared on the original Task Analysis Survey, but by using a randomly selected sample of 100 tasks, the tasks listed by the media specialists were not included as part of this study's survey instrument. Nine or sixty-four percent of the media specialists adding tasks listed the shelving of books as a task given to adult volunteers. Circulation services are represented by three tasks: the carding of books, the checking out of books, and the removing of AEA books for return. Other media services represented by one or two tasks are shelving, clerical, housekeeping, repair, and cataloging.

¹⁸See Appendix E, page 41.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Iowa school systems, employing media specialists, were utilizing adult volunteers in elementary media centers and to determine the tasks the adult volunteers were being assigned. A survey instrument, asking if the media center utilized adult volunteers, and if so, what tasks were assigned, was sent to a randomly selected sample of one hundred twenty-one Iowa elementary media centers, which contained at least half of their grades from kindergarten to sixth grade but excluded schools containing kindergarten through twelfth grade. The tasks listed on the survey instrument were randomly selected from the Task Analysis Survey Instrument developed for the School Library Manpower Project by the Research Division of the National Education Association.

One hundred and eight media specialists replied to the survey instrument. Fifty (46.29 percent) indicated the use of adult volunteers. The grades served by the media center or the amount of time the media specialist was in the school did not appear to relate to the utilization of adult volunteers and the tasks assigned. The hypothesis that fifty percent of Iowa's elementary schools responding utilized adult volunteers in school media centers was rejected.

The second hypothesis was accepted. That hypothesis stated that at least seventy-five percent of the tasks performed by a majority of the adult volunteers were nonprofessional. Fourteen or forty-two percent of the media specialists who assigned at least seventy-five percent nonprofessional tasks to adult volunteers stated that their adult volunteers performed one hundred percent nonprofessional tasks.

This author concludes that those elementary media specialists, who utilized adult volunteers, assigned a majority of nonprofessional tasks. Media specialists seemed to invest time in training and scheduling adult volunteers in order to decrease their own amount of time spent for nonprofessional tasks. A subject that might be investigated in the future concerns the methods being used to train adult volunteers and percentage of professional time required to retrain and schedule replacement adult volunteers. This might be done by conducting a survey of Iowa elementary media centers which have an established volunteer program.

This study limited the number of tasks to a random sample containing one hundred tasks. Fourteen media specialists recorded additional tasks to the study's survey instrument. A more reliable survey might be done in the future utilizing all three hundred tasks on the Task Analysis Survey developed for the School Library Manpower Project.

Also this study only addressed the amount of time the media specialist was employed. Future investigation might be done to determine the effects of having the media

specialist and the adult volunteer in the same center at the same time.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A. Permission Request Letter

June 17, 1983

Dear

The purpose of this letter is to request permission to submit a survey instrument to a number of your district's elementary librarians for their responses. The following paragraphs contain a brief description of the research study and how the random sample was chosen. Attached are the survey instrument and the list of your district's elementary librarians and their schools.

As partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree requirement in the Department of Library Science at the University of Northern Iowa, I am doing a research study entitled, The Utilization of Adult Volunteers in Elementary School Library Media Centers. A survey will be conducted as part of the research study to determine the extent to which Iowa school districts, employing media specialists, are utilizing adult volunteers in elementary media centers and to determine the tasks the adult volunteers are being assigned.

To obtain a randomly selected group of Iowa elementary school media specialists, the Department of Public Instruction's list entitled, Basic Education Data Survey 1982-1983, was used as a source for selecting media specialists who are identified by the local districts as serving an elementary school. Entries that did not clarify grade level were cross-checked with the Iowa Education Directory. The name of the media specialist, the name of the school, and the current school address were recorded on a numbered index card. Using a list of random numbers, 50 percent of the numbered cards were drawn for use in the survey.

Should permission be given, I would greatly appreciate learning of any changes in media specialist assignments for the people listed on the attached sheet. My intention is to have the survey instrument sent to the specific elementary school and the media specialist serving that elementary school on or about September 17, 1983. Also knowing the name of any

new media specialists would allow me to extend the professional courtesy of addressing the envelope to the new person serving the elementary school.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and I hope to be hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Judy Snetselaar
Media Specialist, Northeast Hamilton Community School
1616 Broadway
Webster City, Iowa 50595

Enclosure

APPENDIX B. Pretest Cover Letter

September 1, 1983

Dear

I would like to ask you to take a few minutes of your time to help pretest the enclosed cover letter and questionnaire, which is part of a research study I am doing as partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts degree at the University of Northern Iowa. If possible, please return the cover letter, questionnaire, and your comments in the enclosed envelope by September 10, 1983.

Please note any constructive comments to help improve the cover letter and the questionnaire. Feel free to mark on the enclosures. Your responses will remain confidential, and since you are part of the pretest, answers you might indicate on the questionnaire will not be included with the survey results gathered later.

Thank you for your help with the pretesting, and I hope you have a good school year.

Sincerely,

Judy Snetselaar
Media Specialist, Northeast Hamilton Community School
1616 Broadway
Webster City, Iowa 50595

Enclosures

APPENDIX C. Cover Letter and Questionnaire

September 17, 1983

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 beginning of the school year. If possible, please return the questionnaire to me by October 7, 1983.

The purpose of this survey is to determine the number of adult volunteers serving in elementary school library media centers in Iowa and the tasks they are performing. The information, which will remain confidential, will be used for a research paper I am writing in partial completion of a Master of Arts degree at the University of Northern Iowa.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Judy Snetselaar
Media Specialist, Northeast Hamilton Community School
1616 Broadway
Webster City, Iowa 50595

Enclosure

Tasks Analysis of Adult Volunteers in
Iowa Elementary School Library Media Centers

GENERAL INFORMATION

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to each of these statements by placing a checkmark on the appropriate line.

1. The grades served by the library/media center are
 K-3 4-6
 K-6 5-8
 K-8
2. Amount of time media specialist is in the school building addressed is
 Full-time Part-time (specify percent of time %)
3. Does the center described in Statement 1 utilize adult volunteers?
 Yes No

If your answer to Number 3 is No, you have completed the questionnaire. Please return the entire questionnaire to me in the envelope provided.

If your answer to Number 3 is Yes, please respond to the checklist which follows.

INSTRUCTIONS: The items which follow have been compiled to represent a partial list of tasks that might be performed by your adult volunteers in elementary school library media centers. Please indicate with a checkmark those tasks actually performed by your adult volunteers in the elementary school library media center.

1. Classifies and catalogs all types of print materials
2. Informs teachers and students of inability to fill requests
3. Assists in production of TV programs
4. Makes final check on accuracy of cataloging and classification
5. Places subject headings on vertical file folders
6. Sprays maps and pictures with plastic fixative for preservation
7. Duplicates or prints cards for materials

- ___ 8. Maintains schedules of class activities in library
- ___ 9. Develops routing lists for distribution of materials
- ___ 10. Inspects print materials for damage
- ___ 11. Compiles individual reading guidance lists
- ___ 12. Maintains bindery records
- ___ 13. Plans cooperatively with public librarians for joint library activities
- ___ 14. Disciplines students in library
- ___ 15. Plans cooperatively with faculty members to coordinate materials and library activities with curriculum programs, units, and textbooks
- ___ 16. Plans sequential program of library instruction
- ___ 17. Organizes and advises library or book club
- ___ 18. Organizes and leads literary and book discussions
- ___ 19. Maintains lines of communication with the district administrative offices
- ___ 20. Gives incidental instruction in library skills
- ___ 21. Assists students and teachers with taping sessions
- ___ 22. Reviews library rules and procedures
- ___ 23. Enlists faculty in formulating a written selection policy for materials
- ___ 24. Engages in research activities relative to educational media and media center programs
- ___ 25. Takes attendance in library
- ___ 26. Checks card catalog and shelf list for ordering and duplication of materials
- ___ 27. Plans, prepares, and arranges bulletin boards, displays, and exhibits
- ___ 28. Opens new books and collates pages
- ___ 29. Covers books with plastic jackets
- ___ 30. Prepares sets of catalog cards from main entry cards
- ___ 31. Duplicates tape recordings
- ___ 32. Files orders and invoices
- ___ 33. Repairs nonprint materials

- ___ 34. Maintains, repairs, and makes minor adjustments to audiovisual equipment
- ___ 35. Charges, discharges, and renews materials and equipment
- ___ 36. Monitors use of electronic teaching equipment
- ___ 37. Assists teachers and students in using teaching equipment and materials
- ___ 38. Establishes policies concerning maintenance of materials
- ___ 39. Compiles review files for books and other materials
- ___ 40. Assists teachers and students in the use of production techniques
- ___ 41. Assists with assignments done in the library
- ___ 42. Helps students learn to interpret figures and numerical relationships
- ___ 43. Performs general reference services
- ___ 44. Answers ready-reference questions
- ___ 45. Serves as community resource liaison person
- ___ 46. Prepares adding machine tape to verify total costs of purchases
- ___ 47. Performs routine print shop activities
- ___ 48. Prepares orders for printed catalog cards
- ___ 49. Maintains equipment inventories
- ___ 50. Records meetings, speeches, programs, and performances
- ___ 51. Shifts materials and adjusts location labels as required
- ___ 52. Posts receipt of periodical issues and determine whether issues are missing
- ___ 53. Operates lettering and drawing devices
- ___ 54. Processes and prints photographs
- ___ 55. Stamps ownership mark on all materials
- ___ 56. Orders and returns materials and equipment from district and/or other materials centers
- ___ 57. Administers the library program and staff during summer and/or extended hours
- ___ 58. Supervises practicing librarians from teacher education and graduate library schools
- ___ 59. Helps to determine over-all library policies
- ___ 60. Plans library or media center operations and maintenance

- ___ 61. Maintains cumulative records or condition of and maintenance work on equipment
- ___ 62. Schedules use of facilities
- ___ 63. Plans arrangement of library space and furniture
- ___ 64. Searches for and verifies bibliographic data in trade catalogs
- ___ 65. Inspects nonprint materials for damage
- ___ 66. Alphabetizes catalog cards for filing
- ___ 67. Compiles and revises book catalogs of print and nonprint materials
- ___ 68. Develops media center handbook for teachers and students
- ___ 69. Orients faculty to library program, materials, and services
- ___ 70. Maintains publicity records
- ___ 71. Prepares and assembles bibliographic data for ordering
- ___ 72. Maintains accession and inventory records of materials
- ___ 73. Issues student library cards
- ___ 74. Promotes use of professional library
- ___ 75. Assists teachers in locating bibliographic data
- ___ 76. Reads and reviews professional materials
- ___ 77. Determines methods and procedures for preparation of materials
- ___ 78. Prepares main entry cards
- ___ 79. Supervises noon leisure-time activities
- ___ 80. Places call numbers, classification numbers, copy numbers, etc. in/on books and other materials
- ___ 81. Shellacs or lacquers book spines and covers
- ___ 82. Compiles materials lists
- ___ 83. Types notices, requisitions, bulletins, bibliographies, letters, stencils, orders, etc.
- ___ 84. Plans, organizes, and supervises book fairs
- ___ 85. Gives assistance when equipment emergencies occur
- ___ 86. Participates in book fair activities

- ___ 87. Handles clerical and secretarial aspects of correspondence (i.e., sorting, filing, typing, mailing, etc.)
- ___ 88. Determine added entries needed
- ___ 89. Labels library materials such as pamphlets, pictures, and clippings
- ___ 90. Sets up and organizes circulation desk daily
- ___ 91. Reserves materials and equipment
- ___ 92. Plans system of scheduling and delivery of materials and equipment
- ___ 93. Routes materials according to pre-established lists or records
- ___ 94. Removes from shelves and files books and other materials which need to be repaired, re-marked, rebound, or discarded
- ___ 95. Organizes and maintains special collections of print materials
- ___ 96. Establishes cataloging and classification policies
- ___ 97. Binds copies of old periodicals
- ___ 98. Assists in the sale of paperback books
- ___ 99. Performs messenger service
- ___ 100. Designs new audiovisual materials for instructional use (i.e., slides, filmstrips, charts, graphs)

APPENDIX D. Follow-up Letter

October 12, 1983

Dear Librarian/Media Specialist:

I have not received your completed copy of the survey instrument, Tasks Analysis of Adult Volunteers in Iowa Elementary School Library Media Centers. Although the deadline for returning the survey instrument has passed, I would very much appreciate it if you would mail your completed survey instrument to me no later than October 19, 1983.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Judy Snetselaar
Media Specialist, Northeast Hamilton Community School
1616 Broadway
Webster City, Iowa 50595

APPENDIX E. Raw Data from Survey Instrument of Tasks

| Type | Number | Assignment by | | Total Assigned |
|----------------|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | | Full-time Media Specialist | Part-time Media Specialist | |
| P ^a | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| P | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| P | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| N | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 7 | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| N | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 9 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| N | 10 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| P | 11 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 14 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| P | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 20 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| N | 21 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| P | 22 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| P | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 24 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| N | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 26 | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| P | 27 | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| N | 28 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| N | 29 | 8 | 7 | 15 |
| N | 30 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| N | 31 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N | 32 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| N | 33 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| N | 34 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N | 35 | 10 | 5 | 15 |
| N | 36 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| N | 37 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| P | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

^aP and N indicate professional and nonprofessional tasks.

APPENDIX E. (continued)

| Type | Number | Assignment by | | Total Assigned |
|------|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| | | Full-time Media Specialist | Part-time Media Specialist | |
| P | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 41 | 9 | 3 | 12 |
| P | 42 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| P | 43 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| P | 44 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| P | 45 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| N | 46 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| N | 47 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| P | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 49 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 51 | 14 | 7 | 21 |
| N | 52 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| N | 53 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| N | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 55 | 13 | 6 | 19 |
| N | 56 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| P | 57 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 58 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 59 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| P | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 61 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| P | 62 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| P | 63 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 64 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N | 65 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| N | 66 | 18 | 8 | 26 |
| P | 67 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| P | 68 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 69 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 71 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 72 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| N | 73 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 74 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 76 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 77 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 78 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 79 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 80 | 11 | 5 | 16 |
| N | 81 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

APPENDIX E. (continued)

| Type | Number | Assignment by | | Total Assigned |
|------|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | | Full-time Media Specialist | Part-time Media Specialist | |
| N | 82 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| N | 83 | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| P | 84 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| N | 85 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| N | 86 | 16 | 6 | 22 |
| N | 87 | 11 | 5 | 16 |
| P | 88 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 89 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| P | 90 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| P | 91 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| P | 92 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| N | 93 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| N | 94 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| P | 95 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 96 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 97 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| N | 98 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| N | 99 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| P | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

ADDITIONAL TASKS LISTED

Frequency
Reported

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Repairs books and magazines |
| 3 | Cards books |
| 9 | Shelves books |
| 1 | Runs ditto machine |
| 1 | Files professional catalogs |
| 2 | Assists computer students |
| 1 | Checks out books |
| 1 | Removes and returns Area 16 books |
| 1 | Reads shelves |
| 1 | Reads stories for storytime |
| 1 | Pulling cards for withdrawn books |