



1968

A study of teacher aides

Janis Kolb
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/education_honproj



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kolb, Janis, "A study of teacher aides" (1968). *Honors Projects*. 5.
https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/education_honproj/5

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Illinois Wesleyan Univ. Libraries
Bloomington, Ill. 61701

A STUDY OF TEACHER AIDES
/

BY

JANIS KOLB
//

ARCHIVES

LB
1731
K6

Submitted for Honors Work
In the Department of Education
Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington, Illinois
1968

Illinois Wesleyan Univ. Libraries
Bloomington, Ill. 61701

Accepted by the Department of Education of Illinois
Wesleyan University in fulfillment of the requirement for
departmental honors.

Clifford N. Peltz
Project Advisor

This paper is respectfully dedicated to the three educators whom I admire most, Drs. Lucile Klauser, N. Emerson Miller, and Clifford Pfeltz.

J. E. K.

Introduction

In the scientific, industrial world of today, specialization is a key word. With increasing frequency, jobs that used to be performed by only one or a few persons are being analyzed and, for the sake of greater effectiveness, broken down and assigned to specialists in the field. One area that has been slow in following this trend is that of education. Years ago, the teacher in a one-room school was assigned such diverse duties as snow-shoveling, hauling water, cutting wood, and keeping a fire going. In today's schools, these non-instructional chores are replaced by such duties as ordering films, setting up a projector, making transparencies, setting up a resource library, collecting money, making attendance reports, doing clean-up chores, planning individualized instruction, and attending meetings, graduate courses, and in-service training programs.¹ Clearly, teachers are performing many tasks not directly

¹Mary D. Shipp, "Teacher Aides: A Survey," The National Elementary Principal, XXXXVI (May, 1967), p.30.

related to actual teaching. What, then, can be done to promote some specialization in the field of education?

A possible solution, according to Richard B. Goulet, is the training as aides of many people with high potential but without professional preparation. The first step in freeing teachers of many auxiliary duties has led to the cultivation of a whole new crop of human resources--the paraprofessionals. They are needed because "rapid social change, the great mobility of American people, the increasing growth of our suburbs, and advanced technological developments have resulted in school changes that make increasing demands upon the teacher's time and competencies."²

The National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards describes the addition of auxiliary personnel in the schools as:

one of the challenging and hopeful advances in modern education. The needs of society require significant changes in our present school organization. The teacher is a skilled professional and as such must be permitted to do a professional level of work. He must be a diagnostician and a guider of learning experiences. He should not waste his time on trivia. The utilization of auxiliary personnel can provide the opportunity for teachers to teach.³

²Richard R. Goulet, "Cultivating a New Crop of Human Resources with ESEA Title III," The National Elementary Principal, XXXXVI (May, 1967), p.49.

³National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPS), "Auxiliary School Personnel," The National Elementary Principal, XXXXVI (May, 1967), p.6.

A major question concerning the use of teacher aides is that of where they should be used. The answer, of course, is wherever they are needed, possibly with the greatest concentration in the areas of greatest need. A major social concern today is the "gap in quality" between suburban schools and those of the inner city. The latter areas have such problems as tremendous population pressure, overcrowded schools, and outmoded buildings. These schools do not receive the same financial support as those in the suburbs. The turnover of both teachers and students is high, thus disruptive to school achievement. Therefore such schools are especially in need of new approaches to solve their academic problems. Without these new approaches, the situation cannot improve. About seventy per cent of American youth now finish high school, but the other thirty per cent have the greatest difficulty in entering the job market. They become concentrated in the inner city, and the continued trends of urbanization and automation indicate that the problems of inner city schools will remain the greatest

challenge of mass education.

The inner city, however, is not the only area needing help. Pockets of poverty and low income can be found in suburban areas of every metropolitan center of the United States. There is also a great need in many rural areas. Underachievement is not limited to low income families. In every school there are groups of children who, for various reasons, do not measure up to their potentials and thus need individual attention.⁵ The primary purpose of teacher aide programs is to increase the effectiveness of the teacher.

Why have teachers been delegated so many "extracurricular activities?" The reasons and explanations offered are varied. Being the chief manpower supply in the school, teachers were traditionally assigned functions not strictly instructional. The variety of housekeeping and janitorial chores would have been more properly done by policemen, dieticians, bus drivers, office clerks, and trained medical workers.. These duties have sometimes been justified by claiming that this helped the teachers become acquainted with the whole child.⁶ Superintendents and school boards habitually emphasized "economy-plus-efficiency," and teachers went along doing this meaningless clerical work to please

⁴Gayle Janowitz, Helping Hands: Volunteer Work in Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp.1-2.

⁵Ibid., p.2.

⁶Robert H. Anderson, Teaching in a World of Change (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1966), p.110.

the administration. Furthermore, many teachers and administrators get satisfaction from having clerical functions because they can be done with relative ease. Solving a real educational problem is far more difficult, so many teachers prefer the routine clerical functions to the more hazardous ones of instruction.⁷

Fortunately, in recent years there have been a number of factors leading to sharp increase of interest in and employment of teacher aides. Some of these factors are:

1. Expanding need and demand for school services.
2. New dimensions in education--reorganization of structural patterns, expanded curriculum, and differentiated roles for teachers, including flexible scheduling, cooperative and team teaching, large group and seminar work, and individualized instruction.
3. Acute shortage of professionals--auxiliary personnel would permit greater efficiency in use of time; supporting, not replacing, teachers.
4. Federal funds are becoming available.
5. Heightened awareness of special learning needs of all children and youth, but especially of the disadvantaged.
6. Belief that using indigenous people as aides might result in better communication between professionals and pupils of different backgrounds.
7. Flight of people with less than a college education who cannot compete in an increasingly automated economy but who could contribute to education and find personal satisfaction in working in schools.⁸

⁷Anderson, p. 110.

⁸NCTEPS, p.7.

As evidence of the increasing interest in the employment of teacher aides, there is a constantly growing list of reasons why they are needed. As Robert H. Anderson stated,

It seems that some minimum standards ought to be promulgated as a basis for national adoption of the teacher aide idea. Just as it is widely accepted that all principals need at least one secretary to assist with the central office load, should it not be agreed that every full-time teacher needs at least an hour per day of an aide's time? At least on a trial basis, this proposal deserves to be implemented. In situations demanding an unusual amount of in-service staff activity or higher standards of service to pupils, this allowance should, of course, be increased. While admittedly this scheme would require a significant additional cost, it seems clear that important advantages would accrue.⁹

The Wilson School District in Phoenix, Arizona, was involved in research trying to identify the teaching methods, techniques, and ways of organizing that would best meet the growing demand for more individualized teaching. They reported that "...we believe that through the proper use of instructional aides the climate will be strengthened, and the teacher can be released periodically during the day to plan activities that provide for individualized instruction as well as provide greater stimulation and motivation for learning on the part of all students."¹⁰

Another line of reasoning supporting the employment of

⁹Anderson, p.121.

¹⁰Pat B. Henderson, "Quality Education Through the Use of Instructional Aides," Arizona Teacher LV (January, 1967), p.10.

teacher aides is related to the current shortage of qualified teachers. Studies have shown that one cause of this problem was the excessive load of professional services and nonprofessional duties. Educators have begun to believe that more young people would enter teaching and more capable people would remain in teaching if they were relieved of many of their less professional chores. The use of teacher aides might provide this relief at a reasonable cost and would not jeopardize the interests of the children.¹¹

Numerous estimates have been made of the amount of time teachers spend doing nonprofessional tasks. The Yale-Fairfield Study of elementary schools indicated that teachers spend about twelve per cent of their time on routine activities, and nearly another eight per cent on miscellaneous activities. The Bay City, Michigan, Study showed that elementary teachers spend from twelve to nineteen per cent of their time on clerical activities and between twenty-one and sixty-nine per cent on activities not requiring professional competence. When aides were employed in Bay City, teachers on the average spent twenty-three per cent more time on activities closely related to instruction (for example, one hundred forty-four per cent more time on lesson planning, eighty per cent more on counseling) and forty-eight per cent less time on noninstructional activities. The Peabody Public School Cooperative Program reported that assistance given by the

¹¹Yale-Fairfield Study of Elementary Teaching, Clyde M. Hill, Director, Teacher Assistants (New Haven, Connecticut, February, 1959), pp.1-2.

instructional aides enabled teachers to expand the scope of their teaching; provide better for individual differences; have thirty per cent more time for planning; and do a better job in testing and evaluation, public relations, and other special functions.¹² It seems that teacher aides can thus release teachers from a large part of their time being spent on the four R's--records, reports, rosters, and receipts.¹³

Another reason for employing teacher aides is to provide professional teachers with greater opportunity to use their professional skills, such as keeping up with developments in individual subject fields, planning and preparing lessons, developing imaginative instructional materials, and improving evaluation of student work. J. Lloyd Trump and Dorsey Baynham have stated that:

Lack of time for professional work damages professional pride. About a third of a teacher's day goes to clerical and subprofessional tasks, another third to work that could just as well be done by various kinds of automated devices. A situation that provides only a third of a day for performance of work he is trained to do--and finds satisfaction in doing--contributes little to the morale of a talented, conscientious teacher.¹⁴

Teacher aides cannot be regarded as a panacea for dozens of educational problems, but they are a step in the right

¹²Anderson, p.116.

¹³Jody L. Stevens, "The Need for Teacher Aides," The Texas Outlook LI (May, 1967), p.54.

¹⁴J. Lloyd Trump and Dorsey Baynham, Focus on Change: Guide to Better Schools (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1961), p.8.

direction. Dr. Pat E. Henderson summarized this feeling in his statement:

Instructional aides may not upgrade the quality of instruction merely by turning the handle of a ditto machine, by standing in the shade on the playground, or by preparing materials for a bulletin board. But by performing many noninstructional functions in the classroom, carefully supervised by the teacher, they can assist to provide the environment whereby the teacher can teach and the student can learn.¹⁵

As further evidence of the need for teacher aides, there are numerous surveys of administrators and teachers that showed a favorable response. In 1965 a survey of administrators from fifty-eight districts throughout the state of Texas indicated a strong endorsement of teacher aides as a means of improving classroom instruction. Reports included such comments as "consider the employment of teacher aides best investment school has made. All teachers depend on aide."¹⁶ In a teacher opinion poll conducted by the NEA Journal, an overwhelming majority (nine out of ten) of teachers with aides indicated that having them was helpful, and more than half said that it was of great assistance. Teachers in small systems were more enthusiastic about the program than those in large systems. The actual figures are presented in a table that follows:

¹⁵Henderson, p.22.

¹⁶W. C. Rivers, "Teacher Aides May Set You Free," Texas Outlook L (October, 1966), p.42.

TABLE 1
TEACHERS' RATINGS OF VALUE OF TEACHER AIDES¹⁷

Amount of Assistance	Total (Percentage)	Large System	Medium System	Small System
Great assistance	51.4	49.3	47.9	58.6
Some assistance	38.4	34.3	41.4	36.8
Little assistance	9.5	13.4	10.7	4.6
No assistance	.7	3.0	0.0	0.0

The success of any teacher aide program is partially dependent upon the qualifications of the assistants themselves. Most school districts exercise a great deal of flexibility in their requirements, believing that the necessary qualifications should vary according to the situation, skills, and functions involved. Among the criteria used in the screening of applicants are personality traits; some of the desirable characteristics of aides are ability to get along with people, compassion, dedication, liking for children, ability to fit in, flexibility, and responsiveness to teachers.¹⁸

The educational requirements for aides depend upon the socioeconomic level of the community, and the specific functions of the aides. In the disadvantaged areas where aides

¹⁷Teacher Opinion Poll, "How the Profession Feels About Teacher Aides," NEA Journal LVI (November, 1967), p.16.

¹⁸Gertrude Noar, Teacher Aides at Work (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1967), p.14.

have a dual purpose--relieving teachers of such duties as lunchroom supervision, monitoring play areas, housekeeping chores, etc., and also serving as a person with whom the underprivileged children can identify--applicants who have not completed high school are accepted. On the other hand, in areas where aides are considered almost assistant teachers and expected to follow up the instruction initiated by the professionals, then candidates with some college training are preferred. If the aides' duties are basically clerical in nature, some commercial or business school training would be desirable.¹⁹ A more thorough discussion of the variation of aides' duties will follow.

Some school systems prefer to set down more specific qualifications for acceptance of aides. The Yale-Fairfield Study recommended the following minimum requirements: graduation from an accredited secondary school, recommendation for employment by the secondary school's guidance personnel, recommendation covering moral character, evidence of physical fitness, and a personality suitable for work with children.²⁰ The Wilson School District (Phoenix, Arizona) used the following guidelines:

1. Educationally oriented.
2. Display sincere evidence of desire to work with young people.
3. Possess pleasant attitude.
4. Agreeable, congenial, cooperative, and willing to perform varied tasks.
5. Cognizant of status and importance of classroom teacher.

¹⁹Noar, p.14.

²⁰Yale-Fairfield Study, p.7.

6. Neat in dress and personal grooming.
7. Able to relate well with staff members, parents, and children.
8. Able to follow directions and be adaptable to learning new skills.
9. Experienced in working with children in group situations.
10. Be ethical concerning professional problems and situations.²¹

Salaries for teacher aides generally vary as much as the requirements, and sometimes also depend upon the job performed. Some school systems use volunteer teacher aides, while others pay them on a regular basis. An hourly wage is preferred by some because it allows for variations in time individuals spend on the job. However, some people prefer a monthly wage that usually includes benefits such as annual raises, sick leave, and paid holidays. On the average, pay is approximately one half that of the classroom teacher.²²

The general flexibility of qualifications for teacher aides has led to a great variety of types of people who become teacher aides. In most cases the types who apply and are accepted depend upon the nature of the community, the needs of the people, and the kind of school program.

Inner city areas have large numbers of unemployed, under-educated, and unskilled people. With sufficient funds, well-organized training programs, and cooperative direction, schools can provide jobs for some of these people. Middle class communities differ in needs and available people. Many women,

²¹Henderson, p.11.

²²Rivers, p.42.

well-educated and experienced with handling children, find themselves with little to do--their children are away at school, or at college, their husbands are at work, and many machines expedite their housework. Some on-the-job training can enable these women to be a great help in the schools.²³

College students are an abundant possible source of teacher aides. They have the optimism and enthusiasm of youth, are still fairly close to the children in age, and have the prestige of going to college. Serving as an aide would provide valuable experience for a teacher education student. There are, however, some difficulties in employing college students as aides. They generally have a heavy schedule of academic and nonacademic activities; their need for independence sometimes results in hostility toward institutions; and often feeling dissatisfied with their own work, they need to see results quickly.²⁴

High school students are another potential source for teacher aides. They are often recruited from deprived areas, and many are paid through agencies allied to poverty programs such as the Neighborhood Youth Corps. They are still closer in age to the children they work with, and represent successful growing up.²⁵ An example of this is a program involving thirty teen-aged girls from disadvantaged areas in Brooklyn,

²³Noar, pp.12-13.

²⁴Janowitz, p.76.

²⁵Ibid., p.77.

New York. They served as paid teacher aides for two hours each day, working directly with the children, under the supervision of professionals trained in specific aspects of child care and family living. The program used a wealth of resource personnel, including psychiatrists, pediatricians, public health officials, and cosmetologists who worked to promote the development of the girls' self-image as each grew into adulthood.²⁶

It should not be assumed the teacher aide must be a female; men possess a special appeal as teacher aides because elementary schools are so women-oriented. There are not enough men in the lives of many children, especially those in deprived areas. Male teacher aides also demonstrate that learning can be considered a manly activity. Girls need the image of helpful, interested men as much as boys do.²⁷ In Arlington, Massachusetts, male teacher aides in kindergarten through second grade provided a new image of learning. The experiment involved six schools and six hundred pupils. Emphasis was placed on using men who were imaginative, creative, and enjoyed working with children. They worked in the classroom and conducted tutorial sessions with small groups of boys who were repeaters or who had trouble learning. These groups had interest and achievement as high as other groups working with female aides.²⁸

²⁶Goulet, p.51.

²⁷Janowitz, p.77.

²⁸Goulet, p.50.

Retired adults are also active in various programs. When they have worked successfully with children, they lend a sense of security to which children respond well. Active and retired teachers are often especially involved. They can help the children and other inexperienced aides. The youngsters often sense that these helpers will not be too concerned about poor achievement and that they may be able to help.²⁹

According to a survey conducted by Mary D. Shipp, the typical paid teacher aide in 1965-1966 was a woman, worked more than twenty hours a week helping a teacher or group of teachers in upper elementary grades, had a high school diploma, earned about two dollars an hour, had applied for her job through the school district's personnel office, and went through some sort of screening procedure conducted by the central office staff and the principal of the cooperating school.³⁰

The uses of teacher aides are as varied as the people themselves. Studies of schools using aides seldom found many teacher aide projects exactly alike, nor were the aides alike in the contributions that they made. They included community resource people with special experience, clerks, bus drivers, and high school, college, and graduate students. Experiments have demonstrated that teachers can and do learn to use teacher assistants effectively and efficiently for

²⁹Janowitz, p.78.

³⁰Shipp, p.31.

nonprofessional tasks.³¹

Anderson has classified teacher aides according to ability and preparation into three categories: preprofessionals, subprofessionals, and paraprofessionals. The first group includes various arrangements for gradually exposing teacher education students to the teacher's role through a type of apprenticeship under a professional's supervision. Also included in this group are older or brighter pupils who assist the teacher in some formal way. The second group includes people who do not necessarily intend to be teachers and who often have no college education. They serve in an assistant's role requiring little or no special training or preparation, doing simple tasks that can be explained and supervised by teachers. In the last category are the aides who do tasks requiring a certain amount of technical skill and training not ordinarily possessed by teachers. Their wide range of talents includes clerical aptitude, artistic ability, knowledge about audio-visual equipment, ability to read and evaluate student work, and the training for some types of measurement and guidance work.³²

Trump and Baynham classified aides according to the type of function. General aides would perform clerical and routine duties such as extraclass activities and supervision of students on school grounds, in the cafeteria, corridors, and auditorium. They would be high school graduates, and

³¹Trump, p.80.

³²Anderson, pp.111-112.

would probably work on a part-time basis. Clerks would be assigned such duties as typing, duplicating materials, grading objective tests, keeping records, and checking and distributing supplies. They also should be high school graduates, probably working on a forty-hour week basis. Lastly, instruction assistants would perform such tasks as reading and evaluating themes and reports, serving as lab assistants, supervising projects, and assisting with extraclass activities. They should be college graduates with special training, working about ten to twenty hours per week.³³

Other studies have made more specific suggestions of uses of teacher aides. Experience has shown that teaching teams are strengthened when they include clerical aides, teacher aides, and other supportive personnel. Some educators believe that, for example, a team of five teachers could make more efficient use of a teacher aide than could five independent teachers sharing one. There is even evidence that schools could actually get along with fewer certified teachers if they used nonprofessionals for tasks teachers now waste their time on.³⁴

People indigenous to the community serve a variety of purposes. They often have the same speech patterns as the ghetto children and can reveal hidden meanings of phrases to the teacher. They often serve as a human relations link between the home and school. They visit homes to talk with

³³Trump, p. 34.

³⁴Anderson, pp.120-121.

parents about the school's interest in them and their children. They then describe the home and parents to the teacher, and make arrangements for visitations and conferences. They can also be particularly helpful where children have not learned to speak English, serving as an interpreter and encouraging them to learn to speak the language.³⁵

In upper elementary and secondary schools aides can be used to help the children who have not learned to read. Often called assistant teachers, the aides are trained to work with these children, using flash cards, experience charts, or books with small groups and phonic drills on a one-to-one basis. Children having difficulty with arithmetic can be helped in a similar manner. At present, many under-achievers receive little attention because teachers do not have time for individual help.³⁶

The school library is another place in which teacher aides can be used. A unique project in St. Louis, Missouri, has demonstrated this use. In ten overcrowded schools in a low income area, the library room is used for classroom space. Halls, entranceways, and other unused space serve as repositories for the books. The main collection of materials is in the Library Service Center, which serves all ten schools. The books are taken to individual schools where a teacher aide-clerk takes charge. These aides are volunteers, working part-time. They help select books for each grade level,,

³⁵Noar, p.20.

³⁶Ibid., p.21.

work with each child individually, learn to understand and interpret reading test scores, receive training in children's literature and storytelling, stimulate students to read, and work closely with the teacher. Students receive more personal attention than they would with only one librarian on duty.³⁷

Secondary schools can also find many uses for teacher aides. Harvard University and Newton, Massachusetts, Public Schools worked out a program of "contract correctors." Lay readers received intensive preservice and in-service training and worked at an hourly rate grading students' compositions. Similar arrangements could be worked out for other subjects. Another suggestion concerns a recent study that shows that high school teachers devote from one-fifth to one-third of their time to extracurricular activities for which they often have neither the time nor the background. Well-qualified people could be recruited from the community for these tasks on a part-time basis.³⁸

The teacher opinion poll conducted in schools that used aides classified the types of assistance provided into six main categories: clerical assistance, including recording grades, typing, filing, and duplicating; nonclassroom duties such as lunchroom, playground, and bus supervision; large group instruction in areas such as music and art; small group or individual instruction in subjects such as

³⁷Goulet, pp.50-51.

³⁸Anderson, pp.119-120.

reading and spelling; preparation and use of instructional resources; and taking care of classroom equipment. When the teachers were asked how they used their aides, the results were as follows:

TABLE 2
USES OF TEACHER AIDES³⁹

Type of Duty	Total (Percentages)	Elementary School	Secondary School
Clerical Assistance	77.6	73.0	85.9
Nonclassroom Duties	18.4	24.7	7.1
Large Group Instruction	13.7	18.5	5.1
Small Group Instruction	15.9	16.3	15.2
Preparation and Use of Resources	13.4	15.1	9.1
Classroom Environment	8.6	10.7	5.1
Other	0.7	1.1	0.0

When aides' duties are being determined, assignments should vary according to the situation; there should not be an unalterable list of duties, allowing for no deviations. The faculty of each building or district should determine the general guidelines and policies for the use of aides. Then each teacher should specify the tasks and guide his aide in terms of the particular need. Decisions should be tentative and open to change until more data have been gathered on the use of aides.⁴⁰

³⁹Teacher Opinion Poll, p.16.

⁴⁰NCTEPS, p.8.

Some school systems oppose the use of teacher aides for any duties related to instruction. For example, the Minnesota State Department of Education enumerated the following duties not to be assigned to aides: conducting class, constructing tests requiring professional knowledge, correcting themes and subjective tests, advising and consulting with students, supervising study halls and home rooms, and supervising in libraries.⁴¹

On the other hand, some systems see nothing wrong with assigning simple instructional tasks to the aide. The main point of controversy is over where to draw the line; when does a task require professional skill and knowledge? Thorwald Esbensen, an administrator with many years of experience, made the following statement:

We must conclude, I think, that the distinguishing characteristic of the qualified teacher is his ability to analyze the instructional needs of his students, and to prescribe the elements of formal schooling that will best meet these needs. In this view it is altogether proper for the teacher aide to be more than a clerical aide. The usefulness of the teacher aide should be restricted only by his own personal limitations in whatever duties may be assigned to him by the regular classroom teacher.⁴²

The Yale-Fairfield Study found evidence that this flexible type of policy does work well. In the teacher aide programs studied, cooperating teachers were asked to work out the

⁴¹Minnesota State Department of Education, "Using Teacher Aides," Minnesota Journal of Education XXXXVI (November, 1965), p.29

⁴²Thorwald Esbensen, "Should Teacher Aides Be More Than Clerks?" Phi Delta Kappan XXXXVII (January, 1966), p.237.

assignment of duties to their assistants on the basis of the needs and opportunities of their own teaching assignments. No attempt was made to differentiate between instructional and noninstructional duties; it was felt that if the aides were limited to the latter, they would not have enough to do. The instructional duties assigned were fairly simple tasks and were usually directly supervised by the teacher in charge. The variety of instructional situations in which the cooperating teachers found it practicable to have the assistant help is rather surprising. Particularly frequent was the use of the assistant to help individual pupils with their work.⁴³

When the Teacher Opinion Poll asked teachers what duties they would like assistance with, the results were as follows:

1. Eighty-four per cent wanted help with clerical duties.
2. Fifty-one per cent favored, and forty-nine per cent were against, help with grading and marking papers.
3. Fifty-six per cent would prefer doing classroom instruction duties themselves.⁴⁴

The teacher aide's schedule can also be flexible because she is not primarily responsible for the instructional program. She tends to do many of the errands that the teacher cannot leave the classroom to do and also cannot

⁴³Yale-Fairfield Study, pp.9-11.

⁴⁴Teacher Opinion Poll, p.17.

have a pupil do. The aides do a considerable amount of work during school hours that would otherwise be done by a teacher outside of school hours. The aide's work can be more easily interrupted than can that of the teacher. Thus a number of potential interruptions to the teacher are transferred to the aide when she is in the room.⁴⁵

The lists of possible specific duties seem endless.

J. William Rioux has suggested the following uses:

1. Serve as a teaching team member--take attendance, score objective tests, duplicate materials, assign books and lockers, obtain library materials, help with special projects and discipline.
2. Manage audio-visual equipment.
3. Assist on field trips.
4. Supervise on playgrounds.
5. Help the school nurse and doctor.
6. Advise case workers and gather information.
7. Strengthen school-community relations.
8. Assist in preschool programs.
9. Make counseling appointments.⁴⁶

Other authorities have grouped duties according to their nature. Jody L. Stevens, for example, listed twenty-three instructional related duties, including handling opening

⁴⁵Yale-Fairfield Study, p.12.

⁴⁶J. William Rioux, "At the Teacher's Right Hand," American Education II (November, 1965), pp.5-6.

exercises and announcements, distributing papers, books, etc., assisting in standardized test programs, orienting new pupils, handling interruptions, emergencies, and messages, and monitoring seatwork. In the administrative and clerical category he listed thirteen duties, including keeping inventory, checking out withdrawing students, and recording, processing, and averaging grades. He also listed eleven supervisory tasks such as assisting in the library, knowing and helping the children to know all regulations, and supervising the class during teacher conferences, in-service training periods, and emergencies that require the teacher's attention.⁴⁷

Robert H. Anderson also divided aides' duties according to function. To the list of clerical duties he would add collecting funds, typing and preparing materials for duplication and distribution, checking students' workbooks, and answering phone calls. In the category of housekeeping chores he included taking care of room appearance, lighting, and ventilation, preparation of bulletin boards, moving and arranging furniture, books, supplies, and equipment, and taking care of plants, pets, exhibits, and room decorations. The custodial type supervision of pupils included maintaining order at bus loading and unloading, and supervising halls, stairways, and the cafeteria. To the list of instructional duties Anderson would add supervising study activities, dictating spelling tests or other teacher-selected materials

⁴⁷Stevens, p.55.

to the class, clarifying routine assignments, ordering films, and supplies, and doing library research. He also listed as personal help to pupils assisting younger children with clothes, giving minor first aid, and making health checks.⁴⁸

As a final list, the Salt Lake City, Utah, Public Schools suggested the following additional tasks: making charts, assembling games, cutting paper, sharpening pencils, making out summaries, making lists of names, supplies, etc., counting materials, delivering items to other rooms, reading and listening to the children, acting as a resources person, making backgrounds for murals, playing the piano, reading or telling stories, helping with make-up work, and drilling small groups or individuals in various subjects.⁴⁹ It should now be evident that an aide's duties are dependent upon her own abilities and the situation concerned.

In addition to their actual duties, teacher aides also have certain responsibilities. Aides must remember that they are assistants, not teachers, and their supervising teacher's judgment is final. Professional ethics require that the aides do not discuss teachers, students, or school affairs with other people. They must reserve their judgment and not be critical of what they see or hear at school. It is often impossible for them to understand the whole picture, especially if they work only part-time. Aides should pre-

⁴⁸Anderson, pp.115-116.

⁴⁹Shipp, pp.31-32.

sent a good example of appearance and behavior at all times; their dress and action should show respect for their work.⁵⁰

On the other hand, the supervising teacher has certain responsibilities to her aide. Although the aide may attend a training program and in-service classes to learn skills that will be helpful in the classroom, the bulk of her orientation falls on the shoulders of the classroom teacher. The aide should be allowed to observe the class for a while, learn the location of materials, and discuss with her supervisor the general nature of her duties. She can gradually become an integral part of daily classroom activity without doing any actual instruction. It is also the teacher's responsibility to discover any special talents her aide may have, to have conferences about her work whenever necessary, and to guide the aide to her fullest potential.⁵¹

If a teacher aide is to perform her duties well and accept responsibility, she must have proper orientation and training. Group meetings including aides, teachers, and administrators are probably the best means of orientation. General and specific goals should be explained. The aides should be told something about the children, their families, and school background. Procedures, records, and responsibilities should be explained, and the aides should know who is in charge of what and who can help them. Books, pamphlets, and articles

⁵⁰Shipp, p.33.

⁵¹Ibid.

might also be made available to the aide during orientation.⁵²

The amount and kind of training that the aides receive depends upon their duties and the educational level attained. Parallel programs of training and work might help eliminate the gap between preservice and in-service programs. Schools and colleges could be jointly responsible for planning, financing, and staffing such programs. Included in the programs should be a systematic follow-up, consisting of evaluation, description of the program in progress, interviews with participants, and continuing assistance for the teachers and aides.⁵³

The local school system must bear the major responsibility for training its auxiliary personnel. Preparing the teachers to train and use aides may be the best way to start widespread use of aides and overcome many teachers' reluctance about working with them. In-service training and support can come from informal seminars and the assistance of resource personnel. Exemplary behavior of teachers and enforcement of high standards are needed. The policy and procedures for protection and discipline of aides must be established.⁵⁴

According to the survey of teacher aide programs conducted by Mary D. Shipp, the typical aide was trained by a series of conferences with her immediate supervisor, the teacher with whom she worked. In some cases, the system

⁵²Janowitz, pp.80-81.

⁵³NCTEFS, p.9.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp.9-10.

instituted a series of in-service workshops for aides. The principal and often the central office staff supervised the aide's work. In Oakland, California, aides gained much from weekly meetings, the content of which developed from the interactions and needs expressed by the teachers and aides. Specific areas were then given the emphasis necessary to implement the program by developing their skills and insights. A daily record of activities kept by each aide assisted in the in-service process, and became an instrument available for in-service program development.⁵⁵

The teacher aides in the programs involved in the Yale-Fairfield Study received most of their preparation through seminars and in-service work. The preparation included:

1. Orientation to the school system, the particular school in which the assignment was made, and the responsibilities.
2. Orientation to the school health facilities and instruction in first aid.
3. Instruction in the operation and care of audio-visual equipment.
4. Art workshop in media and techniques.
5. Creative rhythms workshop.
6. Instruction in directing recreation and children's games.
7. Weekly seminars on elementary school curriculum, problems, and practices.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Shipp, p.31.

⁵⁶Yale-Fairfield Study, pp.13-14.

Studies have been conducted to discover the present-day status of teacher aide programs. In 1967 a survey conducted by the NEA Research Division showed that almost one in five (nineteen per cent) public school teachers had assistance from a teacher aide. Fourteen per cent shared the services of one or more aides with other teachers; five per cent had one or more aides of their own. More than twice as many elementary school teachers had aides' services as did secondary school teachers. There was no significant difference between the proportion of teachers in small systems who had aides and the proportion of teachers in large systems with aides. More teachers in the West than in other regions use aides.⁵⁷

In 1966 Educational Research Service conducted a survey of 251 school systems with an enrollment of over 12,000 pupils regarding their practices in the use of teacher aides. Of this group, 217 used aides during the 1965-1966 school year. Fifteen systems used aides only in secondary schools, 64 used them only in elementary schools, and the rest used them at both levels. The total number of aides used, paid and volunteer, was 44,351; of these approximately 30,000 were at the elementary level. One-third of the aides at the elementary school worked with preprimary and kindergarten groups, one-fourth in the primary level, and forty per cent in the upper grades. The number of aides in a system ranged

⁵⁷Teacher Opinion Poll, p.16.

from one or two into the thousands. The largest number was reported by New York City--9,150 paid workers and 1,850 volunteers; of these all but 3,525 worked in elementary schools. In 1965-1966 aides worked 400,000 hours per week, at a salary of about two dollars per hour, totaling many millions of dollars. One-fourth of the systems relied on federal funds completely, another fourth depended on local and state funds, and the rest used more than one source.⁵⁸

In Minnesota great impetus was given to the employment of teacher aides by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In 1966 about 1,284 aides were being used in programs throughout the state. There were about 600 aides in 135 schools outside of the Twin Cities, and their total salary that year was \$889,637. In Minneapolis in 1965 244 aides worked a fifteen-hour week, with one hour per week of in-service training, in 28 schools. The following year 400 aides were used in 41 schools, using local funds for the first time. The St. Paul schools originally used only local funds; in 1965 federal funds were used to hire 200 aides to augment the 50 already on the job. The program for 1966-1967 was expanded to include a total of 287 aides.⁵⁹

Another legislative act to provide federal funds for teacher aide programs was introduced to Congress in 1967 by Senator Gaylord Nelson. The proposal, Bill S.721, cited

⁵⁸Shipp, pp.31-33.

⁵⁹Betty Ann Wilcox, "What Is the Teacher Aide's Role?" Minnesota Journal of Education XXXXVII (May, 1967), p.9.

as the Teacher Aid Program Support Act of 1967, has been sent to committee for further study. It would authorize the appropriations of fifty million dollars for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1968, one hundred million dollars for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1969, and one hundred fifty million dollars each for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1970, and for the two following fiscal years. These appropriations would enable the Commissioner of Education to make grants to local educational agencies and institutions of higher learning to assist them in carrying out projects for the development of teacher aide programs provided for in applications approved under the Act. Funds are to be used to pay the costs of training programs for aides, teachers, and other professional staff members supervising the aides, including appropriate stipends. Apportionment is to be in the ratio of the sums of children aged three to seventeen in the State to the number of all such children in the States.⁶⁰

In his explanation of the bill, Nelson states that it calls for the creation and implementation of a nationwide teacher aide program. The technical workings of the bill and the machinery for the program's operation would insure that local control over projects would be complete. Applications for the program would be filed jointly by the local

⁶⁰Bill S.721, The National Elementary Principal XXXXVI (May, 1967), pp.42-43.

education agency and the local college or university that would conduct the preservice training course for the aides. The teachers and principals of participating schools would attend the training sessions, and adequate in-service follow-up by the university would enable any difficulties in the program's operation to be discovered and resolved.⁶¹

As precedents for his proposal, Nelson cited other teacher aide projects presently supported by federal funds. Eleven pilot projects were constructed by the Bank Street College of Education in New York City in the summer of 1966, with four additional projects under way; these projects were financed by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Auxiliary personnel trainees included low income whites in Appalachia, Negroes and Puerto Ricans in East Harlem, Mexican-Americans in California, and slum residents in Detroit. There were many benefits to both educator and trainee. Other projects are being developed by districts across the country. Nelson suggested that efforts being made through such programs as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Manpower Development and Training Act, and the Office of Economic Opportunity should be coordinated into one teacher aide program across the nation and expanded.⁶²

When studying the effect of experimental teacher aide

⁶¹Gaylord Nelson, "S.721--Teacher Aid Program Support Act of 1967," The National Elementary Principal XXXXVI (May, 1967), pp.40-41.

⁶²Ibid., p.41.

programs on pupils, teachers, and the aides themselves, the Yale-Fairfield Study found many favorable comments. A series of achievement tests given to the experimental group of pupils and a control group showed that the experimental conditions did not impede and may have tended to promote pupil learning. Principals and participating teachers stressed the positive values of the program. A sampling of parental opinion revealed that parents were overwhelmingly favorable to the use of aides in the classroom. The extra time required of teachers for planning the aides' duties was small in comparison to the time saved in clerical work, routine classroom activities, certain easy instructional tasks, housekeeping, and general supervision outside the classroom. Teachers also generally agreed that having an aide tended to augment their professional status, provided that they were not used for tasks requiring professional competency. As a group, the aides reported that they were happy in this type of work, particularly because of the opportunities for self-improvement and preparation for parenthood.⁶³

Despite all the evidence of the need for and effectiveness of teacher aide programs, there has been in some cases great criticism of them. From 1955 to 1960 there was a rather strong negative reaction to pilot projects. A typical charge was that using nonprofessionals would undermine the professional role. Others charged that the use of teacher

⁶³Yale-Fairfield Study, pp.41-43.

aides was merely a means of justifying a higher pupil-teacher ratio, or that the aides would dilute the quality of instruction and injure the well-being of pupils. Another criticism was that children in elementary schools might have difficulty getting along with and adjusting to more than one adult in the classroom. Some expressed concern over whether each teacher could really get to know the whole child--this would theoretically be more difficult under conditions of shared responsibility. Legalistic questions arose--some states apparently ban nonprofessional employees from taking instructional responsibility, and warn that difficult questions about legal accountability arise when certain "teacher's tasks" are relegated to others. Finally, some critics claimed that personality clashes or other forms of friction might develop between teacher and aide. After about 1960, counterarguments and greater support of the idea have come to the foreground.⁶⁴ With increasing frequency, successful programs are disproving the above-mentioned claims. As J. William Rioux stated,

● Only as teachers and administrators see at first hand the contributions that can be made by subprofessionals, only as professionals are freed to be more professional, only as they witness the reliability of teaching aides, will headway be made in destroying the myth that subprofessionals usurp teachers' prerogatives and that all classroom-related functions require professional training.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Anderson, pp.117.-118.

⁶⁵Rioux, p.6.

Clyde M. Hill, the director of the Yale-Fairfield Study, made several favorable observations about teacher aide programs, some of which are:

1. When assistants are well-trained and carefully assigned, their use can relieve teachers of routine, nonprofessional duties so they will have more time for teaching. Promising trends show that this modification of the teacher's job will attract more capable people into the field of teaching.
2. Using assistants can help the teacher shortage problem by permitting larger classes (to a point), and by promoting recruiting of more teachers both because of better teaching conditions and because of interest aroused in professional preparation of the part of the assistants.
3. Using assistants improves the quality of teaching by program enrichment (due to the increased time teachers had for developing the program and sometimes due to special talents of the assistants themselves) and by providing opportunity for more attention to individuals and small groups of pupils.
4. Rather than challenging the status of teachers, the presence of assistants tended to exalt the status of the teacher in the minds of pupils and parents. However, indiscriminate assignments of assistants and excessive overcrowding of classes, particularly in an overt attempt to reduce teaching budgets, would belittle teaching and therefore downgrade teachers professionally.⁶⁶

Once a school system has decided to initiate a teacher aide program, there are several steps that should be taken. Teachers and administrators should study and work together to differentiate between professional and nonprofessional

⁶⁶Yale-Fairfield Study, pp.43-45.

skills so they can establish guidelines of what the aides' duties should be. They should also be willing to accept help, visit other schools employing aides, and be willing to experiment with approaches. The state department of education should establish machinery for devising guidelines, requirements, and methods of protecting aides from exploitation. Colleges can help teachers learn to train aides or consider programs for training aides themselves. They might also consider making being an aide a part of their program for teacher education.⁶⁷

The Educators Encyclopedia recommends the following procedures when initiating a teacher aide program:

1. Select aides carefully--they must be reliable, of a good moral character, in excellent health, and with a sincere desire to participate in the program.
2. Establish clearcut policies with a professional supervisor--what a teacher aide is, the need for cooperation, the basis for assignment.
3. Place the aide in a compatible situation--they should serve to strengthen the teacher, not create feelings of insecurity.
4. Provide an in-service training program of a few weeks.
5. Allow for increased activities--they should increase in proportion to the added time for planning and creativity.
6. Inform the public and staff about the program--an explanation of the program's goals and aims would prevent false rumors.⁶⁸

⁶⁷NCTEPS, p.12.

⁶⁸Rivers, pp.42-43.

Trump and Baynham recommended several ways to start changing staff patterns and thus gradually include teacher aides. One method is to provide teachers with clerical help. The teachers could list the clerical work they do, estimate how much time they spend doing it, and indicate what they would do instead if they had clerical assistance. With this as a basis, a recommendation could then be made to the board of education that clerks be obtained, possibly starting out with one clerk to be shared by the whole staff. A second way to introduce teacher aides is to hire assistants to help English teachers grade themes. The assistant would mark only mechanical errors, leaving evaluation to the professional; this type of aide must be selected with great care. Another possibility is to hire someone to supervise playgrounds, cafeterias, and study halls, and perform other tasks requiring neither professional nor clerical training. A final suggestion for providing assistants is to employ teacher education students. Many already have part-time jobs, but would profit more if these jobs involved working in schools. One or more persons from the college could work with school teachers and administrators in planning and evaluating the program. It could start simply and expand as the need and opportunities developed.⁶⁹ Any one or combination of these methods could develop into a full-fledged teacher aide program.

⁶⁹Trump, pp.107-109.

What, then, is the future for teacher aides? This is necessarily related to that of schools in general. Many educators believe that schools will see increasing professionalization of teaching through the use of teacher assistants and team teaching. Together with professional teachers, the assistant will create a new staffing pattern in which the members will be selected for their particular competencies and for specific tasks. Trump stated, "In relation to the total number of students, the school of the future will employ more adults to work with students, but fewer adults will need to be professional teachers."⁷⁰

The National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards has stated that the effective use of teacher aides could be one of the most significant recent advances in education. As the teacher is released from routine tasks, he is able to devote more time to teaching and assume a truly professional role. New organizational patterns in the school probably will evolve, and differentiated roles for teachers and aides will develop. One present trend is differentiation of roles for career or master teachers, regular teachers, beginning teachers, assistant teachers, and different kinds of aides.⁷¹

In Shipp's survey of teacher aide programs, the overwhelming majority of systems indicated that, if at all possi-

⁷⁰Trump, pp.33-34.

⁷¹NCTEBS, p.11.

ble, there would be more aides in their systems in the coming years. A suggested probable reason is, "The teacher aide is becoming a recognized person on the elementary school scene, and the time has come for the teaching profession and school administrators to realize the potential of aides and to establish provisions for their employment, training, and utilization."⁷² It would seem then that teacher aide programs will undoubtedly meet some obstacles, but none of these are insurmountable, and the programs will meet with great success in communities that understand their value.

⁷²Shipp, p.33.

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Anderson, Robert H. Teaching in a World of Change. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1966.
- Bill S.721. The National Elementary Principal. XXXXVI (May, 1967), 42-43.
- Esbensen, Thorwald. "Should Teacher Aides Be More Than Clerks?" Phi Delta Kappan. XXXXVII (January, 1966), 237.
- Goulet, Richard R. "Cultivating a New Crop of Human Resources with ESEA Title III." The National Elementary Principal. XXXVI (May, 1967), 49-52.
- Henderson, Pat B. "Quality Education Through the Use of Instructional Aides." Arizona Teacher. LV (January, 1967), 10-11.
- Janowitz, Gayle. Helping Hands; Volunteer Work in Education. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- Minnesota State Department of Education. "Using Teacher Aides." Minnesota Journal of Education. XX VI (November, 1965), 29.
- National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPS). "Auxiliary School Personnel." The National Elementary Principal. XXXXVI (May, 1967), 6-12.
- Nelson, Gaylord. "S.721--Teacher Aid Program Support Act of 1967." The National Elementary Principal. XXXXVI (May, 1967), 40-41.
- Noar, Gertrude. Teacher Aides at Work. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1967.
- Rioux, J. William. "At the Teacher's Right Hand." American Education. II (November, 1965), 5-6.
- Rivers, W. C. "Teacher Aides May Set You Free." Texas Outlook. L (October, 1966), 42-43.
- Shipp, Mary D. "Teacher Aides: A Survey." The National Elementary Principal. XXXXVI (May, 1967), 30-33.
- Stevens, Jody L. "The Need for Teacher Aides." Texas Outlook. LI (May, 1967), 54-55.

Teacher Opinion Poll. "How the Profession Feels About Teacher Aides." NEA Journal. LVI (November, 1967), 16-17.

Trump, J. Lloyd and Baynham, Dorsey. Focus on Change: Guide to Better Schools. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1961.

Wilcox, Betty Ann. "What Is the Teacher Aide's Role?" Minnesota Journal of Education. XXXVII (May, 1967), 9-10.

Yale-Fairfield Study of Elementary Teaching. Clyde M. Hill, Director. Teacher Assistants. New Haven, Connecticut; February, 1959.