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Curriculum for High School Students Who Are Responsible for Elementary Library Services

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CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR ELEMENTARY LIBRARY SERVICES

An Educational Development Project
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
Delitha Carpenter
July, 1973

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Located in the wheat country of eastern Washington, Hartline School District is small and remote. There are only 106 pupils attending this school from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Out of an eight-period day, the librarian is assigned three periods in the library which must serve the entire school. In addition, she must teach all the high school business subjects--typing I, bookkeeping, shorthand, journalism, typing II, and secretarial practice. Typing II and secretarial practice are taught during the same period. This is a difficult schedule in itself, but two years ago all the books that were in the elementary classrooms were moved into the library and had to be cataloged. The administration expressed a desire to have all the books cataloged by the end of the year. This, with all the other duties of a school librarian, was to be accomplished by someone who spent only three forty-minute periods per day in the library.

Storytelling services to the elementary children could have been eliminated. It is the opinion of the librarian, however, that students should become acquainted with the library and its services early in their academic careers. Consequently, this possibility was discarded.

The most practical way to cope with the situation was to utilize the student librarians to the fullest. However, that created another problem which was how to efficiently train the student librarians. From this need, a curriculum was designed for teaching library aides for regular, clerical duties, to tell stories to the elementary students, and to aid in the typing and filing of catalog cards.

The School Library at Work by Azile Wofford was the only pertinent reference contained in the Hartline library and the only human resource was the librarian. The curriculum would have to be designed, media would have to be rented, materials would need to be constructed, and all of this would have to be accomplished on a limited budget.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A thorough search into library materials on the subject of training student assistants yielded very little. So, at the time of need, there were no sources available and the reason for this project becomes apparent.

A project was completed in 1972 by Sue Dunn (1) involving a student handbook to be used in the training of her elementary library assistants, but the program was not as complex as the one discussed here and did not include storytelling and typing catalog cards.

The Index to Library Literature revealed an article in Wilson Library Bulletin (2) in May, 1960, which has a bearing on this project. The article was entitled "Anyone Can Tell Stories . . . Including Student Assistants" by Lynn Solomon, a Chicago librarian. Miss Solomon's assistants asked to read stories to the elementary students in their school after having had enjoyable experiences reading to younger brothers and sisters. The results were quite similar to the ones described in this paper because Miss Solomon also found that the students behaved in a mature fashion, were well prepared, and could adequately handle troublesome children. She felt that student assistants should be given an opportunity to participate in this type of program because it was a worthwhile experience.

The review of literature indicates that student assistants are not allowed to read stories in school libraries. A reason for this may be that librarians have felt that as professionals certain responsibilities such as storytelling belong only to them, and they have been reluctant to allow anyone else to take over this responsibility. However, it is the opinion of this writer that creating a program which benefits elementary students, elementary teachers, the student assistants, and the librarian is true professionalism.

CHAPTER III

PROJECT

A representative sample of the program consisting of a slide series and tape and a student handbook accompanies this paper.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Program

The first year's program was developed hurriedly out of desperation and was used as a pilot study. Three junior girls were chosen--one to be responsible for the first- and second-grade group, one for the third and fourth, and one for the fifth and sixth. Because of scheduling, it was difficult for the librarian to find time to see each girl so communication was mostly in a written form. An effort was made to get together whenever scheduling would permit. A complete outline of the materials used in the first-year program is given in Appendix A, page 26.

The program was revised the second year and each revision is discussed under "Program Changes," page 18. The complete outline of the materials used in the second-year program is given in Appendix B, page 27. The second-year program involved those who wanted to participate, even weaker students. After observing how hard the participating student assistants worked for a year, only those who wanted the responsibility would want to be come involved. An adult assistant with a Masters Degree in Library Science was added to the staff at the beginning of the second year. She did not have a teaching certificate so she worked as a resource

aide for the faculty. She was available to supervise the student assistants during story hour and to supervise the tour of the library at Eastern Washington State College.

Seminars were introduced the second year and were held once a week for the first six weeks and whenever needed afterward. It was necessary to have approval of a fellow teacher so she would allow students to participate. In Hartline all the secondary students have P.E. during eighth period. This was the most convenient time to have the seminars so no academic classes would be missed. The P.E. teacher was glad to cooperate.

During these seminars the slides, films, and working instructions were presented. It was also a place for group discussions. It gave the girls a chance to share their experiences with the librarian and with each other and the conversation was between colleagues. This seemed to increase the importance of their job.

It gave them a chance to ask the librarian questions about her job. They wanted to know what courses she had taken to prepare for the job and how she selected books. These questions were answered, and they were shown how Horn Book and School Library Journal help in the selection of books. The librarian explained that she reviewed for School Library Journal and let them read a review. This, of course, produced discussion on how books are reviewed.

Current issues such as censorship, using an article in School Library Journal as a basis, were also discussed. Some of the books on the banned list were even obtained and read and their reasons for controversy were discussed.

The seminars were an encouragement to read. Books were exchanged and the discussions were stimulating and interesting. If the schedule would not permit a seminar, the librarian attempted to find time to talk to each girl once a week to see how she was getting along and if she needed help. It was found that the girls responded more efficiently, more effectively, and learned the material faster through the use of seminars as opposed to written communication predominantly.

To introduce the girls to their new situation as student assistants, the librarian told them a brief history of books and libraries and their importance in man's development through the ages. For this she used materials from a class on the history of books and libraries. To conclude the introduction, the students and the librarian watched a film entitled "You'll Find it in the Library" and toured the Hartline library with the librarian emphasizing the facilities and their significance. A slide set and tape made by the librarian introduced them to their duties as student librarians. This gave a general view of the areas where they would be involved and what would be expected of them. The slide set was viewed by the group as a whole and was made available for each girl to look at again at her own convenience. The

girls were impressed by the fact that the slides and tape had been made by their own librarian and were inquisitive about how this had been done.

Storytelling was introduced with two films entitled "There's Something About a Story" and "And Something More." In weekly seminars the films were discussed as were the ideas they presented and how they could be applied. The media catalogs were also introduced from which the Hartline School District orders and the methods for obtaining the films was explained. The girls' enthusiasm was evident from the beginning, and it seemed that this would be their favorite part of the program.

At first, the librarian chose the materials to be used for "story hour" but it was always discussed with the particular girl involved. This way the student assistant felt included in the selection, and she learned the techniques firsthand. Consequently, it wasn't long before the librarian could fade out of the picture and the aide became more nearly independent in the selections. The girls were never entirely independent--all requisitions for media had to be cleared with the librarian, and she never hesitated to make suggestions if she came across something that would be of interest to the children.

Previewing whatever would be used in "story hour" was a must. Again, the librarian previewed with the aides at first but came to trust their judgements and allowed them to

preview on their own. This trust was deserved as shown by the following incident. Debbie had chosen a filmstrip from the district library called "The Mean Old Elephant." It was about an "onery" elephant who constantly provoked the other animals in the jungle, so they decided to get rid of him. The birds flew over and dropped rocks on his head while the bees began stinging him. When he tried to run away he tripped over a rope which the animals had tied across his path. After he fell, they hurriedly tied him up and pushed him over a cliff. He was never seen again, and this ended the filmstrip. The horrified librarian decided to say nothing and ask for Debbie's reaction. Debbie said that it was too sadistic and that she didn't want to show it. The filmstrip was immediately sent back. Debbie's reaction indicated her maturity and intelligence in selecting materials. She was concerned about exposing small children to cruelty and hatred. Throughout the program it was evident that the student assistants felt responsible for the materials seen by their group and they took this responsibility very seriously. This type of growth experience was an important part of the program and was exciting to see.

Before the children came to the library, it was suggested that the girls look through the shelves to get an idea of the different types of books appropriate for their group and where they were located. They tried, but the reason for doing this was not obvious until after the first

visit by the children. During this initial encounter, they were bombarded with demands for books about horses, firemen, trucks, etc. After the group had departed, the girls headed directly for the shelves and looked for books about the subjects in demand. They were very well prepared for the next visit because they had found an important reason to be prepared. After they had served as librarians for a few months, they were very much aware of the type of books and which particular books were in greatest demand in their group. They would then point out to the librarian areas of greatest interest and whether the supply of books was adequately meeting the demand. If a book was borrowed from another library that was popular with the children, such as the Phantom Tollbooth that was loaned by Wenatchee Regional, then the student librarian would recommend its purchase. The information on book popularity was a big service to the librarian.

Not only did the girls become aware of the stories the children were most interested in, they also learned the type of media which would be most appealing and how to present it. The first time Debbie played a tape to the first and second graders, they interrupted it wanting to know what the gorilla in the story looked like. The next time she played a tape for them, she drew a picture of the main character to place on an easel by the tape recorder. All the girls were highly enthusiastic about the films and

other media. They chose and would play them for interested secondary students. Almost the entire high school saw "Peter and the Wolf."

All the girls prepared for their "story hour" adequately and well in advance. They would attempt to improve their techniques by reading to the librarian. Debbie practiced for a full week making train noises so she could do justice to The Little Engine That Could.

Variety was strived for in the presentations so the girls would tell stories using the blackboard to draw pictures and they also used puppets. Michelle made a puppet for a story presentation and the third grade enjoyed it so much that they asked how they could make a puppet like that. Before the next visit, Michelle located her source book on how to make puppets and the appropriate materials and the entire third grade made puppets during their library period. Needless to say, the book, Do-It-In-A-Day Puppets for Beginners by Margaret Adair, became very popular and so did Michelle.

One of the most important aspects about the girls' experiences with the "story hour" was that they learned facts about children in general and how to handle them. They found that there was greatest enthusiasm when the children were allowed to participate in the storytelling by answering questions and guessing what would happen next. They managed to persuade the restless ones in the group to sit close to

them. They learned to pause in the story until the noisy child was embarrassed into silence, and they learned to skillfully guide the poor reader to a book he could handle. Some of their techniques in handling children were given to them in discussions with the librarian, but some were developed on their own. The girls would always be totally exhausted after the children's visits, and their respect for teachers in general increased tremendously. (After all, coping with the children for 20-30 minutes was tiring, but the teacher did this all day long.)

It was necessary that presentations on the use of the library, the checkout procedures, and behavior should be made to the elementary students. This was the topic of one of the seminars, and the librarian gave a demonstration on how such a presentation could be made. The girls took notes on this, and Michelle made a bright orange chart illustrating how to check out a book that she shared with the others. This chart was used by the librarian in the slide set. Michelle also gave a presentation on the use of the Reader's Guide and the card catalog to the fourth grade in the spring of the year. It was, of course, a general introduction to both, and the librarian instructed her on the material to use and how to present it using the Reader's Guide Instruction Pamphlet; however, Michelle gave the presentation herself. It was arranged that the librarian be present if Michelle needed help in answering questions, but she managed to handle the questions adequately.

A genuine affection developed between the girls and the children. The children would bring in pictures they had made and would share experiences. The student assistants, on the other hand, worried about misfortunes the kids might have had and referred to them as "my kids." The faculty was aware of this warm relationship and felt that it was an asset to the program.

The previous discussion indicates that the girls worked only with elementary children. This is not all of the story. As stated, the librarian teaches a full load and cannot be in the library fulltime. During her absence, there are periods when high school teachers bring their classes in to do research. The student librarians were able to answer questions and retrieve materials effectively. The health teacher and the history teacher depended on the aides to help their students research topics for reports. The English teacher would ask them to prepare lists of books on a certain subject. The math teacher often requested them to write to Wenatchee Regional for Xeroxed copies of magazine articles which were not available in Hartline. In fact, teachers and fellow students referred to them as librarians and not as aides. This was quite a compliment to the girls and the services they provided.

The typing and filing of catalog cards was a major occupation at Hartline because of the tremendous amount of cataloging that had to be done. Fortunately, all the aides

had had typing, and some had advanced typing. Therefore, explanations were needed in terms of what appropriate information needed to be put on the cards and not typing techniques.

The librarian's slide set; two filmstrips, "The Dewey Decimal System" and "The Card Catalog;" 3-M transparencies showing the different types of catalog cards; and a chart illustrating the information contained on each type of card were presented in a seminar. It was not expected, under any circumstances, that the students use The Dewey Decimal System and Sears List of Subject Headings. The only thing they were aware of in this area was that these books were used by the librarian to derive the catalog numbers and the subject headings. They were concerned with the mechanics of typing the cards, but they needed an awareness of what type of information each card contained. After this information was presented and discussed, they were not expected to have memorized everything. The slide series and transparencies were available for them to look at whenever they needed. The chart was placed on an easel in the typing area and could be referred to while typing. The librarian could then write in longhand on a 3" x 5" sheet of paper in the proper order all the information about a book that would go on all the cards. The girls would separate the information appropriately while typing.

A small chart was made listing filing rules and this could be referred to while the cards were being arranged in the organizer. Usually, the librarian or the adult assistant tried to check the organizer for accuracy before the cards were put in the card catalog. The degree of filing accuracy as performed by the girls was adequate.

Not only did the aides type cards, they composed and typed letters as well. Since the budget is limited, the librarian makes an effort to secure all the free and inexpensive materials possible. The library has several sources for these materials so the librarian could merely check the ones she wished to contact and the girls would write the letters. Composing and typing letters is another part of the typing curriculum and was not a new experience for them. The girls would not have been expected to compose and type letters without training in this area. Since the librarian is the business teacher, she knew those students who were capable of this responsibility. Because the student assistants were also business students, it was possible for the librarian and business teacher to adequately check prepared materials. The librarian also knew which girls could take dictation in shorthand, type, and run Dittos and stencils, and use the office copy machines.

Constructing bulletin boards and mobiles was another activity the girls enjoyed. They were introduced to Poster Ideas and Bulletin Board Techniques by Kate Coplan, and they

would frequently refer to this when they were short of ideas. It was rare that a suggestion for change was needed. They were usually full of clever ideas for commemorating holidays, and students from study hall would volunteer to help. As an example, for Halloween last year the library had a huge spider web made from string hanging eerily about on the ceiling and down the walls. It was a success and was designed and constructed by two aides.

The opaque projector was introduced to enlarge pictures to be used for bulletin boards. The machine itself is old and makes a terrible noise, but the girls managed to make some attractive bulletin boards by using it. They would also use the opaque projector to enlarge charts for the teaching staff.

The library in Hartline has a good collection and adequate facilities for a small school. However, it was believed that as a part of the training program an acquaintance with larger libraries and their services would be desirable. The aides visited Central Washington State College's campus last summer for a tour through Bouillon Library. They were impressed with the size of the library and its collection and the different types of services available. They didn't want to leave the room where the New York Times were kept; they were fascinated with the contents of the old newspapers.

In the spring after the girls had worked in Hartline's library, the adult assistant took the girls to Eastern Washington State College to visit the library. This gave them a chance to ask questions that had arisen out of working in a library. They wanted to know who typed the cards and who selected the books and how many magazine subscriptions there were. Two of the girls asked how to obtain part-time jobs and were told to apply when they enter college this fall.

Clerical duties were not emphasized as much as the services. This is the librarian's personal philosophy and it was evident in the program. Shelving, mending, and housekeeping duties were covered in the handbook and were discussed in a seminar. A schedule assignment was made and the girls checked off projects as they finished them. Even though there was not a great deal of emphasis here, things always managed to get taken care of. The shelves were always organized after a group visit and books that had been returned were put away. These things were done without reminders.

Program Changes

There were five differences between the training program carried out the first year and the one presented the second year.

The main difference was the addition of the seminars. It was found that personal contact was effective. The

discussion from these seminars has already been described, and it is believed that these discussions made the difference between teaching and training. The conversations were about libraries and literature and not just on how to shelf books. The meetings were as stimulating to the librarian as they were to the girls.

A second difference was the addition of the slide series and tape made during the Summer, 1972. Previously, the same material had been presented in a written form and was dull and uninteresting. Through the slides a way was found to coordinate the duties of the student librarian in an organized and entertaining manner. One student assistant who was involved in the program both years commented that the slides were more interesting and informative than the previous year's presentation and that it was exciting to watch something made by the teacher.

It was found during the first year that some organizational changes would have to be made the second year. It was necessary to include all the aides in the "story hour." The program was so popular and those involved were so enthusiastic that the ones who did not have a share in this part of the the program were asking to provide services for the elementary students. These were weaker students who were willing to take on extra responsibilities because they believed it would be rewarding. Fortunately, scheduling worked out so that all those who wanted to be involved could

be. In fact, before school was over this year, enough students were signed up to be librarians next year.

The next difference was an adult assistant who was assigned to the library full time. She had a Masters Degree in Library Science but no teaching certificate, and was primarily assigned to providing resource services for the faculty but was available to guide the student librarians in their work and to observe them during story hour.

The last difference involved the addition of tours of larger libraries to the program. It was believed that exposure to larger libraries and their facilities would acquaint the students with more types of services available and the importance of these services in education.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The summary for this project is subjective and based on personal observations of the student librarians during the past two years; conversations held with the students to determine their reactions to the program; and the response of the administration, fellow teachers, and the adult assistant. Based on these criteria, the program was a success and it will be implemented again during the school year 1973-74.

This curriculum allowed the student librarians to be a part of the library; they belonged and felt important. They were not just clerical help but had a responsible position. This is evident by the fact that the other students referred to them as librarians and that the program became so popular.

The teachers strongly endorse the program, and the enthusiasm of the elementary teachers was significant. Moving the books out of the individual classroom and into the library had not been popular, because the teachers wanted books available in the classrooms for children who finished their work early. The librarian made sure that an adequate supply of fifteen books was taken into the classroom and changed every three weeks. This strategy was used to win approval of the library, and it did.

The teachers' reactions to "story hour" being conducted by a student also was a matter of concern. After the first few sessions, they were very impressed. They said there wasn't any way they could avoid being impressed since the responses of their students were so favorable. "What day is library day?" was the most popular question in the elementary classrooms. The Kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers all stated that they were amazed at the maturity shown by the aides and the hard work and preparation they did to provide an effective and entertaining "story hour." Since the elementary teachers are responsible for two grades in one classroom, their schedules also are hectic. It was stressed many times by the teachers that the elementary students would not be exposed to media presentations without their library visits, because the teachers were too busy to select and order such materials.

Secondary teachers appreciated the charts the students made for them and their ability and willingness to set up media presentations.

The superintendent believed that action and involvement in education was more important than sitting and listening. He managed to visit during "story hour" frequently and did not hesitate to compliment the program to the school board.

The adult assistant had had experience solely with large libraries. Before living in Hartline, she had no idea

how a small library functioned with a part-time librarian. She became a believer in the program and said that she felt a full-time librarian could benefit because it is such a worthwhile experience for the students. A full-time librarian should be concerned with providing worthwhile learning experiences for her student assistants, not merely using them for clerical help. A program of this type could produce future librarians.

Recommendations

To prepare for this type of program the librarian needs to be able to work with fellow teachers to arrange seminar schedules. She also needs to work closely with the elementary teachers to assure their cooperation and approval. They need to be consulted about what type of program is being presented to their children. This can be easily done over coffee, and it gives the teachers a chance to prepare the children for the library visit.

Good students should be chosen to participate at first to ensure the success of the program. The assistants should be recommended by the librarian on the basis of their maturity and willingness to take responsibility. Once the weaker students have a chance to see how much and what type of work is involved, then they can be allowed to participate if they want to accept the responsibility.

Student assistants who have had a business background require less instruction in typing and filing and should be

considered for the position of student assistant. These skills can save the librarian valuable time.

Sources for materials should be checked carefully. The intermediate media center can loan free films and filmstrips to explain the library and its facilities. This same media center will also laminate charts and duplicate transparencies inexpensively.

It might be effective for the student assistants to be introduced to the facilities at the intermediate center. There they could learn the procedures for taking slides and recording tapes. By taking slides of storybook pictures and making a cassette tape to accompany the pictures, a collection of media resources could be built for the school library.

It is recommended to anyone considering this program that the students involved be observed through college to see what effect the experience might have on their college careers and choice of vocation.

It is not the personal feeling of the librarian that she taught everything that was learned in this program, but she did provide the experience that did the teaching.

REFERENCES

1. Dunn, Sue E. "Policy Manual for Student Library Assistants," Central Washington State College, June, 1972.
2. Solomon, Lynn. "Anyone Can Tell Stories . . . Including Student Assistants," Wilson Library Bulletin, May, 1960.

APPENDIX A

FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM

- I. Introduction to the Library
 - A. History of books and libraries
 - B. Contents of the library (tour)
 - C. "You'll Like it in the Library" (film)
- II. Duties of student librarian--verbal presentation by librarian
 - A. Typing and filing catalog cards
 - 1. "The Dewey Decimal System" (filmstrip)
 - 2. "The Card Catalog" (filmstrip)
 - B. Storytelling
 - 1. "There's Something About a Story" (film)
 - 2. "And Something More" (film)
 - 3. Sources for our stories
 - a. Our books
 - b. Borrow from Wenatchee
 - c. Media catalogs
 - (1) Intermediate School District
 - (2) CWSC Film Library
 - (3) WSU Film Library
 - C. Bulletin boards
 - 1. Poster Ideas and Bulletin Board Techniques for Libraries and Schools by Kate Coplan
 - D. Miscellaneous (provided by a handbook)
 - 1. Shelving and filing
 - 2. Mending and repairing
 - 3. Vertical file
 - 4. Housekeeping duties
 - E. Teaching (very general)
 - 1. Use of library
 - 2. Card catalog
 - 3. Abridged Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (pamphlet)

APPENDIX B

SECOND-YEAR PROGRAM

- I. Introduction to the Library
 - A. History of books and libraries
 - B. Contents of the library (tour)
 - C. "You'll Like it in the Library" (film)
- II. Duties of student librarian
 - A. Introduction to duties (slide series and tape)
 - B. Typing and filing catalog cards
 - 1. "The Dewey Decimal System" (filmstrip)
 - 2. "The Card Catalog" (filmstrip)
 - a. Transparencies of different types of cards
 - b. Chart
 - C. Storytelling
 - 1. "There's Something About a Story" (film)
 - 2. "And Something More" (film)
 - 3. Sources for our stories
 - a. Our books
 - b. Borrow from Wenatchee
 - c. Media catalogs
 - (1) Intermediate School District
 - (2) CWSC Film Library
 - (3) WSU Film Library
 - D. Bulletin Boards
 - 1. Poster Ideas and Bulletin Board Techniques for Libraries and Schools by Kate Coplan
 - E. Miscellaneous - provided by a handbook
 - 1. Shelving and filing
 - 2. Mending and repairing
 - 3. Vertical file
 - 4. Housekeeping duties
 - F. Teaching (very general)
 - 1. Use of library

2. Card catalog
3. Abridged Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature
(pamphlet)

III. Tours of College Libraries

- A. Central Washington State College
- B. Eastern Washington State College - adult assistant

- IV. Seminars--weekly for the first six weeks, then whenever appropriate afterward