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**TEACHER ASSISTANTS**

**in**

**THE SCHOOLS**

**AN ABSTRACT**

**OF**

**A THESIS**

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**by**

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Studies involving the use of non-professionals, or Teacher Aides, in the public schools have become widespread during the past twenty years. The experimentation is one of the methods chosen by educators in an attempt to overcome the problems created by an expanding school population, the shortage of classrooms and teachers, and the changing role of the schools.

Various programs have revived, with modifications, the idea of using Aides. Among the many studies that borrowed the technique from past centuries are: the Bay City, Michigan, Study; The Norwalk Plan; and the Yale-Fairfield Study.

Aides were generally employed in order to relieve teachers of the burdens of routine tasks and to provide more time for professional activities such as lesson planning, the preparation of educational aids, and direct instruction. Duties performed by the Aides were generally clerical in nature but in many cases were semi-instructional or in rarer cases, actual instruction.

Because of the direct contacts with the educational experiences of pupils, the selection of Aides has been determined by the purposes of the programs utilizing them. Once selected, they are trained by various means to familiarize them with the general aspects of the educational process.

Problems have arisen as a result of the use of non-professionals. Various educators and organizations have questioned the effect on teacher status, teaching standards,

the depressing of salaries, and the movement towards recognized professionalism. While these problems must be carefully considered, one must also consider the positive conclusions reported by the studies. These conclusions can be grouped into three areas: the effect on pupils; the effect on teachers; and the effect on Aides.

Generally, academic achievement has been found to be normal or better than normal for classes with Aides. Pupils benefited from the wide range of groupings possible, the availability of more individual help, and the contact with more adults.

Teachers, being relieved of many time consuming tasks, have been able to provide more individual help, give more direct instruction, enrich the program, and devote more time to planning. Teachers were given opportunity to consult with and help each other and take better advantage of one another's skills and strengths. Although the increased responsibilities were time consuming, teachers with Aides generally found satisfaction in or accepted the use of Aides.

Limited information is available concerning the effect on Aides but subjective data have indicated that they have found the position satisfying. In some cases Aides have been encouraged to study towards meeting the requirements for a professional position.

The future of Aides in the public schools can only be determined through further experimentation and evaluation.

The use of non-professionals should be viewed as only one of the many possible solutions for the problems facing educators today.