CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A Research Paper

Presented to

State University College

at

Brockport, New York

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

John L. Sage

June 1962

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CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS
IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Report submitted in Research 699
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Degree of Master of Science in Education
at State University College
Brockport, New York

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JUN 11 1962
Date

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May 28, 1962
Date

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the kind assistance given to him by his advisor Dr. Andrew D. Virgilio, principal of the Campus School at the State University College at Brockport.

The author also acknowledges the help given him in preparing his final questionnaire by the teachers and principal of his own school, and to Dr. Robert L. Springer, Superintendent of the Rochester Public Schools and his secretary, Mrs. Caniff for allowing the author to look over the work done on classroom interruptions in the Rochester Schools.

The help given to him, in distributing and returning his questionnaires by the instructors of the Education classes of the State University College at Brockport during the Spring Semester of 1962, the assistant district principal and the principals of the suburban school district surveyed, as well as by all the teachers who actually participated, is also gratefully acknowledged.

John L. Sage

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1954, a group of elementary school principals and supervisors of instruction in the adjoining North Carolina counties of Rowan, Cabarrus, and Iredell recognized the problem of classroom interruptions and got together to make a study of the problem.[1]

In 1959, William A. Howe was given the task of surveying the elementary and secondary schools of Rochester, New York after the administration felt a need for a study of classroom interruptions.[2]

The writer of this paper, as a teacher, having also recognized that the matter of classroom interruptions is a persistent problem and a serious one for many principals and teachers, has in this paper undertaken to study and determine the nature of these interruptions. The writer believes the data obtained from this study might help in the overall study of this problem. Bringing it to the

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1. W. W. Hartsell, et al., "Classroom Interruptions", The National Elementary Principal, vol. XXXIII, No. 6, 1954, p. 13.
2. Richardson Gale, "Interruptions Plague Classes, Study Shows", Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, July 20, 1959, p. 18.

attention of school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel might lead them to face the reality of the situation in their schools with respect to opportunities for teachers and children to work together without being unnecessarily disturbed, and might stimulate the co-operative action of the entire staff toward more efficient management of the entire school program.

A pilot questionnaire was written and distributed to teachers in the writer's school. The school involved is a city school, consisting of 850 pupils and thirty teachers and administrative staff. The sole purpose of the pilot questionnaire was to determine the nature and extent of the predominant interruptions, and to obtain suggestions for relieving these interruptions. This pilot questionnaire helped the writer to compose a more comprehensive questionnaire on classroom interruptions. The latter questionnaire sought information on the following items:

1. Types of interruptions that occur in the classroom.
2. Approximate frequency of interruptions.
3. Approximate total number of minutes for each interruption.
4. Space for the respondent to write in comments or suggestions for eliminating unnecessary interruptions.
5. A section for personal data about the respondent.

This questionnaire was then used to survey, a cross-section of elementary school teachers from seven graduate Education classes at the State University College at

Brockport during the 1962 Spring Semester. Four elementary schools in a suburban school district were also surveyed with the same questionnaire.

The results of the questionnaire are contained in Chapter IV. A sample of the pilot questionnaire and the final questionnaire can be found in the appendix on pp. 61-63, 64-68.

The writer has realized that in doing a study of this type, there are many limitations. Much has been written concerning school problems of this nature, but to include all of this material would be impossible. The writer has therefore chosen to limit his study of related literature to the last ten years and has tried to include as many phases of this problem as possible. A second limitation is that the writer has worked on the project for only one semester. A third limitation is that not all educators have the same definition as to what constitutes an interruption.

For the writer's study of this problem, he has defined a classroom interruption in the elementary school as anything that prevents the classroom teacher from having uninterrupted lessons during regular school hours. The author is defining the elementary school as the K - 6 type.

He has used the following resources to aid in his study:

1. Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature
2. Libraries
   a. State University College at Brockport
   b. Rundel Library in Rochester
   c. New York State Education Library in Albany
3. Correspondence with:
   a. National Education Association
   b. National Education Association Research Department
   c. New York State Teachers Association
4. Rochester Board of Education
5. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle Library
6. His own school
7. Graduate classes at the State University College at Brockport during the 1962 Spring Semester
8. A suburban school district in Monroe County containing four elementary schools K - 6

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Planning is an important first essential in the effective use of time and materials. In order to do this paper successfully, the writer has made both long range and short range plans. In such planning, the writer has tried to utilize all educational facets known and open to him.

In his review of literature, he used the card catalog at the State University College Library at Brockport as well as the card catalog at the Rundel Library in Rochester. In one instance where the Rundel Library did not have two desired books, the State Library in Albany was used. He made ample use of the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature for the past ten years to help him locate possible articles relating to his study. The writer found this source extremely helpful.

Although there wasn't a great deal written on actual surveys made on his topic, there was much written to show that classroom interruptions as a problem do exist. A good deal was written that helped this writer formulate some suggestions for alleviating the problem of classroom interruptions in some instances.

The review of literature showed that the problem of

classroom interruptions in the elementary schools is in existence. Some articles gave the feeling that the article was written as a complaint. Others showed that these interruptions had a strong detrimental effect on teacher morale. Some authors were convinced that the interruptions were detrimental to the learning situation. Some of the comments referred to the possibility that these interruptions took up additional time of the teacher and gave some teachers the feeling that they just do not have time to do the kind of job they know should be done. Others indicated that when an interruption occurred, it was very difficult to get the pupils back to where they were before the interruption and an entire lesson might have been ruined because of a brief interruption.

As the writer used the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, he looked for the kind of articles that might show the results of other studies on the problem of classroom interruptions. He looked for proof that such problems of classroom interruptions did and do exist and for some possible suggestions for improving specific types of problems caused by interruptions. The writer found many worthwhile suggestions and as a result, he had to do further research to find out whether or not some of the suggestions made, could be followed within the limits of New York State Education Law.

In reviewing literature for any study, a writer must have in mind certain definite objectives. The author of this study felt that it was desirable to consider such things as:

1. The nature of the elementary school.
2. An overview of the elementary school curriculum.
3. Related research on classroom interruptions and teacher load.

As already indicated in Chapter I, the writer has reviewed pertinent literature of the last ten years and consequently his findings will limited to that extent.

The writer has found that the elementary school is a school having a curriculum offering work in any combination of grades one to eight or from the pre-primary grades to grade eight.[1] The practice today, seems to be to have the kindergarten through grade six as an elementary school unit. It must be realized that there can be many variations to the general rule.

When considering interruptions during the school day, we must first find out what we mean by the school day. Carter V. Good suggests that the typical school day has five-and-one-half hours of instruction.[2] The school day

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1. Carter V. Good, Editor, Dictionary of Education, p. 197.
2. Ibid., p. 482.

usually commences around nine in the morning and ends around four in the afternoon. The total hours set aside as a school day vary in different schools as well as the beginning time and the closing time.

Though the length of the school day may vary from school to school, it is generally found that the maximum length is endured by the older children. Great effort has been made to control the length of the school day even though more demands are put on the school which tend to lengthen it. Educators feel that education is a whole life process. Therefore, time must be made available for children not only to receive formal schooling but to grow into well rounded individuals. They must have time for clubs, music lessons, sports, other activities, and simply leisure time.[1]

A typical school day for grades five and six may be seen in the appendix on pp. 69-71 under the heading: Generalized Program for Grades 5 and 6. This program was developed by Herrick and others from their study of teacher programs.[2]

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1. Peter Palmer Mickelson and Kenneth H. Hansen, Elementary School Administration, p. 57.
2. Virgil E. Herrick, et al., The Elementary School, pp. 129, 130.

If the elementary school is to move ahead with success, the educators and lay people responsible must have certain objectives in mind. One course of study suggests that it is important to help the child learn to read, write, speak correctly and use the elementary processes of arithmetic. It suggests the importance of physical and mental health. A child's knowledge of his community and other communities is also important. Experience with the fine and the useful arts should be provided for.[1] See the appendix on pp. 86-87 for a sample list of objectives as stated by Herbert S. Weet former superintendent of the Rochester Public Schools.

Mickelson suggests that the modern elementary school may include:

1. Communication - language arts.
2. Living together - social studies.
3. Understanding quantitative relationships - Arithmetic.
4. Exploring the natural environments - science, both physical and biological.
5. Healthful living - health and physical education.[2]

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1. H. Weet, Rochester Board of Education, Course of Study, p. 14.
2. P. Mickelson and K. Hansen, op cit., p. 97.

Gould's definition of the elementary curriculum tells us that it:

> is now thought to consist of all the experiences that the student has within the school. Such a definition includes both the curricular and extracurricular, the formal and informal activities which come within the experience of the child.[1]

Following this definition, the big question seems to be: should a classroom interruption, as this writer has defined it, actually be considered to be an essential part of the curriculum? The writer doesn't think so when we consider the definition of a classroom disorder as being:

> (1) pupil or class actions that are characterized by absence of significant motive on the part of the pupil or led by the presence of conditions that interefere with learning or achievement of other educational objectives.[2]

Notice how one wonders about the importance of classroom interruptions when reading the following:

> the true curriculum is something more than the classroom program; it includes all the activities of the children that are carried forward under the direction of teachers.[3]

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1. George Gould, The Teacher and His Work, pp. 245-246.
2. Carter V. Good, op cit., p. 179.
3. H. Spears, The Teacher and Curriculum Planning, p. 10.

The previous quote seems to indicate that an interruption such as an individual music lesson should not be considered an interruption. It should be considered simply as a school activity for that child. Many teachers who have this going on in their classrooms do, however, consider it to be an interruption because classes usually pause to wait for the individual to leave the room. A pause may also be necessary when the individual returns.

When studying interruptions, this writer finds that an over abundance of interruptions increases teacher load - a load which is already heavy regardless of interruptions. An individual who has been out of the room for a music lesson will require extra help from the teacher to catch up on work that might have been missed - thus increasing the load of the teacher.

As we continue to study teacher load, we think of a classroom teacher as one who is responsible for developing learning experiences, activities, and good conduct in class situations.[1]

In order to live up to this definition, a teacher must

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1. Carter V. Good, op cit., p. 99.

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excel in classroom organization. This means that he must be able to plan and bring various activities into a close, effective working relationship.[1]

Teachers expect to do these things. They become disturbed, however, when effective working relationships are hindered by large classes, various demands of pupils, unexpected visitors, bell ringing, announcements, money collections, campaigns, lunchroom management, surveys and other assignments. These interruptions produce tension and disturb thoughtful planning and quiet efficiency necessary for effective teaching. All the above divert the teacher's energy and time from the direct work of instruction.[2]

Teaching is a joy when one has time for teaching. It requires the full resources of a teacher if he is to maintain maximum performance. New ideas do not flourish where distractions abound. Creativity is lacking when there is too little time. The joy of teaching can never be realized when a teacher's load is too heavy.[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 8.
2. National Education Association, Teacher Load, Teacher Lift, pp. 4,5.
3. M. A. Wilson, "Teachers Should be Relieved of all Non-teaching Duties", Instructor, vol. 70, pp. 8,9.

A direct survey illustrating that classroom interruptions do exist was made in 1954 in the North Carolina Counties of Rowan, Cabarrus, and Iredell. Three hundred and seven teachers in twenty-six schools took part in this one day survey. The data yielded by the questionnaire revealed that interruptions were troublesome in some classrooms. A total of 1159 interruptions was reported. Of those, 863 were by pupils, 112 by principals, 109 by teachers, six by superintendents, twenty-one by supervisors, 107 by other school personnel, ninety by parents, and thirty-one by outsiders.[1] A copy of a portion of the questionnaire used in this survey can be found in the appendix on pp. 72-73.

In 1959, a Rochester, New York survey on classroom interruptions was conducted by William A. Howe. One hundred and three elementary teachers kept a record of classroom interruptions over a period of five days. Seventy-nine teachers in the city's nine high schools tallied interruptions during ten school days. This survey showed that high school classes were interrupted an average of 1.78 times per period. Elementary teachers were interrupted an average of 13.27 times a day. Of the 6,838 recorded interruptions in elementary schools, the most frequent were toilet trips (1,860), traffic duty

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1. W. W. Hartsell, et al., op cit., p. 13.

(857), teacher interruptions (337), appointments for clinics, music lessons, etc. (306). This survey showed that the greatest teacher resentment was reported against music, physical education and similar activities in elementary schools and weekly assembly programs in high schools.[1] A newspaper article concerning the above mentioned survey can be found in the appendix on p. 75. A copy of the Rochester survey used in the elementary schools can be found in the appendix on pp. 77-79.

A Bay City, Michigan experiment in 1953:

> revealed that non-teaching operations such as making reports, housekeeping, interruptions, writing on the board, and taking roll required, on the average, 26 percent of the elementary school teacher's time while in the classroom.[2]

The National Education Association Research Division studied teaching load with the help of local education associations about ten years ago. In the study, a hypothetical question was given to the teacher participants concerning what they would try to do to improve the teacher load situation in their respective community if they were president of the local education association. The following shows some results of this study:

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1. Richardson Gale, op cit., p. 18.
2. National Education Association, Facts and Figures on Teaching Load, p. 299.

> About one-fifth suggested specific phases of administrative management that the association might try to get improved, such as better management of bus transportation and lunch-hour activities, more longrange planning so as to reduce the number of interruptions and fewer outside activities of all sorts.[1]

More proof for the need of improving teacher load and the reduction of interruptions is presented in an article by T. D. Mac Owan. Dr. Mac Owan, associate professor of education at West Texas State College, has also taught in the public schools of Indiana. He tells about the typical fund drive. He says that it may go on for about three weeks and the teacher is expected to remind the pupils each day about it. Dr. Mac Owan indicates that this means managing a receptacle where the contributions are deposited and sometimes the drive is complicated by having a contest between classes or between groups within the same class. He says that this means that it is necessary to make thermometers or other charts to show the progress of the drive and possibly two receptacles to be managed. If the contest is between groups within a class, he says that the group contributing the most is treated by the other group and the cost of the treat may in some cases actually total more

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1. H. Davies, "Give the Teacher Time to Look Up", National Education Association Journal, vol. 40, pp. 276-277.

than the original contributions to the fund drive.[1]

This writer feels that having something like this going on during regular school hours may be questionable when considering proper use of time.

Buena Stolberg says that if we put a cross section of any teacher's work load under a microscope, we would see that there are too many interruptions which prevent many teachers from teaching effectively. Teachers have too many extra duties which divert the teacher's energy and time from the direct work of teaching. Many teachers are confronted with a crowded curriculum because they are expected to keep up with the changing times and at the same time pressure from lay people forces the continuation of outmoded practices in the schools. Teachers try to please everybody and end up with frustrations and unhappiness.[2]

Herrick and others in connection with teacher load have this to say:

> Teachers conduct their work effectively under conditions which promote maximum personal well-being. (When):
>
> a. Their work with children is conducted without unnecessary interruption.
>
> b. There is a minimum outside interference with, and interruption of, classroom procedures.

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1. T. D. Mac Owan, "Time Out for Teaching", National Parent Teacher, vol. 52, pp. 7-9.
2. B. Stolberg, "What is Teacher Load", National Education Association Journal, vol. 41, p. 446.

c. They are protected from administrative chores not directly associated with classroom teaching.[1]

The Department of Classroom Teachers of the National Education Association says that many teachers have a long day with no breaks. This means that those teachers have no time for planning or for just gathering their thoughts during their very busy school day. The teacher aide plan may be of some help in this situation. In the modern elementary schools, we find standardized testing, detailed personnel records, frequent reports to parents which means a great deal of additional clerical work for the teachers. Some schools are now beginning to use clerks to help in taking over a good deal of the clerical work now done by teachers. The increase of nonteaching demands, housekeeping duties, and just managing a class often absorb a great deal of time and energy. Some teachers experience a wide range of abilities within their own class which tends to increase the teacher's load because of the special individual attention that must be given. More time is needed to develop special materials and tests. Children who deviate far from the normal may benefit more from individual instruction from special teachers. This would relieve a regular classroom teacher of complex tasks beyond his resources.[2]

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1. Virgil E. Herrick, et al., op cit., p. 340.
2. Department of Classroom Teachers of the N.E.A., "Toward Better Teaching", N.E.A. Journal, pp. 33-47.

We might begin improving the heavy teacher load situation by:

> eliminating some of the less important out-of-class activities, providing auxiliary and monitorial services, planning to reduce the number of classroom interruptions, effecting better scheduling practices, providing free time for each teacher, making teaching assignments consistent with the major field of preparation of the faculty member, providing better and more adequate supplies, and improving classroom facilities and school buildings.[1]

We, as teachers, play an important part in the reduction of the heavy teaching load. Teachers must see the school year as it really is: an orderly group of seasons significant to instruction, holiday recesses which reduce the available time plus many things which cannot be foreseen. Careful thinking and planning helps reduce the possibility of beginning an extensive unit or having a time of almost no activity before a holiday period.[2]

Educators are making an earnest effort to find ways of helping teachers relieve the heavy load of teaching through the use of teacher assistants, teacher aides, and team teaching. These assistants, teacher aides or school

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1. J. M. Eastmond, The Teacher and School Administration, p. 346.
2. G. Gould and C. A. Yoakum, The Teacher and His Work, pp. 364-365.

aides are obtained from interested parents, college seniors, and experts from industry.

Jan Grayson, a first grade teacher, had a mother in her room who acted as a teacher aide and recently gave the following report. She said that the mother served without pay and proved to be very helpful in correcting papers, making flash cards, weighing, making dittos, etc. She mentions in her report that mothers used as teacher's aides should use caution about carrying information about the pupils to the community. Miss Grayson says that such mothers must be extremely sincere in their desire to assist in the classroom. Miss Grayson's aide would tiptoe in and out, come in after classes start, and leave before classes end. Her aid had her own work desk and Miss Grayson would leave notes on the mother's work desk permitting her to go right to work without interrupting the teacher or the class.[1]

Myra Woodruff, in October, 1957 explained how interested parents volunteered to assist in the classroom, on a field trip, in the principal's office, or on a committee. Parents assisting in this way have proved to be of much value to themselves, teachers, and pupils. Parents become more interested in their schools and develop a much better understanding of their schools. Using parents in this way is not recommended

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1. J. Grayson, "Teacher Aide: Mother", The Elementary School Journal, vol. 62, No. 3, p. 134.

unqualifiedly for every teacher, nor for every parent, nor for every school. Each individual school faculty must decide its readiness to have parents assist in this capacity. Parents really want to help. They learn much more about their schools by actual experience in them than by simply being told about them. It increases parents' satisfaction as well as the effectiveness of teaching. Parents develop more confidence in their schools and teachers.[1]

When deciding whether to use teacher assistants in schools, each school must, of course, find out whether it is permissible according to the law. McKinney has this to say about the legality of using teacher aides in New York State:

> Section 3009 Unqualified teachers shall not be paid from school moneys
>
> 1. No part of the school money apportioned to a district shall be applied to the payment of the salary of an unqualified teacher, nor shall his salary, or any part thereof, be collected by a district tax except as provided in this chapter.
> 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the school authorities of any district shall have the power, in their discretion, to employ persons as teacher aides who shall assist the

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1. M. Woodruff, "When Parents Participate, il., National Education Association Journal, vol. 46, pp. 467-468.

> regular teacher or teachers of the district in the performance of their teaching functions by performing those nonteaching duties otherwise performed by such regular teacher or teachers. As amended L. 1961, c 794, eff. April 22, 1961.[1]

Additional information regarding the legality of teacher's aides in New York State is seen in an OPINION OF COUNSEL of the Education Department which may be found in the appendix on pp. 80-85 . It explains that it is legal to use teacher aides in New York State. The service, however, must not be of a teaching nature. They are permitted to supervise children in the sense that they see that the children behave themselves. They may also help in managing records, materials and equipment and attending to the physical needs of children. Their services rendered must be determined and supervised by teachers. It is suggested that a Board of Education employing teacher aides be adequately protected by insurance.

The American Educational Research Association recently reported on an experiment with teacher aides in Bay City, Michigan schools in 1951 in which 226 classrooms in forty-five school districts were participating. A final report published by Central Michigan University, Department of Special Studies (1960) concluded that when teacher aides were used, teachers spent more time on instructional activities. They found that

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1. McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York State, pp. 58-59.

it was not always possible to distinguish clearly between teaching and nonteaching duties. There was no great change in teaching methods. Better use of teachers and experimentation with staffing was possible. Using teacher aids had little effect on over-all costs of instruction. Many of the teacher aides involved were potential recruits for teaching. The use of teacher aides was recommended when conditions make normal class size impossible.[1]

In this writer's review of literature, a good deal of evidence was found favoring the use of cooperating teachers, non professional teachers' aides, and Parent Teacher Association volunteers, and assisting teachers for the lunchroom.

A cooperating teacher and a teacher aide were used in 1959 at Honeyhill School in Norwalk, Connecticut to help the teacher in charge. Seventy second graders were assigned to the team of three women. The class was split up into three groups. Forty pupils went with the teacher in charge for a reading lesson, twenty were assigned to the cooperating teacher for individualized work in adding and subtracting, and the remaining ten were assigned to the teacher aide for a vocabulary lesson. The children rotated among the team members

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1. American Educational Research Association, "Teacher aides: studies of", Review of Educational Research, vol. XXXI, No. 4, Educational Organization, Administration and Finance, p. 394.

until they all had received instruction in all subjects from one of the two trained teachers. The pupils came together in one group for penmanship, gym and singing.[1]

Mother volunteers from the Parent Teacher Association unit at the Arthur W. Erskine Elementary School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa supervise most of the children during the lunch hour freeing the teacher for a "quiet", adult lunch time. Most teachers like it. It gives them a new outlook for the afternoon. It helps teachers have a half hour of quiet,, a chance to be themselves on the adult level and have relaxing surroundings for lunch.[2]

The use of personnel assistants is being studied in many places because studies show that teachers spend at least twenty-five per cent of their time doing things which nonprofessional workers might do effectively. In Richwood, West Virginia, a bus driver gave behind-the-wheel instruction in driver education classes. The actual classroom instruction was given by a certified teacher. Students, parents, bus driver, and teacher were in favor of continuing this plan. Noncertified assistants were used in science laboratories in the Alexander Ramsey High School, Roseville,

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1. Newsweek, June 8, 1959, "Experiment at Norwalk", p. 54.
2. N. G. Zook, "Menu: A Treat for Teachers", National Parent Teacher, June 1960, pp. 29-31.

Minnesota. This plan permitted more individual experimentation. These assistants were university science students and science personnel from industry who helped in the laboratories during activities periods, after school and on Saturday mornings. Experimentation is being carried on in Snyder, Texas to find out what classroom duties can be assumed by clerical assistants. Beecher, Illinois students are doing a variety of clerical jobs under the guidance of a special adviser who acts as coordinator between staff and student clerks. In Newton, Massachusetts; Snyder, Texas; and Jefferson County, Colorado team teaching is being tried where a specialist in poetry teaches a lesson in poetry, etc.[1]

Although most of the previous article refers to the high school situation, the writer mentions it here to show what is actually being done at some schools and because some of the ideas mentioned may also be used at the elementary level.

The use of college students as teacher assistants is shown in an experiment being conducted between Goddard College students of Plainfield, Vermont and seven Vermont school districts. College students of advanced standing and special

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1. J. L. Trump, "Better Staff Utilization", National Education Association Journal, January 1958, vol. 47, pp. 29-31.

ability assist with such subjects as art, music, science, and physical education. The assistant is expected to be well prepared. The project has a director who coordinates the activities in which the assistants are engaged. These assistants are used where the benefit can be greatest for all concerned.[1]

J. Cass writes about the use of honor undergraduate students as teacher assistants from Columbia and Barnard Colleges:

> More than 100 volunteered to become 'assistant educators' in the elementary and junior high schools of the depressed areas of upper Manhattan. 2 or 3 hours a week tutoring and otherwise assisting teachers.[2]

M. Christine writes about parents helping at Ohlones School in Palo Alto, California:

> The parent-helpers are Parent Teacher Association members, all of whom have children in Ohlones School. Each helper serves a few hours a week, doing work that fits in with her particular specialty - as library aide, room assistant, or special Spanish instructor.[3]

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1. G. Beecher, "Educational Resources Project", School and Society, vol., 85, pp. 130-131.
2. J. Cass, "While School Keeps", Saturday Review, vol. 44, p. 90.
3. M. Christine, "Parents Lighten the Load", National Parent Teacher, vol. 51, pp. 32-34.

W. D. Boutwell suggests using parents to help whether they are paid or not. They can be very useful in assisting in pupil supervision plus many clerical chores normally done by teachers. He suggests using children as often as possible to help with chores because it is good for them as well as for the teacher.[1]

The April 26, 1954 issue of Life contains a group of pictures taken of a fifth grade at Lindsay School in Bay City, Michigan. They show the teacher, Ethel Howard, and her busy day being assisted by Kathleen Barber who is a paid teacher aide at forty-five dollars a week. The teacher and aide are handling a class of forty-five pupils. The pictures show the regular teacher going right on with the regular lesson while the aide at one time helps those in need of extra work, another time shows her hanging up art work, and another picture shows her copying an assignment on the board.[2]

Evidence seems to point to the fact that much can be done to improve teacher load and interruptions by the use of various types of teacher aides. Improving these items should help to improve the learning situation as well as teacher morale in schools where there seems to be a need for it.

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1. W. D. Boutwell, "What's Happening in Education", National Parent Teacher, vol. 48, p. 13.
2. Life, vol. 36, "Teacher's Tortured Timetable", pp. 137-138.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

This writer has been interested in the problem of classroom interruptions for quite some time. He has been aware of the problem in his own teaching situation and wondered how common a problem it was for teachers other than those he knew personally.

In reviewing the literature for this study, the largest share of it was done at the State University College at Brockport and the Rundel Library in Rochester, New York. In one instance, when the Rundel Library did not have a desired book, the State Library in Albany, New York was used.

The greatest amount of time spent on the review of literature was in using the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. He referred to articles written during the passed ten years on the topic of classroom interruptions. The writer was interested in finding results of other studies, for proof that interruptions as a problem existed and for the legality of following through with some suggestions made in the articles for the improvement of the problem.

The writer wrote several letters to the National Education Association generally, and specifically to the National Education Association Research Department for

information on recent surveys relating to the problem, for other proof that the problem of interruptions in the elementary schools does exist, and suggestions for the possible improvement of these problems.

The author corresponded with the New York State Teachers Association and a request for information relating to the legality of using teacher aides in New York State was made and granted.

The Rochester Superintendent's office in the Board of Education building was visited. With the Superintendent's permission and the kind assistance of his secretary, this writer was permitted to look over the work that was done on the Rochester Survey on Classroom Interruptions of 1959 by William A. Howe. A sample of the survey sheet used in the elementary schools was sent to the writer and proved to be very helpful as he made up his own survey on classroom interruptions in the elementary schools. A copy of the Rochester survey may be found in the appendix on pp. 77-79.

Another visit was made to the Democrat and Chronicle Newspaper Library where a photostatic copy of the article written on the results of the 1959 survey on classroom

interruptions was obtained and appears in the appendix on p. 75.

This writer, in order to receive some help from his fellow teachers, obtained permission from his principal to use a pilot questionnaire in his own school which was used to help him in making up his own final questionnaire. This pilot questionnaire can be seen in the appendix on pp. 61-63. It proved to be helpful in deciding which items of interruption should be used in his final questionnaire. It gave him an idea about what teachers thought was very important to the learning situation in the elementary school as well as what seemed to be detrimental. On the pilot questionnaire, teachers indicated what they thought were the most important subjects in their individual grades, what some of the predominant interruptions in their grades are, what some of the problems are that are caused by the interruptions they mentioned, and also their suggestions for relieving the problems. This was very helpful in making some suggestions for improving instruction in the author's fifth chapter about his summary, conclusions, and suggestions.

The final questionnaire was designed to find out the frequency of the predominant interruptions in the elementary schools and the approximate amount of time used by these interruptions. Space was provided for comments and suggestions

and on the last page appeared a section for personal data about the respondent. A sample of this final questionnaire may be seen in the appendix on pp. 64-68 .

Seven graduate Education classes at Brockport were given 240 copies of the final questionnaire during the 1962 Spring Semester. They were distributed by the instructors at one of their class meetings and asked to return them at their next class meeting. In addition to the seven graduate Education classes at Brockport that were given the final questionnaire, the writer contacted the principals of four elementary schools of one Rochester suburban school district after receiving permission to do so from the assistant district principal. Permission was given by the principals to use the questionnaire in their respective schools. One hundred copies of this final questionnaire were delivered to these four elementary schools and later distributed by the principals. The completed questionnaires were then picked up after about a week's time.

The data from both groups that received the final questionnaire were then tabulated in such a way that certain learning about classroom interruptions in the elementary schools could be obtained and suggestions could be made for the improvement of the situation.

The results of this writer's pilot study can be found in Chapter IV as well as an analysis of the final questionnaire covering statistics, results and implications based on the questionnaire as tabulated in terms of the purpose as stated in Chapter I.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

This writer used a pilot questionnaire in his own school to determine the nature and extent of the predominant interruptions and to obtain some possible suggestions for relieving these interruptions. It was used also to aid him in composing his final questionnaire on classroom interruptions which was of the more comprehensive type. A sample of both questionnaires may be seen in the appendix on pp. 61-68.

Most teachers indicated on the pilot questionnaire that reading, arithmetic and language were the three most important subjects in the elementary school.

The interruptions mentioned on the pilot questionnaire caused such problems as:

1. too much repetion of teaching in helping those pupils who miss class time;
2. too much repetion of teaching when a message comes to the classroom during a lesson;
3. too much reduction of the time needed to cover the curriculum;
4. too often very wearing on teachers patience and good nature.

Suggestions for improving the problem of classroom interruptions as indicated on the pilot questionnaire included:

1. scheduling music lessons, choir, etc. before and after school;
2. allowing music lessons for above average ability pupils only;
3. having parents let teacher know ahead of time when they are coming in to get work for an absent pupil;
4. counting and collecting money by the office or by

Parent Teacher Association volunteers;
5. having bulletins from the office placed in teachers mailboxes or on bulletin boards or sent around before school begins;
6. combining boys and girls for gym classes instead of having the boys and girls going separately.

The results from this pilot questionnaire proved to be very helpful in the forming of this writer's final questionnaire. It helped to decide what items of interruption should be included and gave him some incite as to what might be expected from other teachers.

This final questionnaire was given to the members of seven graduate Education classes at the State University College at Brockport and four elementary schools (K - 6) in a suburban school district during the 1962 Spring Semester. A total of 340 questionnaires were distributed -- 240 to the graduate classes and 100 to the elementary schools. The number returned to this writer totaled 140 -- seventy-eight from the four elementary schools, sixty-two from the graduate classes. It was learned by this writer that the reason for the "seemingly" low response from the graduate classes was due to the fact that many of these graduate students were actually Junior High School teachers. They were unable to fill out the questionnaire because very few of the items pertained to the Junior High School situation. Of the 140 questionnaires returned -- fifty-nine were from primary teachers (K-3), sixty from intermediate teachers (4-6), fourteen from special class teachers, and seven from Junior

High School teachers.

In this final questionnaire, the author tried to find out what the predominant interruptions seemed to be, the approximate frequency, and the amount of time lost due to these interruptions. This writer has disregarded the time element in his analysis since the responses to this item were not clear. The writer also allowed space for other interruptions to be listed as well as space for comments and suggestions. There was also a section for personal data about the respondent. A copy of the questionnaire used can be found in the appendix on pp. 64-68 .

In the statistical analysis of the returns, this writer has used the data from the primary and intermediate teachers because of their greater numbers. He has analyzed these two groups separately to see if any differences or similarities were apparent. The median was used as the measure of central tendency for the items of interruption because the distribution of the frequencies for each item of interruption deviated too greatly from what statisticians regard as the normal curve. The median seems to be a much more accurate measurement to use in this instance.

The intermediate grades reported a weekly total of 1066 interruptions. Of these, 579 were caused by pupils, 217 by the office, 176 by teachers, and ninety-four by various money collections. The following tables show the analysis of these interruptions.

TABLE I

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY PUPILS ENTERING OR LEAVING THE ROOM AS REPORTED BY SIXTY INTERMEDIATE TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
Individual Music Lesson	52	87%	312	8.5
Safety Patrol	12	20%	129	10.3
Personal Appointments	17	28%	49	4.5
Tardiness	12	20%	39	9.5
Choir or Chorus Rehearsal	18	30%	25	1.5
Orchestra or Band Rehearsal	19	32%	25	1.5

From TABLE I, we see that individual music lessons affect the greatest percentage of teachers and the most frequent interruptions are caused by Safety Patrol and Pupil tardiness.

TABLE II

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY THE OFFICE AS REPORTED BY SIXTY INTERMEDIATE TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
Bulletins and Professional Magazines	22	37%	60	4.7
Request for Messengers	15	25%	57	5.2
Deliveries	13	22%	46	6.0
Request to see pupil or pupils	16	27%	43	4.7
Room Repairs	3	5%	11	4.5

From TABLE II, we see that Bulletins and Professional Magazines from the office affect the greatest percentage of teachers and the most frequent interruption is caused by deliveries.

TABLE III

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY OTHER TEACHERS ENTERING THE ROOM TO SEE TEACHER OR PUPILS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY INTERMEDIATE TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
By other Teachers	36	60%	176	5.5

It can be seen from TABLE III, that a high percentage of teachers are interrupted by other teachers. Those who are interrupted, are interrupted rather frequently.

TABLE IV

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY VARIOUS MONEY COLLECTIONS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY INTERMEDIATE TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
Banking	48	80%	48	1.0
Milk Money	13	22%	21	1.5
Book Rental	10	17%	16	1.8
Fund Drives	2	3%	9	4.6

TABLE IV shows that banking interrupts a high percentage of teachers. Those who are interrupted, however, are interrupted only once a week. A small percentage are interrupted quite often for fund drives. Collecting milk money interrupts almost one-fourth of the intermediate teachers reporting.

TABLE V

A RANK ORDER OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INTERRUPTIONS FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES ACCORDING TO THE PER CENT OF TEACHERS AFFECTED

Type of Interruption	% of Teachers Affected
Individual Music Lessons	87%
Banking	80%
By Other Teachers	60%
Bulletins and Professional Magazines	37%
Orchestra or Band Rehearsal	32%
Choir and Chorus Rehearsal	30%
Personal Appointments by pupils	28%
Traffic Patrol	20%
Pupil Tardiness	20%

From TABLE V, we see that interruptions by individual music lessons, banking, and other teachers affected a significant percentage of teachers.

TABLE VI

A RANK ORDER OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INTERRUPTIONS FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES ACCORDING TO THE WEEKLY MEDIAN FREQUENCY

Type of Interruption	Weekly Median Frequency
Traffic Patrol	10.3
Pupil Tardiness	9.5
Individual Music Lessons	8.5
Office Deliveries	6.0
By Other Teachers	5.5
Office Requests for Messengers	5.2

From TABLE VI, we see that some teachers are interrupted very frequently by traffic patrol, pupil tardiness, and individual music lessons.

From this overall data on the intermediate grades, we may conclude that we should study our particular schools to see if some improvement might be made in at least the areas of individual music lessons, banking, teachers coming into rooms during class time, traffic patrol, pupil tardiness, and office disturbances. It is, of course, an individual school matter. The problem of interruptions may be improved by rescheduling where possible, completely eliminating them if they prove to be an unimportant part of the curriculum and not required by law, and by better planning by all concerned.

Let us now consider the primary grades involved with the same questionnaire, to see whether any differences or similarities exist when the statistics and results are compared with those of the intermediate grades.

The primary grades reported a weekly total of 449 interruptions. Of these 162 were caused by the office, 124 by other teachers, 105 by collecting various kinds of money, and fifty-eight by pupils. The tables that follow, show the analysis of these interruptions.

TABLE VII

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY THE OFFICE AS REPORTED BY FIFTY-NINE PRIMARY TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
Deliveries	11	19%	58	9.8
Request for Messengers	5	8%	5	1.0
Bulletins and Professional Magazines	19	32%	80	10.0
Requests to see Pupil or Pupils	7	12%	10	1.7
Room Repairs	6	10%	9	1.8

TABLE VII shows that bulletins and professional magazines from the office affect a high percentage of primary teachers and very frequently.

TABLE VIII

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY OTHER TEACHERS ENTERING THE ROOM TO SEE TEACHER OR PUPILS AS REPORTED BY FIFTY-NINE PRIMARY TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
By Other Teachers	27	46%	124	8.3

TABLE VIII shows that a high percentage of primary teachers are interrupted by other teachers coming into the room. Those who are interrupted, are interrupted quite frequently.

TABLE IX

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY VARIOUS MONEY COLLECTIONS AS REPORTED BY FIFTY-NINE PRIMARY TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly Interruptions
Milk Money	21	36%	54	4.9
Banking	44	71%	50	1.0
Book Rentall	1	2%	1	1.0

TABLE IX shows that banking affects a high percentage of primary teachers but only once a week. Milk money also seems to affect a high percentage of primary teachers and quite often.

TABLE X

THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF WEEKLY INTERRUPTIONS CAUSED BY PUPILS ENTERING OR LEAVING THE ROOM AS REPORTED BY FIFTY-NINE PRIMARY TEACHERS

Type of Interruption	Number of Teachers Reporting	% of Teachers Reporting	Number of Interruptions Per Week	Median Frequency of Weekly interruptions
Individual Music Lessons	4	7%	9	4.6
Orchestra or Band Rehearsal	1	2%	2	2.0
Personal Appointments	12	20%	25	2.7
Pupil Tardiness	10	17%	22	3.2

TABLE X shows that personal appointments and pupil tardiness are the most significant of those reported by the primary teachers which are caused by the pupils.

TABLE XI

A RANK ORDER OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INTERRUPTIONS FOR THE PRIMARY GRADES ACCORDING TO THE PER CENT OF TEACHERS AFFECTED

Type of Interruption	% of Teachers Affected
Banking	71%
By Other Teachers	46%
Collecting Milk Money	36%
Office Bulletins and Professional Magazines	32%
Personal Appointments by Pupils	20%
Office Deliveries	19%

TABLE XI shows a high percentage of primary teachers being affected by banking and other teachers coming into the room.

TABLE XII

A RANK ORDER OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INTERRUPTIONS FOR THE PRIMARY GRADES ACCORDING TO THE WEEKLY MEDIAN FREQUENCY

Type of Interruption	Weekly Median Frequency
Office bulletins and professional Magazines	10.0
Office Deliveries	9.8
By Other Teachers	8.3
Collecting Milk Money	4.9
Individual Music Lessons	4.6

TABLE XII shows a high frequency of interruptions in the primary grades caused by office bulletins and professional magazines, by office deliveries and by other teachers.

TABLE XIII

THE PERCENTAGE OF PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE TEACHERS AFFECTED BY PREDOMINATE INTERRUPTIONS

Type of Interruption	Intermediate Teachers	Primary Teachers
Individual Music Lessons	87%	0%
Banking	80%	71%
By Other Teachers	60%	46%
Bulletins and Professional Magazines	37%	32%
Orchestra or Band Rehearsal	32%	0%
Choir and Chorus Rehearsal	30%	0%
Personal Appointments by Pupils	28%	20%
Traffic Patrol	20%	0%
Pupil Tardiness	20%	0%
Collecting Milk Money	0%	36%
Office Deliveries	0%	19%

TABLE XIII shows that a high percentage of both primary and intermediate teachers are affected by banking, by other teachers, and by bulletins and professional magazines from the office.

We may conclude from the data on the primary grades that again we should study our particular schools to see if some improvement might be made in at least the areas of banking, other teachers coming in to see teacher or pupils, collecting milk money, and office disturbances. It still, however, is an individual school matter. The primary grade interruptions may be reduced by completely eliminating them if they prove to be an unimportant part of the curriculum and not required by law. This should be done by the cooperative efforts of all personnel involved.

The greatest difference between interruptions in the primary grades and interruptions in the intermediate grades seems to be in the total number of interruptions reported on the questionnaires returned. This may be because more of the items of interruptions on the questionnaire pertained to the intermediate grades than to the primary grades. There is much similarity in the predominant interruptions of both groups. It might also be noted here that the most predominant "write in" interruption by both the primary grade teachers and the intermediate grade teachers was interruptions caused by the intercom in schools where it is standard equipment.

This author's questionnaire clearly shows that interruptions do exist in the elementary schools. Some of the

interruptions were very troublesome. We, as educators, must do all that we can to help our schools function as efficiently as possible. It can be done only if we all make a sincere effort to find the best possible solution. The problem of interruptions is, in every way, a team problem.

In Chapter V, the writer has included a more comprehensive attempt to make suggestions for the improvement of classroom interruptions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Summary

Evidence for the need of a study of classroom interruptions was apparent to this writer. Similar studies have been made and suggestions given for improving the situation in our schools.

In this study, as in most studies of this kind, there are many limitations. It is not a complete study in the sense that it can completely solve the problem. It is hoped, however, that greater interest in the problem will be sparked because of the small contribution that this writer has made.

Specifically, this writer has used the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature to a large extent as well as some books that helped him to better understand the whole problem. He has also used such community resources as the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle Library, the Rundel Library, the State Library in Albany, and the board of education offices of the Rochester, New York school system. He corresponded with the National Education Association, the National Education Association Research Department, and the New York State Teachers Association.

A pilot questionnaire was used in his own school which

greatly aided him in the making of his more comprehensive questionnaire on classroom interruptions in the elementary schools. This final questionnaire was given to the members of seven Education graduate classes at the State University College at Brockport and to the teachers of four elementary schools (K-6) in a Rochester, New York suburban school district during the 1962 Spring Semester. He has analyzed the results of the questionnaires returned to him. The complete analysis can be seen in Chapter IV of this study. The analysis indicated to this writer that interruptions, as a problem in the elementary schools, do exist.

Through the use of all these resources, this writer feels a little more informed about this problem of classroom interruptions. Obtaining this knowledge through his own questionnaire, from teachers who were unknown to him, increased his interest in the problem even more.

Conclusions

Having completed this study, the writer feels strongly that classroom interruptions are a real problem. Perhaps they are such a problem because most dedicated teachers are anxious to get on with their work -- teaching. However, because of these burdensome interruptions, they are frustrated too often in accomplishing their goals. The writer's survey shows that this problem does exist. The review of literature shows that it exists and that there are ways of

improving the situation, such as through study and planning at the higher levels of education, good strong organization and planning at the administrative and teaching levels, employment of teacher aides or volunteer workers, etc.

Teaching is not an easy task. There is much evidence to support this statement. This writer agrees with those who say that teaching morale is a very important aspect to consider. It seems evident that classroom interruptions reduce teacher morale. Poor teacher morale in turn, has a detrimental effect on the learning situation. As a result, the learner suffers. Therefore, we as educators must do all we can to develop the best possible educational environment for those who have been given to our care.

Teachers are an inspired group with much to offer. Perhaps it is this desire to move on that makes us so resentful of things that interfere with educational progress. Interruptions or not -- we will go on doing the very best we can with the most wonderful challenge in the world -- children.

Suggestions

In today's ever changing times, the educational process is a complex matter. To carry out our philosophy of educating the whole child, much has been added to the curriculum thus greatly increasing demands made upon teachers time.

The public must be made to understand the problem of the utilization of teacher time. This can be done through the continued studies by professional organizations at all levels as well as through membership in active efficient Parent Teacher Associations.

This writer feels very strongly that the place to begin control of classroom interruptions in a school plant is at the administrative level. For a teacher to work effectively, proper atmosphere and working conditions must exist in the school. Class sizes must be equalized. A balanced school day must be established. Teachers must have time to teach, time to prepare, time to work with individuals, time to process records and reports. A balanced school day must also allow time for teacher relaxation. Administrators must be aware of teacher load and do everything they can to prevent too heavy a load on any of their teachers.

A brief period at the opening of school should be set aside for all school announcements, for collecting money, for taking care of all interclass communications, etc. The only exception to this should be when a very definite emergency arises.

This writer thinks that teachers should be permitted to use the office staff in matters that would help the teacher to improve his instructional program. If an office staff isn't large enough to handle these responsibilities,

then a teacher aide plan of some nature should be formed.

The use of teacher aides is legal in New York State. The individual school unit must decide its need for and its readiness for the use of teacher aides. These aides have titles such as: teacher aides, assistants to teachers, clerks, and parent volunteers (usually from the Parent Teacher Associations). Choose the type that best fits your particular school, and the problem of classroom interruptions, this writer feels, will be greatly improved.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Teacher,

I am doing a study on Classroom Interruptions in the Elementary Schools and plan to make out on survey on this topic. It will be greatly appreciated if you would help me with the making of my survey by answering the four questions that follow as you see it. It is important that you write down your own thoughts without discussing them with colleagues. Your comments will be kept confidential

Thank you,
John L. Laye

1. What do you consider to be the most important subjects for your grade?

2. What do you consider to be interruptions in your grade?

3. What are some of the problems in your grade that are actually caused by the interruptions you mentioned?

4. What are your suggestions for relieving the problems mentioned?

APPENDIX B

FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Rochester 15 ew York
April 2, 1962

Dear teacher,

I am conducting a study of Classroom Interruptions in the Elementary Schools as part of my graduate work at the State University College at Brockport and would appreciate it if you would assist me.

Through the attached questionnaire, an attempt will be made to understand more fully the kinds of interruptions that occur in the elementary school program, the frequency of these interruptions, and the approximate time loss from instruction at the various grade levels. Obtaining this data from a graduate group, of which you are a part, should give a good cross-section of this problem in the elementary schools within the Monroe County area. With the data derived from this questionnaire and other related studies, it is hoped that recommendations for possible solutions to the problem can be made.

For this study, the term classroom interruption means anything that prevents the classroom teacher from having uninterrupted lessons during regular school hours.

Your responses will be kept confidential. If you would like to have the results of the questionnaire, you may place your name and mailing address on this cover letter, detach and mail to me at the above address.

Please return the questionnaire to your instructor at the next class meeting.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Yours sincerely,
John L. Sage
6th. grade teacher
School #42
Rochester 12, New York

Questionnaire

CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

General Directions

This questionnaire is divided into two sections as follows:

Section I deals with various types of classroom interruptions.

Section II deals with personal data about the respondent.

Specific directions will be found at the beginning of each section.

Section I

Column A is a list of various classroom interruptions.

Column B refers to frequency of the interruptions.

Column C refers to the total number of minutes taken by the interruptions.

In Column B, there are four possible spaces for response. In the space that best applies to your situation, write the frequency (i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc.). If none applies you should leave blank.

In Column C, write in the approximate total number of minutes that applies to your situation.

At the end of Section I there is space for any comments or suggestions relative to such interruptions.

A	B				C
Types of Interruptions	Approximate frequency of interruptions (use one column or more)				Approximate total number of minutes
	per day	per week	per month	per year	
A. Safety Patrol					
B. Music lessons (individual)					
C. Interruptions by other teachers (To see you or pupils)					

Section I (continued)

A Types of Interruptions	B Approximate frequency of interruptions (use one column or row) per day	per week	per month	per year	C Approximate total number of minutes
D. Choir or Chorus (rehearsal)					
E. Orchestra or band (rehearsal)					
F. Milk money collection					
G. Deliveries from Office (books, supplies, milk delivery and pick-up of containers.					
H. Banking					
I. Office (request for messengers)					
J. Personal appointments (Doctor, Dentist, Clinic, Eyes)					
K. Pupil tardiness					
L. Office (bulletins professional magazines)					
M. Office (request to see individuals or groups)					
N. Book Rental (collection)					
O. Fund drives					
P. Making repairs in room					
Q. OTHER 1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Section I (continued)

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Section II

A. Fill in the blanks for each item:

Grade now teaching or position _____;

Years of teaching experience _____;

Number of pupils in your class _____;

Approximate number of pupils in your building _____,

School hours (excluding lunch time): A.M. begin _____

end _____

P.M. begin _____

end _____

B. Check the appropriate blank for each item:

Male _____, Female _____;

Type of school: K - 3___, K - 6 ___, K- 8___, 4 - 6___,

other_____;

Kind of school: city___, town or village___, suburban___,

rural___.

APPENDIX C

GENERALIZED PROGRAM FOR GRADES 5 AND 6

GENERALIZED PROGRAM FOR GRADES 5 AND 6

8:00-9:00	Coming into the room, putting away wraps, getting ready for the school. In most schools the teacher is supposed to be in his room by 8:15. The time from 8:45-9:00 is usually spent in doing the household duties of feeding the fish, putting out food for the birds, sharpening pencils, chatting, or discussing the events of the day. In some schools, school business is handled at this time. In other schools the school day opens with a prayer or the reading of a short selection from the Bible.
9:00-9:15	Health inspection and instruction. School nurse. (Many schools do not have medical resources and the teacher is responsible for this).
9:15-9:50	Oral and written language (use of language in telling stories, making reports, conducting, meetings, writing letters, making notes, writing reports on a major theme with emphasis on grammar and usage).
9:50-10:00	Recess
10:00-10:20	Music (usually taught by the room teacher although in many schools a music teacher may come to the room or the children may go to the music room for this activity.)
10:20-11:00	Arithmetic
11:00-12:00	Social Studies (Varies between school program; in most schools, school studies have geoghaphy as its base, with history and civics added.)
12:00-1:00	Lunch (Village and city elementary schools where the children go home for lunch have from an hour and a quarter to an hour and a half for lunch. In schools where most of the children stay for lunch, the lunch period ranges from 30 minutes to one hour.)
1:00-1:15	Spelling
1:15-1:30	Penmanship

1:30-2:20	Art (three days per week) Science (two days per week)
2:20-2:30	Recess
2:30-3:10	Reading, Library, Currents
3:10-3:30	Physical Education, games, make-up work
3:30	Dismissal

APPENDIX D

PORTION OF A SURVEY

RECORD OF CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS FOR ONE DAY

This report is from. .... School..... Teacher

TIME OF INTERRUPTION	PERSONS WHO CAME TO CLASSROOM								REASONS FOR INTERRUPTIONS
	1 Pupils	2 Other Teachers	3 Principal	4 Superintendent	5 Supervisor	6 Other School Personnel	7 Parents	8 Outsiders	a. Message for child from parent b. Message from principal for teacher c. Request to send child to nurse d. Deliver supplies e. Lunchroom manager to get lunch count f. g.
8:00 - 9:00	d-1	d-1	a-1 b-1			c-2 e-1			
9:00-10:00			b-1						

APPENDIX E

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Interruptions Plague Classes, Study Shows

By [illegible]

Rochester high school classes are interrupted nearly twice in every 55-minute period.

Elementary classes get interrupted more than 13 times a day.

Causes range from teachers "chatting" to student traffic duty and one child's broken arm.

The report on classroom interruption was released last week by Dr. Lowell C. [illegible], superintendent of schools, who said the interruption is still being studied by school administrators. Further comment may be made later, he said.

The loss of class time from many causes, including drills and other activities was pointed out last year by teachers during discussion of a proposed lengthening of the high school day.

Efforts to reduce [illegible] interruptions were also made during the year. A major move was the elimination of private photographing of pupils. Under a new policy, only three grades in the city school district were photographed for identification purposes.

To check on the frequency of classroom interruptions and their causes, a subject survey was made using a cross section of elementary and high school teachers.

Robert F. Lamy, retired [illegible] of which teachers could provide the survey [illegible] was made, pointed out that many interruptions listed are legitimate parts of the school program and are unavoidable.

A total of 163 elementary teachers kept a record of classroom interruptions over a period of five days. In the city's nine high schools, 70 teachers tallied interruptions during 10 school days.

William A. [illegible], principal of East [illegible] High School, surveyed the 1,[illegible] teachers, representing about eight per cent of the city's teaching staff, to get their suggestions for correcting any excesses.

Dean's survey showed:

1—High school classes were interrupted an average of 1.73 times per period.

2—Elementary teachers were interrupted an average of 13.27 times a day. The incidence was greatest in the seventh grade (16.00) and lowest in the third grade (9.00). Kindergarten and the first two grades weren't checked.

The most frequent causes of 1,412 recorded high school interruptions were office announcements (172), student tardiness (156), safety duty (91), detained by counselor (80), other teachers in room (77), detained by class teacher (74), and extra-curricular activities (70).

Of the 6,838 recorded interruptions in elementary schools, the most frequent were toilet trips (1,050), traffic duty (857), teacher interruptions (33[illegible]), [illegible] for [illegible] trips [illegible]

[illegible] in elementary schools and nearly [illegible] in the high schools.

The number of personal interruptions by elementary schools teachers was reported to be "astonishing." Lowest interruptions were [illegible] lower in the high schools, the survey found.

On the other hand, high school classes were reported able to do their work with few unscheduled interruptions. They caused few complaints.

How to make them suggestions:

1—A careful evaluation of the [illegible] traffic duty in both secondary and elementary schools might be helpful.

2—A central plan and time for office announcements might be advisable. High school bulletins issued early in the week apparently reduce criticism on that score.

3—High schools might forbid tardy pupils to be admitted to class during a teaching period.

Elementary Schools May End Rental Fees for Textbooks

By CHARLES HOLCOMB

Textbook rental fees—time-waster for teachers, expense for parents and source of revenue for the Board of Education—may be on the way out in Rochester's 43 elementary schools.

Dr. Robert L. Springer, superintendent of schools, plans to recommend to the board on Thursday that book rental fees be discontinued at the elementary level. Textbooks, under the plan, would be provided by the school system without charge.

The fees will be continued at the high school level, however, where there is "more justification" for a charge, he said.

Book rentals bring in about $75,000 from the elementary schools and more than $70,000 from the high schools.

From kindergarten to second grade, children pay $2 per year for book rental; third to fifth grade, $3 a year; sixth to eighth grade, $4, and ninth to twelfth grade, $5.

• • •

TEACHERS complain that collecting and keeping track of book rental money is one of their most time-consuming non-teaching duties.

At some schools, pupils bring the money in bit by bit throughout the year under badgering by the teacher. Cases where parents say they can't pay must be checked by other school officials. The county contributes about $5,000 in rental fees for children whose parents are on welfare.

Unlike high school students, elementary school pupils take a few books home.

• • •

IF THE BOARD approves Springer's proposal, seventh grade classes in high schools apparently would pay rental fees, whereas seventh grades in elementary schools would not.

The school board has attempted in the past to eradicate book rental fees but financial pressures have kept book rentals in the school budget as a sources of revenue.

Rochester Times-Union
Tuesday Evening Mar. 27, 1962 p.1

APPENDIX F

ROCHESTER SURVEY SHEETS

BOARD OF EDUCATION ROCHESTER NEW YORK

RECORD OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS-ROOM INTERRUPTIONS

Teacher _____ School _____ Grade _____

From _____ Through _____ No. in Class _____

The administration wishes to find the extent and nature of interruptions during your classes. Will you, therefore, tally opposite the possible causes below any interruptions during the week shown above? Please add any causes not mentioned. Enter each tally in its appropriate column.

	AM			PM			COMMENTS
OUTSIDERS	9-10	10-11	11-12	1-2	2-3	3-4	
Office announcements							
Teacher interruptions to see pupil or for							
Outside noise in corridors etc.							
Delivery of lunches or clothing from home							
Pupils excused for other school activities							
Band, clinic, music corps.							
Choir or choir rehearsal							
Special assemblies							
Pupil withdrawn for discip.							
Special examinations							
Making repairs in room							
Others.							
PUPILS							
Pupil tardiness							
Pupil absences in class							
Pupils leaving for corridor duty							
Pupils leaving for Safety Patrol duty							
Detained in special class (gym, music, shop, etc.)							
Pupils entering rooms to get books, wraps, etc.							
Maladjusted pupils causing disturbances							
Going to toilet							
Others:							

BOARD OF EDUCATION ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Teacher _____ School_____ Grade_____

Subject_____ Period_____ No. in Class_____

Your suggestions as to ways and means of controlling interruptions are welcomed. Kindly write below any constructive ideas you may have to improve the situation. Your ideas will be treated in strictest confidence. A 4 cent stamped return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Robert F. Barry

Date_____ Teacher's Name_____

APPENDIX G

NEW YORK STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW YORK STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

152 WASHINGTON AVENUE

Albany 10, New York

March 23, 1962

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SELMA S. AXELROD
PUBLICATIONS AIDE

Mr. John L. Sage

Rochester 15, New York

Dear Mr Sage:

The use of teacher aides is legal in New York State. Enclosed please find an opinion of counsel dated April 4, 1956 and an amendment to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education adopted by the Board of Regents in 1961 which substantiate the above statement. Also enclosed is an excerpt from the revision of our "Handbook on Personnel Practices for Teachers" which has application.

We hope this material is useful to you.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan E. Kullman, Jr.

Education Department

OPINION OF COUNSEL

BOARD OF EDUCATION (Powers and Duties, Employment of Teacher's Aides) -- NEGLIGENCE

No. 140

We have had a considerable amount of correspondence from different parts of the State concerning the legality of employment of "teacher's aides" (not licensed teachers) in public schools and there is no easy answer to it except in generalities. As you know, a board of education may not employ any person who does not have a teaching license to teach. If the service is not teaching, then the board is privileged to employ any person it wishes to accomplish whatever service needs to be done. Each particular problem will therefore have to be solved with this in mind.

You ask about a situation in the cafeteria. If the service to be performed is merely custodial, that is, seeing that the children behave themselves, then any person could be retained to perform such service. If the person is expected to teach in the sense of instruction as to what food to select, etc., then you would need a licensed teacher. The same differentiation would need to be kept in mind in respect to any other similar problems.

For instance, even in a study hall, I presume that if the person is there only to keep order, to answer no questions and to perform no teaching service, any person could be employed to do so.

Having said all this, there is an entirely different phase to this problem which you ought to have in mind. That has to do with the problem of negligence. You understand that every time a school district finds itself in a law suit because of negligence, the first question which must be answered is the competency of the person who had charge of the children at the time the accident occurred. If a person holds a teaching license, such license is prima facie evidence of competency. The question of adequacy of the supervision under the particular circumstances is always an issue even though the supervision was provided through duly licensed personnel, but my comments on the question of whether the employee is a licensed teacher should not be taken as having any application to that issue

We had a most interesting case where a child was injured in the gymnasium during a period of time that a janitor had charge. (I presume that his status generally would be that of the cafeteria worker or the study hall non-licensed teacher aforesaid.) The child was injured tumbling on one of the mats and the court found negligence because of improper supervision. The court felt, apparently, that if children are to be allowed to use mats a licensed teacher should be in charge. So this problem is not at all easy A board takes certain chances in any case where it employs non-licensed personnel, and I certainly would advise that if this is done, that the boar check with its insurance carriers to make sure that whatever else is invol it is at least protected by insurance.

Dated: April 4, 195

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Effective immediately, Article XV is hereby amended by the addition of a new section to be section 149, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XV
Teachers Certificates

§ 149 Teacher Aides

1. A teacher aide may be assigned by the Board of Education to assist teachers in such non-teaching duties as:

a. Managing records, materials and equipment

b. Attending to the physical needs of children, and

c. Supervising students and performing such other services as support teaching duties when such services are determined and supervised by teachers.

Adopted by Regents
1961

CLERICAL AID

The uneconomical engagement of teachers in the increased amount of clerical work connected with teaching has been recognized in law and avoided in those schools that relieve teachers of mechanical clerical work through the expansion of clerical staffs and the assumption of much of the clerical detail by clerks. A board of education may employ persons as teacher aides to assist teachers by performing non-teaching duties. Under the Rules of the Regents a teacher aide may be assigned such non-teaching duties as managing records, materials and equipment; attending to the physical needs of children; supervising students and performing such other services as support teaching duties, when such services are determined and supervised by teachers. Counsel for the Education Department has held that boards of education may employ persons as teacher aides provided: (1) an aide performs no instructional service, (2) if pupils are involved directly, the service rendered is purely custodial, that is, only to see that pupils behave themselves, and (3) if pupils are involved, the activity engaged in by the pupils during the period of custodial care requires no special supervision such as would be necessary if pupils are permitted to use gymnastic apparatus. Counsel has suggested also that a board of education employing teacher aides in a custodial function should make certain that it is protected by insurance. Some boards of education have had their insurance coverage modified accordingly. Some have found that their present coverage included this protection. (For other information concerning teacher aides, please see page ____.)

A teacher who has a teacher aide should remember that aides are not qualified teachers and that in no way should a teacher delegate any of his prescribed duties to his aide. If a teacher should leave his room in charge of a teacher aide and there should be an injury to a pupil and a consequent test of negligence, a verdict would probably rest upon the adequacy of the supervision under the particular circumstance and the action that a reasonably prudent person would have taken under the circumstances. (See pg. ____.)

APPENDIX H

OBJECTIVES OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Herbert S. Weet wrote that the objectives of the elementary school may be listed as follows:

> Any proper respect for the rights of the child and the welfare of the community dictates that during this elementary school period education shall:
>
> 1. Advance the child, although by no means perfect him, in his ability to read, write, and speak correctly the English language, and to know and to use intelligently the elemen- processes of arithmetic.
>
> 2. Advance the child in his ability to know and to observe the laws of physical and mental health and well-being and to appreciate the meaning of life and of nature.
>
> 3. Advance the child in his ability to know and to appreciate the geography and history of his own community, state, and nation, and of the world at large; to sense his share in the social, civic, and industrial order of such a democracy as ours, and to meet to the full the obligations which such knowledge and appreciation should engender, to the end that justice, sympathy, and loyalty may characterize his personal and community life.
>
> 4. Advance the child in his ability to share intelligently and appreciatively in the fine and the useful arts through the pursuit of music, drawing, and literature; of manual training and the household arts as they are related to the three great universal needs of food, clothing, and shelter,[1]

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1. H. S. Weet, op cit., p. 14.