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# The Planning of a Media Center for the Nuttall Middle School in Robinson, Illinois: A Field Study in Instructional Media

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THE PLANNING OF A MEDIA CENTER FOR THE

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NUTTALL MIDDLE SCHOOL IN ROBINSON, ILLINOIS

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(TITLE)

A FIELD STUDY IN INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

BY

Clifford Ehorn

B. S. - Eastern Illinois University, 1970

M. S. - Eastern Illinois University, 1971

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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1973

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The Planning of a Media Center for the  
New Nuttall Middle School in Robinson, Illinois

A FIELD STUDY IN INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

Prepared for

Dr. Gene Scholes Education 611-612

Submitted by

Clifford C. Ehorn

May 21, 1973

## INTRODUCTION

On March 15, 1971, in Robinson, Illinois, a one and one-half million dollar bond issue was passed for the purpose of building a new middle school to house grades six, seven and eight. At that time there were six different attendance centers for the students who will be at the new facility. Porterville Grade School is a country school having a combination of grades one and two, grades three and four, and grades five and six, making up three classrooms with a total of seventy-seven students. The New Hebron Grade School building is identical to the Porterville building and has the same number of classrooms with a total of seventy-six students. The rest of the schools are town schools. Lincoln Grade School has a standard grade arrangement with grades kindergarten through six and an enrollment of three hundred and thirty-eight. Washington Grade School also has grades kindergarten through six but a larger enrollment of six hundred and ninety students. Jefferson Junior High has an enrollment of three hundred and forty-five students and contains grades seven eight and nine. Robinson Junior-Senior High School has an enrollment of seven hundred and seventy-five students and contains grades seven through twelve. All of the students at the Jefferson Junior High School are bussed to the Robinson Junior-Senior High School at some time during the day and trade places with the same number of students who are bussed back to the Jefferson facility. This process makes for considerable confusion and was one of the major issues in showing a need for a new facility. The construction and opening of the New middle school will close the two country schools (Porterville and New Hebron Grade Schools). It will close the old Jefferson Junior High school and take grades seven and eight

out of the high school and place the sixth grade students from all attendance centers into the new facility thus placing the remaining grades one through five from Porterville and New Hebron into Lincoln and Washington Grade Schools. The Robinson High School will then become a four year institution.

The new middle school is to make use of the open classroom - open school concept and will therefore require a combination library-audio visual center for the five hundred students when they arrive the first time on August 27, 1973.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to organize a media library/audio-visual program which will meet the learning needs of the students.

#### Objectives:

1. Standards library/audiovisual will be determined on which the program will be based.
2. A procedure for introducing students and faculty to the media program at Nuttall Middle School will be devised.
3. A judgement will be made on how a media director should relate to his students, faculty, and principal in a new situation.

#### Data:

1. All of the budgeting information used will be taken from financial records that are kept in the Superintendent's office, Robinson, Illinois.
2. Budget information will be coordinated with the Standards for Educational Media (Library-Audio Visual) Programs in Illinois.

3. The plan to establish this program will be based on research and visits to other media programs.

4. The program will be determined in part by ideas and suggestions of the faculty in the Department of Instructional Media at Eastern Illinois University.

Methods:

1. Budget will be considered and determined.
2. Priorities for purchase will be established.
3. Furnishings will be selected and colors determined.
4. A plan for storage of materials will be devised.

Philosophy of Nuttall Middle School:

The philosophy of the school is directed toward developing the whole individual through a curriculum that is truly student-centered and based upon each individual's needs, interests, and abilities in an atmosphere of mutual trust and responsibility.

Introduction to Nuttall Middle School:

Nuttall Middle School is based on an open concept which is designed for maximum flexibility for existing and future programs. The program that is planned will make the most of this flexibility. Rather than students being with a teacher all day, or going from class to class on a pre-determined schedule, 120 students will be assigned to four teachers for a four hour block of time. The teachers will group, schedule, and determine course content for these students based on individual student's needs, interests, and abilities.

The student of middle school age is a unique individual. He has progressed beyond the elementary school concept of developing the whole child, and is not ready for the specialization concept of the high school.

Therefore, the middle school must make provisions for exploration, independent study, and individualization while not ignoring the further development of the basic skills. At Nuttall, the intent is to make this idea a reality via the middle school program.

There are several concepts in a true middle school program, including: a continuous progress approach to learning and a de-emphasis on departmentalized curriculum. Competitive aspects are kept to a minimum, and increased pupil-teacher contact not only in class situations, but also in external surroundings. To "bridge-the-gap" is often included in this list, and is important, but it is not one of the prime factors to be considered.

There are a number of advantages to the concept of a middle school. First, the middle school offers a better learning environment for early adolescents than does the junior high school. Many educators feel that the junior high has been too imitative of the senior high. Second, the middle school offers a unique environment where eleven to fourteen year olds are free to grow up at their own rate, and where attention is placed on the needs of this age group rather than on competition at a "junior" level.

Many cliches, such as "integrated-day" and "learning-how-to-learn" are discussed in open-concept circles. But, in reality, these are most difficult to accomplish, and even more difficult to evaluate. It is the belief of people such as William Alexander and Theodore Moss that individualized curriculum and increased self-responsibility will better prepare our students to "learn-how-to-learn" than the traditional teaching methods. Through interdisciplinary teaching, four teachers instructing in their special areas relative to a common topic approach the "integrated day" idea, which is to show that life is not a string of



isolated topics, but is all related in some way. Specifically at Nuttall the curriculum will have:

A) An activity program based upon opportunities. These will include opportunities for students and teachers to get together and work at projects or hobbies of common interest in non-academic and non-threatening situations. This replaces the elementary recess and the high school clubs so that it is neither a play time nor a student structured environment.

B) A curriculum based upon the individual. The school will not identify the gifted, slow learner, or the exceptional child. Instead, provisions will be made in each subject area for each child to advance as his own capabilities and interests allow. Teachers, aides, student teachers, and other students will act as resources for the students. Care will be taken to insure that students are placed at their proper level, and that they are progressing.

C) A wide range of electives. All students will be required to take English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education. Then depending upon the grade level, they may choose their courses from a list of up to sixteen different offerings. These courses range from foreign language to shop courses and vary in length and frequency of meeting.

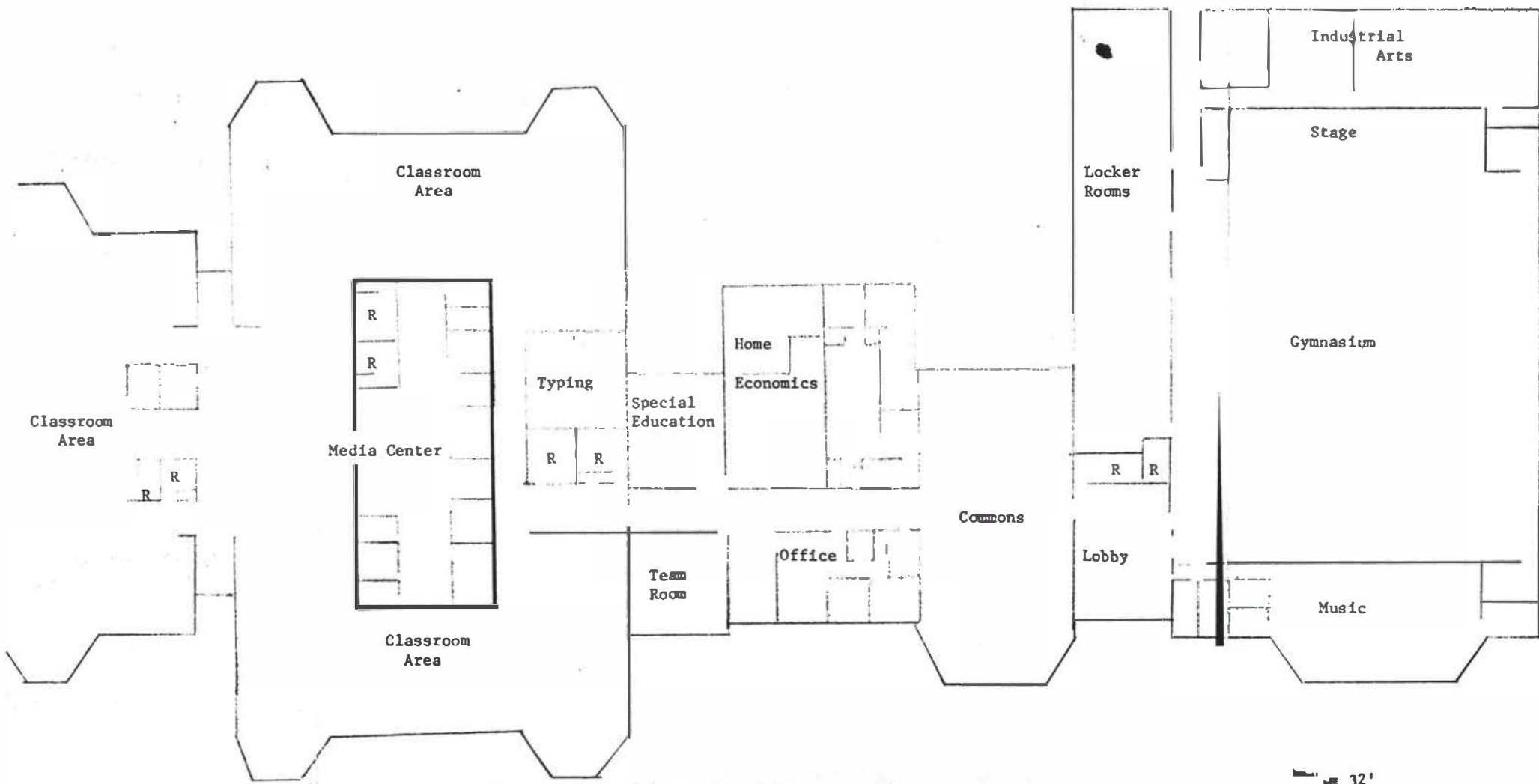
D) An evaluation system based upon the individual. Students will still be evaluated every nine weeks, but instead of receiving letter grades, they receive written evaluations of their work compared to their own abilities. Each report will include the material covered in each course as it relates to the student's abilities. Parent conferences will be encouraged at any time during the year.

E) Interdisciplinary team-teaching (IDTT). The makeup of the team described earlier allows students to become more aware of the use of education. Throughout the year, the teams will be presenting selected topics that show how mathematics and English, for example, are used interchangeably. Continual evaluation of programs and students allows the team to revise as they choose or to restructure their programs. Common planning time encourages the teams to discuss individual student progress. This type of structuring fosters a more professional feeling on the part of teachers because they have a part in arranging learning experiences.

On the following page is a blueprint layout for the Nuttall Middle School, with the media center outlined in red. It is apparent that the media center is hardly adequate for the storage of materials. The area includes 4,222 square feet of the total building size of 60,000 square feet, and is to serve five hundred students. The building is designed without sufficient knowledge of educational needs.

At the outset of this study, it was determined that Standards for Educational Media (library and audio-visual) Programs in Illinois would be used as a basis for the Nuttall Middle School Media Center. These standards seem to best serve the needs of students who will be on an independent study basis. A copy of the standards is enclosed at the end of this report to familiarize those persons not already familiar with it. (SEE APPENDIX A)

When the school opens in August, 1973, it will have met those criteria outlined in phase one of the standards for 500 students. By the following year phase two will have been reached and one year after that phase three will have been reached. (APPENDIX B)



The faculty will be introduced to the new media center two weeks prior to the opening of school on a workshop basis. Each faculty member will be required by the principal to design his own unit of study to get maximum involvement in use of media by the students when they arrive.

During this two week period the media director will become acquainted with faculty members and work with them on a one-to-one basis. Encouraging the use of unfamiliar equipment and introduction to new equipment will be part of this two week program.

When the students arrive, they will be introduced to the media center in small groups, 5 to 8 students per group. They will be introduced to the media center by the teacher who will be in charge of their planning schedule throughout the rest of the year. The media director and the aides will be available during the first few days to assist teachers and students having questions concerning the center, distribution of materials and the process for checking the materials in and out. A major problem that will certainly face the media director in this situation is personal and personnel relations. Number one on the list is BE YOURSELF. Another problem facing the media director is that of providing effective leadership for the staff and students he serves. As defined by Erickson, leadership is the creative activity that is concerned with assisting an organization to discover, identify, and define its basic and specific purposes, or to re-define and change its old ones.<sup>1</sup>

"As an educational leader, the media specialist must see himself as an expert in curriculum and curriculum change, being fully able to make sound judgments about the many aspects of the teaching process. Unless the instructional media leader can pull the teaching process apart and divide it into some of its many, often sharply defined components, it is doubtful that he can operate in the other essential roles of a specialist in technological matters. He must therefore excel in his ability to discuss the problems of teachers and curriculum planners in accomplishing their specific objectives. He must excel in his ability to formulate educational objectives and to predict which responses of learners are likely to be desirable enroute to their

attainment. He needs to be able to suggest rearrangements in learning conditions and to evaluate results in pupils and effects upon teachers. The media specialist must make his judgments in the light of how learning takes place and what pupils actually learn. There is little doubt that this leader of teachers must not fall short in his role of being an innovator in the field of educational method. Such a role ties the media specialist to the entire range of the curriculum, hopefully bringing to his problems a breath of insight into philosophical and cultural values."<sup>2</sup>

There are many ideas on the subject but at this time there are no ready formulas where one mixes all the ingredients in the proper proportion for a successful leader. Donald J. Leu and Herbert C. Rudman point this out in their book Preparation Programs for School Administrators.

They say:

"There is, at this point in time, no clearly defined concept accepted by all administrators or preparatory institutions as one which describes accurately all administrative functions, nor which precisely predicts outcomes of specific administrative behavior. In short, there is no commonly accepted cohesive theory of administration."<sup>3</sup>

This seems appropriate for a media director, because at this point in time there are only certain suggestions or items that will enable the prospective media director to do his job better. It should be noted that the title "Educational Leader" and "Media Director" should be one in the same. However, in some cases, Educational Leader and media Director are two completely different things. Being an educational leader takes constant ambition over a long period of time. One must overcome problems with thoughtful understanding. While in this process one must be able to see and understand the needs of all kinds of children and people. The educational leader also needs to understand the times and the conditions which children parents, colleagues, administrators, etc., live. Even if the educational leader does understand these conditions, he still must understand the needs of these people both in their community and the

surrounding world and be able to meet these needs. Unfortunately, if he cannot meet these needs, he will not be looked upon as a leader, either by himself or by others in the field who know him.

There are numerable traits and/or characteristics that, when added together, will certainly help one who is trying to be a leader. To label all of these would be difficult if not impossible. What is more important than listing all of these items is understanding them. Becoming an effective leader in media is not something one does in a single day. It is a process to which one must devote his entire thought. One must work at being a leader day by day. Staying up to date in the field and understanding present day needs will add to the success of the media director. Others which will add to the media director's success are:

1. Being able to see a problem when it exists.
2. Listening to various kinds of people with different ideas and problems.
3. Having a positive attitude toward professional service to people.
4. Making utilization of materials possible by providing effective in-service to faculty and students.
5. Producing materials that are not otherwise available.
6. Maintaining hardware and software.
7. Setting standards, goals, and objectives that meet the needs of students and teachers.
8. Being able to assist in designing effective instructions.
9. Striving to improve upon what has been previously.
10. Being accountable.

These are by no means all of the items that could or should be listed, but are a sample that show some things that will help the media director become a leader in the field. They might also help the person who is

already a leader to become an even better one.

The 1,560,000.00 dollar Nuttall Middle School has a total budget of \$70,000.00 for year one. \$22,000.00 are available for the media center and these funds will be used for meeting phase I of the Standards for Educational Media (Library Audio-Visual) Programs in Illinois. Future budgeting will be based on materials needed to meet the phase II of the Standards.<sup>4</sup>

An evaluation of the program will be carried on continuously by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the North Central Evaluation Committee, and by media experts in the field who will be invited to the center from various universities. These evaluations will be put together and consideration will be given to recommendations by the faculty, principal, and media specialist to improve the program. Also, any student, faculty member and/or community member may offer suggestions for improvement. This is all part of being a member of an open minded team that will meet student needs.

The areas that we are concerned with for the media center are: A17, B5, B20, B21, B22, B23, B24, B25, B26, B27, and B28. The total cost including installation of the furnishings for the media center is \$24,165.38.'

As of this date, priorities have been established and equipment bids let, but the equipment has not yet been purchased.

Plans for storage have been devised by ordering storage trays and tables. This, compined with the Dewey Decimal system, will be the plan for storage of materials and equipment.

FOOT NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Erickson, Carlton W. H., Administering Instructional Media Programs, Fourth Printing, 1970. Macmillan Company, New York, P. 35.

<sup>2</sup> IBID., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Leu, Donald J. and Rudman, Herbert C., Preparation Programs for School Administrators, prepared for the Seventh UCEA Career development seminar at Michigan State University (East Lansing, Michigan: Office of Research and Publications, College of Education, MSU, 1963. P. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Financial information taken from the Superintendent's Office, East side of Square, Robinson, Illinois.



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