



CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY
E A S T B A Y

College of Education and Allied Studies
Department of Educational Psychology
Special Education Programs

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**Special Education Programs-Advisory Committee Meeting
Department of Educational Psychology, CSU East Bay
Meeting Notes May 11, 2017**

- 1. Accreditation.** Following introductions, faculty provided an update on ongoing CTC Accreditation Processes for the Ed Specialist programs and others in Multiple, Single Subjects, Administrative and Communication Disorders programs granting credentials or licenses within the "Unit". **The CTC On-Site Visit,** (on a 7 year cycle) will be occurring **April 29th-May 2nd, 2018** . The 29th is a Sunday, and CTC respectfully requests that as many interviews as possible be scheduled with each program's representatives of K-12 schools beginning at 2PM on the 29th, since they do not expect people accessible to the review team on week days.

The Program Documents for each area have been submitted according to CTC timelines and minimal revisions requested were completed within the last year. All aspects of all programs are hyperlinked for the reviewers. Any new updates between now and then will be, as well.

Items such as the CEAS Mission will be printed and highlighted on all communications from programs to ensure that all our stakeholders are familiar with it and its connection to what we do in the College Unit.

Scheduled Interviewees for 4-29-18 will need to include: graduates within the past 2-3 years; Master teachers; University supervisors; School and District administrators, and other Advisory Committee members.

Specific Requests for your participation in the CSUEB Specialist Programs Site review will be coming in the Fall 17, or at latest, Winter quarter 2018 . Final lists must be sent to CTC 2 months prior to the visit.

Special Education faculty and the College extend our sincere appreciation for your involvement in this important process. On the Monday through Tuesday, April 30-May 1, possibly extended to Wednesday May 2, the CTC reviewing team will sit in on and meet with classes, interview current students and faculty; provide College leadership with any questions, and complete their initial report.

2. **'Semesterization'** (Fall, 2018) Dr. Smetana shared an overview of the SPED semester framework and schedule, now approved by the faculty Senate and University. She explained the structure, changes, how student teaching and coursework will work for general ed requirements portion as well as SPED in TED SPED. Highlights of the transformed program including the attainment of 2 credentials (Ed Specialist and Multiple Subjects) and a Masters degree in Special Education within two years were reviewed.

Key Areas for LEAS in Semesters:

Elements for continued or enhanced focus in semesters that were emphasized by AC members present-LEAs represented include:

- Para professional supervision and development
- Co-teaching and inclusive service delivery approaches
- Meaningful parent engagement
- Appropriate and accessible language in all communications
- Law and ethics
- Sexuality education (now required for all grades 7-12 as of 2016 law)
- Differentiation or UD of practices such as restorative justice
- Assessment and models of inclusive instruction and intervention

Various elements appreciated by LEAs in present sped program, included:

- UDL in action; what it looks like, fit with MTSS
- Educational, not just assistive, technology
- Student-led IEPs
- Inclusive focus and nuts and bolts
-

Faculty are meeting as well with an **Advisory Group** of Master Teachers and grads to review semester plans in the evening, May 22.

Brief discussion of **TPEs** newly aligned with all credentials and much more inclusive for general ed teachers, with elements of : MTSS, UDL, Collaborative practices, PBIS etc. Bobbie Plough (Ed Lead professor) commented to general agreement that these are all areas needed in **Educational Leadership** as well. Brief discussion of current and higher levels of future cross dept. collaboration were noted.

A few of our **College's collaborative efforts** across Depts. include.: the TED-SPED dual credential program, now operating for 20 years; the 2016 and 2017 Sat. Seminar class in Feb (for all candidates across credentials in mixed teams); Teacher Ed Dept. hiring of new tenure track Special Ed faculty!: Dr. Talya Kemper, from Chico State where she has taught for 4 years; returning to Bay Area where she grew up and taught in SFUSD; PhD in SPED from University of Washington.

4. LEA needs: More teachers! Discussion regarding unprepared applicants for our programs: not following through with CSET tests and passage, other state requirements for Admission, more this year even than in past, despite emailed reminders to each, etc.

Possible Action: Sarah Glasband (OUSD) raised prospect of district –run CSET prep classes focused on current employees such as paraprofessionals, and will invite other LEAs to collaborate on this with her. This could be of great assistance to potential teachers.

Announcements:

- **New tenure track Special Education Faculty member:**
Dr. Meaghan McCollow, Fall, 2017. She has been faculty at Central Michigan University for three years; also obtained her PhD at University of Washington and overlapped with Talya Kemper. Meaghan taught in NYC and obtained her Masters degree and credentials there.
- **New TED SPED Cohort for Summer 2017-** Severely impacted by applicants not completing requirements as note above. Started with a positive applicant pool of 49. Not sure yet where it will end up but it looks like 20 is optimistic. *As in all years, we will also be accepting SPED “onlies” who already have general ed credentials.* **Applications are open and due online May 31 for Fall.** There may be some extensions of that deadline; unknown as yet.
- **Retirements: Professors Jacki Anderson and Ann Halvorsen will both retire this June, after several decades here with wonderful students, graduates and colleagues within and beyond CSUEB; so many in our wonderful school communities..** We are happy about our new SPED faculty coming in, but more will be needed. We very much hope that that will happen soon!

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Advisory Committee Meeting Participants
May 11, 2017**

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“Be Careful What You Wish for ...”: Five Reasons to Be Concerned About the Assignment of *Individual* Paraprofessionals

Michael F. Giangreco • Susan Yuan • Barbara McKenzie • Patricia Cameron • Janice Fialka

You have heard the saying “Be careful what you wish for; you just might get it.” It is a wise adage both school personnel and families might want to keep in mind when considering whether students with disabilities who are placed in general education classes should be provided with individual paraprofessional support. Virtually everyone having any connection with special education can tell you about dedicated paraprofessionals who are worth their weight in gold, so one might ask where the problem lies. In reality, the story of paraprofessional supports has many facets.

Some parents understandably request individual paraprofessional support for their child with disabilities because of their concerns or fears about how their child will be accepted, treated, supported, and instructed in general education classes. Yet parents seeking inclusive education through the assignment of an individual, full-time paraprofessional may be working at cross-purposes with themselves. Having an adult by a student’s side for all or most of the school day can actually interfere with a student’s inclusion as a participating member of the classroom community.

In other situations, parents have been told that the assignment of a full-time, individual paraprofessional is the



required admission ticket for their child’s entry into the general education classroom. A school’s request for an individual paraprofessional as a condition of placement is often rooted in the concerns of classroom teachers. Even highly competent and willing teachers may experience some anxiety when they are unclear about the expectations people have of them in relation to a student with a disability placed in their class. Teachers who feel stretched thin

by issues such as class size and ever-expanding requirements wonder how they will find the time to meet the various needs of students with disabilities and special needs other than disability.

Meanwhile, principals often experience ambivalence about hiring more paraprofessionals. Although they may want to be supportive of parent and teacher requests for paraprofessional supports, simultaneously they may be compelled by their central administra-

Beth's Story: "I don't want an aide!"

When my daughter, Beth, started high school, the school personnel insisted she have a full-time paraprofessional, presumably because she has Down syndrome. It was a battle I wasn't willing to fight, so I agreed to it even though I felt it wasn't needed. Freshman year this arrangement worked out reasonably well. The paraprofessional was a young woman, not much older than Beth. She was skilled at giving her room and knowing when to back off.

During Beth's sophomore year, this paraprofessional was replaced by one who was on her like Velcro®! She was always telling Beth what to do, insisting she leave class early, and generally making a spectacle of their interactions. It wasn't long before Beth reacted uncharacteristically. She ran away from the paraprofessional, called her names, even left school and went home.

Though Beth's communication wasn't socially desirable, her intent was clear; but no one seemed to be listening. A month or so into the year, after this second paraprofessional quit, Beth's team met to decide what would happen next. Beth said she "...didn't like being bossed" and "... didn't want an aide." Her request was honored; Beth didn't have an individual paraprofessional for the rest of high school. The problem behaviors disappeared, and with no intermediary between her and the teachers, Beth was more academically connected. It made me feel even more strongly that we need to involve students in determining their own [need for] supports.

may provide cultural perspectives or speak the primary language of non-English-speaking students (Ashbaker, 2000). Many paraprofessionals provide thoughtful, creative input as valued educational team members.

Five Reasons to Be Concerned About Individual Paraprofessional Supports

In self-contained special education classes, special education teachers and paraprofessionals work together in the same classrooms throughout the school day. This arrangement provides natural and ongoing opportunities for special educators to train, supervise, and mentor paraprofessionals. With the advent of more inclusive models of delivery of special education services, new issues are emerging regarding the training, utilization, and supervision of paraprofessionals, in part because special educators and paraprofessionals often spend much of their day in locations separated from one another. Listed below are five reasons, based on recent research regarding paraprofessionals in inclusive schools, that professionals and parents alike should be concerned about the assignment of individual paraprofessionals.

Parents seeking inclusive education through the assignment of an individual, full-time paraprofessional may be working at cross-purposes with themselves.

Reason 1: The least qualified staff members are teaching students with the most complex learning characteristics.

No strong conceptual basis can be cited for assigning the least qualified staff, namely, paraprofessionals, to provide the bulk of instruction for students with the most complex learning characteristics, nor does a research base suggest

tion or school board to closely scrutinize services, given the dramatic increase in the numbers of special education paraprofessionals and associated costs.

This article attempts to illuminate paraprofessional issues by pursuing three primary purposes. First, we briefly summarize the potential benefits of providing paraprofessional supports. Second, we discuss five research-based reasons why school personnel and parents should be concerned about the assignment of individual paraprofessionals and illustrate them with three real-life vignettes (see Beth's Story, Erin's Story, Micah's Story). Third, we offer a set of considerations for educational teams as they attempt to link paraprofessional research with effective practice. We hope this article spurs constructive dialogue between parents and school personnel about the carefully crafted utilization of paraprofessionals, as well as about alternatives designed to reduce overreliance on individual paraprofessionals as a primary mechanism for supporting students with disabilities in general education classes.

Potential Benefits of Paraprofessional Supports

The benefits of paraprofessional support have long been considered common sense. Busy teachers and concerned parents often appreciate the availability of a second adult to provide an extra set of helping hands, eyes, and ears in the classroom (Daniels & McBride, 2001; French & Chopra, 1999). Under the direction of qualified professionals, trained paraprofessionals can serve a variety of valued roles:

- Doing clerical tasks that free teachers to spend more time instructing students.
- Engaging in follow-up instruction, tutoring, or homework help.
- Providing supervision in group settings (e.g., cafeteria, playground, bus boarding).
- Assisting students with personal care needs (e.g., bathroom use, eating, dressing).
- Facilitating social skills, peer interactions, and positive behavior support plans.

For decades special educators have relied on paraprofessionals to help them teach their students with disabilities. Since paraprofessionals often live in the communities where they work, they

Table 1. Inadvertent Detrimental Effects of Excessive or Unnecessary Paraprofessional Proximity

<i>Category of Effect</i>	<i>Description</i>
Separation from Classmates	Student with a disability and paraprofessional are seated together in the back or side of the room, physically separated from the class.
Unnecessary Dependence	Student with a disability is hesitant to participate without paraprofessional direction, prompting, or cueing.
Interference with Peer Interactions	Paraprofessional can create physical or symbolic barriers that interfere with interactions between a student with disabilities and classmates.
Insular Relationships	Student with a disability and paraprofessional do most everything together, to the exclusion of others (i.e., teachers and peers).
Feeling Stigmatized	Student with a disability expresses embarrassment/discomfort about having a paraprofessional; makes him or her stand out in negative ways.
Limited Access to Competent Instruction	Paraprofessionals are not necessarily skilled in providing competent instruction; some do the work for the students they support.
Interference with Teacher Engagement	Teachers tend to be less involved when a student with a disability has a paraprofessional because individual attention is already available.
Loss of Personal Control	Paraprofessionals do so much for the students with disabilities that they do not exercise choices that are typical for other students.
Loss of Gender Identity	Student with a disability is treated as the gender of the paraprofessional (e.g., male student taken into the female bathroom).
May Provoke Problem Behaviors	Some students with disabilities express their dislike of paraprofessional support by displaying inappropriate behaviors.

that students with disabilities learn more or better with paraprofessional support (Giangreco, Edelman, Broer, & Doyle, 2001). Recent research indicates that not only are special education paraprofessionals playing a prominent role instructing students with disabilities, they are engaging in roles for which they are questionably prepared (French, 1998; Minondo, Meyer & Xin, 2001; Riggs & Mueller, 2001). In some cases, individual paraprofessionals are left to fend for themselves, functioning as the primary teachers for students with disabilities and making the majority of day-to-day instructional and curricular decisions (Downing, Ryndak & Clark, 2000; Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997; Marks, Schrader & Levine, 1999). Having paraprofessionals assume such high levels of responsibility presents a double standard that likely would be considered unacceptable if it was applied to students without disabilities.

Reason 2: Paraprofessional supports are linked with inadvertent detrimental effects.

Although paraprofessional supports are undoubtedly offered with benevolent

intentions, recent studies have linked excessive or unnecessary paraprofes-

sional proximity with inadvertent detrimental effects, such as unnecessary

Erin’s Story: Coming Full Circle

Erin began kindergarten fully included without an aide. By the end of first grade, the school decided to provide part-time paraprofessional support, which continued through grade school. As if the transition to middle school wasn’t traumatic enough, the new teachers decided the best way to support Erin was to place her in a class for students with developmental disabilities. Though Erin stayed in the general education class, to appease the teachers, a full-time aide was assigned. Again, this wasn’t an IEP team decision based on Erin’s needs; it was school politics. After receiving reasonably unobtrusive support in sixth grade, seventh was a different story. The new aide had the attitude that she could teach better than any general or special educator. Ironically, it was this aide’s success in alienating the teachers that opened the door to discussions about using less paraprofessional support, in just three classes. That was Erin’s best year in middle school; finally we were going in the right direction!

High school arrived, and again the school wanted Erin to have a full-time aide attend general education classes with her. Fortunately, or maybe unfortunately, they hired the “best aide ever!” All of us depended on her, as it turned out, a bit too much. When the “best aide ever” left, as they often do, our [over]dependence on her became all too clear. Finally we began to explore natural and alternative supports that reduced the need for paraprofessional time in several classes. Almost immediately, the teachers commented that Erin was interacting more with her classmates and taking responsibility for her own learning; they were surprised at how much she could do. This year Erin has her best grades ever and loves being a “cool senior”!

dependence and interference with peer interactions (see Table 1; Giangreco, Broer & Edelman, 2001; Giangreco et al., 1997; Hemmingsson, Borell, & Gustavsson, 2003; Skar & Tamm, 2001). Even studies that have reported positive aspects of close proximity (Werts, Zigmond, & Leeper, 2001) or mixed data on the effects of proximity (Young, Simpson, Myles, & Kamps, 1997) have raised concerns about whether students are unnecessarily dependent on individual paraprofessionals.

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The least qualified staff members are teaching students with the most complex learning characteristics.

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Reason 3: Individual paraprofessional supports are linked with lower levels of teacher involvement.

The attitude of a classroom teacher toward, and level of involvement with, his or her students who have disabilities is arguably one of the single most crucial variables affecting the success of inclusive placements. An observational study of three primary grade children with autism in inclusive classrooms reported teacher initiations with those students were more frequent when their individually assigned paraprofessionals were not in close proximity to them (Young et al., 1997).

Understandably, busy teachers tend to work with other students when they know the student with a disability already has individual attention. Recent research has documented that the assignment of an individual paraprofessional to a student with a disability often co-occurs with lower levels of teacher engagement, whereas the use of a classroom paraprofessional, under the direction of the teacher, more often co-occurs with higher levels of teacher engagement (Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman, 2001).

Micah's Story: The Power of Peers

Over the years, our son Micah has benefited from the support of several talented paraprofessionals. Yet as he moved through school, we felt ambivalent. We knew Micah needed some extra help in the classroom, but we also knew the more he was surrounded by adults, even well-meaning ones, the harder it would be for peers to connect with him. Adults encircled him and often, though unintentionally, became a wall separating him from his peers—a wall most teenagers would not easily climb over.

We were fortunate to learn about a program where peers without disabilities received credit to serve as mentors to support some of the learning needs of their classmates with disabilities. Under the direction of a special educator, a skilled paraprofessional provided coaching to peer mentors. This coaching allowed the paraprofessional to step back, which resulted in several of Micah's classmates moving closer and interacting with him in new and unexpected ways. During a team meeting, Beth, one of Micah's peers, mentioned she sometimes had a hard time helping him focus on a particular teacher's lectures. She blurted out, "You know what! Sometimes this teacher can be boring—a lot of us have a hard time paying attention in her class. The real difference is that Micah doesn't know how to act as if he's paying attention." Laughter filled the air. Beth blushed and quickly apologized for revealing something negative about this well-liked teacher. The next step for Micah was practicing "paying attention" behaviors, and who better to teach him than genuine inhabitants of the teen world—his peers? Working together strengthened the new bonds they were developing. It also gave the teachers some food for thought.

A real turning point was the day an insensitive substitute teacher mimicked the way Micah said his name in front of the class. Oliver, Micah's peer tutor, leapt out of his seat, rushed to the teacher's desk, and demanded that he stop! This call for respect was much more powerful coming spontaneously from a friend than it would have been coming as feedback from an adult. This incident helped Oliver realize, somewhat to his own surprise, just how much Micah's friendship meant to him. Equally as important was the impact that Oliver's actions had on others. Afterward, several students began approaching Micah in more engaging ways. Oliver nurtured these interactions and demonstrated how to keep a dialogue going with Micah beyond "Hey, what's up?" Oliver was truly a link between Micah and his other classmates.

Reason 4: Teachers, parents, and students may not be getting what they deserve and expect.

Are classroom teachers, parents, and students getting what they deserve and expect? Do they have access to paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained, supervised, and operating under the direction of a qualified special educator or teacher? Too often the answer is "No." Data indicate that too many paraprofessionals are inadequately trained and supervised (Downing et al., 2000; French, 1998; Riggs & Mueller, 2001). Some are unskilled or under-skilled in the academic subjects in which they are asked to support students (Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman,

2002). In French's (2001) study of 321 special educators, 81% of them reported that they do not plan for their paraprofessionals; among the 19% that did so, the planning was primarily through oral instruction rather than written plans. This study also reported that teachers who typically were not trained in supervision of adults were reluctant to supervise paraprofessionals. This finding was extended in a more recent study on the competence of teachers to direct the work of paraprofessionals (Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay, & Stahl, 2001). Although participants agreed that the extensive set of supervisory abilities presented in the study were important, "the competencies were not observed as



JOEY NOTICED A MYSTERIOUS FORCE FIELD AROUND HIS ASSISTANT THAT CHILDREN COULD NOT BREAK THROUGH.

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frequently as their perceived importance” (p. 520) because of lack of pre-service preparation or professional development of teachers on supervisory practices.

Although the expectation that students with individual paraprofessional support would receive more intensive instruction than peers may seem logical, a recent study (Giangreco & Broer, in press) presents contrary findings. In this study individual paraprofessionals reported spending less time in instruction (37%) than did group paraprofessionals (50%). These same individual paraprofessionals reported spending 24% of their time self-directed, without professional guidance. In part, this study suggests that this situation exists because many special education teachers who are responsible for supervising paraprofessionals have less than optimal working conditions (e.g., large caseloads, extensive paperwork, several paraprofessionals to supervise across multiple classrooms and grade levels).

Reason 5. Providing paraprofessional supports may delay attention to needed changes in schools.

Although shifting more responsibilities to paraprofessionals may seem advantageous because it relieves certain pressures on teachers and special educators, in and of itself, this relief should not be confused with effective education for students. Having paraprofessionals assume ever-increasing levels of responsibility for student learning may actually delay attention to needed changes in general and special education.

The findings of Marks et al. (1999) highlight these concerns by indicating that paraprofessionals (a) bore the “primary burden of success” (p. 318) for included students with disabilities; (b) felt part of their role was not being a “bother” to teachers; (c) provided daily

Recent studies have linked excessive or unnecessary paraprofessional proximity with inadvertent detrimental effects.

curricular modifications, sometimes “on-the-spot” with little or no support from teachers; and (d) sensed being solely responsible for inclusion of the students with disabilities. Will more teachers have opportunities to shift their roles from gracious host to engaged teacher if paraprofessionals continue to function as primary instructors? Will schools be as motivated to address the capacity of classroom teachers to differentiate instruction for mixed-ability groups if paraprofessionals continue to make many day-to-day curricular decisions? Will the working conditions of teachers and special educators be addressed soon enough or sufficiently if the pressure on them is kept just below the boiling point by shifting more responsibilities to paraprofessionals? Too often the ways we currently use paraprofessionals make too easy the tendency to delay important actions and changes that could benefit students with disabilities as well as their peers without disabilities.

Considerations for Educational Teams

As schools continue their positive and appropriate efforts to improve the training, support, and supervision of paraprofessionals, we think it would be a mistake to believe that such changes alone will address the fundamental concerns that have led to their burgeoning and sometimes inappropriate utilization. Additionally, we think that to simply change from advocating for more paraprofessionals to advocating for fewer of them would be a mistake. Rather, we need a shift to advocate for exploring different supports that focus on strengthening collaboration between general and special education, building capacity in general education, and placing more reliance on natural supports. Listed below are five initial ideas for educational teams to consider.

1. Extend the conversation in your school community about the support of students with disabilities in general education. Ask teachers what they need to shift from primarily hosting students with disabilities to being engaged teachers of those students. Ask special educators what they

need to better support students in general education classrooms (e.g., narrowing the range of grades supported, attention to caseload issues, assistance with paperwork). Ask both constituencies who should be supervising paraprofessionals and how. This conversation can occur informally among colleagues or more formally at faculty or community meetings, through teacher study groups, or by establishing a cross-constituent schoolwide task force.

2. Scrutinize current roles and practices of paraprofessionals, and consider whether they are truly appropriate. This examination can be accomplished by having teachers, special educators, and paraprofessionals (a) analyze the tasks they engage in, (b) determine whether their respective training and/or skills match the tasks, and (c) make a plan for addressing any discrepancies between their skills and the tasks. In some instances this scrutiny may result in additional training for any of the team members or may lead to a shifting of responsibilities. In considering any shifts in responsibilities, teams are encouraged to limit the utilization of paraprofessional supports to only those specific situations in which, after exhausting more natural possibilities, it makes the most sense. For example, if providing homework support or being accompanied between classes can be appropriately accomplished with peer supports, it should not be delegated to a paraprofessional. Individualization and accounting for unpredictable events will require ongoing teamwork. In reference to existing practices, ask the following question to help identify double standards: Would the practice be acceptable if the students did not have disabilities?
3. Collaborate with families by seeking to understand their concerns that lead to their requests for paraprofessional supports. This collaboration can be accomplished through group meetings at which parents are invited to participate in conversations about paraprofessional issues with

school personnel or on an individual basis, one family at a time. When a family has requested individual paraprofessional support, be direct in asking parents why they believe this level of support is needed. Their responses will allow the school to tailor supports in an effort to meet a student's needs. For example, if a parent is concerned that the classroom instruction will be too difficult for their child to comprehend, then merely assigning a paraprofessional may not address that concern. A forum for parental input will give the teacher and special educator an opportunity to explain how they intend to collaborate on curricular and instructional accommodations. Sharing written information with parents about the pros and cons of paraprofessional supports can be helpful, as can working with them as full team members in an effort to reach consensus on the array of options for supporting their child's education in the general education classroom.

4. Explore ways to involve students with disabilities in contributing to, and making decisions about, their own supports. In instances in which students have limited language skills, the involved adults and peers need to pay close attention to whatever forms of communication the students use in an effort to understand their meaning. We should not assume certain students need paraprofessional supports merely because of their looks or labels; this assumption presumes that the need for paraprofessional support is embedded in the characteristics of the student. A more appropriate approach might be to first consider modifying the characteristics of the school, classroom, and staff (e.g., attitudes, teaching formats, student groupings, resource distribution) in an effort to build a stronger classroom community for all types of students.
5. Consider alternatives to paraprofessional supports (e.g., peer supports, resource reallocation, building capacity, and ownership of profes-

sional educators to support students with disabilities) in ways that benefit a wider range of students with and without disabilities (Giangreco, Halvorsen, Doyle, & Broer, 2004). One way to accomplish this outcome

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The ways we currently use paraprofessionals make too easy the tendency to delay important actions and changes that could benefit students with disabilities.

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is using a schoolwide planning tool that guides school teams to examine their own status in regard to paraprofessional issues, self-assess on a set of schoolwide practices, and select individualized priorities for action (Giangreco & Broer, 2003).

Final Thoughts

Collectively, the five aforementioned actions are meant to affirm the expectation that all students deserve access to highly qualified teachers and that collaboration among professionals and families is essential. The stories of Beth, Erin, and Micah serve as additional reminders of the importance of (a) listening to our students' verbal and non-verbal communication, (b) providing opportunities for self-determination, (c) encouraging normalized experiences, and (d) exploring natural supports (e.g., peers). Working together, school personnel and families hold the keys to finding the individualized balance between judiciously determined paraprofessional supports and emerging alternatives.

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Alternatives to Overreliance on Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Schools

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- Though the utilization of special education paraprofessionals has increased, contemporary literature and research highlight a series of concerns about the field's continuing reliance on this approach.
- This article presents a three-component administrative model for effective utilization of paraprofessionals that includes paraprofessional supports, decision-making, and alternatives.
- The bulk of the article provides composite descriptions about seven alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals based on reports from school personnel who have implemented these alternatives.
- School leaders are encouraged to explore alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals as a way to improve their special education service delivery to meet the educational needs of students with a full range of disabilities within the context of general education classrooms.

Alternatives to Overreliance on Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Schools

A key challenge facing both principals and special education administrators is designing and implementing special education service delivery models that meet the educational needs of students with a full range of disabilities within the context of general education classrooms. Nationally, as more students with low incidence disabilities (e.g., autism, severe behavior disorders, intellectual impairments, multiple disabilities) receive their education in general education classrooms, one of the most common service delivery responses has been to hire and assign more paraprofessionals. This has contributed to the burgeoning numbers of paraprofessionals in American schools and corresponding costs. Simultaneously, the wisdom of proliferating a service delivery model that is highly dependent on paraprofessionals for the successful inclusion of students with disabilities has been questioned conceptually (Brown, Farrington, Ziegler, Knight, & Ross, 1999; Giangreco & Broer, 2003b; Mueller 2002) and a variety of concerns have been illustrated in the research literature (Downing,

Ryndak, & Clark, 2000; Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman, 2001; Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997; Hemmingsson, Borell, & Gustavsson, 2003; Marks, Shrader & Levine, 1999; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay & Stahl, 2001). These concerns include:

- The least qualified group of staff members, paraprofessionals, sometimes have primary or extensive responsibilities for teaching students with the most complex learning characteristics.
- Special education paraprofessionals remain untrained or under-trained for their roles, which at times are questionable (e.g., making curricular decisions, planning lessons, designing adaptations, serving as a liaison with families).
- Similarly, many teachers and special educators remain untrained or under-trained to direct and supervise paraprofessionals; some remain hesitant to undertake this role.
- Inappropriate utilization or excessive proximity of paraprofessionals has been linked to inadvertent detrimental effects (e.g., dependence, interference with peer interactions, insular relationships, stigmatization, provocation of behavior problems).
- Assignment of individual paraprofessionals has been linked to lower levels of teacher

involvement with students who have disabilities, a key factor for successful inclusion in general education classrooms.

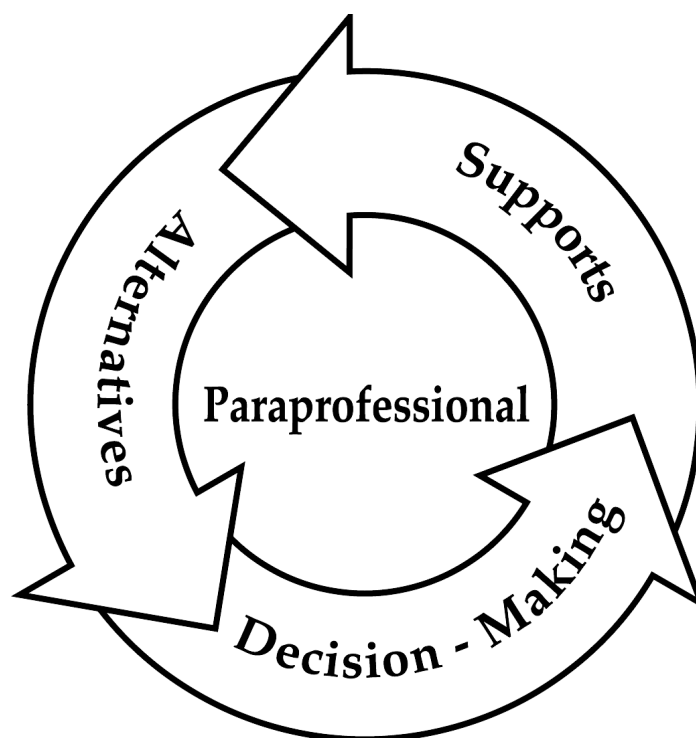
- Shifting responsibilities to paraprofessionals may temporarily relieve certain types of pressures on general and special educators that delay attention to needed changes in schools such as: (a) improving classroom teacher ownership of students with disabilities; (b) addressing special educator working conditions (e.g., caseload, paperwork); or (c) building capacity within general education to design curriculum and instruction for mixed-ability groups that include students with disabilities.

Administrators are faced with addressing these points of concern while simultaneously: (a) acknowledging the valuable work of paraprofessionals as respected members of the school community, (b) utilizing existing paraprofessional resources effectively, (c) ensuring that future decisions about the use of paraprofessionals are appropriate and judicious, and (d) exploring alternatives so that schools are not limited to relying on paraprofessionals as the exclusive or primary mechanism for supporting the educational needs of students with disabilities in general education classes. This article addresses these challenges by first briefly presenting a three-component model for the effective utilization of paraprofessionals to assist in providing special education under the direction of qualified professionals. Second, the focus of the text is on one of the three components of the model, *alternatives* to overreliance on paraprofessionals, because it has been afforded minimal attention in the professional literature and is uniquely important to administrators who are in a position to effect systemic change.

Three-Component Administrative Model for Effective Utilization of Paraprofessionals

As depicted in Figure 1, paraprofessional *supports* represent one of three interrelated components that form a sound administrative foundation for ensuring the appropriate utilization of paraprofessionals in inclusive schools. Though important, *supports* designed to clarify and strengthen the work of paraprofessionals (e.g., role clarification, hiring, orientation, training, supervision) are not the focus of this article because a large volume of contemporary

Figure 1: Three-component administrative model for effective utilization of paraprofessionals.



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literature and research is presently available on this topic (Doyle, 2002; French, 2003; Gerlach, 2001; Ghere, York-Barr, & Sommerness, 2002; Giangreco & Doyle, 2002; Giangreco, Edelman, & Broer, 2003; Giangreco, Edelman, Broer, & Doyle, 2001; Minondo, Meyer, & Xin, 2001; Morgan & Ashbaker, 2001; Pickett & Gerlach, 2003; Riggs & Mueller, 2001; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay, & Stahl, 2001).

A second component, *decision making*, refers to making decisions about the need for paraprofessional supports. Professional literature pertaining to *decision-making* guidelines and processes about the utilization of paraprofessionals is scant. It consists of a small set of conceptual articles (Freshi, 1999; Giangreco, Broer & Edelman, 1999), one programmatic description of a school-based decision-making process (Mueller & Murphy, 2001), and no research data. Though this topic is in dire need of attention, more process options along with an initial set of descriptive and evaluation research studies are

required prior to making generalizations that extend beyond the existing published literature.

The third component, *alternatives*, refers to a variety of actions school leaders can encourage to involve paraprofessionals, general and special educators, parents, and students with and without disabilities, in ways that reduce unnecessary utilization and potential overuse of paraprofessionals. These actions are designed to reduce the problematic, though unintended, effects of excessive or unnecessary paraprofessional utilization. It is our contention that students with disabilities are best served when schools attend to all three components, by: (a) providing appropriate supports for their existing paraprofessionals (e.g., respect, role clarification, orientation, training, supervision); (b) establishing logical and equitable *decision-making* practices for the assignment and utilization of paraprofessionals; and (c) selecting individually appropriate *alternatives* designed to increase student access to instruction from qualified teachers and special educators, facilitate development of peer interactions, and promote self-determination in inclusive classrooms.

Selected Alternatives

The following descriptions of seven alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals are composites based primarily on the self-reports of individuals in inclusive schools across the country. They include a subset of possibilities we consider among those most readily able to be implemented in schools. Additional possibilities (e.g., co-teaching, creative use of dual-certified general/special educators, differentiated teacher roles/positions) also hold promise as alternatives, though likely require more extensive planning to enact than the suggestions presented in this article.

The professional literature offers virtually no student outcome or related data on the impact of these or other alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals. Given the paucity of available information, having descriptions based on first-hand experiences of school-based professionals and parents is an appropriate starting point for administrators to consider as this important area of study emerges. The reader is cautioned that applicability of the ideas presented in this document will vary based on local factors (e.g., collective bargaining agreements, state regulations, policies, special education funding).

Alternative #1: Resource Reallocation—Trading Paraprofessional Positions for Special Educators

Designed as a cost-neutral reallocation of resources, some schools have chosen to shift existing funds from the hiring of paraprofessionals to the hiring of special educators. The number of paraprofessional positions that equal one special educator will, of course, vary depending on a variety of compensation factors; typically three to four paraprofessional positions equals one special educator position. For sake of example, if it costs \$50,000 for salary and fringe benefits to hire one special educator, it might require the resources currently directed toward four paraprofessional positions at \$12,500 per year, based on 30 hours per week at \$9.00/hour with some benefits. The number of paraprofessional positions might be closer to three if the paraprofessionals are paid more, or if early career teachers are hired.

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 Designed as a cost-neutral reallocation of resources, some schools have chosen to shift existing funds from the hiring of paraprofessionals to the hiring of special educators.

Schools that reallocated resources in this manner increased the number of highly qualified faculty without increasing costs and improved working conditions for special educators by reducing their caseload size. Lower caseload size can have a series of positive ripple effects, such as: (a) correspondingly less paperwork; (b) fewer paraprofessionals to supervise; (c) more instructional contact time between special educators and students with disabilities; (d) more opportunities for special educators and teachers to collaborate within the classroom; and (e) opportunities to narrow the range of grade levels special educators are asked to support (e.g., assigned to one or two grade levels). Such effects can contribute to job satisfaction and retention of faculty. Retention of faculty also saves time and money spent on hiring and orientation.

A potential challenge of this alternative can be an insufficient supply of certified and qualified special educators, especially in regions with acute shortages. Additionally, some paraprofessionals report anxiety

when resource reallocation is considered, fearing job losses. Job loss can be avoided in cases where the extent of proposed resource reallocation is less than the projected turnover rate for paraprofessionals—though remaining paraprofessionals may be reassigned to different schools or classrooms, or have their roles redefined (e.g., assigned as classroom paraprofessional rather than individual). Classroom teachers may be concerned that common scenarios (e.g., behavioral incidents) will disrupt special educators’ scheduled times to work in the classroom. Since such unexpected scenarios will undoubtedly occur, relying on other alternatives, in combination, can reduce this concern.

Alternative #2: Increasing Ownership of General Educators and Building Their Capacity

In order for students with disabilities to be successfully included in general education classes, it is vital that the classroom teacher play a substantive role. In part, this means establishing teacher attitudes that are welcoming toward the inclusion of students with disabilities and building professional capacity to support the educational needs of mixed-ability groups, which include students with disabilities.

In order for students with disabilities to be successfully included in general education classes, it is vital that the classroom teacher play a substantive role.

In schools committed to greater levels of ownership and teacher capacity, leadership teams of general and special education administrators began by establishing an expectation that classroom teachers should be directly involved in teaching students with disabilities in their classes. It wasn’t enough to be a “host” and have the paraprofessional function as the primary teacher. This notion was embedded in hiring practices, staff development, and supervision until it became part of the culture. Teachers weren’t expected to go it alone; collaborative teams were formed with other teachers, special educators, related services providers, and families to encourage mutual support and learning. In addition, the teachers were provided with ongoing staff development in critical areas (e.g., lit-

eracy, positive behavior supports, inclusive education). One of the most common areas of staff development focused on teachers’ abilities to differentiate curriculum and instruction for mixed-ability groups.

Increased ownership and capacity-building are designed to: (a) increase the amount and quality of instructional time students with disabilities receive from classroom teachers; (b) encourage more integrated delivery of special education services; (c) decrease reliance on paraprofessionals; (d) encourage utilization of classroom paraprofessionals to support *all* students; and (e) facilitate membership of students with disabilities in the classroom. Though it is not unusual for schools to establish collaborative teams or pursue ongoing staff development, what was unique in these examples was that the administrative leadership teams specifically initiated capacity-building for the general education teachers, at least in part, to address the burgeoning numbers of paraprofessionals in their school system. More broadly, the effort was made to ensure that the general education system had sufficient capacity so that students would avoid unnecessary referrals for special education. Some schools reported a decrease in the percent of students labeled “disabled,” which they attributed, in part, to bolstering their schoolwide educational support system for all students.

Alternative #3: Transitional Paraprofessional Pool

One strategy with potential for dealing with both anticipated and unanticipated events that require short-term paraprofessional support is to establish a pool of trained paraprofessionals that can be centrally deployed by a principal or special education administrator as floaters. This group of paraprofessionals would be recruited, hired, assigned, and trained under the direction of a qualified professional (e.g., special educator, teacher, related services provider) for time-limited roles supporting students and classrooms with specific needs where paraprofessional support has been determined to be appropriate and necessary by the IEP team. For example, a student transitioning to high school might receive support in getting from class to class following a schedule. This support would be systematically faded and replaced by an individualized combination of newly learned student skills and natural supports (e.g., walking

between classes with peers). Similarly, the introduction of a new augmentative communication system or a positive behavioral support plan might require consistent, intensive, initial support on a time-limited basis as determined by individual student progress. Pooled paraprofessional resources provide administrative flexibility, encourage student independence, and establish an expectation among professionals and families that the assignment of a paraprofessional doesn't mean it is, or should be, permanent.

The school or district size, characteristics and needs of the student population, and requests for paraprofessional support will help determine the number of paraprofessionals in the pool. Establishing a protocol and procedures for requesting pooled paraprofessional resources is essential for judicious use. Any such procedures will more likely be effective if a cross-stakeholder group (e.g., principals, general and special educators, paraprofessionals, parents) assists in their development.

Additionally, pooled paraprofessionals can be utilized as substitutes for absent paraprofessionals and be called upon to fill in when a special educator is pulled away to deal with unusual situations or other unanticipated problems (e.g., behavior incident). The variety and breadth of activities of pooled paraprofessionals may mean that this group needs to include some of the most skilled paraprofessionals whose personal characteristics allow them to quickly adjust and contribute in new situations. During periods of lower demand, pooled paraprofessionals can be utilized to free up other paraprofessionals for training or be utilized for other valued-added purposes (e.g., assisting with special projects).

Alternative #4: Clerical/Paperwork Paraprofessional

In an effort to alleviate some of the paperwork burden on special educators, an existing paraprofessional position can be re-conceptualized from working with students to doing logistical and clerical tasks that were being done by special educators. Examples include: (a) sending notifications to families; (b) scheduling IEP and team meetings; (c) making scheduling contacts with related services providers; (d) maintaining student databases; (e) maintaining student files; (g) tracking important dates (e.g., triennial reviews, IEP dates); and (h) general clerical work

(e.g., photocopying, laminating, ordering supplies). The paperwork paraprofessional can also be available to help out in classes if the position is defined in that way. Like any of the listed alternatives, the extent of implementation varies; in one school the paperwork paraprofessional is a full-time position, whereas in another 10 hours a week is sufficient.

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In an effort to alleviate some of the paperwork burden on special educators, an existing paraprofessional position can be re-conceptualized from working with students to doing logistical and clerical tasks that were being done by special educators.

Shifting appropriate clerical and paperwork responsibilities from special educators to paraprofessionals may be part of a package of alternatives to re-establish the role of the special educator as a professional who works directly with students who have disabilities. It can improve working conditions for special educators and raise their morale by reallocating their paperwork responsibilities and creating more time for teaching. In some school districts, the role of the special educator has become almost exclusively that of case manager and supervisor of paraprofessionals. Many special educators express dissatisfaction with this role because their professional passion is to work with students, not push paper. Administratively, having a paperwork paraprofessional can save time by centralizing the organization of required paperwork and contributing to state and federal compliance.

Alternative #5: Lowering Caseloads of Special Educators

In an era when general education is concerned about reducing class size, it is ironic that many special educators have caseloads of students with disabilities that nearly match and sometimes exceed the number of students without disabilities that classroom teachers are expected to teach. Special educators often work across a range of grade levels and subject matter that typically would not be expected of general educators. In addition to students on IEPs, many special educators have an additional caseload of students on 504 Plans or those considered "at risk."

When we take into account the increased numbers of adults a special educator collaborates with to address student needs, is it any wonder that so many special educators are leaving the field?

The main component of this alternative is simple and straightforward: to limit the caseload size of special educators so they can actually work with students and colleagues. In the schools that reported this alternative they purposely limited the caseloads of special educators to 10 or under and attempted to minimize the number of grade levels and individual teachers with whom the special educator interacted. Lowering caseloads was designed to: (a) increase instructional time between special educators and students with disabilities; (b) increase time for collaboration with teachers, related services providers, and families; (c) increase time available to provide sufficient training and supervision to paraprofessionals; and (d) increase the likelihood of special educators remaining in the field.

Alternative #6: Peer Support Strategies

Peer supports have a solid record in the literature and include a variety of examples (Snell & Janney, 2000), though few existing peer support models have been developed specifically to address overreliance on paraprofessionals. Schools can start by examining roles that paraprofessionals currently play that might be appropriately carried out by peers, keeping in mind that some of the same problems that exist with paraprofessionals can exist with peers (e.g., overdependence); so merely changing one set of people for another is not sufficient. Plans must be made to ensure the quality of natural supports; here are two.

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Schools can start by examining roles that paraprofessionals currently play that might be appropriately carried out by peers, keeping in mind that some of the same problems that exist with paraprofessionals can exist with peers...

An approach used in one high school as an alternative to traditional study hall, was a "Learning Lab." It was offered as a schoolwide support where any student, with or without disabilities, who needs extra support can get individual or group tutoring

from an adult or peer. Although this approach was not initiated to address paraprofessional issues, it is presented because it can. The Lab, which is general education staffed and funded, is centrally located and equipped with current technology in an effort to make it a desirable and valued place for students and faculty. Students attend during study halls, before and after school, or at other agreed-upon times.

An important aspect of the Lab is that it supports the academic success of students across a range of abilities. For example, the Lab can support a student having difficulty with basic literacy or computation, as well as a group of advanced calculus students working through a particularly challenging problem, or others preparing for SAT exams. By ensuring service to a heterogeneous group of students, it can offer some students constructive models of academic behavior by peers while avoiding a common problem of "Learning Labs," namely stigmatization associated with serving only students at risk or with disabilities. Additionally, the Lab can serve as an important support for early career teachers.

Running this type of Learning Lab is not without its challenges. It can be difficult keeping up with the demand for the services. There are logistical and managerial challenges associated with scheduling peer tutors. Senior privileges (e.g., permission to be off campus when not in class) decrease the availability of tutors. Some peers can be overly helpful, create dependencies, or be "too bossy," so ongoing adult supervision is necessary. Peers can be underused or find it challenging to deal with situations where paraprofessionals are unwilling to relinquish a sufficient level of involvement or control.

A second alternative is a peer-to-peer support system that pairs a student with a disability with a classmate who does not have a disability. In some secondary programs, peers are eligible to receive course or community service credit. For example, in one school this was an elective course for seventh- and eighth-grade students. Often paired peers are the same age; sometimes they are cross-age (e.g., high school students assisting middle school students). In another case, the use of peer supports in combination with the rotating use of paraprofessionals was utilized explicitly to address overreliance on paraprofessionals.

Support peers receive systematic orientation and ongoing adult monitoring and support. They assist their classmates who have disabilities in social and

academic ways. This approach is designed to provide reciprocal benefits to students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities. Students with disabilities benefit from peer modeling, relationship building, and academic support as well as expanded opportunities to socialize, communicate, and demonstrate learning competencies. Peer supports can assist students with disabilities to feel accepted and build confidence. Peer support programs can also create and extend “hidden safety supports” in the schools. They can be a positive force to counteract bullying and, in general, encourage students to look out for each other. Peers without disabilities benefit in the areas of empathy, respect for diversity, responsibility, leadership, communication, and development of valued relationships with students who previously may have been outside their circle of friends. Through tutoring, students without disabilities often deepen or extend their own academic development because the act of teaching requires them to function on different and higher levels of understanding with the subject matter.

Peers without disabilities benefit in the areas of empathy, respect for diversity, responsibility, leadership, communication, and development of valued relationships with students who previously may have been outside their circle of friends.

Other benefits of peer supports are well known. Peers tend to be less intrusive and stigmatizing in general education settings. Some general education teachers find it easier and are more comfortable directing the activities of students rather than those of another adult (e.g., paraprofessional). Having peer, rather than paraprofessional, support can increase teacher involvement with students who have disabilities. Sometimes students with disabilities will do things with peers that they won't do for an adult. Peers are a good source of information on “what's cool” and what's not; they also often come up with creative and useful ideas.

Alternative #7: Involving Students With Disabilities in Making Decisions About Their Own Supports

Though self-determination is well established in the professional literature as a vital practice, we have not identified any real life examples where schools have systematically included students with disabilities in contributing to decisions about their own supports, specifically whether they need or want paraprofessional supports, when, how, or from whom. Our experiences, particularly with teenagers and young adults who have had paraprofessional supports, lead us to believe that there are a variety of factors and issues important to at least some students with disabilities, that simply are not adequately taken into account when consumers are not integrally involved in the decision-making. Some of these considerations include the impact of age, gender, proximity, chronological age-appropriateness, choice-making, and levels of control/freedom. Though presently we have little of practical significance to offer under this alternative, we have included it because we hope it will spur school personnel to explore ways to include their students in decision-making about their paraprofessional supports.

Conclusion

It is unlikely that any single alternative will be sufficient to affect substantial change. Therefore, consider enacting an individually determined package of alternatives, in combination with attention to the two other major components (i.e., supports, decision making) of the three-component administrative model for effective utilization of paraprofessionals. A school self-assessment and planning process, currently undergoing field-testing in 26 schools in six states (Giangreco & Broer, 2003a), can assist your selections.

When considering whether to act on the information in this article, keep in mind that some people perceive local factors mentioned earlier in this article (e.g., collective bargaining agreements, state regulations, policies, special education funding), as insurmountable barriers to innovation and quality education. It is likely that school personnel will encounter elements of these factors or other barriers that seemingly make it more difficult for schools to pursue sound educational practices. The

good news is that all attitudes, practices, collective bargaining agreements, regulations, policies, funding approaches, or other perceived barriers are subject to change.

As schools or districts identify alternatives that they believe would be beneficial, we encourage them to move forward. Avoid the temptation to say too quickly, "We can't do that because it's against the regulations" or "We can't do that because it won't be reimbursed as a special education cost by our state." By their very nature, laws like the IDEA have a great deal of flexibility built into them. Similarly, IEP teams formed to address the needs of students with disabilities can be very influential in affecting change, especially when you consider that states and school districts are not allowed to make policies or rules that interfere with the IEP team's individual decision-making authority. Administrative, principle-based leadership can assist professionals and families working together to make the best use of whatever flexibility currently is available within our systems. By deferring judgment, sticking to ethical principles, adhering to the guiding values embedded in our laws, and doing what we think is appropriate for students, each of us has the potential to affect some real change in our schools and communities. If we don't do it, who will?

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Various Paraprofessional Materials: References and Resources

A. California:

Paraprofessional in Inclusive Schools: Film and manual (2002).

The Wested LRE Resources Project developed this training/development tool in concert with the CA statewide CA Confederation on Inclusive Ed and the CLEAR Project (Ann Halvorsen, CSUEB) and an inclusive research project at SFSU (Pam Hunt). This remains a great information and development tool for para roles and responsibilities that is on DVD and is available from Wested. It has been available to LEAs at no cost in the past. Contact Dona Meinders at dmeinde@wested.org.

Local District tools and handbooks: Ann Halvorsen will forward examples.

B. Research and Practice

1. Brock, M. E., & Carter, E. W. (2013). A systematic review of paraprofessional-delivered educational practices to improve outcomes for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 38(4), 211-221. **LIBRARY ONLINE L-oL**
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ADDITIONAL PARA RESOURCES

C. KEY WEB SITES - PARAPROFESSIONAL “TRAINING” /DEVELOPMENT:

1. This link takes you to Mike Giangreco’s materials and modules at University of Vermont which are among the best even though they have been out for awhile <http://www.uvm.edu/%7Ecdci/parasupport/>
2. Para job embedded curriculum on aligned with Minnesota’s para standards https://ici.umn.edu/index.php?products/view_part/13/
3. **Effective Para Development:** Teacher Tools section of Univ of Kansas Special Connections Site
http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/?q=collaboration/working_effectively_with_paraeducators See Teacher Tools link to working effectively with Paras there
Note-Special Connections web at KU also has co-teaching resources
4. **Peer Coaching-** Eric link to multiple resources
<http://eric.ed.gov/?q=Paraprofessional+training+Peer%20coaching>

Peer Interaction "Cheat Sheet" (Sawchuck, C. & Hanna, P. 2005).

What students say or do:	How we can respond:
Refuse to work in a group with focus student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Talk to the teacher ahead of time to ensure that focus students are part of a group 2) Remind the students that you will be able to assist the group as necessary 3) Tell the group that they can work together to choose appropriate roles for each group member 4) Have focus student volunteer ways in which they can help the group (if student is unable to do this, you can talk to students about the focus student's strengths in relation to the specific activity)
Talk about the focus student to other people in class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Address the student outside of class if possible: explain that everyone has feelings, and that they need to be aware of how hurtful their words can be 2) Ask the student if they can think of something nice to say about the focus student, and encourage them to share that instead.
Make fun of the focus student or their behavior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ask students if they know why the focus student behaves the way (s)he does 2) Tell them why the focus student behaves that way 3) Ask the student if they can help the focus student work on their behavior by...(e.g. reminding the focus student to stay on task/ helping the focus student by setting up their work for them)
Move seats so they don't have to sit next to or near the focus student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ask why the student appears to be uncomfortable 2) Respond to their specific concern by giving a brief positive explanation of focus student's particular behavior 3) Give the student a small "helping" role so they have an opportunity to work with the focus student and become more comfortable with that student
Stare at the focus student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ask the student if they have a question about the focus student 2) Offer some insightful information about the focus student (e.g. Sally uses that device to talk, Jose sometimes has a difficult time controlling his anger, Richard needs to be reminded to keep his hands to himself, etc.)

Remember

*students are curious, and we need to understand where they're coming from before we can expect them to change

*sharing information with students gives them the knowledge they need to become more understanding

Hanna, P. & Sawchuck, C.(2005) San Francisco, CA:A.P. Giannini MS, SFUSD and Hayward,CA: CLEAR PROJECT. Please include citation on all copies.

Expectations for Inclusion Paraprofessionals

In General

1. Get to work at 9:00 to actively participate in the morning meeting (9:00-9:30).
2. Arrive and stay in your assigned classes for the entire class period.
3. Notify the substitute line and an Inclusion teacher of an absence in advance (by 8:30 the day of absence).
4. Ask for partial days off ahead of time and arrange for "make-up" time in advance.

In Class

1. Become knowledgeable of the student's IEP goals.
2. Work with the Inclusion team to incorporate IEP goals into class curriculum (i.e. modifications).
3. Learn the names of and develop relationships with other students in the class to better assist the teacher and to increase student's social interactions.
4. At any opportune time allow the student(s) to work at an increasingly independent level and walk around the class to assist others (i.e. avoid sitting next to the student).
5. Actively involve the students and yourself in class activities.
6. If no student/teacher requires your assistance during class time ask an Inclusion teacher for suggestions.

Remember: You Are Representing our Inclusion Services and as a Team We Determine the Success of the Program and Students!