

Increasing Paraeducator Effectiveness

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Facts about Paraeducators

- **1,223,400** in the United States: Growing 9% per year. Compared with 3.7 million teachers, Paras comprise over fourth of the instructional force.
- **Over half** of all Paras work directly with **special education populations**
- Paras **provide critical services** to students: instruction, behavior support, inclusion
- How do we make PARAEDUCATORS **MORE EFFECTIVE?**



Something needs to change!

WHY

- WHY ARE WE PUTTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS WITH OUR LEAST TRAINED PERSONNEL?

HOW

- HOW DO WE MAKE PARAEDUCATORS MORE EFFECTIVE





The Problem

- **Lack of education** for paraeducators in critical areas of job readiness: Behavior management, special populations, professional boundaries (etc...)
- **Limited extended contract hours** or time during school day for Paraeducators to develop skills
- Diverse trainers, methods, and ideas don't always create a **common language** based in best practices.
- Paraeducators are supporting our **most vulnerable** students: Disabilities, Diverse Learners, ESL, title I etc...

Effectiveness = STUNT

- **S. SKILLS** are the focus: What to say, what to do, how to think about issues.
- **T. TOP** three things – not everything – is the focus for increasing effectiveness
- **U. UNDO** misconceptions and myths.
- **N. NOT** all at once! Learn in short increments. Not an hour or two hours...5-15 minutes.
- **T. TRY** Practice/Rehearse → try. Use what you learn now.



1. Focus on **S**kills

- What do I need to know how to do?
- Why is this important to me, now?
- How do I think about or conceptualized the task?
- What words might I use – what might I say?
- What process might I go through step by step?



2. **T**op Priorities

- Pick the top 3-5 things that people need to know. (or the top 1-2). Focus on what you want them to remember.
- Makes sure people *remember* the top things by repeating them.
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3. Undo the Myth

- You need to give people the information they need to combat certain myths and misinformation about the subject.
- Give people ammunition to counter misinformation about the subject. This is a very powerful cultural element of change. You must give people this if you want to change ingrained ideas.



4. **N**ot all at once

- All it takes is 5 minutes of effectiveness training to get a few concepts across.
- People can't remember more than that. They can't absorb and can't use or practice more than that.
- Allow skills to build on each other rather than dump them all on a someone at once.
- Everyone has 5 minutes



6. **T**ry it: Practice

- Practice each piece of something new in short increments.
- Rehearse it: Try using the words, the body language, the voice tone, etc...just as you would in real life. Role play it with co-workers.
- Try it: Make it a weekly focus for your paraeducators. Focus on one thing to try, improve and collect data on.



Now You Try it

- **S** - Skill development
- **T** - Top items of importance
- **U** - Undo myths
- **N** - Not all at once
- **T** - Try and practice



What do paraeducators need to be effective ?

○ THE FOUNDATION

- Understanding & Clarification of roles
- Foundation knowledge: special populations, diverse learners, behavior theory.
- Best Practice behavior support skills.
- Relationship Skills: Professional Boundaries, teamwork



Understanding and Clarifying Roles

- Clarify the paraeducator's role within their job context – be specific about what they are supposed to be doing and how they are supposed to accomplish this.
- Clarify paraeducator's role in a classroom with the classroom teacher, students and other assistants
- Clarify what the paraeducator is NOT going to be doing. (calling parents...processing emotions etc..)

Foundational Knowledge about Behavior Theory

Important Stuff:

1. Understanding the idea behind looking for the *function* of a behavior and finding a *replacement* behavior.
2. Understanding the difference between having lagging cognitive/emotional/executive skills and low motivation.
3. Understanding how factors in the environment impact behavior.



Foundational Knowledge on Diverse Learners



1. Concept of diverse learners
2. What special education eligibilities actually mean (and don't mean!)
3. Impact of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, disability (and everything else).

Best Practices in Behavior Support: A Toolkit



- Proactive vs. reactive outlook on behavior.
- Supportive vs. disciplinarian outlook on behavior.
- Pre-teaching, Front Loading
- Direct teaching of social, emotional and behavioral skill
- Staying out of conflicts
- Prompting, confronting,
- Reinforcing/Rewarding
- Using Consequences

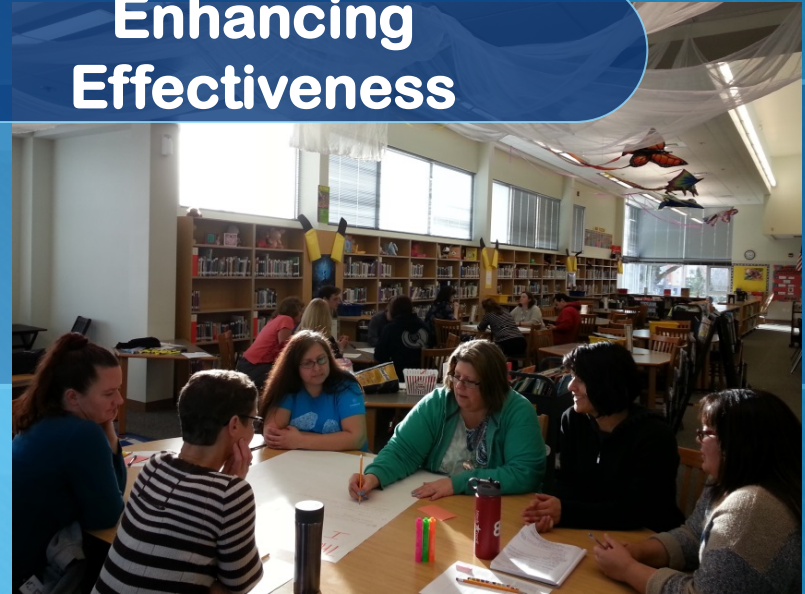
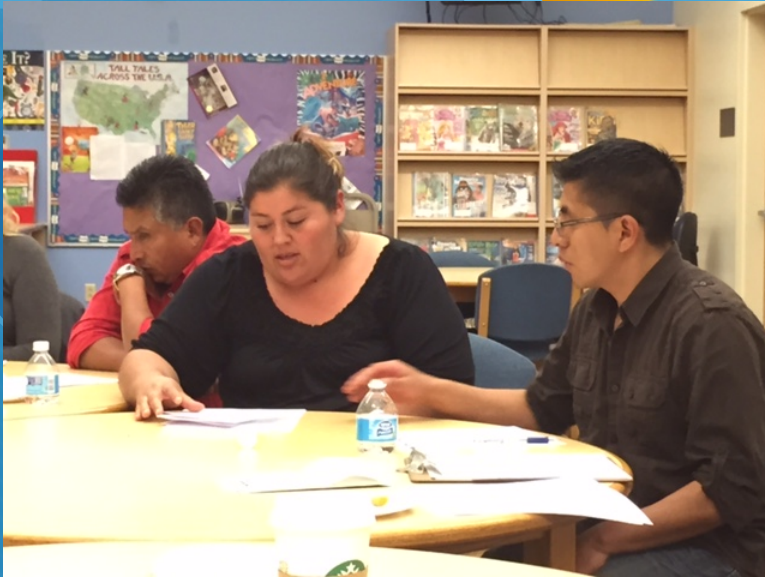


Relationship Skills

- Teamwork and team agreements
- Team communication
- Excellent questions
- Types of personal and professional boundaries and how students breach them
- Personal and professional boundaries – training on exactly what to do and say in relation to boundary delimas.

Para PLCs

Enhancing Effectiveness





Themes created from responses to "What workshop or staff development would you like?"

Behavior Support/Management "behavior" "behavior management in mainstream" "new ways to strategize with behaviors"	Student communication "being able to communicate with the individuals hardest to communicate with"	Special Ed./Disability Awareness "ASD awareness" "the different levels of Special Ed." "disabilities"
Academic Areas "brainology" "ESL observation" "teaching the new math" "know how to teach academics" "Sum Dog and Moby Max"	Social/Emotional "Incredible Flexible You"	Common Core (CCSS) "CCSS" "overview of Common Core" "CCSS expectations"

A concern I currently have in regard to student outcomes is:	In order to create inclusive environments I need:	The biggest challenges I am currently facing are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP kids in mainstream (reading) • Limited staff • No electives for 6th grade kids who don't exit ESL • Training for reading programs (Fontas & Pinnell?) • Educating mainstream students to accept students with disabilities (learning, physical, emotional) • Students who were good at math but struggle with reading now struggle with math because it requires so much reading • Assistants being responsible for creating learning opportunities within the GenEd environment • Are our students learning in the environment where learning curriculum is so far above their levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OIS training • To know what curriculum to use and training on the materials • To know more about the 5 year plan • Time to organize and plan/prep time • Being included in appropriate teacher meetings & planning times (team building activities) • Time for IEP reviews/meetings • Access to IEP & BSP • Being included in IEP (\$\$)? • Access to files to know triggers, history, what works, what their disability is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing CCS into small groups** • Overlooking behaviors in classroom of other students to help student • CCS terminology** • Teach CCS to student below grade level • Kids keeping personal space boundaries • Establishing a relationship of respect with student • Student respecting IA as a teacher • Students not retaining lessons (newcomers) • Not enough planning time** • Too many students per person in small group • Not enough time with ELD kids • Being responsible for creating my own curriculum and lack of time to do that • Time to access our district e-mail • Time to review individual IEPs • Time to tally or record data • CCS for students below grade level-time to find materials & how planning time



Hand out

Whole Staff & Community

**Title I, 600+,
1 SLC, 300 ESL, Dual Language**

- Paid for w/ Title I
- 4/ year ; ½ day
- Pre planned-beginning of the year
- Rotating specialists present
- During school day
- Groups cancelled
- Subs for students who need 1:1

500, 1 SLC, 1 LSC, 90 ESL

- Paid for w/ Admin Support
- 5/year; 1.5 hours
- Planned as we went
- Principal/Specialist led
- After School-early release
Wednesday
- Extended Contract Attendance not
mandatory

Instructional Tool Kits!



Targeted Skills Sheet

Sentence Frames

Discussion Prompts

Timer

White Erase Paddles

Comprehension Questions

Special Considerations

- In-Service Opportunity
 - Community building activity (boundary bus
 - Lunch
 - PBIS / de escalating behavior
 - School Improvement Plan
- Appreciation
- Workshops, Conferences, Observations, Site Visits, Committees
- Job alike & mix it up---beware...



Behavior Cadre

Hillsboro School District



- In response to rising cost of individual assistants for kids with high needs Hillsboro created the *Behavior Cadre: 8* Paraeducators and two licensed TOSAs.
- Cadre is *super-trained: 9* initial days + ongoing professional development to work with students
- Work with schools to develop the capacity of all staff to support students – not to fix kids or be “extra” staff. They are trainers.
- Doubling in size year two due to success in supporting students, reducing costs and keeping kids out of programs.

Parasharp™

Web-based Paraeducator Effectiveness :

- 5-minute videos targeting core areas of paraeducator effectiveness
- Printable Discussion Questions and Summaries
- Administrative tracking
- 3,200 Users in over 100 schools.
- www.321insight.com



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