

Spring 2016

Beyond an Aide: Perceptions and Attitudes Concerning the Self-Efficacy of Paraprofessionals in Special Education

Nicolas Jones
Governors State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://opus.govst.edu/capstones>

 Part of the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jones, Nicolas, "Beyond an Aide: Perceptions and Attitudes Concerning the Self-Efficacy of Paraprofessionals in Special Education" (2016). *All Capstone Projects*. Paper 182.

For more information about the academic degree, extended learning, and certificate programs of Governors State University, go to http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Degree_Programs_and_Certifications/

Visit the [Governors State Multicategorical Special Education Department](#)

This Project Summary is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Capstone Projects at OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. For more information, please contact opus@govst.edu.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me and showing me love and patience throughout my time at Governors State University. When times were rough, I always had someone to talk to for moral support.

I would also like to thank Dr. Philip Boudreau, my Graduate Seminar Professor. Your passion and tenacity in the field of Special Education is contagious and inspiring. Working with you throughout the program has opened my eyes to a whole new world of education that I am eager to work in. I look forward to applying what I have learned to my future career as a special educator.

Tables of Content

Acknowledgements Page	i
Tables of Content	ii
List of Tables and Figures	v
Title Page	01
Abstract	02
Chapter I: Introduction	03
Statement of the Problem	04
Purpose of the Study	05
Question of the Study	05
Educational Significance of Study	06
Definition of Terms	06
Chapter Summary	07
Chapter II: Review of Literature	08
Paraprofessionals in Education	08
Paraprofessional Uses and Roles	08
Preparation and Training for Paraprofessionals	11
No Child Left Behind	15
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	16
Title I	17
Paraprofessionals and Students	18
Supervision of Paraprofessionals	18

Running Head: Paraprofessionals and Self-Efficacy	iii
Student Perspectives of Paraprofessionals	20
Parent Perspectives of Paraprofessionals	20
Origins of Self-Efficacy	21
Teacher Self-Efficacy	22
Paraprofessional Teacher Self-Efficacy	24
Efficacy and Confidence	24
Chapter Summary	25
Chapter III: Methodology	26
Participants	26
Instrumentation	27
Procedure	28
Data Collection	28
Data Analysis	28
Chapter Summary	29
Chapter IV: Results	30
Demographics	30
Survey Results	31
Classroom Management	31
Instructional Strategies	32
Student Engagement	33
Chapter Summary	33
Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion	35
Discussion	35

Running Head: Paraprofessionals and Self-Efficacy	iv
Paraprofessional Teacher Self-Efficacy	36
Conclusion	36
Educational Implications	37
Recommendations for Further Research	37
Summary	38
References	39
Appendices	46
Appendix A: IRB raining (CITI)	47

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Resources for Paraprofessionals	13
Figure 1: Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Model	23
Figure 2: Three Domains of Paraprofessional Self-Efficacy	34

Beyond an Aide: Perceptions and Attitudes Concerning the Self-Efficacy of

Paraprofessionals in Special Education

Nicolas Jones

Prepared in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Masters of Arts Degree in

Multicategorical Special Education

Governors State University

Spring 2016

Abstract

This action based research study was conducted to examine the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals working with students in special education in a specific school district (School District A). The study used a survey design and the paraprofessionals were currently working with students from grades 9-12 in a Chicago Area, south suburban high school district in Illinois. The study was conducted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Multicategorical Special Education program at Governors State University in the spring of 2016.

Key Words: paraprofessional, self-efficacy, special education, disabilities, student engagement

Beyond an Aide: Perceptions and Attitudes Concerning the Self-Efficacy of
Paraprofessionals in Special Education

Chapter I

Introduction

Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as a person's beliefs about their own capabilities to produce effects. In education, teacher self-efficacy has been well documented and some studies indicate that teacher self-efficacy is an important factor in influencing positive teaching behavior and student outcomes (Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013). Many teachers today work alongside paraprofessionals who share a multitude of classroom responsibilities with them (Stockall, 2014). Paraprofessionals are important assets in the world of special education today. National statistics have estimated that there are more than half a million paraprofessionals working in public schools across the country, with more than half of them working with students with disabilities (Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997). The U.S. Department of Education (2004) defines a paraprofessional as someone who provides instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. Given this distinction, the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals should be considered equally important as that of the teachers with whom they work.

According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2004:

paraprofessionals have a vast array of duties in today's education system such as (a) providing one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher, (b) assisting with

classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials, (c) providing instructional assistance in a computer laboratory, (d) conducting parental involvement activities, (e) providing instructional support in a library or media center, (f) acting as a translator, or (g) providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher (NCLB, 2004).

It is essential that someone with this level of responsibility in an academic setting be willing and able to provide appropriate care for students. Due to communication concerns, researchers have recommended that teachers develop a shared philosophy for paraprofessionals to provide feedback on in hopes of using clear language and modeling to offer guidelines and examples of classroom procedures (Carnahan, Williamson, Clarke, & Sorensen, 2009). The better the teacher and paraprofessional communicate, the more the students will benefit.

Statement of the Problem

The number of paraprofessionals employed in schools was reported to be approximately 550,000 in 2000, with 290,000 of those paraprofessionals reported to be working with students with disabilities (McGrath, Johns, & Mathur, 2010). It has also been noted that 70-90 percent of special education paraprofessionals are unqualified, affecting the quality and validity of special education programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In 2008, the Bureau of Labor statistics reported that there were 1.3 million full and part-time paraprofessional jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). With the number of paraprofessionals increasing, it is important to understand their perspectives on students, teachers, and their overall sense of efficacy in their positions (Carnahan et al., 2009). At times, paraprofessionals have even reported feeling incapable

of performing the duties that have been assigned to them (Breton, 2010). Recent studies have indicated that it remains challenging for some schools to hire and retain a sufficient number of paraprofessionals with desired qualifications (Giangreco, Suter, & Doyle, 2010). Other studies have aimed to address the problem of paraprofessional retention in general, suggesting that there is a concern in education (Pickett, Likens, & Wallace, 2003). Educators could also face the possible problem of uncomfortable work environments and job dissatisfaction without the input of coworkers. Issues such as this raise the following questions: What do paraprofessionals feel is important for them to be effective? How much do paraprofessionals believe that they can impact the students? How do they perceive the relationships with the teachers with whom they work? How do they perceive the school as a whole?

Purpose of the Study

Carnahan et al., (2009) emphasize the importance of a shared philosophy and effective communication between teachers and paraprofessionals, so it is important to understand the perspectives of both parties. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perspectives of paraprofessionals in an attempt to provide information to teachers and other school personnel who work with them. In addition, this study explores paraprofessionals' perceptions of their own teacher self-efficacy, which will assist in the better use of paraprofessionals as a whole. The study also attempts to guide future understanding of paraprofessional teacher self-efficacy in relation to students, instructional methods, and the environments in which they work.

Question Addressed in the Study

The following question will guide the focus of the study:

1. What is the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals in terms of interacting with students with disabilities in a school setting?

Educational Significance of Study

Studies have found that students with disabilities often feel stigmatized and rejected by their peers and face inadequate instruction when dealing with paraprofessionals (Giangreco, Suter, & Hurley, 2011). Other studies have shown the opposite when paraprofessionals were prepared for their respective support roles (Hall, Grundon, Pope, & Romero, 2009). Further, Giangreco et al. (2010) suggest that there have been no clear determining factors indicating what will make a paraprofessional remain in their current position. Therefore, the information attained from this study will help to guide future development in paraprofessional support and in positive interactions with future special education students. Moreover, information gained from this study can be used to obtain a broader perspective regarding the positions held by paraprofessionals and how they may relate to students, instruction, and the school environment.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the clarification of this study:

Paraprofessional – a person who may work in a variety of positions in a school district including, but not limited to, instructional assistants, Title I paraprofessionals, pupil support assistants, special education paraprofessionals, job coaches, lunchroom and playground assistants, hall monitors, and media center assistants (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015).

Self-Efficacy -- Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as “people’s judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391)

Teacher Self-Efficacy -- Teacher self-efficacy can be conceptualized as a teacher’s belief in their own ability to plan and to carry out activities that are required to attain educational goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Student Engagement -- The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education (Abbott, 2014).

Chapter Summary

With concerns being raised over the utilization of paraprofessionals (Giangreco, Doyle, & Broer, 2005), it is important to understand the paraprofessional perspective. Paraprofessionals are “used to assist in the provision of special education and related services” (IDEA, 2004), and there is insufficient research in determining exactly how paraprofessionals are to be used effectively. School districts must be provided with guidelines and indicators when hiring paraprofessionals to work with student populations. Students with disabilities are especially susceptible to influence from paraprofessionals because as of 2010, special education paraprofessionals outnumber special education teachers in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Paraprofessionals in Education

In 2015, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that there were 1.2 million people in the United States working as Teacher Assistants. In 2015, paraprofessionals comprised nearly 46 percent of its members, and of those members, 71 percent work with students with disabilities (National Education Association, 2015). Although paraprofessionals have been involved with school districts for almost 40 years (Gartner, 1971), the nature of the position is far from common knowledge. Paraprofessionals play a key part in the education of general education students, students with mild disabilities, and students with severe disabilities (Carter, Sisco, & Lane, 2011). Teachers rely on paraprofessionals to assist them with the daily activities within the classroom to ensure that students are as successful as they can possibly be. Though regulations on paraprofessionals can vary from state to state, the Illinois State Board of Education (2015) makes it clear that the certified teacher is solely responsible for planning the activities conducted by the paraprofessional. To support teachers with a multitude of classroom responsibilities, schools have turned to paraprofessionals for assistance, with the largest number of paraprofessionals being employed in the field of special education (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Teachers in special education have an added resource when educating students with learning disabilities in the form of paraprofessionals.

Paraprofessional Uses and Roles

There was a time when paraprofessionals were used for mundane tasks such as sharpening pencils, making copies, and designing bulletin boards (Ashbaker & Morgan,

2005). Paraprofessionals have since moved on from these roles to being integral parts of the classroom. Services provided for students with increasingly specialized needs is now provided by paraprofessionals. The addition of paraprofessionals to support regular and special education teachers continues to increase and paraprofessionals are no longer limited to minor clerical roles or administrative roles as they have been in the past (Jones & Bender, 1993). Ultimately, paraprofessionals are seen as key assets in the education of students with disabilities. French and Chopra (1999) concluded that parents of students believed that paraprofessionals were compassionate and dedicated people who took on numerous important roles in the lives of their children.

As noted earlier, studies have shown that paraprofessionals have emerged as a mechanism that schools increasingly rely on to support students in the general education classroom, as well as classrooms strictly dedicated to servicing students with special needs (Giangreco, Broer, & Suter, 2011). There also has been a significant increase in the number of paraprofessionals hired to support students with disabilities (Giangreco, Edelman, Broer, & Doyle, 2001). This increase means that students are coming into contact with paraprofessionals more and more, therefore, teachers, students and paraprofessionals are required to work together to maximize student outputs.

For example, Broer et al. (2005) conducted a study in which they grouped the roles of the paraprofessional working in a special education setting into specific categories. The four categories that they used were (a) the paraprofessional as a mother figure, (b) the paraprofessional as a friend, (c) the paraprofessional as the protector from bullying, and (d) the paraprofessional as the main instructor. Viewing the paraprofessional from the lens of these roles helps to better distinguish the different

aspects of the paraprofessional's position. After viewing this study's results, it is clear that paraprofessionals may be called upon to do a vast array of duties and must be prepared for each of them.

Trautman (2004) offers the following 10 characteristics when describing a quality paraprofessional:

- Qualifications in accordance with requirements of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
- Previous work experience, especially in education or related fields
- Appropriate skills for the targeted position
- Positive attitude toward children
- Interest in learning and self-improvement
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good communication skills
- Ability to follow written plans/instructions
- Good organizational skills
- Positive outlook on life (p. 133)

It is believed that beyond these traits, it is up to the school team members to generate ideas as to what the desired characteristics for a new employee in the paraprofessional position are needed. This factor is in part due to variabilities in job descriptions from school to school.

Preparation and Training for Paraprofessionals

The instructional responsibilities of paraprofessionals continues to increase, and with this increase in responsibility comes the increase in the liability of schools and school districts (Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco & Pelsue, 2009). Inappropriate utilization of paraprofessionals can have very significant legal ramifications and reports of paraprofessionals being inappropriately utilized are abundant (Etscheidt, 2005). Even though issues may arise, it has been reported that paraprofessionals generally feel adequately prepared to assume the tasks that they are most frequently assigned to (Carter et al., 2009).

Although paraprofessionals may feel prepared for their positions generally, there are studies that may suggest further steps take place. Breton (2010) found that states and individual school districts needed (1) to develop and enforce competency based requirements for the employment of special education paraprofessionals, (2) to provide opportunities for quality professional development for these individuals, and (3) to ensure that special education teachers are adequately trained to fulfill their mandated supervisory responsibilities with respect to paraprofessionals. States are being held accountable for not only the services provided to their students, but ensuring that the proper training is provided to all those involved with the students.

In order to perform any task effectively, the proper training is necessary. The position of school paraprofessional is no exception to this rule. Ashbaker and Morgan (2005) also found that hearings, lawsuits and legal issues surrounding the training and supervision of paraprofessionals was increasing. Concerning the qualifications of a

paraprofessional, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) states that educational agencies must:

allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities. (Sec.300.156).

The emphasis for a paraprofessional to be appropriately trained is clear, however, it is not always obvious what this training may entail. Since paraprofessionals are often considered instructional leaders, Cobb (2007) suggests that a school's principal and the reading specialist(s) can facilitate training for paraprofessionals in order to assist them in supporting classroom instruction. Even though this approach may be effective, it is not the only means of training paraprofessionals. Most often, paraprofessionals train one another while on the job (Trautman, 2004). This kind of on the job training is possibly due to things like lack of information on what it means to be a paraprofessional or clear, subjective instruction.

In a survey conducted by the National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP, 2012), it was found that paraprofessionals receive training from many different sources. Paraprofessionals stated that they had received training from paraeducators, human resources, the special education department, special educators, a college, contracted professionals/outside agencies, behavior strategists, reading and math coaches, and from district staff development. These findings demonstrate the diverse manner in which paraprofessionals can be trained.

In today's modern education system, the work of paraprofessionals is taken very seriously. Concerns have been raised about placing what some would say are the least trained staff members with students who have the most need (Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009). This is a valid concern and school districts as well as the paraprofessionals themselves need to ensure that the proper training is taking place.

Table 1 refers to resources for paraprofessionals set forth by The Center for Parent Information and Resources (2014).

Table 1.

Resources for Paraprofessionals

Program Name	Brief Description
National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals	Publishes six different paraprofessional training manuals, including the <i>Core Curriculum for Paraprofessionals</i> . The goal of these instructional materials is to provide personnel developers and trainers with resources they can use to improve the performance of their paraeducator workforce.
Project EVOLVE	Project EVOLVE is an OSEP-funded project that has generated a wealth of resources, including the paraprofessional literature from 1990-2009 and <i><u>A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports</u></i> .
Paraeducator Resource and Learning Center (PRLC)	The PRLC provides information for paraeducators about six important topics: Collaborative Teamwork, Inclusive Education, Families and Cultural Sensitivity, Characteristics of Children and Youth with Various Disabilities, Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members, and Implementing Teacher-planned Instruction.

CEC's standards for paraprofessionals

CEC is the Council for Exceptional Children. Its *Parability: The CEC Paraeducator Standards Workbook* includes CEC Standards for Paraeducators, a Code of Ethics of Paraeducators, and two tools that can be used by district personnel, principals, trainers, and paraeducators to ensure that paraeducators meet the CEC standards.

ParaEducator Learning Network

This network helps school systems address paraeducator training needs via an e-learning program currently offering over 115 courses in a wide range of areas. A service center, district, or school starts the process by subscribing to the network services, purchasing individual "seats" for trainees (\$75/seat). This gives the trainees access to the online training modules.

Project PARA

Project PARA conducts research and develops training materials for paraeducators and teachers who supervise them. The project provides web-based self-study programs that offer school districts resources to provide introductory training for paraeducators and/or the teachers who supervise them. These resources are offered free of charge to schools and teacher training programs. Participating schools provide an instructor or mentor who manages their own self-study participants.

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources

The Clearinghouse offers a variety of resources including a focus on supporting paraeducators of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Paraeducator Power Training for Supporting Students with Disabilities

A flexible professional development tool that district trainers can use to train paraeducators at their own site. Includes a CD with six complete PowerPoint presentations, handouts, quizzes, and answer keys, plus one spiral-bound trainee manual. Available from Park Place Publications

No Child Left Behind

With the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) signed by George W. Bush, states and school districts have been driven to recognize paraprofessionals and the work that they do. NCLB requires the state educators and school districts to address many issues concerning paraprofessionals including employment, preparation, and assessment (Pickett, Likins, & Wallace, 2003). NCLB also requires that the paraprofessional work under the supervision of a teacher. Teachers have specific certifications that allow them to directly encounter students without supervision whereas paraprofessionals do not usually have these certifications.

NCLB has drawn out a standard for paraprofessionals that outlines what they are required to do as of January 2, 2002. Paraprofessionals who were hired prior to that date had until January 8, 2006, to complete the requirements. There are three main requirements for paraprofessionals, stating that all are required to:

1. Meet a rigorous standard of quality that demonstrates, through a formal state of local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics or in readiness activities for reading, writing and mathematics.
2. Have completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education.
3. Have obtained an associate's or higher degree (NCLB, 2004).

In March of 2004, the Department of Education amended the No Child left Behind Act as it pertains to paraprofessionals. The amendment redefined "paraprofessionals who provide instructional support" as those who:

provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher, (2) assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials, (3) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory, (4) conduct parental involvement activities, (5) provide instructional support in a library or media center, (6) act as a translator, or (7) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. (NCLB, 2004, p.2).

The amendments to the NCLB Act in 2004 also addressed the differences amongst paraprofessionals. The amendment recognizes paraprofessionals working in a multitude of different settings such as home schooling environments and those working with students who are English Language Learners (ELL).

The requirements for paraprofessionals set forth by NCLB are intended to maximize the quality of education for all students involved. Darden (2009) emphasizes the importance of the law pertaining to paraprofessionals. It is important for paraprofessionals to be familiar with the laws surrounding their positions so that the schools in which they work are able to avoid any types of legal troubles that may arise.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (often referred to as IDEA), begins to outline the role of the paraprofessional. It is important to note that some literature refers to paraprofessionals as paraeducators or teacher aides, but there is no difference between them. IDEA acknowledges the key role that paraprofessionals play in assisting students with disabilities in order to assist them in their education and maximize potential and achievement. Although IDEA 2004 does not

define the term paraprofessional nor does it explain the duties of a paraprofessional, IDEA 2004 simply explains that states must have written laws and regulations regarding the certification of paraprofessionals.

However, IDEA 2004 does not specify the training needed for paraprofessionals to be successful. The NEA (2015) explains the significance of IDEA and what it means for paraprofessionals as follows:

1. IDEA continues to recognize the role of paraeducators in providing services to students with disabilities. Prior to the 1997 amendments, there was no recognition of that role in federal legislation.
2. IDEA highlights the necessity for standards in the training and supervision of paraeducators.
3. IDEA supports the involvement of paraeducators as part of the team that provides educational services to children with disabilities.
4. IDEA encourages professional development opportunities for paraeducators.

Title I

In 2004, there were also amendments to the Title I section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. These amendments ensured that financial assistance provided to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) was used to not only provide services for those students coming from low-income areas, but also for those who are at “most at risk” of failing (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). It can be assumed that many of these students who are “most at risk” fall into one of the categories of special education that also provides services.

Paraprofessionals and Students

In today's educational system, paraprofessionals work with students in many different contexts and situations. Descriptive studies have indicated that paraprofessionals sometimes assume the role of the primary rather than the secondary instructional agent for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Brock & Carter, 2013). It is important to understand perspectives of students concerning paraprofessionals as these perspectives can yield important information about service delivery issues (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005). Although NCLB (2001) indicates that paraprofessionals are to work under the direct supervision of a licensed professional, paraprofessionals are relied upon more and more to work with students by themselves.

Supervision of Paraprofessionals

As previously stated, there is a pressing need for effective training and supervision for paraprofessionals (Carter et al. 2009). Even though legislation has explained the importance of paraprofessionals in special education, there is still a concern that supervision of people in this position is low and paraprofessionals may be relied upon excessively (French, 2001). As noted, NCLB (2001) states that paraprofessionals are to work under the direct supervision of a licensed professional. Without this supervision, paraprofessionals may become unaware of what is expected of them in the role of paraprofessional. Research shows that paraprofessionals are too often left on their own to make important pedagogical decisions while remaining inadequately trained and supervised (Giangreco, Broer, & Suter, 2011). This is a huge problem considering it violates the law surrounding paraprofessionals. There are too many instances in which

paraprofessionals may inappropriately function as the main teacher for students with disabilities or as the special educator (Giangreco et al., 2011).

Studies have shown that several concerns have been raised as to the use of paraprofessionals (Giangreco & Broer, 2007). Issues surrounding paraprofessionals include concerns that the number of paraprofessionals has increased because of the general belief that one of the primary ways to support students with disabilities in general education classrooms is to assign a paraprofessional. There are also concerns that (a) paraprofessionals provide support in subjects in which they are under prepared or unskilled, (b) some students spend most of their time in close proximity with paraprofessionals, (c) some students may become highly and unnecessarily dependent on paraprofessionals, (d) students may communicate through their body language and behavior that they find paraprofessional help stigmatizing or unwanted, and that students are often (e) physically separated within the classroom to work with paraprofessionals (Giangreco & Broer, 2007).

Methods of supervision may also be an area of concern for teachers who supervise paraprofessionals. Studies pertaining to this idea have suggested that teachers normally provide oral instructions rather than written plans (French, 2001). These oral instructions typically consisted of directions about guiding students as they practiced skills or basic behavior management suggestions. Relying strictly on oral instruction is clearly only one way in which teachers can assist in the success of paraprofessionals through supervision.

Student Perspectives of Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals are exposed to many students throughout their careers and any input gained from these students would prove valuable in assessing and defining the paraprofessional position. Broer et al. (2005) explain that students with disabilities have different perceptions of the paraprofessionals that work with them. For example, the students may have preferences such as having a paraprofessional work with them who is near their own age (2005). Students also preferred paraprofessionals who were their own gender as well.

Students are not always happy working with paraprofessionals, however, students have reported being embarrassed, yelled at, and dealt with impatiently when it pertained to paraprofessionals working with them (Broer et al., 2005). Students also reported feeling as if they were in their *own world* at the school because of the isolation that the paraprofessional brought to them. It is important to note the lack of research concerning the student perspectives concerning working with paraprofessionals.

Parent Perspectives of Paraprofessionals

Another important perspective to consider when teaching students with learning disabilities is the perspective of the students' parents. Students are sent away to school in the morning by their parents with the assumption that the students' educational needs will be met in every way possible. Studies have shown that parents believed that paraprofessionals provided hands on assistance in the classroom, not only to students with disabilities and special needs, but to the entire class, and that, have played the role as people with whom parents were able to have daily contact with regarding their children's performance in school (French & Chopra, 1999). The study conducted by French &

Chopra (1999) found that parents saw paraprofessionals engaged in four primary roles in support of students with disabilities in a general education setting: the role of the connector, the role of the team member, the role of the instructor, and the role of the physical caregiver/health service provider. The connector was someone who provided a link between students, parents, families, communities and peers. The team member was someone who became part of the students' IEP team and was able to communicate well with the other school personnel in maximizing services for a student. Parents were happy to see paraprofessionals as instructors as long as they were perceived as doing a good job, were supervised by a qualified teacher as stated in NCLB, and worked from plans that represented the student's IEP goals. The physical caregiver/health service provider was someone who was able to keep a student safe and accommodate for the numerous physical supports that some students with disabilities may need (e.g., lifting, moving, diapering).

Origins of Self-Efficacy

The origins of self-efficacy lie within Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001) and his concept of a person's capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of their own life. Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1994). Since beliefs form the foundations of behaviors, a person's perceived self-efficacy will have an effect on the way they do things day-to-day (Enoch & Riggs, 1990).

Bandura (2001) also states that social cognitive theory is founded from an agentic perspective. He describes that being an agent is "to exert intentional influence over one's

functioning and the course of events by one's actions." People are inherently in control of their own lives and it is up to them to decide what will happen in their lives on a constant basis. Bandura believes that people's beliefs in their own capabilities, or general self-efficacy, are generally developed in four distinct ways. The first is through mastery experiences. People should overcome obstacles through perseverant effort. The second is by social modeling. By seeing someone similar to themselves gain success, it is perceived that the person will be able to achieve that same success (Bandura, 2001). The third is through social persuasion. This is similar to peer-pressure in the fact that someone is more likely to persevere and become successful if they are persuaded to do so by someone else. The fourth distinction relies on a person's physical and emotional state. A healthy person is much more likely to have a heightened sense of efficacy than someone who is not of sound mind and body.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1997) emphasizes that the most influential source of efficacy information is mastery experiences. In finding teacher self-efficacy (TSE), Mills (2011) stresses that teachers interpret the results of prior teaching performances to then use and develop beliefs about their own personal capabilities. If a teacher, or any person for that matter, has bad experiences with performing a task, he or she will then assume they are not good at that particular task. The same concept then works for successful tasks.

Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter (2013) indicate that there are significant positive correlations between teacher's self-efficacy beliefs and both the teacher and student ratings of instructional quality. Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are believed to play a major role in the educational process (Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2010). The way that

teachers approach instruction and the way that they perceive themselves as instructors and educators will have a direct effect on the quality of instruction given. Students stand to either benefit or become negatively affected by the teacher's perceived self-efficacy. The same is true for paraprofessionals. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, & Hoy, (1998) offer a *Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Model* in Figure 1 to outline the process:

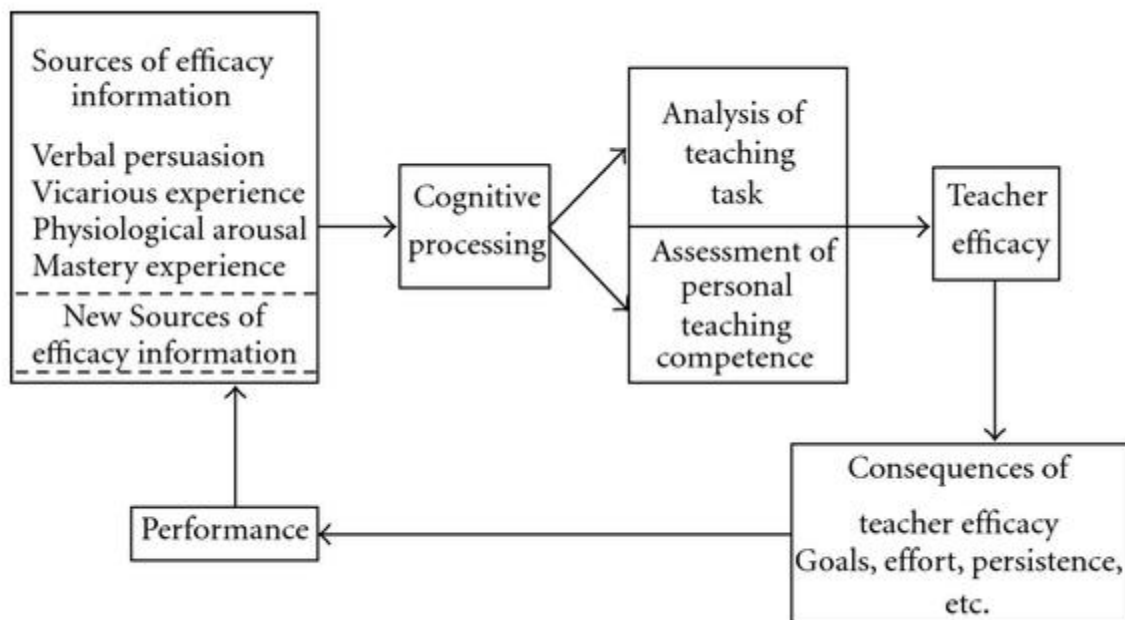


Figure 1. *The teacher's sense of efficacy model (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, 1998)*

Although self-efficacy is not the only factor to teacher success in giving instruction, studies suggest that teachers who feel more competent and have a greater belief in the power of their profession are more comfortable accepting at least some responsibilities for student difficulties (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). These statistics link teachers' self-efficacy with a sense of overall responsibility in understanding their profession and becoming active participants in their students' educations. Teachers with lower teaching efficacy also linked learners' failure with more internal rather than

external factors (Brady & Woolfson, 2008). This links teacher self-efficacy with a greater sense of responsibility in the education of assisted students.

Paraprofessional Teacher Self-Efficacy

With the position of paraprofessional being progressively defined, paraprofessionals still do not always believe that they are capable of performing the tasks requested of them in special education settings (Breton, 2010). The efficacy of *teachers* in the classroom has been clearly studied over the years with different results (Holzberger, Philipp, & Kunter, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, & Hoy, 1998). Though there has in fact been much research done regarding the efficacy of teachers, there have not been many studies conducted regarding the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals (Klassen et al., 2011, Brown, 2012). Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals is referred to as paraprofessional teacher self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy (1998) emphasize the fact that self-efficacy has to do with perception of competence rather than level of competence. It is important to understand this distinction because it can be assumed that people regularly overestimate or underestimate their actual abilities and these estimations may have negative consequences for educators.

Efficacy and Confidence

Though the origins of self-efficacy are fairly clear, there are differences between types of efficacy that are not to be confused. First, it is important that self-efficacy not be confused with self-confidence. Bandura (1997) stresses the fact that confidence is a nondescript term and refers to a person's strength of belief, but does not always specify what the certainty concerns. He believes that it is important for people to know that

confidence is a catchphrase and not a construct that has been placed into a theoretical system.

Chapter Summary

The roles of paraprofessionals continue to be defined as the educational process continues to change. The principles of IDEA 2004 have set the groundwork in attempting to understand the paraprofessional position as a whole. There is no question that there has been a substantial increase in the number of paraprofessionals hired to assist students with disabilities, however, the functionality of these paraprofessionals still comes into question (French, 2003). Studies of paraprofessionals working with students with disabilities will be even more important in the future, as the number of students with disabilities who are served in general education classrooms continues to rise (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). More studies concerning the attitudes and opinions of paraprofessionals will help to define their roles even more for the future.

. Teacher self-efficacy has been well documented and studies have been conducted to document how teachers perceive themselves in the schools and classrooms in which they work (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). However, the concept of paraprofessional teacher self-efficacy is a relatively new one in the field of special education, which warrants further investigation. This study will attempt to create more understanding of the perceptions of paraprofessionals in classrooms as they provide services to the students.

Chapter III

Methodology

This study will be implemented as a descriptive action research study with a survey instrument. The purpose of the study is to analyze the relationships between a paraprofessionals' perceived teacher self-efficacy and the relationships that they have with students. As detailed in chapter 2, paraprofessional self-efficacy is one's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1994). This chapter will briefly discuss the participants, methods, and procedures that were used to conduct this study. Paraprofessionals working in special education grades 9 through 12 will be the focus of the study.

Participants

The participants for the study were paraprofessionals working with students in the field of special education. Surveys were sent via email to 15 paraprofessionals who are currently working in a local suburban high school district (School District A). These participants comprise a convenience sample. School district A consists of three schools with a total student enrollment of 3,303 (Illinois State Board of Education, 2015). 19.9% of the total student population receive special education services. The school district currently has 15 paraprofessionals working with students who receive special education services. The participants were paraprofessionals who service students with disabilities working directly under the supervision of a special education teacher. Paraprofessionals were classified into whole number groups according to years of experience, level of

education, and gender. The paraprofessionals that were used in the study were voluntary participants who currently service special education students in grades 9-12.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire will be created using Google Forms to gather basic demographic data such as gender, age and level of education. To assess the paraprofessionals' efficacy levels, the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (Tshcannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) survey will be used to measure paraprofessionals' levels of self-efficacy when interacting with students (student engagement) as well as their levels of efficacy concerning instructional strategies and classroom management. A peer-review committee discussed the use of the survey and its application to the information being gathered and agreed that the two were in correlation. Through this process, validity of the survey was gained.

As previously stated, the survey is separated into two parts. The first part addresses basic demographics such as gender, level of education, and years of experience as a paraprofessional. The second part of the survey was 24 questions used to assess paraprofessionals' efficacy in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The scale used for the survey is a Likert-like scale that is designed to help gain a better understanding of the things that create difficulties for teachers and paraprofessionals when working with students. The items on the scale will ask the question, how much can you do? This base question refers to what a paraprofessional feels their capabilities are when interacting with students. The scale used in the survey is a Likert-like scale and ranges in levels of perceived ability from 1 to 9. The participants will score survey items using the rankings of: (1) nothing, to (9) a great deal.

Procedure

Ethical training and permissions were obtained prior to collection of subjects through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the study was in compliance with all ethical standards. The proper school officials were also contacted to gain the proper permissions to work within the school environment. Only after these things were attained was the study be conducted.

The participants were contacted by email and asked to participate in the study voluntarily. Those who agreed were able to complete the survey through the same email that they initially received through a provided link. Upon being given the survey, the subjects were further indicated that any information given would remain confidential.

Data Collection

Participants were asked to return survey information no later than April 6th, 2016. Reminders were sent by email to participants to inform them to return the questionnaire to the researcher upon completion so that data analysis could be performed. Upon receiving the data from the paraprofessionals, the data was analyzed and recorded.

Data Analysis

This study uses basic descriptive statistics to analyze the collected data. Survey data was recorded and analyzed on Windows Microsoft Excel program. Averages, frequencies and percentages were used to identify paraprofessionals' self-efficacy in the area of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Demographic information was also gathered to explore commonalities and other possible relationships.

Chapter Summary

This study was conducted to analyze the perceptions of teacher self-efficacy in paraprofessionals. The study offers insight into the relationships that paraprofessionals have with the students that they work with on a consistent basis. All confidentiality in participation was practiced and respected. Data was analyzed using standard statistical procedures and the results were recorded for further observation and analysis.

Chapter IV

Results

To understand the paraprofessionals' levels of efficacy in School District A, a descriptive action research study was conducted which used a survey design. The study was conducted using surveys distributed to paraprofessionals working with special education students in School District A. All of the paraprofessionals working in special education (15) in the district were contacted through an email and asked to participate in the study. 12 out of 15 paraprofessionals in the district (80%) returned the survey and therefore, made up the research sample.

Demographics

As previously stated, out of the 15 paraprofessionals working with special education students in District A, 12 of those paraprofessionals participated. Of the participants, 9 (75%) were females, and 3 (25%) were males. The experience of the paraprofessionals was measured in four variations: (a) 0 to 5 years, (b) 6-10 years, (c) 10-15 years, and (d) 16 years or more (represented as 16+). Of the paraprofessionals surveyed, one has been working for 0-5 years (.08%), 3 had been working from 6-10 years (25%), 5 had been working for 10-15 years (42%), and 3 had been working for 16 or more years (25%). The final demographic category that was reported was the paraprofessionals' highest levels of education. The levels were recorded as: (a) College (3-4 years), (b) College Graduate (Bachelor's Degree), and (c) Master's Degree. Of the paraprofessionals surveyed, two reported the experience level of College (3-4 years), nine reported the experience of College Graduate (Bachelor's Degree), and one reported having a Master's Degree.

Survey Results

The paraprofessionals in the study were polled in the spring of 2016 and results were accumulated into three categories: (a) Classroom Management, (b) Instructional Strategies, and (c) Student Engagement. Though there were three categories, the focus of the study was on Student Engagement.

Classroom Management

In the area of classroom management, the following eight questions from the survey question list of 24 were used to create a subscale:

1. How much can you control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
2. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?
3. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?
4. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
5. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
6. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
7. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?
8. How well can you respond to defiant students?

The results of the survey showed that the paraprofessionals showed the highest level of efficacy when asked the question; to what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? This may suggest that the paraprofessionals in School District A are relatively confident in establishing behavioral limitations for students. Only 17% of the paraprofessionals indicated a level below five for this particular question. The average for the scale was 6.9 and the standard deviation was recorded at 0.7.

Instructional Strategies

To analyze paraprofessionals' efficacy in the area of instructional strategies, eight questions were drawn from the original 24. The questions were different from those used in assessing Classroom Management. The following questions were analyzed:

1. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?
2. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?
3. To what extent can you create good questions for your students?
4. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?
5. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
6. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students re confused?
7. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?
8. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?

The average across the scale for Instructional Strategies was recorded at 6.8 on the 9-point Likert-like scale. This was the second highest scaled average behind Classroom Management. It also appeared likely that paraprofessionals would rate low (5.5) on the efficacy scale when asked about using assessment strategies as they are generally not responsible for the assessment of students. The standard deviation of the data collected concerning paraprofessional efficacy and instructional strategies was much larger than that of Classroom Management at 1.8.

Student Engagement

Efficacy in the area of student interaction was the intended focus of this study and was presented earlier as a question to be answered. The topic of Student Engagement is probably the closest gauge of the proposed research question. The remaining eight questions were used to gather data concerning the paraprofessionals' efficacy in Student Engagement and they are as follows:

1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?
3. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?
4. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?
5. How much can you do to help your students value learning?
6. How much can you do to foster student creativity?
7. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?
8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?

Surprisingly, the area of paraprofessional efficacy that was the most closely indicative of the research question had the lowest scale score. Paraprofessionals in School District A had an average scale score of 6.3 with a standard deviation of 1.8. Figure 2 shows the relativity of the three domains.

Chapter Summary

The overall results of this study indicated that the paraprofessionals working in Special Education in School District A have a general high level of self-efficacy when interacting with students with disabilities. The results also showed however, that they felt an even

greater sense of self-efficacy in their overall classroom management and ability to apply instructional strategies with students. Since the aim of the study was to find the paraprofessionals' self-efficacy when interacting directly with students, the area of student engagement having the lowest average scaled score of the three domains raised a bit of concern for future discussion.

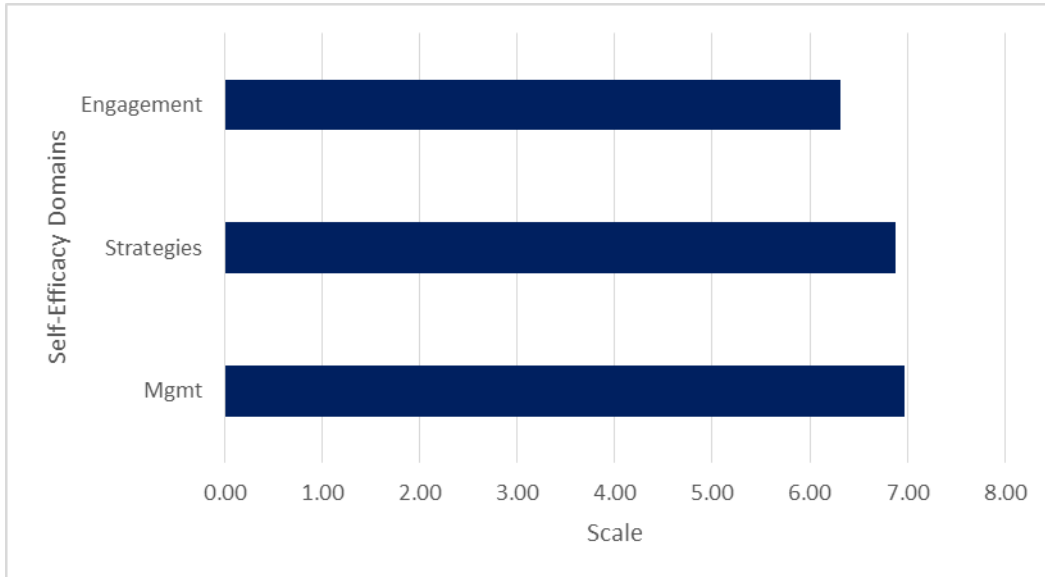


Figure 2. Three domains representing paraprofessional self-efficacy (from top: Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management)

Chapter V

Discussion and Conclusion

A descriptive action research study was done in a single school district (School District A) to determine the level of self-efficacy in paraprofessionals working with students in special education. A nine point Likert-like scale was used in order to determine efficacy levels across three domains. Out of 15 total paraprofessionals within the district, 12 participated in the study. Though all paraprofessionals working with special education students within School District A would have been ideal, the sample of paraprofessionals who participated in the study was relatively large (80%).

The survey results indicate that the paraprofessionals working with special education students in School District A have generally high levels of self-efficacy as it pertains to their positions as educators. Many feel that paraprofessionals are in fact educators and there have been many indications that paraprofessionals who service students with special needs will increase in number through 2018 (Boudreau, 2012). Though the study was done with a relatively small sample of paraprofessionals, it can still be analyzed and used. Data from this study can be further analyzed by comparing it to similar research to find limitations. These comparisons can also bring about further implications for research.

Discussion

Since paraprofessionals do not always believe that they are capable of performing the duties assigned to them (Breton, 2010), it is important for schools and school districts to help them along the way. The paraprofessionals in School District A have a generally high sense of efficacy overall, but some differences in the standard deviations within the

domains could be questionable. The differences may suggest that even though the means of the scaled data were high, there may be outliers causing the difference. This was particularly evident in the areas of Instructional Strategies and Student Engagement.

Paraprofessional Teacher Self-Efficacy

It was a bit surprising that the paraprofessionals in School district A felt the highest levels of self-efficacy in the area of classroom management. Managing a classroom would seem a daunting task for paraprofessionals as they are utilized under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher (NCLB, 2004) however, the paraprofessionals in School District A were the most comfortable in this area. It was then very interesting to see that the paraprofessionals were the least comfortable, or had the lowest sense of self-efficacy in the area of Student Engagement. Student Engagement was the general focus of the study. How do paraprofessionals in special education feel about their interactions with students?

Conclusion

This study indicates that although the paraprofessionals in district A had relatively high levels of self-efficacy overall, they do not feel as good about their interactions with students as they do about their classroom management abilities or their abilities with instructional strategies. There is no clear indication why the paraprofessionals' overall self-efficacy levels are the way that they are, but one could assume that the paraprofessionals working in School District A are fairly content in their positions. Working with students in special education is not always an easy task and the paraprofessionals surveyed appear to have a good amount of experience as paraprofessionals combined with educational experience.

Educational Implications

Looking at the results of this study, the paraprofessionals in School District A appear to be relatively comfortable in their roles in special education. The lowest average scale score recorded however was in the category of Student Engagement (6.3%). This data suggested that paraprofessionals felt that they were least effective in the area that was the subject of the actual research question. School Administration for School District A can benefit from this information by further exploration into student/paraprofessional relationships. Other issues such as training may also gain interest as well.

Recommendations for Further Research

To expand the research done in this study, further research needed to determine the self-efficacy of all of the paraprofessional in the district working in special education. Though the study was conducted on 80% of the paraprofessionals, 100% would be the desired sample. It is also recommended that the survey be distributed to an even larger sample size containing more paraprofessionals from multiple school districts.

Surveying paraprofessionals working in general education classrooms is also a recommendation. Surveys can be distributed to paraprofessionals working in both special education and general education classrooms, and the results could then be compared. All three of the study focus categories for self-efficacy (Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management) could then be analyzed for patterns, tendencies etc. Comparing and contrasting the information attained may be beneficial for developing specific position-focused supports and services.

Summary

This action research study used a survey design to determine the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals working in School District A. To date, there still has not been a large amount of research done concerning the self-efficacy of paraprofessionals (Klassen et al., 2011). This study revealed the self-efficacy of the paraprofessionals working with students in special education in School District A from grades 9-12. The results indicate that although all of the scale averages were recorded above six, the lowest score was in the area of Student Engagement. The questions in the area of student engagement are directly related to paraprofessionals' efficacy level when interacting with students. The information gained from these particular sets of data are indicative of relatively lower levels of self-efficacy when compared to the other categories explored. The administration of School District A should look to further explain the relationships between paraprofessionals in special education and the students with which that they interact.

References

- Abbott, S. (2014). *Hidden curriculum*. The glossary of education reform. Retrieved from <http://edglossary.org/hidden-curriculum>
- Ashbaker, B. Y., & Morgan, J. (2005). *Paraprofessionals in the Classroom*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1998).
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.
- Boudreau, J. A. (2012, January 1). Paraprofessionals as Educators: Differing Perceptions, Responsibilities, and Training. *ProQuest LLC*
- Brady, K., & Woolfson, L. (2008). What teacher factors influence their attributions for children's difficulties in learning? *British Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 78(4), 527-544.
- Breton, W. (2010). Special Education Paraprofessionals: Perceptions of Preservice Preparation, Supervision, and Ongoing Developmental Training. *International Journal of Special Education*, 25(1), 34-45.
- 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 & Practice For Persons With Severe Disabilities*, 38(4), 211-221. doi:10.1177/154079691303800401
- Broer, S.M., Doyle, M.B., & Giangreco, M.F. (2005). Perspectives of students with intellectual disabilities about their experiences with paraprofessional support. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 415-430.
- Brown, C. G. (2012). A systematic review of the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout in teachers. *Educational & Child Psychology*, 29(4), 47-63.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008). *2008-2009 Occupational outlook handbook*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved March 8, 2015 from <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition*, Teacher Assistants. Retrieved from: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/teacher-assistants.htm> and <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/teacher-assistants.htm> (visited March 1, 2016).
- Carnahan, C. R., Williamson, P., Clarke, L., & Sorensen, R. (2009). A Systematic Approach for Supporting Paraeducators in Educational Settings. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 41(5), 34-43.
- Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., & Lane, K. L. (2011). Paraprofessional Perspectives on Promoting Self-Determination Among Elementary and Secondary Students with Severe Disabilities. *Research & Practice For Persons With Severe Disabilities*, 36(1/2), 1-10.

- Carter, E., O'Rourke, L., Sisco, L. G., & Pelsue, D. (2009). Knowledge, Responsibilities, and Training Needs of Paraprofessionals in Elementary and Secondary Schools. *Remedial And Special Education, 30*(6), 344-359
- Center for Parent Information and Resources (2014). Retrieved 3/15/2016 from <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/paras/>
- Cobb, C. (2007). Training Paraprofessionals to Effectively Work With all Students. *The Reading Teacher, 60*(7), 686-689. doi:10.1598/rt.60.7.10
- Council for Exceptional Children. (2010). Paraeducators development guidelines, common core standards: Paraeducators serving individuals with exceptional learning needs. Retrieved 2/20/2016 from: www.cec.sped.org/Content/Navigationmenu/Professional
- Darden, E. C. (2009). Support staff and the law. *American School Board Journal, 196*, 32-33.
- Enoch, L G., & Riggs, I. M. (1990). Further development of an elementary science teaching efficacy belief instrument: A preservice elementary scale. *School Science and Mathematics, 90*, 694–706.
- Etscheidt, S. (2005). Paraprofessional Services for Students with Disabilities: A Legal Analysis of Issues. *Research And Practice For Persons With Severe Disabilities (RPSD), 30*(2), 60-80.
- French, N.K., & Chopra, R. (1999). Parent perspectives on the roles of paraprofessional. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 24*, 259-272
- French, N. K. (2001). Supervising Paraprofessionals: A Survey of Teacher Practices. *Journal Of Special Education, 35*(1), 41-53.

French, N. K. (2003). Paraeducators in Special Education Programs. (Cover story). *Focus On Exceptional Children*, 36(2), 1-16.

Gartner, A. (1971). Paraprofessionals and Their Performance: A survey of education, health and social services programs. New York: Praeger Publishers

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S., MacFarland, & Luiselli, T.E. (1997). Attitudes about educational and related services provision for students with deaf-blindness and multiple disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 63 (3), 329-342

Giangreco, M. F., Edelman, S. W., Broer, S. M., & Doyle, M. B. (2001). Paraprofessional Support of Students with Disabilities: Literature from the Past Decade. *Exceptional Children*, 68(1), 45.

Giangreco, M. F., Edelman, S. W., & Broer, S. M. (2003). Schoolwide Planning To Improve Paraeducator Supports. *Exceptional Children*, 70, 63–79.

Giangreco, M. F., & Broer, S. M. (2007). School-Based Screening to Determine Overreliance on Paraprofessionals. *Focus On Autism & Other Developmental Disabilities*, 22(3), 149-158.

Giangreco, M. F., Suter, J. C., & Doyle, M. B. (2010). Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Schools: A Review of Recent Research. *Journal Of Educational & Psychological Consultation*, 20(1), 41-57. doi:10.1080/10474410903535356

Giangreco, M. F., Broer, S. M., & Suter, J. C. (2011). Guidelines for selecting alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals: Field-testing in inclusion-oriented schools. *Remedial and Special Education*, 32(1), 22-38. doi:
[10.1177/0741932509355951](https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932509355951)

Giangreco, M., Suter, J., & Hurley, S. (2011). Revisiting Personnel Utilization in

- Inclusion-Oriented Schools. *The Journal Of Special Education*, 47(2), 121-132.
doi:10.1177/0022466911419015
- Hall, L., Grundon, G., Pope, C., & Romero, A. (2009). Training paraprofessionals to use behavioral strategies when educating learners with autism spectrum disorders across environments. *Behavioral Interventions*, n/a-n/a.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/bin.294>
- Holzberger, D., Philipp, A., & Kunter, M. (2013). How teachers' self-efficacy is related to instructional quality: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 774-786. doi:10.1037/a0032198
- Hughes, M. T., & Valle-Riestra, D. M. (2008). Responsibilities, preparedness, and job satisfaction of paraprofessionals: working with young children with disabilities. *International Journal Of Early Years Education*, 16(2), 163-173.
doi:10.1080/09669760701516892
- Illinois State Board Of Education (2015). Retrieved February 2016 from:
<https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/School.aspx?schoolid=070162270170002>
- Individuals With Disabilities Improvement Act, 108-446, 118 Stat. 2647 (2004).
- Individual with Disabilities Education Act as amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. (2004). 20 U.S.C.. Chapter 33.
- Jones, K. H., & Bender, W. N. (1993). Utilization of paraprofessionals in special education: A review of the literature. *Remedial and Special Education*, 14, 7-14.
- Klassen, R. M., Tze, V. C., Betts, S. M., & Gordon, K. A. (2011). Teacher Efficacy Research 1998-2009: Signs of Progress or Unfulfilled Promise?. *Educational Psychology Review*, 23(1), 21-43. doi:10.1007/s10648-010-9141-8

McGrath, M. Z., Johns, B. H., & Mathur, S. R. (2010). Empowered or Overpowered? Strategies for Working Effectively With Paraprofessionals. *Beyond Behavior*, 19(2), 2-6.

Mills, N. (2011), Teaching Assistants' Self-Efficacy in Teaching Literature: Sources, Personal Assessments, and Consequences. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95: 61–80.

Minnesota Department of Education (2015) . Retrieved from

<http://www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Para/index.html>

National Education Association (2015). Retrieved 2/15/2015 from:

<http://www.nea.org/home/18605.htm>

National Resource Center for Paraeducators (2012). Retrieved from:

<http://www.nrpara.org/paranews/survey-results-paraeducator-training-part-1>

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. I No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

Pickett, A. L., Likins, M., & Wallace, T. (2003). The employment and preparation of paraeducators New York: National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education Related Services. Retrieved December 6, 2005 from

<http://www.nrpara.org/resources/stateoftheart/>

SPeNSE Fact Sheet. (2001). *The role of paraprofessionals in special education*.

Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education. Retrieved March 5, 2016, from

<http://www.spense.org/report>.

Stockall, N. S. (2014). When an Aide Really Becomes an Aid: Providing Professional Development for Special Education Paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 46(6), 197-205. doi:10.1177/0040059914537202

- Skaalvik, E.M. & Skaalvik, S. (2010). Teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout: A study of relations. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(4), 1059–1069.
- Trautman, M. L. (2004). Preparing and Managing Paraprofessionals. *Intervention In School & Clinic*, 39(3), 131-138.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Hoy, A. W., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research*, 68, 202–248.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2012). Paraprofessionals employed (FTE) to provide special education and related services to children ages 6 through 21 under IDEA, Part B, by qualifications and state: Fall 2010 [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.ideadata.org>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Title I paraprofessionals: Non-regulatory guidance*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.pdf> (accessed March, 5, 2015)
- U.S. Department of Education (2002). No Child Left Behind. Washington, D.C: Author.
Retrieved March, 8, 2015, <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea>.
- U. S. Department of Education. (2004). *Four pillars of NCLB*. Retrieved Feb 1, 2016 from: <http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/overview/intro/4pillars.html>
- U.S. Department of Education (2015). *Improving Basic Programs Operated and Local Education Agencies (Title I, Part A)*. Retrieved 3/20/2016 from: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html>

Appendices

Appendix A