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Article · July 2014

DOI: 10.1177/0040059914537202

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When an Aide Really Becomes an Aid

Providing Professional Development for Special Education Paraprofessionals

Nancy S. Stockall

TEACHING Exceptional Children, Vol. 46, No. 6, pp. 197–205. Copyright 2014 The Author(s). DOI: 10.1177/0040059914537202

Ms. Ruiz teaches in a 1:6 (1 teacher: 6 students) early childhood class for students with moderate disabilities. Some of her students have autism spectrum disorders, whereas others have intellectual disabilities. Ms. Ruiz also has a paraprofessional, Ms. Tyler, who works with students in the classroom. Although Ms. Ruiz was excited about having an extra adult in the classroom, she has discovered some problems that she feels she needs to address—namely, overdependence on the aide and adult attention. Although Ms. Tyler has established a strong connection with Carlos, who is 5 years old and has autism, and even though this connection is positive in many respects, Ms. Tyler is gradually assuming more responsibility for Carlos's instruction. Rather than assisting Carlos with organizational skills, Ms. Tyler will often locate, retrieve, and pack Carlos's supplies for him. Further, Ms. Tyler sits next to Carlos when in the general education classroom, restricting his access to peers and often providing answers for him. As a result, Carlos is regressing in self-management, communication, and problem-solving skills. Sometimes, Ms. Ruiz feels as though her job would be much easier if she did not have a paraprofessional in her classroom.

In 2012, the number of special education paraprofessionals in public and charter schools in the United States (Bitterman, Gray, & Goldring, 2013) was over 450,000, and this number continues to rise. Special education directors can attest to the immediate, insistent, and often desperate pleas from teachers to hire a classroom aide when discussing the placement of a student with a disability in a general education classroom. Teachers grapple with questions about how to meet the intensive needs of a child with a disability while teaching effectively in a class of 25 students. Parents often advocate strongly for the right to include their son or daughter in the general education classroom, but some parents worry that their child will be neglected without the support of a paraprofessional. Teachers and parents continue to consider paraprofessionals an essential support for students with a range of disabilities.

Despite the belief that paraprofessionals are essential, Blatchford, Russell, and Webster (2012) reported little to no positive outcomes for students working with paraprofessionals. Giangreco (2010a, 2010b; Giangreco, Suter, & Hurley, 2011) found that students with disabilities felt stigmatized and rejected by their peers and that they faced inadequate instruction when working with paraprofessionals. In their review of 32 studies, Giangreco and colleagues 2011 highlighted the absence of preparation for paraprofessionals, yet other researchers reported positive effects when paraprofessionals were prepared for their support role (Hall, Grundon, Pope, & Romero, 2010). Knowing that paraprofessionals can be prepared to work effectively with students is an important finding—yet, how do teachers like Ms. Tyler prepare paraprofessionals to work most effectively with students with disabilities?

Just as paraprofessionals have not been prepared, the same goes for the majority of special education teachers who are asked to supervise paraprofessionals (French & Pickett, 1997). Therefore, teachers who supervise paraprofessionals must use basic communication skills, which is the first step in both the preparation of and the work with paraprofesionals.

Basic Communication Skills

Effective communication is necessary for understanding roles and

Table 1. Effective Communication Strategies

Skills	Purpose	Examples
Listening	Set the tone of active participation.	Attend to the person with eye contact; attempt to interpret speaker's message; and focus on present interaction.
Open-ended questions	Gain a range of information.	"What things do you see yourself doing with the students? What tasks are the most challenging for you?"
Closed questions	Acquire facts quickly.	"Do you want to continue to work on this problem? Have you previously participated in training?"
Clarifying	Seek more information by reinforcing and encouraging the speaker.	"You've shared a great deal about the problem with Jack's behavior, and I appreciate that. What specific behaviors are you most worried about?"
Paraphrasing	Take original message and interpret the meaning.	"You are most worried about Jack's hitting and swearing."
Acknowledging	Convey a sense of care and interest in the speaker's message and well-being.	"Ummm-hmm" or "go on" while nodding.
Providing reflective feedback	Acknowledge the speaker's feelings.	Speaker: "I hate when Jeff swears at me and tries to hit me. Sometimes I don't want to tell him it's time to leave because I know he will act out toward me." Listener: "You're anxious about setting him off and that can be intimidating."

assignments, coordinating approaches to students, and building a positive relationship with paraprofessionals. Supervising teachers must establish rapport with the paraprofessional, which means sharing a common understanding and commitment to working together. Rapport provides a gateway for open communication among team members, and clear communication is critical to the success of preparing and actually working as team. According to Ivey, Ivey, Zalaquett, and Quirk (2011), clear communication requires seven basic skills: listening, asking open-ended questions, asking closed questions, clarifying, paraphrasing, acknowledging, and providing reflective feedback. Table 1 illustrates and provides examples of each skill. Teachers should keep in mind that all these skills take practice and, with time, can become a natural part of teachers' interactions. Knowing how to communicate effectively is the cornerstone to working with any colleague. With effective communication skills in place, teachers can address the basic purpose of collaborating with paraprofessionals: protecting teachers' instructional time.

Preparing Paraprofessionals

Protecting, rather than impeding, teachers' instructional time requires deciding not only what roles the paraprofessional should play but also what type of preparation should be provided to him or her. Clearly, there is a need for the intentional preparation of paraprofessionals, but implementing a series of professional development experiences is not always easy. Administrators struggle to find the time and secure funds. Moreover, when professional development is presented in large groups, teachers may inconsistently apply the information in their actual practice. Rather than large-group professional development, models that include individual coaching appear to be the most successful (Steinbacher-Reed & Powers, 2012).

A direct instruction training model (DITM) can promote independence and confidence while gradually releasing responsibility to the learner. In addition the model reflects best practices in special education and is itself a strong example of effective teaching with adults and students (Marchand-Martella, Slocum, & Martella, 2004). Figure 1 identifies the steps of the DITM, including demonstrations and practice examples, and the next section describes one technique used in this model—namely, side-by-side coaching.

Side-by-Side Coaching

Side-by-side coaching refers to a professional development technique

Figure 1. Direct Instruction Training Model

FOR THE PARAPROFESSIONAL	WITH THE PARAPROFESSIONAL		BY THE PARAPROFESSIONAL
I DO IT →	**I DO IT →**	**WE DO IT →**	**YOU DO IT**
Identifies goals & obj. Provides instruction	Teacher Demonstration	Guided Practice	Independent Practice
TEACHER Explains, provides reasons, defines terms	TEACHER Models, explicitly identifies skills, suggests	STUDENT Initiates, approximates, practices	STUDENT Initiates, self-directs, self-evaluates
PARAPROFESSIONAL listens, asks questions	STUDENT Questions, responds	TEACHER Asks questions, encourages, clarifies, confirms	TEACHER Observes, provides performance feedback
INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT Prompting Techniques	INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT Prompting Techniques	INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT Prompting Techniques	INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT Prompting Techniques

whereby a paraprofessional receives individualized instruction with an expert teacher (Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum, & Ostrosky, 2009) while engaged in practice. The word *expert* is important here because expert teachers are instrumental in gaining positive outcomes when training paraprofessionals. Expert teachers are efficient and effective. They juggle students' needs, paper trails, grading, and parent inquires while planning and adapting instruction on a daily basis. They are flexible. They have traits that allow them to multitask and instruct students all while training the paraprofessional. Side-by-side coaching by an educator at this level delivers cost-efficient and customized professional development for paraprofessionals. When implemented correctly, side-by-side coaching is efficient and saves teachers time in the long run. Educators who want to embed coaching techniques into everyday instruction may find a DITM to be most effective.

A Direct Instruction Training Model

A DITM is not necessarily intuitive. It takes practice to learn how to teach each step and to coordinate the steps into a seamless process. The teacher plans, instructs, guides, observes, and provides performance feedback. The paraprofessional listens, responds, questions, practices, and self-evaluates after each lesson. A DITM consists of six steps: establishing training goals and objectives, instructing, demonstrating, guiding, observing the paraprofessional, and providing performance feedback. Figures 2 and 3 offer detailed illustrations of the model based on different skill sets, as an example to help guide teachers who are interested in using this type of professional development and modeling.

Step 1: Establish Training Goals

The special educator and the paraprofessional should decide the specific goals, and these emerge from discussions related to the current interests, needs, and competencies of both parties. What should the paraprofessional know and be able to do? Responses will vary depending on the education and competencies of each paraprofessional, the needs of the student, and the requirements of the position. Although the content of the professional development program may include factual information, specific skill sets are best taught through demonstration and practice (Loughran, 2013). These skills might include prompting skills, teaching routines, demand fading, or even precision requests. First, the teacher determines how long lessons will last and strategically schedules them throughout the day. Starting with three 30-minute sessions a day on one skill, such as prompting, may work best for beginning paraprofessionals. Second, when objectives are met consistently (90% accuracy) for three consecutive trials, the teacher can move to the next lesson. The following is a fictional example of the steps in the process.

Ms. Smith, an accomplished special educator in an inclusive public school, collaborated with Kim, the special education paraprofessional, to produce the following goal and objectives.

Goal Statement: Paraprofessionals assist teachers by reinforcing independence among students with disabilities using a continuum of prompts.

Objective 1: Kim will apply the following continuum of prompts to engage students in assigned tasks: independent (i.e., context prompts), visual, gestural, verbal, partial physical, and full physical (i.e., hand over hand).

Objective 2: Kim will gradually fade prompts with students when supervising and monitoring their activities.

The first lesson is designed to teach Kim a prompting skill set, and it includes the prompts listed in Objective 1.

Step 2: Instruction

After setting the goals and objectives, the teacher explains the skill that will be taught and the rationale. The teacher should be certain to explain all abstract terms used in the lesson. This part of the training is best delivered before the start of the school day and should be kept short, between 5 and 10 minutes.

For example, when Ms. Smith trains Kim to use the prompting skill, she defines the terms and explains why she chose them:

> *Prompts are visual, oral, gestural, or environmental cues that get the attention of the student and get a response. That is, they prod the student to do something. Prompts range from least to most intrusive. For example, if I place my hand over Jack's when we trace a letter, that's a hand-over-hand prompt. It's the most intrusive or controlling prompt to use. I use this prompt only when*

Figure 2 Direct Instruction Training Model to Teach Chaining

Step	Task	Lead Person (s)	Para professional Training Skills	Example
1	Identify the training goal by interviewing Ms. Tyler and reviewing the needs of the individual child, Carlos who has autism	Ms. Ruiz with the paraprofessional, Ms. Tyler	Chaining	Carlos' IEP states that he will change classes independently.
2	Instruction	Ms. Ruiz (teacher)	Chaining (prerequisite skill-reinforcement)	Ms. Ruiz defines the skill, "chaining." Chaining consists of breaking a task into specific steps and requesting that the student comply with each step. After demonstrating each successful step, the student is reinforced. The purpose of chaining is to teach a given procedure.
3	Demonstration	Ms. Ruiz (teacher)	Chaining with reinforcement	Ms. Ruiz explains to Carlos that she is going to teach him how to get to the music class. Ms. Ruiz shows Carlos a picture card illustrating each step. Using the visual, Ms. Ruiz explains each step. "There are seven tasks. First, walk to our classroom door." Good walking! (Teacher gives "high five" in the air). "Next, go out the door and turn left. Yes, that's left!" Another high five is provided. "Walk to the first hallway" (reinforce again). Next, "Turn right" (reinforce). "Walk to the music room with the number 200 on it" (reinforce). "Walk quietly into the music room" (reinforce). Sit in your seat (reinforce).
4	Guided practice	Ms. Ruiz, Ms. Tyler, and Carlos	Prerequisite skill: Knowledge of various social reinforcers specific to Carlos	Ms. Ruiz walks with Ms. Tyler and Carlos as Ms. Tyler instructs Carlos on each behavior and provides reinforcement. Ms. Ruiz asks guiding question to Ms. Tyler such as "What social reinforcers does Carlos enjoy? Which ones are most appropriate for this teaching situation?"
5	Observe independent practice	Ms. Ruiz, Ms. Tyler and Carlos	Prerequisite skill: Cell phone use with earphones.	Using the "bug in ear" technology, Ms. Ruiz observes Ms. Taylor and Carlos leaving the classroom. Ms. Ruiz uses a cell phone and ear bud to coach Ms. Tyler as she transitions with Carlos to the music class.
6	Provide performance feedback	Ms. Ruiz	Chaining with reinforcement	Ms. Ruiz suggests that Ms. Tyler take the visual support along with her and Carlos to show him each task along the way. She also reminds Ms. Tyler to use different social reinforcers as Carlos completes each task. Ms. Ruiz reinforces the correct chaining by specifically pointing out Carlos's response to Ms. Tyler's requests. Once Carlos learns to transition on his own to Music class, Ms. Tyler can check on his progress in the classroom at a later time.

Figure 3 Direct Instruction Training Model to Teach Precision Requests

Step	Task	Lead person (s)	Para training skills	Example
1	Identify the training goal by interviewing Mr. Silvera and reviewing the needs of the individual student, Brian	Ms. Stengle with the paraprofessional, Mr. Silvera	Precision requests	Brian's IEP states that he will comply with adult requests with a 10-second interval.
2	Instruction	Ms. Stengle (teacher)	Precision requests	Ms. Stengle defines the skill, "precision request." A precision request is a direct statement addressed to the student that requires a specific response. Precision requests tend to increase student compliance. Ms. Stengle provides the characteristics of precision requests and how they should be implemented
3	Demonstration	Ms. Stengle (teacher)	Precision requests	Ms. Stengle explains to Brian that she will be teaching him to comply with precision requests. If he responds to the request he will earn a reinforcer (points for basketball) and if he fails to respond, the consequence will be a loss of points. Ms. Stengle begins a whole-class lesson in math. She addresses the class and says, "Please open your math book to page 10." She makes eye contact with Brian and waits 10 seconds. Brian continues to talk to his neighbor. Ms. Stengle moves an arm's distance away from Brian, gives eye contact, and states, "I need you to open your book to page 10." Ms. Stengle waits 5 seconds and Brian says, "Oh yeah" and opens his book to page 10. Ms. Stengle marks a chart on Brian's desk indicating a gain of 5 points towards his basketball game.
4	Guided practice	Ms. Stengle, Mr. Silvera, and Brian	Precision requests	Ms. Stengle hands the lesson over to Mr. Silvera. He continues the math lesson and assigns an in-class set of math problems. Brian begins talking with his neighbor. Mr. Silvera looks at Brian and says, "It's time to get busy." Ms. Stengle uses a gestural sign to coach Mr. Silvera to use a precision request. Mr. Silvera addresses Brian stating, "Please begin the first math problem." Brian mumbles under his breath but after 3 seconds he begins writing. Mr. Silvera marks Brian's chart to indicate 5 points earned.
5	Observe independent practice	Ms. Stengle, Mr. Silvera, and Brian	Prerequisite skills: Precision requests and planned ignoring	Mr. Silvera follows the procedure in the guided practice section. Ms. Stengle observes and documents the use of precision requests, the proximity of the paraprofessional to the student when giving precision requests, the voice inflection and tone of the paraprofessional, the use of planned ignoring, and use of reinforcers to reward compliance. She highlights positive exemplars of precision requests in yellow marker and underlines those that need correcting. She also codes instances of planned ignoring by Mr. Silvera when Brian mumbles or sighs when given a request.
6	Provide performance feed back	Ms. Stengle		Ms. Stengle shares a description from her notes that demonstrates Mr. Silvera's correct use of a precision request. She then focuses on the student's response to the precision request and asks Mr. Silvera if the precision request led to compliance. Mr. Silvera indicates that the student responded but mumbled and showed disrespect. Ms. Stengle reminds Mr. Silvera that the goal is to help Brian learn to comply promptly. When he has learned that skill after three consecutive trials during math class, they can revise the goal and teach Carlos to respond by saying "okay" when given a precision request. Then Ms. Stengle asks Mr. Silvera to revise an incorrect request taken from her notes. He rephrases the request and the two discuss further opportunities for Mr. Stengle to use precision requests with Brian.

I'm teaching a new skill to the student. We want to gradually get students to do things independently, so our goal is to try to fade the prompts as quickly as possible. Eventually, I want to get Jack to trace his name by just putting the paper in front of him. That's still a prompt, but the paper provides him with the cue, not me.

Ms. Smith also posts a large prompt chart above the bulletin board, so it doesn't interfere with the students' visual schedules used in the classroom. Ms. Smith color-codes some figures green, representing the least intrusive prompts, and others red, the most intrusive. Not only does Ms. Smith provide didactic instruction for Kim, but she also models how to construct and post a visual prompt in the actual training.

Step 3: Demonstrate

Now, the teacher demonstrates the skill (i.e., prompting) with several students. In addition to demonstrating the skill, the teacher articulates exactly what to do.

Ms. Smith explicitly communicates her plan to Kim: "I'm going to name and demonstrate five different prompts with several children as they work at their stations." Next, she moves toward Esperanza, a student with moderate intellectual disabilities. Ms. Smith explains that she is using hand-over-hand prompting because Esperanza is just learning to use a pencil. Ms. Smith continues to engage with students, remembering to name and demonstrate each prompt so that Kim can differentiate among them.

Step 4: Guided Practice

In this step, the teacher works with the paraprofessional to complete the targeted skill together. The teacher guides, negotiates, and suggests how to implement the skill (i.e., prompting), depending on the circumstances. The paraprofessional might ask questions, collaborate with the teacher in using the skill, and respond to questions.

As they work through the training, Ms. Smith helps Kim decide on the best prompts to use in a given situation by asking open and closed questions, such as "Has this student ever done this task before?" and "What do you know about this student's sensitivity to touch or proxemics?" Ms. Smith also offers suggestions to Kim: "You might want to consider using a partial physical prompt with the student, laying your hand gently under his, rather than holding it."

Step 5: Observe Independent Practice

At this point, the teacher begins to shift responsibility over to the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional executes the skill set (i.e., prompting) while the teacher observes. The paraprofessional initiates, self-directs, and self-evaluates her own practice, as in the following example:

Noticing that a student, Jess, has stopped working, Kim watches and waits. When Jess makes eye contact, Kim points silently at Jess's schedule. The schedule reminds Jess that she can play after completing the assignment. Jess returns to her task, and Kim continues monitoring the students in centers.

Observing the paraprofessional during independent practice can take time away from instructing other students, so if the technology is available, video-recorded observations are efficient and effective for later analysis. A smartphone can be used to video record several minutes of interaction for later analysis. Not only does this save time, but video recording can be particularly beneficial because the paraprofessional can notice and consider discrepancies between intentional and actual behavior. This may also be the case with paraprofessionals. If that is so, then video recordings might help paraprofessionals distance themselves from the immediate moment and encourage them to reflect on their practice.

When viewing video recordings with the paraprofessional, the teacher begins by asking several open-ended questions, such as "What stood out for you in this video?" This opens a dialogue with the paraprofessional and can help the teacher determine the paraprofessional's frame of reference or perspective. After responding to the paraprofessional's statements, the teacher will want to shift the paraprofessional's perspective to examine the specific behavior of the student. For example, the teacher might ask, "What did the student do or say just after you gave the directions?" Once the paraprofessional has described the behavior, the teacher uses this opportunity to analyze the connection between the prompts and the student response. The teacher may ask, "Was the wait time sufficient for the student to respond? How can you tell? What do you know about the student's characteristics that helps you to predict how long to wait for a response?" Focusing on the behavior rather than the individual helps to distance the actors from the action taking place. This distancing can reduce the emotional content of the scene and increase receptiveness to feedback.

In later sessions, the teacher could edit video observations that highlight positive exemplars of appropriate strategy use. For instance, a series of recorded observations might show the paraprofessional using least to most intrusive prompting strategies. These exemplars are powerful visuals that demonstrate appropriate strategy use and empower the paraprofessional by recognizing progress. Staring each session with a review of a positive strategy use makes reminders of areas that need further work easier to do.

It is also important to remember that if video-recorded observations of practice are desired, then permission to record must be obtained from students' parents and the paraprofessional. If the recorded observations will be used for later instruction with other paraprofessionals, the teacher will want to include a statement of ownership in the document.

Step 6: Performance Feedback

Teachers need to provide immediate feedback and reinforcement to paraprofessionals (Scheeler & Lee,

2002), and this step can be delicate, even for an expert teacher. When the teacher provides feedback, care must be taken to reinforce the initiation of the practice, explaining what was correct, what needs improvement, and what needs further reinforcement. Performance feedback is most effective when it occurs immediately after a critical or planned interaction. When planning the professional development or direct feedback in the classroom, consider a minilesson before a scheduled break, when the teacher and paraprofessional might have 15 minutes or so of uninterrupted time to talk. Another paraprofessional could be asked to supervise the students during this time, or perhaps a support service person could teach a lesson.

Because of the brevity of the meetings that typically have to occur related to feedback, the teacher will want to begin with a positive comment that addresses a specific targeted behavior that the paraprofessional exhibited during the session. For example, the teacher may comment on the way in which the paraprofessional provided appropriate wait time for a student to begin a task. Next, the teacher might comment on the student's positive responses to the wait time, connecting the strategy to the student's behavior. In the next step, the teacher pinpoints a student's negative response to the paraprofessional's request and asks how the paraprofessional might employ a different strategy to guide the student's behavior. If the paraprofessional gives a correct response, the answer is reinforced. If the answer is incorrect, the teacher will provide the answer and explain why it might be more effective. Providing explanation feedback is particularly important when the goal is to promote generalization of skills to different settings and contexts with students (Butler, Godbole, & Marsh, 2013). Finally, the teacher will want to end the conference on a positive note by commenting on another example of correct strategy use and making the connection between the strategy and the students' responses.

Another way to provide feedback that can be private and immediate to the paraprofessional is to employ the use of "bug in ear" (BIE) technology (Goodman, Brady, Duffy, Scott, & Pollard, 2008). BIE consists of a small earbud receiver that transmits verbal communication from a radio or cell phone device. The teacher simply provides suggestions and feedback to the person wearing the earbud. During the guided instruction phase of the DITM, the teacher can use the BIE to observe and listen to the paraprofessional working with a student and provide covert suggestions without disrupting the instructional flow. Moreover, BIE provides seamless and immediate feedback to the paraprofessional in real time, allowing the paraprofessional to readily change a target behavior while practicing, rather than repeat errors until after the fact.

Training Other Skill Sets

The DITM for paraprofessionals can be used to teach multiple skill sets that are applicable to different settings and contexts. For example, precision requests can be particularly helpful in increasing student compliance at the intermediate level. Moreover, precision requests work best when presented under certain conditions. Table 2 illustrates the nature and conditions that influence effective precision requests, and Figure 2 provides specific details for paraprofessionals to use precision requests.

Other skill sets that may be useful for paraprofessionals include frequency, duration, and interval data collection strategies; discrete trial training; use of visual supports; and collection of functional behavior assessment data. Any strategy or skill set that can be divided into sequential steps can serve as instructional content, and the DITM can be used to teach that content. The direct instruction model with side-by-side coaching can do more than traditional workshops to improve practice

Table 2. Precision Requests

Characteristics	Example	Nonexample
Brief but explicit statement	"Please open your book to page 10."	"Can you open your book to page 10?"
Proximity: Move close to student	Teacher moves within an arm's length of student.	Teacher speaks from across the room.
Eye contact	Teacher makes eye contact with student.	Teacher tells student to look at him or her.
Wait time	Teacher waits 5–10 seconds after giving request.	Teacher immediately repeats request.
Teacher is calm, unemotional	If the student does not comply, the teacher calmly repeats request: "I need you to open your book to page 10."	Teacher says in a loud voice, "I asked you to open your book. You better listen this time."
Teacher provides positive reinforcer for compliance	If student complies, teacher states, "I appreciate your following my directions."	Teacher makes no comment or states, "You should listen the first time I tell you."
Consequence	If student does not comply, teacher states consequence: "Because you did not comply, you lose 2 minutes of your break time."	Teacher repeats request with threat: "If you don't do what I say, you'll lose your break."
Repeat cycle	"Please open your book to page 10."	Teacher ignores student and engages with a different student.

(Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2012). Working in situ with the teacher in the classroom allows the paraprofessional to gain new knowledge and skills that are specific to the needs of the student, teacher, and school context.

Final Thoughts

Paraprofessionals hold a significant place in the education of students with disabilities. They assist students in maintaining and generalizing learned skills, organize the environment for seamless teaching, and protect teachers' valuable instructional time. When paraprofessionals teach students independence and self-advocacy skills, they create more time for instruction. To assist in the most efficient outcomes for employing paraprofessionals, school district administrators have an obligation to educate and maximize the potential of these professionals through ongoing professional development. Education is not a one-shot deal; it is a lifelong commitment to strengthen and build on teachers' and paraprofessionals' effectiveness. The role of the teacher as the leader of ongoing and daily professional development for paraprofessionals is one that is critical to the field, as students with disabilities need and deserve instruction from highly qualified teachers *and* highly qualified paraprofessionals.

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TEACHING Exceptional Children,
Vol. 46, No. 6, pp. 197–205.