



Instructor's Overview

Unit 5: Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members



Brief Description of Unit

This unit provides a general description of the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members who work with students with disabilities. It will provide information and activities to assist paraeducators to clarify their own role and responsibilities and understand the roles and responsibilities of others.



Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours of instruction



Unit Objectives

Key: K = Knowledge, S = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Paraeducators will know the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators. (K)
2. Paraeducators will know how various roles and responsibilities facilitate quality education for students with disabilities. (K)
3. Paraeducators will know the roles and types of responsibilities of other team members who work with students who have disabilities. (K)
4. Paraeducators will demonstrate their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. (S)



Preparing for and Implementing the Unit

Required Reading (located only in the Participant's Manual):

CichoskiKelly, E. (2000). *Roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members*. Unpublished manuscript, Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Instructor Materials:

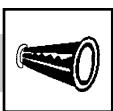
- overhead projector and screen
- Unit 5 overhead masters (must be copied onto transparencies)
- flip charts and markers
- nametags
- *Knowledge Review Quiz* (Unit 5). Enough copies for all participants in the class.



Agenda

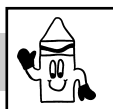
Unit 5: Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members (3 hours)

Agenda Item	Time
A1. Introduce Unit and Objective 1	5 min.
A2. Paraeducator Roles Activity	30 min.
A3. Introduce Objective 2 (2 min.) Facilitating Quality Education Activity (23 min.)	25 min.
A4. Paraeducator Roles Discussion	30 min.
A5. BREAK	15 min.
A6. Introduce Objective 3 (2 min.) Roles of Other Team Members Discussion (43 min.)	45 min.
A7. <i>Knowledge Review</i>	20 min.
A8. Evaluation, Practicum and Preparation for the Next Class	10 min.



Read Aloud

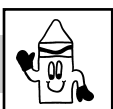
Objective 2: Paraeducators will know how various roles and responsibilities facilitate quality education for students with disabilities.



Facilitating Quality Education Activity (23 mins.)

1. Introduce the activity by stating, “Now that you have examined the roles that you perform at your work sites, we will do an activity that looks at how those various roles facilitate quality education for the students with whom you work.”
2. Arrange the paraeducators into groups of three or four.
3. Facilitate the following activity:
 - a) Give the paraeducators 2 minutes of “think time” to individually list ways in which their roles facilitate quality education for the students with whom they work.
 - b) Ask the paraeducators to share their individual lists with their small group (one at a time going in a circle) (5 mins.).
 - c) Ask the paraeducators to generate a list of common ways in which their roles facilitate quality education (5 mins.).
 - d) Ask the paraeducators to choose one volunteer from each group to report their common list to the whole class (5 mins.).
 - e) Ask the paraeducators each to write two goals to work towards to improve their role in facilitating quality education for students with whom they work.
 - f) Ask the paraeducators to keep their goals for sharing with their cooperating teacher for the Unit 5 practicum activity.

A4 PARAEDUCATOR ROLES DISCUSSION (30 min.)



Activity (30 min.)



Refer to the Participant’s Manual

1. Direct the paraeducators to turn to their manuals and read pages 180 and 181, “How Much Should Paraeducators Do?”
2. Give the paraeducators up to 5 minutes to review the pages (or read it out loud in class).

3. Then randomly assign paraeducators to one of three groups for a class discussion:
 - a) Give each small group 10 minutes to share their experiences by responding to questions 1-4 on page 181 of their Participant's Manual.
 - b) Give them 5 minutes in their samll groups to generate constructive ways to raise these issues with their teachers and special educators.
 - c) Reconvene as a large group and give the groups an equal amount of time to share their thoughts and ideas.
 - d) If time permits, consider the Discussion Questions listed below.



Discussion Questions

Ask both groups:

Q: What distinguishes a paraeducator's role from a teacher's or special educator's role?

Q: What are effective ways to ask for the training and supervision you need?

Q: How can you take initiative without over-stepping your role?

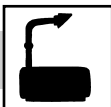
A5

BREAK (15 min.)



A6

**INTRODUCE OBJECTIVE 3 & ROLES OF
OTHER TEAM MEMBERS DISCUSSION (45 min.)**



Show Overhead (OH 5-4): Introduce Objective 3 (2 min.)

**Objective 3:
Paraeducators will
know roles and
responsibilities of
other team
members who
work with
students who
have disabilities.**

OH 5-4



Participant's Overview

Unit 5: Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members



Brief Description of Unit

This unit provides a general description of the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members who work with students with disabilities. It will provide information and activities to assist paraeducators to clarify their own role and responsibilities and understand the roles and responsibilities of others.



Hours of Instruction (in class format)

3 hours of instruction



Unit Objectives

K = Knowledge, **S** = Skill (Knowledge objectives are addressed through readings and class activities; skill objectives are addressed through practicum activities.)

1. Paraeducators will know the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators. (K)
2. Paraeducators will know how various roles and responsibilities facilitate quality education for students with disabilities. (K)
3. Paraeducators will know the roles and types of responsibilities of other team members who work with students who have disabilities. (K)
4. Paraeducators will demonstrate their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. (S)



Preparing for the Unit

Required Reading

CichoskiKelly, E. (2000). *Roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and other team members*. Unpublished manuscript, Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Participant Preparation for Unit 5:

- Read the required readings **prior to the class**.
- Based on required readings, write two questions that are relevant to you or your situation for discussion in class.



Unit 5 Required Readings

Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators and Other Team Members

The required reading for this unit (CichoskiKelly, 2000), provides an overview of paraeducator roles and responsibilities as well as those of other team members (e.g., classroom teacher, special educator, parent, related services providers). There is other material that discusses the issue “How Much Should Paraeducators Do?”

How Much Should Paraeducators Do?

Paraeducators are asked to engage in a wide range of activities in schools. Although all of their varied roles are important, they differ widely in complexity. Some paraeducator roles can be done with minimal direction such as taking class attendance, helping prepare materials with the teacher, or assisting in clean-up when the day is done. Others require specific, short-term training, but are still the kind of roles that can be done without the need for intensive training. These may include tasks such as learning how to operate the school's new photocopy machine, learning the bus boarding procedures, or student-specific tasks, such as helping a student put on a brace or assisting a student who uses a wheelchair. These tasks require some new skills that usually can be learned quite quickly from a person who already knows the task well.

There are other tasks that require extensive background knowledge, such as how to assess a student's level of performance, select appropriate learning objectives, write a good lesson plan, effectively provide instruction, manage groups of students, collect and interpret data on student learning, adapt curriculum, modify instruction, and adapt materials. These are examples of skills that teachers, special educators, and related services providers spend years learning and developing. Yet sometimes paraeducators are asked to do some of these tasks, should they? Are you asked to do some of these tasks?

Regardless of a paraeducator's level of formal education or experience, which we know varies widely, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allows for paraprofessionals to assist in providing special education and related services to students with disabilities and requires that they be appropriately trained and supervised. The professional literature suggests that many paraprofessionals have been asked to do many tasks for which they are unprepared and untrained.

This can put paraprofessionals in some difficult situations. Paraeducators often feel that they have limited control over their roles. If a teacher or special educator asks them to do something, they try to do it — it's part of the job. At the same time many paraprofessionals feel valued when professional educators ask them to do important instructional tasks and they try their best to do a good job even if they don't have the background or training. Many paraeducators take on these tasks as challenges. They use their personal creativity and work ethic to do whatever they can. Sometimes paraeducators feel like they are in over their heads, but they aren't sure what to do.

-
1. As a paraeducator, have you ever been asked to do what you consider teacher-level work that you feel you are not really prepared to do?
 2. Did you worry that if you didn't do it that it would negatively affect your job or your relationship with the teachers?
 3. Did you ever wonder whether you were really doing the right thing when you've made important decisions about a student's program?
 4. How do you feel about the tasks you have been asked to do?

What is an appropriate role for a paraeducator varies. It's a good idea to discuss these issues with your team in an effort to figure out what makes sense in your situation, what training you need, and how you will be supervised. These simple steps are designed to make your own job experience more satisfying and ensure that the students you work with get what they need!