Paraeducators in Nebraska Schools: A Guide for Administrators

Project PARA
Teachers College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln & Nebraska Department of Education

August 1991

Acknowledgements

This guide was developed to assist in planning and administering paraeducator programs within Nebraska public schools. Legal and ethical issues, appropriate roles for the paraeducator and the professional supervisor, training, supervision, and evaluation are discussed in order to provide guidelines for educators utilizing paraeducators within their programs.

The publication was developed by Project PARA. Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders, Teachers College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Education. The publication was funded in part with federal funds, EHA Part B, Grant No. H027A000442 with the state of Nebraska. The individuals listed below were instrumental in the development of the publication.

Stanley F. Vasa
Project Director

Allen Steckelberg
Associate Director

Carol Allen Sundermeier
Coordinator

Cheryl Christensen
Instructional Assistant

Nebraska Department of Education

Douglas D. Christensen
Associate Commissioner
Division of Education Services

Carol Hadfield McClain
Outreach Consultant for Sensory Impairment

Ann Bird
Coordinator
Special Education Region I
Foreword

In 1969, legislation was passed making it permissible for Nebraska schools to employ non-certified paraeducators. The law (79-1233) reads: (1) Public, private, denominational, or parochial schools in the state may employ persons who do not hold a valid Nebraska teaching certificate or permit issued by the Commissioner of Education to serve as aides to a teacher or teachers. Such teacher aides may not assume any teaching responsibilities. A teacher aide may be assigned duties which are non-teaching nature if the employing school has assured itself that the aide has been specifically prepared for such duties, including the handling of emergency situations which might arise in the course of his or her work.

The term “teach” is also defined by 79-1233 through the enumeration of examples of teaching responsibilities. This law reads: (12) the term teach means and includes, but is not limited to the following responsibilities: (a) The organization and management of the classroom or the physical area in which the learning experiences of pupils take place; (b) the assessment and diagnosis of the individual educational needs of the pupils; (c) the planning, selecting, organizing, prescribing, and directing of the learning experiences of pupils; (d) the planning of teaching strategies and the selection of available materials and equipment to be used; and (e) the evaluation and reporting of student progress.

Paraeducators may be employed to do those things that are not defined as teacher. The paraeducator’s role is to assist the teacher so that the teacher can carry out the legal duties and responsibilities.

Training of paraeducators to perform assigned duties is required by statute 79-1233. Training programs for paraeducators are the responsibility of the school district and may be organized within the district or through agencies outside the local district.

The training program should provide the paraeducator with a thorough understanding of the operating procedures and policies of the employing school. The training program should also include an explanation of the role of the paraeducator, the role of the teacher, and the roles of others with whom the paraeducator will be working. Instruction and practice in performing specific tasks which the paraeducator will be assigned is essential.

Teachers who will be utilizing the services of paraeducators should be directly involved in the selection, training and supervision of the paraeducators. Administrators and teachers should establish a plan for systematic supervision and evaluation of the paraeducator program.

The purpose of this publication is to provide guidelines for establishing and operating effective paraeducator programs. Specific topics and issues covered in this guide include the legal and ethical issues in utilizing paraeducators, the respective professional and paraeducator roles, and the training, supervision, and evaluation of paraeducators.

Douglas D. Christensen, Associate Commissioner
Division of Education Services
Nebraska Department of Education
Table of Contents

Rationale for Using Paraeducators

Legal Provisions Regarding Paraeducators
   Statutes Affecting Paraeducators
   State Board of Education Policies
   Nebraska Professional Practices Commission Position

Administrator, Teacher, and Paraeducator Roles
   Administrator Roles
   Teacher Roles
   Paraeducator Roles
   Paraeducator Job Descriptions

Training Provisions

Supervision Policies
   Introduction of Duties
   Using Detailed Lesson Plans
   Conferences and Planning Time

Evaluation of Paraeducator Performance

References

Appendix
   Sample Paraeducator Job Descriptions
   Annual Training Plan
   Paraeducator On-the-Job Training Planning Guide
   Sample Paraeducator Lesson Plan
   Conference Documentation Guide
   Monitor Checklist
   Paraeducator Evaluation Form
Rationale for Using Paraeducators

The employment of paraeducators to assist in the education of students is an option that many Nebraska schools are utilizing. The need for more intensive and individualized instruction and the increasing costs of education have contributed to a greater utilization of paraeducators. Yet the aim of the paraeducator program is more than just reducing cost; it is also to improve the quality of education for students.

The employment of paraeducators may provide:
- additional positive role models for students;
- expanded student learning opportunities;
- more individualized instruction;
- increased individual attention to students;
- additional teacher time for planning instruction, and evaluation;
- increased appropriate student behaviors in the classroom;
- improved teacher morale; and
- better monitoring and evaluation of the educational process.

Some corollary benefits include:
- greater consistency in delivery of instruction;
- improved pupil self-concept;
- increased positive pupil attitudes toward learning and school;
- improved parent-school relations;
- improved teacher and paraeducator interpersonal skills; and
- greater involvement of the community in education.

School districts choosing to utilize paraeducators will want to plan and administer paraeducator programs in a way that maximizes the benefits and ensures that student needs are adequately met and their rights protect. In utilizing paraeducators, educators should keep in mind the following principles:

- Paraeducator programs are centered at the local educational level. Individual schools should develop specific policies regarding their programs. School administrators are responsible for the appropriate utilization of paraeducators.
- Adequate pre-service, in-service, and on-the-job training protects students and maximizes the effectiveness of paraeducators.
- Teachers serve as instructional managers in the schools. The instructional outcomes in the classroom are the responsibility of the teacher, not the paraeducator. Paraeducator programs must be organized to allow for regular and systematic communication and supervision.
- Teachers require both pre-service and in-service training to utilize paraeducators effectively. Training should focus on the roles of decision
makers and managers of the educational environment.

In summary, paraeducators offer a viable means of delivering services to students if they are trained for these duties and supervised. Administrators and teachers who utilize paraeducators need to be prepared for this management role so that the best interests of the students are met.

**Legal Provisions Regarding Paraeducators**

**Statutes Affecting Paraeducators**

In 1969, the Nebraska Unicameral enacted legislation permitting Nebraska schools to employ non-certificated paraeducators:

*Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 79-1233.* Nebraska certificate or permit; prerequisite to teaching; exception; employment of teacher aides; requirements;

(1) No person shall be employed to teach in any public, private, denominational, or parochial school in this state who does not hold a valid Nebraska certificate or permit issued by the Commissioner of Education legalizing him or her to teach the grade or subjects to which elected, . . .

(2) Public, private, denominational, or parochial schools in the state may employ persons who do not hold a valid Nebraska teaching certificate or permit issued by the Commissioner of Education to serve as aides to a teacher or teachers. Such teacher aides may not assume any teaching responsibilities. A teacher aide may be assigned duties which are non-teaching in nature if the employing school has assured itself that the aide has been specifically prepared for such duties, including the handling of emergency situations which might arise in the course of his or her work.

In 1971, the legislature defined “teaching”. Since the earlier law specified that paraeducators shall not assume teaching responsibilities, the responsibilities which paraeducators cannot assume were clarified:

*Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 79-101.* . . . (12) teach shall mean and include, but not be limited to, the following responsibilities: (a) The organization and management of the classroom or the physical area in which the learning experiences of pupils take place; (b) the assessment and diagnosis of the individual educational needs of the pupils; (c) the planning, selecting, organizing, prescribing and directing of the learning experiences of pupils; (d) the planning of teaching strategies and the selection of available materials and equipment to be used; and (e) the evaluation and reporting of student progress.
The legislature also gives direction regarding training and supervision of paraeducators.

_Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 43-635._ STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; REVIEW SPECIAL TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: QUALIFIED TEACHER DEFINED. The State Board of Education shall review special training and educational programs offered by or in conjunction with any public school district, combination of public school districts, educational service unit, or combination of educational service units submit to the following:

1. The teacher or teachers in any such special program shall be qualified;
2. Teacher aides, working with any such program, shall have such qualifications as the governing body of the school shall prescribe and shall participate in appropriate in-service activities, and
3. Each qualified teacher shall be responsible for the direct supervision of teacher aides, whose duties shall be limited to those prescribed in section 79-1233.

State Board of Education Policies

NDE Rule 51 gives specific regulations regarding the use of paraeducators in special education programs:

NDE Rule 51 on School Age Special Education Programs (adapted pursuant to Sections 43-660 and 43-607.01)

003 Definition of Terms

003.26 A paraprofessional shall mean an individual who serves under the supervision of a certificated staff member as an assistant in the educational process or residential care staff under the supervision of certificated staff as defined in 92 NAC 51-010.

005.05 Utilization of special education paraprofessionals in instructional settings shall include:
005.05A The development and maintenance by the district of written procedures regarding special education paraprofessionals that reflect their: job description, pre-service and in-service training, supervision and evaluation.

Nebraska Professional Practices Commission Position
The resources that best delineate paraeducators' responsibilities are the Nebraska Statutes and the Position Statement published by the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission (1977). In part, the legal and ethical responsibility for the proper use of paraeducators rests on the professional and ethical judgment of the teacher and administrator. Paraeducators must not be used to “teach” and they must be specifically prepared to perform other duties. A paraeducator may be assigned duties which are non-teaching in nature, if the employing school has assured that the paraeducator is specifically prepared for such duties, including the handling of emergency situations which might arise in the course of his or her work.

A paraeducator may not, under any circumstances, be hired or used to replace a classroom teacher. Nor can paraeducators be assigned to serve in lieu of teachers under the supervision of a principal or nearby classroom teacher. In addition, a principal or superintendent may not replace a school librarian by assigning a paraeducator to a library or media center to serve under his or her supervision. A paraeducator may not be used in lieu of certified personnel. Figure 1 provides the Commission’s stance on employment and supervision of paraeducator’s liability for paraeducator activities, and ethical standards.

Figure 1
Professional Practices Commission Statement on Teacher Aides

Employment of Teacher Aides

A district should not assign teaching responsibilities to an aide who holds a valid teacher certificate. Only a teacher may assume responsibilities set forth in Section 79-101(13): an aide cannot be held accountable for meeting those responsibilities. IF the employing district believes the certified person is qualified and should be assigned to meet the responsibilities of a teacher, the district should hire him/her under a regular written teaching contract required of all certificated employees. To hire someone as aide and to expect him/her to assume responsibilities for another position is unfair to all parties concerned. If a certificated person agrees to employment as an aide, holding a teaching certificate must be incidental to employment as an aide.

Supervision of Aides

In academic situations, an aide must operate under the continuous supervision of a teacher. The teacher must be able to control and/or modify the situation. An aide should not supervise an instructional station alone, except for brief periods of time.
In nonacademic situations, aides can, subject to local district policy, be assigned to supervise non-teaching activities. Nonacademic activities would include supervision of playgrounds, bus loading situations, cafeterias, and study halls.

Liability for Aides’ Activities

Students can be left in the care of teacher aides without the school district or its personnel risking any greater liability than that when students are left in the care of certificated staff. The question of liability is not one of teacher certification, but is whether the individual (teacher or paraeducator) in charge is responsible and competent and whether his or her duties are carried out in a manner “demonstrating reasonable care and normal precaution.”

Ethical Standards

Ethical standards set forth by the Nebraska State Board of Education and the Professional Practices Commission which apply to the use of aides are as follow: 1) the educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position of responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications, 2) the educator shall not delegate assigned tasks to unqualified personnel, and 3) the educator shall practice the profession only with proper certification, and shall actively oppose the practice of the profession by persons known to be unqualified.

1Note from “Teacher Aides” by the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission. (1990). Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Education

Administrator, Teacher, and Paraeducator Roles

A clear delineation of the roles of the administrator, teacher and the paraeducator is an important element of a successful program. Identification of roles promotes adherence to ethical and legal requirements and serves as a guide in supervision, training, and evaluation. In this section, general guidelines for developing appropriate roles and duties of administrators, teachers and paraeducators are outlined.

Administrator Roles

The Nebraska State Education Association (1970) has provided recommendations for the administrator’s role in the development and supervision of paraeducators. The school administrator plays a leadership role in the
development of rationale and policies and the involvement of teachers. Administrator responsibilities have been identified in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

**Administrator Roles in Developing Paraeducator Programs**

- Writing job descriptions for the various categories of paraeducators
- Developing criteria for the selection of paraeducators
- Recruiting paraeducators
- Assigning of paraeducators
- Providing in-service training for teachers on using paraeducators
- Providing pre-service and in-service paraeducator training programs
- Supervising of paraeducators
- Providing information and interpreting the objects of the program to parents, teachers, students and community
- Providing a system for the evaluation of paraeducators and their contribution to the total school program
- Evaluating the paraeducator program
- Developing career ladder opportunities for paraeducators

Note Adapted from NSEA position paper on educator aides (190). Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Education Association.

**Teacher Roles**

The teacher’s primary role is one of managing the learning environment. Teaching, as defined by statute, includes these responsibilities:

- Organizing and managing the classroom,
- Assessing and diagnosing student needs,
- Planning and directing learning experiences,
- Planning teaching strategies and selecting teaching material, and

When the program includes the use of a paraeducator, the teacher has a number of additional roles to fulfill. The teacher plans for the paraeducator’s duties, supervises the completion of tasks, and provides guidance and evaluation about the paraeducator’s performance. Figure 3 identifies specific teacher responsibilities and roles involved in managing paraeducators.
Figure 3¹
Teacher Responsibilities in Managing Paraeducators

- Set an example of professionalism in teacher responsibilities
- Establish the criteria for acceptable job performance
- Assure Para educators are adequately trained for their duties
- Prepare the Para educator for assign instructional and non-instructional tasks and activities
- Communicate the needs of each student to the paraeducator
- Establish and communicate the paraeducator’s role in classroom behavior management
- Assign non-instructional duties
- Provide consistent feedback to assist in redefining skills
- Monitor the paraeducator’s performance in carrying out instructional activities
- Assist in evaluating the paraeducator’s overall performance

¹Note Adapted from Guide for Effective Utilization of Paraprofessionals in Special Education. (1963). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Paraeducator Roles

Although Nebraska statutes allow paraeducators to carry out only “non-teaching” duties, paraeducators may still perform a wide variety of activities. Again, the paraeducator must be prepared for the duties assigned and must be adequately supervised. Figure 4 further clarifies duties and other tasks often assigned to paraeducators.

Figure 4¹
Paraeducator Responsibilities

The following illustrate duties which a paraeducator may perform when properly trained and supervised:

- Supervise students in the hallway, lunchroom, or playground
- Monitor supplementary work ad independent study
- Reinforce learning in small groups or individuals while the teacher works with other students
- Assist in educational demonstrations for the class or groups
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials
- Score objective tests and papers and maintain appropriate records for teachers
Perform clerical tasks, i.e. typing, duplicating, attendance
- Observe, record, and chart students’ behaviors
- Assist in production of student instructional materials
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher
- Tutor students under the direction of the teacher
- Operate and maintain classroom equipment

^Note Adapted from Guide for Effective Utilization of Paraprofessionals in Special Education. (1963). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Various factors influencing the specific responsibilities assigned to paraeducators include: characteristics and personalities of teachers, paraeducators, and students; interpersonal skills of both teachers and paraeducators; the skill level of the paraeducators; the physical environment of the classroom; and the type of classroom. Individual teachers may select a variety of paraeducator responsibilities in order to enhance the program of instruction.

To the casual observer, it might appear that a teacher and a paraeducator working side by side in serving students are performing identical tasks; however, the roles of teachers and paraeducators differ. In defining responsibilities, it is helpful to compare and contrast the roles appropriately performed by teachers and paraeducators. Duties which may not be performed by the paraeducator are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5

**Duties the Paraeducator May Not Perform**

The following illustrate tasks which should not be assigned to the paraeducator:

- Diagnostic testing of students’ strengths and weaknesses
- Preparing lesson plans
- Grading subjective papers and assigning grades to students
- Taking full responsibility for supervising and planning students’ activities
- Selecting educational activities and materials for students
- Reporting student progress to parents

**Paraeducator Job Descriptions**

The job description is useful in clarifying the roles of the paraeducator in the educational program and can serve as a reference point in conducting an
evaluation of paraeducator performance. The job description should specifically
delineate, in writing, the paraeducator’s duties and may change from time to time,
depending on the needs of the students and staff. Often included are the duties
which paraeducators are to perform and the duties which paraeducators are not
to perform, as dictated by school district policy, ethical and legal constraints and
school protocol. Administrative concerns such as working conditions, training
requirements, supervision procedures, and evaluation procedures may also
appear in a written job description. The Appendix contains sample job
descriptions, which includes these components.

Training Provisions

Paraeducators must be trained for the duties to which they are assigned. This
preparation should consist of orientation, ongoing in-service, and on-the-job
training. It is up to individual school districts which utilize paraeducators to
develop training policies adhering to these guidelines. See Figure 6 for suggested
training outcomes.

Figure 6

Common Training Competencies for Paraeducators

- Demonstrate knowledge of the school policies relating to their role
- Define the legal and ethical issues involved in their roles
- Identify the role expectations of their position in relationship to the teacher,
  administrators, and students
- Demonstrate knowledge of school, program, and classroom rules,
  regulations and procedures
- Demonstrate knowledge of behavior management and physical control
  strategies used with students
- Demonstrate skills in individual program delivery.
- Demonstrate skill in observing, recording and reporting student behavior
  and performance
- Demonstrate ability to use instructional materials commonly used in the
  classroom
- Demonstrate ability to use audiovisual, duplicating and other equipment
- Demonstrate skills in first aid, safety and handling emergency situations

Note Adapted from What Teachers Need to Know about Utilizing
Annual Conference of the Nation Council for In-service Education.
In order for schools to use the talents, interests, and abilities of paraeducators, it is important that they be trained to know the limits of their job description, the policies and procedures of the school, and task-specific skills which they will be expected to perform. An annual training plan provides a systematic way of focusing on the skill development of the paraeducator. The paraeducator and supervising teacher jointly identify the training needs of the paraeducator and plan appropriate activities to facilitate that training.

A general and a classroom orientation should be provided at the opening of the school year and/or at the beginning of employment. Other topics could be covered in more formal in-service settings, through on-the-job training, or a combination of the two. Provision for outside training and other appropriate incentives are important in attracting and keeping quality paraeducators employed within the district.

Many of the skills the paraeducator will need to develop, such as those relating to tutoring and behavior management, are most appropriately taught in an on-the-job setting by the supervising educator. Often, information that is presented in formal in-service must also be coupled with on-the-job training to specific types of skills, related to the classroom where the paraeducator is employed, provided that the training is systematically planned and carried out. An on-the-job training plan can be used to help organize and document the training activities.

The Appendix contains sample planning forms for developing annual and on-the-job training for paraeducators. Using such forms guides the teacher and paraeducator in formulating, implementing, and evaluating appropriate training.

Supervision Policies

One of the paraeducator’s primary roles is the delivery of learning activates directly to students. The teacher is accountable for meeting the learning needs of the students, and must use the available resources—including the skills and services of the paraeducator—appropriately. Paraeducators need to be trained and supervised carefully in order to insure that the learning needs of the students are being met.

Administrators and teachers need to plan for the supervision of paraeducators in a systematic way. The responsibilities of each person should be outlined, timelines determined, and necessary procedures and forms developed.

Heller & Pickett (1983) postulate that the main focus and purpose of supervising a paraeducator should be to assist the paraeducator to improve performance in the instructional setting. This “helping process” should be collaborative, involving “mutually reciprocal interaction between the supervisee and supervisor. “ Several
practices can be used to ensure that supervision is effective, such as planned introduction of duties, the use of detailed lesson plans and holding regularly scheduled planning conferences.

Introduction of Duties

A general orientation covering such topics as policies, program goals, emergency procedures, and ethics helps the paraeducator understand the new position. Mutual exchange of information between the teacher and paraeducator during orientation is important in eliminating misunderstandings. Background information helpful to the teacher includes the paraeducator’s educational level, previous work experiences, experiences with children and socio-cultural background. The teacher should also share similar information with the paraeducator. Additionally, the teacher should explain his/her teaching philosophy, teaching style, and techniques for motivating students.

Clarifying the expectations for the position is an important step. A well-written job description provides the paraeducator with an idea of expected duties, and gives information about supervision and evaluation guidelines. Before working directly with students, the paraeducator will also need additional orientation to the specific classroom in which he/she will be working. The teacher should supply information about the structure of the program, classroom management, and materials and equipment.

The teacher develops a plan for integrating the paraeducator into the program. A new paraeducator will need time to observe and get acquainted with students and staff before assuming an instructional role in the classroom. Duties should be introduced gradually, beginning with clerical and other general support tasks. As the paraeducator becomes acquainted with the students and with the activities that take place in the classroom, the teacher can initiate training for instructional tasks.

Using Detailed Lesson Plans

Teachers who use paraeducators to deliver instruction to students have an obligation to prepare the paraeducator adequately for the task and to supervise the paraeducator’s activities. A well-written lesson plan is the first step in clarifying what the teacher wishes the paraeducator to do. A lesson plan designed to guide the paraeducator through an instructional activity contains five components: objective, activity, materials, reinforcement, and evaluation. Describing these elements in the lesson plan enables the paraeducator to carry out the instruction just as it was designed by the teacher. A sample lesson plan is included in the Appendix.
Before initiating a lesson it is necessary that a paraeducator be given clear and precise directions. During the planning time, the teacher should explain the purpose of the lesson to the paraeducator. Using the lesson plan and materials, the teacher can demonstrate each step of the task. Techniques to reinforce the student and to record student responses should be discussed. The paraeducator can be given opportunities to role-play the lesson and to observe the teacher implementing a similar lesson plan.

The teacher then observes as the paraeducator implements the lesson plan. Later they evaluate the session and discuss what things should be done differently. This supervised practice allows the teacher and paraeducator to focus on improvement of the paraeducator’s skills. As the paraeducator works with the teacher and develops tutoring skills, this process will not require as much detail and time. However, the teacher continues to make periodic observations and suggestions for improvement.

The use of a checklist, such as the Monitoring Checklist included in the Appendix, during these observations, assists the teacher in making a more objective, focused evaluation. The information gained from the observation can be used for discussion to identify areas which need improvement. Feedback to the paraeducator about performance should be given in a constructive, non-threatening manner. It should always be coupled with suggestions for improvement and additional training when necessary.

Conferences and Planning Time

- A regular daily/weekly conference between the supervising teacher and paraeducator provides time for scheduling, planning lessons, evaluating the effectiveness of past activities and solving problems. Key elements of good conferences between a teacher and a paraeducator are included below.
- The purpose and/or content of the conference should be determined in advance.
- Discussion should be pertinent and efficient and end when the purposes have been met.
- Conferences should be positive and oriented to problem solving rather than be teacher dominated.
- Conferences should be held at a site accessible to instructional materials and be from interruptions and distractions. Meeting times should be regularly scheduled.

The Appendix contains a sample conference documentation guide to assist teachers and paraeducators in planning for, conducting and keeping records of conferences.
Evaluation of Paraeducator Performance

Evaluating paraeducator performance helps identify training needs and determines how effectively the paraeducator is being utilized. The evaluation of paraeducator performance can be viewed as twofold: 1) informal evaluation of paraeducator performance by the supervising teacher occurs on an ongoing basis throughout the school year and 2) formal evaluation involves the observations and ratings by the supervising teacher as well as administrators and other appropriate personnel.

In such situations, the supervisory and evaluation processes may blend so that they occur simultaneously. Observations using the Monitoring Checklist (included in the appendix) and other more incidental observations made during the normal course of the day, can be helpful to assess areas of paraeducator strength and those in which improvement is needed. The weekly conference between teacher and paraeducator is an appropriate time to evaluate the paraeducator’s implementation of instructional strategies, rapport with students, and need to perform other duties.

In contrast to informal evaluation, a formal evaluation requires much more preplanning and often involves the use of standardized forms. Components of a formal evaluation include:

1. Preobservation activities including defining concerns, establishing criteria of acceptable performance, and developing evaluative instruments.

2. Data gathering through formal observations, use of rating scales, questionnaires, etc.

3. Analyzing of results and identifying of behaviors to maintain or change.

4. Conferencing with the person being evaluated to provide feedback and outline plans/strategies to improve or change behavior.

The formal evaluation process is frequently shared by teachers and administrators (Vasa, Steckelberg, & Ulrich-Ronning, 1982). Administrators and supervising teachers often draw on the written job descriptions to define areas of concern and establish criteria for acceptable job performance. Items appearing on observation forms and rating scales are designed to match duties and responsibilities outlined in the job description. Local needs and expectations determine the specific content of evaluation instruments and the specificity of items.
The Paraeducator Evaluation Form (included in the Appendix) is a sample rating scale which can be completed by the teacher, administrator or other supervising personnel. This form provides a general, comprehensive evaluation. The Monitoring Checklist (see Appendix) can also be used during a formal observation of the paraeducator conducting an instructional activity.

Evaluation information should be shared in a conference with the paraeducator. Topics of an evaluation conference often include strengths and weaknesses; areas in which improvement might be attempted; strategies for altering behavior; plans for needed in-service; and changes in assigned duties.
References


