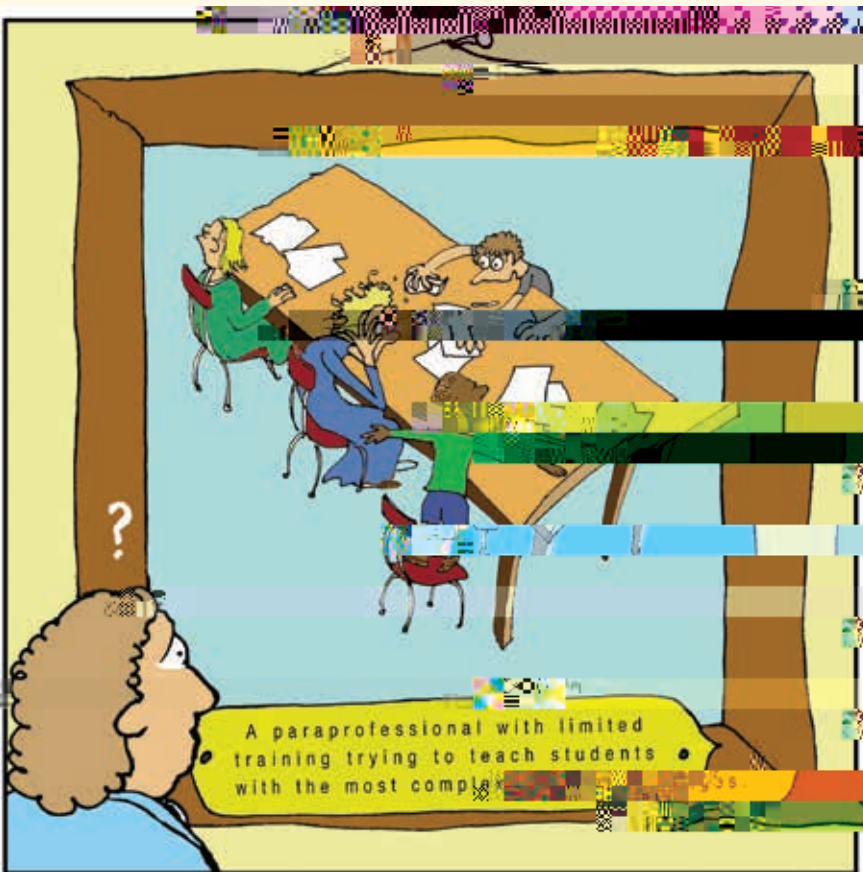


by Michael F. Giangreco, PhD
and Betsy Hoza (c)



WHAT?

Teacher versus paraprofessional instruction

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Table 1. Inadvertent detrimental effects associated with excessive paraprofessional proximity

CATEGORY OF EFFECT	DESCRIPTION
Separation from classmates	A student with a disability and paraprofessional are seated in the back or side of the room, physically separated from the class.
Unnecessary dependence	A student with a disability is hesitant to participate without paraprofessional direction, prompting, or cueing.
Interference with peer interaction	Paraprofessionals can create physical or symbolic barriers interfering with interactions between a student with disabilities and classmates.
Insular relationship	A student with a disability and paraprofessional do most everything together, to the exclusion of others (e.g., peers).
Feelings of stigmatization	A student with a disability expresses embarrassment/discomfort about having a paraprofessional because it makes him/her stand out in negative ways.
Limited access to competent instruction	Paraprofessionals are not always skilled in providing instruction. Some do the work for the students they support in an effort to keep up; this is a sign that instruction has not been adequately adapted.
Interference with teacher engagement	Teachers tend to be less involved when a student with a disability has a one-to-one paraprofessional because individual attention is already available to the student
Loss of personal control	When paraprofessionals do too much for the students with disabilities they may not exercise choices that are typical of other students
Feelings of persecution	Some students report that because they are constantly being watched by adults, their behavior is scrutinized differently; minor infractions that might not be noticed or addressed when done by other students result in consequences for them.
Provocation of problem behaviors	Some students with disabilities express their dislike of paraprofessional support by displaying undesirable behaviors (e.g., running away, foul language, aggression).
Risk of being bullied	Some students are teased or bullied because they are assigned a paraprofessional.

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Table 2. Alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals

CATEGORY OF ALTERNATIVES	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES
Resource Reallocation	Trading in paraprofessional positions to hire additional special education teachers provides increased access to more highly qualified personnel.
Co-teaching	Teachers and special educators work together in the same classroom. To maintain a naturally occurring number of students special needs, it may be necessary to share a special educator across three or four classes.
Building Capacity of Teachers	Teacher capacity can be built in a variety of areas (e.g., expectations of teacher engagement with students with disabilities, differentiated instruction, universal design, response to instruction, positive behavior supports, assistive technology, information about current evidence-based practices).
Paperwork Paraprofessionals	Paraprofessionals may be assigned clerical paperwork duties that free time for special educators to collaborate with teachers and work directly with students.
Improving Working Conditions for Special Educators and Classroom Teachers	

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