

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Graduate Studies

Preparing and Utilizing Paraeducators in Physical Education for
Students with Disabilities

A Critical Analysis Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Science-Physical Education Teaching
Adapted Physical Education Teaching Concentration

Brandon Green

College of Science and Health
Department of Exercise and Sport Science
Adapted Physical Education Teaching Concentration

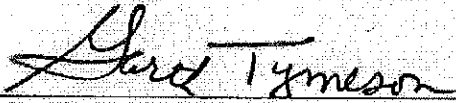
August, 2015

**ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION
CRITICAL ANALYSIS PROJECT
FINAL APPROVAL FORM**

Candidate: Brandon Green

We recommend acceptance of this Critical Analysis Project in partial fulfillment of the candidate's requirements for the degree:

Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Science-Physical Education Teaching:
Adapted Physical Education Teaching Concentration



Garth, Tymeson Ph.D.
Signature of Critical Analysis Project Advisor

7-22-2015

Date

Jooyeon Jin, Ph.D.
Signature of Committee Member

Date

ABSTRACT

Green, B. Preparing and utilizing paraeducators in physical education for students with disabilities. Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Science-Physical Education Teaching, Adapted Physical Education Concentration, 2015, 80 pp. (G. Tymeson).

Paraeducators are school staff members who often have the most direct contact with students with disabilities (SWD) throughout a school day. In many cases they are provided training to work with students in a typical classroom setting, but are rarely formally prepared to assist with SWD in physical education (PE). Paraeducators are vital to the success of SWD in PE settings including general and adapted environments. The video for this project was developed due to the lack of preparation paraeducators have within PE settings. The purpose of this critical analysis project was to create an instructional video to provide guidance for general and adapted physical education teachers who work with paraeducators. Key features of this video and accompanying instructional materials include: how physical educators can prepare paraeducators, how and when to use equipment, technology in PE, misconceptions about paraeducators, recommendations from adapted physical education teachers, and interviews with adapted physical education teachers and paraeducators discussing how they interact and assist one another in PE settings. The video can be found on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse adapted PE graduate study webpage <http://www.uwlax.edu/CDHAPA/Adapted-Physical-Education-instructional-videos/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely thank Dr. Garth Tymeson for guiding me through this roller coaster called graduate school and completion of my adapted physical education critical analysis project. I would also like to thank Dr. Jooyeon Jin for serving on my committee and providing his expertise throughout this process.

Thank you to Dr. Bob Beaudet, Western Carolina University, for inspiring me to further my education and to continue to grow as an adapted physical education professional. I want to thank Teresa Hudson, an adapted physical education teacher at the Progressive Education Program in Asheville, North Carolina who shared with me her wisdom and passion for teaching students with disabilities and for introducing me to the world of paraeducators. Thanks also to the many adapted physical education teachers in the La Crosse area who allowed me to be a part of their programs and to learn more about my field. A special thank you to Dr. Carol Angell for providing insightful feedback on the project. Thanks to Abbie Lee for providing many additions to the project as well.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family, friends, and most importantly my beautiful wife Alesha for always being there for me and supporting me through this journey. I love all of you and know that this life changing experience would not have been possible without you- thank you. Thank you to my sweet puppy Duke for always greeting me at the door after a long and hard day at the office. Thank you to Cathy Jambois for looking out and taking care of me throughout this crazy year. Also, a shout out to my fellow graduate students: Steve, Mackenzie, Bridget, Tom, Katie, and Alex for a wonderful year and memories we will share for a lifetime.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| ABSTRACT..... | i |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | ii |
| LIST OF APPENDICES..... | v |
| CHAPTER | |
| I. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Lack of Preparation of Paraeducators in Physical Education.. | 2 |
| Purpose of the Project..... | 3 |
| Definition of Terms..... | 4 |
| Summary..... | 5 |
| II. REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH LITERATURE..... | 6 |
| Introduction..... | 6 |
| Paraeducators in General and Adapted Physical Education... | 7 |
| Paraeducators in Special Education..... | 11 |
| Instructional Strategies to Prepare and Utilize Paraeducators in Physical Education..... | 21 |
| Summary..... | 25 |
| III. CRITICAL ANALYSIS..... | 29 |
| Introduction..... | 29 |
| Overview and Importance of Paraeducators in Physical Education..... | 29 |
| How Adapted Physical Education Teachers Prepare Paraeducators..... | 31 |
| Utilizing Paraeducators in Physical Education..... | 33 |

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Overcoming Misconceptions about Paraeducators in Physical Education..... | 34 |
| Preparing Paraeducators to Use Equipment..... | 36 |
| Technology in Physical Education..... | 38 |
| Unique Instructional Settings in Physical Education..... | 39 |
| Top 10 Recommendations from APE Teachers for Paraeducators..... | 40 |
| Description of Instructional Video..... | 41 |
| Resources..... | 42 |
| Recommendations for Future Research..... | 46 |
| Recommendations for Future Critical Analysis Projects..... | 46 |
| REFERENCES..... | 48 |
| APPENDICES..... | 50 |

LIST OF APPENDICIES

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| A. A Sampling of Paraeducator Job Titles..... | 50 |
| B. How to Prepare and Utilize Paraeducators in General and Adapted Physical Educaiton..... | 52 |
| C. Do's and Don'ts: Real Paraeducators Aren't Babysitters..... | 56 |
| D. Video Narrative Script..... | 58 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are more than 777,000 paraeducators working in public school districts across the country that play important roles in improving student learning (National Education Association, 2015). Depending on the school or the district, paraeducators who work directly alongside special education teachers and assist students with disabilities (SWD) are referred to by many different titles, including teacher assistants, instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, teacher aides, and paraeducators (Fisher & Pleasants, 2011). Despite the varying terms, these valuable staff members play vital roles in the education of SWD. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, paraeducators are recognized as personnel who may assist in the provision of special education and related services for SWD (National Education Association, 2015). An important aspect of this definition is that paraeducators are there to assist with instruction, but are not providing the services directly.

Paraeducators play major roles in the education of SWD and are held to high standards, but are not considered the content experts in the classrooms where they work. It is vital that teachers and paraeducators plan and work together and they “need the time and resources to develop strong and collaborative teams” (Jones, C., Ratcliff, N., Sheehan, H., & Hunt, G., 2011). Many districts provide school wide training for paraeducators. This ensures that all paraeducators receive the same information and can assist in multiple situations within a variety of settings and for different teachers. Paraeducators that have participated in school wide training become more comfortable and familiar with their jobs and believe that they have “a better understanding of the

entire process” (Giangreco, M., Edelman, S., & Broer, S., 2003). When paraeducators understand what is expected of them they become more valuable resources to students and teachers.

Even when a paraeducator has received appropriate training there are situations presented that requires them to do more than what their job description states. For instance, many paraeducators view part of their jobs “as connectors or bridges among parents, students, and other members of the school and community” (Chopra et al., 2004). This is common among paraeducators because often they get to know the student very closely which leads to becoming familiar with family members as well. Paraeducators gain a wealth of information about the student through working directly with them and being a connector to those outside of school. Despite their importance, many paraeducators feel unprepared (Chopra et al., 2004).

Lack of Preparation of Paraeducators in Physical Education

There are many unique roles and responsibilities in physical education (PE) for paraeducators compared to a typical classroom setting. In many cases, paraeducators are prepared only in classroom settings, but rarely receive any preparation in PE settings (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). Paraeducators are an extension of general and adapted physical education (APE) teachers and are valuable staff for a student’s education. PE teachers often utilize paraeducators “for safety reasons, making sure kids are socially behaving, following directions” as well as being “an anchor for the student” (Bryan, R., McCubbin, J., & Mars, H., 2013). Having paraeducators prepared for daily tasks in PE not only helps to improve student learning, but it also assists in maximizing their time engaged in physical activity.

Studies have shown the lack of training for paraeducators in PE. Davis and colleagues (2007) found that only 7% of paraeducators had the opportunity to be trained, yet 90% stated that they would be willing to engage in specialized training. Paraeducators are often assisting individual students and must be prepared with the resources and skills to assist SWD in PE. Paraeducators are assigned by the IEP team to assist SWD in PE for a reason, but many simply do not specifically know what they should be doing or the goals for the SWD. One paraeducator stated that “I had no role in physical education”, and that they were “a fly on the wall” (Bryan et al., 2013). Being able to utilize paraeducators to their full potential requires that they be prepared to work in this unique and challenging PE setting with SWD. To accomplish this, resources are needed to prepare paraeducators.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop an instructional video and resource guide for APE teachers on how to prepare and utilize paraeducators in PE settings with SWD. There are minimal resources available to prepare and utilize paraeducators in PE settings. Providing APE teachers with information can assist with training paraeducators for the specific duties that arise in their varying settings.

Discussed in the project are specific areas in which paraeducators may find themselves providing instruction or assistance to SWD. Secondly, paraeducators are provided with many strategies that will allow them to be successful in PE settings. Paraeducators can also benefit from the project through the many situational practices including unique PE settings and challenges, technology, and misconceptions about paraeducators. The project includes techniques, strategies, and best practices for both

APE teachers and paraeducators to use when working with SWDs. Many specific topics are focused on within the project. Along with written guidelines there is an instructional video that includes recommendations for paraeducators working in PE settings, equipment guidelines, planning strategies, and valuable insight provided through interviews with APE teachers and paraeducators. The video should be used by APE teachers to assist in the preparation and utilization of paraeducators to best provide support for SWD. It can also be a valuable resource for general PE teachers and special education staff.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the project. These terms are very important and help clarify what is discussed in the project.

Adapted physical education: Specialized physical education that meets the unique needs of individual students with disabilities. The adapted physical education teacher provides these services through planning and assessment, consultation, specialized instruction, and adapts or modifies the curriculum, equipment, and/or environment to ensure a child can participate in all aspects of physical education (Wrightslaw, 2014).

Adapted physical education teacher: These individuals implement specially designed physical education instruction to students with disabilities. Their roles and responsibilities include modifying programs for individual learners, planning and assessment, consultation, and specialized instruction (Wrightslaw, 2014).

General physical education teacher: Provides instruction to improve the development of physical motor skills, fitness, movement patterns, and skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (Block, 2007).

Paraeducator: According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, paraeducators are recognized as school personnel who may assist in providing special education and related services to students with disabilities (Wrightslaw, 2014). Other terms include paraprofessionals, teacher aides, teacher assistants, and instructional assistants.

Summary

Paraeducators are important assets for all teachers when working with SWD in educational settings. Within PE, paraeducators are expected to perform a variety of instructional tasks, but are often unprepared and undertrained to provide needed assistance to SWD and the APE teacher. APE teachers may use the information provided in this project, including the instructional video, to prepare and utilize paraeducators in physical education. Paraeducators may use this resource to better understand their roles and responsibilities, how to conduct themselves, how to use technology and equipment, and how to establish and maintain a professional working relationship with their APE teachers. The video resource was developed using current research and best practices on daily job duties and the need for training and preparing paraeducators in PE.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Research Literature

Introduction

On any school day, paraeducators will spend more time with particular students and know their characteristics and specific needs better than anyone else (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). Paraeducators are “individuals who are trained to work with and alongside educators in classrooms and other education settings to support the education of students in a variety of capacities (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). However, even with the wealth of support and information that paraeducators can provide teachers there is still confusion and lack of communication between the two. This is especially true in adapted physical education (APE) (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). Physical education (PE) services are required by law for all students with disabilities (SWD). Preparing paraeducators specifically for (PE) settings may increase the overall quality of education SWD attain.

SWD can benefit greatly when paraeducators assist with APE lessons. Typical duties of a paraeducator include keeping students on task, giving verbal cues, preparing students for transitions, reviewing instructions, and managing behavior plans (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). All of these roles exist in PE and it can be very difficult if these duties are expected of one teacher. Even though it is clear what paraeducators duties are, many are still unsure of what is expected of them while in PE classes (Haegele & Kozub, 2010).

Lack of communication can cause awkward situations in general and APE. Even within the same school building paraeducators, general and APE, and special education teachers all have different understandings of what the roles of paraeducators are while in

APE (Bryan et al., 2013). The only agreement among all of these professionals is that of keeping the students safe while participating in physical activity. This leads to “concerns about the clarity of the role of the paraeducators in physical education” (Bryan et al., 2013). Many paraeducators have the knowledge to be able to help individuals while in APE, but may need specific instructions and training from the APE teacher to ensure the success of the student. Communication between the two may help increase overall activity times for SWD. Before communication can occur the established roles of the paraeducator must be determined.

This review of literature is divided into two sections. Presented first is research about paraeducators in special education and PE settings. This is followed by a detailed section on practical teaching strategies on how to prepare paraeducators to be effective working with SWD. The following sections present research on paraeducators in PE and special education settings. Discussed are responsibilities that paraeducators are expected to meet, lack of training opportunities, and current practices used to improve the preparation of paraeducators.

Paraeducators in General and Adapted Physical Education

The roles of paraeducators in PE vary in every school and no true definition exists. In fact, a study by Bryan and colleagues (2013) shows that when asking a variety of educators that come in contact with paraeducators about their roles in PE, the answers were very different. Participants included paraeducators, PE teachers, APE teachers, and special education teachers from two school districts (Bryan et al., 2013). This study sought to determine exactly what teachers believed the roles of paraeducators were while

in PE. The researcher collected data from open ended questions with the participants in a one on one interview setting.

The results were broken into three categories. The first being “definitions of student protection and teacher backup roles” (Bryan et al., 2013). In most answers the participants included safety, behavior management, and supporting the teacher. However, when asked specifically about PE, answers varied greatly (Bryan et al., 2013). The second category discussed challenges which participants face with their students. Again answers varied throughout. Some described their challenges in physical education being unsure of what they need to do, while others mention that they have certain roles given to them by the general or APE teacher (Bryan et al., 2013). The third and final category was paraeducators’ role ambiguity. The question asked if they had been told the role of paraeducators. Paraeducators seemed to believe that they had an overall understanding of what their job included while special education teachers seemed not to have a clear definition for paraeducators roles given to them. General PE teachers reported that they had never been given a role, while one APE teacher stated they had been given a description of their roles and the other had not (Bryan et al., 2013). The results from this study may reflect on an individual school district, but it brings attention to the fact that paraeducators, PE, special education, and APE teachers have not established appropriate communication among education team members (Bryan et al., 2013).

The Bryan and colleagues study identified lack of communication between paraeducators and PE teachers and mainly focused on the general PE classes. A study by Lieberman and Conroy (2013) focused on paraeducators working directly with individuals with visual impairments (VI) in PE. This study examined best practices and

training for paraeducators that work directly with students with VI (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). The study included 143 participants including professionals and parents who work with, or have a child with VI.

The results showed that 64% of the participants stated that paraeducators did indeed help students with VI, 11% worked at certain times with students with VI, and 13% said they did not support the student in PE (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). With the majority of participants stating that paraeducators worked with students with VI it would seem that some instruction or training had taken place. However, 15% reported that paraeducators “were trained to work in physical education”, while 61% stated they were not trained (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013).

With the lack of preparation that was found in this study it brings the discussion to what should appropriate preparation for paraeducators in PE include, and how should it be conducted. “For the support of paraeducators to be effective, they should be trained” (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). The need for preparing paraeducators in PE is clear as seen through this study, but there are no established methods to ensure that the best preparation practices are taking place.

Preparing paraeducators can be difficult and “the physical education setting poses unique issues and challenges not present in classroom setting” (Davis et al., 2007). Davis, et al., set out to determine what the training needs of paraeducators were in PE. The researchers used a multiple choice data instrument covering “sociodemographic items, responsibilities, and training needs”. Within the three subcategories, questions were asked to clearly establish what participants believed and thought. The data were collected

from 34 administrators, 28 from East Central Indiana and 6 from Northwest Ohio. All administrators were individually interviewed and were explained the procedures of the study. They then administered the questionnaires to “all 138 paraeducators employed by their school districts” (Davis et al., 2007). There was one follow up by the researchers to encourage all participants to return the questionnaire in a timely fashion. The results of the study showed many interesting findings, but one in particular found that “46 (61%) of all respondents thought they were adequately trained to assist in physical education; however only 12 (16%) respondents reported receiving specific training to assist students with disabilities in physical education” (Davis et al., 2007). In addition, participants reported that they had received training through their school “and when asked about their willingness to participate in training, 68 (90%) reported that they would be willing to participate” (Davis et al., 2007).

It is clear that many paraeducators believe they are prepared for their roles in APE, but this study showed that many do not have the formal training. When participants were asked about their interests in preparation topics the response rate was very low (Davis et al., 2007). Paraeducators seem to want the training, but were unsure of what training is needed. The researchers suggest a need to develop specific training for paraeducators and making it clear on what paraeducators must know when assisting in APE.

Paraeducators are key components in general and APE classes. Research has shown the need for paraeducators in PE settings and the lack of opportunities provided for paraeducators to be trained in this field. Paraeducators are often assigned to individual SWD in PE classes, but rarely have the proper training to assist them appropriately.

Paraeducators in Special Education

With the uncertainty of roles and expectations, it is hard to know exactly what paraeducators should be doing throughout a school day. A study by Fisher and Pleasants (2012) examined what one Midwestern state's paraeducators were doing and how they perceived their job roles. The study surveyed 1,867 paraeducators which represented 27% of the believed paraeducators throughout the state. The participants varied in which age group they worked with and if they were a one on one, or worked with a variety of children (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). The survey asked the participants to state whether the specific role listed was a primary or secondary role and if they believed that this role was appropriate for their job.

“The primary role engaged in by 53% of this group was providing ‘behavioral and social support’ to students” (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). The secondary role seemed to be between “implementing teacher-planned instruction’ and ‘supervising students” (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). Results also showed how paraeducators viewed themselves and their major concerns of the position. The participants stated that the “lack of appreciation ranked as the highest concern for this paraeducator group--40% rating it as a major concern, 38% a minor concern, and 22% as not a concern” (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). With the majority of the answers being a major and minor concern, it raises the question as to how comfortable paraeducators are assisting teachers. One participant stated in an interview that they were “expected to do all or most of the education of the student with no or little feedback from the teachers” (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). The participant went on to discuss how her roles included things that were included in the teachers job description, such as planning and talking to parents (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012).

The findings of this study are very similar to others on the topic, which leads to question why a common set of general roles and responsibilities are not provided for each paraeducator within each subject or educational setting. The article discusses possible implications that are vital for paraeducators success while in the classroom. It states that “school administrators are key to nurturing the local efforts that establish an innovation as a homegrown initiative” (Fisher & Pleasants, 2012). Since each school and district vary, it may be best to develop statewide protocols. This may bring more awareness to the lack of communication between teachers and paraeducators as well as give common standards to follow.

A study by Haycock and Smith (2011) examined teachers’ perceptions of their working relationships with learning support assistants when seeking to incorporate young students with special educational needs within mainstream inclusive PE. The study included small focus groups examining views of paraeducators in their classrooms. Participants described their aids as challenging and hard to contact (Haycock & Smith, 2011). PE teachers who were assigned aids in their classes were “dependent upon colleagues outside of their department to receive information about the needs of young disabled people”, that were placed in their PE classroom (Haycock & Smith, 2011). Information was not properly delivered to the PE teachers that involved SWD within their classes. They were unaware of special modifications that needed to be made for each child and may need the extra help in determining what is needed for a specific student. Since PE is often left out of the communication loop, schools should find ways to develop techniques to help all teachers in general education classrooms and APE.

“Strengthening paraeducator supports without due consideration to strengthening the capacity and working conditions of general and special educators may inadvertently interfere with providing a free, appropriate public education” (Giangreco et al., 2003). This particular study set out to help entire schools plan together to produce quality paraeducators. The researchers sent out email applications to roughly “400 special education professionals nationally”, all of which were connected to many special education training programs and were “offered \$1,000 mini-grants in exchange for field-testing” (Giangreco et al., 2003). The study included “46 schools in 13 states” with 32 being elementary, both middle and high schools having 6, and the final two were classified as K-12 (Giangreco et al., 2003). Within the schools, 331 participants took part in the study and all schools were given a guide book with simple directions to follow throughout the study. The authors noted that schools were given flexibility to make sure that the plan was progressing properly. The guide book mapped out ideas for the participants to come together and to identify strengths and weaknesses of their programs.

The data were collected by what the schools had developed throughout the study and were analyzed and ranked by each team’s top five priorities (Giangreco et al., 2003). It should be noted that all of the teams were able to interpret the information in their own way and that findings may vary. An important part of this study was that it required teams to give feedback on themselves and in many cases “some work” or “major work was listed in terms of paraeducators support (Giangreco et al., 2003). The study brought attention to what needed improvement in each of the team’s schools and allowed them to begin developing plans and strategies to better use paraeducators. This study set out to help schools develop a plan and it was able to accomplish that in a variety of ways.

Having a guide to bring out a school's strengths and weaknesses is key to beginning on the road to improving not only paraeducators, but everyone involved.

With school wide planning on how paraeducators should be utilized, an important aspect to consider is what is too much or what is too little in terms of helping students with disabilities. A study by Giangreco and colleagues (1997) examined “the effects of the proximity of instructional assistants on students with multiple disabilities” while being taught with their peers in general education classrooms. The researchers observed and interviewed 134 education team members throughout 16 classrooms in 11 public schools. There were 11 students, four male and seven female, that were observed as well with all being “identified as deaf-blind” (Giangreco et al., 1997). Data were collected through in depth observations and interviews. Results indicated several areas where problems occurred during a given school day. All of the eight categories can be related to dependence on adults and how students are being helped too much by paraeducators in many ways. The researchers state, “to some extent, many students are initially dependent on cues and supports from the adults who teach them” (Giangreco et al., 1997). Many examples from the study demonstrated how paraeducators gave support when the student could have been successful on their own. Within the APE setting this is very accurate for paraeducators. In many cases it is easy to see if a student is off task, or not performing the skill properly. It’s human nature to want to correct SWD in a timely manner. Giving them a direct solution to the problem makes it appear as if they accomplished the task when in reality it hinders their ability to learn. The research showed how paraeducators are helping too much without being prepared or without working directly with other teachers to help the student be successful.

It seems to be a common trend that paraeducators are not being regularly included in preparation and planning when working with SWD. However, a study by Hughes and Valle-Riestra (2008) found that this is not entirely correct. The study aimed to determine how paraeducators and teachers viewed the preparedness of paraeducators and what their responsibilities were when working directly with SWD. Fifty-two paraeducators and 59 teachers were included in the study and all were employed in a highly diverse school district. It should be noted that all paraeducators were female and 94% of teachers were female as well. All participants worked “with young children with disabilities, aged three to five” (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). There were two surveys, one for teachers and one for the paraeducator working in their classroom. Of all of the participants, 10 teachers volunteered for the follow up interview along with the paraeducators in their classrooms (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). The results from both surveys found that the paraeducators and the teachers were compatible in terms of how they viewed paraeducators preparedness and overall responsibilities for working with SWD (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). When interviewed during the follow up questions a paraeducator stated, “my responsibilities are much like a teacher. That’s why we don’t consider each other like a para and a teacher. We get together and we discuss the kids. She never makes a decision without notifying me and getting my input” (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). The follow up interviews show high quality relationships between the paraeducators and teachers. All seem to follow their own system and make appropriate decisions together for each child.

As shown in the previous study, there are different systems in schools that work to help teachers and paraeducators plan as one. A study by Jones and colleagues (2012)

focused on a two year project that centered on three phases. Phase one surveyed 167 paraeducators and teachers who worked with 4 and 5 year old children. Surveys and observations showed that paraeducators did more within classrooms than what teachers believed they did. Another finding from part one was how paraeducators and teachers viewed paraeducators relationships with the students. The paraeducators believed that they had effective relationships with the students while the teachers saw the paraeducators not having effective relationships with the students (Jones et al., 2012). Phase two had paraeducators teaching a directed 30 minute literacy lesson given to the classrooms by the authors of the study. The observations showed that paraeducators struggled to teach the lesson to their students. A couple of observation notes taken by the authors included lack of control of the students and difficulty understanding directions from the scripted lesson (Jones et al., 2012). With observations showing the amount of instructional time paraeducators actually provide, it was clear to see they were unprepared. Phase three involved the authors meeting with district administrators to address the concerns from the observations and to schedule a half day training for paraeducators “focusing on the implementation of scripted literacy instruction” (Jones et al., 2012). Once completing the training, paraeducators were asked to implement phase two again to the class. Observations showed that only the paraeducators time management skills improved from the first trial. They continued to struggle with control of the students in the class along with other areas as well (Jones et al., 2012).

These findings showed that one time training sessions are not enough to ensure that paraeducators are capable of teaching literacy lessons. This can be related to many subjects within schools. In APE there are many hands-on skills that must be taught and

reviewed often to ensure that the student is receiving appropriate instruction. This study informed these school districts about what they needed to improve on in terms of paraeducator preparation and professional development.

As paraeducators improve their professional development opportunities, their roles in schools and in the community can grow. Most PE teachers want to prepare their students for a lifetime of physical activity which means exposing them to ways to remain active once they leave the classroom and school. Paraeducators often have special relationships with the students they work with, which means “they often acted as links between parents and teachers” (Chopra et al., 2004).

A study by Chopra et al (2004) set out to prove just how well paraeducators connected with parents about what was going on inside the classroom. Methods in this study included five individual focus group interviews lasting 90 minutes each, with a total of 49 participants. The results of the study confirmed that paraeducators saw themselves as connectors between the school and the parents of students. In many cases, the paraeducators expressed how they had a better working relationship with the students and that the students felt comfortable with them rather than the teacher. This leads to better working relationships with the students’ parents outside of school.

When a paraeducator was asked about communication with a parent she stated that, “we, [the child’s] mom and I talk on the phone at least once a week” (Chopra et al., 2004). There is a sense of comfort that seems to come with the paraeducator role, and in many instances the parents just feel that they are being given accurate information. (Chopra et al., 2004). Within the study it was found that paraeducators were pushed to

give parents information that was legally not supposed to be discussed which reveals that paraeducators must remain in a professional role even outside of the schools (Chopra et al., 2004). Paraeducators can be a great resource for APE teachers, not only in the classroom, but outside as well. Having paraeducators understand what is going on in PE is vital in advocating to parents for program support.

All teachers want and need the support of paraeducators in and outside of the classroom. However, if paraeducators are not capable of providing quality education or providing tools for students to be successful then they are not being of assistance. Carter, Sisco, and Lane (2011) surveyed 347 paraprofessionals about seven instructional domains (i.e., choice making, decision-making, goal setting and attainment, problem solving, self-advocacy and leadership skills, self-awareness and self-knowledge, and self-management and self-regulation skills). School districts were sent an electronic invitation and if they chose to participate a research member contacted them directly to explain the procedures. The survey asked paraeducators to rank the importance of the seven instructional domains using a scale from one to six with one being the lowest and six being the highest. The findings showed that paraeducators believed that nearly all of the domains were of high importance, scoring them at either a 5 or 6 on the survey (Carter et al., 2011). The data also determined that paraeducators ranked “problem solving and choice making” higher than any of the other domains.

This study shows that paraeducators believe that all domains are important. However, it is easy to see how the focus on the two highest rated domains from the study could relate to APE. Although the study was not conducted in APE, it relates well. Problem solving and making choices is something that many SWD struggle with. Since

paraeducators find value in these areas it could possibly lead to better overall cooperation from SWD in APE. Knowing what paraeducators value can help APE teachers when approaching them with instructions. Even though nearly every domain was rated highly in his study, it can still be an indicator to what paraeducators find of lesser value and to improve in that category.

In many cases research looks at how paraeducators view themselves, or how other teachers view them, but often a very important aspect is overlooked. The children that are with the paraeducators day to day could possibly provide feedback that not only helps teachers in the classroom, but actually helps the students who they are there to assist. A study by Tews and Lupart (2008) included eight SWD that were drawn from “four age groups (3-6 years, 7-12 years, 13-17 years, and 18-30 years)”, with two students being selected from each age group. Of the eight students participating in this study, “three had autism, two had broadly diagnosed developmental delays, and one each had Down syndrome, brain injury, and Prader-Willi syndrome” (Tews & Lupart, 2008). The researchers interviewed all eight students individually at their family homes for anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes.

The researchers found five themes from the interviews: (1) impact on peer interactions; (2) impact on student autonomy; (3) paraprofessional attributes; (4) impact on teacher responsibility; and (5) impact on school inclusion (Tews & Lupart, 2008). Theme one found that students had mixed feelings on the impact of peer interactions. Students mentioned that they received assistance when around peers and that they found it appropriate when interacting with peers, but in other cases students felt like the paraeducator hindered them when around their peers. Theme two found similar results,

but with much feedback stating that paraeducators over-helped the student. One of the participants stated that, “my [Educational assistant] always did things for me, things I had done by myself before” (Tews & Lupart, 2008). In general, findings showed that students did not always need the help, but paraeducators seemed to assist anyways.

Theme three asked students their likes and dislikes about their paraeducators. Answers fell into two categories: personality and assistance. Answers varied, but a common response from students was that it made students feel different from their peers (Tews & Lupart, 2008). Phases four and five can be summarized together because the study found that in most cases the student spent the majority of their instructional time with the paraeducator and less time with their actual teacher. The paraeducators were described as giving one on one instruction to the students which limited their time in the classroom with their peers (Tews & Lupart, 2008). The study found that paraeducators are indeed facilitators of social interaction for SWD, but it should be noted that not all students believed that their paraeducator was helping them, but rather hindering them at times when social interactions took place (Tews & Lupart, 2008).

When paraeducators are in APE classrooms it is important to not only prepare them to ensure that the student is performing the skill or activity correct, but to also inform them on when and when not to assist. Knowing when it is appropriate to assist and when it is best to let the student learn on their own can be a very difficult thing to determine. Again, this is an instance when the APE teacher must make the paraeducator aware of what they want the student to learn from the lesson. As much as both the APE teacher and paraeducator want the student to be involved, they must focus on what the objective of the class is and decide what the best action is for the student on that day.

Teaching Literature on Preparing and Utilizing Paraeducators

This section presents a review of professional literature about practical strategies for general and APE teachers to use for preparing and utilizing paraeducators to work with SWD in PE settings. Topics include approaches for APE teachers to take, establishing expectations, and dealing with behaviors.

Instructional Strategies to Prepare and Utilize Paraeducators in PE

When paraeducators are present in special education classes they are working with special education staff to provide instructional services for SWD. As paraeducators leave the classroom settings and come to PE it is the responsibility of the general and APE teachers to provide guidance for them. Lytle and colleagues (2007) address key factors that can assist paraeducators to be actively involved in PE.

Many guidelines are illustrated that provide guidance for APE teachers to successfully prepare paraeducators to teach SWD in PE. These include paraeducators roles, inclusion strategies, behavior management strategies, and resources (Lytle et al., 2007). All of these guidelines prepare paraeducators for typical PE responsibilities they encounter. Along with the specific guidelines, APE teachers should always allow paraeducators to have a feeling of ownership within their classroom. Strategies for APE teachers to provide ownership include getting to know the paraeducator, introducing the paraeducator to others in the school, providing input on equipment modifications, and simply saying thank you for providing assistance (Lytle et al., 2007). Many of these strategies are overlooked in PE and can easily be used if APE teachers take the time to build a professional relationship with paraeducators. It should be noted that “effective use

of paraeducators takes time, planning, and communication” and should not be expected to be perfect on day one (Lytle et al., 2007). Implementing these strategies and techniques can build effective relationships with paraeducators and can improve professional development.

For some school districts it is difficult to schedule time to prepare paraeducators in depth on strategies to use with SWD, or how to use specific instructional strategies or equipment in PE. An article by Haegele and Kozub (2010) presented a three level approach for APE teachers to follow and for paraeducators to use in PE and other instructional settings. Level one provides the paraeducator with lesson plan objectives and details that are important to the success of SWD and to let them know their specific roles within the lesson (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). Level one is considered the least supportive in terms of the APE teacher providing instruction to the paraeducator. It should be noted that APE teachers should encourage paraeducators to allow SWD to work independently, or with their nondisabled peers when appropriate (Haegele & Kozub, 2010).

Level two is similar to level one, but has one significant change. APE teachers in level two include in their lesson plans supports needed that are “specific to a child with a disability based on IEP goals” (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). This allows paraeducators to view specific techniques that individual SWD may need to be successful in APE. Within this level, paraeducators are informed by the APE teacher that other roles may be asked of them at certain points throughout the lesson.

Lastly, level three consists of video modeling that is used to help paraeducators assist SWD in areas such as stretching, or specific skill development. Level three is the most supportive for paraeducators (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). Within this level there are three subcategories recommended to follow. The first is only using this level if it is appropriate for the learner. An example of this is when a SWD needs extra time and support to complete a stretching routine. This individual student “requires educators to pay close attention to details” and may not be able to assist with other students during this portion of the lesson (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). The second stage recommends that video modeling be used for only a portion of the lesson. Using appropriate clips that provide “adequate visual prompts for an activity” are important for APE teachers and paraeducators to consider as well (Haegele & Kozub, 2010). Finally, it is recommended that paraeducators are properly prepared to use video modeling. Providing this training allows paraeducators to include their input as well as ask specific questions related to the particular skill and student.

Using this three level approach can be a starting point for APE teachers to utilize paraeducators in PE settings. The recommendations leave room for alternative strategies that are used in specific programs. APE teachers and paraeducators should work together to implement these strategies in a way that best fits the needs of the SWD in their school.

Determining the best methods for preparing and utilizing paraeducators in PE settings can be difficult and overwhelming. The book *Paraeducators in Physical Education A Training Guide to Roles and Responsibilities* by Lieberman and colleagues (2007) focuses on what paraeducators need to know and how to implement it in PE. The text includes what paraeducators should know on the first day of the job and progresses

forward. Establishing “general expectations for the paraeducator in a physical education setting” should take place at the beginning of the school year (Lieberman et al., 2007). Paraeducators responsibilities will grow as they become familiar and comfortable working with SWD in PE settings and will include assisting in locker rooms and assisting with transitions to and from the gym (Lieberman et al., 2007).

PE settings create a different challenge and can lead to behavioral issues with SWD. APE teachers should prepare paraeducators to deal with individual behaviors. One strategy for paraeducators to help SWD is to “catch them being good” (Lieberman et al., 2007). “It seems that we pay attention to people when things are not going well” and when SWD act out it is instinct to step in (Lieberman et al., 2007). Determining what rewards work best for individual SWD and implementing them within PE settings is an important strategy that paraeducators and APE teachers should consider. (Lieberman et al., 2007).

Paraeducators and APE teachers must determine whether a problem actually exists, or if it is minor enough to ignore. Paraeducators must be able to assess the situation and the students. Factors to consider include: the tasks being completed, is the behavior disrupting lesson objectives, and is there an acceptable level of interaction with other students (Lieberman et al., 2007). Developing relationships with individual SWD can assist with making these decisions and determining the best course of action.

Beginning paraeducators are looking for guidance from APE teachers in PE settings. This book provides paraeducators and APE teachers with guidelines to follow and gives both APE teachers and paraeducators information to help them be successful.

Strategies from this resource relate to practical scenarios that most paraeducators will encounter in PE.

Summary

The findings from research provides an overview of how paraeducators view themselves, and how others view them while in their specific classrooms. It is clear that there is not a consistent process to define the roles of paraeducators in classrooms, especially when they are working with children in APE. From the research, paraeducators have been shown to be an asset when assisting with SWD, but at the same time it has not been established for them as what is too much and what is too little help when assisting a student. Most studies showed that paraeducators have roles and responsibilities that may overlap those who are technically in charge of the classroom. Paraeducators are not the special education teachers or PE teachers, but are still an important part to student's education.

A consensus from the research findings show that paraeducators are mainly responsible for behavioral and social distractions of the student in the class, but rarely seem qualified for other responsibilities. Paraeducators may be able to provide more assistance than simply keeping a student under control during a lesson. Being the teacher is not their job, but being an extra pair of eyes or hands can go a long way to making SWD more successful. It has been shown that paraeducators are a valuable resource for other teachers in the school and when properly prepared by classroom teachers a more quality education for students can take place.

The problem seems to be obvious, yet schools, districts, and even states struggle with communicating with one another about paraeducators roles and responsibilities with PE settings. Paraeducators do not understand how a typical PE class should be taught, while APE teachers do not understand all of the specific characteristics of the SWD that paraeducators work with on a daily basis. In many cases it is not that paraeducators do not want to be more helpful, it is simply that they are unsure of what needs to be done. Research has shown that paraeducators are connectors between the teachers and the parents and community. Further research must be done to help improve the relationships of all parties involved.

Attitudes are important when working with others and this particular situation is no different. If APE teachers rarely communicate with paraeducators about their students, or how they can be of assistance then the relationship will not be effective. The paraeducator will not be willing to help the APE teacher and vice versa. In one study a paraeducator stated “that he had no role in physical education” and that he was ‘a fly on the wall” (Bryan et al., 2013). Every situation is different with different variables, but if the goal is to educate SWD everyone must communicate and work towards common goals. Preparing paraeducators seems like the easy solution, but it’s the content included in the preparation that will ultimately make the difference.

Future research within this field is needed, but exactly where to start varies among researchers. Many see it as PE teachers needing preparation in helping paraeducators to gain confidence and understanding of what is expected of them while in their classrooms. General and APE teachers are considered the experts in their schools for their content areas and need to be the ones communicating what they need help with and what

paraeducators need to know while working with SWD in their classrooms (Bryan et al., 2013).

Other studies suggest that specific “training curriculum and video should be made, and pre- and posttesting of paraeducators’ knowledge” should be conducted to ensure best practices in all subjects (Lieberman & Conroy, 2013). Best practices vary within different schools, but a specific, practical, and direct guide to helping paraeducators and teachers work with one another is key moving forward. Studies that included focus groups and observations within schools seemed to offer useful improvement to their problems.

Future research is not limited to educating paraeducators, but preparing PE teachers as well. Backgrounds vary in experience when working with SWD and it cannot be expected that every PE teacher has an extensive background with SWD. Preparing PE teachers about the importance of having a professional and functional working relationship with paraeducators that they come in contact with is critical. Giving and receiving help from both parties must be taken into account before planning lessons for SWD and having both parties on board will be beneficial for everyone.

Many research articles focused solely on how the teachers or paraeducators viewed things, but the limited research on how SWD feel about paraeducators needs to be expanded to show different views to the improvement process. There are few studies on this currently, but with more and more focus occurring in a one on one setting this could be of great importance moving forward.

The research options for this field are available, and are needed for the improvement of relationships between PE teachers, APE teachers, paraeducators, parents, administrators, and students. Enhancing communication is a key part of the solution. Having both the APE teacher and paraeducator prepared will help the process in the long run and ultimately bring success to the students. There are many ways that paraeducators can improve their daily skills as well as bring awareness to improvements that must be made in the field. A specific guide and video resource for both APE teachers and paraeducators is needed in all PE classrooms. A universal guide may not be the best method, but having practical references would be a great way to improve the relationship.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

Paraeducators are vital contributors to the success of students with disabilities (SWD) in physical education (PE). Therefore, it is important for adapted physical education (APE) teachers to prepare and utilize paraeducators. This chapter provides specific information regarding how to guide and utilize paraeducators to support SWD in PE settings. Included is an in-depth description of the instructional video and how to apply the content in PE instructional settings. Resources such as books, websites, journal articles, and instructional YouTube videos are also included in this chapter. APE teachers can use these resources when they prepare and utilize paraeducators in various PE settings. Finally, recommendations for future research studies and critical analysis projects are discussed.

Overview and Importance of Paraeducators in Physical Education

There are strategies and techniques to prepare paraeducators to assist SWD in PE, but they are often not provided to paraeducators in this setting. Paraeducators must know each student's needs in PE, but these needs can be difficult to determine if not fully discussed with the APE teacher in advance. Paraeducators are vital to the education success of SWD, especially in PE because they are assigned to an individual SWD to support their unique needs in a variety of instructional settings.

There are many terms used within schools to describe the professionals that assist the teaching staff. These titles may include, but are not limited to, paraeducators, paraprofessionals, student aides, teacher assistants, and instructional assistants.

Regardless of the term used in a specific school, these staff members are very important for a successful learning environment in PE for many SWD. See Appendix A for more terms used to describe paraeducators.

Paraeducators work in a variety of PE settings based on the individual student's needs. SWD are placed in their least restrictive environment (LRE). This means that SWD must be educated with their same age nondisabled peers in general education settings when appropriate. A common instructional setting that a SWD may be placed in is general PE. This is also known as an inclusive setting. In this setting, paraeducators will consult with general and APE teachers about specific modifications or needs of the individual student. Paraeducators may have a limited role in this setting depending on the individual student, but should always be prepared to assist when appropriate. A second instructional setting in which paraeducators provide support to SWD is the small group or specially designed PE setting. This type of setting may also include working with an individual student within a one on one instructional setting. Paraeducators work and communicate with the APE teacher to provide quality instructional support to SWD based on their IEP goals.

In both of these PE settings, paraeducators may have the responsibilities of providing hands on support, visual and verbal demonstrations, support in hallways or locker rooms, assisting the general and APE teachers in planning, and assisting the IEP teams. It is the responsibility of the experienced general or APE teacher to prepare paraeducators for duties in their classes and to ensure they are meeting the expectations that have been established. All PE settings are unique and require different preparation and roles for paraeducators.

How Adapted Physical Education Teachers Prepare Paraeducators

There is a lack of resources that APE teachers can share with paraeducators for success in the PE setting. It is the responsibility of the APE teacher, as the expert, to provide the paraeducator with direction on what their roles and expectations are during the class.

One of the best ways to prepare paraeducators in APE settings is to include them during the instructional planning process. It is recommended to discuss instructional goals and objectives with the paraeducators prior to the PE class. Taking as little as five minutes to meet with the paraeducator to discuss their specific roles and responsibilities will be beneficial for students and the APE teacher. This is also time to introduce new ideas or discuss unique equipment that may be used within the lesson. Planning ahead also allows paraeducators to assist SWD right away without having to ask the APE teacher what their duties are during class time. This allows the paraeducator to have the student immediately engaged in the lesson while the APE teacher works with other students in the class. Paraeducators should never be standing around doing nothing in PE.

Paraeducators may leave their first few days assisting in a PE class with an overwhelmed feeling. APE teachers must work very hard to make paraeducators comfortable in PE settings. One way to do this is to encourage paraeducators to ask questions. Paraeducators should not be expected to know everything about APE, but that is not a valid reason not to assist the APE teacher. If a paraeducator is unsure of something, it is better to ask the APE teacher than to try on their own. Failure to ask questions may contradict the lesson objectives, or even worse, may risk the student's

success and safety. Asking the right questions is the key to helping a student succeed. Asking questions helps build a successful working relationship and can lead to learning about all students within the class.

It is often believed that paraeducators are only allowed to work with the student to whom they are assigned; however, this is not the case in some situations. Although paraeducators may be responsible for one student, they can and should engage with other students in the class. Engaging with other students allows the paraeducator to learn more about everyone in the class, which can facilitate social interactions for SWD. Encouraging SWD to work with their nondisabled peers during group or partner activities is one way to engage with others. This encourages independence and teaches SWD to not rely on assistance all of the time. When a SWD can be independent, it is important that paraeducators allow them to be. However, paraeducators should always be close by and ready to assist the SWD when appropriate.

Paraeducators and APE teachers want all students to be successful. However, it is important that paraeducators don't overhelp and cause the student to become dependent on assistance. When SWD are not challenged, they develop learned helplessness which can make teaching new skills harder because they will be expecting someone to do it for them. Paraeducators should allow students to perform tasks independently as much as possible. Providing the solution, doing it for them, and making every decision for the student is hindering personal development and independence. Allowing the student to learn from mistakes and to continue working independently towards their goal should always be encouraged. See Appendix B for a detailed list of ways to prepare paraeducators.

Utilizing Paraeducators in Physical Education

Once paraeducators are prepared for their many responsibilities in PE settings, they can be utilized by APE and general PE teachers to their fullest potential.

Paraeducators always have a responsibility in every PE class and should be prepared to assist wherever they are needed. Paraeducators are utilized in a variety of ways that assist APE teachers and SWD. When paraeducators can work independently with certain students, it provides the APE teacher with more time to work with other SWD, or to provide instruction to the entire class.

When paraeducators assist APE teachers, it can add valuable instructional time for working with SWD. APE teachers may ask paraeducators to provide information regarding student behavior, assist and arrange equipment throughout a lesson, and assist with assessing the student during class. These are only a few ways that paraeducators provide assistance to APE teachers in PE settings. Paraeducators and APE teachers should discuss other specific responsibilities before class to ensure that both are clear about lesson objectives and what is expected of them during class.

Another form of assisting in PE is to have paraeducators work with an individual SWD. Paraeducators are an extension of APE teachers and can provide great assistance by working independently. Paraeducators may be asked to assist SWD by providing visual and verbal demonstrations throughout a lesson, assist students changing in the locker room, encourage social interactions between SWD and their nondisabled peers, and introduce and assist with special skills such as riding a bike or roller blading prior to the PE class. Again, all of these tasks should be discussed and planned with the APE

teacher to ensure the most appropriate course of action for each student. See Appendix B for a detailed list of ways to utilize paraeducators.

Overcoming Misconceptions about Paraeducators in Physical Education

There are many misconceptions of what paraeducators are and what they actually do in instructional settings, including PE. When paraeducators are in the classroom setting, teachers provide them with certain responsibilities to perform. Responsibilities should be established by general or APE teachers in PE as well. When the general or APE teacher does not provide specific roles and responsibilities for the paraeducators, many of the following unwanted situations can occur.

1. **Leaving the classroom without communicating with the teacher:** When paraeducators are given no instructional roles or guidance of what they should be doing many see the opportunity as a break from work. General PE and APE teachers are as much at fault as the paraeducator. Establishing responsibilities at the beginning of the school year and holding the paraeducator accountable eliminates this from occurring. Providing the paraeducator with simple tasks such as leading the stretching routine or taking attendance can be a way to continually involve them with the class.
2. **Unwilling to participate:** The saying “I don’t do exercises, I can supervise though” is something many general PE and APE teachers have heard from paraeducators. PE and APE teachers at times have to motivate or encourage paraeducators and let them know how valuable they are to the success of SWD. Again, establishing specific roles and responsibilities can help increase

participation from paraeducators and allows them to feel like a valuable team member.

3. **Avoiding certain instructional situations:** It may not be on purpose, but avoiding getting into the pool, not dancing with a student, or not being able to lift a student can be seen as avoiding certain situations in PE. This may seem innocent, but it is the student who loses benefits. When a paraeducator does not fulfill necessary job responsibilities, the student may lose valuable instructional time or even regress. Performing a task that may risk further injury, such as lifting a student, is something that no one wants, but bringing this to the attention of the PE or APE teacher prior to class will allow for other arrangements. Putting SWD first and making sure that each individual has what they need to be successful should always be a priority.
4. **Missing class:** Being in class and having another pair of hands and eyes can make all the difference for SWD. A common situation that occurs with paraeducators is when they do not communicate or come to PE when the student who they work with is absent. Making contact with the PE or APE teacher prior to class allows the teachers to make arrangements to work with other students, to assist with the class in other ways. Paraeducators may still be needed in the class and should use this time to engage with other students to help with social situations for their assigned student in the future.

All of these situations happen, but can be minimized through communication and establishing specific responsibilities for paraeducators in PE settings. PE and APE teachers must make it known to the paraeducators the importance of their presence and

how they are valuable team members. Certain situations occur simply because the PE and APE teachers do not establish expectations with the paraeducator. Improving these situations can enhance instruction in PE for SWD. See Appendix C for chart of “Dos and Don’ts for Paraeducators”.

Preparing Paraeducators to Use Equipment

There is a wide range of equipment used in APE. It should be noted that this equipment can be expensive and hard to obtain. In some cases, many APE teachers have limited budgets to purchase equipment, so it is important to respect all equipment and use it appropriately. When working with SWD specialized equipment is a valuable tool to have and knowing how to use it appropriately is even more important.

Using a piece of equipment just to use it can lead to bad habits with the student and inappropriate use. There should always be a purpose for using specific equipment within a lesson. This should be based off of the lesson objectives and used for progress toward the instructional goals for each student. Paraeducators must know what equipment is being used for and appropriately use it to help with the instructional goal, not to simply entertain the student. It is never appropriate to use a piece of equipment without having a reason for doing so and clearing it with the APE teacher.

Knowing when and what a specific piece of equipment is being used for is important, but knowing how to use it appropriately to facilitate learning is vital to the success of SWD. Knowledge on how the piece of equipment is meant to be used leads to an increased chance of success for the student and an even greater chance that the item is

not broken or damaged. Using equipment incorrectly can also hinder the student's progress and may disrupt the overall flow of the class.

When students are not willing to participate in an activity, a piece of equipment can be used as a motivator. It is important for both APE teachers and paraeducators to determine what equipment students like or prefer within various situations. Overusing equipment could lead to the student being dependent on always getting to use that piece, so using equipment as a motivator or reward should be discussed with the APE teacher prior to the lesson.

There may be pieces of equipment that are rarely used. Paraeducators should ask and learn about this equipment. It could turn out to be the right equipment for a student that might have been overlooked by the APE teacher. It is also important to ask about alternative pieces of equipment. For example, a student may not want to use a little scooter, but might like a longer and padded scooter. APE teachers should encourage paraeducators to ask questions about equipment.

When possible and safe, allow the student to use the equipment without any assistance. There are numerous ways that paraeducators can help students with equipment. A few common ways to assist are helping them adjust straps and buckles, selecting the appropriate sizes, and monitoring students to ensure they are safe at all times. Although it is important for the student to be as independent as possible, paraeducators should always be close by in case the student needs assistance.

In many APE settings the paraeducators are asked to assist the APE teacher. Often the best way to learn something is to practice it first-hand. Volunteering to help

demonstrate how to use a piece of equipment to the class will be very useful for the paraeducators and will be beneficial when helping a student use it later. This will also show initiative and flexibility to the APE teacher and will help build a positive working relationship.

If equipment is being used in PE settings, paraeducators must know how to use it correctly. It is the responsibility of the APE teacher to prepare paraeducators with equipment that they will be using and to know that they will be using it appropriately. SWD can benefit greatly when paraeducators are prepared to use specific equipment correctly.

Technology in Physical Education

Physical education is changing with the times and has infused technology into the curriculum. Technology is an important tool that can be used to illustrate how to perform skills, as well as motivate students. As technology continues to grow in popularity in PE settings, it is important to remember that it should be used to supplement the lesson and to not take the focus away from being physically active. A few common technologies used in PE are iPads and Smartboards. Again, paraeducators should be prepared by the APE teacher to use these resources prior to assisting SWD. These resources can be used for assessing progress, improving instructional cues, motivating students, visual and audio support, and many other ways. Paraeducators should be prepared to perform these roles by the APE teacher and can assist with tasks such as taking attendance, showing social stories, tracking student behavior, and filming students to show progress in a variety of areas.

Unique Instructional Settings in Physical Education

Many APE programs have access to swimming pools, rock walls, fitness centers, tennis courts, football fields, and many other facilities for instructional purposes. Instruction may also take place at a local YMCA or other community based locations. Paraeducators should be given specific responsibilities by the APE teacher to assist within these unique settings. It is important that all SWD are safe in every environment and that they are focusing on the objectives of the lesson and IEP goals. However, paraeducators provide services that are more than keeping SWD on task. Planning ahead with the APE teacher eliminates confusion and ensures that all staff members are aware of what should be happening within the class when using unique facilities.

The swimming pool is a common place where paraeducators work with SWD. Support from paraeducators in aquatics can range from simply being in the pool to supervise, to working hands on with an individual student as they perform a specific skill. Other duties may include taking the lead in the locker room or assisting multiple students with changing and toileting before entering the pool. Just as a routine is established within the gym, one should be set for the pool as well, as this provides organization for the entire class. Clarifying use of equipment and proper ways to enter and exit the pool are also important pieces of information that should be given to the paraeducators.

Other settings include football fields, tracks, ropes courses, skiing hills, and community facilities. It is important for APE teachers to have a plan in place for every setting and to provide the paraeducators with specific instructions and responsibilities beforehand to ensure safety and success for SWD.

Top 10 Recommendations from APE Teachers for Paraeducators

Paraeducators in APE settings are not luxuries; they are often a necessity for the success of SWD. APE is filled with challenges and teachers need assistance. To assist in preparing paraeducators, APE teachers and current literature suggest recommendations for paraeducators to follow to provide clarity to the position and to assist in preparing paraeducators to work with SWD in multiple instructional settings. A summary of key recommendations for paraeducators from the literature and APE teachers include:

1. Be flexible and willing to assist in any way possible. This helps provide quality PE to SWD.
2. Be a source of information. Paraeducators are a communication lifeline between teachers, parents, and many others who are involved with the student's education. Relaying important information about the child is vital to his or her success (Chopra et al., 2004).
3. Have a positive attitude. Coming to school with a positive attitude sets the tone for students and staff. Students tend to follow the attitudes others display.
4. Ask questions. Paraeducators are not expected to know everything. Ask questions even if they seem minor. They could end up making all the difference.
5. Allow SWD to be independent. Assisting SWD is encouraged, but making sure that they need the assistance is important before performing the task for them. Creating a learned helplessness hinders the students' progress (Giangreco et al., 1997).
6. Meet and plan. Planning ahead with the APE teacher eliminates confusion in the class and allows for all staff members to be consistent with the students.

7. Engage with all students. Interacting with all students in the class should be expected. This allows the paraeducator to get to know other students and to create social interactions for the student that they work with.
8. Complete the responsibilities given to you. The more you put into the duties you are given, the better the experience will be for you and the students (Davis et al., 2007).
9. Know how to use all necessary equipment. Request training on all equipment prior to using it with a student.
10. Embrace the job for what it is. Maintaining focus on why you are there and who you are serving is worth every second.

As the APE field grows, so will the need for paraeducators. An extra pair of eyes and hands can make or break the success of many SWD. In order for APE teachers to utilize paraeducators to their fullest potential and to have students achieve their learning goals, it is important that communication and a professional relationship are established from day one. APE teachers should include paraeducators in lesson planning, preparing them to use special equipment, and discussing the roles and responsibilities that they will have.

Description of Instructional Video

The video produced for this project is entitled *Preparing and Utilizing Paraeducators in Physical Education for Students with Disabilities*. This resource is an in-depth instructional video that provides guidelines to prepare paraeducators to be contributing professionals in PE settings. This instructional video provides a wealth of information in one resource with the ability to quickly reference specific content. This

video will help paraeducators, adapted and general PE teachers, and others to improve their instruction and the overall quality of their PE classes. Content in the video includes: APE teacher and paraeducator interviews, misconceptions about paraeducators, how APE teachers prepare paraeducators, equipment, technology, unique instructional settings, and recommendations from APE teachers for paraeducators working in PE settings. This resource can help paraeducators become valuable assets to any PE program. See Appendix D for video content script. <http://www.uwlax.edu/CDHAPA/Adapted-Physical-Education-instructional-videos/>

Resources

Many resources were used in developing this instructional video and should be used by others for further professional development. Using the following resources can further improve the quality of PE services for SWD.

YouTube Videos

1. Title: I Feel Included

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZfjrd-B0ho>

This video resource provides tips and strategies to assist SWD in PE settings. The video focuses on direct feedback from SWD and how they feel they are best supported during PE. Many strategies include ways to engage all students in activity. APE teachers can use the information provided to improve the quality of instruction for SWD.

2. Title: Staff Training for Physical Education for Children with Visual Impairment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77fyMsRWYs>

This video resource prepares staff members including paraeducators, APE, and general PE teachers to assist students with visual impairments in PE settings. Specific

modifications are discussed to assist with instruction and how to implement these modifications into PE classes. Although the content focus is centered on students with visual impairments, the information provided can be used to help all SWD.

Book

1. Lieberman, L. (2007). *Paraeducators in physical education: A training guide to roles and responsibilities*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

This text provides a wealth of information regarding proper steps to preparing paraeducators in PE. Key chapters include information on creating positive environments, dealing with difficult behaviors, instructional strategies, and assessment. All chapters relate information to how paraeducators can provide valuable assistance to APE teachers and to ensure that all SWD are successful.

Journal Articles

1. Stockhall, N. (2014). When an aide really becomes an aid: Providing professional development for special education paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 46(6), 197-205.

This article provides paraeducators with information regarding communication, side by side coaching instruction, and instruction on implementing the direct instruction training model. This resource can be used by APE teachers to assist paraeducators when preparing them for roles in PE. The article provides specific steps that should be followed when preparing paraeducators for their many different roles.

2. Haegele, J., & Kozub, F. (2010). A continuum of paraeducator support for utilization in adapted physical education. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 6(5), 2-11.

This article discusses a three level continuum of support that is suggested for using paraeducators in APE classes. Level one is the least supportive of the three and focuses on the APE teacher verbally providing details about the daily lesson and specific duties of paraeducators. The second level builds off the first, but now the APE teacher creates a section on their lesson plan with clear directions for the paraeducators. Level three is the most supportive and includes video modeling for the paraeducators to use when working with SWD. This resource can be used to meet the needs of many APE teachers and paraeducators.

3. Piletic, C., Davis, R., & Aschemeir, A. (2013). Paraeducators in physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 76(5), 47-55.

This article provides APE and general PE teachers with an explanation of what paraeducators do and how they can be utilized in PE settings. The article also discusses how PE teachers have many different teaching styles and that paraeducators must be prepared to work in these styles to be effective in classes.

Websites

1. The National Resource Center for Paraeducators
<http://www.nrcpara.org/>

The National Resource Center for Paraeducators provides a place to share and gain new ideas with others around the country. This source includes current news regarding paraeducators, specific resources to improve support, state by state resources, and a conference that brings paraeducators together to continue to develop the field.

2. National Clearing House for Paraeducator Resources

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html#full-text>

This source includes articles and resources about paraeducators in a variety of settings and contexts. It can be used by APE teachers to better understand what paraeducators can be used for and how to help them improve within their current position. This site brings a wide range of information into one easy to use location.

3. National Education Association Paraeducator Handbook

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/05espparahandbook.pdf>

Within this handbook APE teachers will find many valuable sources of information regarding paraeducators. Topics covered include how to appreciate and be aware of paraeducators roles and responsibilities, supporting paraeducators as professionals, ensuring appropriate training and preparation, and providing ongoing professional development. This resource should be reviewed by all staff members working with paraeducators, especially new PE teachers.

4. Council for Exceptional Children

<https://www.cec.sped.org/>

The Council for Exceptional Children provides information related to all types of SWD. APE teachers can use this source to help prepare paraeducators to work and assist SWD in PE settings and to familiarize oneself with specific information relating to individual students and ways to become an advocate for all SWD.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are still many important topics that need to be researched related to paraeducators in PE settings. Future research questions include:

1. How much physical activity are SWD receiving when supported by the paraeducator compared to when SWD are taught by only the general or APE teacher?
2. How prepared do paraeducators feel about terminology used and communication with the PE teachers?
3. How are paraeducators evaluated in PE compared to classroom settings?
4. How qualified are general PE teachers to prepare paraeducators in PE settings?
5. Do paraeducators feel more prepared to work with students with specific disabilities in PE settings compared to others students with disabilities?

Recommendations for Future Critical Analysis Projects

Along with future research, there is a need for many critical analysis projects on this topic. Providing practical information that can be easily utilized by general and APE teachers, and paraeducators can have an impact on SWD. Future critical analysis projects could include:

1. A manual providing evaluation techniques, guidelines, and forms for PE and APE teachers to use to assess paraeducators that assist SWD in PE classes.
2. An instructional video providing roles, responsibilities, strategies, techniques, and equipment uses for PE and APE teachers to use to prepare paraeducators in an aquatics program.

3. An instructional video providing responsibilities, strategies, equipment uses, and appropriate movement techniques for paraeducators to use when working with students with severe physical disabilities in PE settings.
4. An instructional video preparing paraeducators how to use unique or specialized APE equipment with SWD.

REFERENCES

- Block, M. (2007). *A teacher's guide to including students with disabilities in general physical education* (3rd Ed.). Baltimore, MD: Brooks Publishing.
- Bryan, R., McCubbin, J., & van der Mars, H. (2013). The ambiguous role of the paraeducators in the general education environment. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 30(2), 164-183.
- Carter, E., Sisco, L., & Lane, K. (2011). Paraprofessional perspectives on promoting self-determination among elementary and secondary students with severe disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 36(1-2), 1-10.
- Chopra, R., Sandoval-Lucero, E., Aragon, L., Bernal, C., Balderas, H., & Carroll, D. (2004). The paraprofessional role of connector. *Remedial and Special Education*, 25(4), 219-231.
- Davis, R., Kotecki, J., Harvey, M., & Oliver, A. (2007). Responsibilities and training needs of paraeducators in physical education. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 24(1), 70-83.
- Fisher, M., & Pleasants, S. (2012). Roles, responsibilities, and concerns of paraeducators: Findings from a statewide survey. *Remedial and Special Education*, 33(5), 287-297.
- Giangreco, M., Edelman, S., & Broer, S. (2003). Schoolwide planning to improve paraeducator supports. *Exceptional Children*, 70(1), 63-79.
- Giangreco, M., Edelman, S., Luiselli, T., & MacFarland, S. (1997). Helping or hovering? Effects of instructional assistant proximity on students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 64(1), 7-18.
- Haegele, J., & Kozub, F. (2010). A continuum of paraeducator support for utilization in adapted physical education. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 6(5), 2-11.
- Haycock, D., & Smith, A. (2011). To assist or not to assist? A study of teachers' views of the roles of learning support assistants in the provision of inclusive physical education in England. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(8), 835-849.
- Hughes, M., & Valle-Riestra, D. (2008). Responsibilities, preparedness, and job satisfaction of paraprofessionals: Working with young children with disabilities. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 16(2), 163-173.
- Jones, C., Ratcliff, N., Sheehan, H., & Hunt, G. (2012). An analysis of teachers' and paraeducators' roles and responsibilities with implication for professional development. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 40(1), 19-24.
- Lieberman, L. (2007). *Paraeducators in physical education: A training guide to roles and responsibilities*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Lieberman, L., & Conroy, P. (2013). Training of paraeducators for physical education for children with visual impairments. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 107(1), 17-28.
- Lytle, R., Lieberman, L., & Aiello, R. (2007). Motivating paraeducators to be actively involved in physical education programs. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 78(4), 26-30, 50.
- National Education Association. "Paraeducators and IDEA 2004: Recognizing and Defining the Role of Paraeducators." *NEA.org*, (2015). 1, April 2015.
<http://www.nea.org/home/29335.htm>.
- Tews, L., & Lupart, J. (2008). Students with disabilities' perspectives of the role and impact of paraprofessionals in inclusive education settings. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 5(1), 39-46.
- Wrightslaw. "Physical Education (PE) & Adapted Physical Education (APE)." *Wrightslaw.com*, 27, March (2014). 1, April 2015.
<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm>.

APPENDIX A

A SAMPLING OF PARAEDUCATOR JOB TITLES

A Sampling of Paraeducator Job Titles *

Paraeducators are known by many job titles, only a few of which are included in this list:

- Behavior Interventionist
- Career Specialist
- Classroom Assistant
- Early Childhood Education Assistance Program Family Support
- Educational Assistant
- Educational Paraprofessional
- Educational Technician
- English as a Second Language/Bilingual Assistant
- Guidance Specialist
- Home Liaison
- Instructional Aide
- Instructional Assistant
- Interpreter
- Job Coach
- Learning Assistance Program Assistant
- Media Center Assistant
- Occupational Information Specialist
- Outreach Specialist
- Paraeducator
- Paraprofessional
- Playground Assistant
- Secondary Programs Assistant
- Speech/Language Assistant
- Supervision Aide
- Teacher Assistant
- Teacher Aide
- Team Partner
- Technology Assistant
- Transition Specialist
- Tutor

*From: National Education Association Paraeducator Handbook.
<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/05espparahandbook.pdf>

APPENDIX B

HOW TO PREPARE AND UTILIZE PARAEducATORS IN GENERAL AND
ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

How to Prepare and Utilize Paraeducators in General and Adapted Physical Education*

Preparation of Paraeducators for Teaching Students with Disabilities

1. Teach paraeducators (paras) how to properly use equipment (typical physical education equipment, technology, gait belts, etc.).
2. Meet with supervisor of paras to determine roles and responsibilities. Express what your expectations are for paras in your instructional settings.
3. Plan for and meet with paras prior to the lesson (or communicate via email or phone).
4. Clarify expectations of paras at the beginning of the year and be consistent throughout.
5. Provide paras with resources such as books, websites, videos, YouTubes, etc).
6. Create a collegial and professional relationship with paras to encourage an atmosphere for open communication.
7. Review IEP goals and objectives for the student, so paras can see what is trying to be accomplished.
8. Discuss behavior plans with paras; encourage consistency while using plans throughout the year.
9. Make paras feel they are part of the IEP team and give specific feedback towards their goals
10. Inform paras about specific IEP goals and objectives and how they can assist with these.
11. Prepare paras to be engaged throughout the entire class.
12. Prepare paras to demonstrate skill to ensure they understand expected skills.
13. Indicate the importance of allowing the student to be as independent as possible.
14. Provide paras with daily objectives and cues that will be used and how to use them with the student.
15. Discuss responsibilities in unique instructional settings such as aquatics, locker rooms, and off campus facilities like a YMCA or community fitness center.
16. Remind paras to only give praise to students for performing tasks and behaviors correctly.
17. Prepare paras for special circumstances and care for the students (feeding tubes and stents).
18. Show para how to modify specific activities so students are successful and safe.
19. Teach paras how to video students with various technologies (iPad, video camera)

*University of Wisconsin - La Crosse (ESS 537 -- Teaching Models in Adapted Physical Education, Spring 2015)

20. Describe appropriate dress for them to wear in physical education (i.e., swim wear, footwear for activity; dress for fitness center activity, etc.).
21. Establish and review common routines and vocabulary used in classes.
22. Provide evaluations and allow time for feedback on both ends.
23. Paras should be trained in emergency procedures for the physical education situation they will be working in addition to their orientation session.
24. Paras should first be trained on the purpose and definition of physical education, as well as covering standards, teaching styles, and lesson plan formats.
25. Prepare paras how to lift students and how to appropriately place their hands on each child when teaching skills (manual teaching techniques for “proper touching”).
26. Remind paras to have students call them by Mr, Ms, or Mrs to obtain the same level of respect as other teachers.
27. Teach paras about common errors for skills and activities so they can recognize these and assist students perform proper techniques.
28. Speak to paras about the importance of adapted physical education for this child (Federal and State legislation mandates for Adapted Physical Education).
29. Identify supervisors and provide contact information of the principal/supervisor/parent.
30. Supply brief overviews of disabilities that paras will be working with and inform them how these disabilities may impact physical, motor, cognitive and social skills.
31. Encourages and promotes the use of the students own critical thinking and communication skills to actively engage and answer questions asked by the teacher during the lesson.
32. Discuss bullying prevention with paras their work in general physical education classes.
33. Teach paras how to encourage nondisabled students to interact with students with disabilities to facilitate meaningful inclusion.
34. Teach paras how to use specific apps on the iPad that you use in classes.

Utilization of Paraeducators for Teaching Students with Disabilities

1. Use as a source of information about students (problems or behavior issues prior to the APE class).
2. Allow paras to assist or monitor multiple children while the APE teacher assesses a student, or is working one on one.
3. Have paras in charge of record keeping.
4. Assign paras to be in charge of a team/group.
5. Have paras video students while performing skills.

6. Assist in assessing students and monitoring progress on IEP goals and objectives (i.e., rubrics and facilitating tests).
7. Assist and arrange needed materials and equipment.
8. Use as a motivator for the student.
9. Prepare task cards, lists, and social stories for the paras to use with a student.
10. Assign roles to the paras within the locker room and other unique settings.
11. Assist students who need a break, to use the bathroom, or leave the gym for any reason.
12. Ensure that paras arrive and leave on time with the students to ensure that the allotted time in APE is used to its full potential.
13. Assist with instruction when APE teacher may not be present in general PE class.
14. Assist and introduce special skills prior to APE (could be during recess; classroom time for skills such as practicing roller blading, riding a bike, putting on helmet and protective pads, etc.).
15. Provide visual demonstrations and verbal cues to assist student learning.
16. Encourage nondisabled peers to work with or in a group with students with disabilities (create social interactions).
17. Participate in the development and implementation of the IEP goals/objectives and Section 504 Plan activities/content.
18. Assist teachers with involving parents and other caregivers in the child's education.
19. Teach at specific stations to assist with class flow and time on task for all students.
20. "Fade out" of instructional setting as appropriate to encourage independence and authentic peer interactions.

APPENDIX C

DOS AND DON'TS: REAL PARAEDUCATORS AREN'T BABYSITTERS

Table 1.4 Dos and Don'ts: Real Paraeducators Aren't Babysitters

| Dos: The helping paraeducator | Don'ts: The hindering paraeducator |
|--|---|
| Assists only as the student needs it. Makes modifications so the student can do the task independently or with minimal assistance. | Babysits or watches without assisting when needed, or may not know how to assist. Could also be overly helpful. |
| Assists other students in the class who need help. | Sits in the environment where the student is and just watches. |
| Moves away from the student to encourage independence as appropriate. | Always sits or stands right next to the student. |
| Finds ways to encourage social interactions between students with and without disabilities. | Serves as a physical presence and barrier for communication with other students or the general education teacher. |
| Encourages the general education teacher to interact with the student within the context of the physical education class, including instruction and feedback when appropriate. | Gives all the instruction and feedback to the student without encouraging teacher or peer interaction. |
| Allows the student to talk for self and encourages communication directly with the student from others. | Talks for the student. |
| Provides appropriate, positive, specific, feedback or corrective feedback as needed. | Allows the student to continue to practice incorrectly. |
| Values the student's interests and desires and utilizes this information in interactions and modifications for instruction. | Assists the student based on own ideas about what the student needs without regard for the student's interests. |

Paraeducators in Physical Education, by Lauren Lieberman, Editor, and AAPAR, 2007, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

APPENDIX D

VIDEO NARRATIVE SCRIPT

PREPARING AND UTILIZING PARAEDUCATORS FOR STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES

Tentative Title: Preparing and Utilizing Paraeducators in Physical Education for Students with Disabilities

| Time: | Script: | Video(What you see) |
|--|--|---|
| Opening Title: 0-:20 sec. | NONE | Title will appear on screen as music starts. Para's working with students in gym showing multiple activities (throwing, kicking, catching etc.) Music dims into transition. |
| <p>Introduction: 20-55sec.</p> <p>APE Teacher: :55-1:00</p> | <p>Paraeducators play important roles in education programs for students with disabilities. They often have the most direct contact with a student throughout a typical school day and are vital resources for motivating students and relaying information to teachers and other staff. Paraeducators can be assigned to groups of students, but are usually assigned to accompany a specific student within various educational settings. When appropriate, paraeducators are included in a student's IEP and are key figures in their education. Adapted physical education teachers can benefit greatly from working with paraeducators in their classrooms to assist with a variety of tasks and skills to meet individual student needs.</p> <p>"I couldn't effectively teach and get all I need to get done without my paraeducators"</p> | <p>Voice Over: Para's continue to work with students in the gym in the background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hitting off a Tee - Running - Dribbling - Kicking - Rolling - Locomotor Skills <p>Leslie close up</p> <p>Music transitions</p> |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <p>Intro Cont.: 1-7min</p> | <p>Me On Camera: Hello, my name is Brandon Green. I am in the adapted physical education teacher preparation graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. During this video I will share many methods for both preparing and utilizing paraeducators within general and adapted physical education instructional settings.</p> <p>Topics and segments that will be presented include; adapted physical education teachers and paraeducator interviews, misconceptions about paraeducators, how adapted physical education teachers prepare paraeducators, equipment, technology, unique instructional settings, and recommendations from adapted physical education teachers for paraeducators working in physical education instructional settings..</p> <p>To begin, let's talk about what paraeducators are and their roles within special education and adapted physical education settings.</p> <p>According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 paraeducators are recognized as school personnel who may assist in providing special education and related services to students with disabilities.</p> <p>There are many terms used within schools to describe the school professionals that assist the teaching staff. These titles may include but are not limited to paraeducators, paraprofessionals, student aides, teacher assistant, and instructional assistants. There are several others that are used as</p> | <p>Gym background</p> <p>Voice Over as Topics appear on the screen</p> <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Definition shown on screen</p> <p>Terms on screen</p> |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|

well. For the purpose of this video we will use the term paraeducators. Regardless of what term is used in your school, these staff members are very important for successful physical education for many students with disabilities.

Paraeducators are used in all different subject areas and to complete many different types of tasks. However, paraeducators are often not utilized to their fullest potential. In special education paraeducators are usually assigned to assist and work with in a variety of instructional settings based on an individual student's needs.

Roles and responsibilities of a typical paraeducator may include but are not limited to; working directly with a student 1 on 1, providing small group instruction to students, assisting with student transitions to and from classes, and assisting the student with social interactions when necessary. The responsibilities of a paraeducator are different within every school depending on the needs of the students and the skills paraeducators possess.

Unlike classroom settings there are many different responsibilities and challenges that are unique to adapted or general physical education instructional settings that paraeducators need to be prepared to deal with. Davis and colleagues found that only seven percent of all paraeducators surveyed had received training in physical education, but 90% reported that they would be willing to participate in training. With these findings it is easy to see the need for training paraeducators in adapted physical

Me on camera

Clip of para w/ a student

Me on camera

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>education.</p> <p>There are many different scenarios in which paraeducators may find themselves working. To expand on this lets discuss physical education settings in which paraeducators may assist.</p> <p>Special education students are placed into their Least Restrictive Environment. This means students with identified disabilities must be educated as much as possible with their same age peer in general education settings. The least restrictive possible placement is general physical education. Students with disabilities are participating in the same class with their non-disabled peers. This setting is referred to as an inclusive setting. If a student is capable of participating in this setting on their own, paraeducators may have a limited role other than assisting the student with minor tasks such as transitions to and from the gym or monitoring social interactions. In this scenario the paraeducator may be working with the general physical education teacher as well as the adapted physical education teacher. Adapted physical education teachers will consult with both paraeducators and general physical educators to assist with any adaptations or modifications needed by students and to ensure that students are receiving the appropriate education. Depending on the individual student, paraeducators may have more involved support roles. For instance, paraeducators may need to modify equipment, facilitate social interactions with other students, and implement behavior plans to ensure that the student is successful. Paraeducators are not typically left alone within an</p> | <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Student performing task without assistance</p> <p>Leslie talking to Gen. PE and Para</p> <p>Para giving student a different size ball to bounce to be successful.</p> |
|--|--|--|

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <p>instructional setting and therefore are assisted by the general and adapted physical education teachers implementing these plans and strategies.</p> <p>A second instructional setting in which paraeducators provide support is the small group or specially designed physical education settings. This type of setting may also be working with an individual student within a one on one instructional setting. Adapted physical education settings are specially designed physical education instructional settings in which modifications are made for the individual student, based on IEP goals. In this setting paraeducators may have their most significant roles of all. Paraeducators work with the adapted physical education teacher and in many cases are required to work directly with individual students.</p> <p>Paraeducators responsibilities can include hands-on support which requires the paraeducator to physically place their hands on the student when assisting them learn or perform the physical skill successfully. Physical contact may be necessary for a variety of reasons such as guiding a student when throwing, shooting a basketball, or assisting with balance.</p> <p>Paraeducators may also provide additional instruction to students through visual demonstrations and verbal instructions. For example, a student with autism may need a visual list of tasks to perform in class, where a student with Down syndrome may need direct cue cards with pictures on them to be successful.</p> | <p>Group shot from MDP in dance studio</p> <p>Para supporting Student (Peyton) as she dribbles a ball</p> <p>Para using visual cue cards on how to use elliptical machine (Sam R.)</p> |
|--|--|---|

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>Certified adapted physical education teachers have had extensive preparation and experiences in their specific field and are considered the content experts in their given schools. It is the responsibility of the experienced teacher to prepare paraeducators for duties in their classroom and to ensure they are meeting the expectations that have been established.</p> <p>All physical education settings have different challenges and will require different types of preparation and roles for paraeducators.</p> | <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Transition</p> |
| <p>Misconceptions of paraeducators in physical education and Suggestions to help improve them 7-9:40 min</p> | <p>1. “Alright, it looks like you have everything under control. I am going to use the bathroom. I’ll be back soon.”</p> <p>Leaving the classroom without permission from the general or adapted physical education teacher is inappropriate and is viewed as unprofessional. Paraeducators always have a role in physical education and can always be utilized.</p> <p>2. “I don’t do exercises, I can supervise though”</p> <p>Paraeducators must be willing to help in a variety of ways, including performing the activities the students are asked to do. It is important that they are involved to ensure that their student is progressing accordingly.</p> <p>3. “I can’t get in the pool today, I just</p> | <p>Title appears on screen</p> <p>Para talking as they walk out of the door (Mackenzie)</p> <p>Para talking as she sits down on the floor (Steve)</p> <p>Para fluffing up their hair (Bridget)</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <p>had my hair done yesterday” Avoiding situations like this may seem innocent, but it is the student who suffers. Always put the student first and remember why you are there.</p> <p>4. “I can’t lift with my back” Risking further injury is not something anyone wants, but knowing that this is part of almost every paraeducators job who works within a physical education setting is important to know at the start.</p> <p>5. “The student that I usually work with is absent today, so I am going to stay in the classroom” Paraeducators may still be needed to provide extra assistance with other students in the class. If excused by the general or adapted physical education teacher then this may be acceptable. However, most educators always need the extra set of hands and eyes when providing high quality instruction.</p> <p>6. “My student has been really tired today, so we don’t have to do much in class if that’s okay” Being inactive is not something that bodes well in physical education. Even if the student is not working at their normal level, there is always something they can be doing to reach their individual goals.</p> <p>In adapted physical education paraeducators should always have a given role and be expected to meet the criteria that comes with that goal. These are just a few examples that paraeducators should avoid to help retain a professional work relationship with their physical education teachers. It is</p> | <p>Para holding their back and grimacing (Tom)</p> <p>Para talking through the doorway before leaving the gym (Alex)</p> <p>Para sitting in chair talking to APE teacher(Steve)</p> <p>Me on camera</p> |
|--|--|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | <p>important that general and adapted physical education teachers establish paraeducators roles and responsibilities at the start of the school year or beginning of employment and hold them accountable for their performance. They may not know it, but paraeducators play a significant part in the development of the students with whom they work. We will discuss more about ways to handle these situations in the next section.</p> | |
| <p>How adapted physical education teachers prepare paraeducators 9:40-16:40 min</p> | <p>There are many techniques and strategies that adapted physical education teachers should share with paraeducators for working in a physical education setting.</p> <p>To start let's see how experienced adapted physical education teachers prepare paraeducators to be effective in their programs.</p> <p>Me: What are ways that you prepare paraeducators to assist your physical education classes?</p> <p>Leslie Thesing: (One of the most important things I do to prepare the paraeducators that I work with is to establish meeting times prior to classes to plan for upcoming lessons. I typically provide specific responsibilities and instructional cues for them to use throughout the lesson with the student who they are working with.)</p> <p>"These are the cues I want you to use next week during our throwing lesson"</p> | <p>Title on page</p> <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Interview Question 1(Leslie)</p> <p>Leslie On Camera</p> <p>Leslie</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>“Also make sure that your student is staying on task when working with a partner”</p> <p>(OTHER APE TEACHERS ANSWERS IF APPROPRIATE)</p> <p>Now let’s hear from paraeducators on how they feel they are best prepared by their adapted physical education teachers.</p> <p>Me: What are the best ways your adapted physical education teacher prepares you to assist them in their classes?</p> <p>PARA 1: The adapted physical education teacher is very direct with their instructions and tells me exactly what I need to do prior to each class and always reminds me of the instructional objectives and teaching cues.</p> <p>Visual and verbal prompts are often used and may have to be repeated multiple times to the student. Being able to see the skill performed correctly can benefit greatly for students practicing on their own. Repeating directions and demonstrating multiple times throughout a lesson is typical when working with students with disabilities.</p> <p>As mentioned earlier in the video it is the responsibility of the adapted physical education teacher as the expert to provide the paraeducator with direct instruction on what they are expected to be doing in the class. Paraeducators should be utilized every day in adapted physical education.</p> | <p>PARA</p> <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Me Voice over question</p> <p>Para on camera (name on screen)</p> <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Para Demonstrating leg press then student doing it</p> |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>paraeducator is unsure of something it is better to ask the adapted physical education teacher than to try something on their own. Failure to ask questions may contradict the lessons objectives, or even worse may risk the student's development and overall safety.</p> <p>Here are a few examples of common questions that paraeducators should be asking.</p> <p>"How can I modify or use this piece of equipment for my student?"</p> <p>"What are the objectives for this lesson?"</p> <p>"How can I motivate my student?"</p> <p>"How do I reward and reinforce my student appropriately?"</p> <p>"How can I relay information in a different way to my student?"</p> <p>These are all very commonly asked questions and should be a great starting point for any paraeducator working in adapted physical education setting. There is never a wrong question to ask. Just remember asking a question could be the breakthrough to helping a student succeed.</p> <p>Asking questions helps build a successful working relationship and can lead to learning about all students within the class.</p> <p>It is believed that many paraeducators are only allowed to work with the student to whom they are assigned. This is not the case. Although paraeducators may</p> | <p>Me on camera</p> <p>Para's asking questions (Steve)</p> <p>(Mackenzie)</p> <p>(Tom)</p> <p>(Bridget)</p> <p>(Alex)</p> <p>Me on camera</p> <p>3. Encourage and assist all students in physical education</p> |
|--|---|---|

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>be responsible for one student, they can and should engage with every student in the class. Engaging other students allows the paraeducator to learn more about everyone in the class, which can help lead to social interactions for their student.</p> <p>Another tip is to encourage students with disabilities to work with their non-disabled peers during group or partner work. This allows the individual to be independent and teaches the students with disabilities not to rely on assistance all of the time. When a student can be independent it is important to let them, but note that the paraeducator should always be in the area and ready to assist when appropriate.</p> <p>Everyone including the adapted physical education teacher wants all of the students to be successful. However, it is important that paraeducators don't over help and cause the student to become reliable on assistance. When students with disabilities are not challenged they develop learned helplessness which can make teaching new skills harder because they will be expecting someone to do it for them. Paraeducators should allow students to perform tasks themselves as much as possible. Providing the solution, doing it for them, and making every decision for the student is hindering their development. Allowing the student to get it wrong is okay as long as they are learning and continuing to work towards their goal.</p> <p>Paraeducators should not expect students to master the task right away.</p> | <p>4. Have them assisting students appropriately</p> <p>Para instructing the student to pick up the ball and place it on the tee</p> <p>Locomotor skills (providing feedback)</p> |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Equipment Guidelines for Paraeducators</p> <p>16:40-21:30 min</p> | <p>Often students with disabilities take longer to become competent with a skill and paraeducators should remain calm and patient throughout the process. They should always provide positive feedback and be willing to provide verbal and visual demonstrations when needed</p> <p>Paraeducators will find themselves in similar situations and must know what the appropriate actions are. This is the responsibility of the adapted physical education teacher to establish roles and responsibilities to the paraeducator at the beginning of the school year and remain consistent throughout.</p> <p>Now let's discuss situations relating to preparing paraeducators to use equipment in adapted physical education.</p> <p>In adapted physical education there is usually a wide range of equipment available to use. It should be noted that this equipment can be expensive and hard to obtain. It is often the case that many adapted physical education teachers have purchased the equipment with their own funds, so it is important to respect all pieces of equipment at all times.</p> <p>When working with equipment here are a few things adapted physical education teachers should prepare paraeducators to do.</p> <p>There should always be a purpose for using a piece of equipment within a lesson. This should be based off of the lesson objectives and used to progress to</p> | <p>Me on Camera</p> <p>Preparing Paraeducators to Use Equipment</p> <p>View of equipment storage rooms.</p> <p>Me on camera</p> <p>1. Use equipment to compliment the lesson</p> |
|--|---|---|

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <p>the instructional goal. Paraeducators must know what the piece of equipment is being used for and use it to help with the instructional goal and not to simply entertain the student. It is never okay to use a piece of equipment just to use it without clearing it with the adapted physical education teacher.</p> <p>Along with knowing what a specific piece of equipment is being used for, it is more important to know how to use that piece of equipment correctly. Knowing how the piece of equipment is meant to be used leads to a better chance of success from the student and a greater chance that the item is not broken or damaged. Using equipment incorrectly can also hinder the students' progress and can disrupt the overall flow of the class.</p> <p>When students are not willing to participate in an activity a piece of equipment can be used as a motivator. It is important for both adapted physical education teachers and paraeducators to pick up on pieces of equipment students like or prefer within various situations. When explaining to the student that they first have to accomplish the particular task and then they can use the piece of equipment they like the instructional goal is more likely to be reached. Overusing equipment could lead to the student being dependent on always getting to use a particular piece, so using equipment as a motivator or a reward should be discussed with the adapted physical education teacher prior to the lesson.</p> <p>In some cases there may be a piece of</p> | <p>(Para using resistance bands with students)</p> <p>2. How to properly use the equipment</p> <p>(APE teacher showing para how to use lat pull down machine)</p> <p>3. Use as a motivator for the student</p> <p>4.Using alternative pieces of equipment when appropriate</p> |
|--|--|---|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>equipment that paraeducators may see in the storage closet that never is used. It is never a bad idea to ask and learn about new equipment. It could turn out to be the perfect piece for their student that might have been overlooked by the adapted physical education teacher. It is also important to ask about alternative pieces of equipment. For example if a student does not seem to want to use a certain piece there may be another option. Asking questions should always be encouraged.</p> <p>When possible and safe, allow the student to use the equipment without any assistance. There are numerous ways that paraeducators may have to help students with equipment. A few common ways to assist are helping them adjust straps and buckles, selecting the appropriate sizes, and monitoring students to ensure they are safe at all times. Although it is important for the student to be as independent as possible, paraeducators should always be close by in case the student needs assistance.</p> <p>Often the best way to learn something is to practice it first-hand. Volunteering to help demonstrate a piece of equipment will be very useful to see and to perform correctly before helping a student do it later. This will also show initiative to the adapted physical education teacher and that you are flexible to work with. Students often play off of your willingness to participate in the class, so always be looking for ways to engage with the class.</p> | <p>(Para holding equipment looking confused)</p> <p>5. Assist the student with equipment when needed</p> <p>(Para helping student putting on goggles for the pool)</p> <p>6. Assist the teacher with demonstrations and set up</p> <p>(Paraeducator running and kicking ball off ground)</p> |
|--|---|---|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>Some lessons will have more equipment than others and much of time can be wasted setting up and rearranging equipment. Management of equipment may be something that is talked about during planning time and a system should be worked out for paraeducators to set up equipment between tasks or games. Being able to save time on equipment management will be very appreciated by the adapted physical education teacher and it will allow for more instructional time for the students.</p> <p>Me: How do you feel you can best assist your adapted physical education teacher?</p> <p>PARA : I have to be prepared just like the adapted physical education teacher. I have to know how to use the equipment that my student will be using and how it fits in with the lessons objectives. If I were to come to class without any knowledge of what the students were expected to do I would be wasting their time as well as the adapted physical education teacher's.</p> <p>"I need you to work with James tomorrow and make sure he is using the three wheel bike correctly. "Sure no problem"</p> <p>Equipment can make or break a lesson, so knowing when and how to use it is vital for paraeducators to ensure the success of the student.</p> | <p>7. Assist with transitions within lessons</p> <p>(Para picking up cones and setting out poly spots)</p> <p>Voice over question</p> <p>Name of Para on screen</p> <p>APE teacher</p> <p>Para</p> <p>Transition</p> |
| Technology and Paraeducators in physical | Physical education is changing with the times and has infused technology into the | Technology and Paraeducators in PE |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>education 21:30-22 min</p> | <p>gym. It is an important tool that can be used to illustrate how to perform skills and motivate students as well. Even though technology can be a great resource, it should only be used to help compliment the lesson and to not take the focus away from being physically active. A few commonly used pieces of technology are iPads and SMARTBOARDS. Paraeducators should ask adapted physical education teachers about what technology is available and when it's appropriate to use within physical education settings.</p> | <p>Clip of para using smartboard and iPad</p> |
| <p>Unique Instructional Settings and Situations for Paraeducators 22-25:45 min</p> | <p>Many adapted physical education classes have access to swimming pools, another great source of physical activity for students with disabilities. A pool setting contains many different responsibilities to paraeducators.</p> <p>The most important factor of the pool environment is ensuring safety of students.</p> <p>Adapted physical education teachers and paraeducators should discuss the best way to ensure the safety and best measure of action to take with each student.</p> <p>Support from a paraeducator in this setting can range from simply being in the pool and supervising to working hands on with an individual student as they perform a specific skill.</p> <p>One duty may be taking the lead in the locker room with changing and toileting.</p> | <p>Title on screen</p> <p>Pool</p> <p>Me on camera w/pool in background</p> <p>Para supporting student as they swim</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>After exiting the pool students may need assistance showering before changing back into their clothes or turning on the water, washing, and drying themselves.</p> <p>Just like in the gym, a routine in the pool area should be established by the adapted physical education teacher for students to follow. Paraeducators should assist students with putting on life vests, ear plugs, goggles, or other appropriate items during this time.</p> <p>There are many different ways to enter and exit a pool. Here are a few examples</p> <p>Walk in ramps, steps, ladders, and for students who use a wheelchair, accessible lifts.</p> <p>Paraeducators should be informed of the appropriate ways to enter the pool and the equipment that is used by their adapted physical education teacher.</p> <p>Paraeducators should be trained to work with pool equipment prior to using it with their students.</p> <p>Paraeducators should always ask questions if they are unsure of any of their responsibilities to ensure the safety of every student.</p> <p>Many adapted physical education programs hold classes outside, or off the school grounds. Some examples of outdoor activities are skiing, snow tubing, hiking, biking, climbing walls, and ropes</p> | <p>Para and students walking into locker rooms</p> <p>Para assisting student with locating towel and drying off by the pool</p> <p>Katie (APE Teacher) instructing students to enter the pool with the paraeducators</p> <p>Para showing students how to put on life vest.</p> <p>Possible clip of lift being used</p> <p>Outdoor Activities/Community Outings</p> |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>courses. All settings present different responsibilities for paraeducators.</p> <p>Classes can take place outside, but still remain on the school grounds in places such as tennis courts, on the football field, and on the track.</p> <p>When schools do not have specific resources or facilities to use, many adapted physical education teachers look for places in the community to hold classes. An example of this might be the local gym or exercise club that has multiple pieces of exercise equipment. This is a common practice for individuals that are transitioning from being a student to being a contributing member of society.</p> <p>It is of the utmost importance that paraeducators help transition students to and from these facilities in a timely manner. Each situation will differ and adapted physical education teachers and paraeducators need to work together to plan for these unique instructional settings.</p> <p>Me: What roles do you expect paraeducators to perform in class?</p> <p>Jim Cappuccio: I expect my paraeducators to be an extension of me. I want them to be able to step into any situation and be able to provide the student with the appropriate information they need to be successful.</p> <p>"Jim is out sick today will you be alright working with your student"</p> | <p>Short clips of areas</p> <p>Clip of strength center (students working out)</p> <p>Student walking with para by football field</p> <p>Voice over question</p> <p>APE Teacher on camera</p> <p>PE teacher</p> |
|--|--|--|

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | <p>"Yes, we met earlier this week. I know exactly what I need to do"</p> <p>A study by Bryan and colleagues found similar findings where adapted physical education teachers saw paraeducators as one of the many tools involved in a student's successful education.</p> <p>Clarifying expectations for paraeducators should take place at the beginning of the school year. These expectations should be reinforced throughout the year to remain consistent and at a professional level. Again each situation will be different, so discussing roles for all settings is important.</p> <p>What would a video be without a top 10 list?</p> | <p>Para</p> <p>Para working with student kicking a ball</p> <p>Me on camera</p> |
| <p>TOP 10 25:45- 28:30 min</p> | <p>As a summary, these are the top 10 recommendations given by adapted physical education teachers to paraeducators.</p> <p>#10. Be Flexible and willing to assist in any way possible. It helps provide quality physical education to students with disabilities.</p> <p>#9. Be a Source of Information- Paraeducators are a lifeline between teachers, parents and many others who are involved with the students education, so relaying important information to the adapted physical education teacher can be vital.</p> <p>#8. Have a Positive Attitude-Coming in</p> | <p>Top 10 Recommendations for paraeducators in APE</p> <p>Voice over video (top 10) Acting out scenarios</p> <p>APE teacher steps in and asks para to work with other group</p> <p>Para talking to the APE teacher on how the student is feeling</p> <p>Thumbs up and cheering</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p>with a "ready to go" attitude sets the tone for students and staff that promotes good participation within physical education.</p> <p>#7. Ask Questions- Paraeducators are not expected to know everything, so ask questions even if they seem minor. They could end up making all the difference.</p> <p>#6. Allow Students to be Independent- Our first instinct is to help, but this may not always be the best for the students. Let the student perform tasks on their own and remember that it is okay for students to not succeed at first. Creating a learned helplessness hinders the students' progress.</p> <p>#5. Meet and Plan- In many cases adapted physical education teachers are traveling from other schools and may need you to step in until they arrive. Meet and plan with the adapted physical education teacher prior to the lesson, so that you can step in without interruption.</p> <p>#4. Engage with all of the students- Engaging with all of the students allows you to be able to understand each student as well as being able to create and facilitate social interactions between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.</p> <p>#3. Take on the responsibilities given to you- The more you put into the duties you are given the better the experience will be for you and the students.</p> <p>#2. Know how to use the equipment- Receive and request training on all equipment prior to using equipment with a student. Using it incorrectly, or at</p> | <p>Para asking a question (shrugging shoulders)</p> <p>Student with Para in the background</p> <p>In office discussing lesson</p> <p>Para with multiple students</p> <p>Para working solo with a student</p> <p>Holding Ipad as APE teacher tells how to work it</p> |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <p>inappropriate times can hinder student learning.</p> <p>#1. And the number one recommendation from adapted physical education teachers to paraeducators is. Embrace the job for what it is- Maintaining focus on why you are there and who you are serving is worth every second.</p> | <p>Para walking through the front door to work with a smile on their face</p> |
| <p>Closure/Review 28:30-29:20 min</p> | <p>Often times paraeducators in adapted physical education settings are not optional for students with disabilities, they are a necessity. An extra pair of eyes and hands can make or break the success of many students within the adapted physical education setting. In order for adapted physical education teachers to utilize paraeducators to their fullest potential and to have students achieve their learning goals, it is important that communication and a professional relationship are established from day one. Adapted physical education teachers should include paraeducators in lesson planning, training them with special equipment, and introducing them to typical responsibilities they will have are important tasks to preparing and utilizing a quality paraeducator.</p> | <p>Me on camera</p> |

Approximately 29:20 Minutes